

1. LETTER TO BAL KALELKAR

ARNI,
September 2, 1927

CHI. BAL,

I got your letter and liked it very much. I could not reply immediately for want of time. I shall answer two of your questions. A *brahmachari* sacrifices all pleasures merely through faith or in obedience to his parents or a custom. There is obedience in his sacrifice, but not knowledge. And if he cannot bring himself to make for ever that sacrifice, he has freedom to enjoy pleasures within limits after completing his studies. A sannyasi makes the same sacrifice knowingly and willingly. He does not and cannot keep it open for him to return to pleasures after having abjured them. Both types of sacrifice are very essential to individuals as well as to society.

Now the second question. Non-violence means not harming anyone in thought, word or action out of ill will or selfishness. If we wish or do ill to any stranger in the interests of our parents, that is violence. We can see and prove with the help of our knowledge that wishing or doing ill benefits neither the world nor our parents. Hence I had written that it was my belief we discover nonviolence the moment we realize that its root is to be found in wishing well to the world as much as to ourselves. You will thus see that we can of course prove independently that one should wish well to the world, but if we abide by the dharma of non-violence the responsibility to wish well to the world as well devolves on us even in pursuance of that dharma. If we understand this from our very childhood, our reason would admit it and the heart too would like it. That is to say, if we continue for ever the sacrifice which we have undertaken in good faith during the stage of *brahmacharya* we become sannyasis. Shankaracharya did this in the past. Dayanada did it in our own age. That we all cannot do so is due to our shortcoming and that constitutes an obstacle to doing good to the world. But we cannot do such things merely by exercising our reasoning. But if, with the help of our intellect, we imprint it day after day on our hearts and if it gets so imprinted, the whole world will not, even if it tried, be able to stop us from sacrificing our all. If any special problems arise, do tell me. Read this to all the pupils if you can.

[From Gujarati]

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

2. SPEECH AT ARNI¹

September 2, 1927

You love to get a little bit of a rag, or cocoanut, or anything that you can get as *prasadam* from temples from which, alas, all holiness has fled. I would ask you to transfer that spirit of humility and devotion to khaddar which is spun and woven in the living temple of *Daridranarayana*. Our temples have their proper place in our religion and society only in so far they enable us to reach out the hand of fellowship to the starving millions of India. But these very temples will be the instruments of forging our shackles if they become impassable barriers between the masses and us. If you will wear khaddar in true spirit you will purify yourselves and the temples. I need not explain to you now, how the removal of untouchability necessarily follows from this proposition.

Young India, 8-9-1927

3. SPEECH AT ARCOT

September 2, 1927

I am very thankful for the cordial reception and for the purse you have given me, but I am not satisfied with this amount. I know that there are many in this gathering who have not contributed to the Fund which is intended for our poor brethren. You must encourage spinning by wearing khaddar. I am very glad to find here that the Hindus and the Mussalmans have met together in mutual co-operation unlike in the North where communal hatred is prevailing.

Yesterday when I had been to a Hindu temple on my way I was given the *prasad* by the *gurukka*². I told him that I am a pariah and asked him whether he would allow a pariah inside the temple. He laughed at me and said that he would do it gradually. I appeal to all men and women who have assembled here to treat the so-called pariah as our equal and move with him freely.

Since I find no place to have this silver plate, I shall have it auctioned. Volunteers will come in your midst for collection and you

¹ From Mahadev Desai's "Weekly Letter"

² Temple priest

can give whatever you please. As I have to go to another place I shall conclude my speech, once more thanking you for your gifts and addresses.

The Hindu, 5-9-1927

4. LETTER TO BALWANTRAI MEHTA

[After September 2, 1927]¹

I have your letter. You may rest assured that I shall not take a decision hastily. I am now conveying all my doubts to everyone who should know them and am seeking assistance in coming to a decision. I make no distinction between K and Devdas. It is no pleasure to me to entertain any suspicion about K. K. and K are in fact related to me as children. Hence it is not at all possible that I shall decide anything in haste.

Your argument does not appeal to me. You may know that I myself am a proof before you that sex does not discriminate between the young and the old. Even today I have to erect all sorts of walls around me for the sake of safety.

Despite this, I was in danger of succumbing a few years ago. Moreover, sexual desire does not bother about time either. Despite our belief that Bhai K's ideas about *brahmacharya*, etc., were pure it is no wonder if ultimately he succumbed to desire. A young man whose case was almost similar confessed to me in Bangalore. He is regarded as a *brahmachari*. He is a darling of his family. No one can suspect him as things stand. He studies in the intermediate class. He has not been able to save himself from a widow who is related to him. He came to me saying, "Save me from this fever." Despite having sworn to a friend, he fell again. Hence he sought refuge in me. What refuge could I provide? But that is a digression.

What I have learnt is this: K had closer relations with K and her family than warranted. Both were reprimanded and both were convinced. Both agreed not to have such intimacy. In spite of this, they were seen secretly meeting each other. So Maganlal went on a fast. Notwithstanding this, they again met secretly. If my information is correct, I cannot get over my doubt. And if K has committed this slip such a man can in no time succumb to temptations of money. But

¹ The source has this letter after the entries for September 2.

these are all my inferences based on a single premise. I cannot but have all sorts of doubt about a person who acts with deliberate dishonesty. I am still investigating. I am not unaware of Maganlal's opinion which you quote. You are also aware that I have great confidence in his judgment. I shall write to him too.

Now the question that either you or his father should reimburse the amount, if K has embezzled any, does not arise at all. I am considering only the ethical aspect of this question.

Whatever I shall now write for *Navajivan* cannot but reflect my doubt; hence if you let me have some draft I shall consider and publish it, if I can.

I have not made light of suicides. I know of only two occasions when suicide becomes a duty. There are many grounds for that opinion. A man who is helpless against indulgence and cannot control himself but has sense enough to bring about his end ought to do so. That would be his dharma. Likewise, when a beast of a man attempts to criminally assault a woman, it is her duty to save herself by committing suicide. Indeed I have very often quoted these two instances in the Ashram. And I think it is only proper. Even if K has committed all the three faults mentioned above, as far as the tenets of the Ashram are concerned the duty to commit suicide cannot be established nor that of running away. Atonement is the only duty in such a case but I know from the many letters K wrote to me that he has always opposed a number of rules observed in the Ashram.

Blessings from
MOHANDAS

[From Gujarati]

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

5. TELEGRAM TO MIRABEHN

MADRAS,
September 3, 1927

MIRABEHN

SATYAGRAHA ASHRAM, WARDHA

YOU MAY GO BOMBAY FOR EXAMINATION APPENDIX AND
EYES. WIRE CONDITION.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 5266. Courtesy: Mirabehn

6. TELEGRAM TO MIRABEHN

MADRAS,
September 3, 1927

TO

MIRABEHN

SAYTAGRAHA ASHRAM, WARDHA

WIRE RECEIVED. DISTRESSED. GOD BE WITH YOU. EXPECT
DAILY REPORTS. LOVE. ANDREWS JOINS.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 5267. Courtesy: Mirabehn

7. SPEECH TO LABOUR, PERAVALLUR

September 3, 1927

FRIENDS,

I thank you for the address and the two purses. I congratulate you on having the club¹ whose main object is to advance the cause of khadi. The ingenious manner in which you are advocating its cause is worthy of imitation by all of us. For a poor man it is the most convenient form of getting a loan free of interest. But as in most things in this also the honesty on the part of all members is an indispensable condition. As you know, having myself become a labourer and having worked with them in their midst and for them for over 35 years I am deeply interested in everything connected with labour. I do not propose just now to deal with the disabilities that labour is labouring under in India and here in particular. As a matter of fact I know nothing of your special hardship and special conditions. At the present moment what I wish to lay the greatest stress upon is what labour can do for itself.

The one curse with which it is afflicted from within is the terrible drink habit. If labourers do not get rid of it betimes they will be digging their own graves. When the drink habit possesses a man it turns him into a beast. He knows no distinction between the sister and his wife. I therefore advise you all to give up drink. I know what a

¹ Gandhi Club

severe temptation it is for a man who is once given to drink; but God has given man the capacity, if he will only use it, for conquering such defects and temptations. The other defect which I have found amongst the labourers is that they have no consciousness of the strength which is possessed by combination. Labourers must learn to consider that the welfare of all is the welfare of the individual. You must therefore cultivate amongst yourselves a real brotherly spirit. I have known that in many parts of India labourers squander their money in gambling. It is a vicious habit and you should give it up. The morale amongst the labourers in some parts of India is also not all as it should be. If as labourers we want to become a recognized force in the Indian society and in the political world also, it is absolutely necessary for us to recognize the binding tie of marriage and all the obligations that that tie imposes upon us. I have congratulated you upon having this club for the advancement of khadi. But instead of there being a hundred members in that club every one of you should belong to it. Remember that khadi binds us to those who are much poorer than yourselves. To throw away the foreign cloth or even your millmade cloth costs you nothing but the simple thought on behalf of the starving millions of people who are living in our villages. It has given me great pleasure to lay the foundation-stone¹ which I have just laid over the place there. May God help you to do the things I have suggested to you. If you will but do these things, you will find that the majority of your difficulties will disappear without any further efforts.

The Hindu, 5-9-1927

8. *SPEECH TO STUDENTS, MADRAS*

September 3, 1927

You have called your purse a small purse, much smaller than you had expected to raise. I also endorse the sentiment that this purse² is all too small for the students of Madras to present to me. And for what purpose? Not for buying a few collars or neckties for distribution among the modern students who may be in need—not intended for any small work. It is intended for the starving millions in 7,00,000 villages. And I am positive that you, the students, if you could possibly

¹ Of the building of the Madras and Southern Maharatta Railway Employees' Union at Perambur

² Of Rs. 1607

realize the meaning of the starvation of these millions, you could raise a far larger sum. If you knew the conditions of these starving millions, as I do expect you to know, you would have raised a much larger sum. However, for your comfort, let me tell you that you have done no less than the students elsewhere. Not only does your purse not suffer in comparison with purses received by me from students elsewhere, but it comes to me with assurance that your Chairman has given, that your purse is a token of your association with the khadi work I am doing. And, coming as it does with that assurance, I hold your purse very precious indeed, and it has given me additional joy to know that the largest amount collected by any single worker was by a lady student.¹ I wish indeed that all the young ladies of India will beat all the young men of India in the competition of service of the motherland. Why should not women be the first in the field in matters of service? Your purse should carry with it a lesson to you as it does to me. The lesson that the purse carries to me is, that taking all these moneys from the student world, I should realize more fully my responsibility not only to you but to the starving millions. The lesson that it should carry to you is that having given your mite to this purse, you should study the condition of these millions of villagers, in order to fit you all the better for their service. And if you do so, you will make this painful discovery that your education is paid for out of the life-blood of these millions. I hope that every student here also knows that the fees he pays for his education do not, in any way whatsoever, pay for the cost of his education. I hope that the students also know and realize that the education is paid for out of the drink and drug revenue.

Now, consider for yourselves what you owe to these men who pay for your education. I suggest then that you should render ceaseless service to these starving millions and that you should not be satisfied till this gnawing poverty is banished from our land. And, I have told you that khaddar is the easiest and the only way. I ask you not to allow your minds to be befogged by all kinds of specious reasoning that will be advanced against the spinning-wheel and against khadi in these days of rush for machinery. I do not propose to go into all the arguments for the spinning-wheel and khadi, but I commend to your attention a small book that has been published by the All-India Spinners' Association and which has been written by two students,

¹ Miss Ananda Bai of the Law College had collected Rs. 150.

Professor Puntambekar and Mr. N. S. Varadachari. You will find in that little book most of the arguments carefully marshalled, in order to show that khadi and khadi alone can become the only means of alleviating this universal misery of starving India. I want you to bear in mind the qualifications that I have introduced into the proposition with great care. Do not dismiss from your minds the words “universal” and “alleviation” and then raise an argument, which nobody has ever advanced, and then proceed to demolish it. And if you have understood this message of khadi, then you will not rest until you have discarded every inch of foreign cloth and substituted it by hand-woven and handspun cloth.

But, I have said that khadi is really the least part of your performance. It is the beginning of the service and the centre round which all other things can be built up. You will have to bring to bear, on this question of removing the awful distress among the villagers of India, an irreproachable character. You will never be able to put together the shattered fragments of society unless you have got this binding cement of character. I am sure that it will do your soul good to hear from me that students in Gujarat are, at the present moment, working wonders in those flood-stricken areas. They could not do so, if they had not love overflowing and outgoing to those people in distress, and character at the back of their service. Some of them have left off their studies and have gone into villages with pickaxes, shovels and baskets and have restored villages which were stinking with dead cattle and rotten grain to a habitable condition. They did not wait for the *Panchama* brethren to go to their assistance to remove these carcasses, but removed them themselves. And, I know, what has been possible for the few Gujarati students to do, it also possible of every one of you, boys and girls, to do, given the occasion. But I must not take up much of your time, nor tax myself unduly the very first day of my coming to Madras. There are many other things of which I should like to talk to you. I wish I had the time to give you that conversation. But I would like to make a little request to you. I gave to students in Vellore a fairly considered address,¹ and I understand that it has been reported almost verbatim in *The Hindu*. Probably some of you have already read it. But even if you have done so, I commend it to you for reading again carefully and I ask those who have not read it to get a loan of the paper or buy it and read it. You are the hope of

¹ *Vide* “Speech at Voorhee’s College, Vellore”, 30-8-1927.

the future and I should love to think that students all over India should realize their duty to the country to which they owe not only their birth, but also their education, derived as it is from the life-blood of the downtrodden villagers. Whenever the devil presses you and you simply think of yourselves and not of your country, just remember this thing, which I have told you this evening. Remember the debt you are incurring from day to day whilst you are receiving your education, and may the memory of that debt keep you from every temptation.

The Hindu, 5-9-1927

9. AFTER THE FLOODS

From the letters which I received regarding the flood-relief work and from the reports in *Navajivan* I observe that volunteers are doing their work conscientiously showing no signs of exhaustion. But I have formed the impression that all of us are not accustomed to doing physical work, that we feel aversion against certain types of work and that certain things are left undone or delayed or done with too much expense because we do not know how to do them. For example, I read the following in reports by some volunteers which are lying with me.

The wells in this place stink.

The basin at the top of the well in this place is about to crumble.

A buffalo has fallen into the well here and the water stinks with the smell of her rotting body. But the poor Bhangis still use it.

The grain which is rotting in this place gives off foul smell. The people dig up even that and eat it.

We found the Bhangis here lazy. They do not work even when asked.

I have given these statements from different letters and all of them are not in the words of the writers themselves. I have not, however, twisted the writer's meaning in any of them.

I think that in our work we should not have one set of people to do the actual work and another to supervise. Our poor country can progress only if the supervisors and the workers are the same persons. The number of persons who issue orders should be the smallest possible. Of course we cannot do without overseers¹ altogether, but we should bear in mind that their function is largely to keep watch

¹ Gandhiji uses the English word.

against possible malpractices. Volunteers, too, need supervision. If no supervisor is appointed over a volunteer's work, he should ask for one to be appointed. Even so, our aim should be to get out of this unhappy condition of supervisors having to be appointed. In any case, supervisors and others, all should carry hoes and spades with them. If these are not available, they should use their hands as much as possible.

I would, therefore, expect to receive reports as follows: 'In village 'A', the well emitted a foul smell. A bucket and rope were procured from the villagers and the well was cleaned up with the latter's help. Some potassium permanganate was obtained from a hospital nearby and mixed with the well-water. We then tasted the water and satisfied ourselves that it was pure.

'In village 'B' the basin platform round the mouth of the well was unusable, and so a hedge of thorny plants was put up round it with the help of villagers. This notice was put up on the hedge. 'The platform is in bad repair. No one should go near it.' There is another well in the village, and, therefore, there will be no hardship.

'We found only one well in village 'C'. Its basin was quite unusable. The village mason, therefore, was brought along and the basin repaired and made strong enough so that it could be used for the time being. The people have been advised to get it made stronger.

'In village 'D' a buffalo had fallen into the well. We saw that she could not be pulled out even if we tried. There was not much water in the well. With the consent and help of the village people, the well was filled up. As I had never lifted a weight or held a spade, my shoulders are aching and the palms are sore. But the foul smell which could be felt even at a distance of several hundred yards has ceased. When I see now boys playing on the spot where the well stood, I completely forget my pain. And the experience of real appetite is an additional benefit.

'We saw two wells in village 'E', the second being for the use of Bhangi friends. There was hardly any water in it. On inquiry, I was told that it usually contained only a small quantity of water, and that too full of dirt and mud. So I pleaded with the elders of the village. They agreed to let the Bhangis draw water [from the other well], but insisted on these conditions. 'The women in our families will not yet accept your idea of mixing [with Bhangis]. You may, therefore, fix certain hours when they may draw water from the well.' I welcomed

even this, little as it was. I thanked them. I got together Bhangi boys and, with their help, filled up the well in a little while and left the place.

‘I found the Bhangis in village ‘F’ very lazy. I saw ankle-deep slush mud round their wells. The refuse-heap was right near their dwellings. I tried hard to explain things to them, but in vain. I then asked for a spade. ‘There it is’, said one of them, and went away. Another said: ‘Why do you waste your labour, dear Sir? We don’t mind all this dirt and mud. We have always lived thus.’ I said: ‘I can’t bear the sight of these things. Persons like me work hard for you, plead with people not to treat you as untouchables. But what can we do if this is how you behave?’ The man said: ‘Yes, that is certainly true. But we cannot help the slowness in our improvement.’ I made no reply to this, but removed the mud, covered the ground with dry sand and single handed cleared out the refuse-heaps from near the dwellings. Occasionally a boy would come along, remove two spadefuls of the refuse and walk away. I called to mind the *Gita* teaching of disinterested service and left the place.’

The reader may think up more such imaginary reports, and should cherish the ambition to act in the manner suggested and demonstrate that these things can be done.

The substance of what one volunteer writes may be stated as follows :

You were alone so far, but you are two now, for Kakasaheb has joined you. Should we not get some benefit of your being together? Will not one of you write and explain how to create a new world after the *pralaya*?

I have been trying to see that Kakasaheb’s pen is active and dancing. Staying here, I cannot think of any suggestions to make about creating a new world. Those which occur to me do not seem worth putting down on paper. My appeal, therefore, to workers who are already active is this :

Instead of expecting us, invalids, to make suggestions from this distance, you who are on the spot should yourselves think out plans and execute them, limiting them to your villages. You should not wait for the whole of Gujarat to undertake reconstruction before you do so, but should effect what reforms you can in your own village if you can carry the local people with you. I give here a miscellaneous list of do’s and don’t’s.

1. Do not build houses which look like slums.
2. Do not use tin-sheets.
3. Do not imitate America or England, for the climate there is different from ours.
4. Use only a minimum of stone and mortar.
5. In our country, we can build fine houses with straw, stalks, reeds and finely powdered, moistened earth.
6. The site must be cleaned and made level before a house is built.
7. There must be proper provision for ventilation.
8. If there is enough space, a separate shed should be provided for cattle. I saw an inexpensive and very hygienic arrangement for them, which consisted of an enclosure in which they were not tied but were left free. A strong fence of sticks or wire could be put up for the purpose. There should be a small shed in the enclosure where the cattle can rest when they feel inclined to do so.

MISCELLANEOUS

1. Do not give people black, foreign caps, even if received as gifts for them. A thing which is unacceptable in itself should not be received even as a gift. A vegetarian would not accept meat because it was offered to him free.

2. Our aim in life is not to live merely for the sake of living. It should be, rather, to live for a good end, to awaken the soul sleeping in this body which is its house. The difference between dharma and *adharma* is this: One who follows dharma will refuse to live if he has to violate certain restraints for that purpose. One who follows *adharma* accepts no such restraints. He will sell himself, his wife and children and his country in order that he may live.

3. A trader may save and may also destroy. The merchants of Gujarat are doing both without knowing it. I have been observing that there is a shower of foreign and mill cloth. Now that the immediate shock of the heavy floods is over, I caution them and the people. It is Gujaratis and Marwaris who are responsible for the presence of foreign cloth among us. Both these classes of merchants should consider. If I were asked to choose between the destruction caused by foreign cloth and that caused by excessive floods, I know which I should choose. Let the reader know that one kills the body; this can be borne and is inescapable. The other kind of destruction kills the soul

and we can always escape it. Who will explain to Gujarat this profound difference between the two kinds of destruction? Man is always helpless in saving his body from destruction, and he is always free concerning the saving of his soul. That is why the various religions proclaim in the most emphatic words: “The *atman* is its own friend and its own foe.”¹

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 4-9-1927

10. SPEECH AT Y.M.C.A., MADRAS ²

September 4, 1927³

FRIENDS,⁴

The Chairman has asked me to give you a religious discourse. I do not know that I have ever given a religious discourse, or to put it the other way, I do not know a single speech of mine or a talk of mine, within my own recollection, which has not been a religious discourse. I think, if I am not deceived, that at the back of every word that I have uttered since I have known what public life is, and of every act that I have done, there has been a religious consciousness and a downright religious motive. My acts may have appeared to my audiences, or to the readers of the words that I have written, political, economic and many other things. But I ask you to accept my word that the motive behind every one of them has been essentially and predominantly religious. And so is it to be this morning.

When I asked what I was expected to speak about, I was told that I was to speak what I liked. Well, the message came to me this morning as I was on my way to this meeting and I propose now to think before you aloud.

I had very precious moments with a missionary friend in Vellore. I had a heart-to-heart talk⁵ with the students of that place, and the next morning I was told something like this: ‘Your speech was very nice. You talked of the things of the spirit. But how is it that in

¹ *Bhagavad Gita*, VI. 5

² This was published under the caption “Two Speeches”.

³ From *The Hindu*, 5-9-1927

⁴ Vide “Speech at Voorhee’s College, Vellore”, 30-8-1927.

the middle of the speech like King Charles' head with the renowned Mr. Dick, khadi came up? Can you explain what connection khadi can possibly have with spirituality? Then he went on, 'You spoke about temperance; that delighted us and it was certainly spiritual. You spoke about untouchability, a very fine subject for an audience spiritually inclined or for a spiritually inclined man to speak about. But both these came in your speech after your message of khadi. It seemed to jar on some of us.' I have given you the substance of the conversation in my own words but faithfully. I gave the answer that came to me at the time and this morning I want to amplify that answer.

It is quite true that I place khaddar first and then only untouchability and temperance. All these came at the end of the speech I gave to the students of Vellore, in which I made a fervent appeal for purity of life and told them that without purity of life all their learning would be as dust and probably a hindrance to the true progress of the world. Then I took up these three things and a few more by way of illustration. Throughout 35 years' unbroken experience of public service in several parts of the world, I have not yet understood that there is anything like spiritual or moral value apart from work and action. I have often repeated to audiences like this that great verse which has always remained with me ever since I read it: "Not every-one that says unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter the Kingdom of Heaven but he who doeth the will of my Father who is in Heaven."¹ I have not reproduced that verse correctly but you know what that verse is and it is so true. I recall to my mind two brilliant instances of men in English public life who, in their own times, were regarded as very great reformers, and as pillars of spirituality. I am now talking to you of about 1889 and 1890 when many of you were not born. I used to attend temperance meetings in those days. I was interested in that reform. Those two pillars of spirituality were supposed to be great temperance workers, but they were workers with their speeches. They were always in demand when a harangue was required on temperance. I am sorry to have to inform you that I was a witness to their fall. Both of them were found out. They were no workers. The words God, Lord, Jehovah were on their lips always, but they simply adorned their lips, they were not in their hearts. They used the temperance platform for their own base ends. One of them was a speculator and the other was a moral leper. Perhaps you now

¹ *St. Matthew*, vii. 21

understand what I want to say. In India also, I am not able to say that the temperance platform is always a spiritual platform or that the platform of untouchability must necessarily be a spiritual platform. I have known, I know now as I am talking to you, that both these platforms are being abused today in this very land by several people. Others are using them aright. The moral I want to submit to you is that every act may be done, conceived and presented from a spiritual standpoint or it may have none of it at all. I want to claim before you today that the message of the spinning-wheel and khadi is supremely a spiritual message; and it is supremely a spiritual message for this land that it has got tremendous economic consequences as also political consequences.

Only the other day, an American friend, Prof. Sam Higginbottom, writing to me upon a subject in which both he and I are deeply interested, said,—I give you the substance of the letter—"I don't believe in a religion bereft of economics. Religion to be worth anything must be capable of being reduced when necessary to terms of economics." I entirely endorse that remark with a big mental reservation. Not that Mr. Higginbottom also had not that reservation. But I must not claim to speak for him. The mental reservation is this, that whereas religion to be worth anything must be capable of being reduced to terms of economics, economics, to be worth anything, must also be capable of being reduced to terms of religion or spirituality. Therefore in this scheme of religion *cum* economics there is no room for exploitation and for Americanization as the technical term is known. As a distinguished son of India put it— he is no other than Sir M. Vishveshvarayya—whereas an Englishman owns 30 slaves, or is it 36,—I speak subject to correction—an American owns 33 slaves. Personally, I think there is no room in true economics which is convertible with religion for the owning of slaves whether they are human beings, cattle or machinery. There is no room for slavery in economics. Then I suggest to you that you cannot escape khadi and it has the largest limit. Temperance takes in its orbit a certain number of people. It blesses the man who converts the drunkard to teetotalism, and it undoubtedly blesses the drunkard who is so converted by the word of the reformer. Untouchability takes in its orbit at the most seven crores of people of this unhappy land, and not every one of us can do untouchability work. You may certainly give the untouchable education; you may dig wells for him and build temples. But these would not make him touchable unless the so-called touchables will

come down from their insolent heights and brother the untouchable. So you will see it is a somewhat complex problem for the man and woman in the street to handle. And as a man whose sole occupation in life is, be it ever so humble, to find out truth, I was searching for something that everyone can do without exception—everybody in this room—that something which would also remedy the most deep-seated disease of India.

And the most deep-seated disease of India is undoubtedly not drunkenness, undoubtedly not untouchability, great as those diseases are and greater perhaps for those who are suffering from them; but when you examine the numerical content of this disease, you will find with me, if you take any census returns, or any authentic book on history, such for instance as Sir William Hunter's history, or take the evidence of Mr. Higginbottom given before a Commission only two years ago—he said that the largest number of people in India were poverty-stricken, and Sir William Hunter says that one-tenth of the population in India is living barely on one meal a day consisting of a stale *roti* and a pinch of dirty salt which perhaps you and I will not touch—that state of things persists in India today. If you were to go into the interior, outside the railway track, you will find as I have found that the villages are being reduced to dungheaps, the villagers are not there, vultures are to be seen because they could not support themselves, and were reduced to carcasses.

India is suffering from meningitis, and if you will perform the necessary operation and make some return to those starving millions today, I say there is nothing but khadi for you. And if, as men spiritually inclined, you will think of those less fortunate than you are and who have not even enough to support themselves or clothe themselves, if you will have an indissoluble bond between them and yourselves, I say once more there is nothing for you but khadi. But it jars, and the reason why it jars is that this is a new thing and is a visionary thing, a day-dream as it appears to many. The missionary friend of Vellore, whom I spoke about, told me at the end of our conversation, "Yes, but can you stem the march of modern progress? Can you put back the hands of the clock, and induce people to take to your khadi and make them work on a mere pittance?" All I would say is that this friend did not know his India. From the Vellore meeting I went to two places, Arcot and Arni. I did not see much of the people there, I assure you, but saw the villagers less well clad than I am. I saw them not in their tens but in their tens of thousands. They

were in their rage and their wages were practically nil for four months in the year. They gave me of their substance; I was hungrily looking at the thing they gave me. They gave me not pice; they gave pies.

Come with me to Orissa in November, to Puri, a holy place, and a sanatorium, where you will find soldiers and the Governor's residence during summer months. Within ten miles' radius of Puri you will see skin and bone. With this very hand I have collected soiled pies from them tied tightly in their rags, and their hands were more paralysed than mine were at Kolhapur. Talk to them of modern progress. Insult them by taking the name of God before them in vain. They will call you and me fiends if we talk about god to them. They know, if they know any God at all, a God of terror, vengeance, a pitiless tyrant. They do not know what love is. What can you do for them? You will find it difficult to change these delightful sisters (pointing to the ladies present) from their silk saris to coarse khadi woven by those paralytic and crude hands. Khadi is rough! It is too heavy! Silk is soft to be touched and they can wear nine yards of silk, but they cannot wear 9 yards of khadi. The poor sisters of Orissa have no saris; they are in rags. But they have not lost all sense of decency, but I assure you we have. We are naked in spite of our clothing, and they are clothed in spite of their nakedness. It is because of these that I wander about from place to place, I humour my people, I humour my American friends. I humoured two stripling youths from Harvard. When they wanted my autograph, I said, "No autograph for Americans". We struck a bargain, "I give you my autograph; and you take to khadi". They have promised and I rely on the word of an American gentleman. Many of them are doing this work—make no mistake about it, and they like it also.

But I cannot be satisfied, not till every man and woman in India is working at his or at her wheel. Burn that wheel if you find a better substitute. This is the one and only work which can supply the needs of the millions without disturbing them from their homes. It is a mighty task and I know that I cannot do it. I know also that God can do it. The mightiest and strongest matter is but a tiny affair for Him, when it pleases Him. He can destroy them all in the twinkling of an eye, as He has destroyed now thousands of homes in Gujarat and as He had destroyed thousands of homes a few years ago in South India. I carry this message of khadi and the spinning-wheel with the fullest faith in God, and therefore in His creation, man. You may laugh at me today. You may call this a sordid thing. If you like you may distrust

me and say this is some political schemer who has come to place his khaddar before us, but he has got many things up his sleeve. You may misinterpret me and my message. You may say: 'We are too weak to do these things and too poor'. I know it is possible for you to repel me by your arguments and make me speechless. But I shall not lose faith in you so long as I cannot lose faith in God. It is impossible for me to lose that faith, and therefore I cannot lose faith in the message of khadi and the spinning-wheel.

If I have not succeeded in opening out my heart to you, and if I have not succeeded in showing to you the rock-bottom spirituality of the message of khaddar, I don't think I shall ever succeed in doing so. All I can say is I mean to succeed. My lips may not deliver the true message. God will do it all, in whose name I have delivered this message to you. God bless you.

Young India, 15-9-1927

11. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, MADRAS ¹

September 4, 1927

MR. CHAIRMAN AND FRIENDS,

I thank you for the addresses that you have presented to me and the different purses. The general purse amounts to Rs. 13,235-2-6. Rs. 100 from Purasawalkam labourers, Rs. 52-0-11 from the staff of the Indian Industrial Company, Rs. 13 from Jam Bazaar, and additional collections from students Rs. 18. For all this I thank you. I wish that it was possible for me to speak on the various topics that engage the attention of the servants of the country at the present moment. Though I hold strong views on most of those questions, I do not propose at the present moment to deal with them. But let me reiterate my faith before this vast audience. I believe in non-violent non-co-operation as much as I ever did. So far as I can see, there is nothing but non-violent non-co-operation as an alternative to violence. My faith in the possibility and necessity of Hindu-Muslim unity is as strong as ever. But so far as I am concerned, I have nothing but heartfelt prayer for its early achievement. I ask this vast audience to pray for the success of the deliberations of the Hindu and Mussalman leaders that are to take place on the 6th instant² and thereafter at Simla.

¹ At Triplicane Beach

² At Delhi

My faith in the necessity of removing untouchability, which is a blot upon Hinduism, is also as green as ever.

I have been watching with very considerable interest the agitation that is going on in your midst on the part of some of the youths for the removal of the Neill Statue. To me it is like a cloud no bigger than a man's thumb. It is also like every other cloud capable of overspreading the Indian skies. I do hope that those who are owners of this statue will understand the significance of this movement although it appears to be trifling at the present moment. I appeal to the young men who are behind this movement, of whom I have no knowledge whatsoever, not to spoil a good case by a single, hasty and inconsiderate step.

You have invited the National Assembly to meet here in this great city during the year. Madras enjoys the unique reputation of having one of its most distinguished sons as President¹ of this great Assembly. I cannot tell you how much I miss his presence this evening. It is up to you and up to every citizen of Madras to make the coming session of the Congress a brilliant success. I know that you have here, unfortunately, dissensions between Brahmins and Non-Brahmins. In view of the great task that lies in front of you, I beseech you, everyone, to see to it that these dissensions are removed so far as it is humanly possible to remove them and that they are not allowed to interfere with the preparations that you must make in order to ensure the success of the national gathering. I look forward to the time when we shall not think of Hindus, Mussalmans, Christians, Jews, Parsis, etc., or Brahmins, Non-Brahmins, untouchables, etc., as warring elements in our midst. But I look forward to the time—so long as these diversities must continue—when we shall all regard ourselves as branches of one great beautiful tree called the undivided and indivisible Indian Nation. And I wish that this so-called benighted city in the so-called benighted presidency should enjoy the honour of having brought about this desirable result.

And now I will come to the business that has brought me to Madras and that will send me to the end of this Southern Presidency. How I wish I could convince every one of you here that khadi is really calculated to become the best cement to bind all of us together. How I wish I could convince you that in all our little quarrels and squabbles we take little or no account of the voiceless millions whom for the

¹ S. Srinivasa Iyengar

time being we misrepresent. How I wish I could convince you that our obstinacy in not seeing the obvious results that must come from the adoption of khadi makes the progress of khadi itself so lamentably slow. And owing to the slowness of the progress of khadi, some of you turn against me and tell me that khadi has no vitality. And ignoring your obstinacy, you make the advance of khadi not only slow but you make the advance of the country itself almost impossible. And in your impatience to reach the common goal you refuse to see that you are yourselves the greatest obstacle in our march. You refuse to see the simple thing that is in front of you and then not finding any other activity you give way to unmanly despair. I ask you, for the sake of the country, for the sake of the toiling millions, for the sake of God, to shake yourselves free from this lethargy.

I wish that I had the courage to keep this great audience waiting to hear more of what is swelling up in my breast. I therefore conclude with the prayer to God who is watching over us all that He may give us the wisdom to see the path that lies in front of us and the courage to tread that path.

The Hindu, 5-9-1927

12. SPEECH ON “GITA”, MADRAS¹

September 4, 1927

I thank you for the address and the purse. The purse is doubly welcome to me as also the address after the knowledge that I have now gained that Mr. Sastri was the Headmaster of this school. I congratulate you on having given to the Servants of India Society, Mr. Gokhale’s successor, and to India one of her most brilliant and devoted sons. Your school professes to be a Hindu school, with emphasis on the word “Hindu”. I suppose therefore I have a right to expect something characteristic of the Hindu about all of you. If you will live up to your name you would be expected to show Hindu culture at its best in every one of your acts. I wonder if all of you are able to say that you have read the *Bhagavad Gita*. Those who have, will please raise their hands, honestly of course (about 10 persons raised their hands). Now it seems to me that in the very test I have

¹ At Singarachari Hall, Hindu High School, Triplicane

applied the vast majority of you have failed. “If the salt loses its flavour wherewith shall it be salted?” I have given an English proverb, but there is a corresponding one which we know in the North and it is this: “When the ocean is on fire who will be able to quench the fire?” Will you not in all humility ask that question very seriously of every one of you? Will you not make a confession that you have been weighed and found wanting? Imagine a Christian High School and its Old Boys’ Association being unaware of the contents of the Bible! Imagine a Mahomedan High School and the Muslim Old Boys’ Association of that school not knowing the Koran, and don’t you feel with me that every Hindu boy and, for that matter, every Hindu girl, should know the book in the Hindu scriptures which is equal to and should be in the estimation of the Hindu, the Koran and Bible? I hope therefore that now that your eyes have been opened publicly you will immediately set about correcting yourself and understanding the message of the *Gita*. I would like to know how many of you know the elements of Sanskrit. Those of you who do know it, please raise your hands (A number of hands was raised). Thank you.

Half, or perhaps a little more than half of you know Sanskrit. Then let me inform you that the Sanskrit of the *Gita* is incredibly simple. Those of you who know Sanskrit should tomorrow, if possible today, buy the *Gita*—and I understand you can get the book for a very small price—and begin to study the book. Have private *Gita* classes for yourselves. Those of you who do not know Sanskrit should study Sanskrit only for the sake of the *Gita*. If you have not got that much facility, then you should read *Gita* written in English or in Tamil, if there is a Tamil translation of it. I tell you that it contains treasures of knowledge of which you have no conception whatsoever. I suggest to you that at first you may begin to read the third chapter of the *Gita*. You will find there the gospel of selfless work expounded in a most convincing manner. Selfless work there is described characteristically by one beautiful word called *yajna*. If you will read the book with my eyes you will find charkha also described there. There is one passage which says that “He who eats without serving, without *yajna*, is a thief.”¹ I want you not to go to the dictionary for finding out the meaning of the word *yajna*. Do not run away with the idea that by purchasing a few faggots of wood and then burning them with ghee to the accompaniment of certain hymns, you have

¹ III. 12

performed *yajna*. That the word has had that meaning at one time, there is not doubt about it; and when it did bear the meaning, it had its use. You will find in another part of the *Gita* an injunction almost that you must bring your intelligence and your reason to bear upon the meaning of the Shastras. Applying my reason to find out the meaning of this beautiful word I come to the conclusion that the *yajna* that you, I and these sisters and the old boys and the little girls can perform—it must be a *yajna* of that character in order to follow the context of the *Gita*—is nothing apart from the spinning-wheel. But I do not want to give you a discourse on the spinning-wheel. What I desire to tell you is that, if you will search that book through and through, you will find there mentioned in such simple words, *brahmacharya*, *satya*, *ahimsa*, *abhayam* and others which ought to be the primary qualities of everyman of God. The last word I leave with you is that you should read that book with a prayerful spirit, not in a carping spirit, and to obey the dictates of that book.

The Hindu, 5-9-1927

13. TELEGRAM TO MIRABEHN

MADRAS,
September 5, 1927

TO
MIRABEHN
SATYAGRAHA ASHRAM
WARDHA

SORRY FEVER PROVING OBSTINATE. PRAY TAKE PRESCRIBED
MEDICINE. LOVE.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 5268. Courtesy: Mirabehn

14. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

September 5, 1927

CHI. MIRA,

I have just got Jamnalalji's wire. The fever seems to be proving obstinate. It is better for you not to object to the medicines that the doctors may prescribe. There are many delicate reasons why you may not object to medicines under the circumstances that face you today.

My fear is that probably your brain is overwrought. You may have brooded much over the segregation matter and your future plans at the Ashram. Our motto is 'Be careful for nothing'. Anxiety is the mother of many diseases. But whatever the cause, let the physical effect be treated by physical remedies such as medicines, etc. Control of the mind and freedom from all care must be cultivated side by side. No anxiety please about speaking in Hindi to everybody there. My advice and expectations are always conditional. The condition being "consistently with capacity". Of your own capacity you must be the final judge. On no account must health be placed in jeopardy. I suppose Krishnadas and Valunjker are nursing you. I assume that you are keeping altogether cheerful in the midst of this pain and trial.

May God be your Rock, Help, Strength and All.

With love,

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 5270. Courtesy: Mirabeehn

15. LETTER TO AN INMATE OF THE ASHRAM

September 5, 1927

I have your letter. It was good you gave me all the details. I cannot doubt you.

We should observe a convention which does not run counter to morality. *Brahmacharya* is said to be protected by nine hedges. If you have not read of it, do so in Raichandbhai's book. We neglect some of those hedges. I am responsible for this. Hence such neglect is only tentative. But we do observe the rule of never being alone in the company of even our own sister. I fully see the need for this. That protects both.

A *brahmachari* should be utterly humble and should not trust himself. There are two reasons for such diffidence. One is that he himself may thereby remain pure and the other is that the sister who comes in contact with him may not entertain lustful thoughts even in her dreams.

All the world has a right to suspect a *brahmachari* and it ought to have this right. The world does not observe *brahmacharya*. The world believes that no one can conquer the passions which it cannot itself conquer and that is only right. Hence we should not be offended by the world's suspicion. Know that all who stay there are included in the world.

Others have slipped through the liberty which you have taken innocently. In the beginning they were innocent. Even if you yourself have reached the stage at which you can never succumb to passion, you should still observe the restraints for the sake of others. We come across many who claim to observe *brahmacharya*. Could we allow them all to take such liberties?

I myself have not yet been able to conquer passions. Do you not know this? If I am not able to assure myself or the world about myself, you should be all the more careful about yourself.

Desire is a scorpion. One never knows when it will sting. It is *ananga*¹. So we cannot see it; we cannot catch it, even if we try. That is why a *brahmachari* has to remain ever vigilant.

What you write about Bhai Chhaganlal Joshi and others is not right. They are all making efforts. We do not live outside the world, nor do we wish to hate the passions in others; we only wish to be free from them ourselves and live on thus free.

You should therefore be vigilant. If you wish to ask me something more, do so.

[From Gujarati]

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

16. LETTER TO ASHRAM WOMEN

*Silence Day [September 5, 1927]*²

SISTERS,

I have your note.

You must have understood the point of my suggestion that you should develop contacts with the women labourers of the Ashram. Getting a couple of cowries from them for relief work is just an excuse. The chief purpose is that through such occasions you should establish a bond of fellowship with them. You should try to understand each other and should partake of each other's joys and sorrows. I do not mean that you should spend much time over this. It is really a matter of change of heart. It should be your desire that they

¹ Without body; in Indian mythology, sexual desire is symbolized by a deity without a body. The body of the God of love perished in the fire from Siva's third eye.

² From the reference to taking interest in the women labourers at the Ashram

have the same food as we, and the same clothes, that they too get everything we desire and obtain for ourselves. And we should put this into practice as far as we can.

You will be overwhelmed if you try to give what I am saying a wide meaning. Words have at least two meanings—a narrow one and a broad one. We should try to comprehend the broader meaning, but begin cautiously to put into effect the narrower one, so that we are not crushed by the immensity of the task.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3664

17. LETTER TO SHANTIKUMAR MORARJI

[After *September 5, 1927*]¹

There are of course many types of valour in the world. There should be an Indian type for an Indian Victoria Cross. If a Gango Teli² moves with his bullock in endless circles and crushes oil for society and does it selflessly, is it not great valour? The devout Gango became famous obviously because he had courage. Why did not Ghelo³ the oilman attain fame?

[From Gujarati]

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

18. LETTER TO NARAYAN MORESHWAR KHARE

*Monday/Tuesday [September 5/6, 1927]*⁴

BHAI PANDITJI,

I have your letter.

Gangabehn informs me that one day when you missed the prayer because you had gone to sleep you fasted and have taken a vow that each time it happens again you will fast for the day. If that is so you have done right. However, along with the insistence on getting

¹ In the source this letter appears after the entries for September 5.

² Oilman

³ A proper name also meaning 'silly'

⁴ From the contents, which suggest that the letter was written earlier than the letter of September 14, 1927 to the addressee

up early you should also insist on going to bed early. Even for the sake of the children, we adults should inculcate this habit.

I am happy to know that the prayer is now going on well. I hope those who have resolved to attend it regularly will not absent themselves without reason. I feel that if this resolve is adhered to, it will have the most desirable results.

It is certainly necessary to observe the same kind of silence at the evening prayer as is observed at the morning prayer. One way to ensure this is that no one should talk till the prayer is over. I have myself not observed this rule. From now on I will. No one may come and sit down too early for the prayer. The prayer should begin not a moment later than the appointed time. Then there will be absolutely no need to detain anyone afterwards. As soon as one arrives for the prayer one should sit down in the proper posture and close one's eyes. Children should also learn to observe these manners. No one should sell *datun* before the prayer is over. I also feel there is need to stop the plying of *takli* during the prayer. I blame myself for encouraging the *takli*. But it is necessary to stop plying it during prayer time. Of course if everyone is sitting with the eyes closed there can be no question of plying the *takli*. It is necessary that everyone should be calm and attentive when the *Ramayana* is being recited. It is a question whether to keep the eyes closed or not at that time. The person who is leading the prayer will of course keep his eyes open. Another person whose duty it is to seat the guests, if there are any, and shoo away stray dogs, should keep his eyes open. It is necessary that persons on this duty should be changed every week. After the prayer, you may give news of the Ashram if there is any or if need be take up some discussion. Read this out to everyone and after due deliberation accept whatever is worth accepting. After deciding what to take, frame rules accordingly and get them printed. Sell the printed copies of the rules whenever necessary. It will be useful for a few days to read out these rules at the prayer meetings. You should always keep a few copies of the rules handy at the meetings, so that when a new person comes, the gate-keeper can respectfully give him one. These are some external remedies for bringing about concentration at the prayer meetings. It is only to this extent that we as a society can and should enforce control. The remedy for gaining control of inner self is. . .¹ and purity of our leaders. If even one person with a pure heart can

¹ A word is undecipherable here.

achieve concentration it is a rule admitting of no exception that its effect will be felt by everyone. It is a different thing that we always do not experience such effect. It is experienced by practice. The external remedies I have suggested will help us purify our inner selves if they are adopted with that purpose in view. Else we shall be dubbed hypocrites.

We have a collection of some very useful books, so pay close attention to the library. We should have a few copies made of the lists of contents of those books. The books which are useless, that is to say, which are not worth reading should either be discarded or burnt. Books should be listed both language-wise and subject-wise and there should be lists of contents. The thing to do is to engage a person exclusively for the library. I feel that the work is so important that if no one from amongst us can be spared, then a person who is not interested in any other activity except the library work and who abides by our rules should be employed on a salary basis or else we should keep only those books which are of use to us and send the rest to the library of the Mahavidyalaya. This whole question needs consideration. All of you should think over it. I shall discuss it with Kaka and others. This work is both urgent and not so urgent. I have both aspects in my mind. I have been thinking over it for a long time. Discuss it with Valji too.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photos tat of the Gujarati: C.W. 251

19. SPEECH ON PROHIBITION, MADRAS¹

September 6, 1927

FRIENDS,

I am supposed to talk to you this morning about prohibition. I don't remember having talked to a select audience on 'Prohibition' in my life except at one time, although I can claim to be a staunch prohibitionist as I am a staunch khaddarite. My life has been so cast that I get little chance of talking on such matters to a select audience. The one reason for that flaw in me is that I am a crank or I am supposed to be a crank, and therefore very often before a select

¹ At Mani Aiyar Hall, Triplicane

audience I feel like a fish out of water. All cranks are necessarily extremists and where others feel the necessity for caution and moderation and such like about things that matter in life, I feel as if I am nowhere, as if I have no place. When someone says to me that in this practical world I must go slowly, I become impatient and tell him, "How can you go slowly in the matter of prohibition? You won't talk like that to a woman whose husband is drunkard." I have lived in a family where the husband happened to be a drunkard. That was in Pretoria in 1893. The lady tried to make ends meet and was always in dread as to what would happen when her lord and master returned home. If I had told her that "In this practical world we must go slowly", she would not have allowed me to continue as her cotenant. You may imagine me to be in that plight but not with one husband, not one but thousands of husbands. How can you ask me to wait? I become impatient, angry and, non-violent though I am, you will see fierceness in my eyes. I said the same thing to Mr. Anderson, the Secretary of the Temperance Association. I feel strongly about it. There are more things about which my feelings are strong and speech becomes useless for me. Those are really sacred things which I keep in my bosom and when opportunity offers itself I express my views strongly which the world cannot possibly mistake.

In this matter of prohibition we have some Englishmen with us, because they happen to be Missionaries or Christians. I do not know whether there are other Englishmen with us in this matter. They are all for some purpose too practical. They say we should realize the difficulties of Government. Why should I realize the difficulties of Government in this matter? The difficulties are purely financial and nothing else. There are three acid tests in this connection.

Not one Englishman has yet told me that prohibition is an impossibility in India except for finance. Everybody says: "Oh yes. You want to make India bear the burden of additional taxation by the introduction of prohibition, for the education of your children, etc." I would like India to become a pauper rather than that India should have lakhs and lakhs of drunkards in her midst in order to educate her children, or I would have Indian children illiterate rather than have drunkenness in the land as the price of their education. But when I am called upon to become a party to additional taxation I say "Hands off"; because there are other ways in which you can make up this financial loss. I think Government made the initial blunder of considering *abkari* as a source of revenue. It should never have been

considered a source of revenue and it is not to be a source of revenue. And my grievance is definite and tangible that this source of revenue should have been left in charge of the transferred departments to meet the charges of education, sanitation, etc., so that our ministers have to fall back upon this immoral, sinful and hideous source of revenue. There is nothing so sinful as this kind of revenue. It is difficult to contain myself and I have therefore to talk to you in a strained language.

I feel that so far as India is concerned she has a complete case for prohibition and not prohibition piece-meal in one or two districts. I have read the speech of the Madras Excise Minister. I am sorry I have had to write something criticizing that speech in the coming issue of the *Young India*.¹ The method of experimenting in one or two districts does not appeal to me. I shall not be surprised if he makes the experiment in one or two districts and if the experiment fails then it would be said that prohibition can never be tried and it can never be successful. You will try to do the right thing in the wrong manner and then denounce the right thing instead of the wrong manner. The country is in favour of prohibition. If it is a question of lakhs and lakhs of signatures in favour of prohibition it is merely a matter of organization. I have not found a single place where there has been really agitation against prohibition except when it is manufactured and financed also. There are States where territorial prohibition has been declared and where not a single man has come forward to say "we want a shop at least here." In one of the States, Europeans, who consumed whisky and brandy, are exempted. But, we are in this matter terribly handicapped; we have as our rulers or Governors those who do not consider drink as a crime or immorality. I have myself English friends who laugh at me when I talk of prohibition. I have great regard for them. They seem to think that if they drink in moderation they would not lose their sense and would not become brutes. I have myself seen these friends not only losing their sense but becoming brutes. I have seen many friends losing self-control when they drink. They are first-class men. But when they drink they become asses. It may be excusable to have spirituous liquor in countries near the North Pole. There is no need in this country at all for drink. Yet some agitation is going on here against prohibition. I had [from someone] a pile of anti-prohibition pamphlets published anonymously. They

¹ *Vide* "Total Prohibition", 8-9-1927.

constituted a hymn in praise of liquor. Radical, scriptural and all sorts of authorities have been quoted in favour of drinking in moderation and the whole thing has been presented in such an insidiously attractive form that a man who has not his wits about him may easily become a convert to the drink habit.

If you are a fierce prohibitionist like myself and if you will agitate from one end of the country to the other for prohibition, you will certainly succeed. Let us not fall into the financial trap that is laid for us. Our position should be absolutely clear. It is not our purpose to find out finances. Those who committed the initial blunder must retrace their steps. There is also a way out of the financial difficulty. Cut out 25 crores from the crores you spend upon military expenditure. The military expenditure has been jumping from day to day. If you prepare a chart it would show a staggering growth of that expenditure. You can cut out a heavy slice from that expenditure. I must not go into the political history of the question. Whatever deficit that is found in connection with the *abkari* revenue should be made good out of military expenditure and no other. There should be no additional taxation on this score. The result will be that in 10 years' time the revenue of the Government will increase enormously and that is the experience of countries where prohibition has been tried.

Do not believe the interested writings in newspapers that total Prohibition has been a failure in America. Scarcely an American who comes to India goes away without seeing me. These Americans and the literature published by the Prohibition League give the testimony that the sum-total effect of prohibition is to the good of the country although they have not been able to claim all the brilliant results that they had thought they would be able to have. There is no public opinion in America supporting the removal of prohibition. The Government is their own government and people are satisfied with the state of things there. The labourer leads a sober and honest life there. Is not that sufficient consideration for loss of revenue? Such a state of things exists in another part of the world, but not in India unfortunately. The experience of countries which have tried prohibition is that the people have become better and that the country has not been financially ruined. No ruin, no financial crisis will befall India if prohibition is introduced in India. It is the solemn duty of every one of us to see the use of drink wiped out of the land altogether if we possibly can. If I had the power and if I could have

my way, I would do so today.

I come to picketing. I confess that some pickets were violent; but the real reason for Government not tolerating picketing was the loss of revenue. People in Bihar all on a sudden became teetotallers and they were faithful to the pickets. In Assam the same thing happened. The opium dens were closed for the time being. It was a thing too terrible for Government to contemplate. There was ample evidence to show that picketing was useful and necessary and it conferred immense benefit upon India. It showed the possibility of prohibition. In America prohibition has created a tremendous spiritual upheaval. But the task of creating that spiritual consciousness was great in America. But we in India have not the hundredth part of the difficulty that the Americans had to surmount. They had to surmount the American nature itself. Here it is not so for the atmosphere is favourable to prohibition. Therefore you need not go here cautiously. Arm-chair politicians who have no knowledge of the conditions of India do not distinguish between American and Indian life. They cannot see that we can attain prohibition if only you have the will and courage.

I make a distinction between opium and drink. Opium acts as an opiate and makes a man an idiot, whereas drink makes a man a beast. A woman would rather have her husband an idiot than a drunkard. I am willing to make an exception for the use of liquor or brandy for medicinal purposes. I make also the distinction between England and India. What is good enough for England is not necessarily good enough for India. If we allow this drink problem to continue, our posterity will curse us.

The Hindu, 6-9-1827

20. SPEECH AT HINDI PRACHAR OFFICE¹

September 6, 1927

Gandhiji said it was superfluous for him to receive an address from the institution as he regarded it as his own.

Still I understand your view of the matter. This was till now a child being nourished and looked after by the generous people of the North. It has now become a youth who should look after himself and

¹ In reply to addresses, one by the members of the Hindi Premi Mandal and another by the staff and workers of the Hindi Prachar Press

become self-reliant. I meant that henceforward South India should collect enough money from here to make the institution self-supporting.

I appeal to the Marwaris, Gujaratis and other northern settlers here to regard this institution as their own and pay more attention to the work in all possible ways. Marwaris are businessmen by nature and I want them to instil that spirit in the workers of this institution and help to make this a prosperous and successful one. I would like them to go through the accounts which are open to the public and give necessary instructions, if any, for improvement.

Lastly I want to tell the *pracharaks* that they can do successful work in this, as in other works of this sort, only if they would lead ideal lives and possess sterling character. For workers of this kind the first essential quality required is firmness and determination to push on the work to a successful end. I am sure the *pracharaks* will all make this their life-mission if they have not already done so.

The Hindu, 6-9-1927

21. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

[September 7, 1927]

CHI. MIRA,

I anxiously wait for your wires and they come but not to present me with a clean bill.¹ But we must not grumble. Even illness must be turned to advantage and must be taken cheerfully. Your last wire has come just now to tell me that perhaps fever is under control. Let us hope it is. I often think of wiring to you but say to myself I have no right. But my prayers and my blessings are with you always.

“The same in happiness and misery!” is the teaching of the *Gita*.

With love,

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 5271. Courtesy: Mirabehn

¹ Mirahebn explains : “I had been having a severe attack of malaria. My temperature had been up to over 105.”

22. DISCUSSION WITH NEILL STATUE VOLUNTEERS,

MADRAS

September 6 and 7, 1927

We publish today, with the approval of Mahatma Gandhi, a full report of the Conference which the volunteers of the Neill Statue agitation had with Mahatma Gandhi during his stay in Madras on Tuesday and Wednesday. . . . The notes were taken by *The Hindu* representative and were revised by Mahatma Gandhi.

Some 20 members of the Tamil Nadu Volunteer Corps who are now engaged in the agitation for the removal of the Neill Statue from the City on Tuesday afternoon conferred with Mahatma Gandhi on the subject for over an hour. The conversations were not over and they were continued the next day.

Mr. D. Kulandai introduced himself as the leader of these young men and told Mahatmaji how he came into this movement. He said he was horrified at the barbarous sentences which were inflicted upon these youths by the Magistrate and he felt it necessary to give his help and advice as a Congressman and a Secretary of the District Congress Committee. He was not under any pledge and was not courting arrest.

GANDHIJI: Are there one or two who have been sentenced to two years' R.I. in this connection?

The answer was in the affirmative and Mr. Kulandai added that as a result of their intervention the sentences were not too severe.

KULANDAI: So far 27 had gone to prison on this issue, two of whom are ladies. Most of those had taken part in what was called the Sword Satyagraha at Madura and the total strength of the corps was 200 drawn mainly from Madura and Ramnad districts.

Who conceived this plan of attacking Neill Statue?

And the reply was that Somayajulu and Srinivasavaradan were responsible.

That was after the failure at Madura?

A VOLUNTEER: It was not a failure at all. We went into the streets freely with our swords and we were not arrested. We have thus successfully broken the Arms Act.

Mahatmaji could not contain his laughter and told them not to delude themselves into thinking that it was a success.

When the Government saw what you were carrying were merely tin swords and you had no public backing, they left you alone in order not to give you any advertisement; and it is therefore no use in saying that because you were not arrested it is a success to your credit.

When the Government removes the Arms Act and makes it possible for every Indian to carry arms you will have achieved your object. But remember that it is not possible. Not even a Swaraj Government can do without an Arms Act. Some check there ought to be.

Therefore, I would like you to believe that the Madura Satyagraha has failed. It is much better to own our failures, if we are to succeed henceforward.

Mahatmaji next put one or two questions to one or two of other volunteers to test their understanding of the real spirit of satyagraha.

That is why I asked you to define satyagraha. Unless you take up the definition from *Young India* and learn it, you are not going to succeed in a satyagraha campaign. If you are saturated with the true spirit of satyagraha, I will be at your back and the whole of India will be at your back.

One thing of practical value, I must tell you in this connection. You must not expect public associations to guide you or to identify themselves with satyagraha at the present moment. . . .

“Congress Committees included?” eagerly enquired one present.

Yes, at the present moment. I shall tell you why? The Congress has just now a very difficult task before it; and it cannot possibly handle these sectional movements. By sectional is not meant communal. If the Congress is called upon to help such movements, it will cut a sorry figure. The Congress has a status and a reputation to lose. Therefore it is much better for you young men not to expect the Congress or public bodies to immediately shoulder your movement.

You know the agitation in Cherala-Perala¹. I sympathized with it. I was keeping myself in touch with that movement. I had even gone to that place because I used to entertain a high regard for it; and addressed a large public meeting. At that time I had influence in the Congress which I do not possess now. Whatever I said then that the Congress should do, it automatically did and hardly any arguments were required. Even in those days I said to Cherala-Perala: “The Congress is not going to shoulder your agitation. The Congress when it is ready will initiate its own civil disobedience. But it cannot take on itself a movement, initiated by others, however great it may be or however ably it may be conducted. It can only look at it from a distance. It can take credit if the movement is successful and can never

¹ Vide “Chirala-Perala”, 25-8-1921.

share the discredit if it becomes unsuccessful.”

Mahatmaji then gave a chapter from his life in South Africa.

I was Secretary of the British Indian Association, brought into being by me. And when I embarked on satyagraha campaign there, I did not want to break up that Association, in which were all kinds of men, by making it a party to that agitation and thereby risking its reputation. From the moment I launched on the agitation, the British Indian Association was kept aloof from satyagraha. Therefore a new association was brought into being called Passive Resistance Association with a separate fund and separate officers. When the full victory was gained the British Indian Association took the credit. That was why I had been able to carry through the struggle without much difficulty. Difficulties there were. I was hammered almost to death. If I had made the blunder of dragging the British Indian Association into the agitation, I would have cut the Association into pieces and there would have been no South African victory. And I would have missed Mahatmaship.

So, you yourself must say to the Congress: ‘You may remain out, let us try our strength in this agitation. You may share the success that we may achieve but not the discredit if we fail.’ I met Mr. Satyamurti this morning and told him also that the Congress cannot possibly today adopt the movement. It will have to study the movement and the men. Let us not sully the fair name of the Congress by any hasty or ill-considered act. But I tell you this also: that when you have proved your mettle and your merit the Congress must be at your back. If the Congress is not at your back under these circumstances, I would be the first to denounce the Congress. In the mean time I want you to be absolutely honest to yourselves. Some persons told me, “Oh, oh, you don’t know what they are. They are doing this for getting something in order to live, as they cannot live otherwise”. Don’t try to guess who the informants are and don’t get angry. But falsify the accusation by your conduct.

A chit came at this stage giving the information that two of the youths who offered satyagraha had expressed their regret to the Magistrate and were let off with a fine.

“They are bogus volunteers,” shouted one present.

I don’t expect all of you to be sixteen annas in the rupee. Some wouldn’t be a pie and a few not even that. The apology of the two does not therefore disturb me. And if they were bogus men you have

nothing to answer for.

KULANDAI: One difficulty I want to be cleared, Mahatmaji. Suppose the Government and the public know that the Congress is not supporting this movement, it is ten to one possible these boys will get more punishment and less support from the public. I went into this movement because, as I said, I was anxious as the Secretary of the District Congress Committee to save the honour and prestige of the Congress by not leaving these men in the lurch without sympathy or support.

I have already given in illustration of what I did in South Africa as Secretary of the British Indian Association.

KULANDAI: If the Government come to know that the Congress has no sympathy for this movement, all these boys would be clapped in jail.

It does not matter.

KULANDAI: Not only that, they will not get any support from the public.

Therefore my plan is to make you independent and self-supporting. We shall not take the name of the Congress, not until we have succeeded. You may take a leaf out of the book of our conquerors. Take the East India Company. It was not owned by the Crown. The Crown came afterwards. Therefore I say that the movement should not be conducted in the name of the Congress and with the authority of the Congress. As individual Congressmen you may carry on the fight.

A satyagrahi never acts hastily, exhausts all other resources before he resorts to civil disobedience. It is only then that the word 'civil disobedience' can be used and not otherwise. Yours may be civil disobedience, but if you have been hasty and have not exhausted all the other steps, then I say you should suspend your movement. I give you that advice so that public opinion may be consolidated in your favour, and so that you may be real satyagrahis. You should allow the public to take all the steps possible in their own way to remove the statue; and watch the Government whether they would do anything in the matter. If they don't do, then launch on satyagraha.

If you ask my opinion of what you should do, I shall give it. I should say you are right in your agitation, provided you fulfil the conditions I pointed out. I feel very much for you. It was by accident that I learnt of you and your movement in *The Hindu* and I at once wrote what I thought proper in *Young India*.¹ Now that I have seen you and talked to you, I shall try to do more. But before I can do so, I

¹ *Vide* "Notes", 25-8-1927, sub-title "Insolent Reminders".

want a guarantee that there is no dishonesty, no self-glorification at least about the leaders of the movement. The leaders may be cobblers or tailors, it does not matter. I want to make sure that our leaders are pure and above board and are not actuated by any expectation of any pecuniary reward. A satyagrahi must stand or fall on his own strength of will.

Don't give me an answer now. I shall give you another opportunity of meeting me. You consider carefully what I have said and tell me when you come back what your plan is. I want you to give me a list of all the volunteers you have, their age, address and occupation; and I want Mr. Kulandai as Congressman to give his certificate, if necessary, about the honesty of the movement and about the trustworthiness of the men in it. If you do not satisfy me in this simple test, you cannot go forward. You have already done spade work. The Neill Statue has got to go some time or other. The success will depend on our own strength. There is no danger in your slowing down.

Replying to Mr. M. S. Subramania Iyer, Mahatmaji said :

The present method might be a satyagrahic act or a violent act. It all depends on the motive. The motive would decide the character of the act. Damage to or destruction of an inanimate object is not always a violent act.

PAVALAR: Do you advise, Mahatma, to suspend the movement?

Yes, if you have not the real strength. But please consider well and tell me what you think, tomorrow.

When the conversations were resumed on Wednesday afternoon, one of the volunteers read the following statement as representing their opinion as a result of the discussions they had that morning and the previous night in the light of the advice given by Mahatmaji :

We have carefully considered your advice given to us yesterday and we have also had a discussion with Mr. S. Satyamurti last night. We have since reconsidered the whole matter this morning. We realize that the situation is a difficult and complex one. We would therefore prefer your advising us as to what we should do now. We will follow your advice. We only crave leave to place before you our considered views for your favourable consideration. We are very anxious that the enthusiasm roused by this movement should not be allowed to fade. We recognize that in order to carry on this struggle to a successful issue we must exhaust all other means of getting the statue removed, must rouse public enthusiasm and organize ourselves. We are afraid that if the movement be suspended without adequate provision being made for

keeping up the enthusiasm of the people for organizing the movement and for trying every available means of getting the statue removed the movement may die of inanition. We are anxious therefore that the enthusiasm now roused by the movement should be kept up by all legitimate and peaceful means and that if the movement is to be suspended it should be done as the result of your advice so stated publicly. Moreover, the suspension should be for the express purpose of resorting to this movement at the proper time on a more efficient scale, if necessary.

With a view to that we respectfully suggest that you should be pleased to give this movement a paragraph in *Young India* each week and speak about it in the course of your tour in Tamil Nadu. Moreover, we should like to have the strength of an assurance from you that at the proper time and if all other means fail you will yourself help us in this movement in all possible ways.

If these things secure your approval we agree for the suspension of the movement for three months as suggested by you. In the mean time we request you to use your influence with the local Congress leaders to give us the necessary help to keep up the agitation for the removal of the statue.

What is the necessary help?

VOLUNTEER: Delivering lectures, enlisting volunteers and strengthening our financial position—these are the ways in which we expect Mahatmaji to help us.

What is the financial assistance for ?

The volunteer replied that the volunteers, about a hundred of them, were scattered over Madura and Ramnad Districts. To encamp them, to feed and bring them to Madras money was required.

They are supporting themselves at present?

VOLUNTEER: Yes.

Therefore no money is required for their support at present?

Answer to this question also was in the affirmative.

I should imagine that no money would be required in the future even?

VOLUNTEER: We want money for propaganda work.

What propaganda work?

VOLUNTEER: Convening meetings to get support for the enlistment of volunteers.

Supposing the Congress holds meetings, you wouldn't require money. Your business really arises when you have to go to jail. The question of bringing volunteers to Madras is a small matter. You do not want all the thousand volunteers, even supposing you have that

number, to arrive at Madras at the same time. You are going to court arrest only in twos at the most. A true satyagrahi who is courting arrest and who is even prepared to die for his cause would not want any train fare from you. He is sure to find the train fare himself. If he has not the money himself, other people in his place are sure to find it for him. As for propoganda work, you need not do it yourselves; others will do it for you.

You must really leave finance out of your consideration. Money when required will come to you. But you must not insist upon it. And you must do only what is in your capacity to do and no more. I am interested in your cause because it is an appealing one. I do not want that it should get discredited. That is why I gave you an hour yesterday and another today. I repeat that you must erase financial consideration out of your mind. Otherwise, the thing will break down.

If you want to continue this fight with determination, you must do it in the gentlest manner possible. You must be absolutely honest and self-disciplined; there must be no bluster or violence. You must rely on the innate strength of satyagraha. Some day it is sure to gather irresistible strength. If you think you have not the required strength or patience in you, leave it at once. You have done your part. You have laid the foundation. The struggle will go on and the statue will go because it seeks to perpetuate terrorism of the worst type. The best place for it is the sea. Barring that it must go to England or some lumber room.

The second thing I want to tell you is that by a suspension of the movement if you are afraid of getting disorganized and disunited, I do not want you to stop. But if you do not think so and after three months you would still hold together, you issue a manifesto that you have suspended the struggle saying therein we have been so advised and therefore we have done so. We now expect the Congress and all the public associations to take up this thing in hand and do whatever they can, to have this statue removed. When it has become sufficiently demonstrated that this kind of agitation won't move the Government, it will be our turn to suffer. Then let it not be said against us that we have been hasty and that once having drawn attention to it, we did not give a chance for the removal of the statue. For these reasons we suspend satyagraha.

Then comes my part in the struggle. I cannot say I won't lead the struggle; nor am I able to say I shall certainly do so. It will depend

on how I feel at the time and how you yourselves have behaved in the mean time. In these matters I am guided by impulse—impulse is not the right word—I wish to say intuition, a sacred word. But all the support the *Young India* can give will be entirely yours. I shall do whatever I can to educate public opinion through its columns.

In answer to a question :

The final decision will rest with you and not with me. I would not absolve you from your own responsibility. You are the originators; I can direct your energy in proper channel and give you advice. But if you accept my advice and use my name, then you will understand you will do it on my terms. I have given them to you already. I shall reduce them to writing if you want. If there is a departure from those terms by a hair's breadth even, I shall have nothing to do with it. The cause is good. It will be damaged if at the back of it are bad men. The movement must be a *bona fide* movement. If it is found that you speak one thing with your lips and mean another, I would not hesitate to denounce it.

To Satyamurti :

What do you say to this? Do you think that the Congress may or will take up this question in any way?

SATYAMURTI: I see no objection to the Congress taking it up. As far as I can ascertain from friends, the general feeling is that the movement must be supported. What we can do is that in the Corporation we can move resolutions and in the Legislative Council also. And I think we will. Besides that we will use the Press and the platform to create a feeling against the statue as representing terrorism as Mahatmaji put it. For this no financial responsibility need be taken by the young men. The Congress will find money. Is that right, Mr. Kulandai?

KULANDAI: That is one view of the subject.

SATYAMURTI: Even about Congress doing it?

KULANDAI: If this opportunity is lost the South Indian temperament is such that the whole thing will fizzle out. That is my own honest individual opinion. If the majority are for suspending it now and taking it up again after three months and if the Congress Committees will do the propaganda work as efficiently as they have been doing the work . . .

SATYAMURTI: That is for you, the Secretary of the District Congress Committee.

KULANDAI: My own honest impression is that the moment we give it up, the movement is lost for ever. Three months means never. The enthusiasm evoked in this presidency over this matter is genuine and it should not be allowed to die out. It is not

North Indian temperament, Mahatmaji.

I don't consider that North India is any better than South India. We are chips of the same block. Absolutely no difference.

A VOLUNTEER: Our only fear is from the incident which took place two days back. Every one of us may not be an absolute satyagrahi. We don't want demoralization to set in. We want to organize ourselves well, and we want to add more to our number by our further agitation and propaganda. We do not know who among us are real satyagrahis. We started the movement all on a sudden.

Therefore this is really a new ground for suspension.

VOLUNTEER: I do not want at the same time that the Government should be given rest. The agitation must go on in other ways to remove the statue. Ours is only a strategic retreat and no surrender. It is meant for us to go forward with redoubled vigour. We do not want to confess our inability because it would have a demoralizing effect.

This is a new situation. You are really now desirous of covering your weakness under my name.

VOLUNTEER: No, we are merely respecting Mahatmaji's opinion and advice: and we follow it, lest Mahatmaji should denounce us and lose real satyagrahis.

You said it may be a strategic move. That means you are not at present a well-organized body of real satyagrahis. You may say that it is a discovery you made after conversation with me, and you want to postpone the movement irrespective of all other considerations in order to make up for this defect. There is room for that honest strategy in satyagraha. In making an announcement of your suspension, you can state that after conversations with me you were ill-prepared to satisfy the test that I laid down and recognizing that unless you could fulfil that test, the movement would not succeed, you proposed to postpone this thing for 3 months, during which time you proposed to equip yourselves well so as to satisfy the test and that you would afterwards reopen satyagraha, if in the mean time the offending statue was not removed. That would be the correct satyagraha state. Or do you say you are now ready?

VOLUNTEER: We want the Neill Statue to be removed. If the hundred volunteers we have with us are exhausted, the movement will automatically stop. But the statue may not be removed. Thus we would have failed in our purpose. We want a continuous stream of volunteers coming up until the statue is removed.

You suspend in order to ensure a continuous stream. Suspension therefore is required on that ground. On the other hand, if you feel that you must finish the one hundred or twenty, do so and let it not be said

that your enthusiasm was allowed by suspension to cool down. But I must tell you again that in satyagraha there are occasions for suspension. Did I not suspend the Vykom Satyagraha?

You say there would be demoralization if you suspend satyagraha stating you are not ready now. There is no such thing as demoralization in satyagraha. A satyagrahi relies upon his own internal strength and not outside support. But I would feel shocked if at the end of three months you are not ready and if the statue is still there, as is bound to be there, because you know the Government will not easily and without a tremendous effort.

Don't really suspend if have any fear of its fizzling out. If you want to suspend it, do it on this absolute frank admission that under the circumstances I have mentioned now, you want to suspend.

A VOLUNTEER: Why shall we not go forward?

Yes; I do not want to clamp the zeal of a single man among you. I am anxious to be cautious in this matter.

A VOLUNTEER: We want to ask you one question. That is whether Mahatmaji will give us his support?

Yes, I will support you so long as I find you on the straight road.

Another offer I will make, if you want. I have got complete notes of yesterday; and I believe today also notes are being taken. If you like, I will have them published. It is right for you to let the public know about it. If you don't want the publication, I shall not do so. I tell you there is no harm in publishing what has happened here; and there is no secrecy about it. Shall I publish them?

VOICES: Yes, yes.

A VOLUNTEER: We shall leave it to your choice to continue the struggle or leave it.

If I were in your place I will suspend the movement making this confession that we are not fully equipped and strong. If you make that confession, you must suspend the movement.

PAVALAR: Some are afraid and some are not. They want your advice, Mahatmaji.

I have given the advice that if I were you, I would suspend.

A VOLUNTEER: Do you permit us to proceed with our struggle?

I don't prohibit you; in that sense you have my permission.

A VOLUNTEER: You will bless the movement?

You have had my blessings; I shall bless you again.

ANOTHER VOLUNTEER: As for suspending the movement, if you advise us to suspend, we are prepared to suspend.

I cannot take any responsibility. You must not suspend in deference to anybody else. If you suspend, you will do so in response to your own inner voice.

VOLUNTEER: We don't find our inner voice asking us to suspend.

Then go on.

VOLUNTEER: We shall continue the struggle in the manner in which we are doing at present. Meanwhile we request you to give your support. We will conduct the movement in perfect satyagraha spirit and well-disciplined. But if outsiders of their own accord come in our way and cause disturbance, we request Mahatmji not to blame us. Further, we want you to write in *Young India*.

In *Young India*, certainly.

VOLUNTEER: We request you to advise some local Congress leaders to do propaganda work.

I shall certainly advise them. I have discussed the whole thing with Mr. Satyamurti. I suppose he will tell them. I shall publicly advise Congressmen; and you will find it in the notes also to which I have referred. You go on fearlessly; only don't have complications. Don't countenance violence or untruth. Either will spoil the cause.

In reply to another volunteer :

You will give me the list of volunteers, with their age, address and occupation. I shall scan the list. You must publish the list also to make the public know who are the authorized satyagrahis. If anyone offers satyagraha he does at his own risk. If more men come into your hand, publish their names also. When you go to the statue don't attract the public. Go there in the night, even dead of night, in order to avoid a crowd. Give, however, intimation to the police about the time you go there. If you come to know that the police give intimation of the time to the public or people whom they want to create mischief, then you would not inform the Police at all. Let not the public interfere with your work. If they want to take part, let them hold demonstration elsewhere, hold meetings, pass resolutions.

This closed the Conference and the volunteers withdrew.

The Hindu, 10-9-1927

23. SPEECH AT PACHAIYAPPA'S COLLEGE, MADRAS¹

September 7, 1927²

MR. PRINCIPAL, STUDENTS AND FRIENDS³

I thank you sincerely for all the gifts you have given me for *Daridranarayana*. This is not the first time I enter this Hall. It was in 1896 that I entered this Hall in connection with the struggle in South Africa.⁴ Dr. Subramania Aiyar of revered memory presided at the function. The reason why I recall this meeting is that I made the acquaintance of the students of India then for the first time. As you may know I am a matriculate, and therefore never had any college education worth the name in India. But when after the address was finished and the thanksgiving completed I went out to students who were lying in wait for me and took away from all the copies of the "Green Pamphlet"⁵ that I was then circulating throughout India, and it was for the sake of those students that I asked the late Mr. G. Parameshwaran Pillai, who be-friended the cause and me as no one else did, to print copies and circulate them. With supreme pleasure he printed 10,000 copies of the Pamphlet. Such was the demand on the part of the students for understanding the situation in South Africa and it pleased me immensely, and I said to myself, "Yes, India may be proud of her children and may base all her hopes upon them." Since that time my acquaintance with students has been growing in volume and intensity. As I said in Bangalore,⁶ "more if expected from those who give much, and since you have given me the right to expect much

¹ This was published under the caption, "Two Speeches".

² From *The Hindu*, 7-9-1927

³ *Ibid*

⁴ *Vide* "Interview to *The Statesman*", 10-11-1896, "Letter to *The Englishman*", 13-11-1896, "Interview to *The Englishman*", on or before 13-11-1896, "Speech at Public Meeting, Poona", 16-11-1896, "Statement of Expenses", 1896, "Telegram to the Viceroy", 30-11-1896, "Letter to *The Englishman*", 30-11-1896 and "Interview to *The Natal Advertiser*", 13-1-1897.

⁵ *Vide* "The Credentials", 1896, "The Grievances of the British Indians in South Africa : An Appeal to the Indian Public", 4-8-1896, "Notes on the Grievances of the British Indians in South Africa", 22-9-1896, Speech at Public Meeting, Bombay", 26-9-1896, "Letter to F. S. Taleyarkhan", 10-10-1896, "A Letter", 16-10-1896, Letter to *The Times of India*", 17-10-1896, "Letter to G. K. Gokhale", 18-10-1896, "Letter to F. S. Taleyarkhan", 18-10-1896, "Speech at Meeting, Madras", 26-10-1896 and "Preface to the Second Edition of the 'Green Pamphlet'".

⁶ *Vide* "Speech at Citizens' Meeting, Bangalore", 28-8-1927.

more. I shall never be satisfied with all that you could give me! You have endorsed some of the work that it has been my privilege to do. You have mentioned with affection and reverence in your address the name of *Daridranarayana* and you, Sir (Principal), have—and I have no doubt with utmost sincerity—endorsed the claim that I have made on behalf of the spinning-wheel. Many of my distinguished and learned countrymen, I know, have rejected that claim, saying that the little bit of a wheel which was happily put away by our sisters and our mothers could never lead to the attainment of swaraj. And yet you have endorsed that claim and pleased me immensely. Though you, students, have not said as much in your address, yet you have said sufficient in it to warrant the belief that you have in your hearts a real corner for the spinning-wheel. Let not therefore this purse be the first and last demonstration of your affection for the spinning-wheel. I tell you it would be an embarrassment for me if it is the last demonstration of your affection; for I shall have no use for the money if the khadi that may be produced through the distribution of that money amongst the starving millions is not used by you. After all lip profession of faith in the charkha and the throwing of a few rupees at me in a patronizing manner won't bring swaraj and won't solve the problem of the ever-deepening poverty of the toiling and starving millions. I want to correct myself. I have said toiling millions. I wish that it was a true description. Unfortunately, as we have not revised our tastes about clothing, we have made it impossible for these starving millions to toil throughout the year. We have imposed upon them a vacation, which they do not need, for at least four months in the year. This is not a figment of my imagination, but it is a truth repeated by many English administrators, if you reject the testimony of your own countrymen who have moved in the midst of these masses. So then if I take this purse away and distribute it amongst the starving sisters, it does not solve the question. On the contrary it will impoverish their soul. They will become beggars and get into the habit of living upon charity. Heaven help the man, the woman or the nation that learns to live on charity! What you and I want to do is to provide work for those sisters of ours living protected in their own homes, and this is the only work that you can provide them with. It is dignified and honest work, and it is good enough work. One anna may mean nothing to you. You will throw it away in getting into a tram car and lazily passing your time instead of taking exercise for 2, 3, 4, or 5 miles as the case may be. But when it finds its way into the pockets of one poor sister it

fructifies. She labours for it and she gives me beautiful yarn spun by her sacred hands, a yarn that has a history behind it. It is a thread worth weaving a garment out of, for princes and potentates. A piece of calico from a mill has no such history behind it. I must not detain you over this one theme, great as it is for me, and though it engrosses practically the whole of my time. *This purse of yours will not be a help but a hindrance to me If it is not an earnest of your determination henceforth, if you have not it already, that you are not going to wear anything else but khadi.*

Let me not be deluded into the belief that you believe in this gospel of khadi, because you give me the purse and because you applaud me. I want you to act up to your profession. I do not want it to be said of you—the salt of India—that you gave this money merely to bamboozle me, that you do not want to wear khadi and that you have no belief in it. Do not fulfil the prophecy that had been made by a distinguished son of Tamil Nadu and a friend of mine. He has said that when I die I will not need any other firewood to reduce my corpse to ashes but the wood that will be collected out of the spinning-wheels that I am now distributing. He has no faith in the charkha and he thinks that those who utter the name of the charkha do so merely out of respect for me. It is an honest opinion. It will be a great national tragedy if the khadi movement turns out to be that and you will have been direct contributors to the tragedy and participators in that crime. It will be a national suicide. If you have no living faith in the charkha, reject it. It would be a truer demonstration of your love; you will open my eyes and I shall go about my way crying hoarse in the wilderness: “You have rejected the charkha and thereby you have rejected *Daridranarayana*.” But save me and save yourselves the pain, the degradation and the humiliation that await us if there is any delusion or camouflage about this. This is one thing. But there are many things more in your address.

You have mentioned there child marriage and child widows. A learned Tamilian has written to me to address students on child widows. He has said that the hardships of child widows in this presidency are far greater than those of child widows in other parts of India. I have not been able to test the truth of this statement. You should know that better than I do. But what I would like you, young men around me, to do is that you should have a touch of chivalry about you. If you have that, I have a great suggestions to offer. I hope the majority of you are unmarried, and a fair number of you are also

brahmacharis. I have to say a fair number” because I know students; a student who casts his lustful eyes upon his sister is not a *brahmachari*. I want you to make this sacred resolve that you are not going to marry a girl who is not a widow, you will seek out a widow girl if you cannot get a widow girl you are not going to marry at all. Make that determination, announce it to the world, announce it to your parents if you have them or to your sisters. I call them widow girls by way of correction because I believe that a child ten or fifteen years old, who was no consenting party to the so-called marriage, who having married, having never lived with the so-called husband, is suddenly declared to be a widow, is not a widow. It is an abuse of the term, abuse of language and a sacrilege. The word ‘widow’ in Hinduisim has a sacred odour about it. I am a worshipper of a true widow like the late Mrs. Ramabai Ranade who knew what it was to be a widow. But a child nine years old knows nothing of what a husband should be. If it is not true that there are such child widows in the presidency, then my case falls to the ground. But if there are such child widows, it becomes your sacred duty to make the determination to marry a girl widow if you want to rid ourselves of this curse. I am superstitious enough to believe that all such sins that a nation commits react upon it physically. I believe that all these sins of ours have accumulated together to reduce us to a state of slavery. You may get the finest constitution that is conceivable dropping upon you from the House of Commons. It will be worthless if there are not men and women fit enough to work that constitution. Do you suppose that we can possibly call ourselves men worthy of ruling ourselves or others or shaping the destiny of a nation containing 30 crores so long as there is one single widow who wishes to fulfil her fundamental wants but is violently prevented from doing so? It is not religion, but irreligion. I say that, saturated as I am with the spirit of Hinduism. Do not make the mistake that it is the Western spirit in me that is speaking. I claim to be full to overflowing with the spirit of India undefiled. I have assimilated many things from the West but not this. There is no warrant for this kind of widowhood in Hinduism.

All I have said about child widows necessarily applies to child wives. You must be able surely to control your lust to this extent, that you are not going to marry a girl that is under 16 years of age. If I could do so I would lay down 20 as the minimum. Twenty years is early enough even in India. It is we who are responsible for the precocity of girls, not even the Indian climate, because I know girls of

the age of 20 who are pure and undefiled and able to stand the storm that may rage round. Let us not hug that precocity to ourselves. Some Brahmin students tell me that they cannot follow this principle, that they cannot get Brahmin girls sixteen years old, very few Brahmins keep their daughters unmarried till that age, the Brahmin girls are married mostly before 10, 12 and 13 years. Then I say to the Brahmin youth, "Cease to be a Brahmin, if you cannot possibly control yourself." Choose a grown-up girl of 16 who became a widow when she was a child. If you cannot get a Brahmin widow who has reached that age, then go and take any girl you like. And I tell you that the God of the Hindus will pardon that boy who has preferred to marry out of his caste rather than ravish a girl of twelve. When your heart is not pure and you cannot master your passions, you cease to be an educated man. You have called your institution a premier institution. I want you to live up to the name of the premier institution which must produce boys who will occupy the front rank in character. And what is education without character and what is character without elementary personal purity? Brahminism I adore. I have defended Varnashrama Dharma. But Brahminism that can tolerate untouchability, virgin widowhood, spoliation of virgins, stinks in my nostrils. It is a parody of Brahminism. There is no knowledge of Brahman therein. There is no true interpretation of the scriptures. It is undiluted animalism. Brahminism is made of sterner stuff. I want these few remarks of mine to go deep down into your hearts. I am watching the boys whilst I am pouring out my heart. I have not come to appeal to your intellects but to your hearts. You are the hope of the country and what I have said is of primary importance for you.

In response to the request of a Calicut professor I shall now proceed to say something about cigarette smoking and coffee and tea drinking. These are not necessities of life. There are some who manage to take ten cups of coffee a day. Is it necessary for their healthy development and for keeping them awake, for the performance of their duties? If it is necessary to take coffee or tea to keep them awake, let them not drink coffee or tea but go to sleep. We must not become slaves to these things. But the majority of the people who drink coffee or tea are slaves to them. Cigars and cigarettes, whether foreign or indigenous, must be avoided. Cigarette smoking is like an opiate and the cigars that you smoke have a touch of opium about them. They get to your nerves and you cannot leave them afterwards. How can a single student foul his mouth by converting it

into a chimney? If you give up these habits of smoking cigars and cigarettes and drinking coffee and tea you will find out for yourselves how much you are able to save. A drunkard in Tolstoy's story is hesitating to execute his design of murder so long as he has not smoked his cigar. But he puffs it, and then gets up smiling and saying, "What a coward am I," takes the dagger and does the deed. Tolstoy spoke from experience. He has written nothing without having had personal experience of it. And he is much more against cigars and cigarettes than against drink. But do not make the mistake that between drink and tobacco, drink is a lesser evil. No. If cigarette is Beelzebub, then drink is Satan.

There is the Hindi Prachar office supported by people in the North. They have spent nearly a lakh of rupees and the Hindi teachers have been doing their work regularly. Some progress has been made but we have yet to make substantial progress. You can all learn Hindi in one year provided you give one hour a day. You can understand simple Hindi in six months. I can't speak to you in Hindi because most of you do not know it. Hindi should be made the universal tongue in India. You should know also Sanskrit, for then you will be able to read *Bhagavad Gita*. As students of a premier Hindu institution, you ought to be taught *Bhagavad Gita*. I would expect Mussalman boys also to read in this institution.

A VOICE: No *Panchama* is admitted.

This is a discovery to me. This institution should be flung open to *Panchamas* and Mussalmans. I would de-Hinduize this institution if a *Panchama* has no entry here. (Hear! hear!) The fact that this is a Hindu institution is no reason why a Mussalman or a *Panchama* could not receive education here. I think it is high time that the trustees revise their constitution. This is a petition from me, and earnest and a very God-fearing Hindu, saturated with the spirit of Hinduism, not from a petty-fogging reformer, but from one who is trying to live the best in Hinduism. Mr. Principal, you will please convey this petition to the proper quarters, and it will be a great joy to me to hear during my sojourn in this presidency that my petition has been heard.¹ I thank you for listening to this message.

Young India, 15-9-1927

¹ The principal of the College in his vote of thanks said that attempts were being made to throw open the College to all classes of Indians.

24. SPEECH AT ROYAPURAM, MADRAS¹

September 7, 1927

FRIENDS,

I thank you for the address and purse for khadi. I am glad to find that you are taking interest in all that pertains to the Congress. And it pleases me to find your assurance that you are determined to do your share of work in making the forthcoming Congress a thorough success. The Reception Committee here has unanimously elected a tried servant of India to preside over the deliberations. He comes to his task with one great mission that he has set before himself. Dr. Ansari, Surgeon, and one of the best surgeons that India has produced, surgeon that he is, is bent upon healing the breach between Hindus and Mussalmans. I know that many Provincial Congress Committees gave their votes in favour of Dr. Ansari's name in the right hope that his chairmanship of the Congress will result in healing the deep wounds. But let us not make the mistake of supposing that because we have elected him our task is fulfilled. A patient's task is never fulfilled simply because he calls in for his assistance the wisest and best surgeon. He is expected to co-operate with his surgeon body and mind. He is expected to be faithful to the directions of the surgeon. We are the patients. Dr. Ansari is the surgeon whom we have invited. And if we do not co-operate with him in the great task that he has undertaken, the fault will not be his but ours. And since the greatest burden will fall upon the shoulders of those Congressmen who are in Madras and delegates that will flock in largest numbers from the South, it is a matter of great pleasure to me that you are determined to make this Congress a success. You have taken upon your shoulders a very great and grave responsibility. I understand that Sjt. Srinivasa Iyengar is daily in telegraphic communication with the secretary here betraying his care and anxiety about the forthcoming session of the Congress. It is for the men and women of Madras to lighten his labours and make his task easy. We must not expect our leaders to do everything for us. It is often heard against us as a reproach that we, the rank and file, will not put the shoulders to the wheel. I would like Madras to remove the reproach.

You have declared your faith in the spinning-wheel and khadi. You tell me in your address that if arrangements are made for

¹ At Kalandapam Maidan

supplying you with cotton and for taking all the yarn that may be spun off your shoulders, you will be able to organize spinning and weaving of khadi. If you are serious about this matter you have to go one step further. You must form your own committee and find your own cotton. Every spinner in order to be a good spinner has got to learn carding and make his or her own sliver. You should aim at weaving all the yarn that is produced; that is the best and cheapest method of producing khadi. If you cannot weave khadi for yourselves and if you give good, strong, even and weavable yarn the All-India Spinners' Association will certainly take up all the yarn that you can give.

I understand that this is a labour centre. To the fellow labourers I would say just one word. You must give up drink at any cost. And so must you gambling and vice. It is not a difficult task for the labourers to give up this great curse of drink which is sapping their vitality and morals. Indian labour has a bright future before it if it will only help itself. The best beginning in self-help is self-purification. Let the labourers also remember that there are millions who are, so far as finance is concerned, brothers infinitely worse than they are. And if they will but think of these brothers and sisters who are poorer and worse off than they are, they will at least adopt khadi. I know that all the men and the sisters here have not contributed to this purse. Volunteers will be presently going in your midst and if you desire to contribute something going in your midst and if you desire to contribute something please do so. No one need give a single pie unless she or he believes in khadi. The pies of the poor are just as welcome as the rupees of the rich if either is given with a willing heart.

There is a request made to me just now that I should talk about the Neill Statue Satyagraha. I have said what was in my mind at the meeting in the Beach.¹ I gave more than one hour yesterday and more than one hour today also to those volunteers who could come to discuss the matter with me. I have given them all the advice that I was capable of giving. You will find in a day or two the substance of the conversation in the papers; and the notes of this interview, as soon as I get them, will be revised by me and then there will be an authentic publication.² But this much I would like to declare here. The cause appeals to me most forcibly. I have not a shadow of doubt that that

¹ *Vide* "Speech at Public Meeting, Madras", 4-9-1927.

² *Vide* "Discussion with Neill Statue Volunteers", 6 & 7-9-1927.

statue must be removed from that site. I have seen the inscription there with its false history.¹ The statue there is a standing insult to the nation, and the volunteers deserve congratulation for having drawn attention to the existence of the statue by their suffering. But every cause or many causes in this world have been ruined by bad management and bad handling. The volunteers, if they continue the fight, will have to take care that no dirt creeps into their movement. If satyagraha is a very fine weapon to handle, it is also a very dangerous weapon. It becomes a dangerous weapon if the slightest uncleanness touches it. Just at the tiniest drop of poison makes the most wholesome milk unfit for human consumption, so it is the slightest touch of impurity spoils the battle of satyagraha and damages both the cause and those who are connected with it. If there is the slightest violence on the part of satyagrahi or if there is the slightest departure from truth, they will damage themselves and the cause. Satyagraha abhors secrecy. It is the open form of warfare I have ever known. Similarly, satyagraha abhors cowardice. And he who preaches satyagraha with any selfishness about him damns himself. Satyagraha is a weapon which can be handled without the slightest financial support—because it is the essence of suffering. The greater the amount of suffering voluntarily undertaken, the quicker and purer is the success. If therefore the satyagrahis approach their task well, understanding these conditions and limitations and if they will fulfil all these conditions, let them rest assured that success is doubtless theirs. If they do not possess these qualifications and if they have no faith in these conditions let them give up satyagraha. I shall count it as bravery on their part, if they give up satyagraha because they cannot fulfil its conditions. It also requires a certain measure of bravery to own up one's mistakes or limitations and retrace one's steps. But if they will fulfil the conditions I have stated just now, they have my blessings and they will deserve the blessings and encouragement of every patriot.

The Hindu, 8-9-1927

25. TOTAL PROHIBITION

I ask you to realize the fact that the alteration of the present Abkari Act with regard to making, manufacture and possession of liquor, etc., must necessarily, to a large extent, lead to harassing of the people. You must be

¹ *Vide* "The Neill Statute and Non-Violence", 29-9-1927.

prepared for such a harassment which is an inevitable concomitant of the policy of prohibition. I must count then upon your unstinted support. I do not want your support for picketing shops, to preach about the evils of drink and other kindred work. But I want your help in the matter of putting down illicit manufacture of liquor and kindred crimes.

This is an extract from the speech of the Madras Minister for Public Health and Excise reported in *The Hindu*. There is one more assistance the Minister has asked the people to render, i.e., submit to increased taxation. Of this I do not propose at present to say anything except that where the people are able, they should submit to further taxation on proof of necessity. No monetary cost is too great to pay for achieving total prohibition.

But at the present moment, I would confine myself to the extract quoted by me. I fear that the Minister has taken a wrong view of prohibition. In my opinion, it has not to be taken piece-meal. To be successful it should be taken as a whole. It is not a one-district question but it is an all-India question. I have not hesitated to give my opinion, that it was a wicked thing for the Imperial Government to have transferred this the most immoral source of revenue to the provinces and to have thus made this tainted revenue the one source for defraying the cost of the education of Indian youth.

But what pains me about the Minister's speech is his superficial treatment of a question which affects the well-being of the masses. Surely he is not serious about his scheme if he expects the people to do his police work. And why does he frighten the people by saying that *there must be harassment* if prohibition is tried? Is there harassment of the people because theft or manufacture of gunpowder are classed as crimes? Is not unlicensed distillation even now a crime? What the Minister implies therefore is that the men who today hold licences to manufacture or sell liquor will after the prohibition distil surreptitiously and that therefore they will be harassed. There need be in this no harassment of the people.

But it betrays want of imagination and lack of sympathy with the people, if the Minister believes that as a prohibitionist he has nothing more to do but to declare prohibition and prosecute those who will break his laws. I venture to submit that prosecutions are the smallest and the destructive part of prohibition. I suggest that there is a larger and constructive side to prohibition. People drink because of the conditions to which they are reduced. It is the factory labourers

and others that drink. They are forlorn, uncared for, and they take to drink. They are no more vicious by nature than teetotallers are saints by nature. The majority of people are controlled by their environment. Any minister who is sincerely anxious to make prohibition a success will have to develop the zeal and qualities of a reformer. He will then require precisely the help that the Madras Minister is reported to have scorned. In my humble opinion, he does need pickets and men and women who would “preach about the evils of drink” and do “other kindred work.” It is just in these very things that he will want an army of volunteers who will be associated with him in reforming the life of the drunkard. He will have to convert every drink shop into a refreshment shop and concert room combined. Poor labourers will want some place where they can congregate and get wholesome, cheap, refreshing, non-intoxicating drinks, and if they can have some good music at the same time it would prove as a tonic to them and draw them. These can, by judicious management and association of the people, become paying concerns for the State. He who will handle the problem of temperance will have to give a more serious study to it than the Minister seems to have done. Let him study the methods adopted in America and tried by the great temperance organizations of the world. This study will give but limited help. For the Western conditions are widely different from the Indian. Our methods too, will have, therefore, to be largely different. Whereas total prohibition in the West is most difficult of accomplishment, I hold that it is the easiest of accomplishment in this country. When an evil like drink in the West attains the status of respectability, it is the most difficult to deal with. With us drink is still, thank God, sufficiently disrespectable and confined not to the general body of the people but to a minority of the poor classes.

Young India, 8-9-1927

26. OUR CULTURE¹

GIFT FROM A PEASANT

I received while on tour the following from a poor peasant of U.P. It bears the date November 4, 1924. I have been all this time hoarding it among my papers. I give it here just as it was received. I do not even hold back the name, for there is not the slightest fear of

¹ A Gujarati version of this was published in *Navajivan*, 11-9-1927.

Ramchandra being flattered. It is most likely that he does not even read *Navajivan*. Even if he does, I am certain that one who has sent me these beautiful verses¹ of Tulsidas will not become swollen with pride.

GIFT FROM BORODADA

I received another equally priceless gift from the late Borodada², which I always carry with me. He gave me the following verse, written out in his own hands, when I visited Santiniketan the last time³ before his death.

I shall give the meaning :

In the company of a saint, one's suffering turns into welcome happiness, death into immortality and a dull person into a man of perfect illumination.⁴

A supposedly uncultured peasant can, on occasion, quote verses from Tulsidas which fill one with the joy of knowledge and devotion, and another, a great poet, forgets his ego though he is a man of profound knowledge and seeks the company of saintly men. If the reader reflects over both these instances in a detached spirit, leaving out the reference to me, he will realize what our culture is and how we can make ourselves worthy of it.

[From Hindi]

Hindi Navajivan, 8-9-1927

¹ He who gathers up all objects of natural affection—mother, father, brother, son and wife, wealth, home, friends and family—like strands, and makes of them one strong rope to bind his soul to my feet; he who looks on all with an impartial eye and has abandoned all desire, and in whose heart is neither joy nor sorrow nor fear, such a saint abides in my heart like riches in the heart of an avaricious man. Saints like yourself are dear to me; it is only for their sake I am constrained to take on mortal form.

Those who worship the Personal and devote themselves to the good of others, and persevere in the ways of virtue and religious duty, and love the feet of the twice-born, are dear to me as my own life.

² Dwijendranath Tagore, elder brother of Rabindranath Tagore

³ In May 1925

⁴ "A dull person into a man of perfect illumination" is a paraphrase. The literal meaning is : "Nothingness into fullness."

27. SPEECH AT CONJEEVARAM

September 8, 1927

FRIENDS,

I thank you for the several addresses and also the purses. I congratulate the Municipality upon their efforts to reduce to practical shape the message of the spinning-wheel. I hope the boys and girls of the elementary school are learning spinning regularly and in a scientific manner. In many municipalities where this experiment has been tried, the spinning-wheels have practically remained idle because of want of personal interest on the part of councillors. And you will not make it a real success unless at least one or two of the municipal councillors will themselves become expert spinners and keep a vigilant watch over what is being done in these schools. I wish also to draw your attention to the experience of other municipal and non-municipal schools that it is not the wheel which can be successfully worked but it is the *takli*.

You ask me to tell you what more can be done to serve the poorest of the land. You, the parents of the children who go to the schools, can see to it that your children are dressed in khadi. You can successfully induce the municipal employees from the highest to the lowest to wear nothing but khadi. Several municipalities have successfully performed this operation.

One of the addresses asks me to do something to heal the widened breach between Brahmins and Non-Brahmins. I assure you that I should heal the breach today if I had the power. I have told both Brahmin and Non-Brahmin friends that I am prepared during my tour to discuss the thing with you and assist in arriving at a solution, if it is at all possible. It is a spectacle humiliating to both Brahmins and Non-Brahmins. And really our capacity for swaraj can only be tested by your ability successfully to handle such problems. Beyond stating that I am always willing to assist, it is not possible for me to make any concrete suggestions.

Yours is a city renowned for its holiness throughout India. But unfortunately as in other places here also holiness has become but an empty name. Though you do something for khaddar and something more in some other directions, it does not make the city holy. Holiness is made of sterner stuff. It means purity of conduct and

purity of heart in the majority of its citizens. I wish to ask you to ask yourselves and answer the question whether you regard a single being as untouchable. Belief in untouchability and holiness are contradictory terms.

I received a letter today in this place asking me to dwell exclusively upon the question of child widows. Whilst it is not possible for me to deal with this great evil to the exclusion of every other, I am painfully conscious of the fact that you are not free from this evil. It is no credit to Hinduism that it has so many child virgin widows. If I had the power I would certainly insist upon every parent getting married his child widow in his home. Child widow, again, is a contradiction in terms. Only a full grown woman who has been a consenting party to her marriage and who enjoyed the married life can become a widow.

Closely related to the question of child widows is the question of child marriages. It is an inhuman thing to give away in marriage a little girl under sixteen years. We do violence to our Shastras when we wrest from them a meaning which panders to our lust. Now, perhaps, you understand a little of what I mean by holiness. I hope that you, who are naturally and pardonably proud of this city, will bestir yourselves and take early and energetic steps to rid yourselves of the evils to which I have drawn attention. If you really feel for the poorest of the land as you claim to do in your address, you will not rest content until you have brought about total prohibition.

There is a note handed to me asking me to tell you something about the Tilak Swaraj Fund and the present Khaddar Fund for which you have given purses today. I gladly give you the information. So far as the Tilak Swaraj Fund is concerned, I may inform you that the audited accounts have been published and circulated on behalf of the All-India Congress Committee all over India. Anyone who is even now desirous of seeing how much was collected and how the fund was distributed, is entitled to get from the General Secretary a copy of the accounts. The manner of disbursements was in this way. A certain percentage went to the Central Fund in the hands of the All-India Congress Committee and the balance was kept with the respective provinces in which the amounts were collected. And the respective provinces have also, so far as I am aware, except in one or two instances, published audited accounts. You may also know that the largest amounts were collected in Bombay and these remained vested in a number of trustees specially appointed. Furthermore, very large

amounts of this fund were earmarked and these earmarked funds were administered by those donors who gave the funds so earmarked. It is my conviction that no fund of that magnitude has been so cleanly administered as the Tilak Swaraj Fund.

But that does not mean there has never been any misappropriation of these funds. Look at every other human institution. The Congress has had its share of faithless servants. But my examination has disclosed the fact that in the Congress there has been as defalcation. This refers to the Tilak Swaraj Fund and you are able to achieve it because of the extraordinary care that was taken in the appointment of responsible officers. You had in Seth Jamnalalji a treasurer who was not only inviolable, but whose vigilance was surpassed by a single treasurer on the face of the earth. When I say this of Seth Jamnalalji, I assure you that I speak from personal experience.

Now about the Khadi Fund of which also Seth Jamnalalji is the treasurer and Shankerlal Banker is the Secretary. I am entirely satisfied that it is impossible to find two better men than these friends for the administration of this fund. And over and above them is a Board consisting of picked men, who believe in the message of the spinning-wheel. These funds are kept in banks of first-class credit. There is a periodical inspection all over India of provincial accounts; and the accounts also are periodically audited both in the provinces and at the centres. It is open to anyone whether he is a contributor or not to see these accounts. The method of distribution of this fund is to confine the purses that are being collected to the provinces in which they are collected. But the Board does not follow that absolute rule. For instance, we have collected large amounts in Bombay but almost nothing has been spent in Bombay itself. Though very little has been collected in Orissa large amounts were spent in organizing khadi work in Orissa. Similarly more has been spent in Tamil Nadu than has been hitherto collected. This is an absolute rule that wherever there is great distress and there is a chance of working in the distressed area through able and honest workers, funds are always made available.

I always invite enquiries and searching enquiries about the finances of public institutions and it was in appreciation of that fact that I entered into an elaborate explanation of the question that was handed to me. I wish the public take much more and abler interest in the financial administration of all trust funds. I am painfully conscious of the fact that in spite of the care that I am capable of

devoting, it is not possible for me to do it unless I get vigilant assistance from the public to ensure absolute purity of the administration of numerous funds which the public have trusted me with. To ensure absolute correctness and purity of administration, without active and intelligent assistance of the public, is beyond the power of one single individual. I will gladly answer any further questions that may arise out of my explanation either now or by writing.

The Hindu, 10-9-1927

28. SPEECH TO ARUNDHATIYAS, PERAMBUR

September 8, 1927

In replying to the address, Mahatmaji exhorted this community of cobblers to carry on their trade with dead cattle hide instead of with hide of slaughtered animals. Mahatmaji said he himself had made shoes and could make fairly good shoes even now. He could not however make such a beautiful pair as the one they had presented him with.¹ Shoemaking was a respectable trade of which no one need be ashamed. He himself had now organized a tannery at Sabarmati where dead cattle hide was tanned.

Mahatmaji then asked the men to give up drink. Drink, he said, made beasts of men and was the enemy of the family. He also asked them to refrain from vices of all kinds. If they only followed his advice in some details of their daily conduct, their status would be raised automatically in society.

Finally, Mahatmaji asked the men to remember that there were millions of people in rural India much poorer than they. They should sympathize with them and help them by wearing khaddar. It was as wrong for them to wear foreign cloth, as it would be for him to buy foreign shoes without encouraging local shoemakers.

The Hindu, 12-9-1927

29. SPEECH TO GUJARATIS AND MARWARIS, MADRAS

September 9, 1927

I thank you for the purse and the address. I am satisfied with the purse that you have given me because it is a sacred work. There is a special bond between myself and Gujaratis for Gujarat is my birthplace. Ever since I came to India my connection with Gujaratis

¹ Sandals made out of the hide of dead cattle were presented to Gandhiji and Kasturba.

and Marwaris has been one of increasing affection. Swaraj will have come to India if only the two communities had realized their duties as merchants and had given some place to selfless work in the course of their business. One of the reasons why India is still a slave country is the importation of foreign cloth and in the trade of foreign cloth you have a prime share. Therefore when you give money for the service of *Daridranarayana*, whatever you give will be unsatisfactory because your work has a bearing on India's poverty-stricken millions. You are taking away the money of the poor and the *prayaschitta* after the commission of the sin lies when you discharge your duties to those whom you took your money. So if you are going to perform the true dharma, I beg of you to take to khadi business. This is your work and not my work. Though I am myself born a Bania I have given up business. Therefore I have got to learn business from you. Moreover, the biggest business in India has now fallen into my hands and so if you take up this work from my hands, there will be no need to beg throughout the country. You have given me a welcome address in Hindi and I thank you for it. There is a Hindi Pracharak Sabha in South India. The money for it comes from North India now and then. In this work Marwaris have given large amounts of money. I beg of you now to make this your own work. You should not depend upon North India for finance and will have to do it actively yourselves. There is another duty still for you, cow-protection. Gujaratis and Marwaris have taken a prominent part. I must tell you that the work cannot be done by money alone. You have got the Shastra knowledge about this and that is more necessary than money. If you do not open dairies and tanneries in the various parts of the country this work can never be done properly. You are traders in all parts of India. You should make friends with all the people of the country. Do not think of them as strangers. Think of them as sons and daughters of the same country. If you think one a Punjabi, another a Bengali, Marwari, Gujarati and so on, no good will result. May God give you wisdom and desire to serve!

The Hindu, 10-9-1927

30. SPEECH TO WOMEN, MADRAS¹

September 9, 1927

Mahatmaji first thanked the women of Madras for the welcome they had accorded in him and for the purse. Regarding the purse, he said he was not satisfied with the same. He also doubted whether all of them who had assembled there knew for what purpose they had given the purse, for it they had realized it they would have given much more. The money was not intended to be distributed among a hundred poor for charity but was going to be used for the relief of millions of starving people throughout India. He saw round him a large number of ladies with costly jewellery on their persons. They would no have realized that one bit of such jewellery would amount to a fortune to the starving millions. The toiling millions did not know what gold, diamonds, and silver were. Their jewellery was made of wood, stone and copper. Mahatmaji even doubted whether the women who had gathered around him had ever seen their sisters in the villages. He had a great mind to take some of them round those villages and show them the conditions in which some of their sisters lived. Then only they would realize the true significance of the movement he had set afoot, and the object of his mission. They had given a few hundreds of rupees but until they did some other things, that money would become useless. Millions of starving sisters were toiling all round the year and if more fortunate women had any affection for them they must wear khadi prepared by the poor people. Then they must show their self-sacrifice and spirit by spending at least half an hour a day and giving away the yarn. Mahatmaji said that he had been working for the relief of these poor millions and wherever he went he had received the full sympathy of all women. His work would be in vain if womenfolk of India did not co-operate with him. Referring to the welcome address, Mahatmaji said: It was a long one and he did not know whether all the women in the audience knew all subjects dealt with therein. They were all important ones and related only to the middle class people. He did not say that they must be disregarded on that account. He had no time to discuss all the subjects mentioned therein, but would say they had his entire sympathy. He would say only this thing that women had equal rights with men. Hindu Shastras made no differentiation between the sexes and had even symbolized God as *Ardha-nareeshwara*. The English saying that the wives were the better halves was quite true. India had produced many ideal women and among the seven great *satis* worshipped by Hindu woman every morning to ward off her sins Sita stood foremost. That a better place was given to women was significant in the fact that people don't call "Ram-Sita" but call "Sita-Ram". Sita was an embodiment of self-sacrifice and dharma. Her sacrifices were

¹ At Singrachari Hall in Hindu High School, Triplicane

greater than those of Rama. If the Hindus were the true followers and worshippers of Sita and Rama they would not have allowed such disgraceful customs as were prevalent among their society. They would immediately try to purify their Hinduism. If they were determined to purify their society he would ask them first of all not to marry their daughters before they were 16 years old. The next thing they must do is to remarry young widows. It was a sin not to remarry such girls. Consent was necessary for a life contract and he believed that in early marriages there was no consent. He would then ask them to remove from their midst the custom of *Devadasis*. Such reforms as he had mentioned could effectively and easily be done by women's associations and not by male workers however capable they might be.

Continuing, Mahatmaji said that he was gratified at the fact that Dr. Muthulakshmi Ammal was the Deputy President of the Legislative Council. Though he was himself a non-co-operator, he believed that Dr. Muthulakshmi Ammal would do many things in the Council on behalf of the women of India. He would only request her not to completely adopt Western methods. She must instil the Indian atmosphere in the Council and never forget the interests of women. India's progress would be sure and certain if only the women of India worked for it.

In-conclusion, Mahatmaji said then the greatest problem in India at the present day was the relief of poverty among the millions of toiling masses scattered in thousands of villages in India. If educated and more fortunate women did not realize their duties to their less fortunate sisters and do something for their relief India would never progress. He believed that the spinning-wheel would do much in this direction. It must become the centre of their activities. The khadi movement was a women's movement and he hoped that they would take it up and relieve him of his duties. He prayed to God Almighty that He should give them courage and energy to take up this good work.

The Hindu, 10-9-1927

31. SPEECH ON C. R. DAS, MADRAS

September 9, 1927

FRIENDS,

I congratulate Mr. Satyamurti on having presented this portrait to the Mahajana Sabha and I congratulate the Mahajana Sabha upon having secured this very precious possession. If I may do so, I would like to congratulate myself also upon having received the honour of unveiling this portrait. But whilst I prize this honour, I cannot help confessing to you that I am somewhat embarrassed, embarrassed because I am unveiling the portrait of one who unveiled my own.

There is some lack of adjustment in this thing. Not that anybody is responsible for this accident; but it is there. Because Deshbandhu unveiled my portrait it was impossible to avoid me, seeing that I happened to be in Madras when the portrait was presented. So it is quite in the fitness of things considered in that light. But all the same, there are things over which we have no control and yet which mar all our dispositions. The fact that I have brought to your notice really mars my joy, it makes it difficult for me to pour out my heart in connection with Deshbandhu Das but I must struggle through my performance in the best manner I can.

I want to lift myself and yourself out of the political setting that has been given to this function. Deshbandhu's name will always be remembered so long as time lasts and India lasts, as one of the liberators of India. There can be not a shadow of doubt about it. But Deshbandhu himself claimed and was entitled to far higher honour than that of being ranked as one of the liberators—though high that honour is. I came to know this secret of his life myself during his last days, about which you have just now heard as from his very magnificent letter that Mr. Satyamurti read to us.¹ All this strength was really derived from his spirituality and I consider his spirituality even greater than his politics. He considered that his politics were dependent upon and were derived from his spirituality, as I have said more than once in connection with another liberator of India, now no more, Lokamanya Bala Gangadhara Tilak. I think it was in writing about him or speaking about him, I said it had been a misfortune of some of the greatest sons of India to sacrifice their cherished ambition in order to realize what to them was a lesser ambition for the motherland. Lokamanya Tilak, if he had not been born in these times and in India, would have been considered a literary giant but that would not have been enough. He would have been considered a religious scholar, a man capable of giving *smritis* and giving living interpretations of old faiths. But that which was his highest ambition became subservient to the political work that he saw before him and that greatest work became a matter of leisure hours. All the best his

¹ The concluding paragraph of this letter of April 19, 1925; read : "No, my dear Satyamurit, I feel a broken man. I feel that my work is over and somebody is constantly calling me from the other side. I should love now to give up all this fight and worry and retire to seclusion. Surely the last few years—may be a very few—should be given to God. The work should be taken up by younger men—yours affectionately, C. R. Das."

energy could possibly give was given to the political emancipation of India. And so it was with Deshbandhu. When I had the honour of making his acquaintance in Lahore, I remember his having engaged me always whenever we had done with the report on which we were both engaged, in spiritual discussions. We used to talk about and think of things of permanent interest in life. I remember his having said once or twice in my presence that he could not possibly do these things in the thorough manner in which he wanted to.

I confess that I did not know Deshbandhu then as I knew him during his last moments at Darjeeling. I came closest to him there and I look back upon those few days of my association with him among the precious treasures of my memory. But in Lahore I unwittingly did an injustice to him by my thinking for one moment that this spirituality of his was a mere pastime as I have known it to be of so many other distinguished sons of India. But as our friendship, may I say, ripened, I came closer to him and I felt that I occupied a little corner in his heart also. And yet there were some cobwebs. God had designed that those cobwebs should be removed before his eyes were closed. He could not tolerate the idea of a seeker of truth remaining under any illusion what-soever or any misunderstanding whatsoever in connection with a man so good. I omit the word 'great' deliberately. Greatness without goodness counts for nothing in my estimation as I expect it counted for nothing in Deshbandhu's estimation. So I was privileged to enter his heart, understand him through and through and understand the depth of his devotion.

Reckless sacrifice he had. Reckless courage also he had. But all this beautiful recklessness of his was really derived from his very deep spirituality. He himself told me when he was in Darjeeling that he would not be satisfied and consider his work over unless the spiritual treasures he had locked up in his heart had been also delivered to India. That ambition of his was not destined to be fulfilled through no fault of his. Perhaps you do not know his childlike simplicity. I was amazed; his own partner in life was amazed at that incredible simplicity of his heart. In his search for spiritual consolation he placed himself under one who has and had very little education as we understand the word education. But in order to find the real everlasting peace that a spiritual quickening gives, he was reckless and did not mind ridicule of his friends in going forward with that service. I cannot and dare not give you more details. I have given you just enough to share with me the belief that in Deshbandhu if we have lost

a great man, one of the greatest of India's patriots, we have lost also in Deshbandhu a very great spiritual teacher.

I have endeavoured to lift ourselves out of the political setting also because I know that if his spirit is brooding over our proceedings then I know that he shares to the fullest extent the ideas that I am expressing to you. It was another patriot of India, again now no more, who expressed this thought that a time comes in the life of every Indian when mere political battle jars on him and that he seeks to base everything on spiritual, livingly moral foundations. There is no distinction between spirituality and morality, if we rightly understand the latter term. Today somehow or other we have come to distinguish between the two and so I have added the adverb 'livingly' moral. This I heard several years ago; but ever since then, I have seen that utterance more and more exemplified in this manner.

I have introduced this thing for a deliberate purpose; and that purpose is: Let us have the political ambition that we live for the freedom of the country. Today it is impossible for an Indian worth the name even to exist without political ambition, because the political domination of India has unfortunately resulted in if not spiritual subjection, in spiritual *inanity*. And we have simply got the outer husk of spirituality; the kernel of it seems to have been entirely dried up. Let us not delude ourselves into the belief that this political ambition of us is going to serve this *Karmabhumi*, this *Devabhumi* as we flatter ourselves in calling Bharatavarsha. Let us not delude ourselves with the belief that this sacred land can ever be served by or can ever assimilate a political message unless it has got a spiritual foundation. It has got to be broadbased upon that foundation if it is to last and permeate the distant villages of India. That brings me to the appeal which the President of the Sabha made to me. I seemed to have neglected politics, he said. But he corrected himself. "No, he did not". I accept that correction. I have not neglected politics. But having had the privilege of sitting side by side with Deshbandhu Das and having had the privilege of many conversations with Lokamanya and most of our leaders, I have understood the secret of achieving India's freedom, a I fancy. In having done so, I bide my time in endeavouring to translate politics in terms of spirituality. I must restate my doctrine even at the risk of being misunderstood. When I was challenged I had no hesitation in saying that I would sacrifice India herself on the altar not of freedom but of truth. There is a catch about this thing. The catch consists in this, that freedom which is inconsistent with truth is no

freedom whatsoever. But catch or no catch, when I wrote that,¹ I it jarred on some friends and it incensed some. But what could I do? I can only speak what I feel; or else I should be really worthless. So I have got to repeat really the beautiful language that Deshbandhu uttered on that occasion which was reproduced today, namely, that although he had boundless affection for me, he could only do what his soul could ascend to and not what I wished or asked². And no man can do more. I cannot do more—I know that. When my soul ascends to things which you are in the habit of calling political, I shall not wait for an invitation; and I shall lead the cause. But till then, I must be content to contemplate on the treasures that have been left to us by Deshbandhu and his predecessors—spiritual treasures—and must continue to hold the belief that all the politics that may have been handed down to us from the west will be turned to dust in India, good as they might be in the West, if we cannot possibly reduce them to terms of spirituality.

And I consider it a great privilege for me that as my stay in Madras is about to close, I have not only got this privilege of unveiling the portrait of one whose memory I hold dear and near to me, but that I have also in that connection got the privilege of interpreting as I know the mission for which Deshbandhu lived and for which he gave his life. I have much pleasure in unveiling the portrait.

The Hindu , 10-9-1927

32. SPEECH AT ST. THOMAS MOUNT, MADRAS

September 9, 1927

SISTERS AND FRIENDS,

I thank you for the addresses³ that you have given me and the purse. I thank you also for saving my time, when I am pressed for it, by waiving your right to read all the addresses. I congratulate the

¹ Presumably the *Young India* passage reproduced in, vide “A Candid Critic”, January 20, 1927

² While unveiling a portrait of Gandhiji in the same Hall, C. R. Das had said : “I followed Mahatma Gandhi because my soul ascended to his. But I shall refuse to agree to anything which my soul does not ascend to. I have the highest respect, nay veneration, for the Mahatma; but I shall never trample my soul under my foot. The Mahatma knew that and I believe he respected me for that.”

³ By the Jain community, the general public and the Podu Jana Oozhiyar Sangham (Social Service League)

Sangham and its beneficial public activities. I note that you are conducting some schools, doing sanitation work and even the lighting of your streets. This is undoubtedly public service in the right direction but I hope your work is through. Sanitation, until substantially done, has been known sometimes to do more harm than good. It is only things that are well done that produce permanent and beneficial services. I am glad too to find that you have taken up the work of the spinning-wheel I hope you will keep all the wheels going regularly. I hope too that you will keep them in good shape. There is no reason why everyone living in these parts should not be dressed in khadi.

If there are any here who are given to drink habit, I hope you will urge them to give it up. Those who do not drink I ask them to go to their neighbours who drink and gently wean them from that awful habit. I wish that you would initiate a movement which will not end till total prohibition is carried out in the land.

I was also glad to receive an address from the Jain friends. To them also I would suggest that at the present moment the widest application of the doctrine of ahimsa is possible only through the spinning-wheel. It has been conceived and calculated to benefit the remotest village and the neediest people in the land. What ahimsa, what love can be deeper and faster than that which takes in its sweep millions of starving people!

I am glad that all your addresses make reference to untouchability. I hope you will rid yourselves of that curse in the quickest time possible. No religion can possibly countenance the considering of a single human being as an untouchable from birth.

I have been recently drawing attention to child marriages and child widows. It is high time that parents understand their duties by their children. It cannot be a right thing to give away girls of tender years in marriage, nor can it be right to treat the child as a widow when her so-called husband dies. It is the bounden duty of every parent to give in marriage such child widows as may be in his family. We have also in the South the immoral and the inhuman institution of *Devadasis*. If we would respect our womanhood as we are expected to respect them in the name of Sita, we have to get rid of this blot upon our society.

As you are aware I have still to prepare to leave Madras tonight and you will not expect me therefore to say anything further upon the

important subjects that will engage your attention. It is usual for me at such large meetings as these to give those who have not contributed to this purse and may be present here an opportunity, if they so desire and if they believe in khadi, of giving their mite.

The Hindu, 10-9-1927

33. INTERVIEW TO “THE HINDU”, MADRAS

September 9, 1927

Unless I am deceived, the khadi spirit has come to stay.

Thus Mahatma Gandhi summed up to *The Hindu* representative impressions of his stay in Madras. . . .

Although the main theme of almost all my addresses in Madras has been khadi, if I am not deceiving myself, I have not noticed any weariness of spirit about the audience and everyone who has not appeared in khadi has invariably apologized. The financial response has also been satisfactory and khadi sales have been encouraging.

Of personal affection, I can have nothing to say. Even as long ago as 1896, Madras bestowed on me an affection for which I was wholly unprepared and entirely unworthy. That was my very first visit to Madras; and I knew nobody personally. Madras simply took me on trust.

I hope that the citizens of Madras will not postpone to the last minute the preparations for the coming Congress. They will give a practical demonstration of the wisdom as ascribed to the people of the South by Sir Brijendranath Seal, if before the session is held there is no Brahmin-Non-Brahmin quarrel. Of course, I expect the people here to give a good account of themselves in the matter of khadi during the Congress week.

The *Hindu* representative next enquired about Mahatmaji's views on Miss Mayo's book¹ which is agitating the public mind in India today; and Mahatmaji replied:

Under great stress and difficulty, I have just finished a long review of Miss Mayo's book. I entered upon it with much reluctance; and I did so, as many correspondents pressed me to give my own opinion. I could really ill afford the time to read the book, but when I saw I could not escape having to give the opinion, I read it from page to page; and having read it I am glad that I did so, because I saw that it

¹ *Mother India*

required a fairly exhaustive reply from me. As my writings have been profusely used by the lady, I owed it to the public and to her to express my frank opinion on her work.

You will not expect me to anticipate the contents of the article¹ in *Young India*.

The Hindu, 10-9-1927

34. TELEGRAM TO MIRABEHN

CUDDALORE,
September 10, 1927

MIRABAI

SATYAGRAHA ASHRAM, WARDHA

THANK GOD. DELIVERANCE. LETTER REGARDING POONA NOT RECEIVED. DO² WHATEVER JAMNALALJI SAYS AND COMMANDS³ YOU. LOVE.

BAPU

From the original: C. W. 5273. Courtesy: Mirabehn

35. SPEECH AT Y.M.C.A., CUDDALORE

September 10, 1927

MR. CHAIRMAN AND FRIENDS,

I thank you for the address and also for the purse on behalf of the students for the Khadi Fund. Rev. Mr. Lange has invited me to speak to you on how the individual might grow so as to bring about his own advancement and of his surroundings or her surroundings and in doing so, told me that if I expected to address a meeting of saints, I would be sadly disappointed. As I had no such expectations, there is no occasion for me to be disappointed. But, had you been all saints, I assure you, I would have been deeply embarrassed. Being myself a very imperfect man—and this I say not in the language of courtesy, but in terms of truth—I can only address with any degree of usefulness an assembly of men and women similarly imperfect. But this I do own that I am constantly, minute after minute, striving after perfection and it gives me comfort to find myself in the assembly of

¹ *Vide* 'Drain Inspector's Report', 15-9-1927

² The source has "to".

³ The source has "commends".

imperfect men and women who are similarly striving. It consoles me to find that many of them had succeeded in their striving and that therefore there is no reason why I should not succeed likewise, if my striving is prayerful and honest. And in the course of that striving, I fancy that I have made certain discoveries. And I am now endeavouring to the best of my ability to share the results of those discoveries with all I meet. And the one discovery that I have made is that really speaking, there is no distinction whatsoever between individual growth and corporate growth, that corporate growth is therefore entirely dependent upon individual growth and hence that beautiful proverb in the English language that a chain is no stronger than the weakest link in it. And if we realize in its fullness the truth of this homely saying, we would discover that no single lad in this assembly may hope to isolate himself from others and consider himself above them. When I recall my school days, I have a vivid recollection of boys who put on airs, because they were considered to be clever in their class. And some of them domineered over the rest because they had athletic skill and had physical powers. But I soon discovered also that their pride went before destruction. For the weaker ones, realizing their haughtiness, segregated them and regarded them as untouchables and so they really dug their own grave with their own hands. The first condition therefore of individual growth is utmost humility. And if we see at the present moment in our own land, some people in their insolence calling themselves superior and regarding others as below themselves in rank and regarding yet others as untouchables and unapproachables, those who are standing aloof from this strife are able to watch and see that these in their insolence are also digging their own graves. You will therefore see perfect correspondence between the individual and the corporation, and so I always say to students, young men and women, wanting to serve the country and to do big things: "First of all look after yourselves and make yourselves fairly good instruments of service." I hold it to be utterly impossible for any young man and any young woman to serve society unless they start with a clean slate, that is, a pure heart. But to say that we should have pure hearts is really easily said, but it is not equally easy to achieve and so, we have in the Christian scheme of life what is called new birth. The corresponding term in Hinduism is *dwija*, i.e., twice born. The meaning that the term *dwija* has come to bear at the present moment is a prostitution of language. Even this new birth among the many Christians I have seen,

has acquired the significance which, when the word was originally used, it never bore. That new birth does not come from any outward circumstance nor through lip profession. It is an inward change which is unmistakable. It is a change which the person himself notices and so do his neighbours. It is a transformation of the heart and it needs no lip declaration. And that absolute transformation can only come by inward prayer and a definite and living recognition of the presence of the mighty spirit residing within. We call this by the name of Bhakti Yoga and rendered in English it means union with God by means of devotion and that yoga is possible alike for the lad, ten years old, as for an old man on the brink of the grave and when that transformation has come as a matter of fact, there is no falling back. But there is very often a subtle self-deception about the person noticing such a transformation about himself or herself, and so in order to make it easy for ourselves we have accommodated ourselves to a term called backsliding. As a matter of fact, this so-called transformation in such cases never was a transformation but a hallucination and the recognition of this fact keeps a man or woman fresh and humble, when the boy or girl who begins to say I am transformed will be found to be self-deluded. Therefore, whenever we notice any such upward lift or tendency to do better, let us be sanguine but let us not cease to strive. Instead of saying to ourselves in our pride, 'I have done with evil, I can never fall', let us humbly say to ourselves, 'I do not know, I must ever be on the watch.' There is irrevocable promise from God to mankind that no single effort made towards one's upliftment ever goes without its adequate result. But I am painfully conscious of the fact that I am saying these things to the young men before me without making my meaning clear. I am labouring under the load of the knowledge that I am almost speaking to the students in a foreign language, that is to say, not in the English language, but in an idiom which has become foreign to them. The very word God has lost its living touch and its living meaning.

I recollect a conversation I had with an extremely intelligent and somewhat learned young man only a few months ago and he said: "You so often talk and write about God but I must confess to you that I find no echo of what you say in my own heart." An English friend connected with one of the most noted dailies of England sent me a message also very recently admiring my work about untouchability, temperance and social reform but detesting, as he calls it, God's touch in the pages of *Young India*. And let me tell you that this English

friend is not a mean man but he is a most morally upright man. He is also a philanthropist. Similarly this young Indian who is living at the present moment—because I am in constant touch with him—is ever striving after perfection. But both consider that all that counts in this world and all that is required is self-effort, nothing more, nothing less. As against this, I can only say that at least 40 years' experience of conscious and unbroken striving shows to me that whilst self-effort is an absolute necessity, by itself it is an illusory thing. Without the living grace of the living God, all that effort is reduced to dust. I know instances of very dear friends of mine who were able by self-effort, as it appeared to them, to build themselves up, but they found, and I noticed, that because the effort was not touched by this living grace, they had become in an instant a living sepulchre. Before they knew where they were, subtle temptations surrounded them and they found themselves totally unprepared to resist them. And so, whether you understand my language or whether you do not, whether you understand the significance of the word God or whether you do not, I have really no other message for the young men and the young women of India. Do not be deceived by your own little intellect but do have some faith in the experiences of men living in all the climes of the world, in all the places of the world, proclaiming with one voice there is God. I tell you, I give you my assurance, that if you will be patient and exercise that faith, and believe in the definite presence of God within, in spite of yourselves, in spite of your intellect rebelling against your faith, in spite of your surroundings, believe in the presence of God, if you persist in that faith, you will find that some day it will become a living reality for you and it will be the surest shield of protection for you. If you want to know what faith like that can do for you, hear me. May God help you to understand somewhat of what I have been saying to you.

The Hindu, 12-9-1927

36. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, CUDDALORE¹

September 10, 1927

FRIENDS,

I thank you for all these addresses and the purses presented to me including the address I received from the Municipality this morning. Some friends disturbed my night's rest and that of my

¹*Young India* published this under the caption, "Three Speeches". The first and the last paragraphs reproduced here are from *The Hindu*, 12-9-1927.

fellow-passengers and made life itself difficult for my co-workers. To those of them who are present here I should like to say a few words. They besieged the train practically at three stations where the train stopped for some time. They insisted upon my presenting myself at the window. I, on the other hand, insisted on not complying with their demands and so they became angry, terribly angry and the anger was vented upon those who were trying to protect me from all the terrible din and noise that they set up. Tired out, I was stretched on my bed but I was awake all the time at the pain of hearing these din voices. It was at times difficult to say whether the noise was the noise of affection or it was hooliganism, pure and undefiled. I know that these guards of mine would have been glad if I had got up and presented myself at the window. But it was really not possible for me to comply with the demand and I wish that those who were throwing their affection to me will be pleased not to disturb me, at least my night's rest. I do not call that true love. It is blind love which harms those who bestow it and on whom it is bestowed. I would urge those blind lovers of mine to follow the beautiful motto that I saw as I was being brought to this place. "Love the poor and you will love Gandhi." I give you my assurance that there is no poor man or poor woman in this vast audience than whom there are not millions much poorer in this land. I would like you to appreciate the fact that I am doing this tour under the greatest difficulties, I am doing this in spite of the warnings of some of my medical friends, but I feel I have taken this tour in obedience to the promptings of the inner voice. I have been instrumental in monies being collected in several places in this Presidency. These monies are made for the people about whom I just now talked to you. Every rupee collected means food for 16 poor spinners in villages. I tried to ascertain whether these purses collected in several places could be delivered to me without my going personally to those places to receive them, and found that it was not possible. Believe me as I do, that what I am doing is God's work and I feel that even at the risk of my life I should endeavour to travel to those places to unlock those purses which have been put away in the safe. I would therefore urge you all and the whole of the public to co-operate with me in reserving the little energy that is left in me in order to enable me to fulfil this self-imposed task and it is for that reason that I have strictly prohibited my co-workers from making any appointments whatsoever for interviews in rest time that is given to me and which I so much need at every place visited by me. You will

pardon me for my having entered upon what may appear to you to be a personal explanation. As a matter of fact it is nothing of the kind. It is a plea on behalf of the voiceless millions for whom I am collecting this money and that brings me to the taking up of the message, which I left this morning when I was addressing the young boys at the Y.M.C.A. meeting. I was this morning dealing with the growth of the individual and I said then that the growth of the individual, if it is real, must be reflected in the growth of the society of which the individual is a member. And every internal takes an external and outward manifestation. A seed that has a capacity of growth within itself immediately goes underneath the ground, sprouts outward into a beautiful tree in a short time. The seed that has no vitality in it and therefore no capacity for growth dies underneath the earth, and so with individual and nations. If they have capacity for growth, of real life and character within them, it must be manifested by some definite, visible, outward signs. And speaking along these lines, it was in 1918 that I made a discovery—or call it re-discovery—that is, India was really one compact society or one nation and if the component parts of the society, the individuals, were also actuated with one mind and if they had feelings for the lowest and the humblest among them, they must show some universal sign which could be adopted by every man and woman, girl or boy. Hence you find me tirelessly preaching the message of the spinning-wheel which I have considered the message of *Daridranarayana*, and asking you to give me all your best for the charkha.

But I must hasten to the important part of the Municipal address. You have drawn my attention to the existence of the dissensions between the Brahmin and the Non-Brahmins and asked me to find out a solution. As a Non-Brahmin myself, if I could remove the dissensions by forfeiting my life, I should do so this very moment. But God is a very hard taskmaster. He is never satisfied with hasty forfeitures of life. It is a sacrifice of the purest that He demands and so you and I have prayerfully to plod on, live out the life so long as it is vouchsafed to us to live it. I have said, only very recently in Madras, that whenever you want me to take part in your deliberations, or want me to advise you, you will find me at your disposal. I have no clear-cut solution for this difficult question. I confess to you that I do not even now know the points of differences between the two. I tried to draw out some Non-Brahmins, who came to me on Nandi Hills, and they promised to see me in my tour and place all the points of

difference before me. I must confess to you that I am no wiser about the Brahmin side of the question. And wily as the Brahmins are, I admit they have not told me what the differences are, knowing fully well what my opinion would be about all these questions. As you are aware, though a Non-Brahmin myself, I have lived more with them and amongst them than amongst Non-Brahmin friends suspect me of having taken all my colourings from Brahmin friends. I have a shrewd suspicion that the Non-Brahmin friends consider that I am not to be accepted as a hope for a proper solution. And so I find myself in the happy position of being isolated by both the parties, a position which in the present state of my health suits me admirably. But all the same I give you my assurance that I for my part hold myself in readiness to be wooed by either party. And I assure you too that I shall not plead physical unfitness.

But I have for both the parties two counsels of perfection which I can lay before you. To the Brahmins I will say: 'Seeing that you are repositories of knowledge and embodiments of sacrifice and that you have chosen the life of mendicancy, give up all that the Non-Brahmins want and be satisfied with what they may leave for you.' But the modern Brahmin would, I know, summarily reject my Non-Brahmin interpretation of his dharma. To the Non-Brahmins, I say: 'Seeing that you have got numbers on your side, seeing that you have got wealth on your side, what is it that you are worrying about? Resisting as you are, and as you must, untouchability, do not be guilty of creating a new untouchability in your midst. In your haste, in your blindness, in your anger against the Brahmins, you are trying to trample underfoot the whole of the culture which you have inherited from ages past. With a stroke of the pen, may be at the point of the sword, you are impatient to wreck Hinduism of its bed-rock. Being dissatisfied and properly dissatisfied with the husk of Hinduism, you are in danger of losing even the kernel, life itself. You, in your impatience, seem to think that there is absolutely nothing to be said about *varnashrama*. Some of you are ready even to think that in defending *varnashrama* I am also labouring under a delusion. Make no mistake about it. They who say this have not even taken the trouble of understanding what I mean by *varnashrama*.'

It is a universal law, stated in so many words by Hinduism. It is a law of spiritual economics. Nations of the West and Islam itself unwittingly are obliged to follow that law. It has nothing to do with superiority or inferiority. The customs about eating, drinking and

marriage are no integral part of Varnashrama Dharma. It was a law discovered by your ancestors and my ancestors, the *rishis* who saw that if they were to give the best part of their lives to God and to the world, and not to themselves, they must recognize that it is the law of heredity. It is a law designed to set free man's energy for higher pursuits in life. What true Non-Brahmins should therefore set about doing is not to undermine the very foundations on which they are sitting, but to clean all the sweepings that gathered on the foundation and make it perfectly clean. Fight by all means the monster that passes for *varnashrama* today, and you will find me working side by side with you. My *varnashrama* enables me to dine with anybody who will give me clean food, be he Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Parsi whatever he is. My *varnashrama* accommodates a pariah girl under my own roof as my own daughter. My *varnashrama* accomodates many *Panchama* families with whom I dine with the greatest pleasure —to dine with whom is a privilege. My *varnashrama* refuses to bow the head before the greatest potentate on earth but my *varnashrama* compels me to bow my head in all humility before knowledge, before purity, before every person where I see God face to face. Do not therefore swear by words that have, at the present moment, become absolutely meaningless and obsolete. Swear all you are worth, if you like, against Brahmins but never against Brahminism, and even at the risk of being understood or being mistaken by you to be a pro-Brahmin, I make bold to declare to you that whilst Brahmins have many sins to atone for and many for which they will receive exemplary punishments, there are today Brahmins living in India who are watching the progress of Hinduism and who are trying to protect it with all the piety and all the austerity of which they are capable. Them you perhaps do not even know. They do not care to be known. They expect no reward; they ask for none. Their work is its own reward. They work in this fashion because they must. It is their nature. You and I may swear against them for all we are worth, but they are untouched. Do not run away with the belief that I am putting in a plea for Brahmins, *Vakils* and Ministers and even Justices of the High Courts in India. I have not thought of them in my mind at all. What, therefore, both Brahmins and Non-Brahmins, and for that matter everybody who wants India to progress has to do, is to sweep his own house clean. I therefore suggest to Non-Brahmins who have not yet lost their heads, to think out clearly what it is that they are grieved over and make up their minds and fight for all they are worth to

remove those grievances. I recognize however that I have this evening entered upon an academic discussion. Not knowing the merits of their quarrels, I do nothing else. But in my own humble opinion, I have indicated the lines of action for both and within the limits of your capacity, it is open to you to make use of them in any manner you like.

But in trying to grapple with this great problem do not forget the little things for which I am touring in Tamil Nadu. Little they may appear to you but I assure you, that they are great enough to engage the attention of every one of you. I simply summarize them for you without entering into the discussion.

Khadi I have already mentioned. Total prohibition, you can have today if you will act with one mind. Whilst we are quarrelling among ourselves, thousands upon thousands of our countrymen are selling themselves to the devil, they cannot get rid of the curse of drink. And we who witness all these damnations shall have to answer before God for our great criminal neglect of our neighbours. There was a Non-Brahmin lady only yesterday to ask you and ask all the people whom I shall have to see to rid society of the curse of the *Devadasi* institution. Think of the unmanly, unchivalrous manner in which men act towards their sisters. Do not forget these problems which are eating into the vitals of society in trying to fight out the dissensions between Brahmins and Non-Brahmins. And whether I look at Brahmins or Non-Brahmins and treat untouchables as a class of untouchables, I find this one common weakness and error that we, in our impatience, do not think of self-help and self-purification but simply resort to the process of mutual mud-slinging. Since I have no desire to take part in this mutual mud-slinging process, I simply come forward with the humble little things that I have spoken to you. Whatever you may do or may not do, I plead to you that you will not forget these things. I thank you once more for these addresses and purses and what is more for kindly listening to me. May God help you to understand the spirit in which the message has been delivered to you.

Young India, 22-9-1927

37. LETTER TO GANGABEHN VAIDYA

Sunday [On or before September 11, 1927]¹

CHI. GANGABEHN,

I have your letter. This time your handwriting may be said to have improved a little. Good handwriting and correct spelling are not important in themselves. But if they are not important, they also do not require much time to improve. Try, therefore, to improve them both.

I understand about Damodardas. Now you don't have to do anything in the matter. You should now devote yourself wholly to your studies and be satisfied.

My health is improving.

Blessings from

BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 8821 Courtesy: Gangabehn Vaidya. Also G.N.

38. TEST FOR STUDENTS

I feel proud to read that students are making a fine contribution to flood relief work through physical labour. Our hopes of building a better future depend on them. If this foundation is weak, our efforts to put up a building will be wasted. I hope that no student, boy or girl, feels that he or she is unnecessarily sacrificing studies for this work. If they feel unhappy with such thoughts, their service will have been rendered out of weakness and unwillingly and it will be, in that measure, imperfect.

True education consists in such service. They will not have in a school or college the experiences which they are having in this kind of work. A student is a soldier. Just as a soldier's duty consists in carrying out sincerely the orders of his superiors, so a student's education consists in sincerely obeying his teacher's instructions. There may be error in these instructions, but the student will not have to suffer punishment for any such error. If he carries out the

¹From the contents this letter appears to have been written before the letter to the addressee placed "before September 12, 1927" The Sunday prior to this date was September 11; *vide* "Letter to Gangabehn Vaidya", before September 12, 1927.

instructions with a pure mind, he will remain untouched by the error. He will, however, enjoy the fruits, undreamt of by him, of sincere obedience. The injunction to work without thought of the fruit of work does not mean that such work bears no fruit. It always achieves results. In carrying out the teacher's instructions, the student is acting without any desire for the fruit of such obedience. His action has a happy reward in his spiritual progress. Everything done while carrying out the teacher's instructions is done at his instance, and so, if there is error in his instructions, it will be he who will reap the fruit of such error. We need not consider here how and when he may have to do this, or whether he will have to reap such fruit at all.

My only aim just now is to express my happiness at the service rendered by students and to give them encouragement; while doing this, I took the opportunity to discuss in brief what, in my view, is the duty of students.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 11-9-1927

39. "WHAT SHOULD I DO?"

A gentleman asks :

I am trying to get into a railway compartment; someone inside holds the door fast, though there is room, and does not let me get in. What should I do in this situation?

There are three courses open:

1. To complain to the railway authorities on the station;
2. If one has strength enough and courage, to force open the door and get into the compartment and, if necessary, to fight with that passenger who thought he owned the railway;
3. If one has courage and spiritual strength to plead with the bully and, if he does not respond, to forgo one's right and try to find a seat elsewhere. If one fails in that, one may let the train pass. One should have faith that this is for the good of that bully and of oneself. We have no right to ask when he will become reasonable.

All the three courses are legitimate, but the third one is purely of a spiritual character. The first two are practical, but they are not contrary to dharma.

I can imagine a fourth. Being a coward, one may be afraid of getting beaten up in a fight and may look for a seat elsewhere. This is *adharma*. It has, therefore, no place among the legitimate courses

open to one. The second question is this :

I am travelling in a train. I get down at one station to drink water. In my absence, someone enters the compartment and occupies my seat. He refuses to vacate it. What should I do ?

I think the answer to this is contained in the answer to the first question.

Such incidents are common during railway journeys. I have often been in such difficulties. On every occasion, I adopted the third course, and have never regretted having done so. In many cases, I remember, the bully's heart had melted. Let not the reader think that people would recognize me because I was a mahatma and would therefore yield. Most of the experiences of which I have the memory belong to a time before I became a mahatma.

But there is one condition for adopting the third course. The person who adopts it should have a living religious faith and should not merely imitate the behaviour of another. If one feels angry with the bully, one should realize that one is not fit to adopt the third course. Dharma is a matter of the heart. If we try to imitate another, there is every possibility of our falling instead of following dharma. I have often observed Gujarat's non-violence becoming timidity and cowardice. I, therefore, feel reluctant to discuss the third course, and there seems no need to discuss the first two. I do not need to explain that they are even and broad. The third is steep and narrow, and in climbing it we get out of breath, so that we can never discuss it too much. In Gujarat more than elsewhere, but generally in the whole of India, people are usually found to adopt the fourth course which is one of *adharmā*, and so it is necessary to mention the first two. Anyone who adopts either of them may one day be taught to adopt the third, but I doubt if one who follows the fourth can learn the third.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 11-9-1927

40. REPLIES TO A STUDENT'S QUESTIONS

September 11, 1927

Q: 1. Which is the best education?

A: Knowledge of the Self.

2. What is the adornment of youth?

Brahmacharya.

3. What is the best characteristic of the people's culture?

Steadfast adherence to truth.

4. Wherein lies the ultimate fulfilment of life?

In Self-knowledge.

5. What is life's highest ideal?

Satyagraha.

6. What is the most praiseworthy quality in a woman?

Purity.

7. What is the most praiseworthy quality in a man?

Purity.

8. Which is your favourite book?

The Gita.

9. What is dearest to you?

Truth.

[From Gujarati]

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

41. SPEECH TO ADI DRAVIDAS, CHIDAMBARAM'

September 11, 1927

SWAMI SAHAJANDANDA AND FRIENDS,

As you have given me an advance copy of the address, I know what it contains. As you have rightly remarked in the address, Nandanar² was one of the bright stars among the satyagrahis of India. I consider myself highly honoured to have had this privilege of laying the foundation of the doorstep of this temple. I consider it to be a great honour that the first act that I am called upon to perform after entering into Chidambaram is to lay the foundation-stone of the doorstep. I am hoping that this will be really a temple where we will be able to see God face to face as Nandanar himself did I pray that this may be a temple of freedom for everyone who would everyone who would visit this. But you should understand that Nandanar was trying to enter, by giving his life-blood, not in a temple built of stone and mortar only. Nandanar saw in the temple, which he was seeking to

¹ At Nandanar School

² An "untouchable" devotee who became one of the sixty-three Saivite saints of Tamil Nadu

enter, freedom in his own soul. And so by your own lives, the devotees of the temple will be expected to purify the inward atmosphere of which the visible stone and mortar should merely be the symbol. At the present moment I know many temples, whether they be dedicated to Vishnu or Siva, entered into and visited by thousands of the so-called Brahmins, which are no temples of God. Let this temple not be an addition to those numerous temples which today disfigure this holy land. But if you want to do that; those who will be in charge of this temple will have to purify their hearts of all anger. I am glad therefore to notice that in your address you do not seem to seek to destroy Hinduism itself as I see is being done in many places in the present time. I appreciate your idea not to trample underfoot Hindu traditions whether they be bad or indifferent. But as you have decided to make use of the good faculty of discrimination, and as you seek not to destroy that which is good but only that which is bad, let me congratulate you upon your determination to win status by sheer force of merit. You rightly claim to be the descendants of the original inhabitants of this ancient land and if it belongs to any single individual as a matter of right, that right is certainly yours and yours foremost. You are therefore entitled to every consideration. It seems that you are bent upon gaining strength by reform within. Let me draw your attention to one or two points.

There is that drink evil, common almost to every *Adi Dravida*. You must therefore try your level best to rid the community of this drink evil. If I am not mistaken *Adi Dravidas* are also given to beef-eating. Hinduism is a tolerant religion. But tolerant though it is, it is intolerant of beef-eating on the part of its devotees. You must therefore agitate and agitate till every *Adi Dravida* has given up beef-eating and the slaughter of cows. Make this temple at once a seat of devotion, centre of learning and a centre from which the force should spread to every *Adi Dravida* and subsequently to every Hindu and still more subsequently to every Indian. You have said in your address that khaddar itself cannot be successful without the removal of the curse of untouchability.

Here there is a confusion of ideas. The real untouchability will never vanish from this land until khaddar is worn. Let me inform you that there are even now people in India who are poorer and more downtrodden than many *Adi Dravidas*. Are there not many *Adi Dravidas* that I have seen in the course of my tour suffering for want of food? But in many parts of India I can show you many who are not

called *Adi Dravidas* but do not get even a single meal a day. This untouchability, of which you complain, has not to go so much as the untouchabilities of those dying millions. Their untouchability is in one way a far more serious affair than the one with which we are placed. So it pleases me to find mention made in your address to having a weaving institute for *Adi Dravida* boys and I appreciate your invitation to me to help this weaving institute. I shall do so with the greatest pleasure if you will fulfil the conditions that are imposed on every weaving institute which seeks my assistance. The first and the foremost condition I propose to mention to you is that in the weaving institute nothing but hand-spun yarn can be used. If you are serious about this, place yourself in correspondence with the Secretary, Mr. S. Ramanathan, who is in charge of the All-India Spinners' Association in this part of the country. You will find him accessible at all times, ready to render any assistance that is in his power. He and I exist for that purpose. As you are about to make this temple a centre of devotion let me also commend to you the two things which are necessary for our children, i.e., the learning of Sanskrit and Hindi which are necessary for our children, i.e., the learning of Sanskrit and Hindi which may be helpful in life.

The Hindu, 12-9-1927

42. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, CHIDAMBARAM

September 11, 1927

MR. CHAIRMAN AND FRIENDS,

I thank you for all these addresses and the different purses. I thank you also for the delicate consideration with which you have saved the reading of all the addresses, as you are aware that I have to catch the train immediately after 7 o'clock and therefore speak against time. The saving of the time which therefore was caused by the saving of reading of the addresses is all the more appreciable. I tell you that it does not give me satisfaction when I have to go away from you in such a short time. Your fame had preceded my coming here through the beautiful story that Mr. C. Rajagopalachariar wrote through the pages of *Young India*. I know the fame of this place of yours. Ever since that time I know that Chidambaram must be a place of pilgrimage for me. I have never claimed to be the original satyagrahi. What I have claimed is the application of that doctrine on almost a universal scale. And yet it remains to be seen and

demonstrated that it is a doctrine which is capable of application by thousands and thousands of people in all ways. I know therefore that mine is an experiment still in the making. And it therefore always keeps me humble and rooted to the soil. In that state of humility I always cling to every example of satyagraha that comes under my notice as a child clings to its mother's breast. And so when I hear or read the story of Nandanar and his lofty satyagraha and his great success, my head bows before his spirit. All the day long I have felt elevated to be able to be in a place hallowed by the holy feet of Nandanar. It will not be without a wrench that I shall be leaving this place in a few minutes' time. But it gave me great joy and I considered it to be a great honour that the very first act I was called upon to perform was to lay the foundation-stone of the gateway of the temple that has been erected in memory of the great saint. How I wish that it could be said about the people of Chidambaram that at least they knew no distinction between Brahmins and *Panchamas*. If the people of Chidambaram would rise to that lofty height they would have done nothing more than what the *Gita* expects every Hindu to do. In the eye of God there are no touchables or untouchables. Brahmins are called Brahmins not for their superiority, not for their ability to lord it over others, but because of their ability to serve mankind by their knowledge and their ability to efface themselves in the act of service. Theirs is the privilege, theirs is the duty of serving their fellow-brethren. They cannot do so in its fullness unless they renounce every earthly reward. By his indomitable spirit and by his overwhelming faith in the infinite presence of God, Nandanar was able to bear down the haughty spirit of the haughty Brahmins and showed that he in spirit was infinitely superior to the persecutors who considered him the curse amongst mankind. But let the *Panchamas*, the *Adi Dravida* brothers and sisters, profiting by the example of Nandanar, live up to the spirit which they have inherited. Nandanar broke down every barrier and won his way to freedom not by freak, not by lustre, but by the purest form of self-suffering and did not swear against his persecutors. He would not even condescend to ask from his persecutors what were his dues. But he shamed them into doing justice by his lofty prayers and by the purity of his character, and, if I may commit it into human language, he compelled God Himself to descend and made Him open the eyes of his persecutors. What Nandanar did in his time and in his own person, it is open to every one of us to do today. I wish that you, my hearers, will catch

something of the spirit of Nandanar, and if so many of us could possibly imitate Nandanar and assimilate the spark of his spirit, we can make the land, a land again of holy people. I hope and pray that the temple with which the trustees have identified me today will keep green the memory of this great saint by keeping the atmosphere about the temple always pure. I would very much like to leave the atmosphere about this meeting at this stage filled with the spirit of Nandanar. But it would be wrong perhaps on my part if I do not say a few words showing how we can illustrate the spirit of Nandanar in our daily life.

In my humble opinion we cannot better translate that spirit than by clothing ourselves with khaddar in spirit. I am not saying we can imitate Nandanar by wearing khaddar merely. But I say that we must have the khadi spirit. Even a blackguard, even a prostitute will be expected to wear khaddar since he or she, the blackguard, must wear something as they eat wheat and rice in this country in common with us. But the khadi spirit means that we must know the meaning of what the wearing of khaddar carries with it. Every time that we take our khaddar garment early in the morning to wear for going out we should remember that we are doing so in the name of *Daridra-rayana* and for the sake of saving the millions of India. If we have the khadi spirit in us we should serve ourselves with simplicity in every walk of life. Khadi spirit means illimitable patience. For those who know anything of production of khaddar know how patiently those spinners and weavers have to toil. Even so must we have patience while spinning the thread of swaraj. Khadi spirit means also equally illimitable faith. So must we have that illimitable faith in truth and non-violence ultimately conquering every obstacle in our way. Khadi spirit means fellow-feeling with every living being on earth. It means the complete renunciation of everything that is likely to harm our fellow creatures. And if we are to cultivate that spirit amongst the millions of our countrymen, what a land this India of ours would be!

I am well aware that khadi cannot compete with the other articles of commerce on their own platform and on their own terms. Even as satyagraha is a weapon unique by itself and not one of the ordinary weapons wielded by politicians so is khadi a unique article of commerce which will not and cannot succeed on terms common to other articles. If khadi is asked for in the khadi spirit that I have endeavoured to describe to you, khadi has illimitable capacities and it would outstand every other article that you see in India today. You

will therefore perhaps understand why I do not appreciate all these khadi purses that you are giving me. I know that if you had a tenth of the faith in the khadi which I have, you will not give a few hundreds or few thousands of your plenty but you will satisfy me till there is no money required for khadi. I was really distressed this morning when I discovered that a friend who is conducting a khaddar store here, not for making money but for the love of khaddar, is incurring a loss of Rs. 200 year after year. Surely it is the A B C of patriotism, it is the A B C of your love for these starving millions, that you should all wear khaddar. I was equally distressed to find Swami Sahajananda just as I came here telling me that the reason why his boys and girls were not clothed in khaddar was because the persons responsible did not patronize khaddar and it is just the reverse of the khaddar spirit which I have just described to you. In the face of these facts, you will pardon me for saying that even the intrinsic value of these purses of yours suffers. Let me pass on to the drink evil.

You must ask those here, who are given to the drink habit, to give up this cursed drink and those who are not given to the drink habit should not remain satisfied, if they have any real love for their less unfortunate brethren, till they have been rid of this curse and total prohibition is established in this land. So must you get rid of this disgraceful and immoral *Devadasi* institution. You should be no party whatsoever to child marriages and harbouring child widows in your homes. It is time that we should make these elementary reforms in our society without the slightest delay. I thank you once more for all these addresses and the purses and the patience with which you have listened to me.

The Hindu, 13-9-1927

43. LETTER TO GANGABEHN VAIDYA

Silence Day [After *September 11, 1927*]¹

CHI. GANGABEHN (VAIDYA),

I got your letter. There is nothing more to suggest regarding what you are doing. Your handwriting has improved. It will become steady with practice. There are still some errors in the language. Revise the letters after writing and have them corrected by others who

¹ From the contents; *vide* the preceding item

know more than you do. If you will be humble thus and particular about correctness of the language, it will improve gradually without any effort on your part. You will not have to spend a single minute for that.

“5..” should be written 500. A point is used to denote a nasal sound. A zero is indicated with a circle. Here is how you have written the numbers and how they should be written.

5. .	500
1. .	100
5.	50
5.	50
1.	10

Units should be placed under units, tens under tens and so on.

Blessing from

BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 8823. Courtesy: Gangabehn Vaidya. Also G.N. 11379

44. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

September 12, 1927

Unrevised

CHI. MIRA,

I could not help sending you a wire of thanksgiving yesterday. These have been somewhat anxious days. Though I have not written much nor telegraphed to you, my spirit has hovered about and watched over you. I knew that if I sent you a wire daily, you would like it but I thought that I must not. Letter-writing has been almost impossible these trying days. They leave me just enough time to attend to the programme before me. I have been pouring my soul out to the various audiences that leaves me little energy for anything else. On the top of that come the reading of Miss Mayo’s book and the heavy article¹ on it.

But it has been matter of the greatest relief to me to know that Jamnalalji was with you. Thank God it all seems to be over now. It has been a good test.

¹ *Vide* “Drain Inspector’s Report”, 15-9-1927.

And Ramanama! If that has become a living reality with you it is a great thing indeed. But you shall give me your experiences when you are stronger. I want them all and I want to know also why you have been delirious or hysterical. Of course often we do not know.

Now you will go gently.¹ Take all the rest you need. Watch yourself and if any change in your food is necessary, make it. Find out the cause of the enlarged spleen. Stay in Poona as long as you like. Ask for the convenience you need. What you cannot mention to anybody else, you will mention to me. I am faring all right. Rajagopalachari protects me as much as any human being can. He wears himself out in trying to shield me. And I know that the strain is too much for him, but I do not interfere. If God wants this tour to be finished, He will keep those who must be, from all harm. You are therefore not to worry about me. Unless you think otherwise send this to mother.

With love,

BAPU

SHRI[MATI] MIRABEHN
C/O SETH JAMNALAL BAJAJ
KALBADEVI ROAD
BOMBAY

From the original: C.W. 5274. Courtesy: Mirabehn

45. LETTER TO GANGABEHN VAIDYA

Silence Day [Before September 12, 1927]²

CHI. GANGABEHN (VAIDYA),

I have your letter. Your Sanskrit writing is very good indeed. Your Gujarati writing too has improved.

I do not wish that you should spend more time in acquiring knowledge, but I would not consider such a desire on your part improper and would help you to fulfil it. If, comparing yourself with other women who are educated, you feel you lack and desire education like theirs, you have a right within limits to acquire it.

¹ Mirabehn explains : “After the severe attack of malaria, I was on my way to Poona for recouping my health.”

² From the reference to the addressee’s going for relief work; *vide* “Letter to Ashram Women”, 12-9-1927.

If, however, your *atman* has come to be completely at peace with itself, I would wish that you should give yourself wholly to any one activity you like. But this is a matter of the heart. One can do nothing but keep on trying until the heart agrees to give up such efforts.

I see that flood relief work will keep you busy for some time.

Blessings from

BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 8822. Courtesy: Gangabehn Vaidya

46. LETTER TO JETHALAL JOSHI

Bhadrapad Krishna 1 [September 12, 1927]¹

BHAI JETHALALJI,

Your letter. I would advise you to see the Secretary of the Ashram and there take up some work if you find any. There is little possibility of my coming to the Ashram during this year.

Yours,

MOHANDAS

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 1354

47. LETTER TO PRABHASHANKER PATTANI

Monday, Bhadarva Vad 1 [September 12, 1927]²

SUJNA BHAISHRI,

I had duly received your letter about the problems of life. I have held my peace not to oblige you but because I must. I have understood what you write to me. If I can avoid it, I do not want to make a mistake. Since I did not want to pat myself on the back, I considered it proper to keep silent; but may I not say that you were the person responsible for that decision? But this is neither here nor there.

What I wanted to write to you was that you should take care of your health, because I expect many things from you. If you have not

¹ The year is inferred from the reference to Gandhiji's inability to go to the Ashram, as also from the discussion about the work to be taken up by the addressee.

² The year is inferred from the reference to Mayavaram.

read my last speech concerning Mysore, I can send a copy, the hope being that you may carry out as many as you can of the suggestions made in it.

I am getting along as usual. I am writing this from Mayavaram. I am not sending you my itinerary. It will be all right if you write to me c/o the Ashram.

Do you work on the spinning-wheel?

What progress had Lady Pattani made in accepting *pankora*¹ for her garments?

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 3214. Courtesy: Mahesh Pattani

48. LETTER TO ASHRAM WOMEN

*Silence Day, Bhadarva Vad 1 [September 12, 1927]*²

DEAR SISTERS,

I should not say I have your letter—it was little more than a note. I learn that you have appointed Gangabehn Jhaveri as your President, since Kashibehn has gone to Rajkot. The fact that you can get as many presidents as you need is some proof of your ability to run your organi-zation. It would be a better proof still when you respect your President with all your heart and when all of you work in perfect unison in running the organization. Menfolk have not as yet been able to manage such things well. When we look at the affairs of our Ashram we find that we are not yet trained well enough to carry on the administration of the Ashram without quarrelling among ourselves. So it is not surprising if you also have not attained that stage. But if you persevere, I am sure you will acquire the necessary capacity. Try your best to get rid of factions and cliques. Only by striving for better things can we make progress.

It is good that Gangabehn senior has gone away on relief work.

My work continues to make progress, though slowly.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3667

¹ A variety of coarse cloth

² From the reference to Gangabehn Jhaveri becoming President of the Ashram Women

49. LETTER TO GANGABEHN JHAVERI

[About September 12, 1927]¹

CHI. GANGABEHN JHAVERI,

Even though I owe you no letter, I am writing this. It is good you have got the presidentship. Show yourself worthy of it. Give all your attention to its duties. If difficulties crop up, overcome them with courage. Don't be baffled by anything.

As I write this, I remember that as a matter of fact I owe you a letter. I did not, could not, reply to your question about Marathi. Take the help you need for learning Sanskrit, wherever available. Actually, since you know grammar, you can do a lot on your own. And the same is true about Hindi.

Improve your knowledge of Gujarati, Hindi and Sanskrit and then go ahead in reading. As for work, all other things come in after you have mastered the science of the spinning-wheel. That science of course includes ginning, carding, spinning, repairing the spinning-wheel, straightening the spindle, making a cord for connecting the wheel with the spindle, mounting the *sadi*² on to the spindle, etc. The body, too, should be well developed.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3126

50. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

[September 13, 1927]³

CHI. MIRA,

I have just a few moments for writing to you. There is no wire from you since Saturday. I therefore presume that you are quite well now and in Bombay. The Monday letter was sent to Bombay as per your instructions.

¹ *Vide* the preceding item.

² A small piece of fine cloth wound around the spindle to secure the position of the cord or to prevent the disc from moving back

³ From the reference to the "Monday letter". (which is the one dated 12-9-1927)

Your letter in your own hand after the illness was perfectly written and quite legible. In fact the writing was even better than usual.

Yes, the illness was a blessing. The weakness you will soon get over. If you go to Poona, you will take long walks and visit the dairy there in the company of one of our very best friends there. You will love Prof. Trivedi as you see him. You will befriend his boy Manu and you will see the Seva Sadan and the Society's quarters. But that by and by.

With love,

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 5275. Courtesy: Mirabehn

51. LETTER TO KATHERINE MAYO

AS AT SABARMATI,
ON TOUR,
September 13, 1927

DEAR FRIEND,

It was through Mr. Karl Placht that I received some time ago a copy of your book. *Mother India*, which he sent me with your permission. I really get little time to read any literature but as your book attracted much attention here and gave rise to very bitter and angry comment, and as many correspondents drew my attention to the fact that you had made copious references to my writings and urged me to give my opinion upon your book I made time to read it through. I am sorry to have to inform you that the book did not leave on my mind at all a nice impression. I have asked the Publishers of *Young India* to send you a copy of my review¹ of your book. If you think that I have done any injustice to you take care to draw my attention to it I shall feel thankful to you. As I have not your address by me on my tour, I am taking the liberty of sending this to you through Mr. Karl Placht.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

MISS KATHERINE MAYO

From a copy: Katherine Mayo Papers. Courtesy: Yale University Library, New Haven, Connecticut, U.S.A.

¹Vide "Drain Inspector's Report", 15-9-1927.

52. LETTER TO VIJAY SINGH PATHIK

Bhadrapad Krishna 2 [September 13, 1927]¹

BHAI PATHIKJI,

I got your letter today. I had sent a reply to your last letter. I am surprised that you did not get it. There has been no change in my attitude. If there was I would not conceal it. You may come over here whenever you wish to. I shall be touring till the 10th of October, not farther than one day's run from Madras. You will be able to locate me from Madras.

I have written nothing to the Government to save Abdul Rashid from the gallows. I have certainly asked Hindus to forgive him. What do you expect me to do for the Kakori case² prisoners? What people should I appeal to?

Yours,

MOHANDAS

From *Bapu, maine kya dekha, kya samjha*, p. 125

53. SPEECH AT MAYAVARAM

September 13, 1927

LADIES AND FRIENDS,

I thank for all these several addresses and the several purses. If you want me to make a fairly detailed reply to all the important points referred to in those addresses, it is necessary that you should keep perfect silence during the time when I am speaking.

At the outset I have to tender you the same apology that I tendered at Cuddalore; and that was to ask you, out of your generosity, to pardon me for my having been not accessible to all and sundry that came to me during my rest hours. If I could have had the strength, I would have loved to talk to the citizens in this town to

¹ The year is inferred from the reference to Gandhiji's tour programme and to Abdul Rashid, the assassin of Swami Shradhdhanand.

² An armed dacoity committed on August 9, 1925 near Kakori railway station when cash and currency were plundered from the guard's van of a train going to Lucknow from Moradabad; one person was killed. The dacoity, it was alleged, had been committed by certain members of the Hindustan Republican Association of United Provinces, the object of which was the establishment of a 'Federated Republic of the United States of India'. Of the 21 accused, two were acquitted, three were sentenced to death, one to transportation for life and the rest to terms of imprisonment varying from five to 14 years.

cross-question them and to understand their several viewpoints; but in the present weak state of my health, such a thing is not possible.

Some of you may perhaps recall that this is not my first visit to Mayavaram. I have a vivid recollection of 1915, when I had the privilege of talking to some of you on *swadeshi*.¹ But I must not detain you by recalling to you my pleasant recollections of that time.

I congratulate you on your work towards the uplift of the so-called 'untouchables'. . . .

But I must this evening speak to you on a subject which is very dear to me, but on which I have not as yet spoken during this tour of mine. I would like to speak to you on that subject this evening because it was forced on my attention yesterday morning. I want to speak to you upon the sanitation of this place. Your municipality very kindly presented me an address in which you have mentioned some of my activities in which I am interested as a humanitarian, as a reformer. I reckon sanitation also as one of the important things which a humanitarian or a reformer must tackle. Within three or four minutes' walk of the place where you have kindly housed me, I endeavoured unsuspectingly to go out for a walk thinking that it was a beautiful grove by the side of a lovely pond. A rustic bamboo foot bridge drew my attention to walk over it. I crossed it, turned to the right and walked with my companion but a few paces when you may imagine what I saw. What I saw was a sight too horrible to talk about; and the stench that was coming out of it was suffocating. I saw the water of that pond was being defiled in a disgusting manner, when, at the same time, a woman was filling her pot with that same water. And, in order to get the morning walk, I was obliged to go out for some distance in a motor-car. I felt deeply hurt; I felt as if I was wounded. It recalled to me the sights that I used to see in the principal streets of the Madras city itself in 1915. Surely there is something that is terribly wrong in this state of affairs. The first condition of any municipal life is decent sanitation and an unfailing supply of pure water. Do not for a moment consider that either of these two things require any great outlay of money. Both these things are capable of being secured without your having to spend any money at all, if only you have the will to secure them to the citizens. But it requires a vivid sense of your municipal duties. Membership of a municipal board

¹ *Vide* "Speech at Reception at Mayavaram", May 1, 1915.

must not be treated as a place of privilege. No man dare enter a municipality except in the spirit of a scavenger. But what I see so often in the papers is only wrangling over municipal elections and the fight between the Brahmins and the Non-Brahmins arising out of this wrangling. If you will only remember that you are the servants of the people of Mayavaram and not their masters and that you are entrusted with the solemn duty to keep the town in perfect sanitation for the benefit of the people, you will start with a shovel in your hand and set about keeping the water pure and preserving sanitation on the land given to the poor. You have got in your midst so many schools maintained by you; give them a holiday and ask the students of those schools to go about cleaning the streets and also telling the people themselves to keep the streets clean and the water pure. Surely our learning and all the lessons that we receive on sanitation in schools are useless, unless we reduce them to practice in our daily life; and I urge you not to say to yourselves that our people will not listen to these appeals and will not change their habits. The place where I was myself born had terribly impure dungheaps in the streets about fifty years back. But there came to that place an administrator; and, be it said to his credit, he was an Englishman. He removed the dungheaps in a day and there was no protest to his doing so from any of the people. Nor did he use his official authority to impose his imperious will on an unwilling people. But he reasoned with the people, bore down all opposition and carried out his reforms. I have cited this instance before you because I am a determined opponent of this British administration but we have yet got to learn much from the Britisher in the matter of sanitation. I ask you to shake off your lethargy, to take your courage in your hands; and you can easily carry out this reform.

I must now proceed to the very long and well argued address presented to me on behalf of the 'suppressed' society. That address isolates itself from other addresses of the kind, in that it refers not so much to the social disabilities, as it does to the civil disabilities of that community. It casts very serious reflections upon the landlord class. It charges them with having reduced their class to serfdom. It charges the administration with having closed the door against their holding even menial offices. It complains of want of assistance from everybody, except [for] a few isolated instances. It says that, whereas their average income is never more than Rs. 40 a year, their expenses are never less than Rs. 120 per year. It complains that, being rooted to the soil, they have to remain without any occupation at all for a major

portion of the year.

I do not know what truth there is in all these allegations. As it is, I can only give these friends of mine the consolation that I will endeavour to verify these statements in their address. Generally speaking, I may assure them of my fullest sympathy and I certainly associate myself with the remark that I notice in their address that they are the first holders of the land in this country.

But there is no cause for the spirit of despair that runs throughout the address. They, in common with the rest, cannot help profiting by the great awakening that has now come over the country. At the present moment, it is true that that awakening has taken a sad turn. In our blindness, we seem to think that each group, each section, each class, each caste should pull its way by itself without the one co-operating with the other. So we are torn by internal dissensions. But these dissensions are only temporary and are bound to die out; and, when the cloud is really lifted and the day dawns, the 'suppressed' classes are bound to partake in the rejoicings that will come in the wake. And in order to partake in the rejoicings at the time of the advent of that dawn, let them understand that, after all, everyone shall have ultimately to depend upon self-help. They have but to become conscious of their own strength which their numbers and their occupation give them; and they will become an irresistible force. Immediately they realize that they are slaves of nobody, and that, after all, without their labour, the lands they are cultivating will become a horrible wilderness, then the day is theirs.

But I would say to the landlord class, that if the allegations made against them in the address are true to any extent, it reflects the greatest discredit upon them. Let them not crush under their feet the shoulders on which they ride. Let them consider these labouring classes, who alone make their barren fields appear smiling with rich crops, let the landlord class consider these labourers as one of their own family and allow them to share in the happiness to which the labours of these people contribute so much. It is wrong, it is sinful to consider our own labourers as 'untouchables'. Let us wipe out this shame.

But I have yet to talk to you of another shame. I saw some friends this afternoon from whose class the *Devadasis* are drawn. I saw some of these sisters also and I engaged them in a very serious conversation. And, as I was talking to them and understanding the

hidden meaning of this thing, my whole soul rose against the system in its entirety. In calling them *Devadasis* we insult God Himself under the sacred name of religion; and we commit a double crime in that we use these sisters of ours to serve our lust and take, in the same breath, foul as it is, the name of God. To think that there should be a class of people given to this kind of immoral service and that there is another class of people in this country who perpetuate the continuance of such a system, makes one despair of life itself. And I assure you that, as I was talking to them, there was no evil in their eyes and that they were capable of as fine perceptions and as pure feelings as any other woman in the world. What difference can there be between them and our own blood-sisters? And if we will not allow our own blood-sisters for such immoral uses, how dare we then use these women for such purposes? Let the Hindus, who are connected in any way with this evil, purge themselves of it. The existence of such an evil in our society saps its foundations. The majority of these sisters, or all of them, have promised me to retrace their steps on certain conditions; and I promised them that I would make it convenient and possible for them to so retrace their steps. God willing, I shall fulfil my promise and let them also do their part. If they cannot fulfil those conditions, I shall blame not them, but the society in which their lot is cast. It is up to you to extend the hand of fellowship to these sisters. It is up to you to see that they are reclaimed from this life of shame. I know that, when again they have to face temptations, it may become a too irresistible force. But, if man will restrain his lust and if society should disapprove of this practice, it is surely possible that they will not go astray.

I thank you for giving me this very patient hearing. I know that you will excuse my straight talk to you this evening. Though, during the period of my stay here I have had every attention bestowed upon me by so many of the kind friends that were by my side, I must own that the two days of my stay here were sad days for me. This *Devadasi* problem which was brought to my notice yesterday and the state of insanitation that I personally observed, caused me intense grief; and in talking to you in the manner in which I did, I endeavoured to lighten my grief by making you share in it. I shall hope that you will share that grief and lighten my burden by following my suggestions.

As is usual at all these meetings, if you will continue to be silent, volunteers will go round to all of you making collections and you may pay them whatever you are willing to pay.

In answer to a question put to him by a member in the meeting at the time the volunteers were going round, Mahatmaji replied :

A friend has asked me, and very legitimately, how these purses that are being received are to be utilized. The usual custom is to utilize the purse collected in any province in that province itself. But, when it is collected in a very rich place as in Bombay, it is usual to spend it in a place where it is most needed. In the largest part of the country, all over India, all the money that is collected goes into the hands of spinners, carders and weavers. No one is called upon to leave his present occupation, if he has one, and to take to spinning or carding or weaving; so, it is only the poorest classes who are being served by the workers. It has not been as yet found possible to distribute the whole of the purses amongst the spinners, carders and weavers alone. The act of organizing the villages for weaving and spinning takes a portion of this money. It is impossible in a poor country like ours to get an army of workers who can afford to devote themselves to this act of organizing, without any remuneration being paid to them. Though we have in this movement scores of volunteers who not only do not get anything but themselves pay something towards this movement, it is not possible to get the 15,000 people, that we are now employing, for nothing. Roughly speaking, I may tell you that anything between twenty to twenty-five per cent of the total expenses is spent in the work of organization alone. The remaining seventy-five to eighty per cent of the money goes directly into the hands of the really famine-stricken poor as wages for the work that they do. And in this manner, throughout the length and breadth of India, 15,000 villages have been thus organized. Over 50,000 spinners all over India are at present getting each between one rupee and a rupee and a half a month¹, whereas, before hand-spinning came, they were getting nothing at all. And, as ten spinners feed one weaver, at least 5,000 weavers are each getting between Rs. 15 and Rs. 20 a month and, side by side with all this, has been resuscitated the old art of printing which had all but died out. And hundreds of printers, dyers, laundrymen and others are earning now an honest livelihood. The object before the All-India Spinners' Association is to reduce the organizing expenses from 25 per cent to somewhere about 15 per cent at least. Let me also inform you that 1,000 to 1,500 men, who are working to organize the villages, are living honest and useful lives; and I repeat what I said elsewhere

¹ The source has "day".

that, if khadi becomes universal in India, it opens out a good source of livelihood to thousands of young men who are in want of employment. If it is possible to have achieved what had been done with but 15 or 20 lakhs of rupees, you may realize what will be possible if we get all the 60 crores¹ of rupees that are now being paid for the cloth imported from outside the country.

The Hindu, 15-9-1927

54. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

[After September 13, 1927]²

CHI. MIRA,

I had four letters together yesterday and one I have today. I have so much confidence in Jamnalalji as a man and in Dr. Dalal as a surgeon and physician that I have no anxiety. Absence of wire from you means that no operation has been necessary as yet. You will buy the glasses that may be necessary.

Yes, the 9 o'clock silence³ is a great thing. It was Kaka's suggestion. I had no hesitation about its adoption.

Subbiah is still on sick leave though he is now convalescent. He will take about a fortnight before he can rejoin me. Devdas came only today after leaving Subbiah at his father-in-law's.

With love,

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 5276. Courtesy: Mirabehn

¹ The source has "lakhs".

² In Mahadev Desai's letter to Mira dated September 12, 1927, he says that Devdas was attending on Subbiah who was ill.

³ Explaining this Mahadev Desai in his letter dated September 8, 1927 wrote to Mira: "Bapu has decided to go into silence every evening at 9 p.m., that there may be no engagements and no interviews after that hour. The vow is tentatively for two months after which he will decide if it is to be continued for life. There are two exceptions, illness of self and others and travelling."

55. LETTER TO O. G. VILLARD

AS AT SABARMATI,
September 14, 1927

DEAR FRIEND,

I thank you for your letter and copy of Miss Mayo's book¹. A friend of hers had already sent me a copy. I have now read it and written for *Young India* a fairly long review. I have asked the publishers to send you a marked copy of *Young India*. In the circumstances, I hope, you do not consider it necessary for me to write anything special. If, however, on reading my review you consider that there is any point requiring elucidation please let me know. I read your review with a great deal of interest.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

OSWALD GARRISON VILLARD, ESQ.
20, VESSEY STREET
NEW YORK

From a photostat: C.W. 9228

56. LETTER TO N. M. KHARE

*Wednesday, Bhadarva Vad 3 [September 14, 1927]*²

BHAI PANDITJI,

I got your letter about prayers. Since Kaka has written already I do not write more. There is but one ideal behind our prayers. But we must act according to the limits of our capacity. We should deceive neither the people nor our own selves. If many do not arrive at 4 o'clock, let us give up our claim that we hold the prayer at that hour, and keep the time that suits all. But once this hour has been fixed, everyone ought to attend. Those who are devoted to the present hour of 4 o'clock should keep up their practice themselves, get up at four and engage themselves in any activity which they choose.

If all the people do not like the *Ramayana*, by all means discontinue it.

¹ *Mother India*

² From the similarity between the contents of this and the letter dated "Mayavaram, September 13, 1927" from Mahadev Desai to Khare

Do not think about what I like, but take people's capacity into consideration and introduce whatever changes you wish. Do nothing in haste.

I see no advantage in extending the time for reading the *Gita*. At the most it takes five minutes to read three long chapters. I very much like the 14-day reading programme. But even in this matter, do what is agreeable to all of you.

Blessings from

BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 252. Courtesy: LakshmiBehn Khare

57. SPEECH AT KUMBAKONAM

September 14, 1927

MR. CHAIRMAN AND FRIENDS,

I thank you for all the addresses and purses. Apart from the usual addresses, I see here an address from the Hindi Prachar Office, Kumbakonam. I congratulate you on having a branch of the Hindi Prachar Office of Madras here. Had Hindi been more popular in this part of the country, you could not have me speak in English and translate it into Tamil but to speak in Hindi and translate it. I understand that though a fair sprinkling of students are learning Hindi, it is still to be supported so far as the finances are concerned, from the central office. I think as a matter of fact, in an important centre like this there should be far greater earnestness for the study of Hindi and that the whole of the financial burden should be borne locally. It is now commonly recognized by all lovers of the country that if we are to establish a closer contact between the North and the South, a knowledge of Hindi has to be cultivated, especially among the leaders of the country.

I was pleased and grateful to receive the purse from the students also. They were anxious that I should address them separately. But they gladly relieved me of that responsibility when they realized that it would be a great strain on me to address two meetings separately. I am conscious you are aware that in many places I am obliged to address more than one meeting. I have to do so whenever it becomes inevitable for a variety of reasons. But wherever I can decently avoid these obligations, I do so. And I do so because I am anxious to go through the appointed tour without any breakdown. But though I

have not been able to address students separately, let them understand that my heart is always with them. I would like to impress upon the student world the necessity for having pure character. Without a pure character as a foundation, they would not be able to rise to the expectations that have been raised in the nation about the students. All the world over, whether today or in the distant past, the experience is that it is the rising generation that has been able to battle against the entrenched prejudices and superstitions. They are therefore to be found always in the forefront of reforms and the battle for freedom. For the rest, I would advise the students to study the different addresses that I have been giving to them wherever it has been possible during this tour.

To the Municipal and Taluk Board, I would respectfully commend the reply I made yesterday to the Municipal Council at Mayavaram. It was by accident that I happened to draw the attention of the Municipal Council to the terrible insanitation that I witnessed and as a matter of fact the remarks that I passed there are applicable to almost all the municipal councils in this presidency. Nevertheless my remarks do not lose any of their force, because the evil I draw attention to was almost universal. It is high time that municipal councillors understand the responsibility attached to the office. They must not be used as stepping-stones to fame or renown. In the course of having to advise different friends in different parts of India, it has been my painful duty to study the working of the many municipal councils, and I have discovered that much of their time is wasted in mutual recriminations and wranglings. I have noticed that in many municipalities corruption is rampant during election time, whereas every municipal councillor should consider himself a trustee and custodian of public health and public moral. I wish that the municipal councils take to heart blemishes that I have drawn their attention to and trust that they would make serious endeavour to remove those blemishes. This place is renowned for its holiness and learning. It is not difficult and it is not too much to expect to make this place a model so far as sanitation is concerned.

The mention of the learning that exists in Kumbakonam brings me to a subject on which I want to occupy a few minutes of your time. Unhappily at the present moment our learning—I mean the Sanskrit learning—has become synonymous with superstition. I understand that the very earnest remarks I made before the students in the Pachaiyappa's Hall have given offence to the pundits of this place.

They have written to me asking for an appointment. I have sent them the message—I do not know whether it reached them—that though I can ill afford I shall be glad to receive them at 8 o'clock this night. But I would like to appeal with all the earnestness at my command that whatever I said to the students was said after fullest deliberation and I see nothing to alter a single word in that. As a *Sanatani* Hindu, as I call myself to be one, I say with great deliberation that untouchability as we practise today has no warrant in Hinduism and that it is a blot on Hindu society. I say in all humility but with equal firmness that if we, Hindus, do not take care to rid ourselves of this blot, Hinduism itself is in serious danger of being blotted out. A religion whose two great maxims are “*Satyannasti paro dharmah*”¹, “*Ahimsa paramo dharmah*”², a religion that is broadbased on fundamental truth and fundamental love, cannot possibly tolerate untouchability because one is born in particular surroundings. I say also with greatest emphasis that there is no warrant in this Hinduism that I have defined to you for child widowhood. Marriage, it is universally acknowledged, gives a status and a change in life. There can be no such thing as a sacred bond on the part of a girl of tender years who is only fit to sit in her mother's or father's lap. And if fathers, who are blind to all affection springing out of parental love, give away their daughters of tender years in marriage, it is not marriage except a stone being married to a man. Therefore I say that there is no such thing as a child widow because there is no such thing as child marriage.³

I have no hesitation to repeat the advice that, if there are students who want to be married, they will be performing an act of charity towards the girls of India to seek out child widows when they have outgrown their childhood and they will be doing a service to the country if they make up their minds to end child widowhood by refusing child marriage. When a thing is manifestly immoral and repugnant to all reason and all sense of justice, it is wrong to seek shelter under Sanskrit texts of doubtful validity and doubtful authority. Shastras are given to elevate us and light our path towards perfection. Who can possibly offer a moral defence of the painful system of *Devadasis* and of the parent who would consign his daughter to a life of shame and infamy in the name of religion?

¹ “There is no religion higher than Truth.”

² “Ahimsa is the highest dharma.”

³ What follows is from *The Hindu*, 16-9-1927.

I have been told that I am tender when speaking before Christian audiences or Mussalman audiences, whereas I am not at all tender about Hindu religion and Hindu weaknesses. If it is a crime, I plead willingly guilty. About Christianity and Islam I do not claim to know as well as I claim to know Hinduism. Christians and Mussalmans, no matter how open I may be, are likely to misunderstand me but there is no such possibility in Hinduism and I have no fear of being misunderstood by my Hindu people. Therefore courtesy demands that I should be tender before Christian and Mussalman audiences, but it would be totally wrong on my part to be tender in speaking to Hindu audiences about Hinduism and Hindu blemishes. Even as a skilful surgeon knowing his patient and knowing his defects ruthlessly uses his knife to cure the wound, as a reformer, claiming to be saturated at least as well as the tallest among the Hindus, it would be totally wrong if I out of false courtesy and false tenderness do not put emphasis on the defects and weaknesses which are ruining the Hindu society. And I am thankful to be able to say that during a long course of public life I have not been often misunderstood by Hindus or Hindu audiences; but whether I retain the affection of my countrymen or whether I forfeit their affection, the path of duty is absolutely clear before me. Taking all the care that it would be humanly possible for me to take not to give unnecessary offence and not to cause unnecessary displeasure, I must continue to give out what I feel and speak with absolute truth and absolute fairness and so I suggest as humbly as I can to all the learned pundits in this place and to every thinking Hindu, man or woman, to reconsider their views and understand the bearings of untouchability, child-marriages, child widows and *Devadasis* and ask themselves whether there can be any warrant for all these in a religion inspired by *rishis* who went into endless austerities and based their faith upon the teachings of the *Bhagavad Gita*.

I must now come to the spinning-wheel. I am glad that you are, as much as you can, supporting the spinning-wheel. I am glad that there is no difference of opinion about the necessity of the spinning-wheel. You have got in your midst the Saurashtra weavers. Your capacity for khadi service is limitless. But it is not enough that you give me some money when I appear before you. It is not enough that some of you wear khadi on occasions; but it is necessary if you have real fellow-feeling for these starving millions of India, you all throw away you foreign cloth and take to khadi to ward off suffering and

poverty. It is equally your duty to see that this curse of drunkenness is removed from this country. If we would but take personal interest in the welfare of our bretheren who are given to drink, you should insist upon total prohibition and, to my mind, the day is not far off when India would become dry.

As is usual in all meetings, volunteers will go in your midst and collect contributions from those who desire to contribute. It is usual also to auction all the jewellery and any costly thing that I might receive in the course of my journey and, I propose to auction the ring which I have got now. There was a silver plate which is from my kind host (Mr. Pantulu Aiyer) but unfortunately I have not brought it here.

The Hindu, 15-9-1927 and 16-9-1927

58. DISCUSSION WITH PUNDITS, KUMBAKONAM

September 14, 1927

Several leading pundits of this place had a Conference with Mahatma Gandhi last night. The pundits, it is understood, protested against the recent remarks of Mr. Gandhi about child widows and their marriage and the question of untouchability. They contended Mr. Gandhi's statement that those customs had no sanction in the Hindu Shastras was incorrect and that they could cite authorities.

Mr. Gandhi explained to them the proper way of upholding Hinduism was not by quoting isolated texts but by acting through the inner voice of conscience. Nothing that was opposed to truth and love could be dharma according to Hindu Shastras. He appealed to them to co-operate with him in his work of conserving Hinduism against the destroying influences of evil customs and not to help the destruction of Hinduism by putting obstacles in the way of reform.

The Bombay Chronicle, 16-9-1927

59. DRAIN INSPECTOR'S REPORT

On the lips of the good vice becomes virtue,
And even virtue appears as vice in the mouth of the evil-minded:
this need not surprise us.

For, do not the mighty clouds drink the salt waters of the ocean
and return it as sweet refreshing rain,

And does not the cobra, drinking sweet milk, belch it forth as
the deadliest poison?

Rivers drink not of their own waters, the trees do not themselves eat the fruit which they bear.

Nor do the clouds partake of the grains they grow; even so the good devote their powers to the good of others.¹

Several correspondents have sent me cuttings containing reviews of, or protests against, Miss Mayo's *Mother India*. A few have in addition asked me to give my own opinion on it. An enraged correspondent from London asks me to give him answers to several questions that he has framed upon the authoress's references to me. Miss Mayo has herself favoured me with a copy of her book.

I would certainly not have made time, especially when I have only limited energy, and caution has been enjoined upon me by medical friends against overwork, to read the book during my tour. But these letters made it obligatory on me to read the book at once.

The book is cleverly and powerfully written. The carefully chosen quotations give it the appearance of a truthful book. But the impression it leaves on my mind is, that it is the report of a drain inspector sent out with the one purpose of opening and examining the drains of the country to be reported upon, or to give a graphic description of the stench exuded by the opened drains. If Miss Mayo had confessed that she had gone to India merely to open out and examine the drains of India, there would perhaps be little to complain about her compilation. But she says in effect with a certain amount of triumph, "The drains are India". True, in the concluding chapter there is a caution. But her caution is cleverly made to enforce her sweeping condemnation. I feel that no one who has any knowledge of India can possibly accept her terrible accusations against the thought and the life of the people of this unhappy country.

The book is without doubt untruthful, be the facts stated ever so truthful. If I open out and describe with punctilious care all the stench exuded from the drains of London and say "Behold London", my facts will be incapable of challenge, but my judgement will be rightly condemned as a travesty of truth. Miss Mayo's book is nothing better,

¹ णायन्ते दोषाः सुजनवदने दुर्जनमुखे
गुणा दोषायन्ते तदिदमपि नो विस्मयपदम् ।
महा मेघः क्षारं पिबति कुरूते वारि मधुरं
फणी क्षीरं पीत्वा वमति गरलं दुःसहतरम् ॥
पिबन्ति नद्यः स्वयमेव नाम्भः स्वयं न खादन्ति फलानि वृक्षाः ।
नादन्ति सस्यं खलु वारिवाहाः परोपकाराय सतां द्विविभूतथः ॥

nothing else.

The authoress says she was dissatisfied with the literature she read about India, and so she came to India “to see what a volunteer unsubsidized, uncommitted and unattached, could observe of common things in daily human life”.

After having read the book with great attention, I regret to say that I find it difficult to accept this claim. Unsubsidized she may be. Uncommitted and unattached she certainly fails to show herself in any page. We in India are accustomed to interested publications patronized—“patronized” is accepted as an elegant synonym for “subsidized”—by the Government. We have become used to understanding from pre-British days, that the art (perfected by the British) of government includes the harnessing of the secret service of men learned, and reported to be honest and honourable for shadowing suspects and for writing up the virtues of the Government of the day as if the certificate had come from disinterested quarters. I hope that Miss Mayo will not take offence if she comes under the shadow of such suspicion. It may be some consolation to her to know that even some of the best English friends of India have been so suspected.

But ruling out of consideration the suspicion, it remains to be seen why she has written this untruthful book. It is doubly untruthful. It is untruthful in that she condemns a whole nation or in her words “the peoples of India” (she will not have us as one nation) practically without any reservation as to their sanitation, morals, religion, etc. It is also untruthful because she claims for the British Government merits which cannot be sustained and which many an honest British officer would blush to see the Government credited with.

If she is not subsidized, Miss Mayo is an avowed Indophobe and Anglophil refusing to see anything good about Indians and anything bad about the British and their rule.

She does not give one an elevated idea of Western standard of judgement. Though she represents a class of sensational writers in the West, it is a class that, I flatter myself with the belief, is anything sensational, smart or crooked. But the pity of it is that there are still thousands in the West who delight in ‘shilling shockers’. Nor are all the authoress’s quotations or isolated facts truthfully stated. I propose to pick up those I have personal knowledge of. The book bristles with quotations torn from their contexts and with extracts which have been

authoritatively challenged.

The authoress has violated all sense of propriety by associating the Poet's¹ name with child marriage. The Poet has indeed referred to early marriage as not an undesirable institution. But there is a world of difference between child marriage and early marriage. If she had taken the trouble of making the acquaintance of the free and freedom-loving girls and women of Santiniketan, she would have known the Poet's meaning of early marriage.

She has done me the honour of quoting me frequently in support of her argument. Any person who collects extracts from a reformer's diary, tears them from their context and proceeds to condemn, on the strength of these, the people in whose midst the reformer has worked, would get no hearing from sane and unbiased readers or hearers. But in her hurry to see everything Indian in a bad light, she has not only taken liberty with my writings, but she had not thought it necessary even to verify through me certain things ascribed by her or others to me. In fact she has combined in her own person what we understand in India the judicial and the executive officer. She is both the prosecutor and the judge. She has described the visit to me, and informed her readers that there are always with me two "secretaries" who write down every word I say. I know that this is not a wilful perversion of facts. Nevertheless the statement is not true. I beg to inform her that I have no one near me who has been appointed or is expected to write down every word that I say. I have by me a co-worker called Mahadev Desai who is striving to out-Boswell Boswell and does, whenever he is near me, take down whatever he considers to be wisdom dropping from my lips. I can't repel his advances, even if I would, for the relationship between us is, like the Hindu marriage, indissoluble. But the real crime committed against me is described by her at pages 387-8. She ascribes to the Poet "a fervent declaration that Ayurvedic science surpasses anything that the West can offer" (She has this time no quotation to back her statement.) Then she quotes my opinion that hospitals are institutions for propagating sin, and then distorts out of all recognition a sacred incident, honourable to the British surgeons and, I hope, to myself. I must ask the reader to excuse me for giving the full quotation from the book :

As he happened to be in the prison at the time, British surgeon of the

¹ Rabindranath Tagore

Indian Medical Service came straightaway to see him. "Mr. Gandhi," said the surgeon, as the incident was then reported, "I am sorry to tell you that you have appendicitis. If you were my patient, I should operate at once. But you will probably prefer to call in your Ayurvedic physician."

Mr. Gandhi proved otherwise minded.

"I should prefer not to operate," pursued the surgeon, "because in case the outcome should be unfortunate, all your friends will lay it as a charge of malicious intent against us whose duty is to care for you."

"If you will only consent to operate," pleaded Mr. Gandhi, "I will call in my friends, now, and explain to them that you do so at my request."

So Mr. Gandhi wilfully went to an "institution for propagating sin", was operated upon by one of the "worst of all", an officer of the Indian Medical Service and was attentively nursed through convalescence by an English Sister whom he is understood to have thought after all rather a "useful sort of person."

This is a travesty of truth. I shall confine myself to correcting only what is libellous and not the other inaccuracies. There was no question here of calling in any Ayurvedic physician. Colonel Maddock who performed the operation had the right, if he had so chosen, to perform the operation without a reference to me, and even in spite of me. But he and Surgeon-General Hooton showed a delicate consideration to me, and asked me whether I would wait for my own doctors who were known to them and who were also trained in the Western medical and surgical science. I would not be behind-hand in returning their courtesy and consideration, and I immediately told them that they could perform the operation without waiting for my doctors to whom they had telegraphed, and that I would gladly give them a note for their protection in the event of the operation miscarrying. I endeavoured to show that I had no distrust either in their ability or their good faith. It was to me a happy opportunity of demonstrating my personal goodwill.

So far as my opinion about hospitals and the like is concerned, it stands, in spite of my having subjected myself and my wards to treatment more than once by physicians and surgeons, Indian and European, trained in the Western school of medicine. Similarly I use motor-cars and rail-ways, whilst holding to my condemnation of them as strongly as ever. I hold the body itself to be an evil and an impediment in my progress. But I see no inconsistency in my making use of it while it lasts, and trying in the best manner I know to use it

for its own destruction. This is a sample of distortion of which I have a personal knowledge.

But the book is brimful of descriptions of incidents of which an average Indian, at any rate, has no knowledge. Thus she describes an ovation said to have been given to the Prince of Wales, of which Indian India has no knowledge, but which could not possibly escape it if it had happened. A crowd is reported to have fought its way to the Prince's car somewhere in Bombay.

The police tried vainly to form a hedge round the car moving at a crawl unprotected nowthrough a solid mass of shouting humanity which won through to the railway station at last.

Then at the railway station while there were three minutes for the train to steam out, the Prince is reported by Miss Mayo to have ordered the barriers to be dropped and the "mobs" to be let in. The authoress then proceeds :

Like the sweep of a river in flood, the interminable multitude rolled in, and shouted and laughed and wept, and when the train started, ran alongside the Royal carriage till they could run no more.

All this is supposed to have happened in 1921 on the evening of November 22nd, whilst the dying embers of the riots were still hot. There is much of this kind of stuff in this romantic chapter which is headed "Behold a Light".

The nineteenth chapter is a collection of authorities in praise of the achievements of the British Government, almost every one of which has been repeatedly challenged both by English and Indian writers of unimpeachable integrity. The seventeenth chapter is written to show that we are a "world-menace". If as a result of Miss Mayo's effort the League of Nations is moved to declare India a segregated country unfit for exploitation, I have no doubt both the West and the East would be the gainers. We may then have our internecine wars. Hindus may be eaten up, as she threatens, by the hordes from the North-West and Central Asia—that were a position infinitely superior to one of ever-growing emasculation. Even as electrocution is a humaner method of killing than the torturous method of roasting alive, so would a sudden overwhelming swoop from Central Asia upon the unresisting, insanitary, superstitious and sexuality-ridden Hindus, as Miss Mayo describes us to be, be a humane deliverance from the living and ignominious death which we are going through at the present moment. Unfortunately, however, such is not Miss Mayo's goal. Her case is to perpetuate white domination in India on the plea

of India's unfitness to rule herself.

The picturesque statements that this clever authoress puts into the mouths of the various characters read like so many pages from a sensational novel in which no regard has to be paid to truth. Many of her statements seem to me to be utterly unworthy of belief and do not put the men and women to whom they are ascribed in a favourable light. Take for instance this statement put in the mouth of a prince :

“Our treaties are with the Crown of England,” one of them said to me, with incisive calm. “The princes of India made no treaty with a Government that included Bengali *babus*. We shall never deal with this new lot of Jacks-in-office. While Britain stays, Britain will send us English gentlemen to speak for the King Emperor, and all will be as it should be between friends. If Britain leaves, we, the princes will know how to straighten out India, even as princes should.” (Page 316)

However fallen Indian princes may be, I should want unimpeachable evidence before I could believe that there can be in India a prince so degraded as to make such a statement. Needless to say the authoress does not give the name of the prince.

A still more scandalous statement occurs on page 314 and reads as follows :

“His Highness does not believe,” said the Dewan, “that Britain is going to leave India. But still, under new regime in England, they may be so ill-advised. So His Highness is getting his troops in shape, accumulating munitions and coining silver. And if the English do go, three months afterward, not a rupee or a virgin will be left in all Bengal.”

The reader is kept in darkness as to the name of His Highness or of the enlightened Dewan.

There are many statements which Miss Mayo puts into the mouths of Englishmen and Englishwomen living in India. All I can say with reference to these statements is that if some of them were really made by the authors, they are unworthy of the trust reposed in them and they have done an injustice to their wards or patients as well as the race to which they belong. I should be sorry indeed to think that there are many Englishmen and Englishwomen who say one thing to their Indian friends and another to their Western confidants. Those Englishmen and English-women who may chance to read the sweepings gathered together by Miss Mayo with her muck-rake will recognize the statements I have in mind. In seeking to see an India degraded, Miss Mayo has unconsciously degraded the characters

whom she has used as her instruments for proving her facts which she boasts cannot be “disproved or shaken”. I hope I have given sufficient *prima facie* proof in this article to show that many of her facts stand disproved even in isolation. Put together they give a wholly false picture.

Buy why am I writing this article? Not for the Indian readers but for the many American and English readers who read these pages from week to week with sympathy and attention. I warn them against believing this book. I do not remember having given the message Miss Mayo imputes to me. The only one present who took any notes at all has no recollection of the message imputed to me. But I do know what message I give every American who comes to see me: “Do not believe newspapers and the catchy literature you get in America. But if you want to know anything about India, go to India as students, study India for yourself. If you cannot go, make a study of all that is written about India for her and against her and then form your own conclusions. The ordinary literature you get is either exaggerated vilification of India or exaggerated praise.” I warn Americans and Englishmen against copying Miss Mayo. She came not with an open mind as she claims, but with her preconceived notions and prejudices which she betrays on every page, not excluding even the introductory chapter in which she recites the claim. She came to India not to see things with her own eyes, but to gather material three fourths of which she could as well have gathered in America.

That a book like Miss Mayo’s can command a large circulation furnishes a sad commentary on Western literature and culture.

I am writing this article also in the hope, be it ever so distant, that Miss Mayo herself may relent and repent of having done, I hope unconsciously, atrocious injustice to an ancient people and equally atrocious injustice to the Americans by having exploited her undoubted ability to prejudice without warrant their minds against India.

The irony of it all is that she has inscribed this book “To the peoples of India”. She has certainly not written it as a reformer, and out of love. If I am mistaken in my estimate let her come back to India. Let her subject herself to cross-examination, and if her statements escape unhurt through the fire of cross-examination, let her live in our midst and reform our lives. So much for Miss Mayo and

her readers.

I must now come to the other side of the picture. Whilst I consider the book to be unfit to be placed before Americans and Englishmen (for it can do no good to them), it is a book that every Indian can read with some degree of profit. We may repudiate the charge as it has been named by her, but we may not repudiate the substance underlying the many allegations she has made. It is a good thing to see ourselves as others see us. We need not even examine the motive with which the book is written. A cautious reformer may make some use of it.

There are statements in it which demand investigation. For instance she says that the Vaishnava mark has an obscene meaning. I am a born Vaishnavite. I have perfect recollection of my visits to Vaishnava temples. Mine were orthodox people. I used to have the mark myself as a child, but neither I nor anyone else in our family ever knew that this harmless and rather elegant-looking mark had any obscene significance at all. I asked a party of Vaishnavites in Madras where this article is being written. They knew nothing about the alleged obscene significance. I do not therefore suggest that it never had such significance. But I do suggest that millions are unaware of the obscenity alleged to be behind it. It has remained for our Western visitors to acquaint us with the obscenity of many practices which we have hitherto innocently indulged in. It was in a missionary book that I first learnt that Shivalingam had any obscene significance at all, and even now when I see a Shivalingam neither the shape nor the association in which I see it suggests any obscenity. It was again in a missionary book that I learnt that the temples in Orissa were disfigured with obscene statues. When I went to Puri it was not without an effort that I was able to see those things. But I do know that the thousands who flock to the temple know nothing about the obscenity surrounding these figures. The people are unprepared and the figures do not obtrude themselves upon your gaze.

But let us not resent being made aware of the dark side of the picture wherever it exists. Overdrawn her pictures of our in- sanitation, child marriages, etc., undoubtedly are. But let them

serve as a spur to much greater effort than we have hitherto put forth in order to rid society of all cause of reproach. Whilst we may be thankful for anything good that foreign visitors may be able honestly to say of us, if we curb our anger, we shall learn, as I have certainly

learnt, more from our critics than from our patrons. Our indignation which we are bound to express against the slanderous book must not blind us to our obvious imperfections and our great limitations. Our anger will leave Miss Mayo absolutely unhurt and it will only recoil upon ourselves. We too have our due share of thoughtless readers as the West has, and in seeking to disprove everything Miss Mayo has written, we shall make the reading public believe that we are a race of perfect human beings against whom nothing can be said, no one can dare say one word. The agitation that has been set up against the book is in danger of being overdone. There is no cause for fury. I would here close this review which I have undertaken with the greatest reluctance and under great pressure of work with a paraphrase of a beautiful couplet from Tulsidas :

Everything created by God, animate or inanimate, has its good and bad side. The wise man, like the fabled bird which separating the cream of milk from its water helps himself to the cream leaving the water alone, will take the good from everything leaving the bad alone.¹

Young India, 15-9-1927

60. SPEECH AT VALANGAIMAN

September 15, 1927

MR. CHAIRMAN AND FRIENDS,

I thank you for the address and the purse. It is a matter of very great joy to find that this is the birth place of Mr. Srinivasa Sastri. As you very properly say, he is one of the greatest sons of India. I have been asked to announce to you that the library is to be opened very shortly. I have been asked also formally to declare that library open from this place. I do so with the greatest pleasure. And I hope that all the old and young men will contemplate that noble life and try as much as is possible for every one of you to follow him in his lofty patriotism, sense of duty and in his untiring zeal. Service to the cause of the country is his motto. May you also learn to be true servants of the country.

I observe that there is a fair Muslim population here. I hope that you have always peaceful relations amongst yourselves. We Hindus

¹ डचेतन गुणदोषमय विश्व कीन्ह करतार
संत हंस गुण गहहिं पथ परिहरि वारि विकार ।

and Mussalmans must learn to love one another, because we are all children of the same mother.

I am glad that you all believe in khadi. You must to a step further and translate it into action. All of you should wear it. You see the old lady (sitting by his righthand side) spinning before you. There are thousands and thousands of old ladies much poorer than the one before you, who can eke out a living if all of us will wear khaddar. I thank you once more for your address.

The Hindu, 16-9-1927

61. SPEECH AT NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL,
MANNARGUDI

September 15, 1927

PRINCIPAL, BOYS AND GIRLS,

I thank you for giving me this address as also this purse. Since you told me that you impart instruction in this school in Hindu religion, I would like all the boys and girls to signify by raising their hands how many know the *Bhagavad Gita*. No hands should be raised deceitfully. How many of those who have raised their hands understand the *Bhagavad Gita* in the original properly. (Only one raised his hand.) Now you have answered me honestly and I congratulate you upon it. The first step to knowledge is an open confession of one's ignorance. Having therefore congratulated you upon your open confession, let me also express my grief to you that so few of you have read the *Bhagavad Gita* and fewer still understand the meaning of it in the original. In my own opinion the Hindu boys and girls must commence with the reading of the *Bhagavad Gita* and therefore in a place where I am told that Hindu religion is taught, I should expect all hands to be raised in answer to the question that I had put. I can only hope that you will soon make up this defect. The South is better known more than any other part of India for the use of abundant *vibhuti* or *chandan*. And I see all of you either profusely smeared with *vibhuti* or having perfect geometrical *tilakam* on your foreheads with *chandan*. Whilst these marks may do much good up to a certain extent, without a proper backing behind these marks they are worthless. So far as I am aware, they do not, as they did when they were originally invented, express the inner life. At the present moment it seems that the mere crust in the shape of these marks remains and the real kernel, the substance, has dried up. If you read the *Bhagavad*

Gita and pronounce it with exquisite correctness and answer all the questions of grammar also correctly I should not be satisfied with that performance. When I told you that you should read the *Bhagavad Gita*, I meant also that you should translate its teaching in your own individual lives. The divine author of the *Bhagavad Gita* is said to claim it as the substance, the essence of all the Upanishads and of all knowledge and you will find in the *Gita*, a beautiful verse which really means that a man who simply conforms to the outward form and misses the inner is an imposter, a hypocrite and humbug. I therefore ask the boys, I would urge the Principal and the teachers of this school also, to see to it that the inner secret, the essence of Hinduism is expressed in its fullness in this school and if you will read the *Bhagavad Gita* with the eye of devotion and an eye of faith you will discover as I have discovered that there is no room for Hindu-Muslim dissensions or Brahmin and Non-Brahmin dissensions. You will find also in the *Bhagavad Gita*, no warrant whatsoever for untouchability, child marriages, child widows, prostitution in the name of religion, as is practised by our own sisters and daughters who go by the name of *Devadasis*. If you will carefully read the third chapter of the *Gita* you will find also abundant testimony in favour of the spinning-wheel. If the parents and teachers will only make diligent researches they will not allow so many boys and girls, I see before me, dressed in foreign cloth. If you will take care to study the *Bhagavad Gita* in the manner I have suggested, you will find easy solution for many ills of life. I shall be glad to learn from the Principal in future that you have adopted my suggestion and that every boy and girl not only could read and understand *Bhagavad Gita* but is trying his or her best to live up to its message.

The Hindu, 16-9-1927

62. SPEECH AT FINDLAY COLLEGE, MANNARGUDI¹

September 15, 1927

You state in your address that you read the Gospels daily even as I do. I cannot say that I read the Gospels daily, but I can say that I have read the Gospels in a humble and prayerful spirit, and it is well

¹ This was published under the caption "Three Speeches".

with you if you are also reading the Gospels in that spirit. But I expect that the vast majority of you are Hindu boys. I wish that you could have said to me that at least your Hindu boys were reading the *Bhagavad Gita* daily to derive inspiration. For I believe that all the great religions of the world are true more or less. I say “more or less” because I believe that everything that the human hand touches, by reason of the very fact that human beings are imperfect, becomes imperfect. Perfection is the exclusive attribute of God and it is indescribable, untranslatable. I do believe that it is possible for every human being to become perfect even as God is perfect. It is necessary for us all to aspire after perfection, but when that blessed state is attained, it becomes indescribable, indefinable. And I therefore admit, in all humility, that even the Vedas, the Koran and the Bible are the imperfect word of God, and imperfect beings that we are, swayed to and fro by a multitude of passions, it is impossible for us even to understand this word of God in its fullness, and so I say to a Hindu boy, that he must not uproot the traditions in which he has been brought up, as I say to a Mussalman or a Christian boy that he must not uproot his traditions. And so whilst I would welcome you learning the Gospel and your learning the Koran, I would certainly insist on all of you Hindu boys, if I had the power of insistence, learning the *Gita*. It is my belief that the impurity that we see about boys in schools, the carelessness about things that matter in life, the levity with which the student world deals with the greatest and most fundamental questions of life is due to this uprooting of tradition from which boys have hitherto derived their sustenance.

But I must not be misunderstood. I do not hold that everything ancient is good because it is ancient, I do not advocate surrender of God-given reasoning faculty in the face of ancient tradition. Any tradition, however ancient, if inconsistent with morality, is fit to be banished from the land. Untouchability may be considered to be an ancient tradition, the institution of child widowhood and child marriage may be considered to be ancient tradition, and even so many an ancient horrible belief and superstitious practice. I would sweep them out of existence if I had the power. When, therefore, I talk of respecting the ancient tradition, you now understand what I mean, and it is because I see the same God in the *Bhagavad Gita* as I see in the Bible and the Koran that I say to the Hindu boys that they will derive greater inspiration from *Bhagavad Gita* because they will be tuned to the *Gita* more than to any other book.

Young India, 22-9-1927

63. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, MANNARGUDI

September 15, 1927

MR. CHAIRMAN AND FRIENDS,

I thank you for your several addresses and purses on behalf of the *Daridranarayana*. I congratulate the Taluk Board on having given me an advance copy of the translation of its address in Hindi. I am looking forward to the time when everywhere I should be able to make myself understood through Hindi which is or should be the common language throughout India. At the present moment, as you know, there is almost a barrier between the North and the South. Public workers coming from the South find themselves at sea when they are face to face to speak in the North. I do not by any means suggest that Hindi should take the place of vernaculars but I do suggest that all public workers, leaders of public opinion, should know Hindi and should be able to express themselves wherever they go in the Hindi language. You all know that a committee from the North began its operation some six or seven years ago with a view to popularize Hindi in the South. Nearly one lakh of rupees have been spent by this committee, in order to teach Hindi to those who would learn it. The central office at Madras has received from the head office in Prayag the charter of self-government and it is now open to the leaders of public opinion, in the South, to extend the operation of this committee and make it self-supporting.

You have in all your addresses endorsed the work of the spinning-wheel and khadi that is being done throughout India. I had known long ago that Mannargudi was famous for its weaving and I should hope that in the near future there would be no weaver in Mannargudi who is not weaving hand-spun yarn. But the weavers cannot have enough well hand-spun yarn unless you go out in the villages and give work to so many who have so much idle time at their command from year to year. I saw this afternoon a band of workers living about 10 miles from Mannargudi, in a village called Palayur, where they are trying to introduce the spinning-wheel in the village and places surrounding it. They tell me that if they can secure sufficient workers, there is great scope in these villages for the introduction of the spinning-wheel. The remarkable address that I received at Mayavaram, on behalf of the peasantry had nearly six months during the year when they had no work to do. The address

further gives a startling information that the income of the peasantry in this rich district of Tanjore was no more than forty rupees, whereas the expenses were at 120. Making due allowance for exaggeration in this statement, if there is an exaggeration, there is no doubt whatsoever that the peasantry is living from hand to mouth and is in need of supplementary occupation.

The same address proceeded to inform me that the vast masses of toiling millions were considered to be untouchables. And as such they were unworthy of the attention by the middle class people. In order to prevent this atrocious state of affairs, I ventured to present India with the spinning-wheel and khadi. We, the middle class people, take no interest in them, we do not care what happened to their spinning-wheel and what happened to their industry. And so by our criminal indifference we allowed that industry to die an unnatural death. I ask you to approach the spinning-wheel with a new point of view. I also ask you to utilize khadi in order to form an indissoluble bond between the peasantry and ourselves and I am aware that we shall not succeed in our endeavours so long as we consider these toiling millions as untouchables. I had the pleasures, not unixed with pain, of listening to some of our learned Pundits, expounding the philosophy of untouchability, but I am happy to be able to say that these Pundits were open to conviction and open to arguments on behalf of these people.¹ Instead of brushing aside my arguments summarily, they were pleased to listen and grant that so far as the well-being of the people was concerned, the argument was all in my favour. If that much is admitted by all the Pundits of India, I should be indifferent to what interpretation they placed upon the Shastras. As a matter of fact for a layman like myself, it is quite enough for me to know that what is consistent with the highest good is the supreme Shastra and I should have no hesitation whatsoever in rejecting the Shastras which were inconsistent with our goal.

In connection with this I must mention the cause of the child widows. Let us not resort to mere arguments and babbling in the act of doing this simple justice to our little daughters. Let us be manly enough to regard every such child marriage as a nullity. So long as we allow a single child widow to remain unmarried when she reaches her proper age, we fail in our elementary duty to humanity. That really leads us naturally to a consideration of child marriages. . . .

¹ *Vide* "Discussion with Pundits, Kumbakonam", 14-9-1927

You will see that immediately you begin to think of these toiling millions of India and establish a loving bond between them and yourselves, it would be impossible for you to forget the drinkers. We the middle class people have been indifferent to those who are given to this cursed habit. In my humble opinion it is our duty to go out in the midst of these people and to try to redeem them from their ways. But I know how difficult it is for those brethren of ours to resist that temptation so long as there are toddy shops. It is therefore our bounden duty to secure total prohibition.

As is usual at all such meetings at the end of the proceedings volunteers go out with collection bags in order to collect contribution from those who have not contributed for the purses. Pies willingly given are just as welcome. This is essentially a matter of service of the poorest in the land. Every man or woman who is desirous to give should consider it his or her duty and privilege to be able to give to this cause. You may know, in answer to a question at Mayavaram, I explained¹ the full working of the organization under which the spinning-wheel work is being carried on. I wish that you would take a lively interest in the progress of this organization and its administration and understand the disposal of the money that is entrusted to it. But I may inform you that over fifty thousand sisters are being served today in at least fifteen hundred villages, throughout the length and breadth of India. Of this the largest number is being served in the South. Nearly 20 lakhs of rupees have been invested in carrying on this organization and nearly 1,500 workers are carrying on this organization. The whole of the finance part of it is audited at the centre and in the province. I invite all those who are interested in this to study its working in all its many branches. It is for this service that I invite everybody in this land to give the best of his or her subscription.

The Hindu, 17-9-1927

¹Vide "Speech at Mayavaram", 13-9-1927

64. SPEECH AT TANJORE

September 16, 1927

I had hoped on coming to Tanjore today to discuss the Brahmin-non-Brahmin question¹ here and I had the pleasure of having a brief discussion with some of the friends this afternoon. I am not free nor is it necessary for me to discuss and place before you the contents of our discussion. But I was exceedingly glad of this discussion. I now understand the movement perhaps a little better than I did before the discussion. I have placed my humble view before those friends, of which they are at liberty to make what use they like. But throughout the discussion I saw a note of one thing which seemed to oppress these friends. They seemed to think that I had identified myself with the notion of inherited superiority and inferiority. I assured them that nothing was farther from my thought and told them that I would gladly explain my meaning of *varnashrama*² more fully than I have done in order to remove the slightest misunderstanding as to this question of superiority. In my opinion there is no such thing as inherited or acquired superiority. I believe in the rock-bottom doctrine of Advaita³ and my interpretation of Advaita excludes totally any idea of superiority at any stage whatsoever. I believe implicitly that all men are born equal. All—whether born in India or in England or America or in any circumstances whatsoever—have the same soul as any other. And it is because I believe in this inherent equality of all men that I fight the doctrine of superiority which many of our rulers arrogate to themselves. I have fought this doctrine of superiority in South Africa inch by inch, and it is because of that inherent belief that I delight in calling myself a scavenger, a spinner, a weaver, a farmer and a labourer. And I have fought against the Brahmins themselves wherever they have claimed any superiority for themselves either by reason of their birth or by reason of their subsequently acquired knowledge. *I consider that it is unmanly for any person to claim*

¹ For Mahadev Desai's catechism on the subject, *vide* Appendix "Brahmin-Non-Brahmin Question", November 24, 1927.

² The organization of society into four castes, and the division of life into four stages.

³ The view that the atman, the self in man, is not distinct from the Brahman, the Absolute; literally, 'non-dualism'.

superiority over a fellow-being. And there is the amplest warrant for the belief that I am enunciating in the *Bhagavad Gita*, and I am therefore through and through with every non-Brahmin when he fights this monster of superiority, whether it is claimed by a Brahmin or by anybody else. He who claims superiority at once forfeits his claim to be called a man. That is my opinion.

But in spite of all my beliefs that I have explained to you, I still believe in varnashrama dharma. Varnashrama dharma to my mind is a law which, however much you and I may deny, cannot be abrogated. To admit the working of that law is to free ourselves for the only pursuit in life for which we are born. Varnashrama dharma is humility. Whilst I have said that all men and women are born equal, I do not wish therefore to suggest that qualities are not inherited, but on the contrary I believe that just as everyone inherits a particular form so does he inherit the particular characteristics and qualities of his progenitors, and to make this admission is to conserve one's energy. That frank admission, if we will act up to it, would put a legitimate curb upon our material ambitions, and thereby our energy is set free for extending the field of spiritual research and spiritual evolution. It is this doctrine of varnashrama dharma which I have always accepted. You would be entitled to say that this is not how *varnashrama* is understood in these days. I have myself said time without number that *varnashrama* as it is at present understood and practised is a monstrous parody of the original, but in order to demolish this distortion let us not seek to demolish the original. And if you say that the idealistic *varnashrama* which I have placed before you is quite all right you have admitted all that I like you to admit. I would also urge on you to believe with me that no nation, no individual, can possibly live without proper ideals. And if you believe with me in the idealistic *varnashrama* you will also strive with me to reach that ideal so far as may be. As a matter of fact the world has not anywhere been able to fight against this law. What has happened and what must happen in fighting against the law is to hurt ourselves and to engage in a vain effort; and I suggest to you that your fight will be all the more successful if you understand all that our forefathers have bequeathed to us and engage in fighting all the evil excrescences that have grown round this great bequest. And if you accept what I have ventured to suggest to you, you will find that the solution of the Brahmin and non-Brahmin question also, in so far as it is concerned with the religious aspect, becomes very easy. As a non-Brahmin I would seek to purify

Brahminism in so far as a non-Brahmin can, but not to destroy it. I would dislodge the Brahmin from the arrogation of superiority or from places of profit. Immediately a Brahmin becomes a profiteering agency he ceases to be a Brahmin. But I would not touch his great learning wherever I see it. And whilst he may not claim superiority by reason of learning I myself must not withhold that meed of homage that learning, wherever it resides, always commands. But I must not go deeper into the subject before a large audience of this kind.

After all I must fall upon one sovereign remedy which I think is applicable for all the ills of life. And that is, in whatever fight we engage, the fight should be clean and straight, and there should not be the slightest departure from truth and ahimsa. And if we will keep our carriage safely on these two rails you will find that our fight even though we may commit a thousand blunders will always smell clean and will be easier fought. And even as a train that is derailed comes to a disastrous end, so shall we, if we be derailed off these two rails, come to a disaster. A man who is truthful and does not mean ill even to his adversary will be slow to believe charges even against his foes. He will, however, try to understand the viewpoints of his opponents and will always keep an open mind and seek every opportunity of serving his opponents. I have endeavoured to apply this law in my relations with Englishmen and Europeans in general in South Africa as well as here and not without some success. How much more then should we apply this law in our homes, in our relations, in our domestic affairs, in connection with our own kith and kin?

Young India, 29-9-1927

65. LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

[Before *September 17, 1927*]¹

CHI. MATHURADAS,

I have received your letter. Your idea of staying some more time in the mountains is good. But we must leave Pattani Saheb's bungalow by the end of the year. Writing to him to give the bungalow on rent would simply mean not paying the rent. He will not ask for the bungalow to be vacated and he will not accept rent. Hence, even if it is desirable to stay in Panchgani you must look for another bungalow at

¹ From Gandhiji's itinerary given at the end of the letter

least for now. But why should you not stay at Mahabaleshwar now? Or you can go to other hill stations such as Almora or Simla, where accommodation is available. Solan has suited Dhiru. Almora has suited Prabhudas. There are hill stations even on this side. Bangalore is an ideal place if the height of 3,000 is considered sufficient.

Think about what we should do now and let me know. My health is all right.

17-22	Trichinapalli
22-27	Karaikudi
28-30	Madurai
October 1	Paramakudi
2-3	Virudunagar
4	Rajapalayam
5	Tinnevelly

Blessings from
BAPU

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

66. SPEECH IN REPLY TO MUNICIPAL ADDRESS, TRICHINOPOLY¹

September 17, 1927

FRIENDS,

I seem to have come to the end of my resources. The programme in Trichinopoly is much stiffer than I can comfortably go through. But I cannot afford to disappoint those who have arranged so many functions. Dr. Rajan, as my medical adviser, has therefore devised a plan whereby I can go through the functions, with as little strain as possible and that is to observe complete silence at these functions, with apologies for my inability to speak to you, as I should like to if my health permitted. It is with much pleasure I have laid the

¹ Gandhiji, who looked very tired, handed a written speech which C. Rajagopalachari read to the meeting. During Gandhiji's tour in South India and Ceylon, he received purses for the Khadi Fund. He also made on-the-spot collections and auctioned articles presented to him at the meetings. For a detailed statement of these collections, *vide* Appendix "Khadi Collections in South India and Ceylon", December 22, 1927.

foundation-stone of the market and I thank you for your address and commend my Mayavaram speech¹ to your attention.

67. APPEAL FOR INFORMATION

Shri Kantilal Harivallabhdas Parekh left the Satyagraha Ashram on the morning of Monday, the 25th July, 1927, and thereafter on the same day he was seen at several places in Ahmedabad. It is not known where he was on the 26th or the 27th; however, on Thursday the 28th some inmates of the Ashram saw him swimming, or rather being dragged by the current, in the Sabarmati. He is a good swimmer. In case he is hiding himself anywhere it will be an act of kindness if he himself or some acquaintance or relation of his gives some information about him. This good news will bring joy to his father and his old grandmother plunged in grief because of his absence.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 18-9-1927

68. LETTER TO SATIS CHANDRA DAS GUPTA

September 18, 1927

DEAR SATIS BABU,

I have your letter. I did write to Prafulla Babu. Here is Prafulla Babu's letter. I do not remember having pressed him to rejoin the Pratishtan. I have written as much to him. Let him now decide whether he remains on the Trust Board or not.

I look to you, as you have put it, to conquer Suresh Babu and everyone else. It is the best thing to blame ourselves when people cannot get on well with us. Boundless charity necessarily includes all or it ceases to be boundless. We must be strict with ourselves and lenient with our neighbours. For we know not their difficulties and what they overcome.

With love,

Yours,

BAPU

¹ *Vide* "Speech at Mayavaram", September 13, 1927.

[PS.]

I hope you have sent the amount to Abhoy Ashram.

From a photostat: G.N. 1576

69. LETTER TO ASHRAM WOMEN

TRICHINOPOLY,

*Silence Day [September 19, 1927]*¹

SISTERS,

I get your notes regularly. I keep an eye on your work from here. One who works according to one's full capacity does all that can be expected of one. But in our work we should develop the *Gita* attitude which we want to have. That attitude is that, whatever we do, we do it selflessly in a spirit of service. The spirit of service means a spirit of dedication to God. One who does so, loses all idea of self. He has no hatred for anybody. On the contrary, he is generous to others. Even about the smallest piece of service you render, ask yourselves from time to time whether you have this same attitude.

Ramaniklalbhai raised a question on what I wrote to you about myself. You have not told me whether all of you understood what I said in reply. I wish that you would discuss what I write to you, and ask me about things to which you can find no answer.

My health continues to be good enough to let me carry on my work.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3665

70. LETTER TO GANGABEHN JHAVERI

*Silence Day [September 19, 1927]*²

CHI. GANGABEHN JHAVERI,

I have received your letter. Both my mind and my hand are

¹ Gandhiji was in Trichinopoly on this date.

² It appears from the contents that this letter was written after the letter to the addressee dated "About September 12, 1927". The first silence day after this date was September 19

tired by incessant writing. So I will not write much. You have been appointed President. You have got that position against your will. Bring credit to it. It is another matter if senior Gangabehn takes back the office. But your duty is not to give up the responsibility at this difficult time. Bringing glory to it is not beyond your capacity.

I do not know if Radha attends the prayers these days. But I have written her a strong letter to do so.

You must keep writing to me about the conflicts going on in your mind. It will be no burden to me. I shall continue helping you in whatever way I can from here.

Let us conquer falsehood with truth, harshness with tenderness, anger with love, impatience with patience, pride with humility. You women have got a special opportunity now to turn these words into reality. Do not miss this auspicious hour. I have forgotten to inform the elder Gangabehn that I have written to Surendraji.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati G.N. 3122

71. LETTER TO HARIBHAU UPADHYAYA

Silence Day [September 19, 1927]¹

BHAI HARIBHAU,

Your letter. If Swami and Jamnalalji agree, you can count on me too. I cannot understand how *Hindi Navajivan* will be ready in time. But it is not for me to worry on that account.

How is Martand?

Blessings from

BAPU

[PS.]

On re-reading your letter I find that two points have been left unanswered. I shall write later about the article on khadi.

I might return to the Ashram in the month of January. It is a good idea to start an Ashram near Ajmer.

BAPU

BHAI HARIBHAU UPADHYAYA

KHADI KARYALAYA

AJMER

From a copy of the Hindi: C.W. 6058. Courtesy: Haribhau Upadhyay

¹ From the postmark

72. LETTER TO HARIBHAU UPADHYAYA

[After September 19, 1927]¹

DEAR HARIBHAU,

I have been able to read carefully your article about self-reliance in clothes only today. In my view it is not worth publishing. The readers are so raw that they do not make any comparison and are misled about a good thing by accepting what they like and discarding what they do not like. I think the article is not worth publishing because what you have shown as a disadvantage for the sales section is not a disadvantage. Rather, it is necessary and is a difficulty that helps the soul. If we want to do away with the sales section or make it less burdensome, we must lay great emphasis on self-reliance, expand it and find out its science. I have no doubt about it. Hence, give as much thought to this matter as possible and convey in public whatever experiences you have. But the sales section will have to be expanded to the same extent. Sales would always be needed for the cities. It would also be necessary for the other trade communities in the villages. It is not possible at all to improve the quality followed as a business. Ultimately, even the atmosphere of khadi would be preserved only by following this method. We cannot feel satisfied merely by that.

If you have not followed the meaning of what I have said write to me or ask me when we meet. I hope to be at the Ashram by the Ist of January. of yarn or have more varieties of khadi by the method of self-reliance. Both these things can and are being done as a business practice and would be so done in future as well. Moreover, honest, clever and industrious workers would also be produced only when these things are

Blessings from

BAPU

From the Gujarati original: Haribhau Upadhyaya Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

¹ From the contents; *vide* post-script to letter to the addressee dated September 19, 1927 (Preceding item).

73. TELEGRAM TO JAMNALAL BAJAJ

TRICHINOPOLY,
[September] 20 [1927]¹

JAMNALAL SETH
CARE RAMNARAYAN
MANGALDAS RD., POONA

TELL MIRABEHN IF STILL THERE NOT BE HASTY. AM
PERFECTLY WELL. GOD'S VOICE OFTEN INDISTINGUISHABLE FROM
ECHOES OF OUR FEAR. IN THIS RAPID MARCHING IN HEAT HER
PRESENCE IN HER DELICATE HEALTH HINDRANCE. IF SHE
WANTS COME DESPITE MY WARNING SHE IS WELCOME.

BAPU

Panchven Putrako Bapuke Ashirvad, p. 68

74. LETTER TO DILIP KUMAR ROY

September 20, 1927

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter which has been forwarded to me from the Ashram (Sabarmati)². You have evidently imagined that I was living in a London hotel with all the facilities for communication and access to literature and plenty of leisure, so that I had only to read your letter and do the needful. I do not wonder at your making the mistake of so imagining from your place (in Austria) outside the Indian setting. As it was, your letter was received when I was convalescing at Bangalore. Here am I, travelling almost from day to day and I do not know how to give you satisfaction. From your letter I gather that even if I wrote anything now it would be too late. If you think that you would still want something from me I would send for the manuscript, try to read it and write something. Personally I think that you need nothing from me. Much of the reputation that I enjoy in the West is really undeserved, and I often think that if I went to Europe or America, the

¹ Gandhiji was in Trichinopoly on this date.

² The addressee says in his book *Among the Great* that he had reported to Gandhiji from Vienna about the keen interest in him all over Europe and had suggested that Gandhiji visit Europe once.

people there would be soon undeceived about their many exaggerated notions of me. You would believe me when I tell you that I write this not from any sense of false self-depreciation but that is what I truly believe.

M. K. GANDHI

Golden Book of Dilip Kumar Roy, p. 121

75. INTERVIEW TO ASSOCIATED PRESS OF INDIA

TRICHINOPOLY,

[September 20, 1927]¹

I observe that my first speech in Trichinopoly² has been misunderstood abroad, and has caused anxiety to friends. I would like to assure my friends, however, that there is not the slightest cause for any anxiety. My statement, that I had come to the end of my resources, had a local reference, and it was therefore properly understood in Trichinopoly. What I wanted to say was that I had hitherto taken up engagements up to the limit and that I could not comfortably go through a heavier programme in Trichinopoly. This was a warning to friends in Trichinopoly and to the committees in the places yet to be visited, that they should not have a multiplicity of engagements. One meeting a day is about all that I would have attended so far as my heart is concerned. Doctor Rajan overhauled me completely, and neither he nor I have any anxiety. The blood-pressure stands at where it was in Bangalore. Otherwise too, I am feeling quite well, and, if I do not allow myself to be overworked, I have no misgivings about my ability to go through the settled programme. Friends about me are taking extraordinary precautions for my protection, and I am myself wide awake. I hope therefore that there would be no anxiety felt about my tour; and I would request newspaper reporters and editors not to send or publish any reports about my health before submitting them to me, or to those who are in charge of me.

The Hindu, 21-9-1927

¹ Released to the Press on this day

² Vide "Speech in Reply to Municipal Address, Trichinopoly", 17-9-1927.

76. SPEECH AT NATIONAL COLLEGE, TRICHINOPOLY

September 20, 1927

I thank you for what I thought was an address and the purse. I should like to know how many of you understood what I thought was an address, the thing that was read first in Sanskrit. Those who understood it, please raise your hands.¹ Those who did not understand it, raise your hands.¹ I was ill prepared for such a performance at a students' meeting. Unfortunately, in our country, we have got altogether an overdose of humbug and spectacular effect and those who are responsible for this function should have erased all such things out of their proceedings which could not be understood by the vast majority here. (Applause.) This applause also seems to me to be entirely out of place. It is almost notice to me to stop talking, and next time there is applause, you will find that I will take it as notice to quit. Seriously speaking, students' life ought to be regarded as a very serious affair, and since students should all be sportsmen, the serious side of life should be taken by them in a sportsmanlike way. In order to make ourselves, including myself whom I regard as still a student, serious in a sportsmanlike manner, I suggest that next time you all, since the majority of you are Hindus, learn Sanskrit, so that if a Sanskrit verse is recited you should all understand it.

I am afraid that if I examined you again in another matter, you will make the same sorry exhibition that you made just a moment ago. Students of a national college would, for instance, be expected to know Hindi, but hardly one per cent of you would raise your hands if I ask how many know Hindi.

You talk of past February and say that a stirring appeal was made to you by Mr. Rajagopalachari and Shankerlal Banker on the economics of khadi. A stirring appeal is one that stirs us to the depths of our hearts, but if I ask you to raise your hands, you will again make a sorry exhibition and show that very few of you are wearers of khadi. If my surmise is correct it is wrong on your part to say that the appeal made to you in February was a stirring appeal. Compared to other purses, I do not regard your purse as a small purse at all, but I accept

¹ Only very few were raised.

² Many were raised.

your humble suggestion that your purse is really not up to the mark, and if you had been really stirred to the depth of your hearts, you could have collected much more than you have done. Instead of my illness being regarded as an interruption in the course of your collections, you would have used the additional time gained for collecting additional moneys. My illness should really have given a point to the stirring nature of that appeal and you should have said to yourselves: "Now that this old man has become ill and he is really a capable organizer of khadi, let us put our shoulders to the wheel and make a double effort and therefore we shall double our subscriptions, put away our foreign cloth and all wear khadi." Instead of this obvious result following from the appeal, you tell me that my illness sent you to sleep; but it is never too late to mend, never too late to learn. Colleges are not closed down for ever. You still remain students. I shall presently leave Trichinopoly, but khadi won't have left Trichinopoly or India. *Daridranarayana*¹ still knocks at your doors. Khadi still awaits development at your hands. The khadi purse, you don't give me for my pleasure. You give it in the name of and for the sake of *Daridranarayana*. It has therefore a constant call on your purse. Let me then hope that you will not be remiss in your efforts on behalf of khadi, that you will make up your Hindi, because you have got a Hindi *Prachark*² here and that you will make up your Sanskrit, and let me also commend to your attention the addresses that I have given to students in other places and let me ask you to understand the message in those addresses.

The Hindu, 21-9-1927

77. SPEECH AT Y.M.C.A., PUTTUR

September 20, 1927

THE CHAIRMAN AND FRIENDS,

With you I also miss the presence of Mr. Hayward. I had the pleasure of meeting him and having a brief chat with him before he went. I am sorry I shall not be able to give you anything like a speech, but as I was coming to this meeting this morning, I asked myself what it was that I would wish the Y.M.C.A. in India to be. As you are aware,

¹ God in the form of the poor

² Teacher; literally, 'one who spreads'

my association with Christian Indians is growing day by day. Ten years ago, I did not have the privileg of coming in such close contact with Christian Indians as I do nowadays, and I have noticed in coming in contact with so many Christian Indians and in contact with so many Christian Associations throughout the land that very often the word Christian is understood to mean European. I said to myself as I was driving here this morning how nice it would be if the Y.M.C.A. were not really synonymous with the Young Men's European Association. The word "European" has not to me, as to many millions of people, perhaps the same meaning and content as the word Christian, and I feel that very often Christianity itself becomes a restricted thing when it is mixed up with Europeanism. It is not at all, in my humble opinion, necessary for a single Indian to cease to be Indian, because he calls himself Christian. To accept Christianity, or a change in one's religion is acceptance of a new life; therefore, I should expect anyone who changes his religion with a true heart to broaden his own nationality. If he ceases to think of his neighbours, he is not likely to think of those beyond that limit of his neighbours. I say this to Christian and Muslim friends and all those whom I meet in India and who have made India their land, or to whom India is the land of their birth. Let these associations then be not forces of disruption, but forces for conserving all that is good, noble and honest¹ in this land. For the rest, I commend to your attention the remarks I made to the Y.M.C.A. in Madras². I thank you for having given me this opportunity of meeting you.

The Hindu, 21-9-1927

78. SPEECH AT WOMEN'S MEETING, TRICHINOPOLY

September 20, 1927

DEAR SISTERS,

It gives me much pleasure to be able to attend this meeting. I do not want to keep you for any length of time. I just want to say that you ought to take a leading part in the national movement that is going on at the present moment in India—I mean the khadi work and the message of the spinning-wheel. It is work that is designed to

¹ The source has "stand best". Perhaps Gandhiji had in mind the New Testament, Philippians, iv. 8.

² On September 4, 1927

deliver India from the gnawing poverty which she is suffering from. In this distress millions of our sisters are sharers. They need not be in that distress, if you and I will do our duty. They starve because they have no work in their own villages. Time was when they had no need to starve, for one hundred years ago every hut³ in our villages had its own spinning-wheel. Whenever there was time left, our sisters living in villages used to spin yarn. Khadi that was woven out of this yarn was worn by all the people, rich and poor. One of the reasons why the spinning-wheel died out was that you and I left off wearing khadi. Now, the movement has been set afoot in order to reinstate the spinning-wheel in its original state, and the movement cannot be proceeded with, without your assistance. The assistance you can render is for all of you to discard your foreign saris and wear khadi. It is your duty and my duty to think of these poor people, but this work cannot proceed without money. You are therefore expected to contribute as much as possible, and all over India your sisters have been giving me their moneys and also their jewellery. I see that you state in your address that your jewellery is the result of your own thrift. I personally do not believe in it, for the jewellery has been given to you and not made out of your own moneys earned by your own labour, but your jewellery is undoubtedly *streedhanam*¹ and I want you to share it with the poorest of your sisters. If you will have India the land of holiness, then you should all become like Sita, and the beauty of Sita lay not in her personal appearance and in her jewellery but in her heart. A woman is adorable, not for the jewellery she wears, but for the purity of her heart. I therefore urge you, if you believe that khadi will solve all the distress of India, to a certain extent, to part with the money that you have brought and your jewellery also, if you can give it to the cause. If you will go a step further, I would ask you also to spare some time to turn the spinning-wheel. It is a fine occupation for women in their leisure hours and it would be much better for you to pass your time in this useful occupation than idle talk. Now, you will give what you can to the volunteers who will go in your midst.

The Hindu, 21-9-1927

¹ The source has "hamlet".

² A woman's private property over which she exercises independent control

79. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, TRICHINOPOLY

September 21, 1927

Mahatmaji, in the course of his speech, recalled the satyagraha days when he visited Trichy which gave him some of his best co-workers. Unity, which prevailed then among all classes, had given place to dissensions and in spite of many vicissitudes the country had passed through, khadi had remained absolutely steady. It did not admit of dissensions, because khadi permeated the masses, who had nothing of these dissensions. Trichy would have contributed much more but that money would be valueless, if khadi, produced by the sacred hands of villagers, was not used by them. When khadi became universal, it would not be necessary to extend monetary assistance. That khadi required a bounty showed they were not doing their duty by the starving millions, on whom depend their sustenance.

Mahatmaji then referred to the fouling of river water and said that, on one side of the sacred Cauvery is Trichinopoly and on the other Srirangam. What he was about to say was not peculiar to Trichy. It was common all over India. He wished to draw their attention to this because Trichinopoly had got an army of workers who could, if they would, tackle this very difficult problem. Continuing, he said:

I had the pleasure of having a talk with the Chairman of the Srirangam Municipality yesterday and the young men of Vivekananda Ashram at Srirangam this morning. Everybody admits that the sanitation of Srirangam is not in a good condition at all. In my humble opinion, the insanitation is not due to want of funds, nor is the fouling of river water due to want of funds. It is purely due to our criminal apathy. We refuse to see the dirt that is daily growing in front of us. It really requires an army of volunteers who would understand the ABC of sanitation and who would educate the people at large in the elementary laws of sanitary science. It cannot be right to wash our dirt in the same river from which we take our drinking water. Our river banks should be places of recreation for all, young and old, banks on which we could with the greatest safety and ease recline ourselves but it is just the river banks which we make unfit, even for walking with bare feet. It has become abundantly clear by this time that cholera comes out of filthy habits and nothing else. Immediately you cease to drink dirty water and take necessary precaution there is no fear of cholera. I understand that when the great floods overtook the South, as it has overtaken Orissa at present, cholera broke out in Trichinopoly and Srirangam and it was an infliction from

God Himself because we people drank the river water which was made dirty by ourselves. In my opinion we sinned against God and man when we did not take care to keep mother earth and our river water clean. We have poetry enough in ourselves to call earth “mother earth” and deify all rivers of India. What a sacrilege it is to dirty “mother earth” in the manner we are doing and to make the waters of all rivers, which we deify, filthy! It is really a simple matter for the youth of Trichinopoly and Srirangam to make up their minds to educate the people and to visit river banks from morning to morning till they have eradicated the evil from their midst. We do not need to become municipal councillors or have any appointment from any public body and the Government in order to do this work. Nor does it require a great deal of time. All that you need to do is merely to have a little bit of knowledge of sanitary science and a fixed determination to get rid of the evil which is undermining the health of the population. I hope therefore that you will all understand the humble message I have endeavoured to give you and do something to retrieve the honour of Trichinopoly and Srirangam and to make the Cauvery really sacred as we consider it.

Mahatmaji then referred to the eradication of the drink evil for which the young men had ample opportunities of service among the labouring population which was a great one here. Even as insanitation was undermining their health, the drink curse was undermining the health and morals of the labouring population. [Concluding, Gandhiji said:]

We have a real national awakening. It should express itself in all the necessary activities.

The Hindu, 21-9-1927

*80 SPEECH IN REPLY TO CITIZENS' ADDRESS,
PUDUKOTTAH*

September 21, 1927

MR. CHAIRMAN AND FRIENDS,

I thank you for your address and your purse and more so for your having refrained from reading the address. I need hardly assure you that I have read your address. You say that you have been long waiting for a visit from me and waiting is reciprocal. You tell me in your address that you believe in the message of the spinning-wheel and khaddar and you tell me also that you here are really specially in

need of a message on spinning-wheel because of the poverty of the peasantry. I know from my experience of other parts of our country that what you state is literally true. You tell me also that your Legislative Council has passed a resolution making hand-spinning compulsory in your schools. I congratulate the Council upon having adopted that wise and very necessary resolution. How I wish that you and I and all translate our beliefs and resolutions into practice! To pass resolutions and to own beliefs is the easiest thing in the world; for, they cost the believers or the movers of resolutions nothing. But practice means organization, means learning how to do the thing and means going amongst people and a host of others. Now welcome rains have come and I assure you that I do not want to prolong my speech. I shall, however, close with a prayer that God will give you the strength and necessary wisdom to reduce your belief into practice. And if you have at all read my speeches during my Tamil Nadu tour I am sure you know what I would say if the rains did not threaten. For, the things that I have been talking in Madras and elsewhere are also common to you. Now that the rains seem to have stopped for a moment, I shall summarise some of them. . .¹

The Hindu, 23-9-1927

81. LETTER TO PRAGJI DESAI

[Before *September 22, 1927*]²

BHAISHRI PRAGJI,

I got your letter. You have been giving good help to Sastriji. Whatever the likely decision in your case, you need not feel worried. I am sure Sastriji must be doing something on his own to help you. Now that you have joined *Indian Opinion*, you must have given up the idea of earning money there. Am I right ? How is Medh faring? How is your health? Whatever happens, do not be tempted by the luxuries there, and keep away from untruth, secrecy and so on.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 5042

¹ Then Gandhiji spoke on prohibition, untouchability, sanitation, Brahmin-non-Brahmin question and funds for charkha.

² From the text this appears to have been written prior to "Letter to Pragji Desai," 23-9-1927 and "Letter to V. S. Srinivasa Sastri," 22-9-1927.

82. “RANGILA RASUL”

In spite of the goading of correspondents, wise and otherwise, I have hitherto resisted the temptation to be drawn into the controversy that has arisen over this pamphlet. I have endeavoured patiently to deal with these correspondents by private correspondence. But of late the correspondence has increased beyond my capacity to deal with it privately. The last letter is from a Muslim professor in Bihar. He sends me a newspaper cutting containing a letter rebuking me in that even I had chosen to join in the conspiracy of silence observed by the leading Hindus in general. The professor wants me to “reply sharp”. I gladly do so in the hope that my correspondents will be satisfied with my good faith and understand the reason for my silence. As I do not read newspapers, save a local one, I know nothing about the “conspiracy of silence” by Hindu leaders. The newspaper I read most frequently just now is *The Hindu* and I do remember having seen in it a strong article against the *Rangila Rasul*. So far as I am concerned, long before many Mussalmans knew even of the existence of the pamphlet, it came into my possession. In order to test the veracity of my informant, I read it and wrote the following note¹ in *Young India*, dated 19th June, 1924:

Then followed protests from Arya Samajists enclosing viler writing against Arya Samajists and the great founder Rishi Dayanand, telling me that *Rangila Rasul* and such writings were in answer to the Muslim writings referred to above. I thereupon wrote the following second note² (*Young India*, 10th July, 1924):

Thus I had anticipated the Mussalman wrath. But in the present agitation the meeting-point ends there. I could not approve of the turn the agitation took. I regarded it as excessive and inflammatory. The attack against Justice Duleepsingh³ was uncalled for, undeserved and hysterical. The judiciary is by no means above being influenced by

¹ Not reproduced here; *vide* “Notes (subtopic - Inflammatory Literature)”, June 19, 1924.

² Not reproduced here; *vide* “Notes (subtopic - Half a Dozen and Six)”, July 10, 1924.

³ Judge of the Punjab High Court who had on appeal acquitted the author of the pamphlet, prosecuted and sentenced by the lower courts under Section 153-A of the Indian Penal Code.

the Government, but it would be wholly unfit to render justice if it was open to popular attacks, threats and insults. So far as the Judge's integrity was concerned, it should have satisfied any Mussalman that he condemned the pamphlet, as he did, in unmeasured terms. His reading of the section ought not to have been made a cause for virulent attack against him. That other judges have taken a different view from Justice Duleepsingh is irrelevant to the issue. Judges have been often known before now to have given honest and opposite interpretations of the same law. The agitation for strengthening the penal section may be wise. Personally I question the wisdom. Any stiffening of the section will react against ourselves, and will be utilized, as such sections have been utilized before, for strengthening the hold of British authority over our necks. But if Mussalmans or Hindus want to agitate for unequivocally bringing such writings under the criminal law, they have a right to do so.

I hold strong views about Government protection. Time was when we knew better and disdained the protection of law-courts in such matters. To stop anti-Muslim writings like the *Rangila Rasul* is the work of Hindus as to stop anti-Hindu writings is the work of Mussalmans. The leaders have either lost control over mud-flingers or are in sympathy with them. In any case Government protection will not make us tolerant of one another. Each hater of the other's religion will under a stiffer law seek secret channels of making vicious attacks on his opponent's religion, or writing vilely enough to provoke anger but veiled enough to avoid the penal clauses of the law. But then I recognize that at the present moment we are not acting as sane nationalists or as men of religion. We are seeking under cover or religion to wreak mad vengeance upon one another.

My correspondents, both Hindu and Mussalman, should understand that I am just now out of tune with the prevailing atmosphere. I recognize fully that I have no power over the fighters whether Hindu or Muslim. My solution for removing the tension is, I admit, not suited to the times. I therefore best serve the nation by holding my peace. But my faith in my solution is as immovable as my faith in the necessity and the possibility of real Hindu-Muslim unity. Though therefore my helplessness is patent, there is no hopelessness is me. And as I believe that silent prayer is often mightier than any overt act, in my helplessness I continuously pray in the faith that the prayer of a pure heart never goes unanswered. And with all the strength at my command, I try to become a pure instrument for acceptable prayer.

Young India, 22-9-1927

83. LETTER TO V. S. SRINIVASA SASTRI

SABARMATI,¹

September 22, 1927

MY DEAR BROTHER,

I have now two letters from you to acknowledge. I am sorry you are still having trouble from the Transvaal friends. I hope, however, that you will not allow their defection to disturb your peace. I am watching things here and I would ask you not to worry over the notices that Aiyar and Co. may be able, now and then, to secure in the Press here of their activities. I suppose, I may safely say that no real stir will be made in India on the South African question unless I stir. That much credit, somehow or other, I still retain, and it is likely to survive your term of office. And so long as the Union Government continue to co-operate with you and do not reject your advances, I do not see what useful purpose can be served by my making a stir here

The result of the Pragji and Medh² case is unfortunate. I think that they are right in rejecting the offer of a temporary certificate. I do not attach any importance to C.I.D. reports about Medh. If he did anything criminal they should prosecute him, but not use against him C.I.D. reports. He may not be a perfect human being, but I do not think that he is in any way worse than the average Indian there or, for the matter of that, here. The way I look upon the case is this. The understanding of 1914³ was that there should be no colour bar, at least in theory. Therefore the Immigration Law, to read, does not show any colour bar. In practice six men were to be admitted annually on the ground of educational qualifications, and, so far as I recollect, the question of domicile was not to affect them. For, they carried their qualifications in their own persons. As I am writing from memory I am writing under correction. You will, however, examine the position for what it is worth. I do hope that a way will be found of accommodating them. I am glad you like Phoenix and I should feel happy if it could really become, on occasions, a resting place for you.

¹ Permanent address

² Two prominent Indians of Johannesburg who, on returning after a period of residence in India, had trouble in getting their domicile certificates renewed

³ The Smuts-Gandhi Agreement

Andrews described what might have been a serious accident as Kallenbach was driving you from Pretoria to Johannesburg at break-neck speed, and one of the tyres of his fashionable motor burst. I wish you could persuade Kallenbach to come to India, if only to see me and return to his business. Miss Schlesin has given me a fascinating description of her interview with you. When I was in Madras I tried to seek out Mrs. Sastri, but I learnt that she was at Lucknow.

With love,

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

Letters of Srinivasa Sastri, pp. 167-8

84. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, KANADUKATHAN¹

September 22, 1927

FRIENDS,

I thank you for this purse. I am both glad and sad to be in your midst. I want to have a heart-to-heart talk with you this evening. Being born in a Vaisya family, I suppose I may identify myself with you and claim to be a Chetti myself. I came in touch with your family life when I was in Rangoon with Dr. Mehta. I was at that time a youngster and as we walked through Mughal Street, he showed me the rows of verandahs and counters and pointed out people busily engaged practically the whole day long counting rupees on their wooden trays. He said that these were all Chettis and from their appearance and their verandahs I might make a mistake by thinking that these were all petty money-lenders. He said that they were not petty money-lenders but they were big money-lenders and some of them were fabulously rich. I had known some Chettis before this acquaintance with them in Rangoon and South Africa. I then knew some of them as my acquaintances but I did not know, as I knew in Rangoon, that you had monopolized practically the money-lending business in Rangoon. I then recall your acquaintance at close quarters in 1920¹ when I passed through Chettinad and made collections for Tilak Swaraj Fund. I well remember the extreme kindness that you showed me then and that

¹ Extracts from Gandhiji's speeches at Kanadukathan, Karaikudi, Amaravatipur and Devakottah were strung together by Mahadev Desai under the title "Message to Chettinad", in *Young India*, 6-10-1927.

² Actually 1921; *vide* "Speech at Kanadukathan", September 22, 1921.

you are repeating now. But at that time mine was really a hurricane tour and I had no leisure to think of anything else or to enquire into anything else and I was swaraj-mad. I am still for that matter swaraj-mad but God has chastened me. My little tin-pot plan for swaraj was not very evidently His. And He has now further blessed me with physical illness which makes it impossible for me to go on in that hurricane fashion. Thus it is possible for me to study your life and understand you better, much better, than I was able in 1920. The best and only way I can return your extreme kindness is to give you the result of my somewhat summary study. That study has been helped by two letters that I have from unknown friends in Chettinad giving me a description of your life.

But before I enter upon that let me urge you to make khadi your own much more fully than you seem to have done. If you wish it, you have the power of financing the whole of the khadi movement in Tamil Nadu and for that matter in the whole of India. As I have said to my Marwari friends, the Chettis of the North, I can say to you also that if you wish it you can really finance the khadi movement purely out of your superfluity. With your marvellous shrewdness you can even orga-nize khadi. And so you will forgive me if I tell you that all the purses that I have been receiving since this morning on my way to this place have not, in any shape or form, given me real satisfaction. Though the amount may be, I have not counted it, a few thousands, it is really but a drop in the ocean of your own wealth. If you really believe in khadi, if you have understood the message of the spinning-wheel then, but not till then, I want you to give not little out of your plenty but much out of your plenty.

And what is khadi after all? Khadi represents the cause of the starving millions and let not those who have either riches or power, in the pride of their riches or power forget these starving millions. I urge you therefore to befriend this great cause of the starving millions and make that cause your own. And if you will but do so, you will discard all your foreign cloth and foreign fineries and get if you will the richest khadi you want and the finest khadi your taste may demand.

When I saw your houses choked with foreign furniture, your houses furnished with all kinds of foreign fineries and foreign things, your houses containing many things for which in this holy land of ours there should be no room what so ever I told you at the outset that I had felt both glad and sad. I tell you that I have felt oppressed with this inordinate furniture. There is, in the midst of this furniture, hardly

any room to sit or to breathe free. Some of your pictures are hideous and not worth looking at. I recall the many signs and the many descriptions of the simplicity of even the rich men in the time of the *Mahabharata*. Let us not wear our wealth so loudly as we seem to be doing here. This temperate atmosphere and climate of our country really does not admit of this lavish display of all these things. It obstructs the free flow of pure air and it harbours dust and so many million germs that float in the air. If you give me a contract for furnishing all these palaces of Chettinad I would furnish them with onetenth of the money but give you a much better accommodation and comfort than you enjoy today and procure for myself a certificate from the artists of India that I had furnished your houses in a much more artistic fashion than you have done.

I say also that all these palaces are really built anyhow without any sense of co-operation amongst yourselves and any sense of social effect and social welfare. If you will but form a union of Chettis for the common welfare and for the welfare of the peasantry that is living in your midst you can really make Chettinad a fairyland that would attract all the people of India who would come, see and be satisfied with the ordinary life that you would be then leading. So much for the external part of your life.

I want to plead also for internal purity. I have the good fortune of enjoying the confidence of many moneyed friends and I have the information and I guess also that you, the moneyed Chettis, are not free from the weaknesses common to the men of wealth all through the world. But it need not be so. We have the celebrated instance of Janaka, the King rolling in riches and yet he was the incarnation of purity. I therefore plead for personal purity of life. It is really the element of manly life. Manliness for man is to regard every woman as his sister, mother or daughter according to her age, except his own wife. I want, therefore, fellow Chettis, to be as strict as it is humanly possible with themselves and conduct rigorous self-examination.

Let your charities be also wise. I understand that you spend lavishly on building temples. It is no doubt a good thing to build some temples but the building of temples could easily be overdone. It is a horrible superstition to think that, because we have built a building which we call a temple, God necessarily resides in it. I tell you I know many temples in India in which God no more resides than in a brothel. Some good friends like yourselves have given me some

money to build temples for the so-called untouchables. I have refused to spend that money in building a single temple for which I cannot get a holy man and for whose work I cannot get honest trustees.

The greatest charity at the present moment that I can conceive for any Indian to do is undoubtedly to promote this khadi work.

Our rich friends are fond of giving free dinners to the so-called poor people. I have often questioned the virtue of giving these dinners. The *Bhagavad Gita* says that that gift only is a good gift which is given to a worthy man.¹ Therefore it would be right to feed the blind, the maimed and those who somehow or other cannot work for a living. But I make bold to say that if all of you conspired together and set apart a fixed sum for feeding 50,000 men in the villages of India free of charge it would be a great sin. The man who has got good arms and good legs and honest work in front of him is not a man in need of free dinner. The greatest need of India is work for the starving villagers in their own homes; and I tell you that every rupee that you give for the promotion of khadi means 16 meals to 16 women after they have worked for those meals.

Almost equally great is the charity in connection with the criminal waste that is going on of cattle life in India. And he who conducts a good dairy and a good tannery saves several hundred cattle. So if you will make Chettinad an ideal place for you to live in and every people like myself to come and pass a weary day, I would expect not only to make Chettinad a model of sanitation but I would expect you to have good cattle depots, good warehouses where you will have all kinds of cattle stocked and I would expect you also to show an ideal model dairy which will supply yourselves and the poor people round you with good, nice and pure milk at cheap rates and I would expect you to build tanneries where hides of dead cattle should be secured and turned out into shoes for the rich and the poor. Similarly your charity should flow freely to the so-called untouchables whom all have hitherto trampled under foot.

I may still make further suggestions but I hope I have said enough to give you food for thought. I would ask you, as your sincere friend, to think well about the important matters on which I have spoken to you and not to dismiss them out of your consideration and it will give me great joy if I can but find that at least some of you have understood and appreciated my message. I am most anxious to bridge the gulf between the rich people of India and its paupers. I see no way of finding abiding happiness for this land unless there is a

¹ XVII. 20

living bond created between these two.

The Hindu, 24-9-1927

85. LETTER TO PRAGJI DESAI

*Bhadarva Vad 13 [September 23, 1927]*¹

BHAISHRI PRAGJI,

I have your letter. I have written to Sastriji about both of you². He has been trying to do something. Be satisfied with what he does or speaks [on your behalf]. I have suggested one argument to him, which may perhaps help. It is that the timebar should not apply to anyone who seeks entry on the strength of educational qualification. Whatever you do, see that you do nothing of which you need feel ashamed in order to secure the right of residence and do not accept humiliating conditions. Be satisfied with what you can get consistently with your self-respect. It seems both of you have obtained the rights [of residence, etc.,] in Natal. There should not, therefore, be much difficulty in your securing other rights.

Your criticism of Andrews is not right. I see haste and impatience in it. It is impossible that Andrews should tell a lie to you. It may be that. . . 's³ memory failed him or that Andrews misunderstood. When a man like Andrews is working for our cause with selfless devotion, it does not befit us to be angry with him or find fault with him.

I hope Medh and you are keeping good health. I have been travelling for some time now.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 5041

¹ The year is inferred from the reference to Pragji's case.

² *Vide* "Letter to V. S. Srinivasa Sastri", 22-9-1927.

³ Illegible

86. LETTER TO MANILAL GANDHI

[September 23, 1927]¹

CHI. MANILAL,

I got your letter.

A letter for Pragji is also enclosed. Read it before you send it on to him, so that I may not have to write again to you about him. I think the words you have used in writing about Andrews are improper. Such words ought not to be used with reference to a worker like him. He has felt so concerned about the cases of Pragji and Medh that he even sent a cable to me about them. How can we attribute motives to him for having said what he felt? How can we criticize him for what he said in Delagoa Bay either? He who serves us may criticize us too, provided he does not let his criticism be exploited by others. In criticizing one's own people, is there anyone who can outdo me? If people blamed me for that, where would I be?

I am on a tour. It seems this whole year will be spent thus. I shall have to return to the Ashram in January to attend Ramdas's marriage. I have no time to write more.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4723

87. SPEECH AT AMARAVATIPUR

September 23, 1927

FRIENDS,

I thank you for the purse that you have just given me and I hope you will excuse me for my ignorance about this place or its people and it was only upon my enquiry just now I came to know that this was the place that supplied national workers in this part of the country.

I have been saying to the rich people of India that if they would establish a living bond between themselves and the starving millions, they cannot do it better than by adopting khadi and the message of

¹*Vide* the preceding item.

the spinning-wheel. You have, therefore, certainly done well in giving me this purse for khadi. And I should like you to give not the least you can but the most you can. And if you have not given the most I suggest to all the rich people of this place that they should put their hands deep into their pockets and give what they properly consider a decent sum. But even though you may give the most you can in the shape of money, I would not consider that to be the best work or the most you can do for khadi.

If you believe in the message of the spinning-wheel then it is easy enough for me to convince you that you cannot do anything even by giving me all your wealth for khadi unless you are prepared to wear khadi; for unless we wear khadi it is perfectly useless to have it manufactured by the poor people. I would, therefore, ask every one of you who has not become yet habitual wearer of khadi to discard the use of all foreign cloth and adopt khadi exclusively for his use. And what I said to men applies to all sisters who are gathered around me.

I suppose as was done in Karaikudi here also you have fed poor people. If you have done so, while I am prepared to admit that it does credit to your heart I do not consider that it has really added any more to your merit. I am sure that many people of India do not want to make poor people beggars and paupers. And so what I said last night I repeat tonight that the best charity that moneyed people can make today is to support khadi organization. A rupee given to khadi means giving honest work to 16 women per day giving them also one anna each. And if you want to become a self-respecting people you should see that everyone gets honest work and gets an honest pay for the work that he or she does.

And may I repeat what I said last night that rich people need repeatedly to be reminded that after all personal purity of life is the best riches in the world? I know what terrible temptation riches put in the way of men constantly doing evil. I would like you, therefore, to examine, each one of you individually to examine, yourselves and eradicate wherever that evil exists in your breast. Amaravati means literally 'the abode of God'. How I wish you can make your town or your city really the abode of God. You can easily do so if you will be clean both outside and inside. If we honestly think within ourselves each one of us will be able to see that cleanliness like swaraj is really our birthright. The route leading to swaraj is self-control. And self-control means personal cleanliness.

But I have been watching during my stay in Chettinad that so far as outward corporate cleanliness is concerned, it is really lacking. If you all adopt concerted measures you can make your streets, your tanks and your surroundings spotlessly clean. And I have letters from friends in Chettinad which have told me that the inside also is not particularly clean. That uncleanness is worse than the one that I see in the streets and ponds here. The outward uncleanness and insanitation you can really set right in a few days' time if you organize yourselves, have a body of volunteers and workers and put your streets and tanks in a wonderful sanitary condition. The first essential condition of corporate life, that is city life, is that an absolutely clean supply of water is guaranteed to the dwellers of the city and its accommodation made perfectly clean and sweet. When I was on the Nandi Hills I saw that the tank from which drinking water was drawn by the dwellers on those hills was all day long well-guarded against pollution. Bathing tanks must be separate from the tanks that supply drinking water. I know that the inward cleanliness of which I have talked is a more difficult and intricate proposition than the sanitation that I have just talked to you about. But having been in my own days in possession of some amount of money I want to present you with my own recipe of how you can attain comparatively [*sic*] personal cleanliness although you may possess riches. That recipe is nothing original that I am going to give you. It is really a part of our religion and it is this that no matter how much money we have earned we should regard ourselves as trustees holding these moneys for the welfare of all our neighbours. There is a verse which says that he who eats without sacrifice, that is without giving, is a thief.¹ If God gives us power and wealth He gives us the same so that we may use them for the benefit of mankind and not for our selfish carnal purpose.

I would also commend to your attention the question of untouchability. You rich people of Amaravatipur have a warm corner in your heart for those who are miscalled untouchables. It is sinful to call a single human being an untouchable because he is born in particular surroundings. Give them therefore wealth as if they are your own kith and kin, as really they are, and spend your riches for their well-being.

I would beseech you not to dismiss what I have told you this evening but treasure them and translate into practice whatever you are capable of. May God bless you!

The Hindu, 26-9-1927

¹ *Bhagavad Gita*, III. 12

88. MESSAGE TO EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCE,
TRICHINOPOLY

[Before September 24, 1927]¹

I wish the teachers will exercise the great power that they have over the youth of the country for the purpose of binding them to the starving millions by inducing them at least to use nothing but pure khaddar for their dress, but this they will not succeed in doing unless they set an example themselves.

The Hindu, 26-9-1927

89. SPEECH AT WOMEN'S MEETING, KARAIKUDI

September 24, 1927

DEAR SISTERS,

It is a great pleasure to me to be able to see you this morning and I thank you for the purse that you have given me for *Daridranarayana*. But I am not sure whether all of you really know why you have given me this money. I am afraid some of you think that this money is being given to some rightful Mahatma for his own treasure. But if such is the belief entertained by any single one of you, I want to disabuse you of that belief. You have given this money for the sake of your own starving sisters and I am a humble instrument for carrying this gift of yours to these poor sisters, not in the manner in which you often fling money in the faces of the poor people. This money is not to be given to those poor sisters by way of charity but the money is to be given to them for the work they do. And they are starving not because there is no food in their village but because they have got no work for which they could get money and for such money they could get food. These poor sisters of yours and mine are without work for nearly six months in the year, because of your sins and my sins. If you and I do not eat *arisi*² that our agriculturists grow in this part of the country, what do you think will happen to those agriculturists? If instead of eating the *arisi* that they grow we were to

¹ The Trichinopoly District Educational Conference and the 37th annual meeting of the District Teachers' Guild was held on 24-9-1927.

² Rice

eat wheat that grows in Australia and is imported from Australia, what do you think will happen to those agriculturists? They will cease to grow *arisi* and starve because there is no money to be had for the produce of their labour. Now these millions of sisters of ours at one time spun yarn like this and it was woven into cloth that we used to wear and which we now call khaddar. That was the time when we wore khadi. Then came a time in the history of our unfortunate country when you and I and our ancestors went mad and sinned. They and we began to be deceived by all the foreign fineries that came from England, Paris and other parts of the world. And so these sisters finding no market for the products of their labour threw away their spinning-wheels and there was no other work to get in their villages. And so not having any work to replace this, they began to starve. Some very few of them left their villages and sold themselves to a life of shame. And remember that these were your sisters and my sisters. Some others went to towns and accepted factory labour for wages which you will not accept. Now you have given this money by way of some penance for the sin of ours. But this money is perfectly useless if you yourselves will not wear khadi. And so what I ask you all is to consider your own dharma and henceforth make a sacred resolve that for the sake of these poor sisters you will wear nothing but khadi. But then khadi needs something more than merely wearing cloth spun and woven by the sacred hands of these villagers. If you will, through this khadi, think of these poor sisters with a true heart, then khadi will be a symbol not only of your outward change but the whole heart will be changed. If you do that you will again revive the age of Sati and Sita. And that is what I am incessantly praying God to make you like. But even God cannot make us what we should be, against our own wills. God only helps those who are willing to help themselves and He is only waiting to make every one of you like Sita if you would only wish to become like Sita; but you don't wish it because you really consider that there are some people who are even untouchables to you; not so did Sita act. On the contrary, she regarded Guha as Nishadaraja¹ whom in our ignorance today we consider as untouchable. But if you will wear khadi in the khadi spirit, then you will not consider a single human being to be untouchable because he is born in particular surroundings.

Now you will even perhaps understand why I consider that you,

¹ King of the Nishadas, a tribe in the Vindhya mountains

the rich women of Chettinad, have not given for *Daridra-narayana* anything like enough money. I do not hesitate to ask sisters like you not only to give me money which really they got from their parents and husbands but I ask them to part with their *streedhanam* or their jewels. And I ask them to part with it on this condition that they should not again ask that the jewellery should be replaced. The real beauty of woman does not consist in her fine saris, in her diamonds and gold jewellery. Women's real beauty for that matter consists in the possession of a pure heart. May God give you that heart.

The Hindu, 26-9-1927

90. SPEECH IN REPLY TO ADDRESSES, DEVAKOTTAH

September 24, 1927

FRIENDS,

I thank you for all the addresses¹, and I thank the expert spinner, Sjt. Chokkalingam Chettiar, for presenting me with a specimen of cotton as it goes through all the different processes before it is turned out into yarn. I thank him also for giving me khadi prepared out of yarn of his own spinning and woven in this place by a weaver and I have exposed that. This beautifully fine khadi is for you to see and I have no doubt that through this khadi you can also see my face. I want to commence the proceedings of this meeting with an offer to you. This khadi I cannot wear for the simple reason that it would be against my profession that I want to have no more than any of the starving millions. God alone knows how far I permit myself all kinds of latitude under cover of my intense desire to do service. But I have not yet developed sufficient insolence in me to say that if I used this beautiful khadi I should be able to serve you more. Therefore unless you accept this sporting offer that I am about to make, this piece of khadi will go among the exhibits that have been collected by the All-India Spinners' Association. And it will be among some of the rare exhibits of the Association, but I would really like you to retain this beautiful piece of workmanship in your midst as an exhibit for yourselves or in order to adorn some of you, rich men. But if you propose to keep it as a trophy in your midst you will have to pay the

¹ The addresses were presented by the citizens, the Devakottah Union Board, and the students and the staff of the Nagarathar Sri Minakshi Vidyalaya High School.

sportsman's price for it. And to show how much I prize this piece of khadi which is on its way to approach the *shabnam* of Dacca, I cannot let you have it for anything under Rs. 1,000. *Shabnam* is a beautiful poetic name for Dacca khadi which our forefathers were in the habit of manufacturing there. *Shabnam* means evening dew and this mulmul was so called because someone mistook it for evening dew when it was spread in front of him. It was so fine and so beautiful. A few months ago there died in Bengal one Mr. Chatterjee who produced Dacca mulmul or khadi almost approaching this *shabnam*. Unfortunately for us he died but his workmanship exists and that khadi still remains as an exhibit in the Khadi Pratishthan in Bengal and the manager of the Pratishthan will not part with that khadi even for Rs. 5,000. I admit that these are or may be called fancy prices, but lovers of art, lovers of their country, lovers of patriotism do not mind paying fancy prices for their love. And there I finish this story of my sportsman's offer with which I commenced these proceedings. And in the end of my speech it would be seen whether there is anyone who prizes this beautiful piece of art for the money that I have suggested to you.

Here is also another piece of workmanship presented by my friend Sjt. Srinivasa Iyengar. This also, though not so fine as the preceding piece, is too fine for me to use personally. If you wish to pay a fancy price for it you can treat with me, but I shall not name my own price for fear of putting an undue strain upon your love. This is a finished scarf surely and much better than any silk that you get from Paris. You will forgive me for taking away so much of your time over my praise of two pieces of art. But that also shows to you how I am khadi-mad. When I begin to talk of khadi I can talk about it endlessly if I get patient listeners; for I know that in khadi lies the economic salvation of our starving brethren and sisters scattered in seven hundred thousand villages and I wish that I can induce you to think that life is a burden to you as it is a burden to me so long as there exists in India a single man or woman who starves for want of work. I am passing so many days, precious days, in Chettinad with the high hope of being able to evoke the best of your benevolence on behalf of *Daridranarayana*. I want you therefore to give the most that you can and not the least you have.

And if you have given the most financial assistance that you can, you will not have established a living bond between yourselves and these starving millions unless you will make khadi your own. And you

have an ocular demonstration that it is possible for you to have in this very place as fine khadi as you like in order to suit your tastes. What these two friends have been able to produce, many more can also do if they only strive. I hope therefore that you will, all young and old, men and women, boys and girls, make a sacred resolution that henceforth you will not buy any foreign cloth and that all your purchases will be in khadi, hand-spun and hand-woven. So much for khadi.

But there are other things that I would like to commend to your attention. I venture to suggest to you that you are not using your riches wisely though you seem to be using them profusely. You have erected huge palaces but you have not given any attention to your surroundings. I would like you therefore to ensure the purest supply of the purest water not only for yourselves but all those who are living in your midst. Your roads must be perfectly good. And all your tanks should actually be sweet-smelling, containing nothing but good, clear, sparkling, pure water. Your drainage must be in perfect state and all these things are really incredibly simple and if you will set your heart upon it you will find that it won't cost you anything that you will feel. If you will do all these things, well, you must get expert advice for all these things. But this requires a little sacrifice of personal inclinations and personal ease. It requires also a desire to live a corporate life—life not merely for self, but for one's own country. It requires also a fellow-feeling for all your neighbours including the poorest. And immediately you have given that bent to your inclination you will find that it will cost little effort and still less money and I assure you that you will be amply repaid for your pains.

But I was astonished this afternoon to learn that you will not even give a proper and decent education to your own children. Your one ambition in life is, I was told, to make them even at a tender age money-making machines. It cannot be right. By all means make them your worthy successors in office but before they embark upon stormy life let them have an idea of our own knowledge in the shape of our own culture, let their character be formed and let them know something of the history and the country of ours. As it is, I am told that you are tossed to and fro by all kinds of texts that are put before you by people parading to know the Shastras in the sacred name of Shastras. But let me tell you that every incantation whether it is in Sanskrit or whether it is in Tamil is not necessarily Shastra. My definition of true Shastra is the chosen word that giveth us life. Therefore any text, however ancient it may be described to be, which takes us along the path of perdition, which is therefore inconsistent

with truth or the universal law of life, is not Shastra. And hence have we been taught that Shastra comes really out of the mouth of people of character whom we describe as holy men, and not every man, who wears red-coloured robe and smears his forehead and the whole of his body with all kinds of marks and rolls out verses after verses from things which he calls scriptures, is a holy man. A holy man is one who never considers himself superior to any single creature on earth and who has renounced all the pleasures of life. But really in this *Kaliyuga*¹ we do not easily come across a holy man. Therefore it becomes doubly our duty to give a proper education to our children so that they may be able to discriminate between good and evil. And you who are rich and past the stage of education, to you I would like to say what I have been saying elsewhere also during these three days, whatever you do, don't spoil your purity of life. I hear all sorts of stories which I hope are largely exaggerated. But I know that generally speaking it is the experience of the world that possession of gold is as a rule inconsistent with the possession of virtue; but though such is the unfortunate experience in the world it is by no means an inexorable law. We have the celebrated instance of Janaka who, although he was rolling in riches and had limitless power, being a great Prince, was still one of the purest men of his age. And even in our own age I can cite from my own personal experience and tell you that I have the good fortune of knowing several moneyed men who do not find it impossible to lead a straight, pure life. What is possible for those few men is surely possible for every one of you. And I wish that my word can find an abiding place in your heart and I know how much good it will do you and society in which you are living.

Now I have to do the same thing that I did at every meeting. Before dispersing, volunteers go out and make collections from those who have not subscribed to the purse or who, after listening to me, come to the conclusion that they have not given enough. If there are any such men and women who believe in khadi, I want to give an opportunity to them to do so.

Whilst these collections were going on, Mahatmaji repeated that offer which he made at the beginning and asked if there were friends who were prepared to pay the reserved price for that piece of khadi if put up for auction. There being no response for this, Mahatmaji said that it would be sent as an exhibit to the All-India Spinners' Association.² Mahatmaji, in conclusion, said :

¹ The age of strife, opposed to truth and justice

² This was purchased by Shanmugam Chettiar for Rs. 1,001 at Karaikudi the next day.

One word to the students whom I must not forget. They tell me in their address that they proposed henceforth to give greater attention to spinning and those who have not taken up khadi proposed henceforth to take up khadi. I congratulate them on their decision and I pray to God that He will give them strength to follow up their resolution.

The Hindu, 26-9-1927

91. TALK TO YOUNG MEN

[On or before *September 25, 1927*]¹

You are telling me utter falsehoods. You do not know the man.

If Rajagopalachari is capable of telling lies, you must say that I am also capable of telling lies. I do say he is the only possible successor, and I repeat it today. You young men in trying to kill him will kill yourselves. The pamphlet shows how you are fed on lies—you are bringing up your movement on lies which means violence.

You may offer stubborn battle if you like, but build your foundation on truth. I am giving you this time only because I feel for the youth of the country.

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

92. A LETTER

[*September 25, 1927*]²

DEAR FRIEND,

From the facts stated by you and if there are no mitigating circumstances, the case is certainly one for regarding the ceremony as a nullity and leaving the girl free to marry a person of her choice. But in my opinion she may not make any choice before she reaches 21 without consulting her parents.

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

¹ This conversation was reported under this date-line.

² Copied under this date-line in the source

93. LETTER TO SURENDRA

[September 25, 1927]¹

CHI. SURENDRA,

I got your letter. Tell me about all the uncommon experiences you have there. Vasumatibehn did write to me about your listlessness. I was not at all worried though I was certainly surprised.

What is your method of going to the villages? Do you go there alone or with a companion? Have the floods² left any impression on the people's mind or is it altogether gone? During the floods all lived in harmony. Does it now seem a dream? Do the people help in the relief work? And those who accept help, are they generally honest?

What is Balkrishna's state? Chhotelal has again gone into silence.

I am quite happy. Though a great many things happen these days which trouble my mind, and some of them make deep wounds indeed, it is a battle which tests the soldier who is a seeker of *moksha*³ and I have faith, therefore, that the wounds will heal. Even if they do not heal, is it not promise of the *Gita* that one who falls in this battle meets with nothing but good?

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9416

94. LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

Sunday [September 25, 1927]⁴

CHI. MATHURADAS,

I have your letter. If you find Panchgani more congenial, then do try for a bungalow there. It is a pity that we cannot ask for Pattani Saheb's bungalow. But I have no doubt that it is our duty not to ask for it.

¹ From Mahadev Desai's manuscript Diary

² In Gujarat

³ Deliverance from phenomenal existence

⁴ From the postmark

I had received your telegram concerning Manilal's brother. I am quite well.

Blessings from

BAPU

SJT. MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

PANCHGANI CASTLE

PANCHGANI

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

95. *SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, KARAIKUDI*

September 25, 1927

FRIENDS,

I thank you for address and the different purses, the chief purse containing over Rs. 4,000. It is a good purse but not good enough for the people of Chettinad and it is certainly not good enough, when I compared it to the seventeen-rupee purse given to me by the *Adi-Dravida* boys. You can well afford to give four times as much whereas the *Adi-Dravida* boys could give four times as much whereas the *Adi-Dravida* boys could hardly afford to give as much as they have given. Nevertheless I am thankful for whatever you have been able to give for *Daridranarayana* out of a willing heart. I wish to start my remarks by repeating the offer I made yesterday, at last night's meeting. I want to expose to you this beautiful piece of art prepared in your own place, and the yarn of this beautifully fine muslin which I call khadi was spun by Mr. Chokkalingam of this place. I had the pleasure of seeing the very different processes through which he passed his cotton before he could draw his thread so fine as the threads from which this khadi piece is woven. And if you had witnessed his handicraft you would have envied with me and with me you would have also been proud of his art. I cannot make any personal use of so fine a piece of muslin. If therefore I cannot evoke your love of local art and love of the country, I must take this piece away and put it among the exhibits of the All-India Spinners' Association. But I would really like you to possess this piece of cloth. If you will do so, you have to pay a fancy price for it. Works of art all the world over carry always fancy prices and I have fixed the reserve price of this piece of cloth at Rs. 1,000;

but you may, if you wish, ask what is the artistic value about this piece of cloth or in other words you may, if you wish, enquire why is it that I value khadi so much as I do. I was told by one who has lived in your midst for years that there are in Chettinad many people who do not understand the message of the spinning-wheel nor do they understand how all these purses are to be utilized. I propose to devote a few sentences by way of explanation of the message of the spinning-wheel. It is designed to provide work for millions of starving men and women who are living in the seven hundred thousand villages of the land. Everyone who knows anything about India has testified that they have no work for nearly six months in the year and apart from the spinning-wheel it is impossible to find work for these millions of people, and so, through the spinning-wheel we can produce sufficient cloth to cover the whole of India. And I venture to suggest that anything produced by the hands of starving millions such as this muslin is necessarily a work of art. All art that is true and living must have some correspondence to the life that we live. True art must not debase life but it must sustain and ennoble life. And now you understand why I prize khadi so much. But it would be valueless if you and I do not wear khadi.

Now I shall tell you something about the organization which is producing khadi and selling it. There are 1,500 villages at least being served through this organization. In these 1,500 villages over fifty thousand sisters are receiving the benefit of the spinning-wheel and through this spinning-wheel nearly five thousand weavers are weaving the yarn spun by these fifty thousand women. Side by side with these spinners and weavers a class of men has been brought into being who do the special laundry work that is required in connection with the khadi as also dyeing and printing. The whole of the beautiful art of printing and dyeing which had become extinguished in Masulipatam and elsewhere has now been revived and has been given an honourable place. It was through this organization that over seven lakhs of rupees were distributed amongst a network of workers. And if it is of any consequence to you to know, let me inform you that the vast majority of these artisans are non-Brahmins. This organization is being conducted and controlled by a council of nine men, the majority of whom are again non-Brahmins, if you want to know that. Its president is a non-Brahmin who is mis-called Mahatma. (Laughter.) Its treasurer is again a non-Brahmin whose qualities as a treasurer are not to be surpassed by any treasurer on the face of the earth and its

secretary is another non-Brahmin, the son of a distinguished banker in Bombay. This organization is finding work for nearly 1,000 middle class men, the majority of whom are again non-Brahmins. It has also some workers who not only get no honorarium whatsoever but actually feed this organization. All the accounts of the central organization as also provincial organizations are periodically audited and those account may be inspected by friend and foe, donors or non-donors. No official of the organization gets more than Rs. 175 per month. No man or woman can approach this organization or belong to it unless he or she is dominated by a spirit of self-sacrifice. When I mentioned women, I have pleasure in informing you that there are several distinguished daughters of India who are working for this khadi, free of charge. For instance I may mention the three granddaughters of the Grand Old Man of India¹ and the distinguished sisters belonging to the great Petit family. The organization is operating with a capital of about 20 lakhs of rupees. But great as these figures may appear to you to be they are nothing when compared with what you and I should want them to be. If the khadi spirit possesses the whole of India we should be serving not 1,500 but 7,00,000 villages and not fifty thousand spinners but one hundred million spinners. It is for this work that I ask the rich people of chettinad not to give me some portion of their superfluity but a substantial portion of their substance. You may also now understand that when I put the reserve price Rs. 1,000 upon this beautiful piece of khadi I rather underrate than overrate.

Now I must repeat in a hurried fashion some of the most important local matters about which I have been talking during the last four days of my pleasant stay in your midst. I do urge you to look after your sanitation and your water-supply. Your palaces do not look to advantage at all in the midst of insanitary streets and tanks full of not pure sparkling water but foul water. I can show you how you can do these things at an incredibly small expense, not out of your capital but out of your savings.

I understand that some of your marriage customs are very bad. There is very often a price put upon the head of a bride as much as Rs. 30,000. I understand that you do not hesitate to spend as much as Rs. 50,000 per marriage; but this custom I consider to be immoral. There can be no price put either way in the matter of such a sacred

¹ Dadabhai Naoroji

contract as marriage. It must be as easy for a poor man to get a virtuous bride as for a rich man. Merit and mutual love are the sole tests for marriage contracts. The expenses for marriage ceremonies, though I do not consider them to be immoral, I regard them as a criminal waste. It is not becoming of a rich man to dangle his wealth before the multitude in the fashion in which he very often does. The art of amassing riches becomes a degrading and despicable art if it is not accompanied by the nobler art of how to spend wealth usefully. So, out of this marriage reform alone and putting a wise restraint upon your extravagance on these ceremonies, you can turn this Chettinad into a fairyland. You can have if you will, without much effort, public parks, recreation grounds, water-works and profitable dairies that will give supply of cheap and pure milk to the poor people living in your midst. And as I tell you as a man of experience and as a fellow Chetti that you treble your earning resources if you conserve your health by wise sanitation, by an absolutely pure supply of water and by ensuring pure milk for the rich and the poor.

A lady doctor writing to me tells that I should remind you about the immoral custom that is prevalent in Chettinad and that prevents you from thinking of these things of public usefulness. She tells me that the rich people of Chettinad had a due share in perpetuating a hideous immoral custom of assigning girls of tender age to a life of shame under the name of religion. She tells me that there are many *Devadasis*¹ in your midst. If this is true it is really a matter for hanging our heads in shame. Let not possession of wealth be synonymous with degradation, vice and profligacy. And is it not a tragic irony that, in spite of these vices, you are also spending money lavishly in erecting what you flatter yourselves to believe as temples for gods to reside. Not every structure made of brick and mortar labelled temple is necessarily a temple. There are, I am sorry to say, many temples in our midst in this country which are no better than brothels. Do you know that in our religion it is not possible to call any single place a temple unless elaborate ceremonial of purification has been made inside that building and unless the spirit of God has been invoked by men full of piety, so that God may reside in that? And so, I would urge you to restrain yourselves and not lavishly spend in building temples but in the first place dedicate your own bodies to the service of God and for that reason first of all purify by ridding

¹ Female dancers attached to a temple; literally, 'maids of God'

yourselves of the evils to which I have drawn attention. But I am glad to be able to inform you that I received only today a gratifying letter in which whilst the writer admits most of the evils to which I have referred just now he tells me that there are in your midst several noble-minded Chettis rich enough not only in gold but in treasure of virtue also. He tells me that there are in your midst several *brahmacharis*¹ going on with their godly life in a silent manner. He also tells with hope and pride that several young men were conducting against heavy odds a reform movement and I assure these young men that whilst the path of reform is not all roses and that, whilst it is bestrewn with countless thorns, success is theirs if they will persevere prayerfully and with a pure heart. I understood that they are gradually trying to solve one very difficult question that faces every one of you. I understood that a rigid custom has grown up in your midst whereby no Chettiar going either to Burma, Singapore or Ceylon takes his wife with him. I regard this bar sinister against your womanhood as a double drawback and a great sin. It exposes you when you leave homes to avoidable temptations and it deprives your life partners for a number of years of the privilege of your companionship and the opportunity of broadening their outlook by travelling to distant lands with yourselves. I wish these young men therefore very early success in their chivalrous fight and I urge the elders, to whom my voice may reach, to give every assistance to the young men in their endeavour to carry on the necessary reforms in your midst.

And now that silence prevails in this meeting and as this is perhaps the last meeting in Chettinad that I shall address, I should like to say a few words to the sisters in front of me. I am glad to see so many of you attending this meeting. I am afraid you have no notion that this message of khadi is a message principally devoted to the betterment of the condition of your starving sisters living in thousands of villages. I do not know how much men in India will have to pay for keeping you, the women of India, in darkness about so many things of the highest importance in life, both to men and women. But thanks to God that since the advent of the movement for reviving the spinning-wheel, thousands of women have learnt to come out of their homes and listen to the music of the charkha. And I would love to think that you, the women of Chettinad, had begun to think beyond the threshold of your houses or palaces. I would like you to realize

¹ Celibates

the deep and distressful poverty of millions of your sisters and I would like you independently, apart from your men, to part with your possessions, your rupees and your jewellery for the sake of these sisters and it fills me with gladness to be able to tell you that the response from the women of India has been spontaneous so far as this message is concerned and they have even given their moneys and jewellery willingly and in many cases lavishly. But to give me money or your jewellery is by no means enough. If you will establish a living bond between yourselves and your starving sisters, it is absolutely necessary for you to discard your foreign fineries and adopt khadi permanently for your wear; because, if you do not wear the products of their labours, all the money that you give for khadi is a waste of effort.

The beauty of a virtuous woman does not consist in the fineness of her dress but in the possession of a pure heart and virtuous life. Millions of men and women all over India early in the morning invoke the blessed and immortal name of Sita in order that her name may surround them during the whole day with her protecting power, not because Sita wore costly jewels but because she bore a heart that was of pure gold and purer diamond. Sita did not remain in her palace when Rama went into banishment but she insisted upon accompanying him through all these eventful years of exile. Sita did not consider Nishadaraja, whom in our ignorance we consider today, to be untouchable but Sita embraced Nishadaraja and accepted with a grateful heart the services he nobly rendered. And I would like you to imitate Sita's virtues, Sita's humility, Sita's simplicity and Sita's bravery. You should realize that Sita for the protection of her virtues did not need the assistance of Rama, her Lord and master. The chronicler of the history of Sita and Rama tells us that it was the purity of Sita which was her sole shield and protection. And if you will but recognize the power that resides in your breast it is open to you by force of your purity, love and spirit of self-sacrifice to bend the haughty spirit of your men and shame them into forsaking the life of vices and debauchery. I would like you to develop the courage to insist upon accompanying your husbands wherever they go. May God give you that strength and goodwill.

I am now very nearly done and as is usual at all meetings I must follow the custom here also of asking those who have not yet contributed to this purse to do so if they believe in khadi and if they wish it. I would also urge those men and sisters here to give if they

wish as much as they can and therefore if there are those who have not really given enough I would like them if they believe in the statistics I have given and in the importance of the message of khadi not to be niggardly but give generously.

[after this,] the auction of the jewels, silver cups and rings, etc., presented to Mahatmaji commenced. . . . Mr Shanmugam Chettiar announced that he was willing to give for the muslin cloth presented to Mahatmaji at Devakottah his (Mahatmaji's) own fancy price of Rs. 1,000. . . . A small ring which was presented to Mahatmaji for a second time worth not even 10 rupees fetched a fancy price of Rs. 135.

Gandhiji became responsive to the mood of the audience exhibited during the course of the auction and was touched by their boundless affection for him and addressed a few words after the auction, a thing unusual. He said :

I shall never forget the scene. This will remain as one of the pleasantest memories in my life. I have had many a pleasant and unpleasant experiences in my life outside and this will remain among the very few pleasant remembrances and especially so because I have been saying ever since I have set my foot in Chettinad many unsavoury things to you. You might have easily misunderstood my word and my motive. But I have seen that the more harsh words I have spoken, the greater the affection you have showered on me. You have received me as a blood brother and taken the words I have said exactly in the spirit I have delivered them to you. That is really my joy. But I would like you not to forget the words that I have spoken to you but I want every word I have said to you to penetrate your hearts and if I hear that the word having remained in your heart has fructified I think it would give me much greater joy than if you give me millions. I have no use for your money except to serve you with it and it is a strange thing but it is true that I cannot serve you even with your own money if you do not give me your hearts. And so in order that your money which is in my possession may bear ample fruit I request you to do what I have asked you to do. You know that if you can do that, it will do good to you, it will do good to me and also the whole of India. May God bless you and give you the power to understand my message and act up to it.

The Hindu, 27-9-1927

96. MESSAGE TO “ NEW INDIA ”¹

KARAIKUDI,

September 26, 1927

In wishing Dr. Annie Besant many happy returns of the day, I can say that my debt to her was first incurred in 1889-90². It has been increased manyfold since. Cruel God has not yet answered my petition for the power to repay that debt.

The Hindu, 29-9-1927

97. LETTER TO SATIS CHANDRA DAS GUPTA

September 26, 1927

DEAR SATIS BABU,

I have your letter. Mahadev must have written to you about a Pratishtan travelling wheel for a local expert³. He spins very fine. He presented me with a piece of his thin muslin almost like Jogesh Babu's. I sold it for Rs. 1,000 to a local Chetti. It is for this expert that you will send the wheel. Please send it carriage paid and debit the whole cost to the A.I.S.A.⁴ as per advice from me.

As soon as I get your improved pattern I shall use it and report to you. I am sorry about the Abhoy Ashram. They have not written to me.

I see that Nikhil is not yet out of the wood. I do hope he will be all right.

Have you considered the advisability of creating your stock after Mithubehn's style, doing fancy work on it and selling? Mithubehn has created a good market for her skill on khadi. I hope to do a lot of selling in Ceylon and possibly in Travancore. If you have anything that can go anywhere please send me a box for trial.

With love,

Yours,
BAPU

¹ On the occasion of Dr. Annie Besant's birthday

² When Gandhiji was introduced to Mrs. Besant through her book *How I Became a Theosophist*; vide *Autobiography*, Pt. I, Ch. XX.

³ Chokkalingam Chettiar; vide "Speech in Reply to Addresses, Devakottah" 24-9-1927.

⁴ All-India Spinners' Association

[PS.]

You are living on Rs. 20 per month. I do not mind if you keep good health.

From a photostat: G.N. 1577

98. LETTER TO HEMAPRABHA DEVI DAS GUPTA

KARAIKUDI,

Ashvin Shukla 1 [September 26, 1927]¹

DEAR SISTER,

Your letter has reached me. How long will you grieve over Anil's death? It does no good, either for the departed soul or for us, to brood over his qualities. Why should we not look at the matter from this angle? Anil's soul is immortal. We were concerned only with his soul, not with his body. Had it been with the body we could have embalmed the corpse and preserved it for years. But we cremated the body upon the soul's departure. In order to realize this and put it into practice, we need no yogi nor anyone else. Yes, we needs must have faith in God and also in the immortality of the soul. Now let us forget Anil's body and try to emulate him.

Nikhil too seems to be a wonderful child. Do not let him overwork his body.

May God grant you wisdom and peace.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: 1650

99. LETTER TO ASHRAM WOMEN

Aso Sud 1 [September 26, 1927]²

SISTERS,

You won't find today's letter boring. I dared not write till now of certain things that were uppermost in my mind. We wrote to each other tactful letters. We wrote to each other as diplomats do, and not as ordinary human beings. Our letters were not real replies to each other,

¹ Gandhiji was in Karaikudi on this date.

² The year is inferred from the references to relief work and quarrels among the Ashram women.

but formal acknowledgments such as we get from the Government.

Today, I wish to write to you about the quarrels that are going on among you in the Ashram. You do not have mutual trust and respect and, there are petty intrigues among you all the time. You and I know of this, but neither dared to write. I thought I must cut through this studied silence. Why is there so much quarrelling among you? What is the cause of this trouble? Who is to blame? Find out the truth. Religion declares that as long as man harbours evil he is impure and unfit to stand before God. So the first duty of any of you who is impure is to confess the fact and thus purge yourselves of the evil. The immediate cause of this enquiry is a casual letter from Manibehn. It seems she had to go on relief work. So she left the Ashram. Now she pours out her distress in a letter. She could not bear to see the disunion prevailing in the Ashram. Please look into this, be watchful and try to bring credit to the Ashram.

If after reading this letter any of you desires to write to me separately, you are welcome to do so.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3668

100. SPEECH AT SIRUVAYAL

September 27, 1927

FRIENDS,

I thank you for this address on palm leaves and this beautiful quantity of yarn and your purse. I need hardly say that the custom of presenting addresses on palm leaves is infinitely superior. You will not expect me to give you a long speech but I expect you to read the speeches that I have been making in Chettinad. But I do want to congratulate you on having this Ashram. I know that if workers in an Ashram are pure, selfless and self-sacrificing, such an Ashram will promote welfare in a variety of ways. I would, therefore, ask you to interest yourselves in its activities and if the activities commend themselves to you, to help it in every way. I understand that the Ashram has a Gurukul where boys are receiving training and that it is also conducting a school for untouchable boys and doing sanitary

service in the neighbouring villages and teaching the boys spinning. All these activities are very good. And I consider the work among the untouchables to be the most important of all. It is wrong and sinful to consider any person to be untouchable because he or she is born in a particular state. Untouchable children have every right to receive education and every facility as any other children. I would therefore like you to help this untouchability work as much as it is possible for you to do. Now I see in front of me all these boys who do not appear to be particularly healthy. They ought to receive good, pure milk for their food and they should have open air exercises and they should be weighed from time to time. I see also that their hair is kept low and it is not right. Personally, I am convinced that all our boys should be clean shaven. *Brahmacharis* are not supposed to grow hair. I see that the boys are dressed in khadi which is very good. But every detail about boys has got to be considered by those in charge of them. Teachers take the place of parents for the boys and they are therefore responsible for their good health, for their character and for their mental development. I see some girls also in front of me who are heavily and horribly ornamented. These heavy ear-pendants look not only ugly but they interfere with the proper development of all the features of the face. I wish that you mothers will discard all these ugly superficial ornaments. Remember that your beauty consists in your character and not in your ornaments or in your dress. You have really no use for these ugly and costly ornaments of yours. Either melt them or sell them and save your moneys or give your ornaments to a man like me for the sake of *Daridra-narayana*. You don't even wear khadi. You should all be like Sita with an absolutely pure heart, with simple khadi and with simple ornaments.

The Hindu, 29-9-1927

101. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, PAGANERI

September 27, 1927

It delights my heart to see so many sisters attending this meeting, almost the same number as men. As I said at the women's meeting at Karaikudi or elsewhere to the sisters there, the movement for which you have given these purses is essentially a movement for the freedom of the women of India. The full freedom of India will be an impossibility unless your daughters stand side by side with the sons in the battle for freedom and such an association on absolutely equal

terms on the part of India's millions of daughters is not possible unless they have a definite consciousness of their own power. Immediately the spinning-wheel is reinstated in all its glory and with all its implications in the millions of cottages of India, woman recognizes her definite power and her place in India's regeneration. For she is then able to say to men, 'you depend for your food and your clothes as much upon us as on yourselves.' 'We,' she may say, 'clean and cook your food, we spin the yarn from which khadi is prepared.' then she is clothed with dignity which is hers by birthright and of which we, men and traitors of our womanhood, have deprived her. For in our stupidity and in our ignorance we removed from each cottage spinning-wheels and became infatuated with the foreign fineries that came to us from the West and became greedy after the sovereigns and rupees that would dangle before us, and whether by its own design or by an accident, be it however it may, we, men, conspired to keep our daughters and sisters and our wives in utter ignorance and we denied them the education to which they had a right. In our ignorance we gave away our daughters in marriage at an age when they were able only to sit on the lap and play with us as brothers and sisters. By constant usage you yourselves, sisters, who are sitting in front of me, have come to think that it is the most natural thing for you to give away your daughters early in the so-called marriage and to keep them in dismal ignorance. The message of the spinning-wheel is designed to undo these terrible wrongs. The spinning-wheel gives the status to which a woman is entitled and it quickens the conscience both of men and women and enables man to understand his duty by the women of India. If my word has penetrated the hearts of men and women around me you will immediately understand why I consider these purses from you as not adequate for the purpose for which they are intended. I want you men and women to dismiss me from your minds altogether as a Mahatma dropped on you as a curse from heaven. But I want you to realize in all significance the fact that I come before you as a self-chosen humble servant and representative of *Daridranarayana*. I want you to understand that what you have given me is not given and not to be given to feed my vanity and my ambitions, but to clothe and feed *Daridranarayana* who is knocking every day, in season and out of season, at your doors. I have come to you to wake you up to a sense of duty by the starving millions on whom and on whose labour you and I are living. Even your money, your jewellery, your rings and

your necklaces can be of no earthly use to me unless both men and women will wear khadi and nothing but that. This collecting of purses for the spinning-wheel is only a brief and intermediate interval. When every man and woman in India naturally takes to khadi as they all take to the grains that are grown on India's plains there will be as little use for these collections as there is for collection in order to carry on propaganda for cultivating rice and wheat in India. And it is open to you today to shorten that interval as much as you like by adopting khadi, every one of you; and in order to saturate our atmosphere with the spirit of the spinning-wheel, it is necessary for you, all the sisters who are sitting in front of me, to take up the spinning-wheel and if you will, it can become a symbol of your purity and your independence. And it is equally necessary for men to take up the spinning-wheel as a sacrificial rite. I cannot cheapen khadi and I cannot popularize khadi unless I have an army of expert spinners from men who and who alone can penetrate the villages and reinstate the spinning-wheel by giving necessary instruction and by doing the organizing work.

And now let me repeat what I have said in other places in Tamil Nadu about the social reforms which await fulfilment at our hands. Men's lives must become pure. Faithfulness on the part of the husband towards his wife is just as much a sacred obligation as faithfulness on the part of the wife towards her husband. It is wrong, no matter what authority may be cited from the so-called Shastras, for a man to have more than one wife. It is wrong to sell daughters in marriage. It is a sin to have a child widow in one's house and it is equally sinful to give away a child in marriage or to refuse to call all such contracts or ceremonies as an absolute nullity. And it is wrong also to keep our boys and girls without proper education and it is a heinous crime to regard a single human being as untouchable because he is born in a particular group of family. If we had a true awakening in our midst we would deal with all these social evils and deal also with the insanitation around us.

The Hindu, 29-9-1927

102. TELEGRAM TO MIRABEHN

MADURA,
[September] 28, [1927]¹

MIRABAI

CARE HINDI PRACHAR

MADRAS

HOW ARE YOU? MAY GOD MAKE YOU STRONG PHYSICALLY MENTALLY
SPIRITUALLY. LOVE.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 5277. Courtesy: Mirabehn

103. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

September 28, 1927

CHI. MIRA²,

I could not restrain myself from sending you a love message³ on reaching here. I felt very sad after letting you go. I have been very severe with you but I could not do otherwise. I had to perform an operation and I steadied myself for it.⁴ Now let us hope all would go on smoothly and that all the weakness is gone.

I have your two missing letters just now, but of that later. I am writing this against the posting time. You won't worry about me on any account whatsoever.

With love,

BAPU

From the original : C.W. 5278. Courtesy : Mirabehn

¹ Gandhiji was in Madura on this date. *Vide* also the succeeding item.

² Superscription in this and other letters to Mirabehn is in Devanagari.

³ *Vide* the preceding item.

⁴ The addressee describes the incident as follows: "I could not resist going once to see Bapu before returning to my work. But I had made a big mistake this time. I received a severe scolding and was soon packed off to Sabarmati." *Vide The Spirits' Pilgrimage, p. 96.*

104. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, MADURA

September 28, 1927

FRIENDS,

I thank you for your addresses as also for the purses, I thank also the donors of these beautiful hand-spun yarn, and I thank you for the three pieces¹ of hand-spun and hand-woven khadi you do not see exhibited here. They were presented to me this morning and I cannot help mentioning these pieces of khadi also at this juncture. And if time permits and you have the patience you will see these khadi pieces exhibited before you and offered to you also to buy each with a reserve price. The khadi pieces are too artistic, too fine and too long for a self-chosen representative of *Daridranarayana* as I claim to be. I call them very beautiful pieces of art and I would tempt you if you would be tempted to take them from me and keep them as treasures in your beautiful town. At Karaikudi where I got two pieces of khadi², home-spun and home-woven, I sold one piece at Rs. 1,001 and the other at Rs. 101. And I mention these things to you in order to tell you that I had entertained much higher hopes of Madura than what Madura has up to now done. It shows that evidently you who could have done much better have not understood the full importance of the message of the spinning-wheel.

I wish to recall to myself and to you the scene that was presented to me in Madura now nearly seven years ago when I came here leaving behind me at Waltair my friend, fellow-worker and comrade, Maulana Mahomed Ali. Times, however, have changed now. That was a time when you and thousands of other people, as I was journeying from Waltair to Madura, noticed his absence and it brought even tears to many eyes. Today not only does nobody notice his absence or the absence of a Mussalman companion with me but probably you will be surprised if I summed up sufficient courage and audacity to take with me a Mussalman companion. Today the Hindu hand is on the Mussalman throat and the Mussalman hand on the Hindu throat. But I would be false to my God and to my country if in spite of these terribly black clouds overhanging us, I do not repeat in this ancient

¹ Presented by T. C. Chellam Iyengar

² Gandhiji got these pieces at Devakottah and sold them at Karaikudi.

city of yours my absolute and unchangeable faith in the possibility and necessity of Hindu-Muslim union. I know as certainly as I am sitting here that God will bless all our plans and He is going to bring concord out of this terrible discord. And so, those of you who have the same faith burning in your breasts as I have, I invite you to join with me in sending up a heart-prayer to God to cleanse our hearts and give peace to this thirsting land.

But there is yet another incident that happened during that visit of mine which also I want to recall to ourselves. You will remember that after having passed that memorable night in your midst after due prayer humbly offered to God I made a change, a very small change I admit, but nevertheless for me an important change in order to identify myself more closely with the starving millions. As I was travelling to Madura filled with the vivid scenes that took place at Waltair and asking the thousands of people who met me at the various stations at least to discard foreign cloth and take up khadi, one or more of the poor people remonstrated with me and told me that they had no money to buy khadi with. Though I do not think, so far as I recollect now, that the answers given to me were in every case honest, I nevertheless recognized the force of the remark made by some of these poor people who seemed to me to be in rags. I then discussed with the companions who were with me the propriety of the change I am about to describe to you. I passed a sleepless night then resolving within myself what I should do and asking God to guide me. And I made up my mind from next morning, at least for one year to discard the ordinary vest and long dhoti that I used to wear then and be satisfied with the shortest loin-cloth that it is possible for me to do with.¹ The year has rolled by, but seeing the necessity of the change, the change has persisted. I am quite aware that the change, unless it is a token of the change within, has no value whatsoever. But the more I have wandered about India and the more I have pondered over the distressful poverty and pauperism of the millions of villagers scattered throughout seven hundred thousand villages of this ancient land, the more necessary have I felt for one who claims to represent the masses to adopt a change of that character. And if you travelled with me to these villages where you see pauperism in its nakedness, you will recognize with me the necessity of throwing away many of your

¹ *Vide* "My Loin-Cloth", October 2, 1921.

superfluous pieces of dress.

The Municipal address¹ tells me that in your schools, to an appreciable extent, spinning has been successful. Whilst I congratulate the Municipality upon this achievement I must, to be true to you, tell you that it gives me no satisfaction whatsoever. If the people living in the few cities and towns of India were to realize that their life, their comfort, their very existence depend upon these semi-starved millions, they will not treat khadi and the spinning-wheel as a mere pastime, a thing for patronizing. Remember that India does not sustain her town life from wealth drawn from other countries. It has to depend essentially, being almost entirely an agricultural country, for the building up of her towns purely upon what is received from the villages. And after a careful study of the problem of India's poverty and the various remedies that have been suggested to remedy that poverty even partially, I have not been able to see anything approaching the spinning-wheel in usefulness. And it is, in my humble opinion, the sacred duty of the people within the towns to make some slight return to the villagers for what they are obliged to do for them. In my humble opinion this problem of the ever-deepening poverty of India is much more important than even the very important question of Hindu-Muslim unity and, for these parts of India, the very important question of Brahmin and non-Brahmin controversy. These questions are after all mere ripples on the surface of India's waters. The villages are untouched and unaffected by all these questions. And hence you find me in season and out of season talking about nothing but khadi, dreaming about nothing but the spinning-wheel and refusing to be moved from my purpose by these upheavals that are going on in our land. I wish that I could convince every Brahmin, every non-Brahmin, every Mussalman that whatever opinion he retains about these questions that I have mentioned to you, every one of these owes this elementary duty to these toiling masses.

My Nadar² friends in their address tell me that while they believe in the message of the spinning-wheel they have grave doubts about the proper distribution and use of the moneys that are being given to me. They tell me that they have read in a Tamil newspaper that over one lakh of rupees has been lost through maladministration or I do

¹ Gandhiji had earlier received an address from the Municipal Council, Madura, and replied to it at the public meeting.

² A community in Tamil Nadu

not know what. I really thank them for that reference in their address. And if the organization through which I am working this khadi propaganda and through which these moneys are being used is found wanting and careless about the use of these moneys, I confess that it is useless, it is mischievous, to give a single pie for them. And I am glad that whilst they are in doubt as to the proper distribution of these funds they have refused to contribute to the purse. But I am glad to be able to inform these friends and all of you who are present here that there has been no maladministration of the funds. Remember also that the All-India Spinners' Association came to exist only three years ago. Before that this khadi work was one of the items worked by the ordinary Congress organization. But even so nothing like one lakh of rupees has been lost. There are undoubtedly bad book-debts as there are in any organization. We have to deal with all sorts and conditions of men. And in spite of precautions taken, of securities exacted, some of them prove to be dishonest. And if you expect khadi organization to be cent per cent successful before you will part with a single pie, I am afraid that the organization must close. During my public life 35 years I have had the honour of controlling and conducting several organizations. But I must confess to you that I have not been able to conduct a single organization without incurring some loss. In the course of nearly twenty years' practice I came in contact with thousands of commercial men as my clients, and I have not met a single one who has not had some bad debts. And it is my conviction that this khadi organization will stand, in comparison with the tallest firm in the world, side by side with it in the matter of management. The organization is operating with a capital of nearly Rs. 2,00,000. It is serving fifteen hundred villages all over India, and it is feeding nearly 50 thousand spinners. And it finds the spinners on an average from one rupee to one and a half per month. And it utilizes only the spare hours of these spinners who have no other occupations during those hours. It finds work for five thousand weavers, dyers and washermen who are necessary for the development of this business. The provincial accounts, also the Central accounts, are audited periodically by a public accountant. And these accounts are open to inspection by donors and non-donors, by friends and critics. And so if you are satisfied that the cause is good and those who are handling the cause are trustworthy and reliable men, I ask you to unloose your purse and give not the least you can but the most you can. And please remember that your donations are not everything. Even your

donations, however generous they may be, will be of no use to me unless you are prepared to wear khadi which I must present to you for acceptance, being the product of the labour of these spinners and weavers.

I now come to the students' address and I will refer to it only briefly. The students tell me that they are unable to learn Hindi because they have no time and because they can only regard education in terms of commerce. And so they have apologized for their ignorance of Hindi and for having presented their address to me in English language. Even as khadi has been conceived in terms of the millions so has Hindi been conceived in the interests of these very millions. And I was grieved to find this despondent note in the students' address. It is a bad outlook for any country whose young men lose hope. Students should realize that real education comes not in the college course or the high school premises but it comes outside. All of the successful men in the world, if you were to examine their history, you will find that they really learned the essential things of life outside school premises. And poor as we in India are, I must refuse to accept the proposition that education should be regarded in terms of commerce. Let the student world remember that after all they are a handful, a drop in this ocean of humanity. Let them also remember that thousands upon thousands earn an honest and respectable livelihood although they have never entered a high school or college. Let them also understand that it is hurled as a reproach against the student world that the vast majority of the students when they are discharged from their schools or colleges only look forward to clerkships either under the Government or in some business firm. I regard it as a misuse of education. I admit that the educational system is rotten to the core. But taking things as they are, I have been endeavouring to show to students that it is possible for them to help themselves even in the midst of these adverse circumstances if they only think betimes. And so if I suggest to them that even whilst they go to schools which are being really paid for out of the taxes received from the millions, and as a matter of fact that immoral source of revenue—excise—they can make some return for the poor by adopting khadi and the spinning-wheel. Similarly when I suggest that if they regard themselves as citizens not only of the Peninsula south of the Vindhya range but citizens of the whole of India and if they want to have a living touch with the people north of the Vindhya range also they must learn Hindi, they retort that the Senate of the Madras

University should make Hindi compulsory in all schools and all the colleges. I admit the force of that retort, I admit that it is the duty of the Senate to introduce Hindi as a second language in all the curricula. But I am altogether unable to endorse the proposition that the students should feel resourceless and helpless and, sitting with their hands folded, refuse to learn Hindi unless the Senate has made this necessary reform. You have here a Hindi Prachar Office in Madura. It is open to any one of you to learn Hindi and you will find that it is incredibly easy to learn if you will only give one hour per day. And some of you will even discover that just as English has a commercial value so also Hindi has a commercial value in this land if you will use your education for commerce. But I understand that even the Hindi Office you are not able to make self-supporting. I draw the attention of the Municipality and of the citizens of Madura to this defect. Surely it is an activity for which it must not be difficult for you to find a few hundred rupees per year.

I must now hurry on to the other problems which are facing this country. I congratulate the Municipality upon its being able to tell me that so far as its schools and its offices are concerned there is no such thing as untouchability. And I am glad to note that you have a few thousand *Adi-Dravida* boys and a few hundred *Adi-Dravida* girls learning in your schools. But may I also suggest that it is possible for the Municipality to do much more for them? Have you provided them with decent quarters? Are you looking after their homes and their habits which because of our criminal neglect have grown round them? Are you trying to wean them from the drink curse? And I would like here to repeat what I have been saying throughout this Tamil Nad tour that it is necessary for us all, whether we are Brahmins, non-Brahmins and what not, to think of the child-wife and the child-widow. I have received some letters urging me to reconsider my views about child-widows, so far as South India is concerned. I have seen no reason to reconsider my opinion. And I consider that we, thinking men and thinking women, can- not sit still so long as there is a single child-widow to shame us. It is equally necessary for those who are leaders of public opinion to drive out this wretched, immoral *Devadasi* institution. Let us not insult our religious sense by covering this crime under the name of religion.

The Hindu, 30-9-1927

105. THE NEILL STATUE AND NON-VIOLENCE

A Gujarati friend thus remonstrates in a letter to a common friend :

Sometimes Bapu's non-violence baffles one. He encourages the agitation for the removal of the Neill statue as he encouraged the one for the removal of the Lawrence statue. To me it looks very much like violence; for the agitation must beget hatred against Englishmen—the very thing Bapu wants to avoid. And where I can see no violence he sees it, as in carrying arms for removing the Arms Act. It appears to me that in the first case there is every risk of violent temper being begotten by apparently non-violent means. And this according to Bapu should be avoided. In the second case only a slight risk or possibility of violence is incurred in order to achieve a worthy end—just the thing I should have imagined Bapu would brave.

In order to do justice to the argument and make it easily intelligible to the reader, I have somewhat extended the argument put cryptically in the original Gujarati.

Non-violence is made of sterner stuff. There is no doubt that the agitation for removing the Neill statue and the like is likely to increase the feeling of hatred against the English. A reformer seeking to spread non-violence must take note of the fact and guard against hatred, but dare not on any account hush causes of hatred. Non-violence in the form of love is the activist force in the world. As the Gujarati poet Shamal says, "There is no merit in returning good for good; most men do this. Merit lies in returning good for evil." Merit here stands obviously for non-violence. Causes of hatred everywhere obtrude themselves on one's gaze. The seers of old saw that the only way of dealing with the situation was to neutralize hatred by love. This force of love therefore truly comes into play only when it meets with causes of hatred. True non-violence does not ignore or blind itself to causes of hatred, but in spite of the knowledge of their existence operates upon the person setting these causes in motion. Were it otherwise, the fight for swaraj by non-violent means would be an impossibility. For at every step the Swarajist is bound to expose to view the blemishes of foreign rule and the foreign rulers. The law of non-violence—returning good for evil, loving one's enemy—involves a knowledge of the blemishes of the 'enemy'. Hence do the scriptures

say : ““क्षमा वीरस्य भूषणम्—”” —“Forgiveness is an attribute of the brave.”

It is perhaps now clear why a believer in non-violence must endorse my non-violent agitation for the removal of the Neill statue and the like. But the carrying of arms is not permissible for a non-violent man, for he is expected not to use them. And the total removal of the Arms Act in my opinion will never be held to be a just cause. Hence carrying arms for the removal of the Arms Act can never fall under any scheme of non-violence.

It is now perhaps necessary to look a little closer into the Neill statue agitation. Here is the inscription on the front side of the pedestal of the statue :

James George Smith Neill
A. D. C. to the Queen
Lieut.-Colonel of the Madras Fusiliers
Brigadier General in India
A brave, resolute, self-reliant soldier
Universally acknowledged as the first
Who stemmed the torrent of rebellion in Bengal.
He fell gloriously
At the relief of Lucknow
25th September 1857
Aged 47.

The inscription at the back reads :

Erected by public subscription, 1860

I venture to suggest that these are untruthful statements. The inscription is false history. At the time of writing this article I have not by me Kaye and Malleison's volumes, but a friend has obliged me by procuring for me Thomson's illuminating monograph *The Other Side of the Medal*. It shows how false history is taught to us in schools and colleges. I take the following extracts from that book :

These were General Neill's instructions to Major Renaud when he was hurrying with an advance guard to the relief of Cawnpore :

“Certain guilty villages were marked out for destruction, and all the men inhabiting them were to be slaughtered. All sepoys of mutinous regiments not giving a good account of themselves were to be hanged. The town of Futtehpore, which had revolted, had to be attacked, and the Pathan quarters destroyed with all their inhabitants. All heads of insurgents, particularly at Futtehpore, to be hanged. If the Deputy Collector is taken, hang him, and have his head cut off and stuck up on one of the principal (Mahommedan) buildings

of the town.”

According to Kaye :

Again, apart from Neill’s doings, and certainly when a Major was sent on by Neill towards Cawnpore, there is no doubt that people were put to death in the most reckless manner. And afterwards Neill did things almost more than the massacre, putting to death with deliberate torture, in a way that has never been proved against the natives.

Sir George Campbell says : Neill is one of those people who have been elevated into a hero on the strength of a feminine sort of violence, and whose death much disarmed criticism at the time; but now that has passed into old history, I may say that, so far as I could learn from the most impartial sources, there was not much more in him. . . . I can never forgive Neill for his very bloody work and especially for his share in the mismanagement which caused the loss of the regiment of Loodiana. At Allahabad, by violence and mistrustful usage, he all but turned against us the Ferozepore regiment (only second to the men of Loodiana in my affection) which afterwards did such splendid service.

There is much more than can be quoted to show the true character of the “hero” in whose honour the statue was erected by “public subscription”. Statues like these are a portent. They are an eloquent proof of what the British Government finally stands for—terrorism and falsehood. These are strong expressions, but they are as true as they are strong. Hence is it the duty of every Indian, every true Englishman, to oppose this terrorism and falsehood with all his might. But the way to oppose these with all one’s might lies not through retaliation, responsive terrorism and falsehood, but by the exact opposite of the twins, that is to say, by meeting terrorism with non-violence and falsehood with truth. It may be a difficult way, but it is the only way if India and the world are to live. If therefore the young men who have launched upon the battle will follow it up honestly and non-violently, they deserve all sympathy, and it is well that the local Congress Committee has taken up the matter in earnest.

Young India, 29-9-1927

106. COW-SACRIFICE IN VEDAS

In *Young India* for June 2, was published an article by Sjt. C. V. Vaidya making valuable suggestions about saving the cow and her progeny. But in that article the learned writer gave his opinion that sacrificial cow-slaughter and beef-eating were prevalent in the Vedic age. Pandit Satavalekar sent me in Hindi a refutation of Sjt. Vaidya's statement about cow-sacrifice and beef-eating in Vedic times. As my purpose was merely to elucidate truth and not to have a newspaper controversy, I forwarded the article to Sjt. Vaidya. He promptly and courteously sent me his reply. I submitted it to Pandit Satavalekar who sent his rejoinder. I now give below the translations¹ by Mahadev Desai of Pandit Satavalekar's writings and the reply of Sjt. Vaidya in the original. Pandit Satavalekar has in two numbers of his *Vaidika Dharma* given a more detailed and exhaustive argument supported by copious extracts from the Vedas in support of his opinion. I refer the curious to these valuable articles. As a layman not knowing the original, I follow the excellent rule that when there is the slightest doubt, it is best to lean on the right side, the right side in this case being the belief that those who gave us the Vedas were not guilty of what appears to our age to be the crime of killing cows for sacrifice or food. The discussion has otherwise no bearing on the present age, because the veneration of the cow is too deeply embedded in the Hindu bosom to be affected by any opinion, however authoritative it may be, in favour of cow-sacrifice and beef-eating in the Vedic age. It has however more than an academic value for those who incline to the belief that whatever was done during those ancient times should be revived in this age by every legitimate effort. These may study Pandit Satavalekar's article referred to by me and Sjt. Vaidya's published writings which are available as well in English as in Marathi and Hindi.

Young India, 29-9-1927

¹ Not reproduced here

107. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

[September 29, 1927]¹

CHI. MIRA,

This is merely to tell you I can't dismiss you from my mind. Every surgeon has soothing ointment after a severe operation. This is my ointment.

Tell Ramdas I have just got his letter. He must quickly recover.

With love,

BAPU

From the original : C.W. 5279. Courtesy : Mirabehn

108. SPEECH AT SAURASHTRA CLUB, MADURA²

September 29, 1927

I thank you for your beautiful address and your purse. In all my tours I do not remember having used the adjective 'beautiful' in connection with any address that I have hitherto received. I called your address beautiful for a reason which perhaps you have not guessed. I called it beautiful because you have given me the original which is written in your dialect which is a mixture to Gujarati and Marathi showing that you have not forgotten your antecedents. Not that I am myself in love indiscriminately with all antecedents. Where they are bad, immoral, injurious, it is our duty to destroy and forget them. But this one of not giving up one's language or dialect is never a bad thing. And after all, the great Marathi language and Gujarati, these are today living tongues used by men who are leaving their mark on the history of our country. And I am glad also that you are keeping up the Devanagari script.

And therefore it gave me additional pleasure to understand from your address that in your High School, which is very well attended, Hindi has been made an optional language. As I refuse to recognize any barrier between the North and the South or the East and the West, I undoubtedly appreciate and like the idea of your all knowing Tamil.

¹ From the postmark

² Extracts from this speech were also published in *Young India*, 13-10-1927, under the title "The Fallacy of Handloom Weaving".

But that should be an additional accomplishment, an additional grace, not at the sacrifice of Hindi. I wish therefore that your committee may make up its mind to make Hindi compulsory in your High School. And as I expect you to know the value of Hindi more than our brethren in the South, I would like you to specialize in Hindi and finance the Hindi movement that is going on in the town. You are a wellknit, united, energetic, enterprising group of men and women in this town. Therefore this is a responsibility which you can easily shoulder and remove the burden from the people of the North¹ who have hitherto borne the Hindi propaganda in this province.

I am much touched by your reference to your connection to Rajkot, the home of my youth. But please remember that it is a difficult thing to claim such a title, because you have thereby created for yourselves a greater responsibility in connection with every activity of mine in so far as it is commended to your attention. What can be the use of a man having such a large number of kinsmen if he may not fall back upon them in the hour of peril. But it is possible for you, if you will, to claim a still closer kinship with me. For, though I am proud of being the son of a father who was the Minister of a State, I am, if it was at all possible, prouder still on having become a fellow-weaver with you. For whilst my father was weaving the destiny of a little State that was placed under his charge for the time being, you and I, if we wish to, can weave the destiny of this great land, the profession which with you is hereditary, but which I have adopted by choice. And in taking that greater pride in reminding you of this kinship I am doing no violence to the memory, the sacred memory of my father because I am following in his footsteps in ministering to the needs of larger classes of people. And this claiming of closer kinship with me brings me to an important paragraph in your address.

You ask me to encourage hand-weaving even through foreign yarn or mill-made yarn inasmuch as, so you say in your address, it is not possible today to find hand-spun yarn of the fineness you require and in the quantity you require. Now I shall tell you as a fellow-weaver why I cannot possibly endorse your recommendation. If I endorse your recommendation I hope to be able to show you that it would be bad for you and bad for the class which I have in view and which you also should have in view. You should, keen and shrewd businessmen as some of you are, understand that every weaver who

¹ The source has "South".

weaves yarn which is supplied by foreign mills or even by mills of India places himself at the disposal of and at the tender mercy of the mills. You as weavers should realize that this weaving, hand-weaving, which you are today controlling to a certain extent, will in time to come slip away from your hands as soon as the mills of the world or the mills of India are ready to weave the pattern that you are today exclusively weaving. Let me inform you if you do not know the fact already that various mill-owners of the world are making experiments in order to weave the pattern which are today your monopoly. It is no fault of the mill-owners that the mill industry is endeavouring day after day to take away the monopolies and take this trade in its own hands. To make continuous improvements in its machinery and to make continuous encroachments upon the handicrafts of the world is really the objective and the ideal of these great industrialists. Indeed, it is the condition of their very existence that they should try to take this trade also from off your hands. What has befallen the industry of spinning will most decidedly befall the industry of hand-weaving also if the weavers do not take a leaf out of my book. Let me inform you, and you don't know this, very few people in India know this fact that I began as you are now doing. I first became a weaver in 1915. I told you that I became first a weaver and then a spinner. I have woven with these very hands, I mean those foreign yarns and our mill yarns. But you will excuse me for claiming to know more than you do the secret of this business. As I was sitting—I can point out the spot where I was sitting—as I was sitting at my hand-loom and weaving this cloth—certainly not half as fine as any of you perhaps weave—but as I was sitting at this loom I was considering for myself where I should be and where thousands and thousands of weavers should be when mills are organized enough to weave this kind of cloth themselves. And as I was thinking of this thing my heart went out to the millions of starving sisters in our villages and I began, as I was weaving, to think of the lot of these sisters. I became sad and disconcerted, and together with my companions I began a diligent search for some spinner who would teach us hand-spinning and I began also to find whether there was a single village where I could find hand-spinning still going on. I knew nothing then of the fact that there were some sisters in the Punjab. But despair was creeping over me. I took shelter under a brave widow¹ of Gujarat. She was working in the cause of untouchables. I shared this

¹ Gangabehn Majmudar; *vide An Autobiography*, pt. V, Ch. XXXIX and XL.

deep sorrow of mine with this great sister. And I charged her to wander from place to place in Gujarat and not rest content till she had got those sisters, who still had the art of hand-spinning in their possession. And it was she who discovered at Bijapur in Gujarat a few Mussalman sisters who were prepared to spin if she would take their yarn from their hands. From that moment began the great revival which is now covering over fifteen hundred villages in India. And it was after this discovery that I decided not to weave a single thread of foreign yarn or mill-spun yarn in the Ashram of which I happened to be in charge.

I place for your consideration yet another important fact. If you will study the history of the hand-weaving movement in India you will discover that at the present moment several thousands of weavers have simply been obliged to abandon their trade. Weavers, all of your own trade, Saurashtras, are today working in Bombay as scavengers. Weavers in the Punjab are some of them hired soldires and some of them have taken to the butcher's trade. And so you will understand why I cannot possibly endorse your recommendation. That does not mean that you may leave off weaving from today. You do not need encouragement from me. But I venture to suggest to you that it is to your interest not to ask me to mix up this mill-spun yarn weaving together with this movement which I am leading in all humility. And it is equally to your interest to support this movement so that if it becomes stable, prosperous and permanent¹, every one of you would find a respectable living. I therefore suggest to you that if this hand-spinning movement grows apace it is likely that it may be of help to you.

But now in the midst of this disturbance² I must not prolong my speech. But I cannot help drawing your attention to the drink evil that I understand is eating the vitals of this community. You must really make a supreme effort to get rid of this evil.

The Hindu, 1-10-1927

¹ The source has "immovable".

² It had started raining.

109. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

September 30, 1927

CHI. MIRA,

The post is just due but the time for posting is also due. I fully expect something from you today. You are not going to think that you may not write more than once a week.

With love,

Yours,

BAPU

For Ramdas¹

From the original: C.W. 5280. Courtesy: Mirabehn

110. LETTER TO RAMDAS GANDHI

[September 30, 1927]²

CHI. RAMDAS,

You must have recovered now. By all means take Vallabhbhai's permission and go to Amreli.

Blessings from

BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 5280-2. Courtesy: Mirabehn

111. SPEECH AT WOMEN'S MEETING, MADURA

September 30, 1927

Mahatmaji began by thanking the ladies for their address and the purse as also the many presents of yarn and other things made to him by several girls and women. He next asked them to learn Hindi which was the language spoken by their sisters in the North.

He asked them to remember that they had given him a purse not for his own use but for the use of millions of their starving sisters. Living in comfort as they were, he was sure they would find it difficult to imagine the distressing poverty of thousands of their sisters, with hardly one meal a day. There were others who had

¹*Vide* the succeeding item.

² This letter was written on the back of the above.

hardly sufficient clothing to cover up their nakedness. He had talked to some of these poor sisters who had no second clothing whatever and had therefore to go on from day to day without bathing. Needless to say they had no jewels or ornaments worth mentioning. They might not have seen or tasted ghee, oil or milk. Millions of them had no work for nearly four months in the year. Perhaps they would not be inclined to believe what all he had said, but he would tell them that many foreigners too had observed these things and written about them. It was for these poor sisters that he had accepted the purse from them. The money was not to be distributed among them as charitable doles but was proposed to be given to them as wages in return for the yarn which they would be asked to spin. They would be supplied with charkha and cotton and the yarn would be purchased from them. He therefore considered the spinning-wheel as the greatest instrument for bettering the condition of their poor sisters. The spinning-wheel would give them a ray of hope and a sense of self-respect. It would be a means of binding together all the many millions of people in India. They should not rest content merely making a donation which would be of no use if they did not wear khaddar. If really they had sympathy with their poor sisters they should wear only khadi, spun and woven by them. It might appear at first sight that it is difficult to discard all foreign cloth but if they tried they would find it very easy of accomplishment. If they would like to be Sita he would advise them to give up rich garments and jewels and take to khadi. But before they parted with any of their jewels he would impose on them one condition, namely, that they should not ask their parents or their husbands to replace them. He said that three or four years ago he was presented by a lady with fifteen thousand rupees worth of jewels. He wanted them not only not to wear too many jewels but to be careful not to place their children in danger. For, he had come to know of an incident which took place some few days ago at Madura in which a respectable gentleman's daughter had been robbed of her jewels by some robbers. He also wanted them to remember that a woman's beauty did not consist in the jewels that she wore but in the possession of a pure heart. They should also teach this truth to their children and train them to build up their character by giving them proper education.

Again he would tell them that it is sinful to regard any single human being as an untouchable simply because he was born in particular surroundings. If they would copy Sita they would find that she did not regard even the king of the Nishadas as untouchable but gladly and gratefully accepted the services rendered by him. He had therefore no hesitation in saying that the evil custom of untouchability must disappear.

Yet another important matter about which he liked to talk to them was early marriages. They must realize that it was a barbarous system to marry girls at nine, twelve and even thirteen years. He considered such a thing to be immoral too, and urged that no girl should be married or induced to think of marriage before she had

attained her sixteenth year. He would even ask them not to heed the Hindu Shastras if they said that girls should be married before puberty. Taking the case of some of the girls under his control he said that though some of them were aged from seventeen to twenty years, the girls had never thought of marriage till then. On the contrary, some of them were having good education and at the present moment some of them were working for the relief of the distressed in the flood-stricken areas in Gujarat. He was also resolved not to think of their marriage until they themselves told him that they wanted to marry. But he would tell them that all these evil customs would disappear if they took to khadi. For the khadi spirit would make them pure and noble. They should not think that any small quantity of yarn spun by them would be a trifle but should remember that every bit of it augmented the country's wealth. In that light he would ask all of them to take to khadi and spin yarn for the sake of *Daridranarayana*.

The Hindu, 3-10-1927

112. SPEECH AT TIRUMANGALAM

September 30, 1927

FRIENDS,

I thank you for your address and the purse given to me. In your address you have said that this place is one of the cotton centres. I note also that in this place there are many poor spinners, and you tell me that if there were sufficient encouragement it would be possible to work nearly 1,000 spindles. This spinning movement is undoubtedly designed to find work for every woman who has leisure hours and who wants to do some work for coppers. You tell me that it is not possible for you to find a market for all these yarns that can be produced by one dozen men. It shows that in your place or in your taluk you do not possess sufficient workers. You ask me to see to it that this place is made a second Tiruppur. But let me tell you that Tiruppur has made itself. It was not I nor any member of the All-India Spinners' Association that has made Tiruppur what it is today. It is true no doubt that the A.I.S.A. came on the scene to reap the fruit of the original workers. This is an essential work that the Union Board can do and should do and if you have in your midst a body of workers there is no reason why all the yarns that have been produced in this place cannot be sold in the market, and if you go forward and do khadi work, I am sure you cannot find the local market sufficient. The prices of the cloth produced in these parts will be fixed by the A.I.S.A. according to the nature of the cloth woven. I am touring in

all these parts of the country not merely for purse collections but to do khadi propaganda work. I would like the sisters who are sitting here to listen to this part of my speech. This poor country has some millions of men and women idling away their time for four months in the year. Being near the railway line, you are not half as poor as the poorest, on whose behalf I am touring and on whose behalf I am speaking to you this night. And they are so poor that the reports issued by the Government tell us that there are some people who are starving for want of food. I hope you will not make the mistake of thinking that if the railway line was brought near to every village in India the problem of distress will be solved. If you study the history of the railways you will find that this railway system of ours is simply sucking the village and leaves it absolutely dry. Railways, over the world, are necessary and may be prosperous to the people. This country is predominantly an agricultural country and therefore railways are a burden to the village people. If you wear khadi, the product that is produced by the poor villagers, then it will be a return for what we are sucking from them. I ask all the men and women assembled here to discard foreign cloth and use nothing but hand-spun and hand-woven khadi. I take this purse only on one condition, namely, that all of you will use only khadi in future. I would like the sisters who are sitting here to understand that the spinning movement is essentially a woman's movement. To me the spinning-wheel is a symbol of the liberation of Indian womanhood and I would like you therefore to co-operate with me in this effort not merely by giving your money or ornaments but also by wearing khadi. If you do not need spinning for your household work you can do it as a sacrifice. If you do it, it will add to the wealth of the country and the price of khadi also will become low.

The Hindu, 3-10-1927

113. DISCUSSION WITH A. VEDARAMA IYER¹

[About *September 30, 1927*]²

I plead guilty to the charge³ but the Association has been conceived in a different spirit. I shall explain it to you. We may expend thousands of rupees on the starving millions, that is to say, in making spinners of them all, but we may not spend a single pice on employing agencies to promote voluntary spinning. Those who join the Association as voluntary spinners spin as a matter of sacrifice, and a sacrifice that needs external stimulation is no sacrifice at all. I know there are slackers, I know our defaulters' list is heavy, but I shall employ no agency to wake them up. Those who in spite of the apathy around them will continue to perform their sacrifice regularly and offer their quota to the motherland will be the salt of the national movement, and they will survive me and even the movement. But I do not exclude any voluntary agency. For instance, you may try to stimulate your friends as much as you like, in fact it is the duty of every member of the Spinners' Association to increase the membership and to see that every member pays his quota regularly. And for vakils like you, that is, for those who have faith in the cause, it is the easiest thing possible. You can entrust your clerk with the work, ask him to visit every member from time to time, collect their yarn quotas, and remind them if they are in arrears. In South Africa, I got my clerical staff to do most of the Congress work. And that not because I was a freak. Every lawyer if he interests himself in public work has to give his proper share to it. During the war there, for instance, every important lawyer had left his profession to go to the front, and I could almost read the magistrate's anger in his eyes as he saw me still linger on. And I tell you, I found it impossible to continue my practice for sheer shame. I felt that I must also go if I wanted to maintain my status as a lawyer.

Young India, 13-10-1927

¹ From Mahadev Desai's "Weekly Letter"

² *Ibid*

³ A. Vedarama Iyer had complained that members of the Spinners' Association defaulted in paying their yarn quotas because there was no agency to supervise the payment.

114. TELEGRAM TO C. F. ANDREWS

MADURA,
October 1, 1927

C. F. ANDREWS
BHADRAK

SPINNING ESSAY¹ IS BEST AVAILABLE BUT YOU MUST NOT SEND² TILL YOU
HAVE READ IT FULLY. WIRE IF HAND COMPLETELY HEALED.

BAPU

From a photostat: S.N. 12833

115. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

October 1 [1927]³

CHI. MIRA,

I had expected something from you yesterday but nothing came. You are not going to be moody at all nor nervous in trying to avoid nervousness. And do not always think what I would like and not like but do what you think is right even though it may turn out to be not as I would have liked. I want you to be strong in body, mind and soul!

You will not make your time-table too rigid without intervals of breathing time.

I should like to know your weight.

With love,

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 5299. Courtesy: Mirabehn

¹ *Hand-spinning and Hand-weaving—An Essay*, by S. V. Puntambekar and N. S. Varadachari; *vide* “Notes (sub-topic: Prize Essay on Hand-Spinning)”, January 6, 1927.

² Presumably, to the Viceroy; *vide* letters to Andrews, 1-10-1927 and 11-11-1927.

³ Inferred from the reference to addressee’s nervousness; *vide* “Letter to Mirabehn”, 2-10-1927.

116. LETTER TO C. F. ANDREWS

ON TOUR,
MADURA,
October 1, 1927

MY DEAR CHARLIE,

I have received your letter. This little injury of yours has given me a new meaning of, "Do unto others as you would that they should do unto you." I did unto you about your injury as I would have wished you to do unto me. But I see that I was hopelessly wrong in applying the principle to you. I should have done unto you, not only what I would have wished you to do unto me but I should have done unto you what was needed for you. Your need and not your wish should have been the determining factor. And if I had remembered as I should have done that yours was a very sensitive skin, easily liable to infection and difficult to heal after an injury I would have thoroughly scraped the wound, drawn fresh blood and then dressed it. As it was, I went by my own experience and that of others who had an equally responsive skin, and in doing so committed a great blunder. Thank God that you will come out with only some considerable inconvenience. But I do not know what I would have done with myself if there had been serious blood-poisoning, as there might have been.

Your reply to my telegram sent today, I hope, will relieve me from all anxiety. That telegram also gives you my opinion about the spinning essay. I know nothing better available but I do not consider it to be by any means the best that could have been produced. The writers are capable fellows but their *sadhana*¹ of the question is not, so far as I judge, of the highest. They have done what they considered was their best. But in the debilitating unoriginal atmosphere that reigns supreme in the country just now, no one has the capacity for hard thinking. Sluggishness comes over us after a little effort and then the work becomes shoddy. I have therefore my doubts about the essay giving satisfaction to the Viceroy. And then, it is really written for the Indian reader, and not for an exacting reader like the Viceroy, who has an overburdening load of inherited and acquired pre-conceived notions and prejudices. I have, therefore, suggested to you that you should first of all patiently read it, not as a self-naturalized Indian but as an unsympathetic English critic, taking nothing for granted, wanting proof for everything. And if it gives you no satisfaction you should not send the essay to him at all. I had something prepared for Sir Henry Lawrence too. It has Pyarelal's and Mahadev's brains in it.

¹ Study and practice

But even that is not what I should want if I was an unsympathetic critic. But I had to be satisfied with what I could get. I am quite aware that this subject requires ceaseless industry of a patient seeker. But, unfortunately, I have no one whom I can set to that work, and so it languishes. I cannot tell you how this want of solid research taxes me. I do not half disclose my agony but I have unburdened myself to you somewhat as you have obliged me to confess my shame. I know that I ought to have been able to give you satisfaction and straightway send you a first-class unchallengeable and readable essay. Now I have sufficiently prejudiced you against the essay of which I was one of the judges. Read it with this prejudice and tell me what conclusion you have arrived at.

Up to now there is nothing wrong with me. What you read in the newspapers was all false. Every one of these news agencies deserves to be suppressed.

Of course, the light that you saw in Simla was correct. Orissa needed you. But I want you to become a hard taskmaster. If you are taking part in the relief operations you must see whether the accounts are accurately kept. I have seen nothing yet published. And you must also insist upon every worker keeping a log-book, giving an accurate description of his doings from day to day. But what I would like you to do there is not so much immediate relief work but to find a way out of the annual calamity.

You are somewhat hard upon the Congress politics. Surely they have also a place in national evolution. If the Assembly and the Councils have a place, much more has the Congress. And this I am able to say although I have not the slightest sympathy with its present programme or present mode of working that programme. Nevertheless it is a mighty institution—the only all-India institution with an unbroken record of forty years. I shall take little part in its deliberations but I must be present so long as I do not consider it to be an evil in the totality of its activities. Enclosed is my programme.

With love,

MOHAN

From a photostat: G.N. 2621

117. LETTER TO G. D. BIRLA

October 1, 1927

BHAI GHANSHYAMDASJI,

Your letter.

I learn from Jamnalalji's letter that you have returned from Europe with your health impaired. I think it is imperative that you

take rest somewhere and recoup it. I can certainly assist you in selecting a diet but for that you must stay with me for some time.

You did well in sending me your views on various matters.

It is not due to non-co-operation that two factions have come into being. The two camps were already there. What has arisen is only a change in form. My faith is firm that we cannot gain any strength except through non-co-operation. The public has been impressed by its miraculous power but has not enough strength yet to practise it. Hindu-Muslim differences are proving another obstruction in its way. I cannot seek any help from the Councils. The members, if so inclined, can help khadi and prohibition. But members can do nothing to remove selfishness, ignorance and indolence. The khadi and allied work is progressing slowly as well as rapidly. It is slow in the sense that we cannot show [quick] results and it is rapid because all that is done is pure and for that reason bound to produce good results.

My thirst for money is unquenchable. For khadi, untouchability and education work I required the minimum sum of Rs. 200,000. The experiment being conducted in dairying demands Rs. 50,000 at present. The Ashram expenses are of course there. The work never stops; but God gives funds after severe trials. I am content with that. Give me as much as you can for whichever work you have faith in.

My touring will continue up to the end of this year. I hope to reach the Ashram by January.

I have written a letter to Malaviyaji regarding the Hindu-Muslim question. In this matter something must be done through proper channels. I see no dharma in what is going on today.¹

Yours,

MOHANDAS

From the Hindi original: C.W. 6149. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

¹ In the six months preceding, 25 riots were reported; the casualties being approximately 103 persons killed and 1,084 wounded.

118. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

October 2 [1927]¹

CHI. MIRA,

I have your postcard and the train letter. I have never been so anxious as this time to hear from you. For I sent you away too quickly after a serious operation. But the sending you away was a part of the operation. Poor Anna! He too tells me that you were gloomy and wants me to soothe you. Jamnalalji says I should have kept you with me. Well, you are going to belie their fears and be and keep quite well and cheerful. You haunted me in my sleep last night and were reported by friends to whom you had been sent to be delirious but without any danger. They said, 'You need not be anxious. We are doing all that is humanly possible.' And with this I woke up troubled in mind and prayed that you may be free from all harm. And your letter gave me great joy.

You are not disgraced. There is no watch over you. Chhaganlal and Krishnadas are to be your nurses and comforts. I know that you are going to get over your nervousness. The Hindi incubus is no more to worry you. I do not care if you do not speak a word of Hindi, though you know much by this time. So even there, there is no cause for disappointment. My confidence in your robustness is no doubt shaken but not my love. The robustness will come because you are a true striver.

Surendraji suggests that you should work separately. If that is necessary you will do so. No overstraining whatsoever about anything.

With love,

BAPU

The enclosed to Chh. Joshi.²

From the original: C.W. 5281. Courtesy: Mirabehn

119. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, VIRUDHUNAGAR

October 2, 1927

CHAIRMAN OF THE MUNICIPALITY AND OTHER FRIENDS,

I thank you for all these addresses and your several purses. I appreciated your courtesy in giving up your right of reading all your addresses. One of them, if you had insisted on reading, would have

¹ Inferred from the reference to Gandhiji's sending away the addressee; *vide* "Letter to Mirabehn", 28-9-1927.

² This is not available.

taken probably half an hour. But I have endeavoured to read the translations which you were good enough to give me. At the outset I wish to congratulate you upon the harmonious relations between Hindus and Mussalmans. The existence of a well-managed library in your midst, the opening of a choultry¹, an association for redress of grievances of railway passengers, all these betoken healthy activity in this important centre. I understand that the Nadar friends have this place as their most important centre. I understand also that they are more and more coming forward day by day and taking their proper place in all the important movements that are going on in the country. You tell me that yours is a recently constituted municipality. I do not know that it is necessarily a disadvantage, for being a new municipality you have no heritage of sluggishness or indifference. You can cut out for yourselves a new and original path and if you desire it, you can lead in the matter of sanitation. We have on the Bombay side a very expressive equivalent for municipality in the Gujarati language. And that was a name when it was originally given to ridicule municipal service. It is really a name which exactly fits municipal servants. The literal translation of the word by which we know municipalities in Gujarati is "custodians of conservancy". In my opinion the beginning, the centre and the end of all municipal service consists in conserving the sanitation of the people entrusted to the charge of the municipality. And if I had the powers of an autocrat and was minded to utilize those powers I would immediately disband that municipality which did not receive cent per cent marks in an examination in connection with its conservancy work. If you can but keep your closets absolutely clean, if you can ensure a healthy and pure supply of water and the purest and precious free air and a supply of pure milk for your babies, you are in a position to conserve the health of those who are committed to your care. I know that the fashion is nowadays to give primary education the first place in the work of a municipality. In my opinion it is putting the cart before the horse. Primary education of its children must be undoubtedly an important item in the work of a municipality. But I have not a shadow of doubt that sanitation occupies the foremost place in its programme. There is a very fine Latin proverb which says that healthy mind is possible only in a healthy body. And I hold it to be impossible to give a healthy education to unhealthy children. In fact, sanitation is itself a first-class primary education for men, women and children. And I have given so much to a consideration of the true functions of municipal bodies in the hope that you, a new municipality, might be

¹ Lodging for pilgrims

able to do your work in a satisfactory manner in this direction. And let me give you my assurance based upon personal experience that all these sanitary matters do not require so much money as care, diligence and knowledge.

Closely allied with the matter of sanitation is the question of grievances of railway passengers. There was a time when I had almost qualified myself as an expert in the matter of expressing the grievances of railway passengers and enforcing redress. And having travelled in many parts of the world and understood all that third-class travelling was and having been a regular third-class passenger on almost all railways, I had exceptional opportunity of studying the condition of railway passengers. And whilst I believed then, as I believe even now, that for many things the railway management is criminally guilty in connection with the comfort of third-class passengers, I also came to the conclusion which I retain even now that for equally important matters railway passengers were themselves liable. I am fully aware of the fact that third-class passengers are the most paying customers of the railway and that the first-class passengers are practically a loss to the railways. I know that the Railway Board does not provide enough accommodation for third-class passengers; nor does it ensure primary sanitation on railway stations or in railway carriages for third-class passengers. All these things and many more I could mention if I had the time. They undoubtedly demand attention on the part of a reformer in connection with this matter. But let us turn the searchlight towards ourselves for a few moments. Our own neglect of sanitation in the railway carriages as also on the stations is no less than the negligence of the Railway Board. And I know that when I was organizing relief parties in connection with third-class railway passengers how difficult it was for me to enlist volunteers for doing the special work of carrying on education amongst the third-class railway passengers about the primary needs of sanitation. Every railway passenger traffic reformer has therefore to extend the activities of municipal boards. On this analogy that charity begins at home, the reformer must first commence with the passengers themselves and patiently and gently inculcate in them habits of personal sanitation and habits of consideration for their fellow-passengers. I suggest to this useful Association that this is a privileged work of which every reformer may be proud. . . .¹

The Hindu, 4-10-1927

¹ Gandhiji then spoke about khadi.

120. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

October 3, 1927

CHI. MIRA,

This is the second letter I have taken up this morning. The post here has to be despatched at 11 a.m. The first letter¹ was to Devdas who is lying in Dr. Rajan's hospital, having undergone an operation for piles. He is much better now. Such was the report received yesterday.

The common kitchen causes some anxiety. Surendra tells me it is not going on well. If you have the energy and the capacity, you will go into this thing. If you have not, leave it alone. Nothing to strain you. Take only that which taxes your nerves the least.

I am glad you were able to go to Adyar. The aquarium and the other things you mention I have not seen.

With love,

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 5282. Courtesy: Mirabehn

121. LETTER TO SURENDRA

*Silence Day [October 3, 1927]*²

CHI. SURENDRA,

I have your letter. If you have an inner inspiration to go to Baroda or anywhere else and if Chhaganbhai permits it, you may go. From this distance I can say nothing more.

The Ashram can make me neither unhappy nor happy in the future. I believe that its perfection or imperfection is a reflection of my own. I myself am the cause, therefore, of my happiness or unhappiness. If, moreover, this sense of 'I' melts away, there will be neither happiness nor unhappiness. Take these sentences together in trying to understand my meaning.

Only those who regard themselves as inmates of the Ashram are truly so. Prayers are compulsory for such persons and for other inmates who accept them as compulsory. It was only from your letter

¹ This is not available.

² From Mahadev Desai's manuscript Diary

that I learnt about Balkrishna's leaving. Where has he gone to?
And then you catch colds; well, I don't like this.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9408

122. LETTER TO SURENDRA

[After October 3, 1927]¹

CHI. SURENDRA,

I got your letters. Do by all means observe the course of things. If I have any suspicion I will not let it pass. I shall indeed do some cross-examining when we meet. As for investigations you alone can make them. It would be enough if you do not allow yourself to be easily satisfied. Our atonement should be reflected in our work. You must get rid of your colds. It does not matter whether you do it by administering copper sulphate or something else.

I should not write more at this time.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9415

123. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

October 4, 1927

CHI. MIRA,

I have not omitted to write to you a single day after you left me but this may not reach you the day after the letter of yesterday (Monday) for now that I am going further South the distance between you and me is growing. There is however just a chance of this reaching you the day after yesterday's letter. It is too warm just now to let me write more and I must prepare for the meeting that is presently coming off. Heat notwithstanding, I am keeping quite well. Are you?

With love,

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 5283. Courtesy Mirabehn

¹ From the reference to the addressee's "colds", *vide* the preceding item.

124. LETTER TO ASHRAM WOMEN

Silence Day, Aso Sud 8 [October 4, 1927]¹

SISTERS,

Your reply to my last letter was what I anticipated even when I wrote it. The first step in self-purification is the admission and eradication of whatever hatred there is in one's heart. As long as we harbour ill will or suspicion against our neighbour and do not strive to get rid of it, we cannot learn our first lessons in love. In the Ashram, we must develop the strength to do at least this much.

Think well over the matter of prayers. I also believe that the seven o'clock meeting should not be given up. You accepted it as your special duty to make your class spiritually effective. For the present I can only suggest that those of you who have the will and the energy to attend the 4 a.m. prayers may do so, without entering into any discussion about it with others, and thereafter to keep up the habit, in spite of every hardship, as long as health permits.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3669

125. LETTER TO VITHALDAS JERAJANI

A[so] Su[d] 8 [October 4, 1927]²

BHAISHRI VITHALDAS,

I saw your bulletin. You have done well in bringing it out. Now that you have started publishing it, make every effort to keep it up. Do not give more than one column in it to praise of khadi; fill it, rather, with news about khadi. Give news about the progress of khadi in different provinces. This will require the utmost perseverance and a great deal of information. If you can display these, the bulletin can prove to be of inestimable value.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 9763

¹ The year is inferred from the reference to quarrels among Ashram women and their attendance at early morning prayer meetings; *vide* "Letter to Ashram Women", 26-9-1927.

² The source has the entry 4-10-1927, but not in Gandhiji's hand.

126. LETTER TO CHHAGANLAL GANDHI

October 4, 1927

CHI. CHHAGANLAL,

I have your letter. What you read in the newspapers about my health was not correct. I am keeping good health. Rajaji does not give me much work. Rarely does the programme get heavy.

I see that Prabhudas has still not recovered completely. Has he now given up worrying or does he still indulge himself in fanciful ideas? Improve your health to the optimum.

Devdas has made two mistakes and because of that, by his own volition, he would spend sometime in Wardha. At present, he is in Dr. Rajan's hospital. He had symptoms of piles, so the doctor thought it proper to operate on him. Today is the fourth day of the operation. There is nothing to worry. Fairly good work is being done during the tour here. Sale of khadi is picking up on its own. So far, khadi worth about Rs. 80,000 has been sold in this province. It is expected to go upto Rs. 1 lakh.

I want Prabhudas to do one thing. He knows the *Gita* very well. In my view, among all whom I know, his Gujarati is the best and rendering the *Gita* into Gujarati does not require any translation from English. His vocabulary is also good. Whenever he has time, he should send me a translation of twenty *shlokas* of his choice. The translations need not be literal but should convey the full meaning. There are no doubt some chapters in the *Gita* which contain only twenty *shlokas*. He can select one of these if he wants.

I am sure you have my itinerary.

9-12 Trivendrum/Travancore

13 Cochin

14 Trichur

15 Palghat

16-17 Coimbatore

18 Polachi

19 Tiruppur

20 Gopi Chettipalayam

21 Erode

22 Salem

23-24 Tiruchengodu

25 Calicut

26-31 Mangalore
November 1 to 15-Ceylon

Blessings from

BAPU

[PS.]

I will reach the Ashram in the beginning of January.

From the Gujarati original: S.N. 32896

127. SPEECH AT WOMEN'S MEETING, RAJAPALAYAM

October 4, 1927

Mahatmaji addressed the gathering in Hindi which was translated into Telugu. After thanking them for the address and the purses he said they had given the money for *Daridranarayana*. But while receiving the money he had mingled feelings of joy and sorrow—joy that they had given money for the Khadi Fund and sorrow in seeing that in spite of strenuous work for the last six or seven years for the spread of khadi among them so few of them wore khadi. Mahatmaji could not see any reason why they, Andhra Kshatriya ladies, should adopt *purdah*. If they remained at home, never came out into the public, they would not be able to know what was going on in the world. He wanted them to throw off foreign cloth and wear only khadi. He saw that they were rich people but he would tell them that there were thousands of poor sisters who were suffering from want of even one meal per day. To them the charkha could give a livelihood. But then if they, the rich people, did not wear khadi, their poor sisters could not earn anything. He asked them to remember that every man, woman and child of this land had a dharma to fulfil, and that was to wear khadi. They should do their dharma even as Sita Devi did and if all of them tried to act like Sita, he would tell them *Ramarajya* would come into existence. If they could not entertain feelings of sympathy and love for their poor brothers and sisters, of what use was their life to them? Rajapalayam khadi was very fine and an effort was being made to spread khadi work by giving away a hundred charkhas free of cost. He would therefore ask them to wear cloth spun and woven by them. The money they had given would be spent for the production of khadi and also in supplying charkhas to those who wanted them. In conclusion Mahatmaji asked them to give money and jewels for the Khadi Fund, and in doing so he told them it was not ornaments but a pure heart which lent beauty to a woman. He advised them not to load their children with jewels but give them good education and training. He also asked them not to marry their girls before 16 or 17 years of age.

The Hindu, 6-10-1927

128. SPEECH AT KHADI VASTRALAYA, RAJAPALAYAM

October 4, 1927

There would be no difficulty in getting the money for this good work.¹ But you should not always be intent on profits. Even when a man invests capital as in a mill for making his own profits and giving huge dividends, some of you perhaps know that for some years he gets no return whatsoever. But I want you to have a higher objective in view than the mill-owners. That is to say, whilst you make it a point not to lose profits on capital you should never wish to make huge profits out of it.² Remember, the greatest business concerns in the world do not depend for profit on high rates but extensive business. The Bank of England is the largest financial corporation in the world and the most influential. It has a credit which perhaps no other such corporation possesses and really the history of that corporation reads like a fairy tale. Some of the finest Englishmen have poured their life-blood in order to make that corporation what it is today. And it has acquired amazing confidence, because it has made it a point not to make huge profits on small outlays. Profits it does make, but that is because of its phenomenal outlay. You will therefore, I hope, not make big profits your objective, but have primarily the interests of spinners at heart. You will not quarrel among yourselves and if you develop real union and limit your personal ambition, there is no reason why you should not aspire after a credit even larger than that of the Bank of England. After all the clients of the Bank of England are rich men and big men and their names and accounts can be kept in a fairly large ledger, but there is no ledger big enough to contain the names of your clients. What I have said requires a longer sight, and it may appear to you that I am talking like a visionary. But I tell you I am not. If I can gain the confidence of the people of India I hope to make the A.I.S.A. the largest co-operative society in the world. That time may be far off but I am not going to lose hope. For you nothing more nor less is needed than that you enjoy the credit of all your clients and the people around you. And you will do so if you will not kill the goose that lays the golden eggs. You should make simple and understandable rules about the minimum profit and make

¹ Referring to the proposed amalgamation of three khadi-producing concerns with a total share capital of Rs. 30,000

² What follows is from "Weekly Letter", published in *Young India*, 13-10-1927.

them rigid and binding on your Association. I hope you will realize my expectations.

The Hindu, 6-10-1927 and *Young India*, 13-10-1927

129. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, RAJAPALAYAM

October 4, 1927

I thank you for the addresses and purses and also the yarn received from different places. It has given me great pleasure to be able to come to this very important khadi centre. I had the honour and the pleasure of meeting many spinners at work. Many of them were elderly ladies. Some of them are even seventy years old. I should not at all be surprised if the ages of these ladies were even more than what they said because they could only guess what their ages were. I enquired of them all what their earnings were per month and I was agreeably surprised to find some of them earned over Rs. 4 per month. That is much more than spinners earn in other parts of India. You will not therefore come to the conclusion that here you are paying higher wages to them than elsewhere. The reason is that they are more industrious, more skilful and are able to give more time to spinning. Unlike other spinners in other parts of India these ladies do their own carding or have their carding done by their relatives. It thus shows you the possibilities there are in the spinning-wheel. And yet I must tell you that these are not spinners who are really the poorest in the country. Some of them even belong to good families. My eyes are rigidly fixed upon those starving millions whose fringe even we have not yet touched. After having seen these sisters I was taken to another meeting of ladies who I was surprised to see were *purdahnashin*¹. But they were not spinning at all. I understand that it was for the first time in their life that they at all met in an assembly. I do wish that you will tear down this *purdah* and make it possible and convenient for them to meet as often as possible for the common good of all. The contrast between these heavily bedecked ladies and the poor sisters who were spinning was really terrible to contemplate. These *purdahnashin* ladies had altogether too many ornaments and very rich saris. I suggest to all these rich people that real goodness and purity never consist in heavy ornamentation and rich saris. Possession of riches should never be so loudly shown in our lives. Possession of

¹ Observing *purdah*

riches is a trust to be discharged in the name of God and for the sake of all poor people. The sign of good breeding consists not in being richly bedecked but in doing works of charity, and works that are of a useful character to society. I had the honour of speaking to these ladies somewhat in this strain. But I know that it is not possible for them to take the first step without the help of their men. I therefore appeal to you to take the message of simplicity amongst the womenfolk. And I know nothing so powerful as khadi in order to simplify our lives. In every rich home where khadi has penetrated, it has revolutionized their lives. Khadi, somehow or other, does not go well with rich ornamentation. Hence have I called khadi a bridge between the rich and the poor. And I do hope that you will so order your lives and the lives of your womenfolk that there is some correspondence between their lives and the lives of the spinners whom I saw and the terrible contrast that today exists between the rich and the poor might be obliterated. After I finished these two meetings I saw the members of the khadi union—some 20 men who have banded together to devote a part of their moneys in order to develop khadi. And I have no doubt that it is a step in the right direction if the proper khadi spirit is prevalent amongst the members of this union. Everyone who enters into this khadi business must approach it in the spirit of trustees. The welfare of the millions of the spinners must be held predominant over every other thing. In ordinary commerce the maxim is that we look after ourselves and those with whom we trade have to look after themselves. The position in khadi trade is reversed. We, I who make these collections, traders who trade in khadi, organizers who go out to the villages, all of us have to consider ourselves to be the trustees for the welfare of the spinners for whom and whom alone we exist. This I hold to be a condition indispensable for the success of khadi. And even as a trustee deserves his commission so will all those who are engaged in developing khadi find at the end of it that they have not lost anything whatsoever for themselves, but, on the contrary, gained for the spinners and therefore for themselves. It is for this purpose that you have given me all these purses. If considered in that light your purses need not be considered to be too heavy. You can never give too much for *Daridranarayana*. We, those who live in towns, subsist upon the labour of the toiling millions and it is through khadi that we can possibly work out this proposition of making some return to these toiling millions. I therefore tender my congratulations to the gentleman who has

presented over hundred spinning-wheels for these *purdahnashin* ladies. For that also is a step in the same direction. And if these well-to-do sisters will work at the spinning-wheel in the spirit of sacrifice, it will bless them and it will bless the poor spinners. And I hope that this place which has already shown possibilities of good khadi work will continue to make progress in this direction.

I may perhaps occupy your time for a while upon a matter which I was discussing with some Nadar friends yesterday at Virudhunagar. They are an enterprising trading community. They are prosperous and they are as charitable as they are prosperous. They have developed some very fine and clean tastes. They are running an extremely well-managed high school where tuition is free for all boys, whether they belong to the Nadar community or any other community. Their temples like their school are open to everybody. They have opened out gardens for the free use of the public. All this is worthy of imitation by all. You may therefore imagine my painful surprise when I was told that these clean living men were debarred from entering temples between Madura and Tinnevely. I felt ashamed of my Hinduism when I learnt this painful fact. In spite of my three visits to Madura I was not able to enter the great temple there. After having heard this painful story I felt that it was a blessing that I have never set my foot in that temple. Even as it is, whenever I visit a single temple even out of curiosity I feel a sense of deep humiliation because of my knowledge that that temple would not be open to the so-called untouchables. For my part I see not the slightest difference between a Nayadi¹ and myself. I should not care to enjoy a single right which a Nayadi cannot enjoy. And so as I go down south I delight in describing myself as a Nayadi. But still I have by force of habit come to understand that these so-called untouchables, unseeables and unapproachables cannot enter these so-called temples, though there is not the slightest justification for debarring them from entering into the house of God. But it was impossible for me to understand this senseless territorial prohibition against Nadars. I don't know whether you who are present at this meeting can or cannot do much in this direction. But there is one way in which every one of you can help if you wish to. For this senseless prohibition is after all a symptom of the same corroding disease. It comes really from untouchability and the curse of caste. I draw the sharpest distinction

¹ A community which was considered 'unapproachable'

between *varnashrama* and caste. Untouchability I hold to be an unpardonable sin and a great blot upon Hinduism. Caste I hold to be an obstacle to our progress and an arrogant assumption of superiority by one group over another. And untouchability is its extreme bad example. It is really high time that we got rid of the taint of untouchability and the taint of caste. Let us not degrade *varnashrama* by mixing it up with untouchability or with caste. My conception of *varnashrama* has nothing in common with its present distinction of untouchability and caste. *Varna* has nothing to do with superiority or inferiority. *Varna* is the recognition of a definite law that governs human happiness. And it simply means that we must treasure and conserve all the good qualities that we inherit from our ancestors, and that therefore each one should follow the profession of his father so long as the profession is not immoral. And anyone who believes that man is born in order that he might worship his Maker must recognize that he will be able to fulfil his purpose of life if he does not waste his time in finding new professions. You will therefore see that this conception of *varna* has nothing in common with caste. And, therefore, I would ask you to gird up your loins in order to fight this curse of untouchability and caste, and all the influence that you might have at your command in order to see that every temple is thrown open to all irrespective of caste. In closing our temples against anyone at all we forget that we are making God Himself 'untouchable'.

I must not now take up your time with the other matters which I have dealt with at such meetings during this tour. I propose to do some business with you. I have got some jewellery given to me by those sisters at the meeting. As you know, I have sold such pieces of jewellery at such meetings. For, I can make no personal use of any of these things. Nor can I carry with me heavy frames in which addresses are put. I have really no place even where I can hang them up. And whilst I am moving swiftly from day to day and from place to place it is a great trouble to carry these articles. I would, therefore, appeal to you to relieve me of these articles by bidding for them. I have no doubt that there are many in this meeting who have not contributed to these purses. And I doubt not that there are some who have not contributed enough. If after hearing me you have no doubt about the great value of khadi, the great service that khadi renders to the country, if you are satisfied that you should give not the least but the most you can, then you will please open out your purses.

The Hindu, 6-10-1927

130. LETTER TO SURENDRA

[About *October 4, 1927*]¹

CHI. SURENDRA,

I have your letter. About Sharadabehn it was just a slip of memory. Chi. Maganlal writes that she recovered long ago. I intend to write to her tomorrow.

You should certainly make any change that needs to be done about rising early in the morning; I should certainly not insist on this point. There is no doubt that the first requirement is that everyone keeps good health. Those who naturally wake up at 4 o'clock may do so and the others when the bell strikes.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9413

131. LETTER TO SURENDRA

[After *October 4, 1927*]²

CHI. SURENDRA,

I have your letter. I wrote you a short letter because I have not yet got back my original strength and where a few words would do I don't write more. I have felt not the least disappointment in conveying my consent nor am I angry. When seasoned persons like you, Balkrishna and others desired a change in the prayer timings, I agreed to it, regarding it as my duty not to oppose the move. I agreed to the proposal also because it would have been obstinacy to continue to insist on the 4 o'clock time now that I have become an invalid and it is no more certain when I would be able to reach there.

I might perhaps decide otherwise if I were there in person all hale and hearty. Yet I would not stick to the 4 o'clock time at the risk of my health. The 4 o'clock prayer is nothing immutable; it is not an end but only a means.

I have thoroughly understood your implications. Please take my consent for granted. I am neither disappointed nor disheartened. I

¹ From the reference to "rising early"; *vide* "Letter to Ashram Women", 4-10-1927.

² *Vide* the preceding item.

have withdrawn my insistence on the 4 o'clock time solely in consideration of the general good. I have explained things in detail to Maganlal. But do question me if you have any more doubts.

I am glad to get the letter from Balkrishna. I shall write to him when I get the time. Also tell Chhotelal that perhaps I may not be able to write to him today.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9417

132. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

Wednesday [October 5, 1927]¹

CHI. MIRA,

I suppose it is because I am fast moving away from Madras that your letters have not overtaken me. I expect a haul tomorrow. This is just to tell you that I am thinking of you.

Love,

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 5298. Courtesy: Mirabehn

133. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, KOILPATTI

October 5, 1927

Mahatmaji acknowledging all the welcome addresses and the purses expressed his thanks and said that he would auction what he received here at this place itself, at the close of the meeting, as he did in all other places. For, he did not wish to keep such things with him and further it was a difficult task for him to carry them from place to place. The people of this locality might easily have them by purchasing them at the auction, and the amount they thus paid would be utilized for the relief of the poor and the service of *Daridranarayana*.

Referring to the point stated in one of the addresses that the relationship between the Brahmins and non-Brahmins in South India was becoming as much

¹ The addressee, in her collection, has placed the letter at the end of 1927. During the first week of October, 1927, Gandhiji wrote to Mirabehn every day. There is a gap on the 5th which was a Wednesday. The contents connect this letter to those of the 4th and 6th of October 1927.

strained as that between the Hindus and Muslims in Northern India, Mahatmaji said that he had been trying to understand this problem and that he spared as much leisure as he could to the leaders of non-Brahmin movement to discuss the matter with him. He thought that by this time, he had understood the problem and he would try to eradicate the difference between these two communities and establish friendly relations between them by writing about this question in *Young India*.¹ More than that he would not do. For, he was not confident that the leaders of either community would act up to his advice. The leaders of both communities should meet together to discuss the points of difference and sincerely try to effect a reconciliation between them. The allegations of non-Brahmins against Brahmins were sometimes just. But sometimes they exaggerated the matter. He would accept all their reasonable statements. But he did not like the unreasonable hatred of Brahmins prevalent among non-Brahmins. He would concur with the non-Brahmins in their statement that the Brahmins were not doing their duties properly. But he could not accept the statement of the non-Brahmin leaders that the Brahmins had created all the evils. He was also not confident that the Brahmins would, on his advice, be willing to lose their ancient rights. But he would tell them that the struggle was quite unfair and was against the interests of their country. Above all he would urge upon the leaders of both communities to effect a fair and honest compromise among themselves. He would publish his opinions in *Young India* and he did not care as to their acceptance or rejection by others. . . .²

The Hindu, 8-10-1927

134. 'AN INDIGNANT PROTEST'

The head master of a Bengali school writes :³

Your advice and utterances to students at Madras⁴, asking them to marry widowed girls only, have horrified us. . . .

This kind of advice will tend to destroy the tendency of the widows to observe lifelong *brahmacharya*. . . Your theory of marriage will overturn the Hindu theory of transmigration, rebirth and even *mukti*⁵, and will bring down Hindu society on the same level with other societies which we do not like. . . . Examples of Ahalyabai, Rani Bhavani, Behula, Sita, Savitri, Damayanti will guide the Hindu society and we must direct it according to their ideals. . . .

¹ *Vide* "Varnashrama and its Distortion", 17-11-1927.

² Gandhiji then spoke on khadi and untouchability.

³ Only extracts are reproduced.

⁴ *Vide* "Speech at Pachaiyappa's College, Madras", September 15, 1927.

⁵ Deliverance from phenomenal existence

This indignant protest leaves me unconverted and unrepentant. My advice will not wean from her purpose a single widow who has a will of her own and who knows *brahmacharya* and is bent upon observing it. But if the advice is followed, it will certainly bring great relief to those girls of tender age who know not the meaning of marriage when they were put through the ceremony. The use of the term 'widow' in their connection is a violent abuse of a name with sacred associations. It is precisely for the very object that my correspondent has in view that I advise the youth of the country to marry these so-called widows or not at all. The sacredness of the institution can be preserved only when it is purged of the curse of child widowhood.

The statement that the widows attain *moksha* if they observe *brahmacharya* has no foundation whatsoever in experience. More things are necessary than mere *brahmacharya* for the attainment of the final bliss. And *brahmacharya* that is superimposed carries no merit with it, and often gives rise to secret vice that saps the morals of the society in which that vice exists. Let the correspondent know that I am writing from personal observation.

I should be glad indeed if my advice results in elementary justice being done to the maiden widows, and if for that reason the other maidens instead of being prematurely sold to man's lust are given an opportunity of waiting for maturity in age and wisdom.

I have no theory of marriage that is inconsistent with a belief in transmigration, rebirth or *mukti*. The reader should know that millions of Hindus whom we arrogantly describe as belonging to the lower order have no ban on widow remarriage. And I do not see how if remarriage of old widowers does not interfere with that belief, real marriage of girls wrongly described as widows can interfere with that grand belief. I may mention for the edification of the correspondent that transmigration and rebirth are not mere theories with me but facts as patent as the daily rise of the sun. *Mukti* is a fact to realize which I am striving with all my might. And it is the contemplation of *mukti* which has given me a vivid for the belief that in the Vedic times there was any absolute ban upon remarriage of widows. But my crusade is not against real widowhood. It is against its atrocious caricature. The better way is not to regard as widows at all the girls I have in view and whom every Hindu who has a spark of chivalry in him is bound to relieve from their intolerable yoke. I therefore humbly but emphatically repeat the advice to every young Hindu to refuse to

marry any but these maidens miscalled widows.

Young India, 6-10-1927 consciousness of the wrong that is being done to these maiden widows. Let us not in our emasculation mention in the same breath as these modern injured maiden widows the immortal names of Sita and others referred to by the correspondent.

Lastly, whilst there is, and very properly, glorification of real widowhood in Hinduism, there is, so far as I am aware, no warrant

135. NOTES

A KHADI LOVER

Dr. Kailas Nath Katju¹, a distinguished advocate of Allahabad, sent me a letter some time ago referring to several matters, and in that letter avowed his love of khadi and enclosed the first instalment of his contribution to the A.I.S.A. I felt that the part of the letter that concerned khadi should be published by way of encouragement to other moneyed men, especially lawyers. I therefore wrote asking for his permission to publish his letter and incidentally expostulated with him about the foreign black alpaca and endeavoured to explain the value of sacrificial spinning. I am now able to publish below his two letters so far as they relate to khadi :²

The lawyers and other professional men may not be able to do much in other respects, but they can all follow Dr. Katju's worthy example by adopting khadi and contributing to the All-India Spinners' Association, which is always in want because of the growing demand for organizing more villages than the Association has on hand. It is not possible to produce an increasing amount of khadi without increasing the capital, and till khadi has become universal in India expenses of the organization must remain a recurring item.

A DOUBLE SIN

A correspondent, who sends his name for my information but adopts the pseudonym of 'A Bachelor', writes with reference to my article "Is It a Marriage?"³ published some time ago a long letter

¹ 1887-1968; prominent Congress leader; sometime Home Minister, Government of India

² Not reproduced here; Katju had promised to send a monthly contribution to the Khadi Fund, spin regularly and use fine black khadi in place of foreign alpaca.

³ Dated 1-9-1927

which I abridge as follows :

I have read with interest the article in your paper of the 1st instant under the heading "Is It a Marriage?"? Though the names of the parties are omitted it is an open secret to the Gaud Sarasvat Brahmins from Karwar. As a member of the community in which the marriage in question took place I wish to place before the public and the Gaud Sarasvat Brahmins throughout India in particular the following few lines for their careful consideration :

Is is no doubt a disgrace for a man to buy a girl. But there is another custom among us which is equally bad, for a father among us is obliged to buy a husband for his daughter and the amount received by the husband is called dowry. It is not settled to suit the purse of the parents of girls but it would be according to the hereditary income of the would-be husband or it sometimes depends upon the education he has received. The more a man is educated, the higher the degrees he has received, the more is he worth in the matrimonial market.

A few months back the marriage took place in Bombay of a well-educated gentleman who is a high government official and it is said that a dowry of nearly Rs. 20,000 was presented to him. It is really a pity that the people who receive higher education are going lower and lower by resorting to the very practices they are expected to put down.

I have before me another letter on the subject from a member of the same community. It appears that those who wish to buy wives go to Goa in search, for it is there that poor Sarasvat Brahmins are to be found who are not ashamed to enrich themselves by selling their daughters to persons old enough to be their fathers or grandfathers. Thus the community commits a double sin. An educated young man is open to the highest bidder for his hand, and needy parents are open to negotiate the sale of their daughters, hardly out of their teens, to the oldest men (sometimes educated) who are prepared to pay the highest price. The only consolation that the Sarasvat community may derive, if it wishes to, and if it would postpone a dealing with the reform under some excuse or other, is that there are other 'castes' too that are not free from the same evil. The difference, if any, would be that of degree. But if the Sarasvat community would lead the reform, it will disdain to seek the doubtful refuge of the *tu quoque* and will, now that the evil has been exposed, set about ridding itself of the double sin.

Young India, 6-10-1927

136. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

October 6, 1927

CHI. MIRA,

This is from Tuticorin. I had expected something from you here. I have news from the Ashram of your safe arrival there. May God bless you.

Love,

BAPU

MIRABEHN

SATYAGRAHA ASHRAM

SABARMATI

From the original: C.W. 5284. Courtesy: Mirabehn

137. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, TUTICORIN

October 6, 1927

MR. CHAIRMAN AND FRIENDS,

I thank you for all these addresses and purses. I thank also Sarathambal and Saraswati Devi for their bangles. These sisters have anticipated my request to them which I make whenever and wherever I meet them. I thank also the donor of the new and beautiful ring, as also the donors of silver cups. All these and the framed addresses will be presently offered to you for sale. For, by this time all of you know that I do not use all these for my own person, and for the self-styled representative of *Daridranarayana* it will not be right to make any personal use of all these and I make no personal use but I welcome these gifts from you. I have a right to welcome such gifts.

I congratulate you on having a Hindi teacher in your midst and I have learnt with pleasure that not only boys and girls but also grown-up men and women are learning Hindi. But I understand that the expenses of Hindi tuition are not borne by you in their entirety. I think that, if it is so, it is a serious reflection upon your patriotism. As you know, for several years past the people in the north have been financing this Hindi Propaganda. But it is high time now that it became self-supporting. Surely it cannot cost you much money in order to support one Hindi teacher or two teachers among your midst. I may think therefore that you will take all pains to see that you pay

for all the tuition he gives.

I congratulate you also on your having a national school in your town and on having named it after Lokamanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak. It grieves me to hear from your address that you are unable to pay for the expenses of this school. It is something that there is no untouchability in your school, and also that you are teaching Hindi in that school. I do hope that patriotic citizens will look into the affairs of this institution and make it self-supporting. In your address you ask me to set apart a certain portion of the amount of collections here in this town to your school. I am sorry to have to inform you that it will not be possible for me to do so. However willing I may feel it will not be just and honest on my part to deflect even a moiety of the sum earmarked for a definite purpose. I may gladly, however, part with some sum of the collections if some citizens had given me the purse with a distinct request that a certain fraction of it might be given to your school. Even now if there is any citizen so minded to give any sum in that manner, I shall only be too glad to do so. That, however, is not the method by which you can support the institution though it would be something, but it behoves the citizens of Tuticorin to look into the existing state of affairs of this institution and make it absolutely an independent one.

I know from personal experience of several national schools how these institutions are conducted and how beautifully they are serving the national purpose. If you have taken any interest in the distress that has overtaken our countrymen in the north, you will find that the pupils of national institutions in these villages have been rendering great help in reclaiming the area and in relieving their distress to the extent and with the resources that lay in their power. But for the spontaneous and substantial voluntary service done by the pupils of the national schools in Gujarat, Mr. Vallabhbhai Patel would not have been able to do what he had done towards the relief of the flood-stricken people. I, therefore, ask the citizens of Tuticorin to keep the institution going.

There is a way for you to get some amount of help from the Khadi Fund. You know that there is the All-India Spinners' Association. If you will induce your pupils to take up hand-spinning and produce yarn you can send the same to the Association which will pay you a decent price and also try to help you in a way.

I have heard people saying that I have made no reference to the Tamil language during my tour in this Province, and to the necessity of learning it. I have even been accused on that account. I am sorry that I cannot endorse that tribute of rebuke. Those who have known me intimately will admit that the rebuke is uncharitable. I have dilated many time on the need of knowing the Tamil language before learning English and even as early as 1915 I have been asking the people to prefer Tamil to English. Before the year 1917 throughout India ten years ago I carried on a ceaseless agitation for the imparting of instruction to pupils in schools through the medium of the vernacular of the province and asking people to cultivate their vernaculars by speaking in their vernaculars and studying literatures in their respective vernaculars.

You very rightly draw my attention to the treasures that are to be found in *Tirukural*¹. Let me inform you that some twenty years ago I began to learn Tamil with the desire and object of studying *Tirukural* in original. It has been a matter of deep sorrow to me that God never gave me time to finish studying the Tamil language. I am entirely in favour of the agitation for making the vernaculars as medium of instruction. We ought to learn the Tamil language and prefer it to English and place it above all other languages.

As you know I have mildly rebuked the Reception Committee of a place when they read their address in English instead of in Tamil, the language of their province. I hope, therefore, that you will not accuse me any more in regard to this matter as you know that I am for replacing English by Tamil in all schools and centres.

There is also an address from the fishermen in Tuticorin. They ask me to point a way out of a difficulty that faces them. I am sorry to confess that I have not read the Bill referred to in their address. It is entirely a matter for the local patriots to guide them. Having thus cleared the ground covered by the address, I will now come to my favourite subject that has brought me here. . . .²

The Hindu, 8-10-1927

¹ Ancient Tamil classic

² Gandhiji then spoke on khadi and untouchability.

138. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, TINNEVELLY

October 7, 1927

MR. CHAIRMAN AND FRIENDS,

I thank you for the numerous addresses of welcome and your purses and gifts. I thank you still more for refraining from reading all your addresses. I have had a somewhat taxing day and a still more taxing drive in the midst of terrific din and noise in Tinnevelly and it is late for me also. You can, therefore, now perhaps understand how I value your having waived your right of reading the addresses. You have given me so many gifts, large and small, that it will take some time before I dispose of them all in auction as I usually do at the end of the meeting. I need hardly tell you that I have read all your addresses, the translations of which were furnished to me. I value the assurance given in the address of the Indian Christian Association on behalf of their community that while formerly they might not have identified themselves with national movements, now they are identifying themselves more with these movements. Indeed, I have been watching with very great interest and pleasure this manifestation from Christian friends throughout the south. There is no doubt in my mind that it is as it should be. Acceptance of Christianity or any other faith should never mean denationalization. Nationalism need never be narrow or inconsistent with internationalism. That nationalism, which is based upon pure selfishness and the exploitation of other nations, is indeed an evil. But I cannot conceive of internationalism without a healthy and desirable national spirit.

I was glad to note in that address complete sympathy with the khadi movement. To me, it appears to be monstrous to see the slightest opposition to such an incredibly simple thing as khadi. For, after all, khadi is nothing but a desire to identify oneself with the starving millions of India. He or she, who has the slightest feeling or desire to serve these toiling millions, cannot help beginning with khadi. Only recently did Sir M. Visvesvarayya deplore the fact that millions of people in the villages who have so much time and leisure were sending their raw produce outside India and depriving themselves of the opportunities to help themselves with their own efforts. Indeed, in this part of the country you have an unrivalled opportunity to turn the cotton you produce to good account. You see

here on the table these pieces of khadi whose history I will give you. There is in your midst a gentleman whose name is Mr. Aramvalarth-anatham Pillai. He and my kind host, Mr. Vishwanatha Pillai, have conspired to teach boys and girls in two schools simple spinning. And the labours of these boys and girls who are spinning on the *takli* are enough to produce seventeen yards in one month. And I hope that no one in this meeting despises this little production on the part of these boys and girls who have not known till now what it is to produce one yard. This is one of the countries possessing the largest manpower on the face of the earth. This manpower, according to the same high authority I quoted just now, remains unutilized. If all the schools throughout India were engaged only for a short time every day you can imagine the enormous increase in the productive capacity of the country, without any capital or any special skill in technical activity. I have got here nearly 85 yards of khadi all spun and woven here out of your own cotton by your own boys and girls. Here, there is historical cloth for you about which there is as much poetry also. The gentleman has presented me with one piece and asked me to use it and not to auction it at the meeting. I needed no encouragement from him to give him such a promise. As a matter of fact, every piece of cloth that I am using has its own history somewhat like the history of this cloth. It gives me a great joy to be able to know who was the sister or daughter who spun the yarn or whose was the hand that wove the clothes I wear. This is one very vast universal industry in India which not only takes its sweep over millions of our starving countrymen, but is one on which you can build great national activity and unite all the castes and communities of this country.

But these friends, while they have great faith in the future of khadi and its ability to solve to a great extent the deep and distressful poverty of the masses, have little faith now in the solution of the Brahmin-non-Brahmin question in this country. They fear, at least one of them fears, that is too much of the smell of the Brahmin about the khadi work in the Tamil Nadu. I have been therefore bound by them that whilst I may sell this khadi to you I should not utilize the amount for the khadi work in Tamil Nadu. I have given them that promise, for I need as much money as you can give me for khadi work in other parts of India. But I may inform you, that though there is undoubtedly this smell of the Brahmin in the khadi organization of Tamil Nadu, the large majority of spinners and weavers who are supported out of the movement are non-Brahmins. And let me also

give you my assurance as President and head of the All-India Spinners' Association that if I can get as many skilled workers on my terms from the non-Brahmins I will today dismiss all the Brahmin workers from the A.I.S.A. Let me further tell you that those few Brahmins who are serving the A.I.S.A. in the Tamil Nadu are almost every one of them capable of earning far more than the Association can ever give them. I give you my assurance that the A.I.S.A. is not a body which anyone may approach who has the slightest desire to enrich himself. It demands selflessness, self-sacrifice and purity of life. It would be impossible for me to work the A.I.S.A. on anything like the scale obtainable in the service of the Government. There are in the A.I.S.A. men who were at one time earning between Rs. 1,000 to 1,500 per mensem, who are now getting hardly Rs. 100 from the Association. If I begin to pay big salaries to such officers of A.I.S.A., I will have to file a petition in the Insolvency Court. (Laughter.) So you may take it from me that if there are Brahmins identified with the A.I.S.A., they approach it with the true Brahminical spirit. And I must confess to you, that non-Brahmin though I am, I have the greatest regard for the real and the true Brahminical spirit. If I can get a large number of men with that spirit, I can undertake with confidence to solve almost every one of the problems that afflict this country now. The root meaning of a Brahmin is one who knows God and the qualifications required of such a person are that he is an embodiment of learning, self-sacrifice and service. I admit that such Brahmins are not to be found everywhere in India. But I give you my own personal evidence that there are still in existence such Brahmins. And it is one of my businesses in India to get hold of every such Brahmin. It is my conviction that the A.I.S.A. does possess some Brahmins of very nearly the type I described to you. And personally I do not consider that it would be possible to conduct the great movement on the scale it is conducted now without the knowledge and self-sacrifice of such men. If I had the time and strength I would have spoken to you at greater length on this vexing Brahmin-non-Brahmin question. I venture to think that I have now a fair grasp of what this question is. I hope, as soon as I get the time, to reduce my views to writing. But whilst we may debate and discuss the Brahmin-non-Brahmin question, let us not forget the masses of India.

If I may put it in a nutshell, after all the Brahmin-non-Brahmin question also resolves itself into one of untouchability. And he who will successfully kill this cobra of untouchability will have laid the axe

at the root of the Brahmin-non-Brahmin question. For it is my clear conviction that it is this curse of untouchability which has crept into Hinduism and has poisoned Hinduism itself. After all, that untouchability which, in its most excessive and excruciating form, has given us the untouchables and unseeables, has been running through the core of Hinduism. The basis of untouchability is an arrogant assumption of superiority of one class over another; and once we have successfully dealt with the hydra-headed monster of superiority, I think, we have very little to fight about. I therefore invite you all to join me in this crusade against untouchability in every form. Whilst I am glad to find from your addresses and the talk I had this afternoon that your municipal schools are open to untouchables, I ask you not to be satisfied with that alone. When untouchability is really removed from our midst you will not find any untouchable quarter. The untouchables will have the same rights as the tallest Brahmin to enter the inmost sanctuary of any temple to which any Brahmin can go. They will have the same access that anybody else may have to public wells and public places. We shall then have no Brahmin tanks, non-Brahmin tanks and untouchable tanks. In the language of the *Bhagavad Gita*, the Brahmin and the Bhangi will be the same to the Lord. And do not by any means be misled into thinking, as one is often misled by learned men, that this saying in the *Gita* applies to men of exceptional glory or spiritual merit. When untouchability is really dead and gone you will not find in your midst what I am about to describe just now.

I have among the papers that I brought with me a painful letter that a resident of this place has written to me. He tells me that the water of your river Thamraparni is polluted by the citizens of this place. He tells me while the medical authorities are injecting into your bodies matter to prevent cholera, you yourselves are injecting the cholera germs into the river by polluting it in various ways. The address of this Municipal Council thanks me for having spoken openly and frankly on some defects of municipal administration at several places. And the councillors tell me that they hope to profit by these speeches. I do hope that this hope of theirs will be fulfilled in the near future. May I suggest to you that you begin your work by cleansing the river bank of all the filth that is deposited on it from morning to morning. You might have observed that I have connected this evil also with untouchability. I speak not only from my personal experience but from that of thousands of men in India. We have cultivated unfortunately a habit of not looking after our own

sanitation, because of untouchability. We, the so-called higher classes, will not look after our own sanitation. That, we consider in our arrogance and prejudice, is specially the work of untouchables. And having developed a kind of contempt for these countrymen of ours, we will not even look as to what or how they are doing the work. They, poor men, have never been told even the elementary laws of sanitation. And hence whether it is the river bank or any other place it remains as dirty as ever even after they are cleaned by them. You may not know that it was in order to remedy this grave and serious defect that I had to raise a corps of scavengers for the Congress work at Ahmedabad, not from untouchables but from Brahmins and the non-Brahmins. If you want to do the cleaning and the scavenging thoroughly and inexpensively, every one of you should be your own scavenger. A mother who does not do scavenging for her baby ceases to be a mother. A little thought will show you that every one of you who has got the welfare of your town in his heart will have to take the position of such mothers. It will delight my heart if it could be told in my tour that you have also resolved to do the scavenging work yourselves.

I must omit to refer to many other social questions that I love to talk about. I must not forget the promise that I gave to the Nadar friends of Viradhunagar. You have perhaps read in the papers about this territorial untouchability. That such a fine body of clean and enterprising traders should be debarred from entering the temples in the districts of Tinnevely and Madura is a serious reflection on the Hindus of these districts. I wish that you could by some means or other get rid of this evil at the earliest possible time. Now the volunteers will go about collecting while I sell these things in auction. I hope those who buy these pieces of cloth will take pride in wearing them.

The Hindu, 10-10-1927

139. LETTER TO PRAGJI DESAI

October 8, 1927

BHAISHRI PRAGJI,

I have your letter. I had written to Sastriji and Andrews even before I got it. I have sent your letter to Deenabandhu¹ along with my recommendation. Personally, I do not believe that he could have done anything wrong. Whatever the explanation, he is certainly not likely to

¹ C. F. Andrews

have told a lie deliberately; we should, moreover, be grateful to him for any service he may render. Do nothing in haste. Since you have already lived in Natal, you need not take out a limited permit. But you may take out one if Sastri presses you to do so and undertakes to secure a few permits of more than a year's limit and if you really wish to stay in the Transvaal. That you are helping Manilal is very good indeed.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 5030

140. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

October 8, 1927

CHI. MIRA,

I am not going to write to you every day. For I fancy you do not need any soothing ointment. The wound¹ must be healed by this time. And your letter from the Ashram reassures me.

Yes, you may take up the dairy work or whatever you like. How about your feeds²? Chhotelal's message is unacceptable. He must write and that fully.

With love,

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 5285. Courtesy: Mirabehn

141. SPEECH AT NAGERCOIL³

October 8, 1927

Whilst it gives me great pleasure to pay a second visit to this most beautiful part of India, I cannot conceal from you the deep grief I feel for the fact that in this fair land untouchability has a sway which it does not exercise in any other part of India. I feel deeply humiliated as a Hindu to find that it is in this enlightened Hindu State that untouchability appears in its most hideous form of unseeability and unapproachability. I speak with a due sense of my responsibility that

¹ The source has "world".

² "Food" in *Bapu's Letters to Mira*

³ Published under the title "Message to Travancore"

this untouchability is a curse that is eating into the vitals of Hinduism, and I often feel that unless we take due precautions and remove this curse from our midst, Hinduism itself is in danger of destruction. That in this age of reason, in this age of wide travel, in this age of a comparative study of religions, there should be found people, some of whom are educated, to uphold the hideous doctrine of treating a single human being as an untouchable, or unapproachable, or unseeable because of his birth, passes my comprehension. As a lay, humble student of Hinduism and claiming to be one desirous of practising Hinduism in the spirit and to the letter let me tell you that I have found no warrant or support for this terrible doctrine. Let us not deceive ourselves into the belief that everything that is written in Sanskrit and printed is Shashtra and has a binding effect upon us. That which is opposed to the fundamental maxims of morality, that which is opposed to trained reason, cannot be claimed as Shashtra no matter how ancient it may be. There is enough warrant for the proposition that I have just stated in the Vedas, in the *Mahabharata* and in the *Bhagavad Gita*. I therefore hope that it will be possible for the enlightened ruler of Travancore to blot the curse out of the land during her reign. And what can be nobler than that a woman should be able to say to herself and her people that during her rule it has been possible for these people who have been suffering from age-long slavery to receive their full freedom?

But I know also her difficulties and those of her councillors. A government, be it ever so autocratic, is always timid and cautious in moving in such reforms. A wise government will welcome an agitation in connection with such reforms. An unwise government impatient of public opinion will use violence in putting down such agitations. But from my personal experience of Vykam Satyagraha I know that you have a Government which will not only tolerate but welcome agitation in order to strengthen its hands to achieve this reform. The real initiative therefore must lie with the people of Travancore, and that too not with the so-called untouchables miscalled also *avarna*¹ Hindus. To me the very word *avarna* Hindu is a misnomer and a reproach to Hinduism. In many cases the remedy or the initiative lies not with them but with the so-called *savarna*² Hindus who have to rid themselves of the sin of untouchability. Let me tell you that it is not

¹ Not belonging to any of the *varnas*

² Belonging to one of the *varnas*

enough for you to hold the belief passively that untouchability is a crime. He who is a passive spectator of crime is really, and in law, an active participator in it. You must, therefore, begin and continue your agitation along all lawful and legitimate lines. Let me, if my voice will reach them, carry my voice to the Brahmin priests who are opposing this belated reform. It is a painful fact, but it is a historical truth, that priests who should have been the real custodians of religion have been instrumental in destroying the religion of which they have been custodians. I see before my eyes the Brahmin priests in Travancore and also elsewhere destroying the very religion of which they are supposed to be custodians, from their ignorance or worse. All their learning, when it is utilized in order to sustain a hideous superstition, a terrible wrong, turns to dust. I wish therefore that they will recognize before it is too late the signs of the times and march with the events which are taking them and us voluntarily or involuntarily along the path of truth. All the religions of the world, while they may differ in other respects unitedly proclaim that nothing lives in this world but truth.

Let me also warn the impatient reformer that unless he keeps himself on the right, strait and narrow path, he will hurt himself and hinder the reform about which he is rightly impatient. I venture to claim that I have placed in the hands of the reformer a matchless and priceless weapon in the form of satyagraha. But then the conditions of successful satyagraha are fairly hard. If he has faith in God, faith in himself, faith in his cause, he will never be violent, not even against his most fierce opponent whom he would accuse rightly of injustice, ignorance and even violence. I state without fear of contradiction that truth has never been vindicated by violence. A satyagrahi therefore expects to conquer his opponents or his co-called enemies not by violent force but by force of love, by process of conversion. His methods will be always gentle and gentlemanly. He will never exaggerate. And since non-violence is otherwise known as love it has no weapon but that of self-suffering. And above all, in a movement like that of the removal of untouchability which in my opinion is essentially religious and one of self-purification, there is no room for hate, no room for haste, no room for thoughtlessness and no room for exaggeration. Since satyagraha is one of the most powerful methods of direct action, a satyagrahi exhausts all other means before he resorts to satyagraha. He will therefore constantly and continually approach the constituted authority, he will appeal to public opinion,

educate public opinion, state his case calmly and coolly before everybody who wants to listen to him, and only after he has exhausted all these avenues will he resort to satyagraha. But when he has found the impelling call of the inner voice within him and launches out upon satyagraha he has burnt his boats and there is no receding. Let me, however, hope that it will not be necessary in this land for people to undergo all the suffering for removing a wrong which is so patent.

You will be glad to learn that immediately I entered this place, the Commissioner of Police was good enough to call on me and we discussed this great question. There are at the present moment two questions pending so far as I am aware; one in connection with the roads about Tiruvarppu and the other in connection with Suchindram. So far as I am aware in both these places the reformers have the right on their side. I understand that at the first place satyagrahis have already commenced their battle. I think it is a hasty step. I have therefore sent them a telegram asking them to desist for the time being and to see me tomorrow at Trivandrum. And I propose, if I am given the opportunity, as I hope I shall be, to discuss both these questions with the authorities. Though this visit of mine to Travancore was intended to be confined principally to khadi or khadi collections, fate threw me into the untouchability fray immediately on my arrival. I shall not spare myself during the brief time that is at my disposal in endeavouring humbly to assist both the State and the people in arriving at an honourable settlement.

Young India, 20-10-1927

142. LETTER TO MANILAL AND SUSHILA GANDHI

TRAVANCORE,
[October 9, 1927]¹

CHI. MANILAL AND CHI. SUSHILA,

I get your letters regularly. We should not think about Sastriji's weakness to which you refer. It is a kind of weakness from which practically no one in Government service can be free. I adopted non-co-operation with the Government only when I found that its system was altogether evil. It is but natural that, having grown in the atmosphere in which you have, you cannot bear such flattery. But

¹ From the reference to Devdas's operation for piles; *vide* also "Letter to Mirabehn", 3-10-1927.

respect for elders requires that, as far as possible, we should not criticize them. You did well, of course, in drawing my attention to his weakness, but do not permit your behaviour to Sastriji or your sincere respect for him to be affected in any way. We have few patriotic workers as upright and able as Sastriji.

Devdas has been operated upon for piles. He is in Dr. Rajan's hospital. It is now six days since the operation. He is progressing satisfactorily. Almost all the men in the Ashram are engaged in flood-relief work. We arrived in Travancore today. Ba has gone to visit Kanyakumari. (Mahadev and I have visited the place once. Kakasaheb is also accompanying her. He, too, has gone).

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4729

143. SPEECH AT TRIVANDRUM¹

[On or before October 10, 1927]²

As at Nagercoil, here too the best part of the day has been devoted to discussing this problem. Though it was partly a social call that I paid to the Dewan, we naturally began to discuss this thorny question. And if you found me coming to the meetings a few minutes late it was because I had gone to pay my respects to Her Highness the Maharani Regent, and I found myself again discussing this very question with her. I have always, after having paid the first visit to Travancore, looked forward to a series of visits to this enchanting land. Its most beautiful scenery, the location of Kanyakumari in Travancore, and the simplicity and freedom of the women of Travancore captivated me when I first came here. But the pleasure that all these thoughts and associations always gave me has been seriously marred by the thought that untouchability had assumed its most terrible shape in Travancore, and it has pained me to think that this evil has existed in that terrible form in a most ancient Hindu State, which has the privilege of occupying the first place in all India in educational progress. And this existence of untouchability in its

¹ Published under the title "Message to Travancore"

² According to Mahadev Desai's "Weekly Letter", Gandhiji was in Trivandrum on October 9 and 10, 1927 and he made the speech after he had met the Maharaja and the Maharani of Travancore; *vide* also "Speech at Nagercoil", 8-10-1927.

extreme form has always caused me so much pain, because I consider myself to be a Hindu of Hindus saturated with the spirit of Hinduism. I have failed to find a single warrant for the existence of untouchability as we believe and practise it today in all those books which we call Hindu Shastras. But as I have repeatedly said in other places, if I found that Hinduism really countenanced untouchability I should have no hesitation in renouncing Hinduism itself. For I hold that religion, to be worthy of the name, must not be inconsistent with the fundamental truths of ethics and morality. But as I believe that untouchability is no part of Hinduism, I cling to Hinduism, but daily become more and more impatient of this hideous wrong. So, when I found that this question was agitating Travancore I had no hesitation in plunging myself into it. If I have taken up this question, I have done so not in any way to embarrass the State. For I believe that Her Highness the Maharani Regent is solicitous about the welfare of her people. She also claims to be a reformer along these lines, and I fancy that I commit no breach of confidence when I tell you that she is eager to see that this wrong is removed at the earliest possible moment.

But then governments cannot afford to lead in matters of reform. By their very nature governments are but interpreters and executors of the expressed will of the people whom they govern, and even a most auto-cratic government will find itself unable to impose a reform which its people cannot assimilate. So, if I was a subject of Travancore State I should be entirely satisfied to know that my Government was willing to carry forward this reform as speedily as the people were willing to assimilate it. But having satisfied myself of that one thing, I should not rest content for one single moment till I had carried the message of reform from mouth to mouth and village to village. Well-ordered, persistent agitation is the soul of healthy progress, and so if I were you, I would not let the Government rest till this reform was carried through. Not allowing the Government to rest does not by any means mean embarrassing the Government. A wise government welcomes and needs the support and warmth and encouragement of such an agitation in order to achieve a reform which the Government itself wants. I know that when I was here last, I was told that the *savarna* (caste) Hindus were all most anxious for this reform of the abolition of untouchability in every shape and form. But I am afraid that the *savarna* Hindus have slept over their wish. They have not given a concrete form to their wish, and I believe that it

is the bounden duty of every Hindu in the State to wake up to a sense of his duty and to wake up his lethargic brethren also to a sense of their duty. And I have no shadow of a doubt that if the *savarna* Hindus could with one voice express their wish, this monster of untouchability would go. It would be wrong therefore to ascribe our own lethargy and slothfulness to the Government.

But reformers in every community and every country are to be counted on one's finger tips; and I know that the brunt of all such reforms falls upon the devoted heads of that small band of reformers. What are the reformers then to do in the face of this evil of such long standing is really the question one has to solve. The reformers all over the world have resorted to one or other of the two methods that I am about to mention. The vast majority of them have drawn attention to evils by creating wild agitation and resorting to violence. They have resorted to agitation that embarrasses the Government, that embarrasses the people and that disturbs the even tenor of the life of the citizens. The other school of reformers which I would call the non-violent school resorts to agitation of the gentle type. It disdains to draw attention by doing violence in thought, word or deed; but it draws attention by simple self-suffering. It never exaggerates. It never departs by a hair's breadth from truth, and whilst impatient of evil, does not mean ill even to the evildoer. I have given that a short name and I have placed it before this country as before South Africa in the name of satyagraha. Do not for one moment mix up satyagraha with civil disobedience. Civil disobedience is no doubt a branch of satyagraha. It comes not at the beginning but at the fagend. It presupposes immense discipline. It presupposes great self-restraint. It is based upon charity, and it never puts an unfavourable or unwarranted construction even upon the motives of its opponents. For it seeks not to coerce but to convert. You may therefore imagine my painful surprise when I found the whole of my doctrine and my remarks grossly misinterpreted by a friend who visited me in Virudhunagar¹. I saw in the *Trivandrum Express* a report given by him of what had occurred between him and myself. It is a distortion from start to finish of the conversation that I had with him.

A VOICE: Shame.

But there is no warrant for crying "shame". The gentleman

¹ For the *Hindu* version of the interview, *vide* Appendix "Interview to C. Kuttan Nair", October 4, 1927.

who cried shame evidently does not know the virtue or meaning of charity. For, I do not for one moment suggest that the friend who saw me has consciously or deliberately distorted my meaning. I am prepared to believe the explanation that he gave me this morning. But I have drawn your attention to this prominently in order to illustrate what I mean by satyagraha and also to show you the danger of those who do not know this fine weapon dabbling in it. I am simply giving this example in order to warn the would-be reformer against undertaking this method unless he is absolutely sure of his ground and unless he has got more than the ordinary measure of self-control, and seeing that I am enamoured of this method of satyagraha, which I consider to be a matchless weapon, I do not want it to be misused or abused, so long as I can prevent it. I therefore advised this friend to keep out of this problem until he had understood what satyagraha really was, and unless he had assimilated the true spirit of it.

But this again is not intended to damp the zeal of even a single reformer. I am going into the problem so much in detail for the simple reason that I want you to work at it in order to get the quickest possible solution. I want therefore humbly to suggest that those of you who have had some experience of public life should take up this movement and make it their own and harness the energy and the will of the youths who are interested in this problem but do not know how to solve it. And I suggest also that you place yourselves in touch with the authorities and day after day worry the life out of them until this reform is achieved. For I am free to tell you that not only is Her Highness desirous of carrying out this reform but so is the Dewan himself. But belonging as he does to a different faith, you and I, Hindus, can appreciate his limitations. In my opinion, so far as the Government is concerned, it is on the side of reform; only the initiative will have to come from you and not from the Government. You will forgive me for having dealt with this very important question in a highly technical manner. I could not do otherwise as I have no other time at my disposal so that I could have convened a few of the leaders at a conference and discussed the pros and cons. I felt therefore that you would overlook the heaviness of my speech in connection with untouchability before a big audience as this.

One question was put to me arising out of this question this morning, and that was what was the bearing of varnashrama dharma upon untouchability. That means that I should say a few words about my conception of varnashrama dharma. So far as I know anything at

all of Hinduism, the meaning of *varna* is incredibly simple. It simply means the following on the part of us all the hereditary and traditional calling of our forefathers, in so far as that traditional calling is not inconsistent with fundamental ethics, and this only for the purpose of earning one's livelihood. I regard this as the law of our being, if we would accept the definition of man given in all religions. Of all the animal creation of God, man is the only animal who has been created in order that he may know his Maker. Man's aim in life is not therefore to add from day to day to his material prospects and to his material possessions but his predominant calling is from day to day to come nearer his own Maker, and from this definition it was that the *rishis*¹ of old discovered this law of our being. You will realize that if all of us follow this law of *varna* we would limit our material ambition, and our energy would be set free for exploring those vast fields whereby and wherethrough we can now God. You will at once then see that nine-tenths of the activities that are today going on throughout the world and which are engrossing our attention would fall into disuse. You will then be entitled to say that *varna* as we observe it today is a travesty of the *varna* that I have described to you. And so it undoubtedly is, but just as we do not hate truth because untruth parades itself as truth, but we sift untruth from truth and cling to the latter, so also we can destroy the distortion that passes as *varna* and purify the state to which the Hindu society has been reduced today.

Ashrama is a necessary corollary to what I have stated to you, and if *varna* today has become distorted, *ashrama* has altogether disappeared. *Ashrama* means the four stages in one's life, and I wish the students who have kindly presented their purses to me—the Arts and Science students and the Law College students—were able to assure me that they were living according to the laws of the first *ashrama* and that they were *brahmacharis* in thought, word and deed. The *brahmachayashrama* enjoins that only those who live the life of a *brahmachari*, at least up to 25 years, are entitled to enter upon the second *ashrama*, i.e., the *grihsthashrama*. And because the whole conception of Hinduism is to make man better than he is and draw him nearer to his Maker, the *rishis* set a limit even to the *grihsthashrama* stage and imposed on us the obligation of *vanaparastha* and *sannyasa*. But today you will vainly search throughout the

¹ Seers

length and breadth of India for a true *brahmachari*, for a true *grihastha*, not to talk of a *vanaprastha* and a *sannyasi*. We may, in our elongated wisdom, laugh at this scheme of life, if we wish to. But I have no doubt whatsoever that this is the secret of the great success of Hinduism. The Hindu civilization has survived the Egyptian, the Assyrian and the Babylonian. The Christian is but two thousand years old. The Islamic is but of yesterday. Great as both these are they are still in my humble opinion in the making. Christian Europe is not at all Christian, but is groping, and so in my opinion is Islam still groping for its great secret, and there is today a competition, healthy as also extremely unhealthy and ugly, between these three great religions. As years go by, the conviction is daily growing upon me that *varna* is the law of man's being and therefore as necessary for Christianity and Islam as it has been necessary for Hinduism and has been its saving. I refuse, therefore, to believe that *varnashrama* has been the curse of Hinduism, as it is the fashion nowadays in the South on the part of some Hindus to say. But that does not mean that you and I may tolerate for one moment or be gentle towards the hideous travesty of *varnashrama* that we see about us today. There is nothing in common between *varnashrama* and caste. Caste, if you will, is undoubtedly a drag upon Hindu progress, and untouchability is, as I have already called it or described it, an excrescence upon *varnashrama*. It is a weedy growth fit only to be weeded out, as we weed out the weeds that we see growing in wheat fields or rice fields. In this conception of *varna*, there is absolutely no idea of superiority and inferiority. If I again interpret the Hindu spirit rightly, all life is absolutely equal and one. It is therefore an arrogant assumption on the part of the Brahmin when he says : "I am superior to the other three *varnas*." That is not what the Brahmins of old said. They commanded homage not because they claimed superiority, but because they claimed the right of service through and through without the slightest expectation of a reward. The priests, who today arrogate to themselves the function of the Brahmin and distort religion, are no custodians of Hinduism or Brahminism. Consciously or unconsciously they are laying the axe at the root of the very tree on which they are sitting, and when they tell you that Shastras enjoin untouchability and when they talk of pollution distance, I have no hesitation in saying that they are belying their creed and that they are misinterpreting the spirit of Hinduism. You will now perhaps understand why it is absolutely necessary for you Hindus who are

here and listening to me to energize yourselves and rid yourselves of this curse. You should take pride in leading the way of reform, belonging as you do to an ancient Hindu State. So far as I can read the atmosphere around you here, the moment is certainly propitious for you if you will sincerely and energetically undertake this reform.

Young India, 20-10-1927

144. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

October 10, 1927

CHI. MIRA,

I have your letter. Yes, I am satisfied with two letters per week from you. I should be satisfied with even one from you per week, as soon as I became free from all anxiety about you. I am that very nearly now. And so I too have dropped off writing daily to you.

Continue to discuss your plans with Krishnadas, Surendra, Chhotelal and others. Ask them to speak out their minds. You may appoint additional warders. Do not omit to go to Bhansali. He has taken a seven days' fast. This I had consented to long ago. I know that your presence soothes him.

Yes, you will come to Orissa if all goes well here as well as there. You have to keep fit.

I am writing to Mr. Smith about some books to be sent to you.

I met the Resident here yesterday. The first question he asked me was whether you were with me and then he spoke to me about your brother-in-law having replaced him whilst he was on leave. I told him you were with me for a few days in Chettinad.

I am finding the hair question somewhat difficult myself. The thing is good in itself, I have no doubt. I am not sure about its advisability. But I shall not think more about it. Let the women there give their final decision. Why does Mani oppose the removal? Let there be no haste over it. I wonder what Lady Slade will say about it? I would like you to discuss the proposal with her too. I know how keenly interested she is in everything about you.

You know that Maganlal has a fine collection of dairy books. You should look through some of them.

Love,

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 5286. Courtesy: Mirabehn

145. LETTER TO HORACE G. ALEXANDER

ON TOUR,
October 10, 1927

DEAR FRIEND,

I have been keeping your letter in front of me all these days. As your time for going to the Ashram, Sabarmati, is now nearing according to your letter, I write this to say how welcome you would be at the Ashram. But I regret to inform you that I shall not be there to receive you personally. I am just now touring in the south in connection with the message of the spinning-wheel and shall be so doing till the middle of November after which I shall be going to Orissa. I do not expect to be in the Ashram before the beginning of January.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

HORACE G. ALEXANDER, ESQ.
C/O J. S. HOYLAND, ESQ.
HOLYROAD
NAGPUR

From a photostat: G.N. 1404

146. LETTER TO CHHAGANLAL JOSHI

TRIVANDRUM,
October 10, 1927

You need not despair. I know that you are awake and struggling. From my own experience I know that it is extremely difficult to remain unaffected by desire towards one's wife and, therefore, feel sympathy for you. You two will not, however, succeed in overcoming lustful desire towards each other till you give up being together alone, begin to sleep in different rooms and, if necessary, live completely away from each other for some time. You have not told me how far your wife co-operates with you. If you have her co-operation, your way is easy; otherwise, it is difficult. You must succeed in this struggle. And be sure that as your heart grows softer you will have increasing control over your desire. To submit to desire requires hardness of heart. He whose heart is filled exclusively by compassion for others has no moment free to give to lustful thought. That is why I have often said that a pure *brahmachari* will never yield to anger. The

instances to the contrary which we come across in the Shastras are of men who had no experience of real *brahmacharya* and observed it only in its physical aspect. If you reflect more deeply, you, too, will realize the truth of this statement.

All who feel concerned about my fast should give up their fear. Surely, I have not undertaken the fast because of Devdas. Their fear is the result of excessive attachment to me and of ignorance. I never undertake a fast led away by the impulse of the moment. When I do fast, it is for my own purification and peace of mind. A fast, instead of being regarded as a cause for concern, should be welcomed as a warning. A person who is sincere in his striving does not fear the watchfulness of his parents or friends, but welcomes it rather. People should look at my fasts in that light. I admit that the weapon of fast is often abused. For a votary of truth, however, fasts undertaken after due deliberation are extremely useful. I have no doubt about this in my mind. Do we not know that best things are liable to the worst abuse? Can people with a bad reputation deceive others as much as people looked upon as good have often done?

[From Gujarati]

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

147. LETTER TO MAGANLAL GANDHI

[About *October 10, 1927*]¹

CHI. MAGANLAL,

I have both your letters. I see there is an irreconcilable difference of opinion regarding X² in the Ashram itself. I would no more trouble you about this affair. I have been writing something to Chhaganlal Joshi. Having done this I shall observe silence for some time now and shall try to reopen this chapter in the month of January when I reach the Ashram. I still have my doubts. Innocent people do not commit suicide. X's letters to me make me suspicious. You know well that he was connected with the Jagannath incident. I did not succeed in subduing this rebellion on the part of X. I have, therefore, been harbouring a suspicion. I have a letter from Ramdas telling me about the reasons for his suspicion. These are not strong enough but

¹ From the references to errors in the dairy accounts and to X's disappearance from the Ashram

² Names not reproduced

the fact remains that Ramdas had his own suspicions. I think it horrid for X to have gone away without informing anyone. I don't think he is hiding himself anywhere. If this was the case, I would be relieved from a great misery. Because at the moment X as well as X and X whom I regard as my son and daughters are victims of my suspicion.

I do not need rectification of the dairy accounts. I want a co-ordinated report from both of you. The assurance you gave me at Bangalore is enough for me. But Narandas wrote to me there were 21 mistakes pertaining to figures and they pointed to the loss the dairy suffered. I do not say you are slow of improvement. My only concern was that if our mistake was such as would misrepresent the results, we should issue a clarification. Please therefore discuss the figures with Narandas and let me know the actual result.

I have your third letter, in which you ask me to go over there. As regards my health Mahadev has written [to you] yesterday. I have no complaint. What can we say about the Press? In case anything happens to me you shall certainly get a wire from someone.

I am quite anxious to go over there. That is the place for me whether the atmosphere is healthy or unhealthy; particularly since it is unhealthy. Where can I run away from that unhealthy atmosphere? I am myself to blame the most for the unhealthy atmosphere prevailing there, for I have never stayed there for any length of time. So I do not have to be persuaded to go there. I have got stuck here, because I must not leave my work here unfinished and we should, I think, get work out of the body as long as we can. I, therefore, expect to be there by the beginning of January.

“but never say die.”¹

“Never take a defeat even at the cost of your life.”

Or,

“The way to Him is known to the valiant, it is not for the coward.”

Or,

“Having become unattached to happiness and unhappiness, loss and gain, victory and defeat, you engage yourself in battle. In this way

¹ This and the subsequent quotations are presumably intended to encourage the addressee.

no sin will come to you.”¹

“It is only right to be strict with ourselves and magnanimous towards our opponents.”

From the Gujarati original : C.W. 7768. Courtesy: Radhabehn Choudhri

148. LETTER TO ASHRAM WOMEN

Aso Vad 1 [October 11, 1927]²

DEAR SISTERS,

It appears my last letter has caused a good deal of commotion among you. That is perhaps why I have not as yet heard from you. I am glad of the commotion. I shall not feel satisfied if your relations with one another are merely on the basis of formal courtesy; nor should you be satisfied with it either. It should not be our desire just to get on together anyhow. We must become one in heart. We should not deceive ourselves or others, or the world. So what- ever is working in our hearts must be brought out into the open. Once the heart is thoroughly purified, it will take long for it to become impure again. But if any impurity is allowed to remain in the heart, even good thoughts will get sullied, just as water poured into a dirty vessel gets sullied. If we begin by being suspicious of someone, we end by suspecting everything he does.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3670

149. LETTER TO DEVCHAND PAREKH

[October 11, 1927]³

BHAISHRI DEVCHANDBHAI,

I have your letter. Shri Amritlal Thakkar believes that the Conference⁴ will not be held now. As you know, the one for this year could not be held. I feel that the Conference should now be given a new direction. In my present state of mind, I cannot fully associate

¹ *Bhagavad Gita*, II. 38

² The year is inferred from the reference to the strained relations among the Ashram women, *vide* “Letter to Ashram Women”, 26-9-1927.

³ From the postmark

⁴ Kathiawar Political Conference

myself with its work; in fact I am afraid that I am likely to prove a bitter dose. Is it not, therefore, better to lay a new foundation and build afresh?

Blessings from
BAPU

ITINERARY

16-17 Coimbatore
18 Pollachi
19 Tiruppur
20 Gobichettipalayam
21 Erode
22 Salem
23-24 Tiruchengode
25 Calicut
26-31 Mangalore
Up to November 19, Ceylon

BHAISHRI DEVCHANDBHAI PAREKH
BARRISTER, JETPUR

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 5692

150. LETTER TO GANGABEHN JHAVERI

Aso Vad I [October 11, 1927]¹

CHI. GANGABEHN JHAVERI,

I have your letter. I forgot to write about the books altogether. You may read Manilal Nabhubhai's translation of *Shad-darshan Samuchchaya* if you can follow it. I am recommending it not for its language but so that you will learn to understand complex thoughts. You must also read Mansukhram's *Astodaya*. Some select articles by Navalram as well as the articles by Anandshankarbhai also should be read. Also Mahadev's translation of Morley's famous work. Many more books can be suggested. But it will take you several months to go through even this much. Even I found some portions of the *Shad-*

¹ The year has been inferred from the contents. *Aso Vad I* in 1927 corresponded to this date.

darshan Samuchchaya difficult to grasp. You must study some comprehensive work on grammar. Bhai Narahari will be better able to guide you because he has made a special study of Gujarati and is still continuing it.

I do not think you will need any special teacher. You are certainly capable of reading by yourself. Whenever you cannot get the meaning yourself you can consult anyone who is available there. There is Ramniklal, there is Valjibhai.

What you have written about the feuds among the women is correct. But what amity is found at present is only a matter of courtesy. I have explained this in my letter to the women.¹ Hence I shall not write anything more here.

Keep in touch with Mirabehn. First, to give her warmth and, secondly, to get warmth from her. We have no other unmarried woman who has grown as much over the years.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3123

151. SPEECH AT QUILON²

October 11, 1927

Untouchability poisons Hinduism as a drop of arsenic poisons milk. Knowing the quality of milk, and the use of milk and knowing the quality of arsenic, we should be impatient with the man sitting near a pitcher of milk and trying to remove arsenic grain by grain, and we should throw the whole pitcher overboard. Even so do I as a Hindu feel that the curse of untouchability is rendering the milk of Hinduism altogether poisoned and impure. I feel therefore that patience in a matter of this character is not a virtue. It is impossible to restrain ourselves. Patience with evil is really trifling with evil and with ourselves. I have therefore not hesitated to say that the State of Travancore should lead in the matter of the reform and blot out the evil at a single stroke. But I know also that it was not possible even for a Hindu State to do away with this evil, unless it was backed and actively backed by its Hindu population. And so my appeal must be mostly to you rather than to the head of the State; and to every Hindu in this meeting I wish to make a definite personal appeal. You and I

¹ *Vide* the preceding item.

² Published under the title "Message to Travancore"

have long neglected our duty to the so-called untouchables and unapproachables, and to this extent you and I have been false representatives of Hinduism. I ask you without the slightest hesitation summarily to reject the advance of every person who comes to you in defence of untouchability. Remember that in this age whatever one man or group of men and women do does not remain secret for any length of time, and we are daily being weighed and found wanting so long as we nurse untouchability in our bosom. You must remember that all the great religions of the world are at the present time in the melting pot. Let us not ostrich-like hide our faces and ignore the danger that lies at the back of us. I have not a shadow of doubt that in the great turmoil now taking place either untouchability has to die or Hinduism has to disappear. But I do know that Hinduism is not dying, is not going to die because I see untouchability is a corpse struggling with its last breath to hold on for a little while.

Young India, 20-10-1927

152. LETTER TO C. F. ANDREWS

ON TOUR,
October 12, 1927

MY DEAR CHARLIE,

I have the two letters promised by you and the letter containing your reply to Nadkarni. The reply will be duly published.¹

I am anxious to know what you thought of the Spinning Essay and what you said to the Viceroy.²

I do hope that your having sent in Sir Visvesvarayya's name will not be considered too late.

I hope you received my letter about Pragji and Medh. I had your telegram about Orissa.

I do not mind your spending twelve annas to tell me when your hand is completely restored.

With love,

MOHAN

From a photostat : G.N. 2622

¹ *Vide* "The Use of Tractors", *Young India*, 3-11-1927.

² For Gandhiji's earlier letter on the subject, *vide* "Letter to C. F. Andrews", 1-10-1927.

153. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, ALLEPPEY

October 12, 1927

MR. CHAIRMAN AND FRIENDS,

I thank you for your addresses as also the several purses that have been presented to me on behalf of *Daridranarayana*. As I stated at Nagercoil, immediately on my entering the Travancore border, I found myself immersed in studying and assisting at a solution of the untouchability question. And on this the last day of my all-too-brief tour in Travancore for the purpose, I propose to devote the best part of my address to the same question. I wish indeed that I had more time at my disposal so that I could have stayed here longer and studied the question still better and given what assistance I could on the spot.

Being somewhat of an expert on this question, I feel that I could, however humbly it may be, render assistance both to the State and the people in arriving at a just solution. I am glad, as well as thankful, to be able to say that from Her Highness the Maharani Regent down to the officials of the State, they have received my remarks in the same spirit as I tendered. I could entertain no doubt whatsoever in connection with the *avarna* friends. For I regard myself as an untouchable amongst untouchables and I have not hesitated to call myself in several meetings a Nayadi. Probably some of you even do not know what a Nayadi is. To the eternal disgrace of the modern Hindu, Nayadi is the being who occupies the lowest state even amongst the so-called untouchables. His very sight is supposed to defile the *savarna* Hindus. So he is not only relegated to the gutter as we call it, but he is not permitted to present himself to the *savarna* Hindu. I had the painful duty of seeing some specimens of Nayadis when I was passing through the bazaars—I wonder if it was Cochin or Trichur. And I assure you that if I had the time at my disposal, if I had no other irons in the fire and if I had the courage, I would leave the haunts of the *savarnas* and give myself the pleasure of living in the midst of these unseeables, the Nayadis. That is a penance all too small for the great crime that we Hindus have committed against a portion of humanity and are continuing. But I flatter myself with the belief, or I deceive myself into the belief, that by not living in the midst of the Nayadis, I am doing a greater penance because of my

experiencing mentally the tortures that I feel by a sense of the great sin that has burdened Hinduism and Hindus today. I say with a full sense of my responsibility as a sane and sanatani¹ Hindu, as I call myself, that we Hindus will have to answer before God and man for this great sin if we do not wake up betimes and wipe it from our midst.²

I had a very long discussion with many of the Ezhuva leaders this afternoon, and I tell you that if I was not told that they were Ezhavas I should not have known them to be such, nor could I see the slightest distinction between them and those who call themselves *savarnas*. Their pecuniary position is any day better than of many of the *savarnas*. Their educational qualifications leave nothing to be desired, and their personal cleanliness appeared to be infinitely superior to that of many Brahmins and others whom I have seen during my travels from one end of the country to the other. And so when I faced these friends and read their address, I hung my Hindu head in shame, that these friends were considered untouchable and unfit to walk along some of the public roads in Travancore, and that these were the friends whose presence in our temples would defile the temple ground, and that these were the men who could not send their sons and daughters to at least some of the Government schools although they were as much taxpayers as the tallest in this assembly. For let it be remembered that as against these inhuman disabilities, they are not excused from paying the tax in the same measure that *savarnas* pay to the State. This then is in my opinion a cause to which it is the duty of many Hindus who feel for their religion to dedicate their lives, and I do hope that Her Highness the Maharani Regent, enlightened as she is, will not rest content until this disgrace is removed from Travancore, and from all the talks I had with Her Highness, with the Dewan, and the Commissioner of Police, and last but not least, the Devaswam Commissioner, I am leaving Travancore in the hope that at least the roads question will be solved to the satisfaction of all concerned, and it is in that fervent hope that I have not hesitated to advise the deputation today to suspend satyagraha, and I am glad to be able to say to this meeting that this deputation were kind enough to listen to my advice and suspend satyagraha

¹ Orthodox

² What follows is from "Message to Travancore", published in *Young India*, 20-10-1927.

whilst this question was being satisfactorily settled. God forbid that there should be any disappointment with reference to the hope that I carry with me. But I have told the friends that if the redress that is their due is not given in time, and if after they have exhausted all preliminary proposals they fail in getting relief, it will not only be open to them, but it will be their bounden duty, to resort to satyagraha in order to win what is their right. . . .

Let me reiterate to you the implications of the hope I am taking with me. Flimsy in one respect though I consider what is called the Vykom settlement to be, in other respects and from another point of view it is a settlement honourable alike to the State and the *avarna* Hindus. It is a settlement which I consider to be the bedrock of freedom. I call it a bedrock of freedom because the settlement is a document between the people and the State constituting a big step in the direction of liberty in one respect at least. But so far as the *avarna* Hindus are concerned it is in no sense a final settlement, it was the minimum that they permitted themselves to be satisfied with at the time and for the Government never to recede from. Government by that settlement erected for themselves a platform to make further advances from. Its interpretation therefore must be always in favour of the *avarna* Hindus. Nor can it ever be interpreted to curtail the liberties of non-Hindus. Applying this principle to the present trouble at Tiruvarppu it is not possible for Government to curtail any substantial right of Christians and other non-Hindus who have been using the roads there. It is therefore their bounden duty to throw these roads open to *avarna* Hindus, and any difficulty that there may be in the way of the roads being thrown open, it is for the Government to get over, and not for the *avarna* Hindus to accommodate the Government over. Similar though not precisely the same is the case now pending in connection with the roads round the Suchindram temple, and I am hoping that in the very near future the State will overcome all difficulties there may be in giving the relief I have suggested.

Subject to this I have given my advice to the Ezhuva friends to suspend their activities, and I venture to hope that in the circumstances the order the Government have thought it necessary to serve on Sjt. Madhavan will be withdrawn without delay. I think the order at least now wholly unnecessary, as also is the general order prohibiting the

holding of meetings within a certain radius of Tiruvarppu.¹

MR. T. K. MADHAVAN: Mahatmaji, I am asked not to speak in the whole of the Kottayam district.

I made a mistake. The order prevents him from speaking in the whole of Kottayam. I think that in the circumstances I have mentioned the order is wholly unnecessary. And so is another general order prohibiting the holding of meetings within that radius.

One word to these *avarna* Hindu friends. I share to the full extent their grief. And if I could convince myself or somebody else could convince me, that by forfeiting my life today, I would secure the fullest charter of liberty to them, I should do so this very instant. But till that conviction is forced upon me, I content to live and work for this precious freedom. I therefore ask them to remember that whilst it is open to us to become impatient whenever we want to remove a gross abuse, it is necessary for us to hold ourselves in patience. Progress is absolutely assured whenever there is at the back of it truthfulness, self-sacrifice and an unalterable determination. The pages of history, which are open to anybody who cares to read them, show that those who have worked for reforms have worked away in the fullest disregard of consequences, but believing that work is its own reward and that it ensures the result which is hoped for. I therefore ask them to work in the spirit of the teaching of the *Bhagavad Gita*. It teaches us that it is given to mankind to work, work and work, but not to control the results. And with this unalterable promise given in that divine book, there is no occasion whatsoever to lose hope or to become madly impatient. Let them also understand that today throughout the length and breadth of India, not one Hindu like myself is working in the same cause, but there are many Hindus, brilliant men, tried servants of India and tried workers known to the whole of the nation, they are also working to the best of their ability to the same cause. I have not a shadow of doubt that in the very near future, we shall all find that this untouchability which is a horrible nightmare is a thing of the past.

One word to the *savarna* Hindus. I have hitherto said what is the duty of the State and what is the duty of the *avarna* Hindus. But the duty of the *savarnas* is not less great; if anything, it is much greater. A State after all reflects the opinion of its subjects. The crime of

¹ What follows is from *The Hindu*, 15-10-1927.

untouchability is a crime committed by *savarna* Hindus. The penance therefore is due by them. And it is the duty of the *savarna* Hindus to help the *avarna* Hindus in every conceivable manner. If they will but extend their active sympathy to this cause and bestir themselves and worry the Government they will find that it is totally unnecessary for the *avarna* Hindus to resort to the terrible ordeal of self-suffering which satyagraha means. If they will take the credit for achieving this reform in Travancore, they should not wait till the cup of bitterness is full up to the brim and forces the *avarna* Hindus into a position which it will be our disgrace to put them in.

I come to another important subject before I come to khadi which has really brought me to Travancore this time. I wish to refer to the cursed drink habit. Let those who are addicted to this vicious habit understand that it is a habit which dehumanizes man. He who is under the influence of drink knows no distinction between wife and sister. Some of the greatest crimes in history have been committed by men under the influence of drink. I have myself had the pain of witnessing in South Africa many a man, otherwise considered to be the most respectable, wallowing in the gutters under the influence of drink. It is the duty of the sober people of Travancore to compel the Government to do away with this *abkari*¹ revenue. I hold it to be an immoral source of revenue. It is really your duty to agitate till the drink evil is abolished from this land. Let not this land of beauty, with which Nature has surrounded it, stink with the curse of drink. And if you realize, as Hindus, Christians or Mussalmans, the essential oneness of man and regard your neighbours as your own step-brothers and sisters, it is your duty to go into the midst of those who are given to the habit of drink and by gentle persuasion wean them from it. I hold total prohibition as an absolute necessity because so long as the temptation is put in the way of the person given to the drink habit, no amount of persuasion would keep him away from this habit. The movement therefore amongst those who are given to the habit and with the State go side by side.

It should not be necessary now for me to take up much of your time over the message of the spinning-wheel. Your purses are an earnest of your faith in khadi. But if you have convinced yourselves that your duty towards the poorest of the millions is discharged sufficiently by your having flung a few rupees in my face, you are

¹ Excise duty

sadly mistaken. I should not be able to use the purses that I have been receiving throughout the tour and they would be an unbearable burden to me, if you refuse to wear khadi for the manufacture of which through the sacred hands of the toiling millions I propose to work. I regard these gifts of yours therefore as your promise henceforth to use khadi for your household and use nothing else. You should also endeavour to organize the villages of Travancore through the spinning-wheel. In order to create the spinning atmosphere throughout the land, it is necessary for us all to spin by way of sacrifice and example. It is necessary also for the intelligent people to become experts in spinning if we are to organize the villages through the spinning-wheel. I was pleased to hear in Trivandrum that the State had already voted a certain sum for the introduction of the spinning-wheel in State schools. Inasmuch as the women of Travancore are dressed in spotlessly white clothing, Travancore is really the easiest place in India where khadi can become easily popular. Let me add one more reason why you should clothe yourselves from khadi made in Travancore. When you agitate for total prohibition you will have the argument flung in your face that the *abkari* revenue, which I understand amounts to over twenty lakhs of rupees, has got to be somehow or other found if the children of Travancore are to be educated. If forty lakhs of people of Travancore were to be clothed in khadi manufactured in Travancore itself, I assure you that you will be saving four times forty lakhs of rupees per year out of khadi. Study intelligently the economics of khadi and you will find that this replacing of *abkari* revenue

I hope that all these three things that I have suggested to you, and on which I have spoken to you, will abide with you after I have gone. I pray to God that He will give you the wisdom to understand my word and the power to act up to it.

The Hindu, 15-10-1927 and *Young India*, 20-10-1927

154. NOTES

TRUE EDUCATION

Professor Malkani sends the following wire from Ahmedabad:

Proceeding Bombay meet Sir Purushottamdas. Help from Central Fund urgently needed. Vallabhbai promised support. Kripalani Vidyapith volunteers going Sind.

Sir M. Visvesvarayya is reported to have spoken as follows at the opening of the All-India Swadeshi Bazaar and Industrial Exhibition at

Poona on the 3rd instant.

If my voice can have any influence with the universities, I would beg them, so long as our present economic inefficiency continues, to restrict admissions to literary and theoretical courses and induce the student population to covet degrees in agriculture, engineering, technology and commerce.

Whilst Sir M. Visvesvarayya has emphasized one grave defect of our present education which places exclusive emphasis on literary merit, I would add a graver defect in that students are made to think that whilst they are pursuing their literary studies, they may not do acts of service at the sacrifice of their studies, be it ever so small or temporary. They will lose nothing and gain much if they would suspend their education, literary or industrial, in order to do relief work, such as is being done by some of them in Gujarat. The end of all education should surely be service, and if a student gets an opportunity of rendering service even whilst he is studying, he should consider it as a rare opportunity and treat it not really as a suspension of his education but rather its complement. I therefore heartily welcome the idea of the students of the Gujarat National College extending their works of service beyond the confines of Gujarat. I remarked only the other day that we must not become narrowly provincial. Sind is not so well organized for producing an army of relief workers as Gujarat is. It is therefore expected of Gujarat to send volunteers to Sind or any other province wherever their services can be utilized. And after all, Gujarat in general and Gujarat national students in particular owe a debt to Sind in that she sent in the course of the Non-co-operation movement three distinguished educationists—Acharya Gidwani, Acharya Kripalani and Adhyapak¹ Malkani. If therefore Gujarat students will go to Sind, they will do nothing but a simple duty.

HELP FROM KANGRI GURUKUL

The response received by Gujarat to the appeal for help in her distress has been most gratifying. Among the early helpers were two institutions that I should like to mention, Gurukul Kangri and Shantiniketan, and knowing how their gifts will delight my heart they even sent telegrams to me advising me of their donations, which were sent directly to Sjt. Vallabhbai Patel. Acharya Ramdevji sends me

¹ Teacher

particulars regarding the four instalments sent on behalf of the Gurukul. He tells me that even more may be expected, and adds:

The teachers have paid a percentage from their salaries, the *brahmacharis* have saved money by washing their own clothes instead of having them washed by dhobis as is done usually, and the *brahmacharinis* of the girls' school have saved money by giving up ghee and milk for a time.

Let those in Gujarat who are receiving relief and who are distributing relief remember what self-denial lies behind some of the donations received. The present self-denial of the Gurukul boys and girls reminds me of the practice of self-denial first inaugurated by the late Swami Shraddhanandji when he was Governor of the Gurukul, for helping our countrymen in South Africa during satyagraha there. Such acts of self-sacrifice are therefore what one would always expect on given occasions from boys and girls brought up in the traditions of the Gurukul.

ABOUT COW-PROTECTION PRIZE ESSAY

The reader will recall that in *Young India* of October 29, 1925, I published a note offering on behalf of Sjt. Revashanker Jagjivan Jhaveri a prize of Rs. 1,000 for the best essay on cow-protection in English, Sanskrit or Hindi, and similarly in *Navajivan* for December 13, 1925 a prize of Rs. 251 was announced on behalf of Sjt. Tulsidas Khimji for the best essay on the same subject in Gujarati. These were the terms:

The essay should be delivered at Satyagraha Ashram, Sabarmati, to the Secretary, All-India Cow-Protection Association, on or before March 31st 1926. (The time was since extended to 31st May). . . . It should deal with the origin, meaning and implications of cow-protection quoting texts in support. It should contain an examination of the Shastras and find whether there is any prohibition in the Shastras for conducting dairies and tanneries by association interested in cow-protection. It should trace the history of cow-protection in India and methods adopted to achieve it from time to time. It should contain statistics giving the number of cattle in India and examine the question of pasture land and the effect of Government policy about pasture land in India and suggest remedy to be adopted for securing cow-protection.

Acharya Anandashankar Bapubhai Dhruva, Sjt. Chintamani Vinayak Vaidya and Sjt. Valji Govindji Desai were appointed judges. I regret to announce that the judges have independently of one another come to the conclusion that no essay has been found to be worthy of the prize in terms of its conditions. I am sorry for the delay

in announcing the result of the competition for causes into which it is unnecessary to go. But I would ask those who have studied the question and who are interested in this important question to attempt an essay worthy of this subject. Let those who competed for the prize try again. The judges inform me that some competitors do give evidence of industry but they are of opinion that even these have not given to the subject the diligent research that it deserves and that hardly any has kept himself to the conditions laid down winning the prize.

Whilst the prize should be deemed as withdrawn, if any worthy attempt is made and the essays sent to the secretary, I do not anticipate any difficulty in inducing the judges to examine the essays or the donors to give the prizes if any essay is found worthy. If enough competitors send their names and qualifications in advance of their intention to make or remake the attempts, I hope to be able to reannounce the prizes, the conditions of course being the same as before.

Young India, 13-10-1927

155. HINDU LAW AND MYSORE

Sjt. Bhashyam Aiyengar of Bangalore writes :

The principles of Hindu Law as at present administered are antiquated and opposed to our sense of equity and justice. I shall give a few instances¹ :

The prominence I have given to the foregoing need not imply that I endorse every one of the reforms suggested by the writer. That some of them require immediate attention I have no doubt. Nor have I any doubt that all of them demand serious consideration from those who would rid Hindu society of its anachronisms.

In pre-British days there was no such thing as rigid Hindu Law governing the lives of millions. The body of regulations known as *smritis* were indicative rather than inflexible codes of conduct. They never had the validity of law such as is known to modern lawyers. The observance of the restraints of the *smritis* was enforced more by social than legal sanctions. The *smritis* were, as is evident from the self-contradictory verses to be found in them, continually passing, like ourselves, through evolutionary changes, and were adapted to the new

¹ The correspondent mentioned ten injunctions relating to inheritance, widow remarriage, inter-caste marriage, adoption, etc., and suggested that the Mysore State should undertake the desired reforms through legislation.

discoveries that were being made in social science. Wise kings were free to procure new inter-pretations to suit new conditions. Hindu religion or Hindu Shastras never had the changeless and unchanging character that is now being sought to be given to them. No doubt in those days there were kings and their councillors who had the wisdom and the authority required to command the respect and allegiance of society. But now the custom has grown up of thinking that *smritis* and everything that goes by the name of Shastras is absolutely unchangeable. The verses which we find to be unworkable or altogether repugnant to our moral sense, we conveniently ignore. This very unsatisfactory state of things has to be, some day or other and somehow, changed if Hindu society is to become a progressive unit in human evolution. The British rulers cannot make these changes because of their different religion and their different ideal. Their ideal is to sustain their commercial supremacy and to sacrifice every other interest, moral or otherwise, for the attainment of that ideal. Unless therefore Hindu public opinion clearly demands it, and it can be made without any injury to their ideal, no drastic change in our customs or so-called laws will be attempted or countenanced by them. And it is difficult to focus Hindu public opinion on identical points in a vast territory like British India covering many schools of thought and law. And such public opinion as there is naturally and necessarily preoccupied with the struggle for political freedom. A State like Mysore however has no such limitations or preoccupations. In my humble opinion, it is its duty to anticipate British India in the matter of removing the anachronisms in the Hindu Law and the like. Mysore State is large and important enough to attempt such changes. It has become a progressively constitutional monarchy. It has a Legislative Assembly representative enough to initiate social changes. It seems already to have passed a resolution asking for the appointment of a committee to consider what changes, if any, are necessary in the Hindu Law. And if a strong committee representing orthodox as well as progressive Hindu opinion is appointed, its recommendations must prove useful and pave the way towards making the necessary changes. I do not know the rules of the Mysore Assembly governing the constitution of such committees, but there is little doubt that they are elastic enough to admit of appointing or co-opting members from outside the Mysore State. Anyway Sjt. Bhashyam Aiyengar has shown that a revision of the Hindu Law is absolutely necessary in several cases. No State is better fitted than Mysore for initiating the belated reform.

Young India, 13-10-1927

156. NEILL STATUE SATYAGRAHA¹

In accordance with the promise made by the volunteers connected with this movement, they have sent me papers giving the particulars I had asked for. From them it appears that during the six weeks that the struggle had been on when the papers were sent to me, thirty volunteers had courted imprisonment. Of these 29 are Hindus and one Mussalman, one lady aged 35 and one girl aged 9, her daughter. Of these thirty, two apologized and got themselves released. The apology of a few, if it does not become infectious, does not matter. 'Blacklegs' will be found in every struggle. The men who have gone to jail are not noted men. This is no loss, rather it is a gain in a satyagraha struggle which requires no prestige save that of truth, and no strength save that of self-suffering which comes only from an immovable faith in one's cause and from a completely non-violent spirit.

The volunteers must not be impatient. Impatience is a phase of violence. A satyagrahi has nothing to do with victory. He is sure of it, but he has also to know that it comes from God. His is but to suffer.

The papers give me an account of income and expenditure. The income is given in detail and amounts to Rs. 228-2-6. The expenditure amounting to Rs. 228-2-6 [*sic*] is made up as follows : Meals, etc., Rs. 71-7-9, conveyance Rs. 53-2-6, notices for meetings, etc., Rs. 39-4-0, establishment and postal charges Rs. 21-8-9, lights at meetings Rs. 22-8-0. I am not satisfied with these expenses. I have asked for more details. But subject to correction, I would warn the satyagrahis against spending much on meals, conveyances and lights. I know that my own meetings are not free from extravagance in these items. The Congress work too is not unopen to the charge of over-expenditure. But it is better to illustrate what I mean by what happens to me, the self-styled representative of *Daridranarayana*. Where six oranges will do, sixty are brought; where one car will do, six are ready, and where a hurricane lantern will serve the purpose, incandescent burners are produced. Let the satyagrahis understand that they have to use every pice they get as a miser uses his hoards. I suggest their getting a local man of note to take charge of their moneys and a philanthropic auditor their accounts free of charge. Strictest honesty and care are necessary in the handling of public funds. This is an

¹ *Vide* also "The Neill Statue and Non-violence", 29-9-1927.

indispensable condition of growth of a healthy public life.

The third paper I have before me is their appeal to the public. A satyagrahi's appeal must contain moderate language. The appeal before me though unexceptionable admits of improvement. "Not only Neill but all of his nefarious breed must go", is a sentence that mars the appeal. General Neill is no more. What we have to deal with is the statue and not even the statue as such. We seek to destroy the principle for which the statue stands. We wish to injure no man. And we wish to gain our object by enlisting public opinion not excluding English opinion in our favour by self-suffering. Here there is no room for the language of anger and hate.

So much for the volunteers.

The public owe a duty to them. They may not go to jail but they can supervise, control and guide and help the movement in many ways. Agitation for the removal of the statue is agitation for the removal of but a symptom of a grave disease. And while the removal of the statue will not cure the disease it will alleviate the agony and point the way to reaching the disease itself. It is also often possible to reach a deep-seated disease by dealing with some of its symptoms. So long therefore as the satyagrahi volunteers fight the battle in a clean manner and strictly in accordance with the conditions applicable to satyagraha, they deserve public support and sympathy.

Young India, 13-10-1927

157. KHADI SAMPLES

The technical department of the A.I.S.A. reports to me that all the khadi depots have not furnished it with the particulars required with their samples, and some have not even sent their samples. Out of nearly 40 names of places from which samples have been received, nearly 20 have failed to comply with the requirements. I therefore give them below :

Each piece should be four square yards with a ticket bearing the following particulars :

1. Width in inches;
2. Length of piece in yards;
3. Number of strands in warp per inch, and count of yarn used for warp and number of strands in weft per inch;

4. Weight in *tolas* per square yard;
5. Cost price per yard; and
6. Sale price per yard.

Khadi depots should realize that these particulars are required as much for their benefit as for that of the khadi movement in general. It is impossible for the technical department to make generalizations, draw deductions, and guide khadi producers, unless it is assisted in its research work by the various khadi depots and other workers. Nor is it possible to evolve discipline unless there is quick response made to the head office by all subordinate organizations, and it will be impossible to enable the All-India Spinners' Association to realize its aim unless there is voluntary discipline evolved at all points of its activity.

Young India, 13-10-1927

158. SPEECH AT ERNAKULAM

October 13, 1927

FRIENDS,

I thank you for the address and your purses. It will be interesting for you to know how these purses stand; nearly Rs. 500 from the students and Rs. 400 and odd from the public. I hope that the public assembled here will understand the meaning of the difference and make it up before they leave this meeting. I am also glad to inform you that on behalf of the Darbar I received this morning a cheque for Rs. 500 from the Dewan Sahib, and I also received through the Consort of His Highness the Maharaja notes valued at Rs. 300 on behalf of the Maharaja's daughter Shrimati Vilasini Devi who is at present in England. What is more, I have also received a parcel containing fairly well-spun yarn, spun by her sister Shrimati Ratnam a portion of which was spun by the Consort of the Maharaja herself. Evidently, this fact that khadi is favoured by the Maharaja's household is responsible for the favourable atmosphere that I see in Ernakulam. And I was also exceedingly pleased to learn that Christians, Hindus, Jews and we have some Jewish friends among us, and even some of the Mahommedans are favouring khadi. But I was at the same time grieved to learn that there is not the same enthusiasm and love for khadi that existed here more than two years ago. That is in my opinion wrong. We have been often charged with developing a sudden enthusiasm which vanishes suddenly. I should

like you to belie that charge. And in my humble opinion khadi is preeminently an activity in which sustained effort and sustained enthusiasm is necessary.

And if I could but induce you to understand the tremendous importance that khadi has to millions of starving people living in 700,000 villages in the whole of India, you will understand that enthusiasm and effort are not only necessary but indispensable. Remember the fact that it is calculated to serve not the city dwellers but millions of starving people living in the villages.

He regarded it as auspicious that instead of being assembled in front of what promises to become one of the finest harbours of southern India, they were assembled there in the college grounds.

I propose to take this even as an earnest of the fact that the boys and girls studying in this institution are not going to neglect their starving brothers and sisters. And I know that if I can but harness the energy of the student-world, there will be no difficulty in making khadi universal in India and solving the distressful poverty of the masses. Let the boys and girls, and men and women of this beautiful State, remember that the education that the boys and girls received in big cities is got only from the toiling masses in the country. And let me just tell you that I have spread for your edification a little, very little khadi exhibition in front of me.

Here Mahatmaji exhibited some fine hand-woven and hand-spun saris and purses, some of them containing delicate embroidery. He explained that the saris were produced in Andhra Desh, and that they were such as the most fastidious lady could use. The exhibits supported, he said, not only the spinners who received from one anna to two annas a day, but also those who earned Rs. 1 to Rs. 2 per day. The embroidery, he explained, was done in Bombay where a class of nearly 150 girls was being conducted under the supervision of some rich Hindu and Parsi ladies of Bombay for whom it was a labour of love. The exhibits, he said, were very much superior to the flimsy calico that many of them wore and which the ladies of Travancore and Cochin always delighted to wear. The exhibits before him were packed with the spirit of patriotism and a religious sentiment. And he or she who wore the khadi of which he had spoken placed himself or herself directly in touch with the poorest of his or her countrymen.

I want you, therefore, to consider this khadi work as a privilege and not merely as a pastime. I want the boys and girls of this institution to take to it as a gospel of love, to work in the villages.

I wish to convey my thanks to His Highness the Maharaja for

extending to me the hospitality of the State, as also for the gift that he has sent me. The only return that I can make for this kindness is to give frankly my view of some of the things that exist in this State. It is not open for a man like me to render service in any other manner. I wish therefore to refer to the same problem that engaged my attention in Travancore because I find that the problem taxes you, the people of Cochin, in the same manner as it taxes the people of Travancore. You have untouchability, unapproachability and unseeability. And it is a matter of deep grief to me to find this in a State ruled by a Hindu ruler. That untouchability should exist in these Hindu States is most regrettable.

A VOICE: It is worse here than in Travancore.

When darkness reigns supreme, where is the use of fixing the extent of that darkness? I confess that there has been great amelioration in recent years. I recognize that there is a desire on the part of His Highness and his officers to accelerate the rate of this progress. It gave me great joy to find that one member of the royal household was engaged in conducting an institution for our Pulaya brethren. But it is impossible for me to be satisfied with this progress. And I would like His Highness the Maharaja and his officials to share with me the impatience over these age-long wrongs. As a ruler of the State His Highness may measure the progress with a little foot-rule and claim satisfaction. But as a custodian of the fair name of Hindu religion, he must not perpetuate these wrong which are corroding Hinduism. In fair weather a captain would be justified in sailing along at a moderate pace and yet hope that in proper time he would reach his port. But this barque of Hinduism is sailing essentially in cloudy and stormy weather. In common with the other religions of the world it is also in the melting pot. World eyes are centred on India's millions. They are eagerly waiting to see how we Hindus solve this question. And in this stormy weather it is suicidal to be satisfied with this slow progress. If we want to overtake the storm that is about to burst we must make the boldest effort to sail full steam ahead. It is impossible to wait and weigh in golden scale the sentiments and superstitions of the priests who have been the custodians of these for centuries. In the face of this evil which everyone seems to recognize, it is not possible to wait till these prejudices and superstitions vanish.

Mahatma Gandhi then referred to the practice in Cochin of keeping out the members of untouchable castes when the deities of temples are taken in procession

along public roads as if the untouchables had not paid for the upkeep of those roads. He said :

I was both amused and pained when turning over your *Hansard*¹. I found a defence of the practice on the ground of immemorial custom. Having been at one time a lawyer in the enjoyment of some sort of practice I brushed up my memory as to what immemorial custom was. And I have a faint recollection of having read a case in which a judge is reported to have made a cutting remark that immemorial custom should never be pleaded to commit a crime against humanity. These immemorial customs have wrung with time [*sic*]. Sin is as old as Adam himself, but I have not read a single book which says that because sin has been handed down to us from generation to generation is ought not to be interfered with. I find several other titbits in the same proceedings over the right of using the public roads. I find that the Fort is not open to *avarnas* because a temple is located there and there are schools situated near temples not open to children of all classes.

He had the pleasure of meeting two Ezhuva friends the same afternoon and he had a long discussion with them over this question. He could understand and appreciate the depth of feeling with which they spoke to him over the question. The arguments advanced were the same here, in British India, and in South Africa and they were filled with righteous indignation over the existing state of things. He said that it was the duty of the *savarna* Hindus to move the State to do elementary justice to the untouchables.

Mahatma Gandhi then referred to the institution of *Devadasis* which reflected no credit upon them. He did not know whether any sanctity was pleaded for this abominable custom.

A VOICE : There are no indigenous *Devadasis*. They are all 'imported' ones.

MAHATMAJI : Imported wines are also prohibited. (Laughter.)

Mahatmaji said that if there was one *Devadasi* in the whole State that was a disgrace to every young man.

Continuing, Mahatma Gandhi referred to the drink-trade and observed that drink was an immoral source of revenue. If they were fired by the real national or social spirit it was their own fault that there was a single drunkard among them. There were two methods of removing drunkenness, viz, (1) to carry on a ceaseless agitation for total prohibition in the State, and (2) to carry on a reform movement among those who had fallen a prey to the drink habit. Mere total prohibition was not adequate nor

¹ The reference is to the reports of the proceedings of the Cochin Legislative Council.

could mere reform movement succeed without total prohibition. The two must go side by side and no sacrifice of revenue should be considered too great. As regards revenue he said that if they could only manufacture all the khadi they required in the State itself, they could increase the earnings of the people by four times.

He concluded with an appeal to those assembled to remember his message. He wished that some of them should dedicate themselves to the khadi work or to any of the other items of work mentioned by him all of which were extremely important. He appealed to those present to contribute their mite to the Khadi Fund and volunteers who went round met with a very generous response. Mahatmaji said that ladies in Travancore and Cochin were not heavily ornamented; but he confessed, amidst roars of laughter, that he was a little jealous even of the little jewellery they wore. There were several people in the country literally starving so that they had no justification to adorn themselves with jewellery. Real beauty consisted, he said, in the purity of character, not in ornamentation.

The Hindu, 15-10-1927

159. LETTER TO W. H. PITT

ON THE TRAIN,
TRICHUR,
October 14, 1927

DEAR MR. PITT¹,

I was glad to receive your note and glad too that you over-slept yourself. The morning visit would have been an unnecessary formality. Please tell Mrs. Pitt how glad I was to be able to shake hands with her.

You must have seen my speech at Alleppey. Messrs Madhavan and friends have suspended their activity and will not take any forward step without consultation with me and of course I shall do nothing without first putting myself in touch with you. May I look forward to you to set the matters at Tiruvarppu and Suchindram right? If you want me to write to the Devaswam Commissioner I would gladly do so.

It will be a graceful act now to withdraw the orders of prohibition.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a microfilm : S.N. 14623

¹ Commissioner of Police, Trivandrum

160. SPEECH AT TRICHUR

October 14, 1927

MR. CHAIRMAN AND FRIENDS,

I thank you for the address and for several purses that have been presented to me. I was looking forward to the pleasure of this, my second visit to Trichur and whilst I am not able to say that all my expectations of Trichur have been realized, I have seen sufficient during the day, in the course of my talks with several friends and my visit to several institutions, to fill me with hope. It gave me very great joy and pleasure to find that in these school of Trichur, spinning had become very popular. I saw hundreds of boys and girls spinning either on the wheels or on the *takli*. But as I have said and written, this spinning must be taken with religious faith and in a service and scientific spirit. I had the pleasure of seeing the girls spinning in the institution conducted by Mrs. Swans, whose enthusiasm for the institution captivated me. But even here I miss the scientific handling of spinning. It would not matter in the slightest degree, if spinning was not at all introduced until raw cotton was available. But it is in danger of becoming very unpopular even at the hands of enthusiasts who, not knowing the technique of spinning, may mishandle it. I remember my own school days when geometry was extremely unpopular amongst the boys. The reason of its unpopularity was not in the boys but in the teacher himself. Not having a full grasp of the subject, he rattled away for all he was worth at the propositions which he drew up on the board before the boys who never followed him. Now, personally I consider that geometry is a most fascinating study and when I understood its fascination, I really could never appreciate objections that boys very often raised to that subject. But you will find if you were to go deep into such things that wherever a particular subject is uninteresting or could not be popular among the boys and girls, it is not the fault of the subject or of the boys and girls, but essentially of the teachers. But geometry which is a great science and which has thousands of votaries throughout the world is, and was in my time, in no danger of suffering harm if it happened to be handled by some idiotic teachers. But unfortunately for the toiling millions of India, hand-spinning is even now struggling for its very existence. Many economists brought up in the European school even laugh at me when I advocate spinning as a

scientific thing and a sign of beauty and art. And believing as they do, in the system of competition reigning supreme in this world as the final word on economics, they believe that spinning is merely a toy of mine, varily to be destroyed as soon as I retire from this world. You will, therefore, appreciate my great anxiety for this child, struggling for its very existence and you will forgive me if I warn you against mishandling this thing for me and I say this after a careful study of the subject since 1908; spinning is not one of the many handicrafts that boys and girls may learn or our people may take to, but it is in my opinion the central fact of the life of the starving masses of India. I have come to the conclusion that no solution of the deep and everdeepening poverty of the masses is possible without giving hand-spinning a central place in any scheme. Whilst, therefore, I tender my congratulations to the State for countenancing hand-spinning in the manner I have seen and whilst I congratulate the boys and girls, whom I saw today, as well as the teachers, on their having taken up spinning, I must beseech the State authorities and the teachers and the boys and girls and all those who have the welfare of the State in their keeping to give this subject their very serious attention.

We are making an experiment in Ahmedabad on nearly 1,000 boys belonging to the so-called untouchables and I can claim that we have attained a very fair measure of success. The experiment is being tried under the personal supervision and care of Shrimati Anasuyabai, herself brought up in a millionaire family, but I told you that in order to achieve the measure of success that has been achieved in connection with that experiment, many experts have to give many a precious hour to its development and it was there that we came to the final conclusion that in the schools it would be wrong to introduce the spinning-wheel, but that it would be necessary to confine hand-spinning to the *takli* only. I will not go through the different processes that we tried there but I will simply give you the results of that experiment. All the boys' *taklis* are carefully examined; every boy has well-carded sliver. The hands of the boys are often likely to get moist as they are handling the *takli*; they are instructed to see to it that their hands do not get moist. Every boy's yarn is carefully kept and tested for its twines and counts and strength, and we saw that in an incredibly short space of time, the results came up to 50 per cent higher. It is also found that the average speed too increased because of this testing. Every teacher was encouraged to learn this art by offering a small increment in his salary, if he would learn it, so that

now every teacher is a good carder, and a good spinner. The testing continues up to this day. The result is altogether encouraging during the time this experiment has been made. And we have found also by actual experience that the quantity that we so received from those boys is four or five times greater than the quantity that we were able to get from the spinning-wheels. Not because a boy sitting at the spinning-wheel would draw less than from the *takli*, but because a simultaneous spinning by all the boys at the spinning-wheel was found to be a physical impossibility. Spinning-wheels had a knack of going out of order in the hands of these mischievous youngsters times without number, and let me give out the secret to you that we found too that the boys and girls would remain boys and girls and would be mischievous. And there was no iron discipline in them not to do a little harmless mischief. But we understood that that mischief was a sign of overflowing energy. We, therefore, try to harness that mischief for this work and now we find these boys, if we were to go there, smiling away and singing away whilst they are spinning gladly and religiously for half an hour every day, and our goal is to enable every boy to spin enough during the year and more for his own requirements and something for the requirements of his family. Figures have been worked out, that if one half of the population of India were to give a portion only of its leisure hours from day to day, the whole of India can have more than enough of yarn for her requirements.

But I must not engage this great meeting with the details of hand-spinning. I simply ask you, seeing that you are conducting this very great experiment, to handle it very seriously, scientifically and skilfully. But if you are really serious and not playing at it and if you have the taste for hand-spinning that I have, or even some measure of the taste that I have, then I suggest to you that it is absolutely necessary for you to train the boys and their parents to wear khadi. You will understand me when I say that the reality of the experiment disappears immediately you acknowledge that the boys do not wear khadi. It therefore did give me pain to see, although I was scanning most carefully, that very few boys and girls that I saw at these institutions were wearing khadi. But the boys and girls are not likely to wear khadi nor are the parents likely to encourage their boys and girls unless the teachers themselves set the example. I know some very good parents, themselves inveterate smokers, trying to teach their children not to smoke. You may easily imagine the disastrous results

of this teaching on the part of these parents. The boys simply laugh at the teaching and smoke secretly. If, therefore, you really think as you seem to from all your talks, and all the addresses that I have received, that you have faith in the efficiency of hand-spinning for solving to a very large extent the problem of the poverty of the masses, it behoves you seriously to adopt khadi yourselves, and fill the atmosphere with the khadi spirit and the the spinning-wheel.

In this State where boys and girls are receiving so much education and boys and girls derived from all classes, Christians and Hindus and all others, who are in this State, it is really a very easy thing for you to make this beautiful State self-supporting, so far as its clothing requirements are concerned. We have it on the authority of Sir Dinshaw Wachha that the average clothing requirements of India are nearly 13 yards per year per head. I, therefore, calculate Rs. 4 for that quantity of cloth per head. You have to multiply the number of the population in the State and find out for yourselves what a vast sum you can save from year to year in the aggregate and that brings me immediately to the cursed drink problem.

It is amazing to me that where there is spread so much education, where there are so many educational institutions, where there are so many Chistians and Hindus, that this great evil is tolerated. If we really thought, as we should think, all the people in this land as our own blood brothers and sisters, this evil should not be allowed to exist for one single day. Can we contemplate with equanimity the terrible fact that our children depend for their education upon this immoral source of revenue to a large extent? I have heard from so many mouths the financial difficulty mentioned in achieving this reform of necessary total prohibition. I have presented you with a ready-made solution for that difficulty in the shape of the spinning-wheel. It is really the bounden duty of all of you to eradicate this evil by every legitimate means at your disposal, and if I talk in this strain of the drink evil, what am I to say about the evil of untouchability which appears in this fair land in the extreme and odious forms of unapproachability and unseeability?

I know that the State had done a great deal to help these so-called untouchables. I was delighted to find that a member of the royal house was looking after a Pulaya colony and that this colony received a substantial grant from the public purse. It was a joy to me to see the Secretary of the Y. M .C. A. in a neighbouring place who is

in charge of such a colony and which receives State aid to the extent of Rs. 300 or Rs. 400 a year. And I was equally delighted to understand from the Director of Public Instruction, with whom I had the pleasure of a heart-to-heart conversation, that nearly 50 per cent of the boys learning in the schools of this State belong to this untouchable class.¹ I thank you for the correction. I understand now that it is not 50 per cent of the boys who are studying in the schools, but 50 per cent [of boys] of the school-going age amongst the depressed or the untouchable classes. Even this statement, whilst not as satisfactory as the one I had made to you, is also satisfactory. And I would like to say, in parenthesis, that seeing that these boys, and girls also I expect, who have been so long neglected require special handling, and as they study in the ordinary schools of the State and very rightly so, the educational syllabus itself needs, in my humble opinion, overhauling. But whilst I tender my congratulations to the State and the people of this State upon the progress that has been made in this direction, I must confess to you my feeling that great as this progress may appear otherwise, with regard to the enormity of the evil that has spread into Hinduism even this progress is still insignificant. If we are to do enough penance for the sin we have committed before man and God, in treating a class of human beings, as good as ourselves, as untouchables, the rate of progress has to be much quicker than it has been. I had a graphic but painful description given to me by the Secretary of the Y.M.C.A. of the condition of the Nayadis. I must not take up your time by describing in detail the painful conversation. Probably you know much better than I do the wrong upon wrong that we Hindus have heaped upon our own kith and kin that wrong can only be somewhat washed away when we rise in indignation against ourselves and wipe out the evil. I know the argument that is advanced always in favour of patience and advanced also in favour of prejudices, however sinful that prejudice may be, but having seen the condition of these classes from one end of India to the other, I can only say to you that by talking in this fashion of philosophers about the progress and conditions of progress, we are getting tired. For me this question of removal of untouchability to the core is the acid test of Hinduism. Though the problem is capable of yielding either way enormous political and economic results, it is to

¹ Here Rao Saheb Mathai, the Director, intervened briefly to correct Gandhiji's statistics.

me preeminently a religious question. It is a question of self-purification for the *savarna* Hindus. I, therefore, feel that we are not doing our duty by these people when we talk of doing these things in easy stages. I would not be satisfied unless every one of us became a missionary for taking a ray of hope and comfort into the desolate homes of these people. You will, therefore, understand why I feel deeply hurt to find that on certain occasions when these people pass through public streets they are pushed away, that schools which may be in the precincts of temples are not open to the children of this class. I myself find it impossible to reconcile the prohibition orders against the entry of these men and women into our temples. To me it is not a place fit to live in where we have the impertinence to consider that God Himself can be defiled by the approach of His own creature. That temple from which a single human being is debarred, because of his being born in a particular sect, for me, ceases to be a temple itself. I, therefore, appeal to every one of you with all the earnestness and force at my command to do your duty valiantly by the people.

There is another evil also, which is corrupting society. I have a printed open letter, signed by some friends whose names I do not know and some I could not decipher, in connection with the *Devadasi* institution. Enclosed with that letter was a petition addressed to His Highness the Maharaja. This petition makes a painful reading. It describes how a few *Devadasis*, having been, in the first instance, brought into the State, have now developed into a growing institution. I do not know how far the statements made in that petition can be borne out, but all I know is that it is a well-reasoned petition from responsible quarters. It bears *prima facie* marks of credibility and that petition contains the statement that girls born of *Devadasis* and girls also adopted from other classes by *Devadasis* are actually, in the name of God, dedicated for purposes too awful to contemplate. The petition mentions a whole class of people who disgrace themselves and India by making use for unlawful purposes of these girls of tender age. I do not know how far it is possible for you to contradict the statements made in this petition. But it is for you, those who are leaders of public opinion in this State, those who are capable of moulding public opinion in this State, to study this petition. You will find that there is substantial ground for the complaints made in this petition. You should try to deal with this problem in a serious manner. The petition alludes with gratitude, and I think, very properly too, to the resolution of the Mysore Government taken as early as 1909, in order to deal

with this great evil which was in existence there at that time. I venture to think that it is a resolution worth copying by this State. It gives elementary justice to these unfortunate sisters of ours. You may also know perhaps that there is at the present moment a Bill being promoted by the lady member of the Madras Legislative Council on the same models, somewhat after the style of the Mysore resolution. The petition gives convincing reasons for the adoption of that resolution. I commend to all of you a serious study of this delicate question.

And that brings me to the students, both boys and girls, from whom I received the address and whom I saw this afternoon. It has been a matter of the greatest joy and comfort to me to find that I possess the confidence of thousands of students throughout the length and breadth of this land and I assure you it is the daily prayer going out from the bottom of my heart to the Maker of us all, that He may make me worthy of that confidence. I wish that I had ample time at my disposal to open out my heart to the students, boys and girls at this meeting. I know that I may never see you again in this life by my heart is always with you.

I have always felt that our education is imperfect and incomplete in a variety of ways. You have yourselves, in your address expressed the same opinion and you have expressed the ideal hope that my having come in your midst would set matters right in the matter of education. I wish that there was warrant for that hope. The alteration of the educational scheme is very important and from one end of the country to the other it is a tremendous problem. I have often written on it and some of the students of mature age are probably familiar with my views. I assume that they have not undergone the slightest change and with the march of time the intensity of my convictions has grown. But that is a solution which I dare not even discuss with you at the present moment. It rests with the educationists of the country and more than that it rests really on so many circumstances over which not even they have any control. And in speaking, therefore, to the boys and girls I have adopted a method which is easier of adoption and which is capable of being adopted by them without the slightest change in the present curriculum. Rightly or wrongly it is claimed by all educationists that education should be only secular.

Personally I have always dissented emphatically from that view but things being as they are it is necessary at some stage or other or

the students to receive some religious consolation, some religious instruction. Unfortunately the homes of those parents who send their boys to these schools have practically broken up. They have neither the fitness nor the willingness to give this necessary instruction to their boys and girls. That religious and moral atmosphere which we hope and believe at one time surrounded every home and hamlet in India is today conspicuous by its absence, but thank God that students need not feel helpless. If you have as every one of us ought to have the religious and moral impulse within us, it is possible to give ourselves the necessary training.

Let us understand what is meant by religious and moral instruction. In other words, it is nothing but character-building and every boy and every girl knows instinctively what character is. It needs no parental instruction, no priestly instruction to tell you that there is a God. Without that indispensable faith, in my opinion, building of character is an impossibility. It is the foundation of character. So I say to the boys and girls, "Never lose faith in God therefore in yourselves and remember that if you allow refuge to a single evil thought, a single sinful thought, you know at once that you lose that faith." Untruthfulness, uncharitableness and violence—all those things are strangers absolutely to that faith. Remember that we have in this world no enemy greater than ourselves. The *Bhagavad Gita* proclaims it in almost every verse. If I was to sum up the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount I find the same answer; my reading of the Koran has led me to the same irresistible conclusion. No one can harm us so much as we can harm ourselves. If you are, therefore, brave boys and brave girls you will fight desperately and valiantly against the whole of this group of evil thoughts. No sinful act was ever done on this earth without the prompting of a sinful thought. You have therefore to exercise vigilance over every thought growing up in your breast. Many students, both boys and girls, have often asked me or told me that whilst they understand with their intelligence the cause of such remarks that I have just now made to you, they find it impossible in practice to control their thoughts and drive them away. Thus they give up the struggle and give way to despair. Except for perfect beings, surely evil thoughts will arise some time or other in every breast. Hence the necessity for incessant prayer to God to keep us from sin; that is one process which does not do harm. The other process is actually welcoming evil thoughts when they come. That is the most dangerous and harmful process and it is that process against which I

invite you to fight with all your might and if you think of what I am saying, you will immediately discover that this really is the easiest thing to do. For every one of us can make up our choice as to the guests that we are to invite or encourage in our own breast. We may not be able to help the onslaught of the enemy but it is given to every one of us to die in the attempt to repel the onslaught. I suggest to you to take this home with you and see whether you do not, day after day, become successful in this strife. And there is another thing also along this line which I want to tell you and it is this.

If we will not think of ourselves but think of those who are less fortunate when compared with ourselves we shall find that we have no leisure whatsoever for harbouring evil thoughts. Hence I have invited every boy and girl to set apart at least half an hour to think of the poor millions. I have asked you to regard yourselves as trustees for these millions of population. I have asked you to establish a living bond which binds yourselves with these and if you uphold this you will find that you are always occupied and are always not at home to receive these unwelcome visitors. I tell you from my own experience and the experience also of many of my comrades how this one thought of incessantly working for India's poor millions keeps me and them from all harm. That is the spiritual secret of the spinning-wheel, but I do not care if the spinning-wheel does not appeal to you. All I suggest to you is that you must establish a living bond between yourselves and these paupers and you will find immediately that you have laid this surest foundation for building up your character. May God help you to understand what I have told you, may He give you the power to act up to it.

The Hindu, 17-10-1927

161. CONVERSATION WITH DEPRESSED CLASSES' DEPUTATIONS

October 15, 1927

Mahatmaji insisted on receiving both the deputations¹ together, as by so doing the Cherumas and the Ezhuvas would be brought together in the same hall.

Mr. P. C. Gopalan explained the grievances of the Ezhuvas in not being allowed to pass through Agraharam streets.

¹ Of the Depressed Classes Mission led by C. Seshayya and the Ezhuvas led by T. M. Chamiappan, Sukumaran and P. C. Gopalan

Mahatmaji enquired whether the restriction remained only for the festival days or on all the days of the year. Mr. Gopalan answered the restriction remained throughout the year in the Agraharam roads. . . .

Regarding an enquiry from Mahatmaji Mr. C. Seshyaya informed him that the admission of the Depressed Classes into the ordinary schools was a pious hope which existed on paper only.

Mr. Raghava Menon informed Mahatmaji that on account of the various social disabilities heaped on the Ezhuvas by the higher castes, some of the Ezhuvas had gone over to Christianity and Islam. But a check has been placed on such defections from Hinduism by the efforts of the Arya Samaj who have obtained a ruling from the Madras High Court that on public streets vested in a municipality all members of the public have equal rights and that one section of the community cannot interdict another section from the lawful use of the public streets.

Mahatmaji opined that the same problem existed everywhere in Kerala and so public conscience must be aroused.

Mr. P. C. Gopalan wished to know from Mahatmaji that, since all religions are equal, the Ezhuvas wished to know if they could embrace other religions to obtain redress of their wrongs.

Mahatmaji said that they must not leave the Hindu religion but must fight the cause with all reasonable force. If only they knew the utility of Hinduism the persecution of the so-called higher castes was nothing.

Mr. Chamiappan informed Mahatmaji that the majority of the Ezhuvas did not want conversion to other faiths, excepting a few. Their lands were in the ownership of the higher castes and that was the reason they were afraid to fight.

Mahatmaji said that if all of them were of one mind and with discipline and courage, they could win their social freedom.

Mr. Chamiappan brought to the notice of Mahatmaji that Congressmen themselves were not helping them in the struggle, let alone the general public. . . .

Mahatmaji said certainly he would talk to the Congressmen on that, but whether they would accept his advice or not he could not say. He added that some were Congressmen only in name.

Mr. Seshayya stated that . . . the ambition of the Cherumas was not temple entry but only to pass along public roads.

MAHATMAJI: Why not temple entry also? The question was a difficult one all over Malabar.

Mr. P. C. Gopalan wanted to know if the Ezhuvas could put up a tough fight, by using violence, meaning assault for assault.

Mahatmaji deprecated violence. As for him he would not file a complaint in a

court, but the Ezhuvas, if they chose, could. There was the Hindu Maha Sabha to which body they could appeal. Violence would spoil their cause. Satyagraha was a complete substitute or violence.

Mr. Gopalan submitted to Mahatmaji that the salvation of his community either lay in conversion to other faiths or non-participation in the fight for swaraj. Mr. Gopalan wished to know if there was any hope of having a purified Hinduism.

MAHATMAJI: Oh yes. Otherwise I would not be a Hindu and could not live.

In reply to another question whether Ezhuvas could join the Arya Samaj or Brahma Samaj, Mahatmaji answered that they could do so if they wanted.

Then Mahatmaji enquired why a large number present there did not wear khadi. Mr. Chamiappan stated that Government was their only support for the moment in this social struggle and reminded him of the recent Government order against subscribing to the Khadi Fund and as such they did not wish to alienate that only support and sympathy. He appealed to Mahatma Gandhi to help them in their struggle.

Mahatma Gandhi promised to do his best. He informed his hearers that he was soon to lay aside khadi work to take up the solution of untouchability. He thanked them for having waited in deputations. He was just going to Sabari Ashram—where the removal of untouchability was going on—and thence on a visit to His Holiness Shri Shankaracharya of Kumbakonam Mutt, to have an interview, with a view to convert the Swamiji, if he could, to his view in the matter of the removal of untouchability.¹

The Hindu, 17-10-1927

162. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, PALGHAT

October 15, 1927

FRIENDS,

I thank you for your addresses and the several purses. As you are aware, this is not my first visit to Palghat. I have vivid recollections of your kindness when I was here last. I am glad that the Taluk Board is devoting some of its attention to the spinning-wheel. I hope you will organize spinning in all your schools in a scientific manner. I had occasion yesterday in Trichur to see a number, nearly four or five

¹*The Hindu* report adds: “Mahatmaji and party motored to the Nellichery village. Here he was met and received by Shri Shankaracharya of the Kamakoti Peetham, Kumbakonam Mutt. There was a heart-to-heart talk between the two great men. The interview lasted some 30 minutes and was strictly private.” For a report of the meeting between Gandhiji and the Shankracharya, *Vide* Appendix “Interview with Shri Shankaracharya of Kanchi”, February 12, 1948.

hundred, of boys and girls spinning. They belong to two high schools. Whilst I cannot say that the spinning was high-class spinning it was nevertheless an ennobling sight. But the pleasure of it was marred by the anomaly that the majority of the boys and girls, whilst they were spinning, were dressed in foreign cloth and not in khaddar. I hope that the same anomaly does not exist in your schools. It is necessary to understand the implications of the spinning-wheel. All the spinning that our boys and girls may do or even the millions of somewhat starved villagers may do, will be, you can easily realize, of no avail whatsoever, if we do not make use of the khadi to be produced from the yarn so spun. If then you really endorse, as you seem to do, the message of the spinning-wheel, I would respectfully ask you to be true to it and adopt khadi for yourselves. Wherever I have gone throughout this tour I have found a hearty endorsement of this message; but a lip profession accompanied even by a solid purse will not relieve the distress of famishing millions in our 7,00,000 villages, unless we are prepared to wear khadi.

You have in your midst here an ashram, called Sabari Ashram. It was from this Sabari Ashram that I received this beautiful piece of khadi, where yarn is spun by the little boys whom I saw there and woven also by their little hands. I call it beautiful not because it is as fine or as soft as the calico that you are wearing. But I call it beautiful because of the history and the romance behind it. This piece of khadi puts you in touch at once with those boys and with the millions of villagers. It is even beautiful because of the significance that attaches to it. If a corpse was painted by the greatest painter and presented to us as a specimen of beautiful art, we would not touch it but we would shrink with horror from it. We fall down at the feet of our own mothers irrespective of whether her form is considered beautiful or not. For every one of us, I hope, there is no woman more beautiful than our own mother. The beauty comes then from the association which it carries with it. At the end of the meeting I shall test the sense of your beauty by offering this cloth to you. You may have seen, some of you at least, in the papers that in Chettinad, for a small piece of khadi, which was in reality exceedingly finer than this coarse khadi, I got Rs. 1,000 because it was prepared locally by a self-sacrificing artist and because it was woven also in the same place Devakottah.

I have a purse from the Viswabharati Reading Room that is being conducted in Palghat and a proposal has been received by me that I should formally declare open the khaddar depot which the

people associated with the Reading Room want me to open. I do so with great pleasure and I hope that it will receive the encouragement that it deserves from you all. I have got some khadi also from this depot which, if you can preserve the silence that prevails just now, at the end of the meeting it will be open for you to have. But pleasant though everything that I can say about khadi is to me, I must hasten to enter a subject which has been engrossing my attention throughout the Kerala tour.

I refer to the evil of untouchability known here in its extreme form, even of unapproachability and invisibility. It has been a matter always of deep grief to me whenever I have come to Karala to find that in a land so beautiful, almost unrivalled for its beauty in all India, there should be this untouchability in all its hideous forms. I had a long and serious discussion with a deputation from friends belonging to the Ezhuva and Cheruma communities. I offer no apology for not knowing these intricate sub-divisions. It is enough for me to know that this is a hydraheaded monster. I assure you it gives me no pleasure whatsoever to understand all these kinds of gradations in untouchability that are prevalent here. When I hear of all this graded untouchability I feel deeply humiliated and ashamed. To add to my grief I had today an ocular demonstration of a thing, which I shall not be able to easily forget.

As soon as I arrived in Palghat, I heard a shrill voice in the neighbourhood of the house where I have been accommodated. In my innocence I thought that as this was a business centre this was the sound of some labourers working in a factory in order to ease themselves of the burden of carrying heavy loads as I am used to in Ahmedabad and Bombay. Within an hour after we reached Palghat, Mr. C. Rajagopalachari came to me and asked me whether I was hearing any strange sounds. I told him, yes. And he straightway asked me whether I knew what it was. He told me that that was the voice of a Nayadi and he added that was the sign that a Nayadi at a distance was begging. I asked him how far he could be. On hearing that he was within a stone's throw I hastened out to see who this man could be who was making all that sound. Well, you all know where I could have found him. He was not walking along the road, but he was at some distance from the hedge that guarded the road. I asked him to come near and he came near but not at the roadside of the hedge and told me that he dared not come on the roadside. He added that he never walked along the roads of Palghat. The rest of the story of this

miserable case I don't need to recite to you.

The man certainly did not look starved; but that to me was no matter for compliment to the Hindus. It was to me a sign of contempt, of degraded conscience shown by flinging a handful of rice in the face of this man whom we refuse to recognize as a human being and as a blood-brother. In flinging rice in the face of these people in the manner we do on Saturdays and Wednesdays of the week, in my humble opinion, we not only degrade human beings but also we put a premium on begging. I don't think that the virtue of charity demands that we should give meals, or food or money to men who are able-bodied, who have got two strong arms and legs as this man has. When I asked this man whether he would take up some steady labour and could put by this profession of begging, he told me that he could not do so unless he had consulted his brethren. I leave it to you, everyone who has got intelligence enough, to work out the frightful results and consequences of this wrong. Some of the results of this kind of charity we are already suffering from in this poor country of ours. Two hours after this humiliating spectacle I had the pleasure of receiving the friends I had already referred to.

Some of them were as learned as the most learned amongst you. I could find no difference whatsoever between them and the tallest in this assembly and yet their addresses unfolded a tale of wrong which is enough to shame every one of us. They cannot go along some roads, public roads, although they are as much taxpayers as any of you, simply because they are classed as untouchables. Temple entry is an unthinkable thing. Some of them cannot walk along any road whatsoever and on the analogy of what the *savarna* Hindus have done, they have amongst themselves also, as I remarked before, gradations of untouchability. They appealed to me for help and I wish that it was in my power to give them the help that I should like to. For, as a Hindu I feel that I am a participator in the crime that we have done against them. I wish that I could convince the men and women who may be here that this is a terrible wrong we are doing to them, to ourselves and to our own faith. I wish I had the power to convince you that there is absolutely no warrant for such untouchability as we practise today in Hinduism. My whole Hindu soul rises in rebellion against this hideous wrong. I have searched our books in vain for any mention of Ezhuvas, Pulayas, Nayadis and what not. I have asked learned men here in Travancore and elsewhere in all humility to teach me how these men can be classed as untouchables and on what

authority. I tell you that there is absolutely no authority whatsoever for all these terrible deeds except that of custom. But nobody as yet had the hardihood to tell me that this immoral custom carried any religious sanction with it. If we were not too lazy to think out these problems for ourselves, if we had not surrendered our reason to superstition, we could remove this evil in the twinkling of an eye. I have found no warrant in Hinduism or in any religion or in any system of philosophy for the arrogation of superiority by one class of men over another. If we harbour this doctrine of inequality in our breast it ill becomes us to think of swaraj. We talk with our lips in a most learned manner of democratic institutions but in our heart of hearts we deny to others the elementary rights we propose with our lips. I ask all the learned men, all those who have the welfare of Hindus and Hinduism in their hearts to wake up betimes and deal a deathblow to this great demon. If you are nationalists and feel for the country and therefore feel for the lowest of our countrymen, go down to their haunts where the Nayadis and the Pulayas and all those men, miscalled untouchables, are living and give your whole life to their amelioration.

I was pained when these friends of the two deputations informed me that there were even some of the Congressmen who believed in untouchability and kept these men at a great distance. I should like to find that these men have been misinformed and that that charge cannot be sustained. But if there are any Congressmen who harbour untouchability in their hearts, as a Congressman expected to know something of the Congress creed and the Congress resolutions, I beg to inform you that such Congressmen should resign their membership. They should understand that the removal of untouchability is an integral part of the Swaraj Resolution that was taken up by the Congress at its first session under the new constitution. In my opinion that resolution has almost the sanctity of the Congress creed. To be true to the nation, to the Congress and to be true to ourselves, if we do not believe in the removal of untouchability it is open to us to challenge the Congress creed, to challenge that resolution or to move for its removal. You cannot be truthful if you harbour untouchability and still be a party to the resolution on untouchability. But I have put before you after all only a miserable, worldly view of a thing which does not admit of playing with. What does it matter whether you are a Congressman or no Congressmen? Is it not your duty—those who are Hindus—to give due consideration to

this great question and examine it in its religious significance? I regard the removal of this evil as really an acid test of Hinduism. In my own humble opinion the Brahmin-non-Brahmin question, the Hindu-Muslim question and so many other questions that afflict us today are but phases of this untouchability question.

If we, whom God has blessed with intelligence and privileges, would only understand that we are but servants of the lowest and poorest among our countrymen, all these questions that have arisen in our midst would disappear in a moment. It is impossible in the face of the great mass awakening that has taken place in this land, as all over the world, to sustain arrogance, insolence and superiority for one single moment.

I have turned myself inside out whether there can be any reasonable justification for all the wrongs from which these friends are suffering and I tell you I have not discovered a single justification. But I must not take up any more of your time. I only pray God that He may open the eyes of your understanding, that He may awaken your conscience and that He may bless you with power to go out into the midst of the people and bring them the solution and relief that they deserve.

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

The Hindu, 18-10-1927

163. SPEECH AT WOMEN'S MEETING, COIMBATORE

October 16, 1927

SISTERS,

If you don't stop that noise I can't talk to you. I thank you for the purse you have given me. There are only one or two things I want to talk to you. We all want *Ramarajya* in India. You can't get *Ramarajya* in India if you can't live like Sita. Sita was pure in heart and pure in body. I think and it is my opinion, that most of you, the vast majority of you, defile your body with foreign cloth. Not so did Sita Devi. Don't suppose for one moment that Sita Devi went in for or sent for foreign finery to decorate her body. On the contrary, we know that in Sita Devi's time, Sita Devi and all the women of India sat spinning and wore cloth woven by the men of India. And that was beautiful. There is enough in our ancient books to show that women

without exception span in those times with their own hands and that we made all the cloth we needed. The books tell us that in those days India's millions in villages and towns ate well and clothed themselves sufficiently. But you deck your bodies with foreign saris, while millions of our women are starving in our villages. I know that men, no less than women, are guilty of this. I know that Indian men initiated this habit of wearing foreign cloth. The fruit of this has been that men and women in the villages are daily becoming poorer and daily descending into deepening distress. Like Sita Devi, think day by day of the poor brothers and sisters of India. When you think of them I am sure that you will think it your duty to wear the khadi woven by their sacred hands. I will tell you another thing that Sita Devi did. She did not consider a single human being as untouchable. She and the great Rama willingly and gratefully accepted the services of Nishadaraja, who according to our false notions of today would be considered untouchable. Bharata, the great brother of Rama, embraced Nishadaraja warmly when Bharata observed that he had served Rama with devotion. You know Bharata, the king of *rishis* and sannyasis. Today we consider those who serve us, till our fields and clean our closets, as not fit to be touched by us. I tell you that it is not religion, but irreligion. And I wish that you should get rid of this stain of untouchability.

The third thing I want to talk to you about is *Devadasis*. Friends, I understand there are some of these sisters here. I consider the occupation of *Devadasis* to be immoral. They ought not to be found in that occupation. I see you have got your women's club or association. It is your first duty to look after these unfortunate sisters. If you band yourselves together and carry on an agitation in this matter, you can compel the men and women of Coimbatore into their duty in this regard.

You must take into your hands reforms of this character. You have heard the name of Dr. Muthulakshmi of Madras. She is your representative in the Madras Legislative Council. She is even its Deputy President. I had a long chat with her. Her view is, and others also think, that It is now high time to combat this serious evil of Hindu society. You here should do likewise.

There is another evil I should like to speak to you about. You give away your daughters in marriage before they can know what marriage can be. Do not get them married before they reach a ripe

age, at least before they attain the age of 16. I tell you that it is a sin to do so.

I have with me in Ahmedabad girls more than 16 years old and unmarried. They are as innocent as flowers in your home. They spend their time in doing many acts of service for society. They receive proper education there. They are not going to be married, unless they themselves desire it. Do not for one moment consider that this is not your work, but men's work. This is especially your work for the women. Wake up and work for the happiness of the girls. The men cannot do it and won't do it.

To realize the truth I have told you, you need not go to colleges or read a single line. You can easily understand all this. This is what I call human education, what all women can achieve without knowing a single letter of the alphabet.

Now I must tell you, I am not satisfied with your purse. I can tell you what your sisters, the ladies of other districts, did for the movement. Malabar girls do not wear much jewellery like yourselves. Heavy jewellery I see only in Tamil Nadu and Andhra Desha. Malabar ladies parted with even the single bracelets, rings, etc., they wore for the khadi movement. And it is my standing request to them not to molest their husbands or disturb their parents for fresh jewellery to replace the jewels donated. If you feel for your poor sisters and if you like to, I would ask you to surrender your jewels for their sake. Gifts must be absolutely voluntary and willingly given.

Remember that the beauty of a woman does not consist in the beauty of her clothes and jewellery but in the purity of her heart. Whether you give me your jewellery or not, is a minor matter. But I do want you to bear the truths, that I have just told you, in mind. And I tell you from my experience that the desire for wearing much jewellery does no good. Husbands often ask me to advise you to revise your notions of jewellery and finery. I am free to tell you that there are husbands who have assured me that the wives who came to be influenced by my teachings, themselves rejoiced for such influence.

May God, through you, bless our land.

The Hindu, 19-10-1927

164. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, COIMBATORE

October 16, 1927

I thank you all for the presents and addresses that you have given me. I am sure you do not want me to mention the names of the bodies who have presented the addresses or of the donors and their gifts. What is given for the sake of *Daridranarayana* needs no mention. I may inform you that I have read very carefully all the translations that have been given to me of the addresses or their originals.

I will take up first of all the municipal address. My sincere thanks are due to the Municipality for not only expressing their sentiments frankly, courteously and firmly but also for reminding me of the address which the municipality gave me when I paid my last visit to Coimbatore. Throughout my life I have gained more from my critic friends than my admirers, especially when the criticism was made in courteous and friendly language as the present one is. The first address I had the honour of receiving from this Municipality told me or rather questioned the utility of non-co-operation, especially regarding schools and public services. Many important, and some of them painful, events have happened since the birth of non-co-operation. I had two years of prayerful contemplation over the advice that I tendered the country for the first time in 1921. I have read and read with careful attention and open mind almost everything that has been written against non-co-operation and as a result of my observation I am able to inform you that not only have I not changed the views that I held in 1921 and that I expressed when I had the honour of meeting you last but have been confirmed more and more in those views. It is my humble opinion that, within the last two generations, our country has not gained as much as it has gained since the advent of non-violent non-co-operation. I entertain no doubt whatever as to the verdict of history over non-violent non-co-operation. It is also my certain belief that every student who left his school or college or every government servant who left what passes for public services has gained immeasurably and lost nothing by having done so. That public services in spite of non-co-operation have not been abandoned, that Government, schools have not been abandoned by our boys is no demonstration whatsoever of the failure of my doctrine, even as, because men and women are not all votaries of truth, truth cannot be challenged as to its efficacy or soundness; but I want to go a step

further and tell you that he who wished to study carefully and impartially current events will find ample testimony that several Government servants who left their jobs and several students who left their schools are giving a good account of themselves.

It is a small thing that millions of people rose to a man, as if by magic, one fine morning under the spell of non-co-operation? If co-operation is a duty I hold that non-co-operation also, under certain conditions, is equally a duty. I go further and contend that if this country of ours is to gain its freedom by non-violent means, there is no other means open but for them some day to take up non-co-operation. Believe me that if today I do not talk of non-violent non-co-operation it is not because my faith is not burning as brightly as ever but because as a practical man I do not find the atmosphere for working out that creed. I must not weary you with my arguments about my belief.

The present address of the Municipality in courteous but firm language enters a protest against the views that I have been expressing about varnashrama dharma. The signatories or framers of the address seem to regard varnashrama dharma as an unmitigated evil. I venture to reaffirm my belief that varnashrama dharma is not only not an unmitigated evil but it is one of the foundations on which Hinduism is built. In my humble opinion the framers of the address have mistaken the shadow for the substance. Instead of making, as I humbly believe, this serious blunder if they invited me to join them in a crusade against the travesty that passes for varnashrama dharma, they would have found me enrolling myself as a volunteer under their banners. I hold it as a low of our being and, whether we know such laws of our being or whether we do not, we have to obey them even as our forefathers obeyed the law of gravitation before it was discovered by a master mind. Nature's laws are inexorable. We may not disobey them and escape punishment. The conviction is daily forcing itself upon me that this India of ours and the rest of the world are suffering because of our breach of the law of varnashrama dharma. If Hinduism today seems to me to be in a fallen state it is not because of Varnashrama dharma but because of the wilful disobedience of that dharma. Varnashrama dharma defines man's mission on this earth. He is born day after day not to explore avenues for amassing riches and to explore different means of livelihood; on the contrary, man is born in order that he may utilize every atom of his energy for the purpose of knowing his Maker. It restricts him therefore for the

purpose of holding body and soul together to the occupation of his forefathers. That and nothing more or nothing less is varnashrama dharma and it is not possible nor desirable nor necessary that I should ignore that dharma because the majority of Hindus seem to deny it in their lives. Thus conceded, varnashrama dharma has nothing in common with castes as we know them today. That dharma therefore can never mean and has never tolerated untouchability. That dharma therefore has no idea of superiority or inferiority. Because many people, millions of people, take the name of God in vain and even insult God and man in the name of God Himself, shall we disown our God and find another name for Him? I therefore invite respectfully the framers of the address and the audience to join me in a crusade against the spectre of castes and the curse of untouchability and I promise that if you join me in this crusade you will find at the end of it that there is nothing to fight against in Hinduism. I have been preferfully studying the great non-Brahmin and Brahmin question which has been agitating so many able men in the South and I am daily driven to the conclusion that the question, in so far as it is a non-Brahmin question, is a phase of the battle against untouchability.

Let me then come to the address of the *Adi-Dravida* friends. Ever since my entry into Travancore this question has been engrossing my attention in some shape or another. To the *Adi-Dravida* friends I may give the assurance that all my attention is given to the solution of that question. I have been recently delighting myself in describing myself as a Nayadi and it is my regret that I have not had the courage to refuse the hospitality of Mr. R. K. Shanmugan Chettiar in his palatial house and go straight to the Nayadis and share their hospitality and live among them. But I wish to give this assurance to the *Adi-Dravida* friends that this curse of untouchability is fast going. It is true that the temple gates are not flung open to admit them. It is still too true that certain roads are barred against them. It is still too true that both untouchability and unseeability still exist in their hideous forms. But I also know that public opinion is daily gathering force against this insufferable evil and it is my conviction that much earlier than any of us imagine this evil is going to be blotted out of Hinduism.

There is, however, one telling paragraph in the address of the *Adi-Dravida* friends and the paragraph is so important that I should like to read it out to you.

The Government tempts our young men by locating liquor shops in or near our *cherries*—the living quarters of our community. If industrial institutions took the place of such shops and if social workers befriended us instead of *abkari* contractors, we have no doubt that our progress can be assured in a very short time. We therefore very earnestly appeal to you for help to organize industrial schools in or near our living quarters to save our community from ruin.

This paragraph gives us all food for reflection. To repeat what I said this afternoon, in spite of solid efforts put forth by so many members, the Government rejects the advice of the Municipality to close a few of the liquor shops within the limits of the Municipality. For me it is a first-class tragedy that such a simple proposition should have been shelved by the Government. I associate myself wholeheartedly with the paragraph I have just read out to you on behalf of the *Adi-Dravidas* and I wish you, the citizens of Coimbatore, will take up battle on behalf of all those who are given to the vice and rid your city of the curse of drink. I wish also that there would be some young men and women coming forward as volunteers to take the challenge of *Adi-Dravida* friends and start industrial schools for them instead of driving them to drink.

I now take up the Congress address. The Congress address invites me to take the lead again. Evidently they still have a lingering faith in the programme of 1920. Let them understand that I have never given up the lead. I am still wooing, but what shall I do if I do not find followers. But there is a better answer than I had given you. Let me tell you what I mean by leading. I made statements even before I went to jail that the only lead that could be given to the country by a man with non-violence as his creed is to pursue the constructive programme of the Congress. The most effective programme of the Congress is the message of the spinning-wheel and with the consent and permission of the Congress duly given to me, I am leading in that constructive programme as President of the All-India Spinners' Association. And the Spinners' Association is the creature of the Congress, a creature that works by dint of perseverance and systematic efforts to absorb the creator himself. Those who have real belief in the efficacy of non-violence for obtaining the freedom of their country cannot but believe in khaddar and put their shoulder to the wheel so that it may become universal in this country. They should talk of no other creed before this becomes an accomplished fact. If anyone asks me for a lead and ignores the lead I am really

giving, I really wonder whether the questioner has understood the implication of the struggle of non-violence. Remember that the Spinners' Association which is designed to serve 300 millions of people, including the poorest, invokes and requires the greatest administrative skill and the widest possible platform. Remember that it requires for its success on the part of the workers ceaseless watch, ceaseless perseverance, indomitable faith in the face of sneers, in the face of opposition, in the face of malicious misrepresentations. It requires, on the part of the workers, an amount of sacrifice, unexciting and sustained beyond compare and if God helps India to run an organization of this character and carry it to the remotest village, we can imagine that with that one thing accomplished very little will remain to be done to make this land free. I have a growing faith in the capacity of India to respond to these efforts and whether you share my views about non-co-operation, varanashrama dharma and many other things in which I dabble, I ask you all to work for *Daridranarayana*.

Last but not the least to be mentioned are our own unfortunate sisters, the *Devadasis*. I understand that they are to be found even in your midst. Some of them were present at the women's meeting this afternoon. It reflects no credit upon our religion or on our country. A Bill is pending before the Legislative Council sponsored by Dr. Muthula-kshmi Ammal. It has been framed, so far as I can see, on the Mysore model. That enlightened State dealt with this question so long ago as 1909. I suggest two things before this is done. Let these young men or old men who are making unlawful use of these dear sisters refrain from making them the object of their lust. Secondly, let everyone join in the crusade against the existence of this system, whether it is by legislation or by creating an active enlightened public opinion against this evil.

You will pardon me if I have tired you out. All your addresses are serious and I felt that if I was to be courteous I should return as full an answer as I could possibly make. I ask you to consider the things that I have told you and to act according to whatever would commend itself.

The Hindu, 18-10-1927

165. LETTER TO ANASUYABEHN SARABHAI

Silence Day [On or before *October 17, 1927*]¹

CHI. ANASUYABEHN,

The time for my departure for Ceylon is approaching. When I was in Bangalore I had expressed the wish that you should accompany me on the tour. If you can free yourself from there do come. You will see that island and do khadi work among the women there. I would even like to take you with me on the Travancore tour but perhaps that will be too much. You will hardly come across another area in the country as beautiful as Travancore. I will leave for Ceylon by steamer from Mangalore on November 1 or October 31. So you will have to come to Mangalore. If Shankerlal can extricate himself from the work, he too may come along. I hope by then the work on workers' houses will be over.

I have not so far got the handkerchief you have sent.

Blessings from

BAPU

From the Gujarati original: S.N. 32789

166. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

October 17, 1927

CHI. MIRA,

I have received all your letters. During the last week after the Monday letter I have not written to you so far as I can remember. It has been a perfect rush in Travancore and Malabar and an anxious time, all of my own making and seeking. I therefore needed rest. As soon as I mentioned the fact, Rajagopalachari cancelled three places and also his own Ashram where I was eager to go. But as I want to be fresh for Ceylon where I have promised myself a strenuous time I have reconciled myself to the cancellation. Needless to say there is nothing wrong with me. The rest is a mere precautionary measure. On 21st I move to Tiruppur which I leave on 24th night. The rest of the programme stands. The places to visit near Mangalore I do not know as yet. So you will write your letters to Mangalore to reach between 26 and 31st.

There should be no hurry about the hair cutting. I want you to

¹As suggested by the contents

carry the ladies with you. I have much hope of your becoming a powerful influence among them. You must not therefore unnecessarily become a strange creature to them. They will appreciate the consideration you will show to their feelings even in a matter purely personal to yourself.

Your suggestions about the guest house were admirable. You may anticipate my approval in all such matters so long as you can accomplish them without a jar. We should tolerate any amount of carelessness and apparent dirt if insistence on their removal should mean discord. Dangerous insanitation should be put down, discord or no discord. You know what I mean.

Come near as many of the inmates as possible. And if you rule out the odd corners in Chhotelal, it will be a great blessing. I want you, in order that you can drink in the Ashram spirit and atmosphere, not to have any rigid time-table. Keep several unmortgaged hours so that you may be free to handle what comes your way.

Yes, do insist on scrupulous cleanliness in the dairy. But here again you will not sacrifice good fellowship for securing the highest standard. What has gone on so long without apparently doing harm may be endured a little while.

It was good you went to the Ambalals. Mr. Ambalal is so good, in spite of his obstinacy and often ignorant and harsh judgments.

No hard and fast vows beyond those that are necessary for the protection [of] the fundamentals need be now taken so long as I am in your midst. You will use your judgment as to what may be necessary either for your own growth or of the society in which you are living, when I am gone.

Please tell Mr. Saunders that it is difficult for me to write the book he suggests. It is so unlike me to write anything of an academic nature. And where is one to find the time when one lives from moment to moment!

In Ceylon, unless I write to the contrary, the address should be Colombo.

With love,

BAPU

From the original : C.W. 5287. Courtesy : Mirabehn

167. LETTER TO CHHAGANLAL GANDHI

COIMBATORE,
Monday, October 17, 1927

CHI. CHHAGANLAL,

I have your letter. I have gone through the letter from Mr. Lawrence which I return herewith. You are doing good work. Do stay on, if you get leave from the Ashram. I haven't got your article. Perhaps it is lying with Mahadev. You must be aware of the commotion in the Ashram. You don't have to trouble yourself by worrying over it from all that distance. I am trying to clear the matter from here, but I am not worried. In the end peace will return. A water-mill can be operated where we have a waterfall. But to have one worked by an artificial fall would be like paying for a shave more than the head is worth. I am keeping well. I shall start on the 1st and leave Ceylon on the 19th. In the interval therefore address the letters to Colombo.

We will pass three days on sea. Prabhudas will recover soon, if he does not let his ailment or any other matter worry him. Nor must he exercise himself more than he can stand. He should stay in Almora as long as he likes. There is nothing wrong in not returning before he is sure of his health. Devdas has been at fault. It appears therefore that he will not go there or anywhere else. He proposes to go to Wardha. But the operation is yet . . .¹ so he is confined to bed. I think he will join me at Tiruppur on the 28th.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original : C.W. 9188

168. LETTER TO KARIM MAHOMED MASTER

October 17, 1927

BHAISHRI K. M.

I have carefully gone through the book you sent to me. I doubt its usefulness. You have not gone deep. You have included some matters as being worthy of belief which even eminent Ulemas do not

¹ The source has a blank here.

accept. I shall not make a list of these here. If you believe in them, I can have nothing to say to you, but I for one would not recommend a book containing them to anyone who wishes to understand Islam.

There are a few things, moreover, which seem dangerous to me at this critical time. Read again pages 26-7. You mention there that God never forgives the crime of those who worship gods and goddesses, that there is nothing but hell for such perpetrators of evil and that it is the same whether one prays for them or not. What effect will this have on Muslim readers! Can they who read it and believe it tolerate even for a moment Hindus who worship gods and goddesses, or even mix with them? What effect will these pages have on Hindus who read them?

I have read the verses in question. I do not put upon them the interpretation which you do. If your interpretation is the correct one, I would bear with the verses but certainly regret them.

At the present time, I would rather that no person who wishes to write on Islam should do so unless he possesses wide knowledge and generosity of heart.

M. K. GANDHI

[From Gujarati]

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

169. LETTER TO KISHORELAL MASHRUWALA

COIMBATORE,

October 17, 1927

I got all your three letters. The one about theft¹ reached me rather late, but even so it was three days ago. Since, however, your second letter, which was received before the first, did not ask for an immediate reply, I did not send a wire, and I could not get time before today to write. Your letter about truth was received yesterday. I saw from it that you were awaiting a reply to the letter about theft and, therefore, dispatched a wire² today. You must have got it. I could not, of course, explain everything in the wire.

¹ A thief was caught while lifting a trunk at the addressee's residence. In the lower court, he gave evidence against the accused but requested the magistrate to pardon the thief. In the mean time, he sought Gandhiji's advice, on receiving which he refused to give evidence in the Sessions Court.

² This is not available.

Though we live in society, there are matters in which we should not or cannot follow it. Society may punish a thief because it does not believe in non-violence or cannot follow it. But those who seek to follow it in their lives, who have the courage to follow it, should remain neutral [in such cases]. If they do not, they will learn nothing from their effort to follow non-violence and society will make no progress. If this view is correct, you certainly cannot go to the court to give evidence. You should go, however, if you are summoned. In this case, at any rate, you should courteously explain to the magistrate what you think to be your dharma, so that the latter will punish the thief independently of you or may even let him off for want of evidence.

So far the course seems clear to me. You have, however, no right to ask for mercy to be shown to the thief. When did you feel compassion for him? If you had felt it when you found him, you and Gomati¹ would not have felt afraid and run after him. You would have remained unconcerned if he had taken away anything. But we have not risen high enough for this. Fear has not left us nor the love of possessions. I, therefore, feel that compassion is out of place, because unnatural. We may strive, we have been striving to cultivate such compassion in us. But so long as compassion has not become a permanent sentiment in us, it cannot be regarded as springing from our heart and, therefore, genuine. If indeed it has become a permanent sentiment in our heart, we should take the thief in our hands, meet him and try to reform him. Nor can the court accede to such a plea for mercy. If the thief himself makes the request and promises to try to reform himself, the court may consider it. The court may accept our request too, if we offer to keep the thief with us so as to prevent him from being a danger to others. I do not feel inclined to go so far and ask for mercy towards him. I have not been able to think of a third alternative besides punishment and mercy. When compassion does not produce as much effect as even punishment, we should understand that it is not genuine or sufficiently strong. I have practically stopped taking interest in the Hindu-Muslim problem because I feel that the compassion in my heart is insufficient or is unnatural. Unnatural does not mean pretended, but only that it has not gone deeper than the intellect. If it had gone deeper than the intellect, I should have been able to discover an alternative to the method of

¹ Addressee's wife

reprisal. But I am not in such a condition as yet. I have been striving hard to cultivate that degree of intense ahimsa¹ in my heart. I must admit that up to the present I have failed. I have not accepted defeat however.

I should like to correct an error you have made. I am sure it is due to oversight. You say that the presentday law does not regard theft itself as crime, but that theft is a crime only when the thief is caught; surely it is not so bad as that. You would be right if you said that the thief who was not caught escaped punishment. But then, this must have been so even in the golden age. God alone can visit every theft with punishment, and those who believe in God actually hold that man has to suffer punishment for every transgression. I assume that you mean no more than this.

And now about the commotion in the Ashram. I am not surprised by it. Nor am I shocked. We are only making an attempt to cleanse our hearts and bring about complete understanding among ourselves. Commotion like the one you mention is inevitable in such an attempt. These developments convince me that we did right in establishing an association. It is only through such experiences that we shall learn the right manner of working and discover new laws of community life, if there are any, which conform to the principle of non-violence. If any of us were a perfect being, he would have before now composed a new *smriti*. But the truth is that we are imperfect beings who are, nevertheless, making a sincere and devoted effort to become perfect. It would not pain me if we decided to start a new institution for those who could not live with us, provided the motive was sincere. There will be differences among us so long as we have not succeeded in cultivating true humility, that is, real non-violence. There will always be some who cannot live in harmony with the others. When such occasions arise, why should we hesitate to start a new institution, if it could be useful? If all of us are progressing towards non-violence we may unite again. If we do not, we shall only be playing on different branches of the same tree and, therefore, see unity even in our differences. Hence I think it necessary only that we make sure of this : that no one should be insincere, that we should not suspect one another's motives or believe others to be evil-minded and that no one should harbour selfish thoughts or wish to appear other than what he is.

¹ The word is underlined in the original.

I shall not now discuss the problem about truth. I have understood all that you have said, and I accept it too. However, there is another side, and a beautiful one to every one of the issues, and that should not be lost sight of. But I will take up this subject some other time. I am not impatient. I believe that both of us are seeking the same truth. I do not want, I do not like, that you should sit down to write your letters to me at a quarter past one at night; in fact I think it wrong of you to do so. It does not befit Gomati to insist that she will go through the treatment only if she gets your services. She ought to be able to accept the services of anyone who offers them sincerely.

Blessings from

BAPU

[From Gujarati]

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

170. LETTER TO GANGABEHN VAIDYA

COIMBATORE,

Monday [October 17, 1927]¹

CHI. GANGABEHN,

I got both your letters. Please don't think that I feel hurt by what you and other women there write to me. It is but right that I should know everything that happens there. If I don't stay in the Ashram, I should help you through my ideas at any rate as much as I can.

You were the one that started the women's prayers. If you now don't take interest in them, wouldn't that be like the sea catching fire? It is your especial duty to attend them.

I wish to advise you all with regard to the conflicts among you which have arisen, without sitting in judgment over anyone. I will not form any opinion in my mind before I have talked with everyone. I have certainly not felt that Ramniklal is to blame in any way. I didn't send Radha's letter to him to inquire and ascertain the truth; I sent it so that all the women may understand the problem, come together and remove the misunderstandings. There was no reason for anyone to feel upset on reading that letter. Why should we be upset on

¹ From *Bapuna Patro*—6 : G. S. Gangabehnne; Gandhiji was at Coimbatore on this date.

discovering that someone thinks, justifiably, in a certain way about us? If we have done anything wrong, we should not feel upset when told about it, but atone for it and thank the person who drew our attention to it. If, on the other hand, the person has attributed anything to us without reason, whether he is an old man or a child we should look upon him as an ignorant person and forgive him. You may show this to the other women if you wish to.

And now your questions.

I have nothing to say about the comparison with gold.

You enjoyed peace in Bordi, Borivali and Matar because you were a guest there and were careful how you behaved. You lived there in an atmosphere created by you, or others treated you as a guest and changed the atmosphere to make you feel comfortable. But you look upon the Ashram as your home, you have made it so, and therefore you are not a guest there. You are all members of one family. It is in the Ashram, therefore, that you will be really tested. Anyone there may find fault with you, or no one may listen to you; but you must bear with it all. If you do, you will enjoy peace. In a place where there is no cause for losing peace, the peace which you enjoy is not real peace. What is the value of the peace which an opium-addict enjoys? You will have won peace only when you enjoy it in circumstances the opposite of peaceful. Be sure that, so long as you do not enjoy the profoundest peace in the Ashram, you have not won real peace; that, till then, you have not really become an inmate of the Ashram. She alone is an inmate of the Ashram who lives on in the Ashram when others have left it, and will remain there till her death. Unless the inmates live thus, the Ashram will not be a real Ashram. I have never believed that it is. We are trying to make it one.

Neither you nor any one of us can say that what you regard as self-development is really so. The Lord has said that he alone goes to Him who thinks of Him, is filled with peace, even at the moment of death. It is, therefore, at that moment that we shall be tested, but who will judge whether we have passed the test? The truth is that real peace cannot be described, it can only be experienced. Ask the countless people sunk in ignorance; won't we have to say that they enjoy peace? But in fact their peace is not the peace of knowledge. The peace of knowledge is like nothing else in our ordinary experience. Even the capacity to endure hunger and thirst, heat and cold, should not be regarded as a sign of peace. A good many murderers have

shown such capacity; but they draw their sword as soon as someone says a word to offend them. He alone enjoys real peace “who has no attachment and no aversion, no love for honour, for whom the pomp of wealth is nothing but a misfortune”.¹

Question me again if you have still not understood, and go on questioning till you do understand.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original : C.W. 8705. Courtesy : Gangabehn Vaidya

171. LETTER TO ASHRAM WOMEN

Silence Day [October 17, 1927]²

SISTERS,

I have your letter. I understand that all of you are disturbed but I am not worried by it. When I opened this question, I knew that you would feel agitated. But I found no other way of cleansing your minds of impurity. Be patient. Everything will turn out well, and we shall enjoy new and real peace. We are really one family. Now what do we do when there is unrest in the family? If both parties have goodwill, then each puts up with the other's anger, and tries to subdue one's own. That is what we should also do. If every one of you does her duty correctly, those who do not now do theirs, will also begin to do it; and if they do not, they will appear conspicuous as defaulters do. Make good use of this commotion and learn to be generous towards each other. To be generous means having no hatred for those whom we consider to be at fault, and loving and serving them. It is not generosity or love if we have goodwill for others only as long as they and we agree in thought and action. That is only amity or mutual affection. The use of the word 'love' is wrong in such cases. Let us call it friendship. 'Love' means friendly feeling for the enemy.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati : G.N. 3671

¹*Ramacharitamanasa*, Uttarakanda

² From the reference to the strained relations among the Ashram women

172. TELEGRAM TO V. J. PATEL¹

[COIMBATORE,
On or after *October 17, 1927*]

VITHALBHAI PATEL
NADIAD

NOVEMBER FIXED FOR CEYLON. DIFFICULT POSTPONE. HERE
TILL TWENTYFIRST. THEN TIRUPPUR.²

GANDHI

From a photostat : S.N. 12862

173. LETTER TO VIJAYA

Aso Vad 8, October [18³,] 1927

CHI. VIJAYA,

I was happy to read your letter. So was Ba. It is good news that both of you are now well. Chi. Mathuradas and Taramati are also well. Stay there for now. Devdas is gradually recovering.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a copy of the Gujara ti: Chhaga nlal Gandhi Papers . Courte sy: Sabar-mati Sangra halya

¹ In reply to the telegram sent by Vithalbhai Patel, dated and received on October 17, 1927, which read : “Please adjust your programme so as to enable you be with me from second to eighth November. Very urgent. Dayalji starting with my letter to you.”

² In reply to this telegram, Vithalbhai Patel wired back : “You will have to surmount all difficulties and accompany me second November. Please therefore adjust your programme accordingly and wire reply. Dayalbhai has already started.” Vithalbhai was evidently sounding Gandhiji on behalf of the Viceroy. Viceroy’s letter to Vithalbhai Patel, dated 13-10-1927, *inter alia*, said : “I am now in a position to say that I should like to invite Mr. Gandhi and Dr. Ansari to come and see me in Delhi; and I would therefore be grateful if you would ascertain from them whether they would be willing to respond to an invitation to do so.” (*Vithalbhai Patel, Life and Times*, Book Two)

³ The date in English in someone else’s hand has “30” *Aso Ved 8* however corresponds to October 18

174. LETTER TO RAMESHWARDAS PODDAR

ON TOUR,
Asvina Krishna 8 [October 18, 1927]¹

BHAI RAMESHWARDAS,

What can I write? Why do you think you are in hell? And why live there? Have faith that Ramanama is our only resort and that all impurities of the heart will be washed away by the grace of Rama.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi : G.N. 185

175. LETTER TO MAGANTI BAPINEEDU

COIMBATORE,
October 19, 1927

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Good Narayana Raju sent me a wire on Monday about the passing of Annapurna and now I have the letter he informed me of. I knew nothing of this sad event. I had inquired about her only the other day of Desabhakta² and he told me she was ailing as usual. The wire therefore stunned me.

If you have lost a dear wife I have lost a dearer daughter. I don't mind your rebuke. You are entitled to chide me, to chide fate herself on your irreparable loss. But I ask you to share my belief that Annapurna whom you loved and I loved is not dead. Her imperishable soul must be, now that she cannot speak through her body, a greater reminder of our respective duties.

I do hope that you will follow in her footsteps and carry out her noble wishes. You ask me to give my name to the proposed committee. I may not do so for the simple reason that I have many daughters both dead and living. It would be too great a burden for me to carry if I began to become a member of committees formed to perpetuate their names. I must be satisfied with the endeavour to

¹ The year is inferred from the contents; *vide* "Letter to Rameshwardas Poddar", July 23, 1927.

² Konda Venkatappayya

become worthy of so many noble daughters. I am writing a note about Annapurna in *Young India*.¹

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a copy: C.W. 11166

176. WHY I AM A HINDU

An American friend who subscribes herself as a lifelong friend of India writes :

As Hinduism is one of the prominent religions of the East, and as you have made a study of Christianity and Hinduism, and on the basis of that study have announced that you are a Hindu, I beg leave to ask of you if you will do me the favour to give me your reasons for that choice. Hindus and Christians alike realize that man's chief need is to know God and to worship Him in spirit and in truth. Believing that Christ was a revelation of God, Christians of America have sent to India thousands of their sons and daughters to tell the people of India about Christ. Will you in return kindly give us your interpretation of Hinduism and make a comparison of Hinduism with the teachings of Christ? I will be deeply grateful for this favour.

I have ventured at several missionary meetings to tell English and American missionaries that if they could have refrained from 'telling' India about Christ and had merely lived the life enjoined upon them by the Sermon on the Mount, India instead of suspecting them would have appreciated their living in the midst of her children and directly profited by their presence. Holding this view, I can 'tell' American friends nothing about Hinduism by way of 'return'. I do not believe in people telling others of their faith, especially with a view to conversion. Faith does not admit of telling. It has to be lived and then it becomes self-propagating.

Nor do I consider myself fit to interpret Hinduism except through my own life. And if I may not interpret Hinduism through my written word, I may not compare it with Christianity. The only thing it is possible for me therefore to do is to say, as briefly as I can, why I am a Hindu.

Believing as I do in the influence of heredity, being born in a Hindu family, I have remained a Hindu. I should reject it, if I found it

¹ *Vide* "A Good Servant Gone", October 27, 1927.

inconsistent with my moral sense or my spiritual growth. On examination, I have found it to be the most tolerant of all religions known to me. Its freedom from dogma makes a forcible appeal to me inasmuch as it gives the votary the largest scope for self-expression. Not being an exclusive religion, it enables the followers of that faith not merely to respect all the other religions, but it also enables them to admire and assimilate what ever may be good in the other faiths. Non-violence is common to all religions, but it has found the highest expression and application in Hinduism. (I do not regard Jainism or Buddhism as separate from Hinduism.) Hinduism believes in the oneness not of merely all human life but in the oneness of all that lives. Its worship of the cow is, in my opinion, its unique contribution to the evolution of humanitarianism. It is a practical application of the belief in the oneness and, therefore, sacredness of all life. The great belief in transmigration is a direct consequence of that belief. Finally the discovery of the law of *varnashrama* is a magnificent result of the ceaseless search for truth. I must not burden this article with definitions of the essentials sketched here, except to say that the present ideas of cow-worship and *varnashrama* are a caricature of what in my opinion the originals are. The curious may see the definitions of cow-worship and *varnashrama* in the previous numbers of *Young India*. I hope to have to say on *varnashrama* in the near future. In this all-too-brief a sketch I have mentioned what occur to me to be the outstanding features of Hinduism that keep me in its fold.

Young India, 20-10-1927

177. TELEGRAM TO V. J. PATEL

October 20, 1927

DAYALJI JUST ARRIVED. ALSO YOUR WIRE. DIFFICULT ALTER CEYLON PROGRAMME. SHOULD GLADLY GO DELHI OR ELSEWHERE LATER IF INVITED. IN MY OPINION PRESENT JUNCTURE AM NOT HOPEFUL PERSONALLY RENDERING USEFUL SERVICE THROUGH DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS. IF DESPITE MY LIMITATIONS IMMEDIATE VISIT DELHI CONSIDERED NECESSARY AM PREPARED POSTPONE CEYLON VISIT AND ATTEND DELHI PROVIDED INVITATION IS ANNOUNCED AND PUBLICATION AGREED STATEMENT PURPORT INTERVIEW IS PERMITTED. IF YOU CONSIDER THIS SATISFACTORY PLEASE REPEAT WHOLE TEXT PROPER QUARTERS BUT PERSONALLY URGE YOU KEEP ME OUT OF THIS BUSINESS. AM HERE TOMORROW TIRUPPUR UNTIL TWENTY- FOURTH CALICUT TWENTYFIFTH.

Vithalbhai Patel, Life and Times, Book Two, p. 777

178. TELEGRAM TO V. J. PATEL¹

October 20, 1927

YOUR WIRE. THINK CONDITIONS NEITHER OFFENSIVE NOR HARD
BUT DESIRABLE PUBLIC INTEREST. PLEASE WIRE FULL TEXT.

From a photostat: S.N. 12864

179. LETTER TO V. S. SRINIVASA SASTRI

COIMBATORE,

October 20, 1927

MY DEAR BROTHER,

There is much fiery stuff coming from South Africa nowadays. Here is one cutting. I am watching what is happening but consider it wise not to say anything. But I shall not hesitate to intervene when necessary. What I find disturbing is a para in Manilal's letter which I translate below :

I am not quite satisfied with his speeches.² He crosses the limits in praising the Empire and the benefits conferred by it on India. He thinks it necessary thus to please the Europeans. He seems to believe that thus only shall we secure something here. The effect of these speeches cannot be good in India. He has therefore asked me not to print them in *Indian Opinion*.

I thought I must pass on to you this from Manilal. For he is a good boy and brave boy. Knowing my later views about the Empire, I am not surprised at his mentality. He has not the faculty of discrimination to see that we are like blood-brothers even though we do not hold the same views about the Empire. I have not said to him much about this letter of his beyond warning him against coming to

¹ This is in reply to V. J. Patel's telegram, dated 20-10-1927, which read : "Before I wire full text of your telegram to proper quarters request you once again to agree to respond to invitation without conditions. If you still maintain your attitude I will send full text and let you know reply. Please wire immediately."

² Srinivasa Sastri wrote to his brother from Pretoria on October 6, 1927: "I fully expected criticism of my sentiments about the Empire. People must make allowance for the difference in latitude and longitude. The public speaker whose conscience is not dead must be content very often to be guilty of *suppressio veri*. If he doesn't suggest a falsehood he does as much as is possible."

hasty judgements and telling him that you do honestly believe the Empire activity to be on the whole beneficial. But you will of course not hesitate to summon him before you and speak to him if necessary, as you would to your own son. I do hope that you are not going to worry over what appears now and then in some papers here or what people may be talking there. Pray do not hesitate to tell me when you want me to act. Of course you know that I do not follow the papers closely, especially when I am moving from day to day.

May God keep you in good health.

With love,

Yours,

M. K. GANDHI

Letters of Srinivasa Sastri, pp. 169-70

180. LETTER TO PRABHAVATI

Asvina Krishna 10 [October 20, 1927]¹

CHI. PRABHAVATI,

I did get your letter. But I could not reply owing to lack of time.

All my efforts to have you in the Ashram have failed so far. I have given up hope now. I do not also know what Chi. Mrityunjaya is to do. Now the only chance for you is to come by your own efforts. Talk to Father and it will be good if he can send you somehow. Do not be perturbed even if there is no opportunity to go to the Ashram. One of the *shlokas* we sing in the Ashram is as follows :

Whose mind is untroubled in sorrows and longeth not for joys, who is free from passion, fear and wrath—he is called the ascetic of secure understanding.²

Or as Tulsidas says :

One to whom glory and disaster are alike.³

If you have any further news of your husband, write to me. My health is all right. By the time this letter reaches you I shall be near Mangalore.

¹ The year is inferred from the tour programme.

² *Bhagavad Gita*, II. 56

³ *Ramacharitamansa*, Uttarakanda

26-31 Mangalore

November 4-19 Colombo

Three days will be spent on sea.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi : G.N. 3330

181. LETTER TO MANILAL AND SUSHILA GANDHI

Thursday, October 20, 1927

CHI. MANILAL AND SUSHILA,

I got your letters.

I have conveyed to Sastriji your opinion about him expressed in your letter. I thought it best that he should know it. Someone has cabled to newspapers here unconnected extracts from his speeches in order to run him down. I am not surprised or pained by his praise of the Empire, since that is his view of it; were it not so, he would not have accepted service under it. Nevertheless, you can with due courtesy tell him whatever you think, so that if he wishes he may explain his attitude to you. Do not be hasty in anything you do.

Devdas has been operated upon for piles. He was operated upon by Dr. Rajan in Trichinopally. He is in the doctor's nursing home. He is quite well now. There is still a small wound, but it will heal soon. He will see me the day after tomorrow.

You should immediately send to the Ashram the money you owe for the goods sent to you. I have explained to you that you cannot delay paying this money, because the Ashram has no authority to supply goods on credit. Pay the amount, therefore, without delay.

How much weight has Sushila gained? How many miles can she walk now? How is her ear? Can she set the types with speed? Is the *Gita* being read?

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

I had a cable from Andrews informing me that he had wired to Natal about Pragji.

I got your letter just now. You write in it that you did not get a letter from me by one mail. You should get one by now. I did forget and missed one mail.

From a photostat of the Gujarati : G.N. 4726

182. LETTER TO JETHALAL G. SAMPAT

[Before *October 21, 1927*]¹

BHAISHRI JETHALAL,

I have your letter. The figures published in *Navajivan* are merely those sent by the various branches of the Charkha Sangh. This does not mean that only so much khadi is produced annually all over India. I think the figures published are accurate. If they can be further corrected, do so. Keep writing to me in this manner. Send me brief reports of the work from time to time.

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS

SHREE JETHALALJEE
KHADI KARYALAYA
BIJOLIA P. MANDALGADH
MEWAR
RAJASTHAN

From the Gujarati: C.W. 9841. Courtesy: Narayan Jethalal Sampat

183. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

October 21, 1927

CHI. MIRA,

I get your letters regularly. I do not prohibit you from writing as many letters as you like. I simply said that I should be satisfied so long as you gave me one per week. I should be anxious if I did not get even one. I should welcome one every day if you felt like sending one.

I wonder if you do not find moving about in the sun rather trying. Do you wear a sunshade? You must not hesitate to use a hat if you need one.

Though I take the place of mother or rather because I take that privileged place the natural mother should be more to you than ever before. My connection with you to be pure must strengthen all natural affections. Only, they should become purer and lose all selfish taint.

With love,

BAPU

From the original : C.W. 5288. Courtesy : Mirabehn

¹ From the postmark

184. LETTER TO SURENDRA

[After October 22, 1927]¹

CHI. SURENDRA,

I got your letter. *Pujya* Gangabehn² requests that you should give some time daily to the women's class. I approve of her request. Do give a little time, if you can spare it.

Sundaram³ met me here today by chance. I had suggested to Devdas to go to the Ashram, but he preferred Wardha. I am afraid his wound will take some time to heal.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

Balkrishna. . .⁴

From a photostat of the Gujarati : S.N. 9412

185. TELEGRAM TO V. J. PATEL⁵

TIRUPPUR,

October 23, 1927

YOUR WIRE JUST RECEIVED. RECOGNIZE DIFFICULTY
PUBLICATION AND IN VIEW APPARENT URGENCY MY
PRESENCE WELL GLADLY RESPOND INVITATION IF

¹ From the reference to Devdas's wound; Gandhiji expected to meet Devdas on 22-10-1927. *Vide* "Letter to Manilal and Sushila Gandhi", 20-10-1927.

² Gangabehn Vaidya

³ Tribhuvandas Luhar, a poet who had adopted this pen-name

⁴ Two words in the source are illegible.

⁵ In reply to Vithalbhai Patel's telegram, dated October 23, 1927, which read : "Received following telegram from Viceroy. Begins : '28 C. Thank you very much for your telegram of October 20th. I fully realize Gandhi's difficulties and would not suggest especially having regard to his health that he should alter his plans and take long journey unless I thought it important to see him. I should be quite willing if interview takes place that announcement of fact of invitation should be made but am afraid that I cannot agree to any statement regarding subject-matter of interview as this would inevitably impair confidential character of meeting. If I hear from you that in these circumstances he will come to Delhi I shall be happy to extend invitation to him. Please ascertain this and let me know by telegram. In mean time I propose, unless you see any objection, to invite Dr. Ansari without further delay to come and see me on November second.' Ends. Strongly advise and insist for country's sake permit me assure Viceroy that you would accept his invitation. Reply immediately."

From a photostat : S.N. 12865

186. SPEECH TO STUDENTS, TIRUPPUR

October 23, 1927

In declaring the *Gita* class open Mahatmaji advised the students to get up at 4 o'clock in the morning and regularly read the *Bhagavad Gita* daily. He was anxious that they should begin the study of the *Gita* in right earnest. If they could not read Sanskrit they could go in for a Tamil translation of the *Gita*, but not the English one, because the English rendering could not impart the true significance of the *Gita*. He said that the third chapter is an important one in the *Gita*. [He continued :]¹

The *Gita* contains the gospel of karma or work, the gospel of *bhakti* or devotion and the gospel of *jnana* or knowledge. Life should be a harmonious whole of these three. But the gospel of service is the basis of all, and what can be more necessary for those who want to serve the country than that they begin with the chapter enunciating the gospel of work? But you must approach it with the five necessary equipments, viz., ahimsa (non-violence), *satya* (truth), *brahmacharya* (celibacy), *aparigraha* (non-possession), and *asteya* (non-stealing). Then and then only will you be able to reach a correct interpretation of it. And then you will read it to discover in it ahimsa and not *himsa*, as so many nowadays try to do. Read it with the necessary equipment and I assure you you will have peace of which you were never aware before.

The Hindu, 25-10-1927 and *Young India*, 3-11-1927

187. DISCUSSION ON VARNADHARMA²

October 23, 1927

A few young men³ sought an interview with Gandhiji for a discussion on *varnadharma*. . . . They were troubled as to how the Brahmin could shed his

¹ What follows is from Mahadev Desai's "Weekly Letter", published in *Young India*, 3-11-1927.

² From Mahadev Desai's "Weekly Letter"

³ Vithal Das Anandji Sait, M. N. Chikkana Chettiar, T. S. Kandaswami Chetti, T. S. Avinashilingam Chettiar, K. S. Ramaswami Gounder, P. D. Asher and K. V. Venkatachalam Pillai

superiority so long as he continued to be a Brahmin.

Gandhiji said, taking an extreme case to drive the matter home :

Even Sita is not superior to a prostitute. Are you satisfied?

The friend said, "No, quite shocked." Gandhiji said :

I am, for Sita had no sense of superiority. Had she been proud of her purity she would have been nowhere. But she was not even conscious of it. She was pure, because it was impossible for her to be otherwise. Are the Himalayas conscious of their supreme heights? Not a bit of it. But if they were, they would crumble to pieces. Even so, *varna*, if it becomes synonymous with superiority, and an expression of egotism, will be nothing better than a halter round the neck. Max Muller put the spirit of Hinduism in a nutshell when he said : "India considers life as only one thing—DUTY—whereas others thought of enjoyment *cum* duty". *Varna* is nothing more than an indication of the duty that has been handed down to each one of us by our forefathers. In the West, when they talk of the amelioration of the lot of the masses, they talk of raising their standard of life. In India we need not talk of raising the standard of life. For, how can an outsider raise the standard, when the standard is within every one of us? We can only strive to increase man's opportunities of realizing and fulfilling his duties and of getting nearer to God. But you are today attempting the impossible task of uprooting the tree. Some of the branches and leaves, I admit, are rotten. Let us have the pruning knife and lop off those diseased branches, but let us not lay the axe at the root. You will be bad gardeners to destroy the tree under which you have lived and grown. Cut off the unnecessary excrescences, even if in the end the trunk with the root appears like a stubble, but if you keep the root intact and then fondly water it, it will some day grow into a fine big tree.

But as I said the tree cannot be destroyed, for the true Brahmin will stand all blows and yet stand erect in his sacrificial dignity. I will admit that there are few Brahmins today, few Kshatriyas, few Vaisyas and even few Sudras. For the Sudra too has an individuality. We are all slaves today. We cower today before the insolent might of a Dyer. Let us all aspire to fulfil each one of us his calling. Most of us will have to be Vaisyas, for it is the Vaisyas who hold us under their heels.

We will revere the Brahmin, not because of his superiority, but because of the superior service that he renders to us. It is because we are degraded today that one cannot think except in the terms of superiority and inferiority.

Young India, 3-11-1927

188. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, TIRUPPUR¹

October 23, 1927

FRIENDS,

I thank you for all your addresses and all these purses, as also the different gifts of khadi and these two diamond earrings which have cut out the work for me and for you. Because, as you have known by this time, the valuable gifts are of value to me only on behalf of *Daridranarayana* and not for personal use. What little khadi I need for my own use I have already. And therefore, if you will have the patience, at the end of the speech I shall offer you all the khadi and these valuable earrings and these frames for your acceptance. You remind me that when some time ago I visited Tiruppur you called me khadi-king and you called this the capital of the khadi-king. It was a title which I accepted gratefully and in all humility and I recognized your claim to call this the capital of the khadi-king and inasmuch as I am not an exacting king, I am able to say that you have fairly earned the title that you gave to yourselves. You will retain the first place in all India in the matter of production. You have improved the quality of your khadi. But when I consider my own ambition and what it is that is required of you and of all India, I must confess that the progress, good relatively though it is, is not satisfactory. For, considering what we intend to do through the length and breadth of India, naturally this capital is expected to make use of all the cotton that is produced in the neighbouring areas. I expect you to have, by dint of service, such a hold upon the cotton cultivators that they would sell their cotton only to you and I expect you also by the same right of service to influence the poor villagers so that there will not be a single home left without a spinning-wheel working in it, and that there will not be a single weaver who weaves anything but hand-spun yarn. I do not want you to consider that this is beyond your reach. If you will retain the privilege of calling your town the capital of khadi you must have this ambition, and you will find that if you are actuated not by a motive of exploitation but by the simple motive of service to the poor villagers you will find that in no time you will acquire the influence that you should, both over the villagers and over the cotton cultivators

¹ Gandhiji's speech in English was translated into Tamil by C. Rajagopalachari, sentence by sentence.

and all this will be possible only if there is hearty co-operation between the different khadi merchants. You will also have to limit your own personal ambition about making money out of khadi. I have no doubt that khadi is a sound economic proposition. It can give you a decent living and moderate profits. There is, there should be, no room for individuals to get high rates of interest. I personally always suspect organizations which are capable of giving 25 per cent, give 20 per cent interest on their outlay. It may be safely laid down as a general proposition beyond challenge that wherever there are large and inordinate profits they have been obtained at the expense of the poor people. But the whole conception of khadi is that we, who are active in developing khadi, must regard ourselves as trustees for these starving villagers. Whatever is therefore earned beyond a respectable living must be returned to these villagers. And so long as this hand-spinning is strictly kept up, you will find that the king will stick to his little capital and advertise it for all it is worth.

But then there are other partners also in this company of *Daridranarayana* and these are the spinners and the weavers. The spinners, I know, are not in this meeting. I happened to know that there are some weavers here. I want to tell the weavers who are here and want them to give my message to those who are not here that I grieve to hear that there are some weavers here addicted to drink and gambling. In the firm of *Daridranarayana* there is really no room for drunkards and gamblers. Drink is an evil which has desolated thousands of homes throughout the world, and it behoves weavers who have anything to do with khadi that they at least will not defile their bodies with drink. A man under the influence of drink forgets the distinction between wife and sister. I hope, therefore, that the young men in Tiruppur will bestir themselves and work in the midst of those who are given to drink and by gentle persuasion wean them from the drink habits.

Gambling is a vice which degrades the gambler and leads him to innumerable crimes. It must, therefore, be given up. You know that this part of the South is noted for the crime of murder. Hardly a week passes but sees a few cases of murder and it is well known that wherever there is drunkenness and gambling murder is the necessary consequence. We should really be ashamed of ourselves that there should be any men in society who hold life so cheaply that they would take it on the slightest provocation or the slightest pretext. If there are philanthropists in society in this place, as I have no doubt

there are, I wish that they will study this crime, know exactly the causes and endeavour to remove this reproach from this fair district.

It gave me this morning the greatest joy and the greatest pleasure to meet the Head Master and some of the students of the Municipal High School. They asked me to open a *Gita* class, and in order to have the ceremony performed both the students and the staff came early morning at about quarter to four. I hope that these students will prove themselves worthy of this sacred study and they will not, having begun this great work, lag behind and neglect it. It is a step in the right direction. At the present moment there is a mania for literary education in this country. But little emphasis is placed upon character-building. Education which is not built upon solid foundation of character, in my humble opinion, is like a lifeless body. And for a Hindu boy I cannot conceive anything so fortifying as a reverent study of the *Bhagavad Gita*. If students will remember that they are to learn *Bhagavad Gita* not in order to be able to parade Sanskrit knowledge or a knowledge of the *Gita* itself, they will remember that they learn it to derive spiritual comforts from it and to solve all their difficulties through its aid. No man who engages in a reverent study of that book can help becoming a true servant of the nation and through it of humanity. Lokamanya Tilak has told us that *Bhagavad Gita* is pre-eminently a gospel of work and work that is absolutely selfless. And selfless work is nothing but service, nothing but sacrifice. I have ventured to suggest in spite of whatever might be said to the contrary that the true sacrifice of this age, sacrifice in terms of the *Bhagavad Gita*, is hand-spinning done for the sake of and in the name of the starving millions. And if the students will establish a living bond between themselves and the starving millions as they ought to do, they will find that there is nothing so powerful as the spinning-wheel to enable them to do so.

I was glad, therefore, to find in the municipal address the mention of the spinning-wheel in connection with the schools and I hope that the Municipality will carry its determination into effect in the near future. I must not now detain you over my remarks any longer, for, I will take some of your time in asking you to help me to dispose of these goods and volunteers will in the mean time kindly go out amongst the people and collect from those who believe in khadi and who have not paid for the Khadi Fund.

The Hindu, 25-10-1927

189. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

October 24, 1927

CHI. MIRA,

I have all your letters and they were all welcome.

You have inquired where the straying letter could have gone. I have not suppressed any. So you must get it in due course.

I am still without your weight.

I admit your analysis of Bhansali's¹ case. He is too good a man to resent any friendly criticism. You should therefore talk to him freely and see what you can do with him. Similarly Chhotelal. He must be broken in. Probably he will listen to you. I am so glad you are looking after all these sick people and reporting to me daily. I shall look forward to your report of your visit to the dairy and the pinjrapole.

The little rest I have taken is not even prevention. It was merely precaution. As a matter of fact I paid for the rest by having to do two omitted places during the Tiruppur visit. But this harmless interruption was a good test for your nerves. No news, even untoward, should affect you. You should not say to yourself, 'How nice if he had not gone there or taken more rest.' It should be enough for you to believe that I am taking all the care of myself that my nature will allow me. There is no doubt that I want rest. But who will give it to me? Do we get all we want? If we did, where would our faith have any play at all? Sufficient to know that not a blade moves but by His will. He will take care, if we will but trust Him, not after the manner of those who will take all the care that money can procure and then trust. That we must take some care is true. But men of trust will not do violence to their own nature and go out of their way to take precautions and adopt remedies which ordinary men have no means to command. The formula therefore is the less care the better and no more than the least of us can procure by reasonable effort. Judged by this standard, the care that I take of myself and that is being bestowed on me is out of all proportion and inconsistent with my profession of faith in God. You will thus see that everything I do in this direction appears to me to be exaggerated and I often feel that it would be a great benefit, if I could be neglected for a time. As it is, I am wrapped

¹ J. P. Bhansali, an inmate of Satyagraha Ashram, Sabarmati

in cotton wool.

It is very likely that there will be another interruption and I shall have to go to Delhi for a day or two. I may know in the course of the day.

Love,

BAPU

From the original : C.W. 5289. Courtesy : Mirabehtn

190. LETTER TO SATIS CHANDRA DAS GUPTA

October 24, 1927

DEAR SATIS BABU,

Your letter makes dismal reading but I do not mind. We may not attempt more than the atmosphere warrants or more than the purse allows. The chief thing is to reduce your stock. I shall see what I can do with your box when it arrives.

The new charkha has now been received. Though it shows extraordinary care in packing it has been received in a broken condition. The middle side has broken in two and the stopper is also damaged. But I had no difficulty in examining the wheel. Though it is better than the original, it is not equal to what Keshu has made and I am now using. It is much stronger than the one you have sent. The axle does not jut out of the box. The handle and the winder are made of metal. The spokes are much stronger. The hub too is made of metal. Although it has seen much rough usage it has not yet gone out of order. Before you make further improvements or standardize the pattern you should see Keshu's wheel. Have you much demand for the box charkha?

How are you keeping in health? Does the heart still give trouble?

I had heard about Shyam Babu before you gave me the news. I wish he would or could stick to this his latest. Did Sarat Babu get the consent of his wife? What more will he do, now that he has taken the robe? I prefer your sannyasa.

It is very likely that I shall have to go to Delhi and postpone the Ceylon visit for a few days. I should know for certain today or tomorrow.

Is Tarini better now? And the boy?

I had a full account about Abhoy Ashram. From it, it appears

that there was no aggression on their part and that the story about masked spears is a pure fabrication. These fabrications are just now the order of the day, the same as was the case during the War on the part of both the sides.

With love,

BAPU

Here is a letter from Capt. Petavel and the enclosure. This is not the first of its kind but one out of many. I remember you once reported adversely on his institution. Now he has come out with Dr. Ray's testimonial. I have this time asked him to see you and discuss the thing with you. Give him some time and show him the error of his ways unless you find him to be on the right path.

BAPU

From a photostat : G.N. 1578

191. LETTER TO C. F. ANDREWS

October 24, 1927

MY DEAR CHARLIE,

I have a letter at last written in your own hand.

I forgot to tell you that Sir Purushottamdas wrote to me saying he could not find time to go [to] East Africa. He suggested Sarojini Devi's name. It might be as well to send her. But think of it and tell me what you propose.

Capt. Petavel has been sending me letters after letters asking me to support his plan. Somehow or other he does not inspire me with confidence in himself. You have warned me against him. He now asks me to get someone to report to me upon his plan and work. In my despair I have told him I have referred the matter to you and Satis Babu. Do you feel like saying anything that I may use? He has now procured an enthusiastic certificate from Dr. Ray. The more certificates he gets, the more dissatisfied I become.

Gujarat has not got 30 lakhs in public subscriptions but a huge sum from the Government. I quite like the idea of the Gujaratis in Calcutta giving all the amount to Orissa. The question is whether you have good and capable men to use it. Gujarat has nearly 1,000 workers operating upon the collections.

The finger has caused me much worry. The stiffness is a new thing. I shall draw a sigh of relief when you can report perfect recovery.

It is highly likely that I shall have to postpone the Ceylon visit a bit and go to Delhi. I should know definitely by tomorrow.

With love from us all,

MOHAN

Sorab is on his way to India. I shall certainly talk to him about the memorial. I am quite at one with you that had Rustomji been alive, he would have sent the whole amount.

MOHAN

From a photostat : G.N. 2623

192. LETTER TO R. PARTHASARTHI

October 24, 1927

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter. I do not remember having ever approved of mill cloth especially foreign being exhibited side by side with khadi. What I have done is reluctantly to agree to exhibit khadi in a separate court notwithstanding the knowledge that Indian mill cloth will also be exhibited somewhere in the exhibition.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

SJT. R. PARTHASARTHI

12, ARUNDALE STREET

MYLAPORE

MADRAS

From the original : G.N. 10847

193. TESTIMONIAL TO M. R. BOB

TIRUPPUR,

October 24, 1927

M. R. Bob's services as driver were lent by Sjt. Shanti Narayan Rao of Bangalore. Bob motored me throughout my Tamil Nad and Kerala tour. He was most attentive and careful. He made not only a good driver but he became my truest friend when I was in need of one. The only reward I can give him is to pray that God may bless him for his services.

From a photos tat: C. W. 10974. Courte sy: M.R. Bob

194. LETTER TO DEVDAS GANDHI

Monday [October 24, 1927]¹

CHI. DEVDAS,

I have Dr. Rajan's² letter about you today. There is nothing of note in it. There is a telegram from the Viceroy today and so I have to be in Delhi on November 2.³ Hence, from Mangalore I shall either go back to Madras or, if I can get the booking on the steamer, I shall go to Bombay and from Bombay to Delhi. I shall have to get back to go to Colombo. I wish you now to be calm.

Blessings from
BAPU

SJT. DEVDAS GANDHI

C/ODR. RAJAN

TRICHY, S. INDIA

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 10899. Courtesy: Awadhnanandan

195. LETTER TO AWADHANANDAN

Monday, October 24, 1927

DEAR AWADHANANDAN,

You have indebted me by serving Ch. Devdas so well.

BAPU

SJT. DEVDAS GANDHI

C/ODR. RAJAN

TRICHY

S. INDIA

From the Hindi original: C.W. 10899. Courtesy: Awadhnanandan

¹ The postmark bears the date "October 25, 1927". The Monday prior to this date was October 24.

² Dr. T.S.S. Rajan who had operated upon Devdas Gandhi for piles

³ Vide "Telegram to Viceroy", on or after October 24, 1927.

196. TELEGRAM TO VICEROY¹

[On or after *October 24, 1927*]

HIS EXCELLENCY VICEROY
VICEROY'S CAMP

YOUR EXCELLENCY'S WIRE JUST RECEIVED. IN VIEW THEREOF
I HOPE WAIT ON YOUR EXCELLENCY APPOINTED TIME.

GANDHI

From a photostat : S.N. 12866

197. LETTER TO CHAND TYAGI

Dipavali [October 25, 1927]²

BHAI CHAND,

Received your letter. For some time now don't fuss about the
Chandrayana vow³.

I am happy to learn that you have arrived at the Ashram. What
work have you taken up?

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi : G.N. 3269

¹ In reply to the Viceroy's telegram, dated October 24, 1927, which read : "I am anxious to have a talk with you on certain important and rather urgent matters and if it is convenient to you I should be very glad if you could come and see me in Delhi. The most convenient day for me would be Wednesday November second at eleven thirty. I realize that I am giving you very short notice and that this must inevitably cause you inconvenience but I hope it will not make it impossible for you to come. Please wire whether you can come on that date."

² Gandhiji had earlier asked him to go to the Ashram; *vide* "Silence Day Note to Chand Tyagi", March 21, 1927.

³ The penance of gradually reducing the daily intake of food during the waning phase of the moon ending in a total fast on the 15th day, and increasing it similarly with the waxing moon to have a full meal on full-moon day

198. LETTER TO ASHRAM WOMEN

Tuesday, Aso Vad Amas, Diwali [October 25, 1927]¹

SISTERS,

Your letter. Do not lose heart. Do not wait for the other person to set the example; don't say : 'Let everyone else first become good, then I too will be good.' On the contrary, the principle to be followed is : 'If I become pure, others will follow suit.' We have two proverbs which embody this idea. One says : "If you are good, the world is good", and the other : "As the individual, so the universe." If this were not true, one can never have any hopes for the world.

Rama is the support of the whole world. Sita is the mainstay of all women. So if every one of you strives with determination to be pure, and becomes devoted to her duty, you will find that everything else will straighten out in the end. 'Defeat' should never find a place in our dictionary.

I am waiting to see what new resolves you are going to make on new-year's day. Talk with one who does not talk to you; go to one who does not come to you; try to please one who is displeased with you, and all this not for their good but for your own. The world is a creditor; we are its debtors.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati : G.N. 3672

199. LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

Diwali [October 25, 1927]²

CHI. MATHURADAS,

I have your letter. I see no harm in staying a week longer in Pattani Saheb's bungalow after taking his or his agent's permission. That it is so difficult to find accommodation in Panchgani even in

¹ The year is inferred from the advice to the addressees to make up their differences; *vide* "Letter to Ashram Women", 17-10-1927.

² The addressee received the letter on October 28, 1927. Diwali fell on October 25 in 1927.

winter is surprising. We would be so thankful if you could somehow recover completely. Will you never be well enough to live permanently in Bombay?

Devdas's wound is taking a long time to heal. According to the doctor it may take another week or so. The doctor said that a larger area than had been thought necessary had to be cauterized. Devdas's physical condition seems to be satisfactory. Yesterday he paid me a visit.

Rajaji has been keeping indifferent health lately. But he should be all right in a couple of days.

Blessings from
BAPU

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

200. LETTER TO ANASUYABEHN SARABHAI

Diwali, [October 25, 1927]¹

CHI. ANASUYABEHN,

I have received your presents. I started using them from the very day I received them. I have lost one handkerchief out of them. We are a big crowd here. It is surprising that some of the small things at least are saved.

I understand about Ceylon : I think your decision is right. You must understand that the days of sitting around with me are over. It seems criminal to have even a moment of external peace. Hence I must learn to find peace in turbulence. And what is true for me will also be true for my colleagues, is it not so?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photograph of the Gujarati : G. N. 11568

¹ From the contents; *vide* "Letter to Anasuyabehn Sarabhai", on or before October 17, 1927.

201. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, CALICUT

October 25, 1927

FRIENDS,

I thank you for all these addresses, these purses, gifts of yarn and books and a watch. I shall present these things for your acceptance and convert them into money. And here our friend has just sent me a copy of Rabindranath Tagore's *Sadhana*. He is a student and says: "My sole object in presenting this book, i.e., Tagore's *Sadhana*, is that you might auction it and the money so realized might be added to the students' purse."

I recall the time now, many years ago, when I had the privilege with my friend and brother, Maulana Shaukat Ali, to address a meeting of this character from this very beautiful beach. Since then, many changes and grave happenings have taken place in this country. We know also that, at the present moment, the horizon in the north appears as black as it can be. But I should be false to myself and false to my country if I did not, in spite of the blackness of the horizon, redeclare my immovable faith in the necessity and possibility of Hindus and Mussalmans living in this land as blood-brothers. God alone knows how this consummation, so much to be desired, is to be brought about. But then, we know how often God confounds man's plans and brings about events for which he is least ready. And I would invite those who have the good of the country at heart to share this living faith of man with me. And this reminds me of a somewhat remarkable letter that was placed in my hands this afternoon. I have not yet been able to know who the writer of that letter is. I was not able to read the whole of this long letter myself, but I asked a friend to give me the substance of that letter. And the substance of that letter is this. The writer says, 'It is all very well for you to ask Mussalmans and Christians to save the cow for you.' But the friend adds, 'What are you doing to the Hindus who are, in the sacred name of religion, killing day after day and year after year innocent animals and birds?' The rebuke is well deserved. I do not know how far this evil of sacrificing innocent animals and birds in the name of God prevails in this part of India. The writer little knows my sentiments about these things. Wherever I have spotted this evil, I have neither spared myself nor my hearers in condemning it. I know that this practice of

sacrificing animals and birds in the name of the Almighty is a sinful superstition. And it is time that the Hindus, wherever they may be, who are offering great sacrifices, stop this sinful practice. I should be always in association with any movement designed to stop this inhuman practice. I derive comfort from the knowledge that this practice is not increasing in this country. But it is day by day falling into disrepute. It was only the other day that Her Highness the Maharani Regent of Travancore stopped all such sacrifices, and what she has been able to do by decree, you can do by cultivating public opinion against this practice in this part of the country.

But I must hasten to other parts of my speech. I am glad that the students have come forward with their address. There is nothing new about their presenting me with the address. All over India, it has been my good fortune to enjoy the confidence and friendship of the student world. But I mention my pleasure over this address, because it contains a promise about khadi. The students have made a solemn promise in their address, henceforth to use nothing but khadi. Let me remind the students of the sacredness of promises. It is the custom very often in our country as also elsewhere especially for enthusiastic students to make all sorts of promises. This habit of making promises is really a vicious habit unless it is accompanied by a firm determination to fulfil them at any cost. If my recollections serve me right, it was from a teacher in Calicut that I received a pathetic letter asking me to speak to the student world, and put an emphasis on some of their failings. Day after day, it is being realized by educationists all the world over that mere literary education, unless it is built upon a solid foundation of character, is not only of no avail but is a mischievous accomplishment, and the beginning of character-building is surely made by complete adherence to truth. And it is a departure from truth not to fulfil a promise which has been once made. It is not a bad thing not to make promises hastily and without due deliberation. But it is absolutely necessary, after having once made them, to abide by them and fulfil them even though we should have to die in the attempt. I therefore hope that the students, having made the promise, will abide by it.

But there are other things to which my attention was drawn in this letter, that the student world was thoughtlessly drifting and indulging in what might be superficially considered minor vices. My attention was drawn to the habit, which is spreading amongst students, of smoking and excessive tea or coffee drinking. These things may

appear insignificant; but I know from the experience of many students that these are by no means insignificant things. It is a symptom of want of self-restraint; and this want of self-restraint is undermining the constitutions of the student world throughout India. I, therefore, urge the students to think well over what I have said reconsider and recast their life. According to the Hindu conception, a student has to be and should remain a *brahmachari* so long as he is studying. If a student desires, as he ought to, to observe this self-control both in mind and body, it is necessary for him to deny himself all those things that are superfluous.

Coming to the other addresses I am glad that I find in every one of them, an enthusiastic endorsement of the message of the spinning-wheel. There is no doubt that, in abandoning home-spuns, we have committed a crime against Indian humanity, and it seems that Calicut was the very first offender in this respect; for I understand that it bears the name it does because Calicut was the first port where India turned to import calico from outside. But now I see your belief in the potency of khadi, and as you have told me that, whilst Calicut itself might appear a prosperous place, the country all round is groaning under poverty, it behoves you now to undo the mischief which Calicut commenced. And if you will be true to the profession you have made in your addresses I have to ask you the same thing that I have asked of the students, that you would all discard foreign cloth and take to khadi. But even that is not enough. You have to apply your talent to the organization and production of khadi in this very place. You, the citizens, including the students, can do so by doing sacrificial spinning and, having thus created the spinning atmosphere, you can take the gospel of spinning to all the villages round you and expect the villagers to spin for the whole of Malabar. And if you will but do so, you will find that you can add Rs. 4 per head per year to the wealth of the country and that you will do without replacing any other profitable occupation or without taking away from a single minute of your time which might be otherwise usefully occupied. And this is the penance we are expected to do for the sin that our forefathers committed.

There is again the great evil, concentrated or intensified in this part of the country, of untouchability known as unapproachability and unseeability. The sooner we Hindus get rid of it the better it is for us and Hinduism.

The drink evil is sapping the manhood of the poor people of the country. If we identify ourselves with the poorest of our country, it behoves us to work in their midst and try to wean them from the evil habit, and you must not be satisfied until you have brought about total prohibition in the land.

There are other things about which I have been speaking at other meetings. But I do not propose to take up your time with those other things important though they are. But I want to do some more business with you. I received some jewellery from the ladies here. I have a piece of hand-made khadi, beautiful in my opinion, given to me at Sabari Ashram which many of you know or ought to know. It is unostentatiously doing khadi work and doing work amongst the untouchables. I would like you to watch its activities, and, if they commend themselves to you, to support that Ashram. The spinning of the yarn, of which this piece of khadi is made, is done by one Brahmin, two Nayars, three Pulayas and four Thiyyas. It is woven also by the boys of the Ashram. So you have got a romantic history.

I already drew your attention to this book.¹ And here too, these books are useful books presented by a friend. And if you have the patience to be with me yet for a while and if you will bid for these things it will naturally take a little time. At the ladies' meeting a lady gave me a very beautiful timepiece. This is to be wound for eight days at a time, and it is in perfect order. There is this wrist watch and some rings, one of which is beautiful. And then, there are these frames which, it is well known, are expected to be taken up by the meeting. I propose to start with these frames. I have the copies of all these addresses supplied to me beforehand. Now we can start.

The Hindu, 27-10-1927

¹ A copy of *Sadhana* held in his hand

202. LETTER TO ANASUYABEHN SARABHAI

*Silence Day [After November 25, 1927]*¹

CHI. ANASUYABEHN,

I have wired my reply to your telegram. I can't think of more. I thought of you a lot while in Ceylon.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: S.N. 32811

203. TELEGRAM TO V. J. PATEL

October 26, 1927

REACHING BOMBAY TWENTYNINTH MORNING MANGALORE
BOAT. PICE YOU BARODA THIRTIETH.²

Vithalbhai Patel, Life and Times, Book Two, p. 780

204. SPEECH TO ADI-DRAVIDAS, CALICUT

October 26, 1927

DEAR FRIENDS,

It has given me the greatest pleasure to be in your midst. I also liked the idea of your absolutely facing me so that I can have a good look at all of you.

It distresses me somewhat that we have got these different sections here. But, perhaps, it was inevitable—inevitable for my convenience. I had also hoped that I shall be able to see a much larger number of you as I have done elsewhere.

Now I have gone through the whole of your address, because I see a translation of it. You don't want me to give you my assurance that my whole heart is with you. And, if mere lip profession should make me one amongst you, I have even described myself as a Nayadi. But I know that at the present moment it is perhaps an impertinent profession. I have not come in touch with a single Nayadi, and on the

¹ From the contents the letter appears to have been written after November 25, 1927, till which date Gandhiji remained in Ceylon.

² On the way to Delhi for interview with the Viceroy

only occasion when I was able to see a Nayadi I was not able to get a touch of him, because of a fearful hedge dividing me from him. I could not induce him to come round the hedge and onto the road, where I and my friends were standing, and I made myself believe that then I had no time to pass nor walk along the hedge and then pass by it and go on to this friend. So, if anybody in this audience or elsewhere accused me of making empty professions, I should straightway plead guilty. But, side by side with pleading guilty, I should also unhesitatingly declare that I felt for them and felt for you as keenly as anyone can possibly do in this world. Well, I am rather afraid that this very long address you have not understood, nor has it been explained to you. And so, I propose to tell you what that address contains. The substance of it is that those who are called untouchables and unapproachables and unseeables are treated in the land of their birth as not merely outcasts, but as slaves; that they are property to be sold and bought; that you do not even enjoy the right of road that a human being should have in every part of the world, and that it was not without much difficulty that you were able successfully to get one girl admitted into a municipal school in Calicut. I do not know how far this last allegation, which is specific, is true; but I am quite aware that the substance of your address is true. And it is true, because, even we, who have gathered here and are witnessing this giving of address to me and my speech to you, have been and are neglectful of your interests. If we, who falsely call ourselves touchables, and what not, and arrogate superiority to ourselves, really felt for you as blood-brothers, these things could not stand for one single day. But there is a silver lining to this black cloud. Hindu conscience has been stung to the quick, and, at the present moment, a mighty movement is going on throughout the length and breadth of India to do some little reparation to you for the atrocious wrong that has been done to you. Many Indians who are known as great men are today interesting themselves in this matter. I have therefore no doubt whatsoever in my mind that the time is soon coming when these disabilities will disappear in their entirety. And I have no doubt also that if these disabilities do not disappear by some act of sacrifice and repentance on the part of the Hindus, Hinduism itself will disappear.

You have suggested, or it has been suggested on your behalf, in the addresses, that institutions should be established for you all over, which have residential arrangements for the instruction of your boys. The idea is no doubt admirable. You have yourselves mentioned the

name of Mr. Kelappan Nair. He is conducting one such institution. Not very far from here is also Sabari Ashram. But I know that these are all too short for their requirements. And I want to tell you, and tell everybody in this audience that if more institutions have not sprung into being, it is not due to want of funds, but it is due to want of workers. There are Hindus enough today in India, who are willing to give as much money as may be required, if they can be assured that there are honest, industrious, self-sacrificing and intelligent workers to do this work. But to the shame of *savarna* Hindus, it must be confessed that we have not many workers of the stamp I have described for this work, and I am also aware that locally there is not even money enough for this work. The largest amount of money required, even for this work, comes from the North. It should not be so, and, in order that this movement of reform, which is long overdue in Hinduism, may become really universal in India, it is necessary that local Hindus everywhere should come forward and organize this reform both with men and money. And for this purpose, I want to make a concrete suggestion. Contrary to my expectation, this meeting is more a meeting of *savarna* Hindus and others than of *Adi-Dravidas*. At the end, therefore, of this meeting, I propose to make an appeal not for the Khadi Fund, but for this particular kind of work; and I would use that Fund as a nucleus for a larger fund for work to be done in Kerala. And whatever may be collected at this meeting, I shall hold, in order that it might be handed over to a committee, that may be formed here locally, because I feel that it is not right that always for this class of work money should come from the North. Work so done cannot be considered to be really substantial. Whereas, what is necessary is that every Hindu should definitely heal this wrong, and, at least, make reparation by setting apart a certain sum from month to month or year to year for this work. And I can give you this assurance that whatever money that you may subscribe now, I shall not part with, unless I have seen a proper committee with a proper purse, set in working order.

Now so much for the part that *savarna* Hindus have got to play. But you have very properly said, or it has been very properly said for you in this address, that, after all, salvation must come from your own self. I have no doubt that, if you could only feel your strength, you could free yourselves today. But it has been stated, and properly stated in this address, that it is at the present moment beyond your capacity to feel this glow of strength. But there are some things which you can

do at once. If you are drinking you must give up drinking. If you are smoking you must give up smoking. If you are eating dead meat, carrion, you must give that up. You hold it to be intolerable for a Hindu to kill cows or to eat beef. That is one abstention enjoined most strictly upon every Hindu. And, in my own humble opinion, this abstention from cow-killing and beef-eating has a much deeper meaning than appears on the surface. I would like you, therefore, to give up this habit. I have just now heard from our host that many of you are giving up eating beef. And it gives me very great pleasure to hear this. I must apologize to you for even thinking that you have been eating beef. But as you will recall, I spoke conditionally. But I know that *Adi-Dravidas* in other parts of the South do eat beef. And if you will carry on this process of self-purification, little by little, you will find an evolution in yourselves, and you will also acquire self-confidence, which cannot possibly be gained by anybody.

Now, I do not propose to say anything more to you because I want to do the business that I have proposed for myself. But I shall hope that, since you have been brought here, or you have come here, those who have organized this meeting will more fully explain what I have told you, and you yourselves will go out into the midst of those who are related to you or known to you and carry my message to them.

Now, before I send out collectors in the midst of this meeting, I should like [the] principal men to announce their subscriptions themselves, if they have not got money enough in their pockets. Whatever is announced, I shall expect to be paid before I leave for Mangalore. I am an expert in making and organizing collections, and I know that it is a most dangerous thing to give credit for more than a few hours in the matter of collection. I want to exert no pressure, save the pressure of love. But, if you realize the significance of the speech I have made to you, I do not want you to give in niggardly fashion. I want you to consider this as your own work. Now, I leave this matter of collection in your hands.

At this stage, donations to the extent of about Rs. 380 were announced and paid on the spot. Whilst collections were going on, Mahatamaji read out a letter, which was handed over to him just then, and it was as follows :

On the 5th instant I had occasion to go in the company of the District Scout Master and a Provincial Organizing Secretary of the Boy Scouts Association to the house of a lawyer. The agent of this gentleman received us

all kindly and offered seats in the verandah. Subsequently, however, the lawyer was given our visiting-card. His agent came out and told me that since from my name I appeared to be an unapproachable I should stand out in the courtyard. Out of self-respect I came away. I do not wish to encroach on your valuable time by offering criticisms on this occasion of the highly educated Brahmin gentleman. It will surely pain you to know that the lawyer mentioned is also one of the best Brahmins in the district. The particular instance, therefore, shows how deep-rooted is the vice of untouchability in this part of India. Mahatmaji carefully omitted all the names in the letter and said :

Of course it is a shameful thing. I believe that this instance must have happened, because I know myself that instances of this character have happened elsewhere also. It is certainly not creditable. But let us all who are here make some penance for those who are still harbouring unapproachability. I can understand a man full of superstition doing this; but I cannot possibly understand a man who has received college education such as it is, has become a lawyer, is practising and so on, and still having—what shall I say—the audacity or the ignorance or whatever adjective or whatever word you may wish to use and turn out a man, every inch of him a gentleman. This instance ought not to occur. However, I have mentioned this instance to you in order to make my appeal more effective.

My suggestion now is that the organizers of this meeting will not let the grass grow under their feet, but they will set about working today and form a little committee not for name, but for work, and substantial work. Send me the names of that committee. I am going today to Mangalore and as I had expected to go to Ceylon, I won't be able to go nor shall I be able to give four days to Mangalore, as I had expected to do. But, having received an urgent invitation from the Viceroy who wants me to go to Delhi on "urgent and important matters" as he puts in his telegram, I am also obliged to interrupt my journey to Ceylon and go to Delhi from Mangalore, and then I hope to return as quickly as possible, and go to Ceylon. But you can correspond with me in Delhi where I expect to reach on the 31st and I should be there for three days. I make the suggestion in order that you may lose no time. I want this committee to be a substantial committee and the committee should make it a point of honour to raise every penny that may be required for this work in Malabar itself. I know now enough of Malabar. I know that Malabar has that capacity for financing this, your purification movement.

And then having done that, the second thing I want to say now is

not in connection with this untouchability. But I cannot possibly leave this meeting without drawing the attention of these friends in front of me. Of course it hurts me to the quick to see a single person, who considers India as his or her land by birth or adoption, neglecting the poorest of the land by neglecting khadi. There are millions in our country, who are not called untouchables, but who have become untouchables because of semi-starvation. They have become untouchables because nobody goes to them. Nobody thinks of them. Nobody cares whether they are dying or whether they are living. Beasts and other animals at least get their food somehow or other. But these have become less than animals even, because they are semistarved. I want you therefore to think of them and in their name and for their sake not to invest a single rupee in buying any cloth but khadi, remembering that every rupee so spent means food for at least 16 women for one day.

And then I want you all to do a little spinning every day. If you do not know it, you should learn it. You can have clothes made out of yarn of your own spinning. I want to inform you that hundreds, possibly thousands, but I may not be able to verify the figure by thousands, but hundreds of the so-called untouchables have been reclaimed through the spinning-wheel. Many untouchables in the northern parts of India were weavers. But they were no weavers of fine cloth or patterns but of simple coarse cloth, and, as Manchester calico came, they ceased to weave, because nobody would give them anything to weave. I know one family in the Ashram which has now made several thousands of rupees after this movement came, and that family consisting of husband, wife and one boy also working, and one child I think, they are at the present moment earning Rs. 75 per month, and have free lodgings. I can give you instances of many such families, though not earning so much as this family, but earning a decent living. Supposing that this movement dies, all these families will be again out of work. Supposing that this movement continues to progress much more than it is doing now, hundreds and thousands of such families can be set up. For, I know that there is no limit to our capacity for producing cloth even of the finest khadi. But somehow or other we seem unfortunately to have lost the will to love our country. And so you have more khadi than there is demand at the present moment in India. I want you *Adi-Dravida* brethren to alter this state of things because, after you, poor men like you are to be counted in millions. When khadi becomes the current coin in India our economic march cannot be stayed by any power on earth. Now I thank you all for responding to this appeal of mine.

The Hindu, 28-10-1927

205. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, MANGALORE¹

October 26, 1927

I am grateful to you for all the money which you have given me on behalf of *Daridranarayana* as also for the addresses. Since coming here I was very glad to find that some people spoke to me in my own language. I find that an address from the Arya Samaj in Hindi also was presented to me. If all the addresses had been in Hindi or at least in your own language, Kanarese, I would have been more glad. On this earth, God, Parameswhara, gives us sorrow and happiness. That Parameshwara has given me sorrow when I heard these addresses read in a foreign language. In this town I originally wanted to stay with you for four days. I wish I had been able to do so. This day in the ordinary course of events I would have been in Nileshwar. When we reached Nileshwar Railway Station this afternoon I found thousands of people collected and in despair and my mind was very much aggrieved to disappoint them, and come here passing that station. I find some consolation in the fact that while serving the country I may have to disappoint so many by unavoidable change of programmes.

While I was in Tiruppur I received a telegram from the Viceroy. In that telegram His Excellency requested me to come up to Delhi in order to discuss with me some important matters. I think that by complying with that request also I may be able to do some service to the country. So it is that I had not the heart in me to refuse the invitation. I told you I have to go to Delhi and hence I am not able to stay in your midst long. So please excuse me. For what precise business I am going to Delhi to the Viceroy, why he has called me, and what important matter he wants to discuss with me, you might all be anxious to know. I am sorry to say that I myself do not know anything more about it. He has simply requested me to come even at a little inconvenience to myself. I have complete confidence that I will be able to finish my work in Delhi in two days. After that I want to go to Ceylon. If I get time and convenience when I come back, I will finish my full programme in your district.

I want to go to Ceylon and finish all the programmes that have been arranged there. I was to serve the *Daridranarayana* of Ceylon also as I have been serving here. So on account of all these reasons

¹ Gangadharrao Deshpande translated the speech into Kannada.

please excuse my abrupt departure tomorrow from Mangalore by sea.

Six or seven years ago I came here with my brother Maulana Shaukat Ali. That visit I will never forget. At that time Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs and all other in this country had been at peace. They trusted each other. There was perfect confidence between them. In Northern India, you have at the present time Hindus and Mussalmans fighting with each other and breaking each other's heads. This state of things should not continue. I am confident that good relations will be restored between them at no distant date.

In all your addresses you have mentioned about charkha and khadi and expressed your perfect confidence in the success of the movement. All the money you have given me is for that purpose. It is not enough if you say that you have faith in this movement. That will not make the movement successful. This khadi movement will succeed only if all of you wear khaddar. I see many of you around me dressed in foreign cloth. Our country produces enough cotton and food products. If all our countrymen had only been consuming imported food materials then what would have been our condition today? It is the same if we wear foreign cloth. One of my sister told me that so long as she could not get very fine khadi she would not wear that dress. Now I will tell you of one instance. Suppose your mother or your daughter prepares food, even though it is not so nice you relish it will. In the same way the cloth prepared by your own brothers and sisters should be readily acceptable to you even if it be a little rough. As regards fine khadi I can supply you khadi of whatever fineness you want. You can see how fine is the cloth on which the addresses were printed and the khaddar saris worn by my wife. You can also produce such fine khadi if only you take a little trouble and interest. What I would request you is this: this day onwards you should promise me that you will wear khadi only.

In your municipal address I am glad to find that spinning has been introduced in the schools maintained under their jurisdiction. In these schools small children can make beautiful thread by means of *takli*. That is the best instrument to use in schools. You must teach them to spin in a scientific manner. I have noticed that those who are engaged in spinning khadi are very happy and contented. But all the members of the Municipal Council do not wear khaddar. They do not work on the charkha also, I know. So if they introduce the charkha in schools and ask the students to spin they would consider it as a

punishment. So in order to satisfy their students at least they should wear khadi.

There are certain evils in Hinduism like untouchability which I would bring to your notice. It is the duty of every Hindu to see that these vicious evils are immediately up rooted from the country if our Mother India is to attain salvation at all.

To the students who have gathered here I wish to say one word only. That is, the future of this country depends upon you alone. Because you are learning, it cannot be said that you are serving the country and the extent of your knowledge only has no relation to such service. I wanted to tell you two or three things more but I do not want to detain you.

Many of you may know that there is Hindi *prachar* work done by a disciple of the late revered Swami Shraddhanandji. He will teach Hindi to those who want to learn it. I would appeal to all of you, especially students, to learn that language. About the study of this language I have mentioned in several of my speeches in other places, and have also written a number of articles. Still if you want to hear more I will tell you a few words. If you desire to serve all India, if you want a bond of union between the northern and southern portions of this vast country, it is necessary that you should learn Hindi.

Finally, those who have not contributed enough money may do so even now. If there are my ladies who want to present any jewels to *Daridranarayana* they may do so. As regards my sisters I will tell you this—your ideal is Sita Devi. Just as she was beautiful in her natural form so also you should not desire the help of ornaments to aid your beauty. Moreover it is not good for you to wear ornaments while there are many of your sisters starving for food and work. Those who give a jewel worth Rs. 100 will provide food for sixteen hundred of their poor sisters for one day. These sisters do not beg. I do not give money to a beggar. I take full work from them. In Tamil Nadu, Travancore and other places many sisters and small children have given me various jewels and ornaments. I thank you all and may God bless you to understand what all I have said!

The Hindu, 28-10-1927

206. A GOOD SERVANT GONE

It was in 1921 at Bezwada that at a great ladies' meeting I saw the only khaddar-clad girl present there taking charge of the meeting, keeping order, and moving about with energy and decision. She was the first to give up, so far as I can remember, all her rich ornaments, bangles and a heavy gold chain. "Have you got the permission of your parents?," I asked her, as she was delivering all the ornaments to me. "My parents do not interfere with me and they let me do as I like," she replied. Annapurna Devi spoke English fluently. She had received her education at Bethune College in Calcutta. She went out amongst the huge mass of ladies for collections and brought ornaments and money. Ever since then she kept herself in touch with the movement—in fact dedicated herself to it. She was captain of lady volunteers at Coconada, and many have described in glowing terms her wonderful work at the time. Unfortunately even at this time she was not in robust health. She was married to Sjt. Magunti Bapi Needu, B.Sc. Whilst at Coimbatore I suddenly received a telegram several days after her death that she was no more. And now I have a letter from Sjt. Needu from which I take the following extracts¹ :

It is true, indeed, that I have lost more than a devoted follower. I feel like having lost one of my many daughters whom I have the good fortune to own throughout India. And she was among the very best of these. She never wavered in her faith and worked without expectation of praise or reward. I wish that many wives will acquire, by their purity and single-minded devotion, the gentle but commanding influence Annapurna Devi acquired over her husband. I appreciate his mild rebuke to me for Annapurna Devi having worn her body out in pursuit of the service of the Motherland. I doubt not that many young men and young women will have to imitate this good woman and die martyrs to duty before India becomes once more holy and free as millions believe her to have been in ancient times.

I have not been able to respond to the request to serve on the committee referred to in the foregoing extracts. For I have many

¹ Not reproduced here. The extracts gave a graphic description of Annapurna's steadfast devotion to Gandhiji, to khadi, non-co-operation and even to his dietetic experiments. The correspondent had asked for Gandhiji's consent to be included in a committee for her memorial.

interests, and I could not cope with the burden of being a member of hundreds of committees. I have never believed in becoming merely an ornamental member of any committee or belonging to it or the sake of lending my name. That there should be a local memorial to perpetuate the memory of one so brave, pure and patriotic like Annapurna Devi, I have no doubt. But the best memorial would be for her worthy husband to follow in the footsteps of his wife, and perpetuate her memory by finding his lost partner in the country's cause. For according to his own testimony Annapurna Devi had already lost herself in that cause.

Young India, 27-10-1927

207. A WORTHY EXAMPLE

The Vice-Chairman of the Municipality of Chanda (C.P.) writes as follows :

This is the first Municipality in Central Provinces and Berar to exempt khadi from payment of octroi. Over and above this, from 1922 it has been regularly making an annual grant of Rs. 500 for khadi work which is being utilized for maintaining a 'Shuddha Khadi Karyalaya' here. This Karyalaya has now been affiliated to the All-India Spinners' Association. The yarn produced in it has been found to be the best in Maharashtra, with regard to its count, evenness and strength. Since 1922 the Municipality has been employing, for all its purposes, exclusively khadi manufactured in the Chanda Khadi Karyalaya. It is now considering a scheme for introducing khadi in its schools.

The resolution referred to reads :

Resolved that all the hand-spun and hand-woven khadi certified for its genuineness by the All-India Spinners' Association be exempted from payment of octroi duty.

This is an example worthy of imitation by every municipality. The khadi work by this Municipality is no new love but it is well tried. It has survived the vicissitudes through which the other municipalities, large and small, have passed, and it has grown from year to year. The Municipality has been able to achieve this success because many of its members not only believe in the message of the wheel but reduce their belief into practice in their own lives. The evolution of khadi in this Municipality has been natural in its stages. It commenced with a monetary grant, then they introduced khadi uniform for its servants.

This has been followed up by the removal of octroi duty on khadi, and it now proposes to introduce spinning in its schools. I hope that the introduction of spinning in the schools will be carried out in a scientific spirit, and that boys and girls will be induced to wear khadi before they are called upon to spin, and will be told why they should spin rather than do any manual work. I suggest, too, that the spinning will be on the *takli* and not on the wheel. Those boys who show great aptitude and take a keen interest in spinning may be supplied with spinning-wheels as loans to be worked not in the schools but in their homes, the wheels to be their property if they show continuous work for a period of one year. Both boys and girls should also be taught carding before they begin to spin, and their work should be tested daily and tabulated from time to time.

Young India, 27-10-1927

208. PROFITABLE COTTON CULTIVATION

A correspondent suggests that there should be a widespread movement to induce cotton cultivators to store a quantity of cotton for themselves to be converted into hand-spun yarn and finally into khadi for their own use. He also suggests that in non-cotton areas individual peasants should be encouraged to grow enough cotton as they grow vegetables for their own requirements. The correspondent contends that if this becomes popular, it will cheapen khadi for the peasantry. He says that in some parts of the South before the khadi movement came there were cultivators who followed this method. The correspondent thinks that Indian States are best able to promote this kind of cultivation of cotton.

There is much force in the correspondent's suggestion. The experiment of inducing cotton cultivators to retain sufficient cotton for their own needs is being tried in Bijolia (Rajputana), Bardoli and Kathiawar. But it has been found difficult in Kathiawar for the cultivators to resist the temptation of selling stored cotton when prices ruled high. This is not possible, until the cultivators appreciate the economics of khadi, and the fact that labour spent upon cotton during their leisure hours in subjecting it to the processes antecedent to weaving will bring about the same result that they achieve by selling cotton at a high price, and will in addition free themselves from the clutches of the speculator. This means that the All-India Spinners' Association will have to educate the cultivators in the economics of

khadi. There is no doubt that in order to overtake all the branches of khadi work it is necessary for khadi workers to come in close touch with the cotton growers, because even for buying cotton for the manufacture of khadi for town consumption, it would be necessary to come to touch with the cotton growers, and buy from them direct instead of buying in the market as is being done at present. If we would be independent of the speculator and the fluctuations of the cotton market and stabilize the price of khadi, we shall have to come in touch with the cultivator and induce him to deal with us directly. The greater the progress of khadi the more shall we find that our methods have to be far different from those hitherto adopted by the commercial world, which believes in selling at the highest price obtainable and buying at the cheapest rate possible. The world commerce at the present moment is not based upon equitable considerations. Its maxim is: 'Buyers beware.' The maxim of khadi economics is: 'Equity for all.' It therefore rules out the present soul-killing competitive method. Khadi economics are designed in the interest of the poorest and the helpless, and khadi will be successful only to the extent that the workers permeate the masses and command their confidence. And the only way of commanding their confidence is doing selfless work among them.

The correspondent's suggestion that the Indian States are more fortunately placed in the matter of storing cotton by cotton cultivators and growing enough for home consumption by other cultivators is no doubt true. The question however is: 'Who will bell the cat?' The majority of the States are little concerned with the welfare of the peasantry. Their aim in life for the present moment seems to be to increase their revenue as much as possible and at any cost, and to spend the largest part of it for their own pleasures. Moreover they, like other capitalists, have little faith in khadi economics. A very cautious experiment is now being tried, in Mysore, of finding out the possibilities of the spinning-wheel as a village industry. One may hope that if that experiment is tried scientifically and patiently and is found to succeed, it would prove infectious.

Young India, 27-10-1927

209. REMOVING UNTOUCHABILITY

Sjt. S. D. Nadkarni in letter from Karwar, dated 10th September, says :

Last week, my brother and I, helped by a band of young men, successfully organized, against many and unexpected difficulties, a खरा सार्वजनिक गणेशोत्सव (i.e., real all-inclusive Ganapati festival), so called because we included the untouchables along with the other Hindus in our programme of processions, *puja, bhajan, arati, kirtan*, Puranareading and lastly a drama specially got written and staged twice during the festival. The drama is based on the real experience of the depressed class member of our District School Board, who was refused admission into a school housed in a temple in a neighbouring village, while his Mussalman fellow-member and companion was admitted to inspect the school! Could you believe it? It was some of our own people (Hindu touch-me-nots) who tried to prevent the performance of the drama by setting up the local Muslims to petition to the authorities that the drama should be prohibited on the (totally false) ground that it was anti-Muslim. Could our people's opposition to a vital reform in our own community take a more suicidal course than this? But thank Reason and Justice, their attempts came to naught!

With the help of Chitre Shastri of Poona (President of the Maharashtra Hindu Sabha) specially invited here for the purpose, we formed a local branch of the Hindu Sabha, with the object in particular of combating untouchability and securing admission to the untouchables into our public temples.

The opposition, and the manner of it, from the "touch-me-nots" as Sjt. Nadkarni calls the self-styled orthodox Hindus, to the presence of the so-called untouchables at the innocent performance organized by the reformers does not reflect any credit on them or their Hinduism, and it shows the lengths to which blind orthodoxy will go under the sacred name of religion. I congratulate Sjt. Nadkarni and his friends upon their having successfully taken the untouchable friends in their procession and admitted them to their theatrical performances. The only way to get rid of untouchability is for every reformer to do some such constructive work, be it ever so small, on behalf of the suppressed classes and by gentleness combined with firmness break down the double wall of superstition and prejudice. I hope that the reformers of Karwar will succeed in their efforts to gain for the untouchables admission to the temples.

Young India, 27-10-1927

210. MESSAGE TO SOUTH INDIA

[October 27, 1927]¹

I am leaving the South not without much regret. Wherever I have gone I have experienced richest affection from all kinds of people, not excluding those who consider themselves to belong to a different political school. Wherever I went I found a genuine faith in the message of the spinning-wheel. I am therefore leaving the South full of hope. I wish that I had more time at my disposal so as to enable me to overtake the many places whose invitations I was not able to respond to. I ask the people now to translate their faith into practice more than they have hitherto done, and they will discover a potency in khadi which they had not expected.

The Hindu, 29-10-1927

211. INTERVIEW TO THE PRESS

OMBAY

October 29, 1927

When asked by a representative of *The Indian Daily Mail* whether he would be prepared to accept the appointment of assessors on the Royal Commission or boycott it, Mahatma Gandhi said :

I have not given any thought to this question.

He said he was out of touch with events being away in South India and hence was not prepared to say anything about the rumours he was told about Indians being excluded from the Royal Commission.

Referring to the Unity Conference, Gandhiji said that he had not been specially invited to it, but being a member of the All-India Congress Committee and the Working Committee he would under ordinary circumstances have attended the Conference. He did not attend the Conference, because there was no way in which his services would be of any use.

The representative asked him: "As the question of Hindu-Muslim unity is important, don't you think that if you had lent your support to the deliberations of the Conference, it would have been of great assistance in arriving at an amicable settlement of the problem?"

¹ Gandhiji left Mangalore on the morning of October 27 to see the Viceroy on November 2.

[GANDHIJI]: I admit it is a very important question. If I had thought that I could assist the deliberations of the Conference, I would certainly have suspended my tour and gone to Calcutta. In short, I simply say that I hold strange views about the way of bringing about unity which in the present atmosphere cannot get accepted. Therefore, I can only be a hindrance rather than a help. So I felt that my abstaining was a kind of service.

Mahatmaji added that his “strange views” might be gleaned from the pages of *Young India*.¹

[In reply to another question Gandhiji said :]

If someone invites me to consult me on some public matter I never reject the invitation.

He said he was not going to meet the Viceroy as a representative of anyone. Speaking about the Unity Conference at Calcutta, he said :

I was not invited to the Conference. In not inviting me Sri Aiyengar has only done me a kindness. He knows my views on the question and being a true friend he refrained from giving me unnecessary trouble. . . . I would have done no good by going. I have no sympathy for the attitude either of the Hindus or the Muslims and my presence at the Conference would have been only a hindrance.

Asked about his Southern tour Gandhiji said :

I have returned from this tour with hope. People evinced great enthusiasm about khadi—although they could have shown even greater enthusiasm.

Answering the criticism evoked by his statement that in some Hindu temples God was present only as much as He was in brothels, Gandhiji said :

I am not prepared to withdraw a single word of what I said. In a way, it is the truth. God is omnipresent. He is present in thieves’ dens, in toddy shops and in brothels. But to worship God we do not go to these places. For this purpose we look for a temple, trusting that the atmosphere there will be pure. I say that in this sense God does not dwell in some of the temples. Or if He does, it is only as much as in a brothel. If this statement of mine has hurt any Hindus I am sorry for it. But for the sake of truth and Hinduism I cannot either take away from or add to my statement.

¹ What follows is a translation from the Hindi daily *Aaj*, 31-10-1927.

Speaking about the statue agitation¹ Gandhiji said :

Since the Madras Council has turned down the resolution about removing the status, the youth of Madras should redouble their effort and those members of the Council who supported the resolution should help them in every way. I cannot help saying that those who voted against the resolution have not understood the importance of this agitation. I am also sorry that the Europeans too obstructed the move.

The Hindu, 31-10-1927 and *Aaj*, 31-10-1927

212. NOTES

OWNERLESS

A language which does not possess a universally accepted dictionary but admits all words in it may be regarded as ownerless. We have inexhaustible means at our disposal for checking spellings of English words. From huge dictionaries to the smallest and cheapest pocket-sized ones they are available. In all of them uniform spellings are to be found.

I have an impression that commonly accepted dictionaries are available for Hindustani and other language. Gujarati is the only language which has hitherto remained ownerless. I do not know of a single Gujarati dictionary which is commonly accepted or which contains all the words in the language. I have often made efforts in this direction but failed every time.

Some workers have been making efforts over several years to remedy this deficiency. Their work may now be regarded as having secured a good footing. Shri Narahari Parikh has taken upon himself the special responsibility for this. Kakasaheb Kalelkar is its founder-compiler. The approval of as many learned men as possible has been secured in regard to the principles that are being followed in the compilation of this dictionary². It will be published under their seals and their signatures.

However, an increasing number of difficulties are cropping up as this work makes headway. Every lover of the language can help in

¹ For the removal of Neill statue in Madras; *vide* also "The Neill Statue and Non-Violence", September 29, 1927 and "Neill Statue Satyagraha", October 13, 1927.

² *Jodni Kosh*, published in 1929 with a preface by D. B. Kalelkar

solving some of these difficulties. The reader will see for himself how and in what particular manner he can help by reading Shri Narahari Parikh's appeal to the lovers of the language published in this issue. Without the assistance of a large number of persons this work cannot be accomplished as well as it should be. I hope, therefore, that everyone will give the best help he or she can.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 30-10-1927

213. INTERVIEW TO "INDIAN NATIONAL HERALD"

[On or before *October 30, 1927*]¹

A representative of the *Indian National Herald* questioned him as to what attitude he would take up at the Viceregal Conference, if he were faced with the proposition so much in the air, viz., that the Statutory Commission is to be composed of parliamentarians and Indians to act as mere assessors. Gandhiji replied :

How the Royal Commission should be constituted is as alien a subject to me as, say, the cure for tuberculosis which falls in the province of a medical expert. I have paid no thought to the subject of Royal Commission because it is distinctly outside the sphere of my knowledge, thoughts and activities.

Q. Would you accept a seat on the Royal Commission, if one was offered to you?

A. What is the use of asking me that question? I had once speculated what I would do if I were appointed Viceroy of India, but those days of speculation are gone.

In the end, the *Herald's* representative asked: "As a sure panacea for the country's ills, it has been suggested that you should be given dictatorial powers in all our national activities and be persuaded to play the Mussolini in India. How do you think that idea will work?"

Gandhiji returned a hearty laugh, then replied in all seriousness :

I have neither the ambitions of Mussolini nor can I have his powers. If dictatorship were thrust on me, I should cut a sorry figure as an Indian Mussolini. Moreover, you can't impose by force any reforms, social or otherwise. In other words, you cannot make people good by force.

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 3-11-1927

¹ Gandhiji arrived in Bombay on October 29 and left for Delhi on the 30th.

214. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

Sunday [October 30, 1927]¹

CHI. MIRA,

Your letters have been a great comfort to me, as they have enabled me to know all about the patients. I am glad you are clearing the kitchen thoroughly. I did write last Monday. You must have got that letter by now. More tomorrow.

Love

BAPU

[PS.]

I hope to be for a day at the Ashram during the return journey.

From the original: C.W. 5296. Courtesy: Mirabehn

215. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

Monday [October 31, 1927]²

CHI. MIRA,

This is being written on a moving jolting train. And I am disinclined to do any writing at all today. It is now 4 p.m. when I have commenced the Monday letters. I have done a very fair amount of sleeping and an equal amount of listening to two friends.

I want you to tell me all you saw at the dairy and the pinjrapoles and the names of the ten. But perhaps there will be hardly time for you to write in reply so as to reach me in Delhi. For if I finish with the Viceroy on 2nd at the very first interview I shall hope to leave that very day for Sabarmati. Let us see. There is no warrant to hope much from the interview but I would not reject the advance on that ground.

I am looking forward to seeing both the serious patients absolutely free from fever. You should press both to take milk principally and keep their bowels in order.

Love,

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 5290. Courtesy: Mirabehn

¹ From the references to Gandhiji's proposed halt at the Ashram and to a letter already written; *vide* "Letter to Mirabehn", 24-10-1927.

² From the contents of the succeeding item; *vide* also "Letters to Mirabehn", 30-10-1927.

216. LETTER TO ASHRAM WOMEN

Sud 6 [October 31, 1927]¹

SISTERS,

I tried to write in ink; but the train is moving so fast and is shaking so much that I cannot. And yet, how can I miss writing to you my Monday letter?

Never give up your efforts at unity. Success lies in the effort itself. God has promised that effort for good never goes waste and all of us have had some experience of this. You cannot now give up the store work. You should not, out of diffidence, give up work once undertaken. There is no reason either to feel diffident or to fear defeat. If a few of you gain experience and become expert in the work, there should be no hitch whatsoever; if you give up the store work out of a sense of defeatism, you will never be able to undertake any other work without any misgiving. Even if there are differences of opinion and petty jealousies, whatever work has to be done must be done. We should certainly not do less than what others do.

Blessings from

BAPU

[PS.]

I hope to see you within three or four days.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3673

217. LETTER TO GANGABEHN JHAVERI

Silence Day, Kartak Sud 6 [October 31, 1927]²

CHI. GANGABEHN JHAVERI,

I got your letter about the girl and her mother. I am sure Gangabehn³ will be able to apply the correct remedy for burns. It is all to the good that one should lose faith in doctors, but the cause should not be the negligence of one of them. Carefulness is an

¹ Year and month inferred from the reference to the Ashram women's efforts towards unity and Gandhiji's hope to see them "within three or four days"

² The addressee was elected president of the Ashram women in September 1927.

³ Gangabehn Vaidya

independent quality of character. We may, therefore, place ourselves in the hands of a doctor about whose carefulness we have no doubt at all and in whom we have faith, and then trust to God.

You should not be impatient to give up the Presidentship. It is certain now that I shall go to the Ashram for a day. You may tell me more then. Consider your position not as a privilege but as a responsibility. One should never pass on responsibility to someone else.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3124

218. LETTER TO PARASHURAM MEHROTRA

Tuesday, November 1, 1927

CHI. PARASRAM,

I have your letter just now. Rajkishori's¹ soul is certainly at peace. You must have fortitude. May God grant you peace and faith.

Blessings from

BAPU

From the Hindi original: C.W. 2972. Courtesy: Parashuram mehrotra

219. SPEECH AT JAMIA MILLIA ISLAMIA, DELHI

November 2, 1927

The boys that were just introduced to you are grandsons of my friend and fellow-worker who was like a blood-brother to me, the late Ahmed Mahomed Kachhalia whom I naturally recall as I see the boys, and about whom I think I had better tell you something. Amongst the Hindus and Mussalmans that lived in South Africa in the days of satyagraha there was not a single Indian who could compare with Kachhalia in his bravery and his integrity. He sacrificed his all for the honour and prestige of his country. He cared not for his business nor for his wealth, nor for his friends, and plunged himself wholeheartedly into the struggle. Even in those days the cursed Hindu-Muslim differences now and then cropped up, but Kachhalia held the

¹ Addressee's wife who had passed away a few days earlier

scales even between the two. No one ever accused him of partiality for his community.

And he had learnt this great virtue of patriotism and tolerance not at any school nor in England, but in his own home, for he wrote even Gujarati with difficulty. Lawyers were amazed at the way in which he met their arguments and puzzled them, and his uncommon common sense was often very helpful to them. It was he who led the satyagrahis, and he died in harness.¹ He had a son called Ali whom he had trusted to my care. A lad of 11 he was wonderfully restrained, and a devout Mussalman. He never missed a day of fast during the sacred month of Ramzan. And yet he had not will towards Hindu boys. Today so-called religious devoutness in either is synonymous with a dislike, if not hatred, for other religions. Ali had no such dislike, no hatred. Well, both the father and the son are to me names to conjure with, and may their example inspire you.

In those days when Hindus and Mussalmans seemed to be one and ready to shed their blood for one another, and for their country, I appealed to the students to leave Government schools and colleges. The many years that have passed have left me utterly unrepentant for having asked those boys to come out of those institutions, and I am firmly of opinion that those who responded to the call served their land, and I am sure the future historian of India will record their sacrifice with approval.

But alas, today there are Muslims who go to mosques and offer prayers, and there are Hindus who visit temples, worship God and they are full of hatred against each other. They have begun to think that going to mosque or temple means that we should hate each other. But Ali, though a very religious soul, never thought so. I have related this story to you simply because I wish every one of you to be truly patriotic like the great Kachhalia and his loving son Ali. I pray to God to bless you with their noble heart.²

Hakimji has reminded you of that memorable day (11th October, 1920) , when Hindus and Muslims had sun their differences and they had united for ever, when students all over India were invited

¹ At this stage Hakim Ajmal Khan pointed out that Gandhiji was not audible on account of his low voice and hence Maulana Mohammed Ali be asked to repeat sentence by sentence what Gandhiji spoke. Mohammed Ali then related in brief what Gandhiji had already said.

² This paragraph is from *The Hindustan Times*.

to come out of all Government-owned or aided institutions. I know that I had a great hand in this invitation, but I make bold to say that even after seven years, I don't feel the least sorry for that nor do I think that I committed a blunder in that. I believe that those who gave up their studies at the Government institutions did a great service to the country. I am sure that when the history of that period in India will be written the historian will no doubt have to write that those who boycotted Government institutions did great good to themselves and to their country.¹

I am glad to find here some of the traces of those proud days, and I am very happy that you are trying your utmost to keep the flag flying. Your number is small, but the world never overflowed with good and true men. I ask you not to worry yourselves about the smallness of the number, but to remember that however few you may be the freedom of the country depends on you. Freedom has very little to do with your learning the letters or even with mere mechanical plying of the *takli*. If you have not the things essential for the freedom of India, I do not know who else has them. Those things are fear of God and freedom from fear of any man or a combination of men called an empire. If training in these two essentials cannot be had in your institutions, I do not know where else it can be had. But I know your professors, I know Hakimsaheb, and I am sure that these two essentials are being very carefully taught.

I do not mind the unsatisfactory state of your finances. In fact I am glad that we should be living from hand to mouth, so that we may all the better cherish our Maker and fear Him.

Mahatmaji laid great stress on the fact that if the University was doing good work, they must be confident that God will supply them with funds.²

Hakimji was quite right when he said that it was difficult for me to come to Delhi. But to come to you was a solace and a comfort. It is not to please you that I came here, but to please myself. I came with a selfish end in view, and that is to tell you that in spite of the storm of hatred and poison raging outside your Millia, in spite of Muslim running at the Hindu's throat and *vice versa*, you boys here will keep your heads cool, will not deny your Maker, will give no room in your hearts to hatred, nor even in your mind gloat over the country and its

¹ These paragraphs are from *The Hindustan Times*.

² *ibid*

religions going to wreck and ruin. That's the only hope that has drawn me to you.

You will have noticed that I have said nothing about khadi or *takli*. That is because even khadi and *takli* are nothing before the essentials I have talked to you about. You may ply your *takli* and wear khadi, but if you do not do the things I have told you, your khadi and *takli* will be of no account. But you will, I am sure, not forget what Hakimsaheb has told you about the necessity of wearing khaddar. You will bear in mind that it is by means of khadi that we are supporting 50,000 spinners today besides hundreds of weavers, washermen, carpenters, etc. Do not forget that many of these are Mussalmans. Without the charkha the Mussalman women in many places would have been starving. There is no other way of identifying with yourselves the Hindu and Muslim poor than that of wearing khadi.

Then Mahatmaji spoke very feelingly on the urgent need of building moral character. He said :

I meet thousands of students in my tour in the country. I find them entangled in ugly and dirty habits, which need no mention, because you all know. I pray God that He may save you from those dirty doings. When a man makes his hands, eyes and mind dirty, he is no more a man, but he becomes an animal.¹

You should always abstain from doing any evil with hands, mind or eyes. If we want to be truly brave men then we must regard all women as our mothers, sisters or daughters, according to their age. Never cast a bad eye on any lady. We must be prepared to die for the honour of women. I know people forget this duty nowadays. I once again pray God to save you from this evil.²

Above all keep yourselves pure and clean, and learn to keep your promises even at the cost of life, and have the memory of the examples I have cited to you ever green in your hearts.

Concluding, Mahatmaji thanked the students for the purse and prayed that their University may live long and become India's freedom centre.³

Young India, 10-11-1927 and *The Hindustan Times*, 4-11-1927

¹ These paragraphs are from *The Hindustan Times*.

² *ibid*

³ *ibid*

220. NEED FOR SELF-CONVERSION

Lokamanya gave us his message in four simple words. But there are even now people who question the proposition that swaraj is their birthright even as there are some who question the existence of God. The swaraj movement, therefore, is a movement to make us realize that swaraj is our birthright. In the midst of the many reminders that we already have of the existence of this need of self-conversion, the debate in the Madras Legislative Council on the Neill statue satyagraha came as an additional and emphatic reminder of that need. The innocent resolution asking for the removal of the offending statue was lost by an overwhelming majority. Almost all the Indian members, except the stalwarts, voted against the resolution. The motion showed the sharp difference between the Swarajist mentality and every other. This vote and the debate are a fresh demonstration of the fact that swaraj is delayed not so much by the obstinacy of the English 'rulers' as by our own refusal to recognize and work for our status. This agitation for the removal of the Neill statue is, in my humble opinion, a step towards our goal. National self-respect demands the removal not only of the Neill statue but of every emblem of our slavery, as I regard this statue to be. The agitation gains force by reason of the fact that it has no material gain as its objective. Swaraj will be within easy reach when millions of Indians unite in sacrificing themselves for the vindication of mere self-respect. Why does an Englishman feel personally insulted by and would die in the attempt to resent an insult offered to the Union Jack? It is not a sentiment to be despised or curbed. The method he adopts to resent the wrong is no doubt often barbarous, but if he ceased to cherish the sentiment itself, he would lose national solidarity and the power of sacrificing himself for the nation to which he belongs. Even so, if we were conscious of our birthright, it should be a matter for pride for us to know that there are young men who resent the presence in our midst of a statue that is an insult to the nation. Many Indian members who took part in the debate betrayed no such consciousness or pride. To them the young men who were fighting the nation's battle were ignorant men whose conduct was worthy only of condemnation. They saw nothing wrong in the statue standing in a prominent public place where there should be statues only of national heroes whose lives

would inspire and ennoble the nation.

It cannot be too clearly pointed out that this satyagraha is not aimed at General Neill as man. It would be just as appropriate and necessary if instead of General Neill it was General Virding whose statue was erected in order to perpetuate a reign of 'frightfulness'

There was in the debate a defence of the statue offered on behalf of the Europeans. It was cautiously, temperately and plausibly worded. Nevertheless it betrayed the European mentality. That for which General Neill stood was necessary for saving the Empire. And in order to cover the misdeeds of General Neill, it became necessary for the defender to vote down Mr. Thompson, the author of *The Other Side of the Medal*, as a neurotic, and to unearth a fulsome address presented to General Neill's regiment by 110 Hindus of Madras two years after the Mutiny. I have no means of ascertaining the circumstances in which the address was presented, but it does not appear to me to be at all strange that such an address was presented. For it is possible to quote such instances from contemporary events. Was not General Dyer presented with a similar address in Amritsar itself? And it would be strange if even now Sir Michael O'Dwyer, if he returned to India, did not find 110 Indians to present an address to him, if it was found necessary in the interest of good government. Have not the most unpopular Viceroys received addresses and trophies in our own times?

It is a matter of great pity to find Englishmen applaud sentiments in us which they would be ashamed to see expressed by Englishmen. I remember the wife of a Governor leading loud applause at a conference at which in speaking to a resolution on loyalty a learned Indian permitted himself to say that he considered every Britisher to be his teacher and that he owed all he was to Britain. The Madras performance was somewhat after that style and it grieved me.

But let not the adverse vote of the Madras Council discourage the young men who are fighting the battle against symbols of terrorism. They must not be angry against either Englishmen or the Indians who are now opposing the agitation. They must have faith in themselves and their cause, and they will convert the very men who are now opposing them. The agitation, of which they have laid the foundation, is bound to succeed, if they will keep it strictly non-violent and within the prescribed limits.

Young India, 3-11-1927

221. TELEGRAM TO MITHUBEHN PETIT

November 3, 1927

MITHUBEHN PETIT

BOMBAY

LEAVING AHMEDABAD TONIGHT FOR BOMBAY. FIFTH
EVENING LEAVE [FOR] COLOMBO.

From a microfilm: S.N. 12838

222. TELEGRAM TO SOMASUNDARAM

November 5, 1927

SOMASUNDARAM

PROCTOR

89, DAM STREET

COLOMBO

SAILING EARLY MORNING TOMORROW BRITISH INDIA
CARGO STEAMER. REACHING ABOUT TENTH.

GANDHI

From a microfilm: S.N. 12838

223. TELEGRAM TO JALRUST, BOMBAY

November 5, 1927

JALRUST¹

BOMBAY

LEAVING TONIGHT GUJARAT MAIL. MEET GRANT ROAD
STATION. GOING DIRECT FROM STATION. TAKING BOAT
FOR COLOMBO.

From a microfilm: S.N. 12838

¹ Presumably the firm of Jalbhai and Rustamji

224. TELEGRAM TO C. RAJAGOPALACHARI

November 5, 1927

C. RAJAGOPALACHARI
GANDHI ASHRAM
TIRUCHENGODU

SAILING TOMORROW EARLY MORNING. REACHING
COLOMBO ABOUT TENTH. WIRE COLOMBO. BRING
LAKSHMI.

BAPU

From a microfilm: S.N. 12838

225. LETTER TO G. D. BIRLA

BOMBAY,

Sunday [November 6, 1927]¹

BHAISHRI GHANSHYAMDASJI,

It was by sheer chance I got your letter, because the ship in which I was to sail [to Colombo] was delayed.² It was as well.

The use of the expression “Marwari interest” should not have pained you. And if it did, you should have told one like me then and there. I had used the expression only jokingly. I often use the word ‘Kathiawari’ in its derogatory sense. ‘Kathiawari’ suggests a crook. It does not at all mean that I am a crook. Being attached to you I shall not use even jestingly the word ‘Marwari’ in its derogatory sense, if you so wish. But I feel that you should not be afraid of such expressions. The idiom “when Greek meets Greek” is well known. But this does not mean that every Greek is treacherous.

For your information I may tell you that in Gujarat too there are many who exact exorbitant interest. Marwaris may be good or bad,

¹ From the reference to the ship to Ceylon being delayed

² *Vide* the succeeding item.

your body must get well like your heart; and you should be prepared to sacrifice the Marwari community for the sake of India.

Yours,
MOHANDAS

11-21 Colombo

22-25 Touring

From the Hindi original: C.W. 6150. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

226. *LETTER TO MIRABEHN*

November 6, 1927

CHI. MIRA,

Man proposes, God disposes. On reaching Bombay Shantikumar coolly told me the steamer was not going today but tomorrow. It was none of his fault. He came to know the postponement too late to let me know. It was open to me to take the train today. But I did not mind a day's delay. It will touch Tuticorin which we should reach on 9th or 10th.

I hope you are quite composed and that you have cleared up things with Krishnadas. I was not satisfied with my talks with Bhansali yesterday. His looks and his manners are changed. He was very good and sweet but there was a weirdness and an unnaturalness which pained me. I want you to cultivate him and help him gently out of his moods. But of course he needs most delicate handling.

I may not write tomorrow (Monday) as there will be no halting anywhere to post. I have taken special silence today to cope with correspondence.

Love,

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 5291. Courtesy: Mirabhen

227. *LETTER TO MANILAL AND SUSHILA GANDHI*

November 6, 1927

CHI. MANILAL AND SUSHILA,

I get letters from you regularly, but they are letters which I feel you write as a matter of social duty or to keep your promise. The letters which I used to write to my elders were not of this kind; I gave in them a detailed description of my life. Today Mira, aged thirty-two,

writes letters to me as long as ten to twenty sheets, though she writes as often as twice or thrice a week. She writes to her mother once every week and in those letters, too, she pours out her whole heart. One of you two at any rate should get time. If you wish you can write about many things, such as how your press is working, what difficulties you have to face, whether your expenses have increased or decreased, how large the circulation of the paper is, and so on. You can also, likewise, give information about the social and political conditions there. I may even be able to use your reports sometimes.

Why is it that Sushila does not get strong? Does she digest the food she eats? What is her diet? How much milk does she take? Do you obtain fresh milk, and cow's milk? What work does Sushila now do in the press?

I would have missed the mail this time, were it not that God saved me. For I was to sail for Colombo today. I would not have been able to catch the mail for South Africa from there. Today is Sunday. The mail leaves on Wednesday. Sorabji and his bride came to see me today and had my blessings. The marriage will take place on the 18th. There is much I can write about Harilal, but I don't wish to spend time on the subject today.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4727

228. MESSAGE TO PEOPLE OF CEYLON

[Before *November 7, 1927*]

Though I am going to Ceylon as a self-chosen representative of *Daridranarayana* and therefore in the high hope of filling the begging-bowl, I have long looked forward to visiting the historic island. I nearly went there in 1901 but God had willed otherwise. I am a labourer and would love to make the acquaintance of Ceylon labourers to whom Ceylon owes its present condition.

The Ceylon Observer, 7-11-1927

229. TELEGRAM TO N. R. MALKANI

BOMBAY,
November 7, 1927

PROFESSOR MALKANI
NATIONAL COLLEGE
HYDERABAD (SIND)

IF THADANI DISENGAGES YOU MAY DEVOTE ENTIRELY
RELIEF.

GANDHI

From a photostat: G.N. 880

230. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

November 7, 1927

CHI. MIRA,

Though I have nothing to say, I do not want to break the habit of writing to you on Mondays.

I take it that you are making notes from the dairy books you are reading. Now that you are in that line, I would like you to become an expert. You will have to have a mastery over figures too, if you can at all manage it. Only you must not make yourself sick over this or anything else. You will simply do what is fairly within your reach.

You will cultivate Chhotelal. He must get out of his awkwardness and moroseness. It is time he blossomed out.

Find out, too, the cause of Parnerkar's repeated illnesses. He must be well if he is to do much work.

Love,

BAPU

[PS.]

The voyage is very pleasant indeed.

From the original: C.W. 5292. Courtesy: Mirabehn

231. LETTER TO BENARASIDAS CHATURVEDI

November 7, 1927

DEAR BENARASIDASJI,

I received your two letters but could not reply earlier because I was touring.

I am very glad that you have taken up some steady work.

I am writing to the Ashram to dispatch the biography of Garrison available there. You will return it after use.

Yours,
MOHANDAS

[PS.]

It was good that you gave up the trip to Africa.

PANDIT BENARASIDAS CHATURVEDI
91, UPPER CIRCULAR ROAD
CALCUTTA

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 2558

232. *LETTER TO TULSI MAHER*

Kartik Shukla 13 [November 7, 1927]¹

CHI. TULSI MAHER,

I have been able to read your New Year letter only now. We are all aboard the steamship bound for Ceylon. Kakasaheb too is with us. I am very happy to watch the good progress of your work and your delight. Ceylon will take about two weeks. After that Utkal, then Madras and the Ashram in January. I stayed in the Ashram for two days. There is a lot of malaria there. Devdas was operated upon for piles. He is well now.

Blessings from
BAPU

SJT. TULSI MAHER
CHARKHA PRACHARAK
NEPAL

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 6532

233. *LETTER TO GANGABEHN VAIDYA*

Monday [November 7, 1927]²

CHI. GANGABEHN (SENIOR),

Ramibehn accidentally met me in the train. She travelled with me from Mehmedabad to Nadiad. She talked about you all the time.

¹ From the reference to Gandhiji's voyage to Ceylon

² From *Bapuna Patro—6* : G. S. Gangabehnne, p. 13

She feels unhappy because you do not look after the children. I told her that, if the children were entrusted to you on your conditions and if no one interfered with you afterwards, you would certainly agree to take charge of them. She had nothing to say to this. I am sure you write to her from time to time. Her ideals are good. At present, she devotes all her time to acquiring knowledge of the letters.

See that you do not flee from the responsibility which has come upon you. It is now that the knowledge and experience you have gained are being tested. With patience, good temper and generosity of heart, you will be able to overcome all difficulties. Just as the sea accepts the water of all rivers within itself, purifies it and gives it back again, so you too, if you make yourself as the sea, will be able to accept all people. As the sea makes no distinction good rivers and bad, but purifies all, so one person, whose heart is purified and enlarged with non-violence and truth, can contain everything in that heart and it will not overflow or lose its serenity. Remember that you aim at being such person.

Blessings from

BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 8706. Courtesy: Gangabehn Vaidya

234. *LETTER TO ASHRAM WOMEN*

Silence Day, November 7, 1927

SISTERS,

I am writing this letter on board a steamer. It will be posted after two days, but since I always write to you on Mondays, I am doing so today.

This time I spent two very busy days in the Ashram. I felt tired, but I did not like to leave the Ashram.

You must have observed that your responsibilities are growing day by day. None of you should lose heart. Remain absorbed in your duties, and try to get peace even where there is none. Our joy must lie in our devotion to duty, and not in the success of our efforts or in the fact that circumstances are favourable. Narasinh Mehta has said: "If man had the power to do everything, no one would be unhappy, for he would destroy his enemies and allow only friends to live." But man is a lowly creature. He becomes great only when he surrenders his ego and becomes one with God. A drop, if separated from the

ocean, serves no useful purpose; but staying in the ocean, it shares in bearing on its bosom the heavy burden of this huge steamer. In the same way, if we learn to be one with the Ashram, and thereby with the world and with God, we may be said to be bearing the burden of the world. But in such a state, the 'I' or 'you' ceases to be and only 'That' remains.

As the steamer is only a cargo steamer, it is very quiet.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3675

235. *LETTER TO V. L. PHADKE*

Monday [November 7, 1927]¹

BHAI MAMA,

It was only yesterday that I could read your article on the Antyaja Ashram at Vartej. I am writing this letter on board a ship bound for Ceylon. Since the article is very old now, I am not sending it to be printed in its present form. I shall see what should be done about it when there is an opportunity for writing about the *Antyaja* movement. How are things with you? Kaka is with me. My health is good enough.

11-21 Colombo

22-25 Jaffna

After that Orissa, and then Madras—at the time of the Congress Session.

Vandemataram from

BAPU

SJT. MAMASAHEB PHADKE

ANTYAJA ASHRAM

GODHRA, B.B. & C.I. RLY.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3819

¹ From the postmark

236. LETTER TO G. N. KANITKAR

ON WAY TO LANKA,
November 8, 1927

MY DEAR KANITKAR,

I have gone through the report you left with me. It makes interesting reading. I hope that you will realize all the expectations raised in the report and that you will succeed in your attempt at turning out the best and the cheapest wheel.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From the original: C.W. 961. Courtesy: Gajanan Kanitkar

237. LETTER TO PRABHASHANKAR PATTANI

Tuesday, Kartak Sud 14 [November 8, 1927]¹

SUJNA BHAISHRI,

I am writing this letter aboard a boat. I had duly received your long letter.

I felt that I need not have been called to Delhi. I think that it was not right to have called the others too. The Viceroy did not wish to know others' views; he wished only to express his own. I am not surprised by this strange procedure. It merely reflects the condition of the country.

Your remedy for the Hindu-Muslim problem is worse than the disease. If even the ordinary law is applied in a straightforward manner, many of the quarrels which occur today would stop. The problem was discussed at some length. I don't believe that unity between the warring factions can be brought about by declaring martial law. If it were not the policy of the Government to maintain its power by setting the two communities against each other, the Hindu-Muslim problem would hardly last a few months. The two communities would fight it out and then come to an understanding. But that is a long story.

I think it would be good for you to go away somewhere to rest in order to improve your health—rest not from work but from worries.

¹ On this date Gandhiji was on board s. s. *Colaba* bound for Ceylon.

I shall spend 15 days in Ceylon. After that, that is, on the 26th of this month, I shall leave for Orissa, from where I shall go to Madras during Christmas and then return to the Ashram in January. The Kathiawar Parishad¹ is likely to be held about the 15th or the 14th January.

Vandemataram from

MOHANDAS

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 3218. Courtesy: Mahesh Pattani

238. WAS IT A FAILURE?

Repeatedly does one read in the papers that non-co-operation was a perfect failure. Several courteous critics often apologetically broach the question in conversations, and gently tell me that the country would have made great progress if I had not led it astray by my ill-conceived non-co-operation. I should not refer to this subject, which may be said to have no bearing on the politics of the day, but for my belief that non-co-operation has come to us as an active force that may assume a universal form any moment, and but for the purpose of reassuring those who are bravely holding on in the face of criticism and scepticism. Let me, how-ever, admit the dangerous half-truth that non-co-operation entirely failed the moment it became violent. Indeed, non-co-operation and violence are here contradictory terms. It is a living belief that violence lived on itself and it required counter-violence for its daily maintenance that gave rise to non-violent non-co-operation. The fact, therefore, is that the moment non-co-operation became violent it lost its vitality and nation-building character. But in so far as it was and remained non-violent, it was a demonstrably complete success. The mass awakening that took place in 1920 all of a sudden was perhaps the greatest demonstration of the efficacy of non-violence. The Government has lost prestige never to be regained. Titles, law-courts, educational institutions no longer inspire the awe they did in 1920. Some of the best lawyers in the country have given up law for ever as a profession and are happy for having accepted comparative poverty as their lot. The few national schools and colleges that remain are giving a good account of themselves, as witness the great organization that came into being in Gujarat when the floods turned into a waste what was once a rich

¹ The Kathiawar Political Conference

garden. But for the students and teachers of national institutions and other non-co-operators the timely help that the afflicted peasantry of Gujarat received and so much needed would never have been at its disposal. It is possible to multiply illustrations of this character and prove that wherever there is real national life, a bond between the classes and the masses in India, non-co-operation is the cause of it.

Take again the three constructive items of the programme. Khadi is a growing factor in national regeneration and is serving over 1,500 villages through an army of nearly two thousand workers and is giving tangible productive relief to over fifty thousand spinners and at least ten thousand weavers, printers, dyers, dhobis and other artisans. Untouchability is a waning thing just struggling for existence. Hindu-Muslim unity of 1920-21 showed its vast possibilities. The violence, deceit, falsehood and the like that mark the rupture between the two great communities today are no doubt ugly signs, but they are a demonstration of crude self-consciousness. The process of churning that the movement of non-co-operation was and is has brought the dirt to the surface. And if non-violent non-co-operation is a living and purifying force, it will presently bring to view the pure unity that is invisibly forming itself under the very visible dirt that obtrudes itself on our gaze today. It is therefore clear to me as daylight that real swaraj, whenever it comes to us, will have to be not a donation rained on us from London, but a prize earned by hard and health-giving non-co-operation with organized forces of evil.

Young India, 10-11-1927

239. LETTER TO HARJIVAN KOTAK

ON THE BOAT "KAVERIMBA"

November 10, 1927

One should feel worried and ashamed even if there is involuntary discharge only once. It is certain that such discharge is the result of impure desires. I was told recently that a person who suffers from constipation may also get it. This is true, but constipation is also the result of impure desires. A man or woman who is free from such desires will not eat even a grain too much of food. Such persons never suffer from constipation.

But, then, there are two kinds of worry, one necessary and uplifting and another unnecessary and tending to drag us down. Despite worry and shame, we would remain cheerful if our lapse was

not intentional or if we did not take pleasure in it. Such worry may also be called vigilance. The second kind of worry is the remorse one feels afterwards though one had taken pleasure in the lapse when it occurred. Such worry preys upon one's mind and yet one sinks even deeper into the vice. A person who worries in this sense gets involuntary discharges more and more frequently, whereas the man who exercises vigilance gets them less and less frequently. You will perhaps understand now that a man who gets involuntary discharges cannot afford to remain unconcerned. He should sincerely strive to overcome his impure desires. If he can remain free from them during waking hours, he should not be frightened by involuntary discharges but should take them as a warning that impure desires are secretly eating him up from within, and he should ceaselessly struggle to save himself from them. If, despite his efforts, he cannot stop the discharges, he may have patience but ought not to give up the struggle. I am myself not completely free from involuntary discharges. There was a period in my life when I remember to have remained free from them for many years but after I came to India and started taking milk they became more frequent. There are other causes besides milk. The atmosphere here revived memories of early life. There will be a chapter on this in the Autobiography. Read it.

[From Gujarati]

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

240. LETTER TO DAHYABHAI M. PATEL

Kartak Vad 1 [November 10, 1927]¹

BHAISHRI DAHYABHAI,

I had your letter. I am going to Ceylon by sea and, having got some free time, am trying to overtake my correspondence. I could pay an unexpected visit to the Ashram for two days. With ceaseless effort, the ego is bound to melt away. Do come and see me when I return to the Ashram in January.

Blessings from
BAPU

BHAISHRI DAHYABHAI
DISTRICT CONGRESS COMMITTEE
DHOLKA, B.B. & C.I. RLY.

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 2699. Courtesy: Dahyabhai M. Patel

¹ The year is inferred from the reference to Gandhiji's voyage to Ceylon.

241. LETTER TO C. F. ANDREWS

AS AT SABARMATI

S. S. "CHINKOA"

November 11, 1927

MY DEAR CHARLIE,

It seems I have not written to you for ages. And it so appears because I have been having a glorious voyage from Bombay to Colombo. We reach there only tonight and I am dictating this on a cargo boat. I see that there is nothing like a cargo boat for quiet or for time for doing work if it is a clean boat. From Bombay to Tuticorin we had a very big, new, clean boat with ample room for moving about. I have changed into another cargo boat at Tuticorin in order to gain a day. It is also comfortable but not so roomy.

Well, I have seen the Viceroy.¹ I might not have gone at all but according to my wont I did not want to say a flat 'no'. We did not discuss khaddar but he has promised to invite me again for that discussion specially. He had in front of him the essay you have sent him. He is a good man with no power.²

I saw Ramchandran at Delhi and talked to him about the man you want for Jamshedpur. I was not able to see him for he was at Lahore. I am therefore unable to guide you. Ramchandran considers him to be a good man. Did you see Tehalramani? What did you think of him?

My programme having been interrupted owing to the Delhi visit I cannot be in Orissa on the 20th instant as I had expected to be. I must give about a fortnight to Ceylon. I shall, therefore, have to leave Ceylon for Orissa at the latest on the 26th or the 27th instant and reach there by the quickest route.

I hope your hand is now in perfect [working or]³ der. Kaka,

¹ For reports of Gandhi-Irwin meeting, *vide* Appendix "Gandhi-Irwin Interview", November 9, 1927.

² The Viceroy wrote to his father describing his first meeting with Gandhiji : "I have broken the ice and met Gandhi. He really is an interesting personality. . . . He struck me as singularly remote from practical politics. It was rather like talking to someone who had stepped off another planet on to this for a short visit of a fortnight and whose whole mental outlook was quite other to that which was regulating most of the affairs on the planet to which he had descended" (*Life of Lord Halifax*, pp. 246-7).

³ The source is damaged here.

Pyarelal and Jamnadas¹ are with me besides Ba and Mahadev. And Rajagopalachari and Subayya are waiting for me in Colombo.

I told you that Devdas had an operation for piles. He must have been discharged on the 8th.

With love,

MOHAN

From a photostat: G.N. 2624

242. LETTER TO V. A. SUNDARAM

November 12, 1927

MY DEAR SUNDARAM,

This voyage has given me a little time to overtake correspondence. I was thankful to hear of Savitri's safe delivery and her presenting you with a daughter. May the baby prosper. I hope Mother is quite well.

Yours,

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 3177

243. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

ON BOARD SHIP TO COLOMBO,

Novemebr 12, 1927

CHI. NARANDAS,

Your letter of 16-10-27 is lying with me. I am replying to it in the ship which is carrying me to Colombo. You are right in what you say about the General Secretary. But such rules can be adopted only when an institution is running like an efficient machine. So long as we have not reached that condition, we should be content with what work we can smoothly do; only then will the institution take root. You may question me further when I arrive there in January. We shall certainly settle the Kathiawar matter than.

I suppose you know that Jamnadas is with me.

Blessings from

BAPU

CHI. NARANDAS GANDHI
SATYAGRAHA ASHRAM

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 7713. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

¹ Youngest son of Khushalchand Gandhi, Gandhiji's cousin

244. AN ILL-MATCHED UNION OR CHILD-SLAUGHTER

The facts that have come to my knowledge regarding the ill-matched union that has taken place or is about to take place in Dhrangadhra State remind me of the essays on this subject which I read forty years ago. It is a matter of regret that such unions can take place even today.

The culprit in this case is a Brahmin servant of Dhrangadhra State. His name is Shri Keshavlal Damodar Bhatt. He is a revenue officer at Charadva. He is about fifty-five years old. He has three daughters. Four years ago he lost his wife and, now with the intention of remarrying, he has got himself engaged to a girl thirteen or fourteen years old.

The eldest son-in-law of this Keshavlal has sent me the correspondence that he had with the latter on this subject, in the hope that I would write something about it in *Navajivan* which might perhaps have some salutary effect on the old man or make him feel ashamed. As there is still time to wake up, let him do so and save himself from the great sin of child-slaughter.

Bhartrihari has stated from his own experience that those who seek the gratification of their desires know neither fear nor shame. If this lustful old father of three daughters has some fear or shame instilled in him in some manner, that young girl who is fit to sit in his lap as his grand-daughter will surely be saved.

Bhattji wrote the following letter¹ to his son-in-law on the 6th of October :

Prabha is Bhattji's youngest daughter and this good man has thought of remarriage at this advanced age only because he might feel lonely when she gets married. However, almost every one of his letters gives proof of his lust.

This elderly man, who, blinded by his lust, is about to remarry, exhibits his own hopes in greater detail in his second letter².

We find from this letter that Bhattji regards this betrothal as an auspicious deed. He informs his son-in-law of his desire to dress his

¹ Not translated here

² *ibid*

child wife in a *chundari*¹ made of Japanese silk, with checks in it—*chundari* of the same kind that was presented to Prabha, and he expects his eldest daughter Jeevi to perform the auspicious ceremony of presenting that *chundari* to his child wife.

However, both his elder daughters and his eldest son-in-law are against this sinful marriage and oppose it, and the latter requests his father-in-law to save himself from this sin. In reply to this, Bhattji writes to say as follows :²

Thus the rope remains twisted even when it burns. Even now, if the daughters and the son-in-law withhold help in this sinful act, Bhattji may save himself from the crime of child-slaughter, Dhrangadhra will be saved and so will the whole of India.

A strong public opinion is the only means to prevent such wicked deeds. In this case public opinion is represented by old Keshavlal's son-in-law, his daughters, people of his caste and his other neighbours. All these persons should not lose hope; they should plead with Bhattji with firmness and courtesy. The would-be bride's father, too, should be persuaded to desist from slaying his own child. If, in this manner, Bhattji does not receive any co-operation from anyone, this evil deed may yet be prevented from materializing.

Bhattji and those other old widowers like him who cannot control their lust should think of the plight of innumerable widows. The sex instinct is equally strong in men and women. Can the widowers not exercise self-control by thinking of widows leading lives of purity?

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 13-11-1927

245. INTERVIEW TO THE PRESS

November 13, 1927

Q. Your photographs belie you. Is it that you refuse to smile when you are photographed?

A. I never have myself photographed.

¹ A silken sari for ceremonial occasions

² The letter is not translated here.

Q. I wonder whether they make your photographs from drawings!

A. Only the photographers know it.

[Asked about the progress of khadi, Gandhiji said :]

I have met with a fair amount of success.

Q. Do you think that the charkha will ultimately remedy the evils of industrialism?

A. So far as India is concerned, I have hoped in faith. I am hoping in faith that the charkha will be universal in India, and that it will correct many evils of industrialism.

[Asked for an expression of opinion on the Simon Commission, Gandhiji said :]

So far as I am concerned, my conscience in this matter is in the keeping of the President of the National Congress, and the Congress in general.

Q. If you are dissatisfied, would you advise a boycott?

A. I have no opinion in the matter, except that of the leaders of the Congress.

Q. Are you prepared to abide by whatever decision they make?

A. Yes, I shall accept it and if I cannot endorse it, I shall not resist it.

Q. Do you think the peace efforts of statesmen will be successful or do you think that the world is heading for another war?

A. It is a difficult question to answer. Appearances go to show that the world is preparing for another war, but one must hope that it may be possible to avoid it.

The Ceylon Daily News, 14-11-1927

246. SPEECH TO CHETTIAR COMMUNITY, COLOMBO

November 13, 1927

FRIENDS,

I thank you for all those purses¹ that you have presented to me in this eminently business-like manner. I feel again like standing in Chettinad. The very pleasant recollections that I have of my recent visit to Chettinad have become vivid and fresh before me this afternoon. Their generosity and kindness I shall never forget and you here in Colombo are but repeating all that I witnessed in Chettinad.

¹ For the Khadi Fund collections in Ceylon, *vide* Appendix "Khadi Collections in South India and Ceylon", December 22, 1927.

The only consolation that I have in receiving all these gifts and kindness from you is that it is all being done for the sake of *Daridranarayana*; and seeing that I regard myself as but a humble trustee for the millions of paupers of India I not only feel no shame or humiliation in receiving these gifts, but I feel impelled by your generosity and kindness to ask for more. Rich and generous though you may be it is really not possible for any single corporation to fill the millions of mouths of *Daridranarayana* and if there are any of you who have not given at all or given in a miserly fashion I appeal to you to open out your purses and give as much as you can on behalf of *Daridranarayana*. I can conceive of no better investment for wealthy Indians whether in India or outside; and let not your generosity end with merely giving money. If you will establish a living bond with these dumb millions you must wear khadi. It is produced by the hands of those starving men. If you will continue on these lines you will find that it will become necessary for you, if you are to have that bond continuously with the dumb millions, to purify your lives. And, wherever there is pure love there is charity and wherever there is personal purity there immediately arises cohesion in that society. You will find that one step in your advancement towards purity leads on to another.

You are in what might be considered a strange land. Geographically and officially speaking Ceylon is not considered part of India. You, as merchants living in this hospitable land, are expected to behave towards the indigenous population in an exemplary and honest manner. By your conduct will be judged the conduct of the millions of India. I hope, therefore, that your dealings with the people of this fair island are absolutely just and free from all reproach. Let your scales be absolutely correct, your accounts accurate, and, I hope that you regard every woman in this island as your sister, your daughter or your mother. Let possession of wealth not render us giddy. It must carry with it greater sense of responsibility if it is to be a blessing to the possessor and those from whom it is earned.

I must not detain you any longer. I have hardly commenced my work in Ceylon yet. In the course of my tour in this island I shall have many things to speak about and I would like you to follow whatever I might have to say in the different places where I may be taken and nothing will please me better than to find that when I have gone out of this island you have not forgotten the things that I may lay before you from the deepest recesses of my heart.

I thank you once more for all these generous presents and if there are any who want to pay they are at liberty to do so. Let me also inform you that if you want khadi you can get it at the place where I have been accommodated. May God bless you!

The Ceylon Daily News, 14-11-1927 and With Gandhiji in Ceylon

247. SPEECH AT VIVEKANANDA SOCIETY, COLOMBO

November 13, 1927

I thank you for your address and your purse. During the short time I had at my disposal I tried to glance through the report of the work of your Society and I beg to tender to you my congratulations on its many activities. Vivekananda is a name to conjure with. He has left on India's life an indelible impress and you will find at the present time societies named after him in many parts of India; and this is apart from the many branches of the Rama Krishna Mission.

But I see that I must not keep you long at this meeting. There are impatient crowds waiting outside. All that I would say at the present moment is that I wish every prosperity to this Society, and may I suggest that your activities will be incomplete unless you add to these the one thing that renders service to *Daridranarayana*? Your purse to me is a token of your appreciation of the message of the spinning-wheel. If Vive-kananda is the name of your Society, you dare not neglect India's starving millions, and the conviction is daily being driven home that without the spinning-wheel it is impossible to serve the starving millions of India. I have therefore no hesitation in making an appeal to the Indians, whether they are living in India or outside, that they should carry with them on their persons an emblem of the living bond between themselves and the starving millions in their motherland.

I wish to say to my sisters on the right and the fashionable Indians living in Colombo, or for the matter of that in all Ceylon, that it is now possible, after six years of continued activity, to give you all the fineness you can reasonably desire, even in khaddar.

I pray to you that you will not despise the little service it is

possible for you to render to these starving millions of your countrymen and women by wearing khaddar, rather than foreign and mill-made cloth.

I thank you once more for your address.

The Ceylon Daily News, 14-11-1927 and With Gandhiji in Ceylon

248. LETTER TO SURENDRA

Sunday [On or after November 13, 1927]¹

CHI. SURENDRA,

I got your letter. Devdas was taken ill on the way. This led to some delay in Bombay, but I think now he would have reached Wardha. If you can get away from there by all means go to Wardha and comfort him as much as you can. You would naturally want to go to him and I don't want to stop you from it.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9411

249. INTERVIEW TO "THE TIMES OF CEYLON"

COLOMBO

[On or before November 14, 1927]²

Gandhiji, interviewed by *The Times of Ceylon*, said that his attitude towards the Statutory Commission would be determined by the Congress.

As regards boycott, he said it was his personal opinion as an individual that an active and general boycott would be an effective answer to the British Government.

Asked if he honestly believed that India would be happier if the British got out altogether, Gandhiji is reported to have said that he believed that the only solution of the problems, not only in India but also in Africa, was that it was better if the English remained as friends. India, he admitted, had internecine strife, but in the result India would ultimately free herself. There would be no half-way house.

Replying to another question, Gandhiji explained that non-co-operation was

¹ The letter seems to have been written after Devdas's discharged from the hospital on November 8, 1927; *vide* "Letter to C. F. Andrews", 11-11-1927.

² The report of the interview was published under this date.

aimed at the forces of evil. Concluding, he declared :

We want friendship, but we do not want a master.

The Hindu, 15-11-1927

250. CABLE TO DHANGOPAL MUKERJEE

[November 14, 1927]¹

DHANGOPAL MUKERJEE
CARE
MRS. WALLER BORDEN
1020, LAKESHORE DRIVE
CHICAGO

YOUR CABLE. INDIAN LEADERS' PROTEST WHICH
"TIMES" REFUSED PUBLISH WIDELY PRINTED IN INDIAN
PAPERS. "MOTHER INDIA" IS DISTORTED ONE-SIDED
PICTURE CONTAINS PALPABLE FALSEHOODS WILD EXAG-
GERATIONS SUPPRESSION RELEVANT FACTS. MANY
WHOSE CONVERSATIONS AUTHORESS CLAIMS QUOTE
HAVE PUBLICLY REPUDIATED THEM. BELIEF NOT
UNWARRANTED DAILY GROWING THAT BOOK
INSPIRED BY PEOPLE INTERESTED IN DEGRADING
INDIA IN PUBLIC ESTIMATION IN WEST. MANY
WELL-KNOWN ENGLISHMEN AMERICAN AND ENGLISH
MISSIONARIES OF LONG EXPERIENCE HAVE REPUDIATED
AND CONDEMNED BOOK.²

GANDHI

From a photostat: S.N. 12551

251. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

November 14, 1927

CHI. MIRA,

I got your two letters.

I liked the voyage very much and wished I had more of it.

¹ From an entry in the source and the reference to Katherine Mayo's *Mother India* which was published in 1927.

² In his reply dated 17-11-1927 the addressee informed Gandhiji of a Lecture Bureau's invitation to Sarojini Naidu to visit U.S.A. on a lecture tour to repair the damage done by Miss Mayo's book.

I leave Ceylon definitely on 29th instant. The first place to reach in Orissa will be Berhampur, Ganjam District. There are two routes: *via* Calcutta, *via* Raichur-Bezwada. I do not know which is cheaper or better. You will look up and decide. Surendra is familiar with both the routes, I fancy. I expect to reach Berhampur on 2nd December. So there won't be a month in Orissa as I had expected.

Your programme for cutting off the quantity of cloth required is drastic. You may have that for indoors but perhaps not for all occasions. The sari may be necessary for the very work you have to do. But I do not know. Let us hasten slowly. Anyway, I shall not interfere with your wishes in this matter.

Surround Bhansali with all the affection you can and let the latter work its way. Affection may succeed where argument fails.

With love,

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 5293. Courtesy: Mirabehn

252. LETTER TO ASHRAM WOMEN

COLOMBO,

Silence Day, November 14, 1927

SISTERS,

We reached Colombo on Saturday. I expected a letter from one or other of you, today being Monday. But it has not come yet.

This is a very pleasant land. Though it is outside India, it is exactly like it. Indians here are mostly from the South. The local inhabitants do not look very different from them. Women's dress here is very simple; in fact it may be said that men and women dress practically in the same way. Both put on dhotis in the manner in which Surendra does. Only, the dhotis here are dyed and have various designs on them. Both wear jackets, though there is a slight difference in cut. Women are never without jackets, whereas men are content often to come out with only dhotis on. Malabar has also similar dress, only the dhotis there are not dyed. These clothes are bound to be very cheap. Only if people in these two States begin to take a liking for khaddar, there will be no difficulty for them to adopt it.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3676

253. *SPEECH IN REPLY TO MUNICIPAL ADDRESS,
COLOMBO*

November 15, 1927

CHAIRMAN AND FRIENDS,

I want first of all to apologize to you for not standing up to speak to you. For years past I have been unable to address audiences standing; so you will not consider it discourteous on my part if I address you sitting and that I have not received your address standing. I am sorry also that at the present moment I have not a voice that would carry far, and I have also to apologize to you and to the citizens of Colombo for not having arrived here in time. But for that the blame must rest on stronger shoulders. I refer to His Excellency the Viceroy. It was he who invited me to go to Delhi, and if you want to pass a vote of censure on His Excellency the Viceroy I will certainly join you. But perhaps you will excuse His Excellency and, through him, me also.

The second cause of my delay was that I came as a passenger on two cargo boats and in spite of the efforts of the captains and the officers to bring me here as soon as they ever could, you will understand the limitations that are imposed upon cargo boats. Cargo boats have got to take care of their cargo rather than the passengers, who are interlopers.

It is a matter of great pleasure to me to receive this address at your hands. I was totally unprepared for it. Mine, if you will like to take it so, is a mercenary visit. I have come to Ceylon in reply to invitations from some of my own countrymen, and I have devoted this year which is about to expire to getting collections on behalf of the cause which is designed to serve millions of paupers in India. The temptation that these friends gave me was irresistible.

I very nearly came to this pearl among the islands of the world in 1901. You may not know that I have many Mussalman friends in South Africa. They are dear to me as life itself, and some of them urged me to come to Colombo on my way to India, and I would gladly have done so then, and then I would have come as a sojourner in your midst to appreciate the unrivalled beauties of this very beautiful island and to enjoy also your open hospitality. But I cannot say the same today; so that I was not prepared for this address because I hardly deserve it at the present moment.

But I am a lover of municipal life, and although it never fell to my lot to serve a municipality as a councillor, I came as a citizen into the closest touch with two great Corporations. I mean the Corporation of Durban and the Corporation of Johannesburg. And if you were to ask the mayors of these two Corporations, they will perhaps testify that I served them as much as a single citizen, humble like myself, could possibly do.

I consider it a great privilege for a person to serve any place where he has cast his lot. I have since been studying the methods of great Corporations throughout India, more or less closely, and I have been in search of an ideally conducted municipality in the East. I must confess to you that I have not yet found one in my own country. I should love to think that you are that ideal Corporation. But I am unable to say anything owing to my great ignorance of your achievements.

Yesterday I asked for a copy of the latest report of your administration, but it was not possible for me to go through the whole of the interesting document.

Having done spadework myself both in Durban and Johannesburg, I turned to pages referring to the plague and it gave me something of a shock when I read in those paragraphs that you were not yet immune from that curse. These two corporations, Durban and Johannesburg, had also their share of the plague. In Johannesburg it was of a most virulent type, but the Municipal Councillors counted no cost too great to protect the citizens against any further inroads. I won't take you into the very interesting history of how Johannesburg battled against the plague. Durban also did likewise, and it was in that connection that I had an opportunity of reading the very wonderful history of the Corporation of Glasgow and how Glasgow poured money like water in order to make that great city plague-proof. And it succeeded. I don't know that since that one visitation Glasgow has had another. I am speaking under correction, but I hope that my impression is absolutely correct. I can say from first-hand knowledge of Johannesburg that Johannesburg has not had that visitation again. Of course, it has got a climate probably second to none in the world which is in its favour but the manliness of its citizens also stands out to its credit.

As you know Johannesburg is a cosmopolitan city. It has a great Bantu population, and it has its share of the Indian population. It has

also its ghettos, and still Johannesburg is immune.

Here I have found that your difficulty was with the Harbour Master—that it is too expensive to disinfect all the grain that comes or passes through this beautiful harbour of yours. I say that this Corporation should fight against these interests in order to make this city absolutely free from plague, and to invest passing visitors like me with a sense of perfect freedom. My medical adviser would tell me: ‘In your dilapidated condition you must not go to a place like Colombo’—and if I was inclined to listen to my medical advisers I would not have come if I had read a report of that character before I came here.

The second thing I was reading in this interesting document was about your dairies. . . .

I notice that you import dried milk from New Zealand. You are finding room for dried constituents of milk, and, if I am to speak in that special language, you reassemble the constituents and sell that liquid but it appears under the name of milk. I wonder that your medical officer passes the stuff as milk at all. I was sent by friends whilst I was having my convalescence in the Nandi Hills a book on vitamins, and if these writers and distinguished specialists are truthful, they tell us lay people that milk is robbed of its vitamins when subjected to a certain temperature. I know something of the constituents of dried milk and I know that milk loses its vitamins when it reaches that dry stage. When you rob milk of its vitamins you rob it of half its richness. You have many dairies here. I want to throw out a suggestion here. You have inspectors, you have bye-laws, and you have some prosecutions. Why go through all this trouble and why not municipalize your dairies and take control of your milk supply, and, believe me, you will then conserve the health of your babies and you will conserve also the health of an old and dilapidated man like myself. I have no doubt that you have in Colombo very old men and that they stand in need of milk, and there is a very great labouring population for whom milk should be cheap. It should be standardized like your stamps, and the people should be able to get their milk absolutely guaranteed. And if you want to do that you cannot do better than municipalize your milk supply and make it accessible to the poorest man in Colombo.

The third thing and I have done. I know that you have got a very beautiful harbour. I have passed through your cinnamon gardens, a credit to any city in the world. I have noticed some of your

palatial buildings. They are very good indeed. But then do the dwellers in cinnamon gardens or those who reside in this city and do business in it require trustees to look after their welfare? I fancy not. They are trustees for those who cannot look after themselves. They are trustees, therefore, for the welfare of the labouring population.

I have not yet been able to visit your slums to be able to say at first hand what the condition of these slums is. But if you are able to tell me that your slums will be just as sweet-smelling as cinnamon gardens I will take it on trust and will advertise your city throughout my wandering and I will say: "Go to Colombo if you want to see an ideal municipality." But I hardly think that you will be able to get a certificate of merit from me. I refer to the condition of your slums. I have been going through some statistics about your labouring classes.

I think a place like Colombo which is certainly dry in one respect can easily afford to go dry in another respect. And if you, the trustees for the welfare of the citizens of Colombo, will make Colombo, dry if it is really possible for you to do so, you will earn the thanks not only of the citizens of Colombo and the thanks of a humble individual like myself, but the thanks of all Eastern municipalities.

May God help you to lead the way in the direction I have indicated. I thank you once more for the address that you have so kindly presented to me.

The Ceylon Observer, 15-11-1927 and With Gandhiji in Ceylon

254. SPEECH AT ANANDA COLLEGE, COLOMBO

November 15, 1927

MR. PRINCIPAL, TEACHERS AND BOYS,

It has given me great pleasure to be able to come to Colombo and Ceylon and to make your acquaintance. Wherever I go I love to see school children.

Here in Ceylon the majority of the boys come under the influence of Buddhist teaching. That great Master taught us what is known as the Right Path, and you, boys, come to institutions of this character to learn the Right Path. And to learn the Right Path is not merely to pack our brains with many things that sound nice, goods or sweet, but to do the right things. Well, the first maxim of the Right Path is to tell the Truth, to think the Truth and to act the Truth. And

the second maxim is to love all that lives. Gautama Buddha was so filled with mercy and kindness that it was he who taught us to love not only the members of the human family but also to love all life, to love all the animal world. And he taught us also personal purity of life. Therefore, if you, boys, are not truthful, are not loving and kind, and not pure in your personal conduct, you have learnt nothing in this institution. And which of the boys will tell me where Gautama Buddha was born?

A very small boy tot who was in front of the Mahatma replied : He was born in Kapilavastu.

MAHATMAJI : And where is Kapilavastu ?

THE BOY : It is in India.

MAHATMAJI : Then I suggest to you all, boys, that you owe something to Gautama's countrymen, and I am sorry to have to tell you boys, if you do not know it already, that in the land where Gautama lived and taught, and which he hallowed by his feet, there is dire poverty and distress. One reason why the sacred people of India, the millions of them, are so poor is because they have abandoned their ancient industry or have been deprived of it, I mean the spinning-wheel. Well, now, they can revive the spinning-wheel if everybody in India and others will wear what can be spun and woven from it. That cloth is called khadi.

Now, if you will render something unto Gautama for the great message of mercy that he delivered to you and to my countrymen, certainly wear khadi. So far as I know all the cloth that you little boys and others have worn has not been produced in Colombo or Ceylon, and seeing that you must buy some cloth in order to cover yourselves it is your primary duty to buy that cloth which is woven by the famishing millions, the countrymen of Gautama. And if you will do so you will then certainly act or begin to act according to the second maxim in the Right Path. What I have told you naturally applies with double force to your teachers and your parents. If you are clever, good and brave boys, you will discuss these things with your teachers and your parents and ask them: "What is it this strange man called Gandhi told you?" And if I am not mistaken they will endorse every word of what I have said to you. You have given this money to me for this very purpose, and I thank you and the teachers for giving me this money thinking of the famishing millions of India. To wear khaddar

is merely to follow up the step that you have taken today. May God bless you all.

The Ceylon Daily News, 16-11-1927 and With Gandhiji in Ceylon

255. SPEECH AT NALANDA VIDYALAYA, COLOMBO

November 15, 1927

MR. PRINCIPAL, TEACHERS AND BOYS,

I thank you very much for giving me this donation for the work which has brought me to this beautiful island. . . .¹

And I suggest to you that if you will carry out this law of mercy that Buddha taught, and if you will make some return that you owe to Gautama you will, until you are able to produce your own khadi, wear khadi that is manufactured in India. My friend, the translator², proudly pointed out that the cloth he was wearing was manufactured in Ceylon. Well, I would prohibit you from buying a single yard of khadi manufactured in India as long as he is able to produce sufficient khadi manufactured in Ceylon, and you would certainly be still followers of the Buddha if you work with your own hands and manufacture khadi. If you will do that you will help the whole world by setting a noble example. But, meanwhile, I suggest to you that you will be doing the right thing and following up the step that you have taken by giving this purse if you all wear khadi, teachers and all. I thank you once more for this gift of yours, for inviting me to this school and I pray that God bless you.

The Ceylon Daily News, 16-11-1927 and With Gandhiji in Ceylon

256. SPEECH IN REPLY TO BUDDHISTS' ADDRESS³, COLOMBO

November 15, 1927

I thank you very sincerely for the address that you have given to me. I appreciate the courtesy, in that you have supplied me with a translation of your address in advance. I am equally grateful to His

¹ Then Gandhiji spoke on the message of Buddha and khadi.

² J.S.P. Jayawardene, who translated the speech into Sinhalese

³ Presented at the Vidyodaya College by the All-Ceylon Congress of Buddhist Associations

Holiness and the priests for the benediction that they have pronounced just now. I shall always esteem it as a great privilege that I have received this benediction this afternoon, and I can give His Holiness and the priests in the presence of this assembly the assurance that I shall always strive to deserve that benediction. Your address mentions it and His Holiness also just now mentioned the fact about the Buddha Gaya temple which is situated in India. I have been interesting myself in this great institution for a long time, and when I presided over the deliberations of the Indian National Congress at Belgaum¹, I had the privilege of doing what was possible on behalf of the Congress in this connection. I had sent to me by some unknown friend in Ceylon [a report] of the controversy that took place in connection with what I did at the Congress. I did not think it proper to take part in that controversy nor do I desire even now to go into it. I can only give you my assurance that everything that was humanly possible for me to do to advance your claim I did and I shall still do. I can only tell you, however, that the Congress does not possess the influence that I would like it to possess. There are several difficulties raised in connection with the proprietary rights. There are technical, legal difficulties also in the way. The Congress appointed a Committee of the best men that were at its disposal to go into this matter and if possible even to come to terms with the Mahant who is at the present moment in possession of the temple. That Committee has already reported, and I take it that some of you have seen the report of that Committee. That Committee endeavoured to have an arbitration appointed, but it failed in its efforts to do so. But there is absolutely no reason to lose hope. However, I can tell you that all my personal sympathies are absolutely with you and, if the rendering of its possession to you was in my giving, you can have it today. In your address was mentioned another temple that is situated in Ceylon. I do not know anything about the controversy regarding this temple. I, therefore, like some of you to give me particulars about it, and tell me if there is anything that I can do in connection with it whilst I am in your midst. You may take it for granted that I should take a personal interest in it if I feel that there is anything that I can do, and I should do so not in order that I can oblige you, but in order to give myself satisfaction.

For, you do not know perhaps that one of my sons, the eldest boy, accused me of being a follower of Buddha, and some of my

¹ *Vide* “Belgaum Impressions [-II]”, January 8, 1925.

Hindu countrymen also do not hesitate to accuse me of spreading Buddhistic teaching under the guise of sanatan Hinduism. I sympathize with my son's accusations and the accusations of my Hindu friends. And sometimes I feel even proud of being accused of being a follower of the Buddha, and I have no hesitation in declaring in the presence of this audience that I owe a great deal to the inspiration that I have derived from the life of the Enlightened One. Indeed, at an anniversary celebration in the new Buddha temple that has been erected in Calcutta I gave expression to this view. The leader in that meeting was Angarika Dharmapala. He was weeping over the fact that he was not receiving the response that he desired for the cause which was close to his heart, and I remember having rebuked him for shedding tears, I told the audience that though what passed under the name of Buddhism might have been driven out of India, the life of the Buddha and his teachings were by no means driven out of India. This incident happened, I think, now three years ago, and I have seen nothing since to alter the view which I pronounced at that meeting. It is my deliberate opinion that the essential part of the teachings of the Buddha now forms an integral part of Hinduism. It is impossible for Hindu India today to retrace her steps and go behind the great reformation that Gautama effected in Hinduism. By his immense sacrifice, by his great renunciation and by the immaculate purity of his life he left an indelible impress upon Hinduism, and Hinduism owes an eternal debt of gratitude to that great teacher. And if you will forgive me for saying so, and if you will also give me the permission to say so, I would venture to tell you that what Hinduism did not assimilate of what passes as Buddhism today was not an essential part of Buddha's life and his teachings.

It is my fixed opinion that Buddhism or rather the teaching of Buddha found its full fruition in India, and it could not be otherwise, for Gautama was himself a Hindu of Hindus. He was saturated with the best that was in Hinduism, and he gave life to some of the teachings that were buried in the Vedas and which were overgrown with weeds. His great Hindu spirit cut its way through the forest of words, meaningless words, which had overlaid the golden truth that was in the Vedas. He made some of the words in the Vedas yield a meaning to which the men of his generation were utter strangers, and he found in India the most congenial soil. And wherever the Buddha went, he was followed and surrounded not by non-Hindus but Hindus, those who were themselves saturated with the Vedic law. But the Buddha's

teaching like his heart was all-expanding and all-embracing and so it has survived his own body and swept across the face of the earth. And at the risk of being called a follower of Buddha I claim this achievement as a triumph of Hinduism. Buddha never rejected Hinduism, but he broadened its base. He gave it a new life and a new interpretation. But here comes the point where I shall need your forgiveness and your generosity, and I want to submit to you that the teaching of Buddha was not assimilated in its fulness whether it was in Ceylon, or in Burma, or in China or in Tibet. I know my own limitations. I lay no claim to scholarship in Buddhistic law. Probably, a fifth-form boy from Nalanda Vidyalaya would plough me in a Buddhist catechism. I know that I speak in the presence of very learned priests and equally learned laymen, but I should be false to you and false to myself if I did not declare what my heart believes.

You and those who call themselves Buddhists outside India have no doubt taken in a very large measure the teachings of the Buddha, but when I examine your life and when I cross-question the friends from Ceylon, Burma, China or Tibet, I feel confounded to find so many inconsistencies between what I have come to understand as the central fact of Buddha's life and your own practice, and if I am not tiring you out, I would like hurriedly to run through three prominent points that just now occurred to me. The first is the belief in an all-pervading Providence called God. I have heard it contended times without number and I have read in books also, claiming to express the spirit of Buddhism, that Buddha did not believe in God. In my humble opinion such a belief contradicts the very central fact of Buddha's teaching. In my humble opinion the confusion has arisen over his rejection, and just rejection, of all the base things that passed in his generation under the name of God. He undoubtedly rejected the notion that a being called God was actuated by malice, could repent of his actions, and like the kings of the earth could possibly be open to temptations and bribes and could possibly have favourites. His whole soul rose in mighty indignation against the belief that a being called God required for His satisfaction the living blood of animals in order that he might be pleased—animals who were his own creation. He, therefore, reinstated God in the right place and dethroned the usurper who for the time being seemed to occupy that White Throne. He emphasized and redeclared the eternal and unalterable existence of the moral government of this universe. He unhesitatingly said that the law was God Himself.

God's laws are eternal and unalterable and not separable from God Himself. It is an indispensable condition of His very perfection. And hence the great confusion that Buddha disbelieved in God and simply believed in the moral law, and because of this confusion about God Himself, arose the confusion about the proper understanding of the great word *nirvana*. *Nirvana* is undoubtedly not utter extinction. So far as I have been able to understand the central fact of Buddha's life, *nirvana* is utter extinction of all that is base in us, all that is vicious in us, all that is corrupt and corruptible in us. *Nirvana* is not like the black, dead peace of the grave, but the living peace, the living happiness of a soul which is conscious of itself, and conscious of having found its own abode in the heart of the Eternal.

The third point is the low estimation in which the idea of sanctity of all life came to be held in its travels outside India. Great as Buddha's contribution to humanity was in restoring God to His eternal place, in my humble opinion greater still was his contribution to humanity in his exacting regard for all life, be it ever so low. I am aware that his own India did not rise to the height that he would fain have seen India occupy. But the teaching of Buddha, when it became Buddhism and travelled outside, came to mean that sacredness of animal life had not the sense that it had with an ordinary man. I am not aware of the exact practice and belief of Ceylonese Buddhism in this matter, but I am aware what shape it has taken in Burma and China. In Burma especially the Burmese Buddhists will not kill a single animal, but do not mind others killing the animals for them and dishing the carcasses for them for their food. Now, if there was any teacher in the world who insisted upon the inexorable law of cause and effect, it was inevitably Gautama, and yet my friends, the Buddhists outside India would, if they could, avoid the effects of their own acts. But I must not put an undue strain upon your patience. I have but lightly touched upon some of the points which I think it my duty to bring to your notice, and in all earnestness and equal humility I present them for your serious consideration.

One thing more and I shall have done. Last night the members of the Reception Committee asked me to speak at one of these audiences of the connection khadi had with Ceylon. I have not left much time for myself to expand this message before you, but I shall try to summarize it in two sentences. One thing is that you who regard Buddha as the ruler of your hearts owe something to the land of his birth, where millions of his descendants for whom he laboured and for

whom he died are today living a life of misery, living in a state of perpetual semi-starvation. I venture, therefore, to suggest that khadi enables you to establish a living bond between yourselves and the ruler of your hearts. If you will follow the central fact of his teaching and regard life as one of renunciation of all material things, all life being transitory, you will at once see the beauty of the message of khadi which otherwise means simple living and high thinking. Taking these two thoughts with you, I suggest to every one of you to dot the 'i's and cross the 't's and make out your own interpretation of the message of khadi. I thank you again for the great kindness that you have shown, for the address and for the benediction, and I hope that you have received the humble message that I have given to you in the same spirit in which it has been delivered. Regard it as a message not from a critic, but from a bosom friend.

Young India, 24-11-1927

257. SPEECH AT Y.M.C.A., COLOMBO

November 15, 1927

Addressing a huge gathering in the hall of Y.M.C.A., Colombo, Gandhiji welcomed the occasion as one more instance of the close touch, he was daily finding himself in, with Christians throughout the world [and said:]

There are some who will not even take my flat denial when I tell them that I am not a Christian.

The message of Jesus, as I understand it, is contained in his Sermon on the Mount unadulterated and taken as a whole, and even in connection with the Sermon on the Mount, my own humble interpretation of the message is in many respects different from the orthodox. The message, to my mind, has suffered distortion in the West. It may be presumptuous for me to say so, but as a devotee of truth, I should not hesitate to say what I feel. I know that the world is not waiting to know my opinion on Christianity.

One's own religion is after all a matter between oneself and one's Maker and no one else's, but if I feel impelled to share my thoughts with you this evening, it is because I want to enlist your sympathy in my search for truth and because so many Christian friends are interested in my thoughts on the teachings of Jesus. If then I had to face only the Sermon on the Mount and my own interpretation of it, I should not hesitate to say, 'Oh yes, I am a Christian'. But I know that at the present moment if I said any such

thing I would lay myself open to the gravest misinterpretation. I should lay myself open to fraudulent claims because I would have then to tell you what my own meaning of Christianity is, and I have no desire myself to give you my own view of Christianity. But negatively I can tell you that in my humble opinion, much of what passes as Christianity is a negation of the Sermon on the Mount. And please mark my words. I am not at the present moment speaking of Christian conduct. I am speaking of the Christian belief, of Christianity as it is understood in the West. I am painfully aware of the fact that conduct everywhere falls far short of belief. But I don't say this by way of criticism. I know from the treasures of my own experience that although I am every moment of my life trying to live up to my professions, my conduct falls short of these professions. Far therefore be it from me to say this in a spirit of criticism. But I am placing before you my fundamental difficulties. When I began as a prayerful student to study the Christian literature in South Africa in 1893, I asked myself, 'Is this Christianity?' and have always got the Vedic answer, *neti neti* (not this, not this). And the deepest in me tells me that I am right.

I claim to be a man of faith and prayer, and even if I was cut to pieces, God would give me the strength not to deny Him and to assert that He is. The Muslim says He is and there is no one else. The Christian says the same thing and so the Hindu, and if I may say so, even the Buddhist says the same thing, if in different words. We may each of us be putting our own interpretation on the word God—God Who embraces not only this tiny globe of ours, but millions and billions of such globes. How can we, little crawling creatures, so utterly helpless as he has made us, how could we possibly measure His greatness, His bound-less love, His infinite compassion, such that He allows man insolently to deny compassion, such that He allows man insolently to deny Him, wrangle about Him, and cut the throat of his fellow-man? How can we measure the greatness of God who is so forgiving, so divine? Thus though we may utter the same words they have not the same meaning for us all. And hence I say that we do not need to proselytize or do *shuddhi* or *tabligh* through our speech or writing. We can only do it really with our lives. Let them be open books for all to study. Would that I could persuade the missionary friends to take this view of their mission. Then there will be no distrust, no suspicion, no jealousy and no dissensions.

Gandhiji then took the case of modern China as a case in point. His heart, he

said, went out to young China in the throes of a great national upheaval, and he referred to the anti-Christian movement in China, about which he had occasion to read in a pamphlet received by him from the students' department of the Young Women's Christian Association and the Young Men's Christian Association of China. The writers had put their own interpretation upon the anti-Christian movement, but there was no doubt that young China regarded Christian movements as being opposed to Chinese self-expression. To Gandhiji the moral of this anti-Christian manifestation was clear. He said:

Don't let your Christian propaganda be anti-national, say these young Chinese. And even their Christian friends have come to distrust the Christian endeavour that had come from the West. I present the thought to you that these essays written by young man have a deep meaning, a deep truth, because they were themselves trying to justify their Christian conduct in so far as they had been able to live up to the life it had taught them and at the same time find a basis for that opposition. The deduction I would like you all to draw from this manifestation is that you Ceylonese should not be torn from your moorings, and those from the West should not consciously or unconsciously lay violent hands upon the manners, customs and habits of the Ceylonese in so far as they are not repugnant to fundamental ethics and morality. Confuse not Jesus' teachings with what passes as modern civilization, and pray do not do unconscious violence to the people among whom you cast your lot. It is no part of that call, I assure you, to tear the lives of the people of the East by its roots. Tolerate whatever is good in them and do not hastily, with your preconceived notions, judge them. Do not judge lest you be judged yourselves. In spite of your belief in the greatness of Western civilization and in spite of your pride in all your achievements, I plead with you for humility, and ask you to leave some little room for doubt, in which, as Tennyson sang, there was more truth, though by 'doubt' he no doubt meant a different thing. Let us each one live our life, and if ours is the right life, where is the cause for hurry? It will react of itself.

To you, young Ceylonese friends¹, I say: Don't be dazzled by the splendour that comes to you from the West. Do not be thrown off your feet by this passing show. The Enlightened One has told you in never-to-be-forgotten words that this little span of life is but a passing shadow, a fleeting thing, and if you realize the nothingness of all that

¹ The Y.M.C.A. had among its members Buddhist as well as Christian youth.

appears before your eyes, the nothingness of this material case that we see before us ever changing, then indeed there are treasures for you up above, and there is peace for you down here, peace which passeth all understanding, and happiness to which we are utter strangers. It requires an amazing faith, a divine faith and surrender of all that we see before us. What did Buddha do, and Christ do, and also Mahomed? Theirs were lives of self-sacrifice and renunciation. Buddha renounced every worldly happiness, because he wanted to share with the whole world his happiness which was to be had by men who sacrificed and suffered in search of truth. If it was a good thing to scale the heights of Mt. Everest, sacrificing precious lives in order to be able to go there and make some slight observations, it was a glorious thing to give up life after life in planting a flag in the uttermost extremities of the earth, how much more glorious would it be to give not one life, surrender not a million lives but abillion lives in search of the potent and imperishable truth? So be not lifted off your feet, do not be drawn away from the simplicity of your ancestors. A time is coming when those who are in the mad rush today of multiplying their wants, vainly thinking that they add to the real substance, real knowledge of the world, will retrace their steps and say: 'What have we done?' Civilizations have come and gone, and in spite of all our vaunted progress I am tempted to ask again and again 'To what purpose?' Wallace, a contemporary of Darwin, has said the same thing. Fifty years of brilliant inventions and discoveries, he has said, has not added one inch to the moral height of mankind. So said a dreamer and visionary if you will—Tolstoy. So said Jesus, and Buddha, and Mahomed, Whose religion is being denied and falsified in my own country today.

By all means drink deep of the fountains that are given to you in the Sermon on the Mount, but then you will have to take sackcloth and ashes. The teaching of the Sermon was meant for each and every one of us. You cannot serve both God and Mammon. God the Compassionate and the Merciful, Toleranceincarnate, allows Mammon to have his nine days' wonder. But I say to you, youth of Ceylon, fly from that self-destroying but destructive show of Mammon.

Young India, 8-12-1927

258. SPEECH AT MISSIONARY CONFERENCE, COLOMBO

November 16, 1927

MR. CHAIRMAN AND FRIENDS,

You have very kindly lightened my task by letting this meeting know my wishes. I always welcome any invitation to a missionary body and I accept as a flattering compliment to be called a fellow missionary. Perhaps we may not give the same meaning to the word 'missionary'. Nevertheless, I like that compliment. I understand that you have a conference every month where the missionaries of Ceylon or Colombo meet and I understand also that you have anticipated the day of the Conference in order that you may meet me and give me the privilege of meeting you. I appreciate that thoughtfulness also on the part of your Committee and in order to make it really a conference of that nature I would like you to ask me any questions that may occur now. That will really lighten my task. I don't want to give you any address. I have nothing new to say. I have been speaking to missionary conferences in Calcutta, in Bangalore and I also spoke to missionaries in Madras and I have nothing possibly to add to what I have already said. But it would be much better if you ask me questions arising out of anything that you may have read of my speeches delivered to those conferences or speeches delivered elsewhere on any subject or out of what you might have heard of me and from intimate fellowship that some of you have extended to me; I know that some of you have read about me in the papers. If you extend the same confidence you may ask me anything you like out of what you may have heard about me also and I assure you that I will not take it ill if you ask me questions that might be considered embarrassing in a drawing-room meeting. Let us not have a drawing-room meeting but a meeting between friends who are attempting to be closer friends still and dispel all the mists of misunderstanding.

Continuing, Mahatma Gandhi recalled a hymn that he had heard in Pretoria, "We shall know each other better when the mists have rolled away." Let them see that there were no mists hanging about them.

There was a pause for questions and Mr. G. P. Wishard asked what Mahatma Gandhi thought of the doctrine of the possibility of the forgiveness of sins.

GANDHIJI : That is a very fine question indeed. It is a very old question and naturally occurs to every sinner and as I consider myself

to have sinned more often than I have wished—I have certainly never wished to sin—I know how much [need] there is for forgiveness. Some of you have read perhaps even my confessions of the very grievous sins into which I have been led and not once but often, often enough to make any man ashamed of himself. And so, for my own personal satisfaction too I have been obliged to investigate that question. Whether it is my Hindu upbringing or whether it is my close association with some Jain friends, so far as Jainism may be distinguished from Hinduism, whatever the cause might be, I have come to the conclusion, I suppose that is the safest word to use at this time of life, though, of course, it is never too late to mend, that there is no such thing as forgiveness on the part of God as we understand the word ‘forgiveness’ in mundane matters as a king, for instance, forgives lapses on the part of his subjects. I believe in the eternal nature and the immutability of God’s laws. God and His laws, so far as I have been able to understand God’s purpose, are not distinguishable as we can and do distinguish between kings, earthly kings and their laws, and yet in a sense there is a forgiveness which is infinitely more definite than and superior to any forgiveness that may be given by a most forgiving king and that forgiveness is none else than a new heart. It is a definite promise of God which everyone who has the slightest desire can verify for himself or herself and so far as I have been able to see, the process takes place something after this type.

Continuing, Mahatma Gandhi said that if a man became conscious of his guilt and had the desire to wash himself of that guilt he began by prayer and supplication. The words ‘prayer’ and ‘supplication’ had a more extended meaning than in a mundane sense and then came a definite consciousness of God Who was within and, if they fulfilled the test that was necessary for that definite change in them and after that change came about, the sinner felt within himself as if there were a wall of protection being built for him, but still he would feel that safety not because of any strangeness that he had but because of that living wall of protection which he saw growing in front of him and round him, below him and above him, so that he became sin-proof and guilt-proof.

It was a gradual process but it came to them as if by a sudden miracle and therefore they used the word ‘grace’ of God. He used that phraseology freely because there was a similar word in Hinduism. It was not taken bodily from the Christian teaching but it was a most familiar thing in all the writings of the Hindu teachers, as distinct from the priests. They had written down their own experiences and that was how they had related their experiences. He did not mind how he had arrived at that

process. If he had arrived at that process from his very close Christian contact, he would be delighted, or if he had come to that conclusion from his Hindu upbringing, he would still be delighted. His own purpose was to find if there could be escape from his sins, some escape from the crushing weight of that sinfulness, and therefore he felt that it was a gradual process till it came to such a fulness that they began to recognize it and then they said there was a sudden change, but personally he did not believe in a sudden change. There was really no such thing as a miracle in God's universe which was governed by definite laws which were unalterable. But seeing that they did not understand all those laws and seeing that God's processes were so mysterious and beyond their reasoning faculty, it was necessary for them to exercise patience and then they would be justified in calling it a miracle, but seeing the whole process in cold blood he did not think that God worked by a series of miracles and if he was right that the process was a gradual change then there were two things that went on in their own selves. One was that definite striving minute after minute, second after second, making persistent effort; and in the second place a definite recognition of their utter helplessness without the help of that quickening spirit that revived them and which he would call God. Thus, there was the help which they called the grace of God on one side and on the other side human effort, however, infinitesimal it might be. The two processes went on side by side.¹

Gandhiji explained at length how there could be no forgiveness like the forgiveness that a criminal prays for and gets from an earthly king. It was a question of a change of heart brought about by true contrition and ceaseless striving for purification. In this connection Gandhiji referred to the case of the Plymouth Brother. . .² [and side:]

But the Plymouth Brother I met argued that there was no such thing as human effort. If you accept the fact of crucifixion sinfulness would go altogether. I was astounded as I knew and was intimate with quite a number of Christian friends who were making a definite effort. "Don't you fall?" I asked him. "Yes," he said, "but my strength comes from the fact that Jesus intercedes for me and washes my sins away." Well, I tell you, the Quaker friend who had introduced me to the Plymouth Brother felt no less astounded. Asking for forgiveness means that we should not sin again, and the grant of forgiveness means that we would have power to resist all temptation. It is only after a persistent, untiring effort that God comes to our rescue as a

¹ What follows is from "Ceylon Memoirs" by Mahadev Desai, published in *Young India*, 22-12-1927.

² *Vide An Autobiography*, pt. II, Ch. XI.

wall of protection and there is a growing consciousness that we shall not sin. In a famous controversy with Huxley, I remember Gladstone having said that when the definite grace of God was pledged to us we became incapable of sin. Jesus was incapable of sin from birth, Gladstone said, but we could be such by constant striving. So long as there is a single evil thought coming to our mind, we must conclude that there is not complete forgiveness nor grace.

[Asked if Gandhiji's position in matters of faith was not like living in a sort of half-way house, he replied:]

I certainly admire the friend who made that criticism but he may be sure that there is no half-way house for me. I have been described as an intolerable wholehogger. I know that friends get confused when I say I am a sanatani Hindu and they fail to find in me things they associate with a man usually labelled as such. But that is because in spite of my being a staunch Hindu I find room in my faith for Christian and Islamic and Zoroastrian teaching, and therefore my Hinduism seems to some to be a conglomeration and some have even dubbed me an eclectic. Well, to call a man eclectic is to say that he has no faith, but mine is a broad faith which does not oppose Christians—not even a Plymouth Brother—not even the most fanatical Mussalman. It is a faith based on the broadest possible toleration. I refuse to abuse a man for his fanatical deeds, because I try to see them from his point of view. It is that broad faith that sustains me. It is a somewhat embarrassing position, I know, —but to others, not to me !

The Ceylon Daily News, 17-11-1927 and Young India, 22-12-1927

259. *SPEECH TO LABOUR UNION, COLOMBO*

November 16, 1927

MR. CHAIRMAN, FRIENDS AND FELLOW-LABOURERS,

I thank you for presenting me with your beautiful address and handsome purse for the cause which has brought me to this pearl amongst the islands of the earth. I have called myself a labourer in addressing you as fellow-labourers and I have done so for the simple reason that since 1904 I have been endeavouring to live to the best of my ability as a labourer myself. But long before that date I began to understand and appreciate the dignity of labour and it was long

before that date that I realized at the same time that labour was not receiving its due. And out of His infinite grace, God so fashioned my life that I began to be drawn closer and closer to labour and to its service. It, therefore, gives me great joy to be in your midst and to receive from fellow labourers an address and also a purse on behalf of those who are, materially speaking, infinitely worse off than yourselves. The use made by you in your address of the expression “Mother India” has touched me to my deepest recesses. The use of that expression derives great significance to me because I know all of you are not Indians. Perhaps to those of you—and you are in a majority in this Union or these Unions, so far as I understand—and, as I said, to all those of you who are not Indians, the significance that I attach to that expression and which I shall presently explain to you was not before your mind’s eye when you made use of the expression. Legend—and legend at times is superior to history—legend has it that in remote times a king called Rama came to Lanka to rid this island of an evil king, and instead of exercising the rights of conquest by annexing this fair island to india, he restored it to Vibhishana, the brother of that evil king, and crowned him King of Lanka.

Rendered in modern language, it means that Rama, before trying the loyalty of the people of Lanka or the loyalty of King Vibhishana and putting either him or the people through a course of tutelage, gave them straightway complete self-government or dominion status. Many changes have taken place since that date, assigned to the period of this legend, in this place as also in India, and they have undergone many vicissitudes of fortune, but the fact remains that the millions in India, even to the present day, believe in this legend more firmly than in any facts of history. And if you, people of this beautiful island, are not ashamed of owning some connection with your next-door neighbour I would advise you and ask you to share the pride that millions of Indians have in owning this legend. And now you can understand why I told you that you, in my opinion a daughter State, in using the expression “Mother India” for India, had done well in expressing your allegiance to that country.

I would also point out that whether Rama of the legend ever lived on this earth or not, and whether also the ten-headed Ravana of the legend lived in Lanka or not, it is true that there is a Rama who is living today and there is also a Ravana who is living today. Rama is the sweet and sacred name in Hinduism for God and Ravana is the

name given in Hindu mythology to evil, whenever evil becomes embodied in the human frame. And it is the business, the function, of the God Rama to destroy evil wherever it occurs and it is equally the function of the God Rama to give to his devotees like Vibhishana a free charter of irrevocable self-government.

Let us all, whether we are labourers or otherwise, seek by ridding ourselves by the help of God Rama within us, of the ten-headed monster of evil within us, and ask for the charter of self-government. And you fellow-labourers who have still to receive your due are perhaps in greater need of Rama's help and Rama's grace in order that you might rid yourselves of evil and fit yourselves for self-government. Don't believe it if anyone tells you that it was I who secured the comparative freedom for the indentured labourers of South Africa or that it was I who secured freedom to the labourers of Ahmedabad or Malabar. They secured whatever they did because they complied with the rules, the inexorable rules, governing a self-government. They won because they helped themselves. And let me briefly tell you what in my opinion you should do to come to your own. Combination amongst yourselves in the form of unions is undoubtedly the first step. But I can tell you from experience that your very Union can become one of the causes of your bondage if you do not comply with other conditions which I shall presently mention to you. You should consider every one of you a trustee for the welfare of the rest of your fellow-labourers and not be self-seeking. You must live and remain non-violent under circumstances however grave and provoking. If you will be men and realize your dignity as such, you must give up drink in its entirety if you are given to that cursed habit. A man under the influence of drink becomes worse than a beast and forgets the distinction between his sister, his mother and his wife. And if you really believe me as your friend you will take the advice of this old friend of yours and shun drink as you would shun a snake hissing in front of you. A snake can only destroy the body but the curse of drink corrupts the soul within. This, therefore, is much more to be feared and avoided than a snake. You should also avoid gambling if you are given to that evil habit.

There is a still more delicate thing about which I was pained to receive a letter only yesterday or today from a friend who has given his signature. He tells me that the personal purity amongst labourers is somewhat conspicuous by its absence. He tells me that many of you, men and women, huddle yourselves together in small spaces

irrespective of any restriction that modesty imposes upon us and demands from us. One of the things that sharply distinguishes a man from a beast is that man from his earliest age has recognized the sanctity of the marriage bond and regulated his life in connection with woman by way of self-restraint which he has more and more imposed upon himself.

My dear friends, if you will realize your dignity as men and rise to your full height, as you ought to, you will bear this little thing in mind that I have told you, treasure it and give effect to it from this very night. If your means do not permit you to have separate and sufficient habitations so as to observe the laws of primary decency, you will refuse to serve under such degrading conditions and for such insufficient wages. I would honour you as brave men if you will accept a state of utter starvation rather than that you should labour on such insufficient wages as would render it impossible for you to observe the primary laws of morality. I do not care whether you are Hindus, or whether you call yourselves Buddhists, or whether you are Christian or Mussalman, the demand or religion is the same and inexorable that every woman other than your wife must be treated by you as your sister or your mother, whose body must be held as sacred as your own. I would advise you to use your Union as much for internal reformation as for defence against the assaults from without, and remember that while it is quite proper to insist upon your rights and privileges it is imperative that you should recognize the obligation that every right carries with it.

While therefore you will insist upon adequate wage, proper humane treatment from your employers and proper and good sanitary lodgings, you will also recognize that you should treat the business of your employers as if it was your own business and give to it honest and undivided attention. You must on no account neglect your children but you should give them decent education and bring them up properly so that they may be able, when they grow up, to play their parts on the human stage nobly and well.

Lastly, while you have done well in thinking of the unfortunate millions in India I would advise you to establish a living bond between them and yourselves, especially if you still consider that India is the Mother State, the Mother Country; you will for the sake of the few millions invest every pie or every cent that you may want to use for dress in khadi and nothing else. I thank you once more for your

address and your purse and for the patient attention with which you have listened to the few words I have said to you this evening. I also thank your volunteers who have been silently and unselfishly serving me to the best of their ability and showing me very delicate attention; although I did not acknowledge their service before, the matter did not escape my attention. I hope and pray that the words I have spoken to you this evening will enter your hearts and God will give you the wisdom and the strength to carry out such advice as may commend itself to you.

The Ceylon Daily News, 17-11-1927

260. A COTTON QUOTATION

Mr. Richard Gregg, with whose name that reader of *Young India* is familiar as the joint author of the booklet on *Takli Spinning*, sends the following usefull old quotation¹ which he has unearthed in the course of his researches.

Young India, 17-11-1927

261. VARNASHRAMA AND ITS DISTORTION

The reader will find in another column Sjt. Nadkarni's interesting letter² on the Brahmin-Non-Brahmin question. I gladly respond to his invitation to explain my views on *varnashrama* more fully than I have done in my speeches during the recent Tamil Nad tour, which have been more or less fully reproduced in these columns.

Let me clear the issue by dismissing from consideration the celebrated story of a Sudra said to have had his head cut off by Rama by reason of his having dared to become a sannyasi. I do not read Shastras literally, certainly not as history. The story of the decapitation of Shambuka is not in keeping with the general character of Rama. And whatever may be said in the various *Ramayanas*, I hold

¹ Not reproduced here. The quotation was from the English translation of Fra Paolino da San Bartolomeo's *A Voyage to the East Indies*, published in Rome in 1796. Among other things, it said: "It may in truth be asserted, that in spinning, weaving and dyeing the Indians excel all other nations in the world."

² For extracts from the letter, *vide* Appendix "Extract from S. D. Nadkarni's Letter", November 17, 1927.

my Rama to be incapable of having decapitated a Sudra or for that matter anyone else. The story of Shambuka, if it proves anything, proves that in the days when the story arose it was held to be a capital crime for Sudras to perform certain rites. We are in the dark as to the meaning of the word Sudra here. I have heard even an allegorical meaning given to the whole version. But that would not alter the fact of certain unreasonable prohibitions operating against the Sudras at some stage in the evolution of Hinduism. Only I do not need to join Sjt. Nadkarni in doing penance for the alleged decapitation of Shambuka, for I do not believe in a historical person by that name having been decapitated by a historical person called Rama. For the general persecution of the so-called lower orders of Hinduism, especially the so-called untouchables, I am, as a Hindu, doing penance every moment of my life. In my opinion, illustrations like that of Shambuka have no place in a religious consideration of the question of *varnashrama*. I propose therefore merely to say what I believe to be *varnashrama*, and I should not hesitate to reject the institution if it was proved to me that the inter-pretation put upon it by me has no warrant in Hinduism. *Varna* and *ashrama* are, as Sjt. Nadkarni says, two different words. The institution of four *ashramas* enables one the better to fulfil the purpose of life for which the law of *varna* is a necessity. The law of *varna* prescribes that a person should, for his living, follow the lawful occupation of his forefathers. I hold this to be a universal law governing the human family. Its breach entails, as it has entailed, serious consequence for us. But the vast majority of men unwittingly follow the hereditary occupation of their fathers. Hinduism rendered a great service to mankind by the discovery of and conscious obedience to this law. If man's, as distinguished from lower animals's, function is to know God, it follows that he must not devote the chief part of his life to making experiments in finding out what occupation will best suit him for earning his livelihood. On the contrary, he will recognize that it is best for him to follow his father's occupation, and devote his spare time and talent to qualifying himself for the task to which mankind is called.

Here then the difficulty suggested by my correspondent does not arise. For no one is precluded from rendering multitudinous acts of voluntary service and qualifying one self for it. Thus Sjt. Nadkarni born of Brahmin parents and I born of Vaisya parents may consistently with the law of *varna* certainly serve as honorary national volunteers or as honorary nurses or honorary scavengers in times of

need, though in obedience to that law he as a Brahmin would depend for his bread on the charity of his neighbours and I as a Vaisya would be earning my bread by selling durgs or groceries. Everyone is free to render any useful service so long as he does not claim reward for it.

In this conception of the law of *varna* no one is superior to any other. All occupations are equal and honourable in so far as they are not in conflict with morals, private or public. A scavenger has the same status as a Brahmin. Was it not Max Muller who said that it was in Hinduism more than in any other religion that life was no more and no less than Duty?

There is no doubt that at some stage of its evolution Hinduism suffered corruption, and the canker of superiority and inferiority entered and vitiated it. But this notion of inequality seems to me to be wholly against the spirit of sacrifice which dominates everything in Hinduism. There is no room for arrogation of superiority by one class over another in a scheme of life based on ahimsa whose active form is undefiled love for all life.

Let it not be said against this law of *varna* that it makes life dull and robs it of all ambition. In my opinion that law of *varna* alone makes life livable by all and restores the only object worthy of it, namely, self-realization. Today we seem to think of and strive for material pursuits which are in their very nature transitory, and we do this almost to the exclusion of the one thing needful.

If I am told that the interpretation put by me upon *varna* is not supported by anything to be found in the *smritis* which are codified Hindu conduct, my answer is that the codes of conduct based upon fundamental invariable maxims of life vary from time to time as we gain fresh experience and make fresh observations. It is possible to show many rules of the *smritis* which we no longer recognize as binding or even worthy of observance. Invariable maxims are few and common to all religions. The latter vary in their application. And no religion has exhausted the varieties of all possible applications. They must expand with the expansion of ideas and knowledge of new facts. Indeed I believe that the contents of words grow with the growth of human experience. The connotation of the words sacrifice, truth, non-violence, *varnashrama* etc., is infinitely richer today than it was during the known historic past. Applying this principle to the word *varna*, we need not be bound, it would be foolish and wrong to be bound, by the current interpretation, assuming that it is inconsistent with the requirements of the age with our notions of morals. To do otherwise will be suicide.

Varna considered in the manner above indicated has nothing in common with caste as we know it today, nor is prohibition as to interdining and intermarriage an essential part of the recognition of the law of *varna*. That these prohibitions were introduced for the conservation of *varnas* is possible. Restrictions against promiscuous marriage are necessary in any scheme of life based on self-restraint. Restraints on promiscuous dining arise either from sanitary considerations or differences in habits. But disregard of these restrictions formerly carried, or what is more, should now carry no social or legal punishment or forfeiture of one's *varna*.

Varnas were originally four. It was an intelligent and intelligible division. But the number is no part of the law of *varna*. A tailor for instance may not become a blacksmith although both may be and should be classed as *Vaisyas*.

The most forcible objection I heard raised in Tamil Nad was that, however good and innocuous *varnas* might appear under my interpretation, they must either be worked under a different name or destroyed altogether by reason of the evil odour that surrounds them. The objectors feared that my interpretation would be ignored and yet my authority would be freely quoted for supporting under cover of *varna* the hideous inequalities and tyrannies practised at the present day in Hinduism. They further observed that in the popular estimation caste and *varna* were mere synonymous terms and that the restraint of *varna* was nowhere practised, but the tyranny of caste was rampant everywhere. All these objections have no doubt much force in them. But they are objections such as can be advanced against many corrupted institutions that once were good. A reformer's business is to examine the institution itself and to set about reforming it if its abuses can be separated from it. *Varna* is however not a mere institution made by man but it is a law discovered by him. It cannot therefore be set aside; its hidden meaning and potentialities should be explored and utilized for the good of society. We have seen that the evil is not in the law or the institution itself, but it lies in the doctrine of superiority and inferiority which are superadded to it.

The question too arises how the law is to be worked in these days when all the four *varnas* or sub-*varnas* break asunder all the restrictions, seeking by all means lawful and otherwise to advance their material welfare, and when some arrogate superiority over others who in their turn are rightly challenging the claim. The law will work itself out even if we ignore it. But that will be the way of punishment. If we

will escape destruction, we will submit to it. And seeing that we are just now engaged in applying to ourselves the sub-human rule of survival of the fittest, meaning the strongest (physically), it would be well to recognize ourselves as one *varna*, viz., Sudras, even though some may be teaching and some may be soldiering and some others may be engaged in commercial pursuits. I remember in 1915 the Chairman at the Social Conference in Nellore suggesting that formerly all were Brahmins, and that now too all should be recognized as such and that the other *varnas* should be abolished. It appeared to be then, as it appears to me now, as a weird suggestion.

It is the so-called superior that has to descend from his heights, if the reform is to be peaceful. Those who for ages have been *trained* to consider themselves as the lowest in the social scale cannot suddenly have the equipment of the so-called higher classes. They can therefore rise to *power* only by bloodshed, in other words by destroying society itself. In the scheme of reconstruction I have in view, no mention has been made of the untouchables, for I find no place for untouchability in the law of *varna* or otherwise in Hinduism. They in common with the rest will be absorbed in the Sudras. Out of these the other three *varnas* will gradually emerge purified and equal in status though differing in occupations. The Brahmins will be very few. Fewer still will be the soldier class who will not be the hirelings or the unrestrained rulers of today, but real protectors and trustees of the nation laying down their lives for its service. The fewest will be the Sudras for in a well-ordered society a minimum amount of labour will be taken from fellowmen. The most numerous will be the Vaisyas—a *varna* that would include all professions—the agriculturists, the traders, the artisans, etc. This scheme may sound Utopian. I however prefer to live in this Utopia of my imagination to trying to live up to the unbridled licence of a society that I see tottering to its disruption. It is surely given to individuals to live their own Utopias even though they may not be able to see them accepted by society. Every reform has made its beginning with the individual, and that which had inherent vitality and the backing of a stout soul was accepted by the society in whose midst the reformer lived.

Young India, 17-11-1927

262. *READY-MADE KHADI CLOTHES*

A Parsi friend makes some suggestions about ready-made khadi clothes which I expand as follows :

Just as we have readymade khadi caps on the market, why not khadi vests and shirts both after the Indian and European styles? Surely our khadi shopkeepers should be resourceful enough to find the different varieties of clothes that are sold readymade and to have them made of khadi. The suggestion is worthy of consideration by khadi shops.

It will be one method of cheapening khadi and providing remunerative employment for the town-dweller. If the khadi tailor has patriotism enough to take a trifle less than the market wage, the saving can go to reduce the price of khadi required for the articles. Miss Mithubehn Petit has found out ingenious patterns which she works on khadi and charges prices which her chosen customers gladly pay for the knowledge that they are not only supporting khadi but also girls who might otherwise have been without such a clean method of earning livelihood as khadi work provides for them. In Bihar and Tamil Nad, I saw tailors who were working exclusively on khadi. There is no reason why even educated Indians should not go in for tailoring with a view to serving khadi at the same time that they may be serving themselves.

Young India, 17-11-1927

263. *SPEECH AT NEGOMBO*

November 17, 1927

MR. CHAIRMAN AND FRIENDS,

I am deeply grateful to you for presenting me with this very beautiful and artistic address. Ever since my arrival in your beautiful island I have been surrounded with affectionate attention in all quarters and you have but added to the same by bringing me to this picturesque place and presenting this address. I hope that my countrymen who are living in your midst are living with you in peace and harmony. And I suggest to you who are from India that you will consider yourselves representatives of India's culture and tradition and live up to them. I would ask you, inhabitants of this island, to bear with them as your next-door neighbour, whenever you see shortcomings in them.

At the end of my talk I shall consider myself a happy and fortunate man if, as you have co-operated and made my mission happy, so also you have lived in mutual co-operation. It does not surprise me in the least that you, the hospitable people of Ceylon, recognize the usefulness and necessity of my humble mission. Indeed I would have been greatly surprised if you had not risen to the occasion and endeavoured to do your duty by responding to the dire call of millions and millions of the people who, everybody will admit, are living in a state of semi-starvation. I thank you once more for your address.

The Ceylon Daily News, 18-11-1927

264. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, KURUNEGALA

November 17, 1927

. . . Mr. Tambiraja had referred to the political situation of Ceylon, and his expectations from the Reform Commission. If he [Gandhiji] expressed an opinion on the matter, he would be abusing the hospitality he had received. He, however, expressed a wish that the expectations of the country would be fulfilled, and hoped that when the deliberations of the Royal Commission were over, their finding would be to the entire satisfaction of the people.

There was another question, he said, about which he could freely express himself. That was with regard to temperance. During the short time he had, he had made an attempt to gather some idea about the statistics and it was with great pain he discovered that Ceylon was no better off than her neighbours across the sea. In his opinion one who was a slave to drink was no better than a beast. He wished the Temperance Union in Ceylon every success, and he hoped that they would not be contented until Ceylon was entirely "dry". There was one other thing he wished to touch upon. He had been informed that women belonging to certain castes in the island were not permitted to wear upper garments by those of higher castes. He hoped that the ladies who were present would consider it a personal insult if any woman is prohibited from wearing whatever garment she desired. In conclusion, he hoped that the people of this country would help their famishing neighbours in India by buying cloth turned out in India.

The Ceylon Daily News, 18-11-1927

265. *SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, MATALE*

November 18, 1927

I thank you for these addresses as also for the generous purses that you have presented to me.

You have in your addresses very kindly mentioned my wife also. But I am very sorry to have to inform you that she is not with me this morning. The fact is that we are not travelling in Ceylon to receive honours from you, but purely for the business which I have undertaken on behalf of the poor millions of India. As a matter of fact, people have often, as a gentleman did last night, mistaken her for my mother. For me, as for her also, I hope, it is not only a pardonable mistake, but a welcome mistake. For years past, she has ceased to be my wife by mutual consent. Nearly forty years ago I became an orphan, and for nearly thirty years she has been my mother, friend, nurse, cook, bottle-washer and all these things. If in the early hours of the day she had come with me to divide the honours, I should have gone without my food. And nobody would have looked after my clothing and creature comforts. So we have come to a reasonable understanding that I should have all the honours and she should have all the drudgery. I assure you that some of the co-workers will duly inform her of all the kind things that you have said about her and I hope that the explanation that I have tendered you will be accepted by you as sufficient excuse for her absence.

You will forgive me for having taken up so much of your time over a flimsy personal explanation, but if the men in front of me, and especially the women, will understand the serious side of the explanation and appreciate the secret of it I have no doubt that you will all be the happier for it.

I have no doubt that it is not necessary for me to draw the attention of a people whose country is dominated by the spirit of the Buddha to the fact that life is not a bundle of enjoyments and privileges, but a bundle of duties and services.

That which separates man from the beast is essentially man's recognition of the necessity of putting a series of restraints on worldly enjoyment.

I am therefore surprised to find that in this land of Buddha people are given, as they are given in other parts of the country, to drink.

In studying the statistics of this island, I found that the drink

revenue was a substantial part of the general revenue. I was still more shocked to discover that, unlike us in India, the drink habit did not carry with it a sense of shame and disrespectability.

You know that I belong to the country where Gautama was born, where he found his Enlightenment, and where he passed his life. Whatever the Ceylonese scholars in Buddhism may say to the contrary, I want you to take it from me that this drink habit is totally against the spirit of the Buddha. Because in this land, Hinduism, Christianity and Islam are represented in abundance, I tell you that in Hinduism drink is a sin; I know that it is equally held abominable in Islam. I am sorry to confess that in Christian Europe drink is not considered disrespectful, but I am glad to be able to tell you that hundreds, if not thousands, whose friendship I have the privilege to enjoy, have assured me that this drink habit in Europe is entirely contrary to the spirit of Christ.

I am in close touch with Christian America. You know how bravely these men in America are battling against the drink evil. I would therefore respectfully urge you all, whether you are Buddhists or Hindus, Christians or Mussalmans, to unite together in making a supreme effort to rid this country of this drink curse.

Whatever may be said about the medical necessity of drink in cold climates, everyone is agreed that there is absolutely no occasion for drink in the climate of a temperate zone like this.

One of the things to which I would like to draw your attention is the existence of untouchability in the most liberal religion in the world-Buddhism. I wish you would take immediate steps to declare every man to be absolutely equal with the rest of you. You are denying Buddhism, you are denying humanity, so long as you regard a single man as an untouchable.

Lastly, since you have been good enough to sympathize with my mission, I would ask you to broaden your sympathy by making your purchase of cloth in khadi alone, so long as your clothes are not manufactured in this beautiful island.

My barber friends have presented me with an address and a purse. It is a manifestation from fellow-workers of sympathy for the starving millions, which deeply touches me. I would be happier if those, who have, will always think of those, who have not.

I thank you once more for the addresses and the purses.

With Gandhiji in Ceylon, pp. 70-2

266. *SPEECH AT DHARMARAJ COLLEGE, KANDY*

November 18, 1927

It has been my good fortune to feel at home and make myself at home wherever I have gone in any part of the world, and had I not been able to do so, probably I should have died long ago without having had to commit suicide. But I feel doubly at home when I see my Parsi friends. You cannot understand this really. And you might also think that I am joking. It is not joking. It is serious, because of my having been in closest association with Parsis in South Africa and in India, and having had personally nothing but treasures of love from them. Even now you do not know, of course, but it gives me great pleasure to own before you that some of my best workers are Parsis, and they are those three grand-daughters of the Grand Old Man of India.

But I must not detain you on my personal and family affairs. I thank you very much for this purse and I like this opportunity of having come to you.

As I told the boys of the Trinity College a little while ago, your education is absolutely worthless if it is not built on a solid foundation of truth and purity. If you, boys, are not careful about the personal purity of your lives and if you are not careful about being pure in thought, speech, and deed, then I tell you that you are lost, although you may become perfect finished scholars.

I have been asked to draw your attention to one thing. Purity consists first of all in possessing a pure heart, but what there is in the heart really comes out also and is shown in outward acts and outward behaviour. And a boy who wants to keep his mouth pure will never utter a bad word. Of course, that is quite clear. But he neither will put anything into his mouth that will cloud his intellect, cloud his mind and damage his friends also.

I know that there are boys who smoke, and in Ceylon perhaps you are as bad as they are in Burma, though boys are becoming bad everywhere so far as this wretched habit of smoking is concerned. And of course, Parsis as you know, are called or rather miscalled, fire-worship-pers. They are no more fire-worshippers than you and though they see God through that great manifestation the Sun which is nothing but the God of Fire.

Some of you good Parsis never smoke, and you make it a point, whenever you have a number of boys in your care, to train the boys not to foul their mouths by smoke.

If any of you are smoking, you will henceforth give up that bad habit. Smoking fouls one's breath. It is a disgusting habit. When he is in a railway carriage, the smoker never cares whether there are ladies or men sitting about him who never smoke, and that the stench that comes out from his mouth may be disgusting to them.

The cigarette might be a small thing from a distance, but when the cigarette smoke goes into one's mouth and then comes out, it is poison. Smokers do not care where they spit.

Here Gandhiji related a story from Tolstoy to explain how the tobacco habit was more disastrous in its effects than drink and proceeded :

Smoking clouds one's intellect, and it is a bad habit. If you ask doctors, and they happen to be good doctors, they will tell you that smoke has been the cause of cancer in many cases, or at least that smoke is at the bottom of it.

Why smoke, when there is no necessity for it? It is no food. There is no enjoyment in it except in the first instance through suggestion from outside.

You, boys, if you are good boys, if you are obedient to your teachers and parents, omit smoking and whatever you save out of this, please send on to me for the famishing millions of India.

With Gandhiji in Ceylon, pp. 75-7

267. SPEECH IN REPLY TO MUNICIPAL ADDRESS, KANDY

November 18, 1927

MR. CHAIRMAN AND FRIENDS,

I am sorry that I have lost the voice that I had only some months ago. My voice is now one that will not carry very far, and if those who are sitting at the end of the hall cannot hear me, I hope they will forgive me for my physical inability. I do not know whether it is necessary to apologize to you also for my physical inability to stand up and speak to you. I thank you very sincerely for the address that you have given me and the mention made therein to some services that I have rendered to my country and mankind in general. I have

been reading today something of this ancient city and the struggles that the citizens have been undergoing, and a feeling of pain and sorrow has crept upon me. I have not yet finished this booklet, but I have read enough of it to realize the difficulties the citizens of this place are undergoing. I can only say to them through this audience that my whole heart goes out to them. I hope that all your best wishes will be realized.

As I said in Colombo, I am a lover of municipal life. I do believe that municipal service is a privilege and duty which every citizen should render to the best of his or her ability. That service can be rendered without becoming a member of the municipality. It is not given to everyone to be elected members. I do not suppose that you, in Ceylon, are different from the people in India and therefore I fear that here, as in India, places in the municipalities are often aspired to and if that is so, the sooner we get rid of this idea the better for us.

I do not know whether you have any slums here. I fear you are not without slums, but those who are municipal councillors owe their duty to the poor citizens more than to the rich ones. I have had municipal experience in Bombay, Calcutta and Allahabad and almost all principal cities in India and I have noticed that those who are powerful and wealthy are able to have municipal service properly and promptly rendered to them, but, on the contrary, the poorest people hardly receive any consideration. I will be wrong if I let you understand that that is the condition in all Indian cities. No councillors have made it their duty to serve the poorest. I must also say that this state of things is improving though the improvement is painfully slow.

I venture to suggest to you that, in Ceylon, you are happier, much happier, than we are in India, in that you have not large masses of mankind to deal with. You have got a country second to none in physical beauty or climate. There is absolutely no reason why you should have plague, or the fear of plague. You should be able, as some of the municipalities in South Africa—I know South Africa even more than my own country—to keep off such visitations. I notice that the municipalities make it their business, like the Cape municipalities, to advertise their places and to draw people from all parts of the earth. They advertise their cities by making them gems of beauty and you here surpass even Cape Town in beauty.

The natural scenery that I see about me, in Ceylon, is probably unsurpassed on the face of the earth. If you will add to it by making all efforts humanly possible, you can certainly advertise this beautiful

spot and draw people from all parts of the earth much to their betterment and your own.

They have much to learn in this island which received enlightenment from the Great Buddha. You have a great religion which cannot be surpassed on the face of the earth. It is a religion which ennobles the noblest. It is professed by the largest number on the face of the earth but your religion, as it stands at present, is not at its best because you do not put forward an effort. It is your duty to do so.

You cannot begin better than by making up this beautiful place into a little paradise. I thank you again for your address of welcome.

The Ceylon Daily News, 19-11-1927; also With Gandhiji in Ceylon

268. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, KANDY

November 18, 1927

I am obliged to you for these numerous illuminated addresses, costly caskets and many purses.

I had hoped to be able to speak to you at some length, but your kind presentations of the gifts and the reading of those addresses have taken up over forty minutes out of sixty allotted for this meeting.

It has given me the greatest pleasure to be able to visit this beautiful island of yours. I have come to understand some of the difficulties and sorrows of the people of Kandy during the few hours that I have been in your midst. I wish that it were possible for me to give you more than lip sympathy, but as it is, I have to be satisfied with assuring you of my hearty sympathy and with praying that your sorrows may somehow be alleviated.

You have, in one of your addresses, asked me to do something in order that you may have the Buddha Gaya restored to you. I can give you my assurance that I shall not fail to do everything that is in my power to restore the property to you (Cheers.). But I wish I could think that your applause was justified, because I fear that in spite of all my efforts my power to help you is much less than you seem to imagine.

I would therefore warn you against building much hope on my assurance and ask you to continue your effort to vindicate your right absolutely unabated.

I had hoped to be able to speak to you on the message on the spinning-wheel as it is applicable to you, but I feel that it is my duty to

occupy the few minutes at my disposal with more serious and more urgent problems before you.

I have heard and it has given me pain to learn that even with you, the followers of the Enlightened One, there is untouchability rigidly observed. I assure you that it is wholly against the spirit of the Buddha. And I would urge Buddhists and Hindus to rid the community of this curse.

There is again the drink curse prevalent in your midst, as it is in other parts of the world. In so far as I know it, it is opposed to the spirit of all the great religions of the world and most decidedly Buddhism.

I understand that you have the right of local option in your midst. It would give me the greatest satisfaction to learn when I have left your shores that you are making the fullest use of this right of local option in order to rid this beautiful island of this curse.

I was distressed to learn that the estates and the plantations were not covered by the right of local option. I hope that the information given to me is not true. But whether that information is true or false, I hope that my voice will somehow or other reach the great planters who ought to regard themselves as the trustees for the welfare of the labourers on whom depends their marvellous prosperity. I venture respectfully to suggest to them that it is their duty to take a personal interest in the social welfare of the labourers whose bodies and even their souls are entrusted to their care. I regard it as their duty not only to put no temptation in the way of their labourers in the shape of drink, but to make an active effort to wean them from their errors.

I see that the time allotted for this meeting is over and I must conclude by repeating my thanks to the people of Kandy for the extraordinary kindness that they have shown to me.

With Gandhiji in Ceylon. pp. 77-8

269. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, BADULLA

November 19, 1927

MR. CHAIRMAN AND FRIENDS,

I thank you for your address and purse. It has given me the greatest pleasure to be in your beautiful island.

I see before me thousands of labourers from the neighbouring plantations. I wish that I had time to go in your midst and look at the surroundings in which you are living and your habitations and mode of life.

You may not all know that nearly a generation of my life has been passed either in the midst of labourers or in closest contact with them and nothing would have given me greater pleasure than to have passed a few days in your midst, understanding your wants and aspirations, but I hope that the cause which prevents me from doing so will be accepted as sufficient excuse for my not coming in your midst and living with you for a time.

The cause is that I am travelling just now as a self-appointed representative of millions in India who are infinitely worse off than any of you here. It is for their sake that these purses, that you have seen presented to me, have been given.

Every rupee of this purse will go to find employment in their own huts for 16 women, at least per day. These are men and women who cannot afford, even if they semi-starve, to leave their own homes, huts and fields. Out of the moneys that are being collected throughout the year nearly every year 50,000 women are being supported in their own homes through the spinning wheel industry.

Behind these spinners, several thousand weavers, dyers, printers, washermen and others are also being supported, who, but for this revival of spinning, would have been without any work.

This work is being done through the agency of an all-India organization called the All-India Spinners' Association which contains several self-sacrificing men, either sons of millionaires or of proved merit and integrity.

Whilst for this cause I gladly collect sums from moneyed men, it gives me great joy to be able to collect also from poor men like those of you who are sitting in front of me. Every cent, every anna received from a willing heart is just as welcome as the rupee or ten-rupee note received from a rich man.

I know that many of you who have graced this occasion with your presence have not had the opportunity given to you to subscribe to this fund. If my guess is correct, and many of you have not subscribed, I invite you, before you leave this meeting, to give your mite to this cause if you are so minded.

I am glad to be able to inform you that whilst I am making this appeal to the audience, a member has already sent me evidently all the money that he had in his pocket, Rs. 8 and odd.

But a more serious thing to which I wish to refer is that you should all establish a living bond with these starving millions by

wearing khadi which is produced by them out of these funds. All these moneys will be perfectly useless if I do not find customers for the khadi that I manufacture. I see that the response has already commenced before my appeal, and if every one of you put your hands into your pockets, and give your eyes to the men who are collecting and ears to me, I shall easily deliver the message I am about to give you.

There is an important matter which I want to discuss with you. A Western friend informed me this morning that hundreds of looms used to work here and he told me sorrowfully that owing to importation of foreign cloth and foreign yarn, all these looms were lying idle and this old industry had all but died out in this district.

I have told this gentleman that if he wants the assistance of experts in order to teach all the processes from ginning to hand-spinning, he can have it in Ceylon itself. There is near Colombo a family which has already learned all the processes and manufactures its own cloth from raw cotton.

There is no doubt whatsoever that if there are really needy men and women in this fair island, nothing can be better than that you should clothe yourselves out of cloth of your own spinning and weaving. I therefore hope that you will help this Rev. gentleman with all your hearts in his work and progress, and make use of all the industry and skill that he may place at your disposal.

I understood from another visitor this afternoon that you are without any organization here for doing this class of social work or political work of any nature whatsoever, and indeed nothing would please me better than to find that as one of the results of this meeting, you had such a working organization manned by selfless workers.

Still another friend came to me and asked me what was the message of the spinning-wheel for the people of Ceylon. He told me that there were men and women in this island who also needed work, and in answer to my cross-questions, he told me also that he wanted me to show a way whereby the youth of this fair land could be weaned from hasty and indiscriminate imitation of the West.

A fourth friend writes to me, saying that all the beautiful garments that I see on some of the women of Ceylon and all the faultless European style dress that I see on so many young men must not be taken by me to be an indication of the possession of wealth by the wearers. This correspondent tells me that many of these stylishly

dressed men often find themselves in the hands, I am sorry to say, of Chettis or Pathan money-lenders.

Well, the spinning-wheel has a message for all this class of people. To the starving man or woman who has no work possibly for him or her to do, the spinning-wheel says : 'Spin me and you will at least find a crust of bread for yourself.'

That is its economic message, but it has also a cultural message for one and all. The spinning-wheel says culturally to you and to me : 'Seeing that there are millions on the face of this earth who are compulsorily idle for want of work, and since I am the only instrument that can be placed in their hands without taking work away from a single mouth, will you not spin me for the sake of these millions and produce an atmosphere of honest industry, honest work and self-reliance and hope for all on God's earth?'

That is the cultural message the spinning-wheel addresses to all people of the earth, no matter to what country, religion or race they belong.

I assure you that slowly but surely this cultural appeal of the spinning-wheel is finding a lodgment in the remotest corners of the earth. I know Englishmen, Austrians, Germans, Poles, who have already accepted this appeal of the spinning-wheel. And I assure well-to-do men and women of Ceylon that if they will accept the cultural message of the spinning-wheel and try to make at least some part of their own clothing they will find themselves, at the end of the task, much taller than they are today.

The spinning-wheel has a third message which is metaphorical. It stands for simple life and high thinking. It is a standing protest against the modern mad rush for adding material comfort upon comfort and making life so complicated as to make one totally unfit for knowing one's self or one's God. It says appealingly every minute of our life to you and to me : 'Use me and you will find that if all of you unitedly make use of me, small and insignificant though I may appear, I shall be an irresistible force against the mad, indiscriminate worship of the curse called machinery.'

It is a standing rebuke to the men and women of Ceylon who go in for all kinds of fashions and styles and it tells them : '*Do not for the sake of your country ape the manners and customs of others which can only do harm to you and for heaven's sake do not wish to be what every one of the people of Ceylon cannot be.*'

I must now place before you one or two other subjects which I wish to dwell upon, and I want to tell you about the drink evil.

I know that many of you, labourers, are given to the drink habit. The drink habit is worse than a snake-bite. A snake-bite may poison a body to death, but the drink habit poisons and corrupts the soul. I would therefore urge you to fly from that curse as you would fly from a hissing snake.

I would respectfully urge the employers of labour in this district to regard themselves as trustees for the welfare of their employees and try to wean them from the drink habit. It is their bounden duty, in my humble opinion, to close every canteen in their neighbourhood and take away every such temptation from their men. I can tell them from personal experience that if they will open for their men decent refreshment rooms and provide them with all kinds of innocent games, they will find that the men will no longer require this intoxicating liquid.

As I was passing today from Kandy to this place, I passed through some of the finest bits of scenery that I have ever witnessed in my life. Where nature has been so beneficent and where nature provides for you eternal and innocent intoxication in the grand scenery about you, surely it is criminal for men or women to seek intoxication from that sparkling but deadly liquor. I suggest to the followers of the Enlightened One that it is totally against the spirit of his teaching to consider that drink can possibly be taken by those who adore the Buddha.

I was deeply pained to hear that even many of you who are Buddhists observe the curse of untouchability. I understood from a very high officer that some of you Buddhists consider it an insult for an untouchable woman to wear upper garments. I have no hesitation in saying without fear of contradiction that if you believe in untouchability, you deny totally the teaching of the Buddha. He who regarded the lowest animal life as dear as his own would never tolerate this cursed distinction between man and man and regard a single human being as an untouchable.

I was equally sorry to hear that you, Hindus, had not left this curse in India itself, but had taken it with you even on entering Ceylon. I so wish that both the Buddhists and Hindus living in Ceylon would set about working and remove this curse from their midst.

I must devote a sentence or two to one very important thing which I had almost forgotten.

While I was in Colombo I received a letter which told me that the life of the men and women in the estates and in all huge workshops was not as pure as it ought to be. The letter went on to say that the relations between men and women were not what they should be.

What chiefly distinguishes man from the beast is that man from his age of discretion begins to practise a life of continual self-restraint. God has enabled man to distinguish between the sister, his mother, his daughter and his wife. Do not for one moment imagine that because you are labourers you are absolved from having to observe these necessary distinctions and restrictions. If your huts are not so constructed as to enable you to observe the laws of decency and necessary privacy, I would request your employers to provide you with facilities to enable you to do so.

May God help you to understand the significance of these last words of mine!

With Gandhiji in Ceylon, pp. 79-85

270. 'BHUNDI BHUNCHHI'

Gujaratis living outside Cutch may not even have an idea of what "Bhundi Bhunchhi" means. A tax known by this name seems to be collected in Cutch alone. It is imposed on those persons belonging to the Meghwal caste¹ who remarry. The State gives a monopoly for the collection of this tax. It is said that those who hold such monopoly rights perpetrate many kinds of atrocities in order to increase their earnings.

When I was in Cutch,² I discussed this and many similar matters with Maharao³ and I had certainly hoped that this tax would immediately be abolished. However, a letter from a reader in Cutch shows that my hopes in this matter seem to have been belied.⁴

Besides these, I do not reproduce other extracts in which the writer has stated facts which one would be ashamed to publish. I would like to think that even the above facts are somewhat exaggerated. However, there should be no tax on persons remarrying

¹ Traditionally regarded as untouchable

² Gandhiji was in Cutch from October 22, 1925 to November 3, 1925.

³ The ruler of the then princely State of Cutch

⁴ The letter has not been translated here.

and, that too on those of one particular caste. I did not come across a single officer in Cutch who defended this tax. Some of them gave unconvincing replies such as : “It has been in existence for a long time”, “No one’s attention has been drawn to it.” We all then thought, however, that this tax would be surely repealed and the poor Meghwals would be relieved of this infliction.

This, however, did not materialize and the writer hopes for my help. I wish I had the capacity to convince Maharaoshi or his officers. If I had this capacity, I would immediately make use of it. There is a limit to the influence which newspapers can exercise. It is often found that the mahatmas can be influential only to the extent that they can be made use of. The satyagrahi’s influence is also not unlimited. As a journalist I have no influence whatsoever in Cutch. As a mahatma my influence [in Cutch] is on the debit side and as a satyagrahi it will have to be tested when the time comes. Although the influence of a satyagrahi can be powerful, it is circumscribed by time, place and circumstances. At present my satyagraha would not benefit the Meghwals of Cutch. The circumstances are unfavourable, and, moreover, Cutch is beyond my field of activity. Hence the only way open to me is that of the weak—that of the poor—the way of persuasion and appeal. Through this article I make that appeal to the Maharaoshi and his officers.

To the people of Cutch, however, innumerable ways are open provided they have courage and compassion. It is not necessary for them to revolt or to adopt any drastic measures. The Indian people have always adopted the remedial measure of getting into a sulk. Whenever the ruler was unjust, the people resorted to this measure and thereby convinced the ruler of his injustice. Today we have lost the capacity for this even. The Mahajans have become quite insignificant. I remember times when the Mahajan was even more powerful than the ruler. The Mahajan unions now exist only in name. They are now motivated by self-interest and have become unjust and, whereas once they were the representatives and true protectors of the people, at many places they are now found to have become the exploiters of the people. This explains why the rulers and their officers are found to be unafraid of the people, and why they have become indifferent and act in a wilful manner. To educate the people is the only remedy for this situation.

This education does not imply schooling. It envisages some reformers who enter the battlefield in the spirit of ‘do or die’, do not give up their courtesy, observe graceful restraint, maintain their

seriousness and, by their own strength of character, overshadow both the ruler and the subjects and influence both of them. They can truly educate the people. It may, however, take a long time before the goal is achieved. But this alone is the straight and the shortest way.

So long as such reformers are not forthcoming, anyone who may think of a remedy which adheres to truth and non-violence should adopt it. The above mentioned writer has taken the step of approaching me. That is only a small step. If he wishes to do something better, he should familiarize himself with the Meghwals and make a detailed study of their hardships. Some of these hardships are such that close association with these people may remove them. Moreover, young people, rather than sit still, accepting defeat, should choose to go to places where immorality and injustice happen to be rampant. Anyone who with a pure heart and in a spirit of renunciation makes a serious effort, directly comes upon straightforward measures.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 20-11-1927

271. ABOUT THE CHARKHA SANGH

A Bihari gentleman living in Calcutta has put three questions to me in Hindi and asked me to give replies to them in *Navajivan*. As the questions are somewhat useful to Gujaratis also, I give them below in Gujarati.

The first question¹ denotes lack of faith in the Charkha Sangh² and ignorance of common rights of donors.

Even some of my friends who know me well and are very familiar with the members of the Charkha Sangh believe that this organization will be wound up after my death and khadi will come to a standstill. A critic has gone to the length of prophesying that my corpse will be burnt with the fuel of spinning-wheels. In these

¹“What will happen to the funds collected for the All-India Spinners’ Association after the latter is wound up? Those persons who have made, are still making and/or will make contributions will have no claim whatsoever over the funds. Hence, will these contributors be consulted before a final decision is taken in regard to the use of these funds?”

² Akhil Bharatiya Charkha Sangh, i.e., All-India Spinners’ Association

circumstances, how can one blame this correspondent who, although he is a staunch supporter of khadi, has expressed these doubts? However, I would like to assure him and those like him that none will cremate my dead body with the wood of spinning-wheels. After my death, the members of the Charkha Sangh will work twice as hard as they are working now. I do not claim the sole monopoly of matchless faith in khadi. I do not find a single sign to suggest that khadi work will totally disappear from the country. I do, on the contrary, see certain signs of increasing faith in khadi. Moreover, the members of the Charkha Sangh Committee are devotees of khadi. They are independent-minded; some of them have sacrificed their all on the altar of khadi and they live for khadi alone. I cannot even imagine that such people will allow the Sangh to be wound up. Moreover, persons belonging to an organization should not lose faith in it, but should rather try always to develop the attitude which would enable them to remain loyal to it to the end and try to see that it continues to function although others may prove disloyal. I am absolutely sure that he Charkha Sangh has such loyal workers within its fold.

However, all created things will certainly perish. In accordance with this law perhaps the Charkha Sangh will one day cease to function. Destruction as such is no evil. The destruction of an activity which is sacred is as good as a revolution. When we pull down a small temple and build a large one instead, we regard the former as having been renovated, and this is indeed true. In a similar manner, it is my firm belief that when the Charkha Sangh ceases to exist, its identity will be merged in a larger organization.

Anyone who contributes even a single pie to the Charkha Sangh will have a permanent right over it. This association can certainly not be wound up without the permission of the donors. In other words, their permission must be obtained if the funds belonging to the Charkha Sangh are to be used for any purpose other than khadi. Any donor may interfere if some member of the Sangh's Managing Committee wilfully misuses the funds or the name of the Charkha Sangh. An organization which is run with the help of donations is public property and not only the donors but the entire public have a right to see that it is properly run. It is because everyone is not aware of this simple fact, and even those who are aware of it are either lazy or self-centred, that dishonesty is practised in many institutions and funds are misappropriated. The public alone, however, is to blame for

this. Wherever society is unenlightened, lazy, indifferent or selfish, hypocrites and rogues take advantage of the situation and do what they like.

Now to the second question.¹

It is quite true that there is a difference in the prices of khadi in Bengal and Bihar. But this is not because of the profit pocketed by middlemen. There is some difference in the procedure that is followed in these two provinces, hence the cost of khadi production is higher in Bengal. The main reason, however, is that the spinner and the weaver in Bengal have to be paid higher wages. The Charkha Sangh does exercise control and supervision over the institutions in Bengal. The very nature of khadi activity is such that for the present khadi prices will differ from province to province. Perhaps, the khadi produced in Gujarat is priced even higher than that produced in Bengal. It is certainly more expensive than khadi produced in Bihar. This is not because some middleman makes any profit out of it. Khadi produced in Rajputana is perhaps even cheaper than that produced in Bihar. Some varieties of khadi produced in Tamil Nad are certainly cheaper. I do not see any inconvenience arising out of this. Our aim is through khadi activity to enable poor persons to maintain themselves wherever they live. In doing so, the expense is higher at some places and lower at others. We should take care to see that the larger portion of the amount finds its way into the pockets of the poor. It is indeed one of the functions of the Charkha Sangh to see that this is done with the greatest care; in fact, this is being done. It should also be borne in mind that Bengal is the only province which uses almost all the khadi that it produces.

Now the last question :²

I know that there has been a reduction in the price of khadi all over the country. This applies to khadi in Bengal too. The price can

¹ "A pair of durable dhotis each measuring four yards (in length) is available for Rs. 3-8 in my province, Bihar, whereas such a pair is not available even for Rs. 4-4 in Abhoy Ashram or in the Khadi Pratishthan. Does this not confirm my suspicion that the organizers of these institutions earn some extra commission as the Akhil Bharatiya Charkha Sangh has no control over them? In Bihar, the entire activity (of khadi) is under the direct control of the Charkha Sangh."

² "Why is it that, although continuous attempts are being made day and night, no reduction can be made in the price of khadi? There has been no reduction at all in the price (of khadi) in Bengal in the past two years; it must be admitted of course that there has been some improvement in the quality of the cloth."

be said to have been reduced even where the quality has improved but there has been no corresponding increase in the price. Ordinarily, it may be said with regard to the whole of the country that, on an average, there has been a minimum of 25% reduction in the prices. At some places and in respect of certain varieties, the price has gone down by 50%. At present, more attention is being paid towards improvement in quality.

It is to be wished that all lovers of khadi take the same amount of interest in it as is shown by the Bihari lover of khadi. By taking more interest, they help in allaying doubts. Hence, I wish that those who have honest doubts should get them resolved through the columns of *Navajivan*.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 20-11-1927

272. SPEECH AT NUWARA ELIYA

November 20, 1927

MR. CHAIRMAN, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

I thank you for your address and your purse. Everywhere my speeches have been interpreted both into Sinhalese and Tamil but here as I see the majority of you are Tamils I suggested to the Chairman of the Reception Committee to dispense with Sinhalese in order to save your time and my time and I hope that you will accept this arrangement. You, sir, have apologized for the simplicity of your address. There was not only no necessity for an apology, on the contrary you deserve my hearty congratulations for saving money. Claiming as I do to represent the famished and famishing millions of India, I cannot be too strict, nor can you be too strict about every farthing that you collect in saving anything else for the starving millions. I grudge every rupee that is spent on flowers and in ornamentation whatsoever. You will remember that every rupee that you so save means sixteen starving women getting their meals and it is on their behalf that I have come to your island to ask for your support. It has been a matter of great joy to me to find the people here liberally responding to my appeal. I understand that this purse represents the voluntary collections made by labourers and *kanganis*¹ and the like. I can make no return save empty thanks for this

¹ Labour contractors

generosity, but I do know that God will bless every one of you who has voluntarily contributed to this purse. Every cent, every rupee that you may spend on your pleasures, scents, toys, ornamentation and flimsy fineries is only so much waste, but you may depend upon it that every rupee, every guinea given to this cause will return to you tenfold and if there are in this assembly any people who have not yet contributed to this purse or not been approached by anybody I would ask them to silently send in their gift to me while I am speaking to you. I am emboldened to make this appeal, because of the very generous response the meeting at Badulla made to me and the appeal at the meeting itself. You know that every home in the numerous villages of India has become at the present moment dilapidated because the poor people had been deprived of the only industry they had to supplement their resources from agriculture. I hope that whilst the friends are making their collections no noise will be made, but please preserve silence while I speak, for I want to make a personal appeal to labourers whom I see in front and behind me from neighbouring estates surrounding this beautiful hill.

I want you, the labourers, to understand that I am but one of you and have been casting my lot with you ever since my visit to South Africa nearly 30 years ago. I want you to realize and recognize your own dignity as men and women. Do not despise yourselves or allow others to despise you because you are labourers. There never was and never is shame in honest labour. Without the existence of labour around these hills, their present condition would have been utterly impossible, but there are some well-defined conditions attached to your dignity, if you will preserve it. The first and foremost is that you must not go near the liquor shops. Drink is a devil in whose net you must not find yourselves. A man who comes under the influence of drink forgets the distinction between his wife and sisters. You should therefore, if you have not already given up, make a sacred resolve that you will not pollute your lips by the touch of that cursed water, but if after having fed and clothed yourselves and your families, you have got some money to lay by, keep it for a better purpose, keep it for educating your children, keep it for a rainy day when your hands and your feet can no longer work and the time comes for you to rest. All these savings would come in useful to you and I would ask you to use a portion of the same for people much poorer than yourselves in the name of God.

I know also that many of you are not leading pure lives. It is

wrong to live an impure life. God has made man so that he of all beings on earth can distinguish between women who are his sisters, daughters, mother and wife. Refuse to live under conditions which will make it impossible for you to live a life of discipline, purity and restraint. I wish that my voice will be heard by your employers, as I know that they will see to it that they take a personal interest in your daily life. I know that many of you use your idle hours, your spare hours, in gambling your time and money away. You must not use your idle hours in this criminal fashion. Since you have sufficient open air life in your plantations, I would advise you to employ your leisure hours to cultivate your minds and if you have leisure spend your time in spinning for yourself and for your family.

I understand when you come to this island you bring with you the curse of untouchability. I tell you that there is no warrant in Hinduism for untouchability. It is wrong to consider a single human being as untouchable, and if you will bear in mind all the things I told you, you will find yourselves better men and better women for having practised these things.

I am reminded by a letter received from Colombo that hookworm is prevalent in many of the estates in Ceylon. It is a disease wholly avoidable and it surprises me to find that your own employers have not been able to give you lessons to avoid this wretched disease. I know positively that this disease is due only to filth. The letter that I have received says that there are some remedies which are quite good and if there are such, you can certainly resort to them, but the better thing is to prevent the disease, seeing that it is so easily preventible and the chief thing is to regulate your sanitary life. Your methods of sanitation are not of the best kind, I am sorry to confess. I know that if planters will take proper measures to teach you sanitation, they will be doing their duty to themselves, to you and to humanity. That disease comes from polluting the water and using that water for all sorts of purposes. If you will only understand and learn the elementary lessons in sanitation and if you do not pollute the water which you drink by washing or dirtying it, you will never get hook-worm. I thank you again for your address and generous purse.

With Gandhiji in Ceylon, pp. 85-8

273. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

KANDY,
Monday, November 21, 1927

CHI. MIRA,

I have your letters.

Chhotelal should go out for a change, if he cannot improve. See what he will do. Tyagiji should principally live on milk if he will avoid another attack. Bhansali continues to cause me anxiety. Am glad Parnerkar has gone. It is better that he does not return till he is quite restored. Surendra will quite substitute you whilst you are away. I am due to reach Berhampur 2nd December. You will wire or write to Babu Niranjana Patnaick, Khadi Depot, Berhampur (Ganjam Dist.) the exact date and time of your arrival and the route. Do not burden yourself with more than two or three books on dairying. I do not think you will have so much time as you imagine for study in Orissa.

I remember having told you that you may not get books or things *ad lib* from mother. But the rule may be relaxed for dairy literature. She may send you all the books that experts of her acquaintance may recommend.

This is probably my last letter before we meet.

Love,

BAPU

From the original C.W. 5294. Courtesy : Mirabehn

274. LETTER TO SATIS CHANDRA DAS GUPTA

November 21, 1927

DEAR SATIS BABU,

So you have lost a brother now. These deaths of dear ones teach us much if we would learn from them. Like births, they are ever with us. This knowledge is in the possession of everyone and yet how few of us are able to profit by it when the time comes. And somehow or other we Hindus who should be least affected by deaths are, or it seems to me to be, the worst off. Have you read the disgraceful wailings depicted in the *Mahabharata* over the war deaths? I write this not for you. I feel that you are comparatively composed. I [have

doubts]¹ about Hemaprabha Devi. I would like you to translate this with your own commentary to her.

I never got the consignment of khadi you promised to send. If you had, I think I would have sold it all here. I reach Berhampur, Ganjam District, on 2nd December I expect. I leave Ceylon on 29th. Leave Colombo on 25th. Reach Jaffna 26th.

With love,

Yours,
BAPU

From a photostat : G.N. 1579

275. LETTER TO HAMAPRABHA DEVI DAS GUPTA

KANDY,
Monday [November 21, 1927]²

DEAR SISTER,

I have your letter. I hope you did not grieve over the death of Satis Babu's brother. Why rejoice over birth and grieve over death? This is the teaching of the *Gita*. I can see you suffer much because Nikhil is still keeping bad health. How can I console you? If we cannot utilize all our wisdom in such a situation, it is no use at all. Realize this and pass your time in the performance of your duty, looking upon it as the source of happiness and peace.

The Ceylon tour is certainly strenuous, but the country is very beautiful [and] the weather is cool. Therefore, it is not too much a strain.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi : G.N. 1660

276. LETTER TO ASHRAM WOMEN

Monday, November 21 [1927]³

SISTERS,

I have as yet received no letter from you. I have to wander about so much in Ceylon that it is difficult to get my mail direct from Colombo.

¹ The words are not decipherable.

² Gandhiji was in Kandy on this date.

³ From the reference to the Ceylon tour

When I look at the Ceylonese women, I think of our Ashram women. I wrote to you upon the simplicity of the dress of ordinary women. On the other hand, women of higher social standing have grown so fashionable that they put on nothing but silk and brocades. In my eyes, it does not suit them at all. I always ask myself, "Whom do these women want to please by putting on such clothes?" There is no *purdah* system here. Why women adorn themselves, you can tell better than I. But seeing all this, I felt that it was good that we had established the tradition in the Ashram of wearing the fewest possible ornaments. I cannot of course say that in the Ashram we put on no ornaments at all. Write and tell me if you don't agree.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati : G.N. 3677

277. LETTER TO ASHRAM CHILDREN

November 21, 1927

The natural beauty of Kandy is so great that one would simply gaze for ever. There are hills, trees and greenery all round and nowhere does one see a dry spot. I very much enjoyed walking in solitude in such a place. Kakasaheb was talking to me on some matter. I was listening to him with my ears, but the eyes were engrossed in looking on God's play. I wonder why, with such temples in existence, men spend lakhs and crores of rupees in erecting big temples so that people may meditate in them on God. How far has the existence of temples helped religion? Think on this question and let me know your conclusion.

[From Gujarati]

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

278. LETTER TO V. L. PHADKE

Monday [November 21, 1927]¹

BHAISHRI MAMA,

I have your letter. Did you wish your article about Vartej to be published as soon as I had the opportunity to read it? I never knew that Mithubai's speech was published. It is true, however, that articles regarding flood relief have gone to the press direct. If your note about Vartej was something special you should have marked it as such and sent it direct to me. If it is desirable to move among the *Antyajas* in the Panchamahals, don't you think you yourself could do it? One must know the right method of moving amongst them; mustn't one? Keep on imploring Nanabhai. If you write to Kaka he would write . . . says Kaka. Your . . . remains with. . . . However he . . . does not . . . to have forgotten the matter.²

Blessings from
BAPU

BHAISHRI MAMA
ANTYAJA ASHRAM
GODHRA
B.B.C.I. RLY.
INDIA

From a photostat of the Gujarati : G.N. 3818(2)

279. SPEECH AT WOMEN'S MEETING, COLOMBO³

November 22, 1927

I am used to ladies' meetings where thousands of sisters came in their naturalness and there the hearts meet. I do not think I can say that about stiff meeting.

¹ From the postmark

² The source, a postcard, has been damaged.

³ Published under the title "The Haunting Memory"; Mahadev Desai says of this meeting : "Gandhiji had looked forward to a meeting like one of those women's meetings in South India attended by thousands. But instead there was a meeting of little more than a dozen ladies in the drawing room of a stately palace. It was a misnomer to call it a public meeting. . . . For a moment it looked as though he would say nothing and go to the next function on his programme. But he saw that the ladies were not to blame. . . . So he gave them a talk."

He gave them a picture of the starving millions, and said :

When Mahendra came to Ceylon the children of the motherland were not starving either materially or spiritually, our star was in the ascendant and you partook of the glory. The children are starving today and it is on their behalf that I have come with the begging bowl, and if you do not disown kinship with them, but take some pride in it, then you must give me not only your money but your jewellery as sisters in so many other places have done. My hungry eyes rest upon the ornaments of sisters, whenever I see them heavily bedecked. There is an ulterior motive too in asking ornaments, viz., to wean the ladies from the craze for ornaments and jewellery. And if I may take the liberty that I do with other sisters, may I ask you what it is that makes woman deck herself more than man? I am told by feminine friends that she does so for pleasing man. Well, I tell you if you want to play your part in the world's affairs, you must refuse to deck yourselves for pleasing man. If I was born a woman, I would rise in rebellion against any pretension on the part of man that woman is born to be his plaything. I have mentally become a woman in order to steal into her heart. I could not steal into my wife's heart until I decided to treat her differently than I used to do, and so I restored to her all her rights by dispossessing myself of all my so-called rights as her husband. And you see her today as simple as myself. You find no necklaces, no fineries on her. I want you to be like that. Refuse to be the slaves of your own whims and fancies, and the slaves of men. Refuse to decorate yourselves, don't go in for scents and lavender waters; if you want to give out the proper scent, it must come out of your heart, and then you will captivate not man, but humanity. It is your birthright. Man is born of woman, he is flesh of her flesh and bone of her bone. Come to your own and deliver your message again.

And he cited for them the example of Sita defiant in her purity, and Miss Schlesin who with her defiant purity and innate fearlessness commanded in South Africa the adoration of thousands including amongst them fierce Pathans, robbers and questionable characters, and rounded off by telling them wherein true honour lies.

Do you know the hideous condition of your sisters on plantations? Treat them as your sisters, go amongst them and serve them with your better knowledge of sanitation and your talents. Let your honour lie in their service. And is there not service nearer home? There are men who are rascals; drunken people who are a menace to society. Wean them from their rascality by going amongst them as fearlessly as some of those Salvation Army girls who go into the dens

of thieves and gamblers and drunkards, fall on their necks and at their feet, and bring them round. The service will deck you more than the fineries that you are wearing. I will then be a trustee for the money that you will save and distribute it amongst the poor.

I pray that the rambling message that I have given you may find a lodgment in your hearts.

With Gandhiji in Ceylon, pp. 16-21

280. SPEECH AT ZAHIRA COLLEGE, COLOMBO

November 22, 1927

It has indeed given me great pleasure to be able to visit this College.

You have reminded me of the happy days I spent in South Africa. Those were days when my life was almost wholly cast in the midst of my Mussalman countrymen and it was early in 1893 that I found myself in the company of some of the finest Mussalmans it has been my good fortune to meet, as also to influence. It therefore does not surprise me that you have invited me to meet you in this hall.

Maulana Shaukat Ali when he returned from Ceylon gave me what he said was a message from the Mussalmans of Ceylon to hasten to Ceylon as soon as possible. But the work in which both he and I were engaged made it impossible for me to come here at that time.

Those of you who are in the habit of reading Indian newspapers will know that just before I embarked for Colombo I had the pleasure of meeting the professors and boys of the Jamia College at Delhi. I have not got the time to give you a set speech, because there are other appointments waiting for me, but I would summarize the speech¹ I gave to the boys in Delhi.

All the education that you are receiving in this great College will be reduced to nothing if it is not built on the foundation of a pure character.

As I was reading your magazines I could not help admiring the zeal with which the work was done here and the marvellous progress that has been made in a few years. But as I was reading the report that was read before the Governor on the occasion of the foundation-laying ceremony, I could not help feeling how nice it would be if we

¹ *Vide* "Speech at Jamia Millia Islamia, Delhi", 2-11-1927.

could raise a foundation of good character so that stones on stones might be raised thereon and we might look back with joy and pride upon that edifice. But character cannot be built with mortar and stone. It cannot be built by other hands than your own. The Principal and the professors cannot give you character from the pages of books. Character-building comes from their very lives and, really speaking, it must come from within yourselves.

As I was studying Christianity, Hinduism and other great faiths of the world, I saw that there was a fundamental unity moving amidst the endless variety that we see in all religions, viz., Truth and Innocence. You must take the word 'Innocence' literally, that is, to mean non-killing and non-violence, and if you boys will take your stand definitely always on Truth and Innocence, you will feel that you have built on solid foundation.

I am grateful for the generous purse you have presented to me. It is meant for finding work for the starving millions of India. These consist of Hindus, Mussalmans and Christians. Therefore you have, by giving me this donation, established a link between these starving millions and yourselves, and in doing so you have done a thing which is pleasing to God. It will be a very feeble link if you do not know the purpose for which this is going to be used. These moneys are utilized for finding work among men and women for the production of cloth like that you find on my person. But all this money will be useless if you cannot find the people to wear khadi so manufactured.

It is possible now for us to satisfy every taste and fashion. If you will forge a lasting and continuing link with the masses of India you will henceforth clothe yourselves in khadi.

With Gandhiji in Ceylon, pp. 88-90

281. SPEECH TO PARSIS, COLOMBO

November 22, 1927

You have apologized for your inability to present me with a proper address. Your address is written on your hearts which you have laid bare before me.

A strange relationship binds me to the Parsis. The affection they have showered on me, a Hindu, wherever I have come in contact with them is something inexplicable and impregnable.

Wherever I have gone Parsis have not failed to find me out. When scarcely anyone knew me, when the burden of Mahatmaship

had not yet been imposed on me, a Parsi befriended me and made me his own. I refer to the late Parsee Rustomji of South African fame.

When the South African Europeans mobbed and lynched me on my landing at Durban in 1896 Parsee Rustomji harboured me and my family at grave risk to his person and property. The mob threatened to burn his house, but nothing daunted Rustomji who gave us shelter under his roof. Ever since, throughout his lifelong friendship with me he helped me and my movements and in 1921 his was the biggest donation to the Tilak Swaraj Fund from an Indian abroad.

Mr. (afterwards Sir) Ratan Tata sent me a cheque for Rs. 25,000 when I most needed it during the satyagraha in South Africa. And Dababhai Naoroji. How can I describe my debt to him? He took me to his bosom when I was an unknown and unbefriended youth in England, and today his grand-daughters are a tower of strength to me in my khadi work.

I ask you to continue the tradition of your forefathers, I ask you not to forget their simplicity and their frugal ways by aping the showy fashion of the West. Your community has been known throughout the world for its charity, and luxury-loving ease and extravagance go ill together with charity. I am glad to find that you here have retained some of your simplicity and your Indian ways. You are known for your business capacity and your people have made fortunes wherever they have gone. But remember that it is not their riches but their large-hearted charity that made them famous.

May God help you to keep up that tradition unbroken.

With Gandhiji in Ceylon, pp. 99-100

282. *SPEECH TO CEYLON NATIONAL CONGRESS, COLOMBO*

November 22, 1927

I thank you for the words that you have spoken about myself, and I thank you also for the pleasant reminder that you have given me of the ancient times when the connection between India and Ceylon was established. I do not propose, however, to take up your time by giving my own views upon what that connection means to India, means to you, and shall I say to the world. But I will say this that in my opinion the teaching of Gautama Buddha was not a new religion. In so far as I have been able to study those lofty teachings, I have come to the conclusion—and that conclusion I arrived long before

now—that Gautama was one of the greatest of Hindu reformers, and that he left upon the people of his own time and upon the future generations an in-delible impress of that reformation. But it would be wrong on my part to take up your time and my own, limited as it is, to consider that very fascinating subject. I therefore come to mundane matters relating to the Congress.

In India the Congress is a word to conjure with. It is an association with an unbroken record of over 40 years. And it enjoys today a reputation which no other political association in India enjoys, and that is, in spite of the many ups and downs which the Congress in common with all worldly institutions and associations has gone through. I therefore take it for granted that in adopting this name you are also, as far as may be and is necessary, following the traditions of the parent body if I may call the National Congress of India by that name. And on that assumption I venture this afternoon to place before you my views of what a Congress should be, or how the National Congress in India has been able to build up its reputation. I know that after all my connection with the Congress in India does not stretch over a period longer than 10 years—or I may now say, more accurately speaking, 12 years. But as you are aware that 12 years' association is so close, and I have been so much identified with the Congress that probably what I may say might be taken with some degree of authority. But in one way my association with the parent body is nearly 30 years old now.

It was in South Africa in the year 1893 when I went there that I dreamt about the Congress. I knew something about its activities, though I had never attended a single one of the annual sessions of that great institution. Just like you, as a youngster, I took my proper share in founding an association called the Natal Indian Congress after the fashion of the Indian National Congress, making such changes as were necessary to suit the local conditions. I shall therefore be able to give you the results of my experience of public life in connection with such institutions dating back to 1893. And what I learnt even so early as 1894 was that any such association, to be really serviceable, to deserve the name of being called 'national', requires a fair measure—I was going to say a great measure—of self-sacrifice on the part of the principal workers. I have no hesitation in confessing to you that that ideal I found to be very difficult to put into practice even in that little community, because we were after all a very small body of men and women in Natal, which is the smallest province of South Africa, where

we had a population of nearly 60 thousand Indians of whom the vast majority had no vote in the deliberations of the Congress.

The Congress however was a representative institution and fully representative of things that interested the people, because it constituted itself the trustee of the welfare of those men. But I must not linger over the history of that institution. Even in that small body we found bickerings and a desire more for power than for service, a desire more for self-aggrandizement than for self-effacement, and I have found during my 12 years' association with the parent body also that there is a continuous desire for self-seeking and self-aggrandizement; and for you as for us who are still striving to find our feet, who have still to make good the claims for self-expression and self-government, self-sacrifice, self-effacement, and self-suppression are really absolutely necessary and indispensable for our existence and for our progress.

I do not profess to have studied your politics during the brief stay that I have made here, I do not know the internal working of this organization, I do not know how strong it is, and how popular it is. I only hope it is strong and is popular. I hope you are free the blemishes that I have just mentioned. It is, I know, a pleasurable pastime (and I have indulged in it sufficiently as you know) to strive against the powers that be, and to wrestle with the government of the day, especially when that government happens to be a foreign government and a government under which we rightly feel we have not that scope which we should have, and which we desire, for expansion and fullest self-expression. But I have also come to the conclusion that self-expression and self-government are not things which may be either taken from us by anybody or which can be given us by anybody. It is quite true that if those who happen to hold our destinies, or seem to hold our destinies in their hands, are favourably disposed, are sympathetic, understand our aspirations, no doubt it is then easier for us to expand. But after all self-government depends entirely upon our own internal strength, upon our ability to fight against the heaviest odds. Indeed, self-government which does not require that continuous striving to attain it and to sustain it is not worth the name. I have therefore endeavoured to show both in word and in deed that political self-government, that is, self-government for a large number of men and women, is no better than individual self-government, and therefore it is to be attained by precisely the same

means that are required for individual self-government or self-rule, and so as you know also, I have striven in India to place this ideal before the people, in season and out of season, very often much to the disgust of those who are merely politically minded.

I belong to that body of political thought which was dominated by Gokhale. I have called him my political guru : not that everything that he said or did I accepted or accept today, but just because the moving force of his life (as I who came in the closest touch with him came to understand) was his intense desire to 'spiritualize politics'. This was his own expression in the preamble to the prospectus of the Servants of India Society, of which he was the founder and the first president. He makes the deliberate statement that he founded that Society in order to introduce spirituality into politics. He had studied the politics not only around him in his own country but had been a close and careful student of history. He had studied the politics of all the countries of the world and having been keenly disappointed to see a complete divorce between politics and spirituality, he endeavoured to the best of his ability, and not without some success—I was almost going to say not without considerable success—to introduce that element into politics. And so it was that he adopted the name of the Servants of India for his Society, which is now serving India in a variety of ways.

I do not know whether what I am saying commends itself to you or not, but if I am to show my gratitude for all the kindness that you have lavishly showered upon me during my brief visit to this beautiful country, if I am to show it in truth, I can only tell you what I feel and not what will probably please you or tickle you. You know that this particular thing—truth—is an integral part of our Congress creed. And we have therefore in the creed the attainment of swaraj by legitimate and non-violent means.

You will find that I have not been tired of insisting upon truth and non-violence at any cost. Given these two conditions, in my humble opinion, you can hurl defiance at the mightiest power on earth—and still come away not only yourselves unscathed but you will leave your so-called adversary also uninjured and unhurt. For the time being he may misunderstand the non-violent blows that you deal, he may misrepresent you also, but you don't need to consult his feelings or his opinions so long as you are fulfilling these two absolute conditions. Then it is well with you, and you can march forward with

greater speed than otherwise. The way may appear to be long, but if you take my experience extending over a period of 30 years uninterruptedly, without exception, I give you my assurance that it is the shortest cut to success. I have known no shorter road. I know that it very often requires great faith and immense patience, but if this one thing is fixed on our minds, then there is no other way open to a politician, if he is to serve not himself, but the whole nation. If once that determination is made, then comes faith and with that faith comes also patience, because you know that there is no better or shorter road.

I am afraid as we are in India, so are you cut up into groups and communities. I read casually only today something in praise of communalism. In India also we have this blight—we call it a blight, we don't praise it. Even those who believe in communalism say frankly that it is a necessary evil to be got rid of at the earliest possible moment.

In India we have to deal with 300 million people. But you have to deal with such a small mass of men and women that it is a matter for pain and surprise for me to find a defence—an energetic defence—of this communalism. But I know that it is totally opposed to nationalism. And you want, as you must want, swaraj. It is not the birthright of one country only; swaraj is the birthright of all countries—I feel constrained to say, the birthright even of the savage as of the most civilized man—how much more of people who have got a culture second to none in the world, a people who have got all that Nature can give you, have got resources in men and money and in natural gifts, who have everything that goes to make you a powerful nation on this globe of ours, yet at the present moment you seem to be far away from it.

I don't suppose that any of you flatters himself or herself with the belief that you have at the present moment anything like what I should consider self-government. And that self-government you will not have—I was going to say you cannot have—unless you speak with the voice of one nation and not with the voice of Christians, Mussalmans, Buddhists, Hindus, Europeans, Sinhalese, Tamils and Malays. I can't understand that.

As you, sir, said in your remarks that you represent all races and religions, I congratulate you upon that, and if you are really capable of vindicating that claim, all honour to you, and not only the Congress but you then deserve to be copied by us. We, an older institution, are

not able to vindicate that claim. We are striving; we are groping in the dark; we are trying to suppress provincialism; we are trying to suppress racialism; we are trying to suppress religionism, if I may coin a word; we are trying to express nationalism in its fullest form, but I am ashamed to confess to you that we are still far from it. But it is given to you to outstrip us and set us an example. It is easy for you, much easier for you than for us, but a condition indispensable for that is that some of you at least will have to give your whole time to this and not only your whole time but your whole selves and you will have to suppress yourselves.

As Gokhale said, politics had degenerated into a sort of game for leisure hours, whereas he desired that, for some at least, politics should be a wholetime occupation, it should engross the attention of some of the ablest men of the country. It is only when truth, fearlessness and non-violence are dominant factors that a person can devote himself unselfishly to the service of the nation.

I hope that in your Congress you have such a body of men and women, because woman must play her part side by side with man. As I said, in India our one limb is paralysed. Women have got to come up to the level of man. As I said to the ladies at a meeting today, they may not copy man in all the wildness of his nature, but they must come to the level of man in all that is best in him. Then in this island you will have a beautiful blend, then you will be worthy of what Nature has so profusely showered on you.

As I travelled from Kandy to Colombo this morning, I asked myself what the Congress was going to do in order to save Ceylon, whom God had blessed with enough natural intoxication, from the intoxication of that fiery liquid. I make a humble suggestion to you. If the Congress is to be fully national, it cannot leave this fundamental social question. In this temperate climate, where no artificial stimulant is necessary, it is a shame that a substantial part of your income should be derived from liquor. You may not know what is happening to the labourers whose trustees you are, whose will is only once expressed when they cast their votes in your favour. I saw thousands upon thousands of them at Hatton. I have lost all sense of smell, but a friend told me that some of them were stinking with liquor. They had gone mad over the fact that one of their own was going in their midst, and had broken the bounds of restraint. Well, I know what you will say. You will say it was the result of excess and that it is not bad to drink in

moderation. Well, I tell you, I have found so many making that claim and ultimately proving dismal failures. I have come from cities of South Africa where I have seen Africans, Europeans, Indians rolling in gutters under the influence of drink, I have seen proctors, advocates and barristers rolling in gutters and then the policemen taking them away in order to hide their shame. I have seen captains mad with drink leaving their cabin to the chief officer, or defiling the cabin where they were supposed to keep guard over the safety of their passengers. Claiming, as you do, allegiance to India, and endorsing, as you do, your connection with the story of the *Ramayana*, you should be satisfied with nothing but *Ramarajya* which includes swaraj. When the evil stalks from corner to corner of this enchanting fairyland, you must take up the question in right earnest and save the nation from ruin.

Then there is the other thing, untouchability. You consider the Rodiyas¹ as untouchables and their women are not allowed to cover their upper parts. It is high time for the Congress to take up the question of the Rodiyas, make them their own and enrol them as volunteers in their work. Democracy is an impossible thing until the power is shared by all, but let not democracy degenerate into mobocracy. Even a pariah, a labourer, who makes it possible for you to earn your living, will have his share in self-government. But you will have to touch their lives, go to them, see their hovels where they live packed like sardines. It is up to you to look after this part of humanity. It is possible for you to make their lives or mar their lives. The Indian National Congress deals with both of these questions. They are living planks in our programme. I urge upon you, if you want to make your Congress truly national and truly representative of the poorest and meanest people of Ceylone, you will add these items to your programme, if you have not already added them, and introduce a full measure of spirituality into your politics and everything else will follow; self-government which is your birth-right will drop in your hand like a fully ripe fruit from a laden tree. May this message produce its due effect and penetrate your hearts.

Young India, 1-12-1927

¹ The story goes that a Rodiya, whose duty was to provide venison to the king, substituted human flesh, and hence the caste was outlawed.

283. *SPEECH TO TAMIL UNION, COLOMBO*

November 22, 1927

I am deeply grateful to you for the address that you have given me, and also for the purse for my mission.

I know that everywhere I have gone in this fair island, Tamil friends have surrounded me with overwhelming kindness and given me of their best for the cause which has brought me here. It therefore gives me no surprise that you, the members of this union, decided to give a separate purse on your own behalf, but I know this also that you are well able to pay what you have paid, and it is possible for you, if you understood the full significance of my message, to pay even much more than you have done.

You, sir, have conferred on me a favour by asking me to tell this meeting how the funds that I am now collecting are being utilized and what I expect from the distribution of these funds.

There is in India an association called the All-India Spinners' Association. It has got its own constitution and its affairs are administered by a Council of nine, of which I am the President for the first five years of its existence. One of the millionaire merchants is the Treasurer of this Association. His name is Seth Jamnalal Bajaj. At the present moment he acts also on my behalf as Chairman of the Council. Its Secretary is a moneyed man's son named Shankerlal Banker. The other members of the Council are equally well known and known also for their self-sacrifice. This Council operates through its branches all over India. All accounts are periodically audited by chartered accountants.

Through this agency over 1,500 villages all over India are being served today, and in these villages at least 50,000 spinners who are Hindus, Mussalmans and in some cases even Christians and others are being given work through the spinning-wheel. Whereas before the advent of the spinning-wheel, they had no work whatsoever to do for four months in the year, now since the advent of the spinning-wheel, they got between one and two annas per day whilst they are working the wheel. Of these, the largest amount is spent in Tamil Nadu because the largest number of spinners are to be found in those districts of Tamil Nadu where there is almost chronic famine. Often women walk several miles to receive cotton or slivers and to deliver yarn and receive the money earned.

Behind these spinners several thousand weavers have been

reclaimed, as also dhobis, whose special function is to wash such khadi, dyers, printers, and traders.

Of this distribution over this vast area covering 1,900 miles long and 1,500 miles broad, nearly 1,000 workers of the clerical class are employed, earning anything between 20 to 30 or even 40 rupees per month. There are some who get even as much as Rs. 75 or even Rs. 150 per month, but these are very few. On the top of these are a band of honorary workers who get nothing whatsoever, but who give their work for the love of this service. All the provincial offices and subprovincial offices are also under supervision and are required to keep regular accounts which have to be periodically audited.

Through this agency over 20 lakhs rupees worth of khaddar was manufactured and sold last year. This work is capable of indefinite extension, provided we get men first and money next. Experience extending now over five or six years has told us that if we get sufficient monetary assistance from people, if we get willing customers and if we get a number of qualified workers, it is merely a question of time when we should be able to serve all the 7,00,000 villages in India. I have, therefore, not hesitated to call it the largest co-operative effort in the world.

Satisfactory though the results that I have described to you are, they are by no means brilliant or at all enough for the work or the end that I have in view, but it merely awaits conversion of all those who feel for India like yourselves. It may flatter my pride, but I know that it is not a satisfactory state of affairs so long as I have got to travel about in order to convert people to the creed, as it were, of khadi and to induce them to part with their superfluous cash. If you took this simple work of collecting funds and of finding customers for khadi from off my shoulder, I can assure you that I can utilize my talents as an expert spinner for organizing these villages and giving you the best and the cheapest khadi.

I know that you cannot be all spinning experts in a moment, but you can all become khadi experts in the sense of becoming khadi buyers and collectors of money. I am painfully aware that the country is making an uneconomical use of my abilities by compelling me to wander about from place to place in search of money and in search of custom for khadi.

I speak thus heart to heart to you for the simple reason that during my tour of Tamil Nadu from which I have come here and from which you are drawn I have been so overwhelmed with kindness

and generosity especially in Chettinad that you have created in me a passion for more.

You have, I understand, a sporting club and it is a good thing. I want you to become sportsmen also of the higher order. I want you to become sportsmanlike enough to share your riches with those who are famishing in India, not by flinging a handful of rice at them, but by finding work in the manner that I wish to train them for.

I would like you also to be sportsmanlike enough to share your abilities or capacity for service with those who are labourers in this island. That is social service which requires the abilities of many young men whom I see in front of me. I must not take up your time in order to relate my experiences of thousands of labourers I saw between Badulla and Hatton. On the one hand, I was glad to see them and on the other, it showed me how much there was for you, young men, to do for them who are bleeding away and do not know how to lead a pure life.

You have heard my message. If there are any who have not yet paid or not paid enough, please send your donations on to me and if you will establish a living tie between these poor millions and yourselves, you will follow up your donations by making a resolve henceforth not to buy any cloth which is not khadi.

I thank you once more for your generosity.

The Hindu, 28-11-1927 and *With Gandhiji in Ceylon*

284. SPEECH AT PANADURA

November 23, 1927

The Mahatma, having inquired about Mr. Arthur V. Dias, who was absent, said that he would wish to be face to face with the father of the temperance movement in Panadura. He had heard of this temperance worker who, he thought, was working in the same spirit as himself. He hoped the public of Panadura would strive further in the cause of temperance.

You will then earn not only the gratitude of the present generation but of generations to come. It has been my lot to be thrown among drunkards in various places. I have read copious literature relating to the evils of drink. I know of homes rendered desolate. I have known men, respectable men, ruined. And I have seen husbands turn monsters to their wives on account of that drink evil. A captain who was under the influence of liquor was nearly going to

imperil the whole crew of a ship where I was on board. You being in a tropical climate, there is no reason to warrant drinks. It is beastly—it is a sin against the Lord and humanity! The great labouring classes are becoming more and more useless under its deadly influence. Then there is untouchability, and among Buddhists also, in Ceylon.

He was informed by a certain gentleman of Kandy that there existed a sort of untouchability among Buddhists, although it was against Buddhism.

By whatever name you may call it, untouchability is bad. Where kindness has been taught, even to the very animals, there is no room for untouchability among men in Buddhism.

The Ceylon Daily News, 25-11-1927

285. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, GALLE

November 23, 1927

MR. CHAIRMAN AND FRIENDS,

I am deeply grateful to you for the addresses and the collections presented to me just now.

Ever since my landing on the hospitable shores of this beautiful island of yours, I have been the recipient of great blessings and not the least among them is the benediction just recited by a number of boys and girls. A few minutes ago I received an address from your Municipal Council too and to the best of my ability I propose to give a combined reply, but I know you will thank me if I be as brief as possible as I don't wish you to be in the sun.

I have nothing different to say to Municipal Councillors from what I have to tell you, the citizens of this town.

I propose to repeat the hope I have been repeating day after day since I arrived in this island.

I hope that you will do your utmost to rid yourselves of the curse of drink and caste distinctions from this island. Gautama Buddha, whose life was one of continuous renunciation, has preached that his followers should not foul their mouth and poison their body by the use of liquor. Islam denounced drink in unmistakable terms. So far as I have seen of Christianity there is no warrant in the Christian doctrine for the use of liquor and I can give you my personal testimony as a Hindu that my religion considers it a sin to take liquor.

Even in this island you have imported from your Motherland the bane of communalism, but I hope that in our life of work for God

and humanity we shall work shoulder to shoulder, as children of one common soil for the good of your country. Side by side with the sublime teachings of the Enlightened One, you have imported from India caste distinctions. Your adoption of the teachings of Buddha will remain incomplete, so long as you observe these distinctions. The spirit of democracy that now pervades the world demands that one should not be considered superior to another. All are sons and daughters of one divine essence.

Lastly, may I expect you to give a finishing touch to your donations and manifestations of regard to me by following the example of the Tiranagama Women's Association who, while giving me a reception at Hikkaduwa, intimated to me that they were going to organize a campaign to popularize khaddar among ladies.

It gives me great joy to see that Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims and Christians have united to help me to ameliorate the condition of the famishing millions of India. I pray to God that even as you have worked in unison on this occasion that you may work in unison for the good of your common Motherland.

With Gandhiji in Ceylon, pp. 103-5

286. *SPEECH AT MAHINDA COLLEGE, GALLE*

November 24, 1927

It has given me the greatest pleasure to be able to be present at this very pleasant function¹. You have paid me indeed a very great compliment and conferred on me a great honour by allowing me to witness your proceedings and making the acquaintance of so many boys.

I hope that this institution will progressively expand, as, I have no doubt, it deserves. I have come to know enough of this beautiful island and its people to understand that there are Buddhists enough in this country, not merely to support one such institution, but many such institutions. I hope, therefore, that this institution will never have to pine for want of material support, but having known something of the educational institutions both in South Africa and India, let me tell you that scholastic education is not merely brick and mortar. It is true boys and true girls who build such institutions from day to day. I know some huge architecturally perfect buildings going under the

¹ Prize distribution

name of scholastic institutions, but they are nothing but whited sepulchres. Conversely, I know also some institutions which have to struggle from day to day for their material existence, but which because of this very want, are spiritually making advance from day to day. One of the greatest teachers that mankind has ever seen and one whom you have enthroned as the only Royal Monarch in your hearts delivered his living message not from a manmade building, but under the shadow of a magnificent tree. May I also venture to suggest that the aim of a great institution like this should be to impart such instruction and in such ways that it may be open to any boy or girl in Ceylon.

I notice already that, as in India, so in this country, you are making education daily more and more expensive so as to be beyond the reach of the poorest children. Let us all beware of making that serious blunder and incurring the deserved reproach of posterity. To that end let me put the greatest stress upon the desirability of giving these boys instruction from A to Z through the Sinhalese language. I am certain that the children of the nation that receive instruction in a tongue other than their own commit suicide. It robs them of their birthright. A foreign medium means an undue strain upon the youngsters, it robs them of all originality. It stunts their growth and isolates them from their home. I regard therefore such a thing as a national tragedy of first importance, and I would like also to suggest that since I have known Sanskrit in India as the mother language, and since you have received all religious instruction from the teachings of one who was himself an Indian amongst Indians and who had derived his inspiration from Sanskrit writings that it would be but right on our part to introduce Sanskrit as one of the languages that should be diligently studied. I should expect an institution of this kind to supply the whole of the Buddhist community in Ceylon with textbooks written in Sinhalese and giving all the best from the treasures of old.

I hope that you will not consider that I have placed before you an unattainable ideal. Instances occur to me from history where teachers have made Herculean efforts in order to restore the dignity of the mother tongue and to restore the dignity of the old treasures which were about to be forgotten.

I am glad indeed that you are giving due attention to athletics and I congratulate you upon acquitting yourselves with distinction in games. I do not know whether you had any indigenous games or not. I should, however, be exceedingly surprised, and even painfully

surprised, if I were told that before cricket and football descended upon your sacred soil, your boys were devoid of all games. If you have national games, I would urge upon you that yours is an institution that should lead in reviving old games. I know that we have in India many noble indigenous games just as interesting and exciting as cricket or football, also as much attended with risks as football is, but with the added advantage that they are inexpensive, because the cost is practically next to nothing.

I am no indiscriminate, superstitious worshipper of all that goes under the name of 'ancient'. I never hesitated to demolish all that is evil or immoral, no matter how ancient endeavour it may be, but with that reservation, I must confess to you that I am an adorer of ancient institutions and it hurts me to think that a people in their rush for everything modern despise all their ancient traditions and ignore them in their lives.

We of the East very often hastily consider that all that our ancestors laid down for us was nothing but a bundle of superstitions, but my own experience, extending now over a fairly long period of the inestimable treasures of the East has led me to the conclusion that, whilst there may be much that was superstitious, there is infinitely more which is not only not superstitious, but if we understand it correctly and reduce it to practice, gives life and ennobles one. Let us not therefore be blinded by the hypnotic dazzle of the West.

Again I wish to utter a word of caution against your believing that I am an indiscriminate despiser of everything that comes from the West. There are many things which I have myself assimilated from the West. There is a very great and effective Sanskrit word for that particular faculty which enables a man always to distinguish between what is desirable and what is undesirable, what is right and what is wrong—that word is known as *viveka*. Translated into English, the nearest approach is discrimination. I do hope that you will incorporate this word into Pali and Sinhalese.

There is one thing more which I would like to say in connection with your syllabus. I had hoped that I should see some mention made of handicrafts, and if you are not seriously teaching the boys under your care some handicrafts, I would urge you, if it is not too late, to introduce the necessary handicrafts known to this island. Surely, all the boys who go out from this institution will not expect or will not desire to be clerks or employees of the Government. If they

would add to the national strength, they must learn with great skill all the indigenous crafts, and as cultural training and as the symbol of identification with the poorest among the poor, I know nothing so ennobling as hand-spinning. Simple as it is, it is easily learnt. When you combine with hand-spinning the idea that you are learning it not for your own individual self, but for the poorest among the nation, it becomes an ennobling sacrament. There must be added to this sacrament some occupation, some handicraft which a boy may consider will enable him to earn his living in after life.

You have rightly found place for religious instruction. I have experimented with quite a number of boys in order to understand how best to impart religious instruction and whilst I found that book instruction was somewhat of an aid, by itself it was useless. Religious instruction, I discovered, was imparted by teachers living the religion themselves. I have found that boys imbibe more from the teachers' own lives than they do from the books that they read to them, or the lectures that they deliver to them with their lips. I have discovered to my great joy that boys and girls have unconsciously a faculty of penetration whereby they read the thoughts of their teachers. Woe to the teacher who teaches one thing with his lips, and carries another in his breast.

Now, just one or two sentences to boys only and I have done. As father of, you might say, many boys and girls, you might almost say of thousands of boys and girls, I want to tell you, boys, that after all you hold your destiny in your own hands. I do not care what you learn or what you do not learn in your school, if you will observe two conditions. One condition is that you must be fearlessly truthful against the heaviest odds under every circumstance imaginable. A truthful boy, a brave boy will never think of hurting even a fly. He will defend all the weak boys in his own school and help, whether inside or outside the school, all those who need his help. A boy who does not observe personal purity of mind and body and action is a boy who should be driven out of any school. A chivalrous boy would always keep his mind pure, his eyes straight and his hands unpolluted. You do not need to go to any school to learn these fundamental maxims of life, and if you will have this triple character with you, you will build on a solid foundation.

May then true ahimsa and purity be your shield for ever in your life. May God help you to realize all your noble ambition. I thank you once more for inviting me to take part in this function.

With Gandhiji in Ceylon, pp. 105-9

287. *SPEECH AT GIRLS' WEAVING INSTITUTE,
AKMIMANA*

November 24, 1927

[Gandhiji] said he was extremely gratified with having been presented with the address and the purse and he regarded it as an honour that he had been asked to lay the foundation-stone of the Akmimana Girls' Weaving Institute. He hoped the Institute would prosper. They might not all know that he, while in the course of acquainting himself with several useful matters, was also a weaver. In the course of learning spinning and weaving he discovered that any country that went in for weaving must also take up spinning. By this he meant that the weaving industry in terms of a country's self-reliance and self-dependence also included spinning and it would surprise them to hear that in the history of the great weaving industry in Lancashire itself weaving was preceded by spinning. He had not the time to dilate further on the subject but this much he would say that they in Ceylon required some kind of spinning and weaving as the motherland in India needed, if they aimed at making Ceylon a self-reliant and self-contained country.

The Mahatma also referred to the reference made in the address to the restoration of Buddha Gaya to Buddhists. He said that if someone who had the power gave him full authority and placed a pen in his hand the Buddhists would have Buddha Gaya restored to them that very minute. Unfortunately he had not the power to act as he would in the matter but he would assure them, he would try his best, his very best, to secure the restoration of Buddha Gaya to Buddhists as their very own concern, but above everything else they must not lose heart or relinquish hope. It was up to them to prosecute their quest since it was a well-accepted legal maxim that those who slept over obtaining their rights would never get them.

The speaker went on to say, referring to the subject of village life, that unless they banished drink their villages would be ruined. He was delighted to hear that morning that they had no taverns anywhere near those parts to disfigure their fair country. He would congratulate them on that achievement. He would entreat the number of Buddhist priests assembled in the hall to make every endeavour to put the people on the path of total abstinence. However, they should never be content with being just parochial. They should spread their activity further afield with a view to removing permanently and absolutely the curse of drink in order to save the lives of the population and leave the country unpolluted with drink.

Finally, he said the Buddha preached the doctrine of equality among persons. One's neighbour was as good as oneself. They would be unworthy devotees to their faith if they did not set about then and there to abolish caste distinctions.

The Ceylon Daily News, 3-12-1927

288. SPEECH AT MATARA

November 24, 1927

MR. CHAIRMAN AND FRIENDS,

I am deeply obliged to you for all the addresses you have been good enough to present to me and the various purses. Chauffeurs, barbers and other friends have given their purses here on this platform. I deeply appreciate these purses from poor people. That shows that they had not forgotten those that were much poorer than themselves; but there was one purse that had not been announced and that is the cheque from your representative Mr. Obeysekere for Rs. 500. There are two opinions about that cheque; one is mine and that is that he has concealed his gift because of his modesty. But there is another opinion weightier than mine, perhaps because it is based upon experience, and that is Mr. Obeysekere has been too stingy and he did not want this Rs. 500 to be announced to be compared with the chauffeurs' purse¹, but I being a beggar and also a trustee cannot possibly judge between Mr. Obeysekere and his own generosity or stinginess. That judgement I may leave to you as his constituency to whom he might have misrepresented or represented properly as the case may be. You will, however, all accept, my sincere thanks for these gifts you have given me on behalf of the famishing millions of India. I can only give you my assurance that every rupee thrown into the purse is much more fruitful than the rupee lying in your pockets, for one rupee in my hands means 16 meals for 16 poor women spinners in India, who but for that rupee might have gone without that meal.

As he was piloting me to his beautiful place Mr. Obeysekere informed me that attempts were being made at Matara in order to induce hand-weaving. I congratulate you on that step and nothing will please me better than to learn within a few months that you at least in this land are able to clothe yourselves out of the cloth woven with your own hands. But may I also ask you that whilst you are making preparations to clothe yourselves with cloth woven and spun in your own places, you will follow up your gifts by investing in khaddar whenever you have cause to buy cloth in future. Let me also point out to you that if you propose to become self-contained with reference to your clothing requirements, a foundation has to be made in hand-spinning.

Mahatmaji then went on to refer to the work of municipal and urban councils

¹ The Chauffeurs' Union had given a purse of Rs. 100.

and earnestly pleaded that the vices of drink and caste should have no place in a Buddhist country.

The Ceylon Daily News, 30-11-1927

289. *SPEECH TO LAW STUDENTS, COLOMBO*

[November 25, 1927]¹

I am glad you have put this question². For, I may say that if I cannot speak on this subject with authority, no one else can. For throughout my career at the bar I never once departed from the strictest truth and honesty.

Well, then, the first thing which you must always bear in mind, if you would spiritualize the practice of law, is not to make your profession subservient to the interests of your purse, as is unfortunately but too often the case at present, but to use your profession for the service of your country. There are instances of eminent lawyers in all countries who led a life of self-sacrifice, who devoted their brilliant legal talents entirely to the service of their country although it spelt almost pauperism for them. In India you have the instance of the late Mana Mohan Ghose. He took up the fight against the indigo planters and served his poor clients at the cost of his health, even at the risk of his life, without charging them a single pie for his labours. He was a most brilliant lawyer, yet he was a great philanthropist. That is an example that you should have before you. Or better still you can follow Ruskin's precept given in his book *Unto This Last*. 'Why should a lawyer charge fifteen pounds for his work,' he asks, 'whilst a carpenter for instance hardly gets as many shillings for his work?' The fees charged by lawyers are unconscionable everywhere. I confess, I myself have charged what I would now call high fees. But even whilst I was engaged in my practice, let me tell you I never let my profession stand in the way of my public service.

And there is another thing which I would like to warn you against. In England, in South Africa, almost everywhere, I have found that in the practice of their profession lawyers are consciously or unconsciously led into untruth for the sake of their clients. An eminent English lawyer has gone so far as to say that it may even be the duty of a lawyer has gone so far as to say that it may even be the

¹ Gandhiji was in Colombo on this date.

² How to spiritualize the legal profession?

duty of a lawyer to defend a client whom he knows to be guilty. There I disagree. The duty of a lawyer is always to place before the judges, and to help them to arrive at, the truth, never to prove the guilty as innocent. It is up to you to maintain the dignity of your profession. If you fail in your duty what shall become of the other professions? You, young men, claiming as you have just done to be the fathers of tomorrow, should be the salt of the nation. If the salt loses its savour wherewith shall it be salted?

With Gandhiji in Ceylon, pp. 35-7

290. SPEECH AT YOUNG MEN'S BUDDHIST ASSOCIATION, COLOMBO

November 25, 1927

At the outset Gandhiji pleaded for toleration. He did not claim to be a scholar in any sense of the term. His first introduction to any religious study was through a single book, viz, Sir Edwin Arnold's *The Light of Asia*, which fascinated and engrossed him. Ever since, the spirit of Buddha had haunted him, so much so that he had been accused of being a Buddhist in disguise. And as he had said on a previous occasion he accepted the accusation as a compliment though he knew that if he made any such claim it would be summarily rejected by orthodox Buddhists. As one, however, who had imbibed the spirit of Buddhism, he would reassert in all humility, but unhesitatingly, if in a different language, what he said on the previous occasion:

There are some conditions laid down in Hinduism for a proper prayerful study of religions. They are of a universal character. Remember also that Gautama was a Hindu of Hindus. He was saturated with the spirit of Hinduism, with the Vedic spirit, he was born and bred up in those exhilarating surroundings, exhilarating for the spirit, and so far as I am aware, he never rejected Hinduism, or the message of the Vedas. What he did was therefore to introduce a living reformation in the petrified faith that surrounded him. I venture to suggest to you that *your study of Buddhism will be incomplete unless you study the original sources from which the Master derived his inspiration*, that is, unless you study Sanskrit and the Sanskrit scriptures. But your duty, if you are to understand the spirit of the Buddha and not the letter of Buddhism, does not end there. That study has those conditions which I am about to describe to you. Those conditions are that a man or a woman who approaches a study of religion has first of all to observe what are called the five *yamas*. They

are the five rules of self-restraint and I will repeat them before you. First, *brahmacharya*, celibacy; the second is *satya*, truth; the third is ahimsa, absolute innocence, not even hurting a fly; the next condition is *asteya*, non-stealing, not merely not stealing in the ordinary sense in which the word is understood, but if you appropriate or even cast your greedy eyes on anything that is not your own, it becomes stealing. Lastly, *aparigraha*—a man, who wants to possess worldly riches or other things, won't be fit really to understand the spirit of the Buddha. These are the indispensable conditions. There are other conditions, but I am going into these because these are the fundamental ones, and Gautama before he attained his knowledge had conformed to all these rules, and conformed, as few of his contemporaries had ever done, to the spirit of those rules. I humbly suggest to you that you will not understand the spirit of the Buddha unless you have also yourselves conformed to these rules and then prayerfully tried to ascertain what the Master meant. It makes no difference that you know of him through all the books that have been written, but even these very books, I make bold to assure you, you will understand and you will interpret with a new light, immediately you have gone, first of all, through these preliminary observances. Look what many critics of Islam have done—how they have torn the very book, that millions of Mussalmans swear by, to pieces and held up the teachings of Islam to scorn. They were not dishonest men who wrote this criticism, they were honest men, they were not men who were not trying to search the truth, but they did not know the conditions that they had to fulfil before they could make any religious study. Again look at what the critics of Hinduism have done. I read many of those criticisms, trying to enter into the spirit of the critics but came to the conclusion that they did not know the A B C of Hinduism and that they were grossly misinterpreting Hinduism. Take Christianity itself. Many Hindus have misinterpreted Christianity. They approach the Bible, the Old Testament and the New Testament in a carping spirit, with preconceived notions. But why talk of the Hindus? Have I not read books written by Englishmen who, pretending to consider themselves atheists, have turned the Bible upside down, and put all the fiery writings into the hands of innocent men and women and thereby done grave injury to the simple people who read them? I have laid these points before the young men of this association because I am anxious that *you should be the pioneers of presenting Ceylon, and through Ceylon the world, with a real Buddhistic revival, that you should be*

the pioneers in presenting a living faith to the world, and not the dead bones of a traditional faith which the world will not grasp.

The priests, whom I had seen by deputy, said they could not argue but that they could only say what the Master taught. It is all right, but today the spirit of enquiry is abroad. We have got to deal with that spirit. The world is trying to seek the truth, and thirsting for peace in the midst of this terrible strife. There is also the desire for knowing the truth, but as I have ventured to suggest to you, those, who made a scientific study of religion and those who gave their lives for arriving at the truth and those with whose bones the snows of the Himalayas are whitened, have left these treasures not merely for 300 millions of India, but they have left those treasures for everyone who cares to understand them, and they have said : ‘We cannot deliver the truth to you.’ It is incapable of being delivered through writings, it is incapable of being delivered with the lips, it is capable of being delivered only through life. It transcends reason. But it is not past experience. So they said : ‘We tell you that such and such is the fact, but you will have to test it for yourselves. You will apply your reason, we do not want you to deaden your reason, but you yourselves, even as we, will come to the conclusion that reason which God has given is after all a limited thing, and that which is a limited thing will not be able to reach the limitless. Therefore, go through these preliminary conditions, even as when you want to study geometry or algebra, you have to go through preliminary processes, however trying and tiresome. Observe them and then you will find that what we tell you with our own experience will be also yours.’

I want to take you through only one illustration as to how the teaching of the Buddha is now not being observed. I have retained this part of my talk up to almost the very last moment except that I hinted at it in my speech at the Vidyodaya College.

You believe that Gautama taught the world to treat even the lowest creatures as equal to oneself. He held the life of even the crawling things of the earth as precious as his own. It is an arrogant assumption to say that human beings are lords and masters of the lower creation. On the contrary, being endowed with greater things in life, they are trustees of the lower animal kingdom. And the great sage lived that truth in his own life. I read as a mere youngster the passage in *The Light of Asia* describing how the Master took the lamb on his shoulders in face of the arrogant and ignorant Brahmins who thought

that by offering the blood of these innocent lambs they were pleasing God and he dared them to sacrifice a single one of them. His very presence softened the stony hearts of the Brahmins. They looked up to the Master, they threw away their deadly knives and every one of those animals was saved. Was this message given to the world in order to falsify it, as it is being falsified here? I feel that you who are the repositories of this great faith are not true to the spirit of the Master's teachings so long as you do not regard all animal creation as sacred, and you cannot do so, so long as you do not abstain from meat and delude yourselves into the belief that you are not guilty of the crime of that slaughter because someone else killed the animals for you. You entrench yourselves behind the wall of traditions. You say that the Master never prohibited meat-eating. I do not think so. If you would approach the teachings of the Master in the spirit indicated by me, and rub in the spirit of tradition, you will have a different vision and a different meaning. You will find that when the Master said, 'I do not prohibit you from meat eating', he was preaching to a people who were, in Christian parlance, hard of hearts. It was because he wanted to make allowance for their weakness that he allowed them to eat it, and not because he did not know the logic of his own teaching. If animals could not be sacrificed to the gods above, how could they be sacrificed to the epicure in us? When he prohibited sacrifice he knew what he was saying. Did he not know that the animals were sacrificed to be ultimately eaten? Why do they sacrifice thousands of sheep and goats to the Goddess Kali in Calcutta—be it said to their discredit and the discredit of Hinduism—in spite of having received this message from the Hindu of Hindus—Gautama? Do they throw the carcasses away in the Hooghly? No, they eat every bit of the meat with the greatest delight, thinking that it has been sanctified because of the presentation to Kali. So the Buddha said, if you want to do any sacrifice, sacrifice yourself, your lust, all your material ambition, all worldly ambition. That will be an ennobling sacrifice. May the spirit of the Buddha brood over this meeting and enable you to measure and assimilate the meaning of the words that I have spoken to you.

Young India, 8-12-1927

291. *SPEECH TO CEYLON INDIAN ASSOCIATION,
COLOMBO*¹

November 25, 1927

I know you have here several political problems arising. The one maxim of conduct that I think should guide the life of those who come from another country to stay in the midst of a people of another country, as we do, is that we must throw in our lot entirely with the people of the country of our adoption. Their welfare must be our primary concern. Our own must be subordinate to theirs. That seems to be the only line consistent with dignity, and it follows along the lines of the great teaching that we should do unto others as we wish that they should do unto us. Thinking along these lines, as you know, I have repeatedly suggested to Englishmen in India that they should subordinate their own interests to the interests of the teeming millions of the country in which they are living, and nobody has questioned the propriety of that statement. There cannot be one law to govern the relations between ourselves and foreigners who come to our land and another law governing us when we go to another foreign land. And though I consider that Ceylon is not a foreign land and though it has given me the greatest pleasure to hear from the lips of the Sinhalese that they own India as their mother country, it is much better, when we wish to regulate our relations with them, that we regard them as foreigners. The safest rule of conduct is to claim kinship when we want to do some service and not to insist upon kinship when it is a matter of asserting a right. Indeed, I have applied this rule of life, which I call the golden rule of conduct, between communities and communities even in provincial inter-relations in India. For instance, whenever I have gone to Bengal or to Madras or to any other province but Gujarat, and wherever I have seen Gujarati settlements, I have not hesitated to submit to the Gujaratis that they must consider the welfare of the people of the province to which they go superior to their own. I know of no other method of preserving sweet relations in human affairs and I am fortified by my experience extending for a long period of years that wherever there has been an interruption in the observance of this golden rule which I have submitted to you, there have been bickerings and quarrels and even the breaking of heads. I

¹ The speech was translated into Tamil by C. Rajagopalachari.

have no doubt whatever that if you, my dear countrymen, will govern your conduct in accordance with the rule that I have submitted to you, you will cover yourselves with honour and glory and your conduct will redound to the credit of the whole of India whose deliverance we are seeking with all our might.

The Ceylon Daily News, 26-11-1927

292. *SPEECH AT REDDIAR SANGAM, COLOMBO*

November 25, 1927

I thank you for all these numerous addresses and equally numerous purses.

I see that as the time for my leaving Ceylon is drawing near, your hearts are extending and with your hearts, the frames of your addresses are also expanding. But you the Reddiar friends and others who really should have known me better might also have understood that if you gave me big framed addresses, you would also have to find me a place in which to keep these addresses in my Ashram at Sabarmati. If you, out of your generosity, offer to give me a few thousand rupees earmarked for the purpose of building such a house in which all your great and big addresses might be accommodated, I would have been obliged to say to you—if you have so much money to spare in order to enable me to build a house for these things—‘Give me all this money and it will provide more food for the poor starving sisters in this world.’ You should also have known that for years past I have declined to accept any costly gifts for my own personal use. As you at least should be aware, I have not hesitated at the very meetings where these addresses have been presented to sell them at auction without laying myself open to the charge of discourtesy. But in this beautiful island where I might be mistaken for a stranger I have out of delicate consideration for the feelings of the Sinhalese refrained from offering their addresses for auction. But here I know that you cannot possibly misunderstand me. Therefore I propose with your permission, which I anticipate, to convert them into money which will swell the amount of your purses and will go to feed so many hungry mouths. I regard your addresses really as a temptation for me to do this thing, and therefore I shall not take up more of your time or my time by making any elaborate speech.

I would leave one or two thoughts with you before I leave Colombo. Since you are earning your bread in this beautiful island, I

would ask you to live as sugar lives in milk. Even a cup of milk which is full up to the brim does not overflow when sugar is gently added to it; the sugar accommodating itself in the milk enriches its taste; in the same way I would like you to live in this island so as not to become interlopers and so as to enrich the life of the people in whose midst you may be living.

Take care that none of the vices we have in India are brought with you in this land in order to poison the life. Let us not bring with us to these shores the curse of untouchability. In the Kingdom of Great God there cannot be any superiority and inferiority. Let us make this world therefore the Kingdom of God instead of making it the kingdom of the devil, as sometimes it appears to become. Let our lives be absolutely pure, our eyes straight, our hands unpolluted and since you have so generously given me all these gifts, may I not ask you to make all your cloth purchases in khadi.

Friends, I would beseech you to join the great struggle against the curse of drink that is going on in this island. Not only will you refrain from drinking yourselves, but help the movement, and the communities themselves, to deliver them and establish complete prohibition in this land.

I thank you once more for all the kindness that you have showered on me which I shall never forget.

With Gandhiji in Ceylon, pp. 115-6

293. *SPEECH AT FAREWELL MEETING, COLOMBO*

November 25, 1927

MR. CHAIRMAN AND FRIENDS,

I thank you for the words that you have spoken about me and your good wishes on your own behalf and on behalf of the citizens of Colombo. I thank you also for this generous purse. Good as the purse is, as it is announced here, I know and you ought to know that it is not the only purse that the citizens of Colombo have gladly given to me. Throughout my stay in Colombo, little by little, various associations and individuals have not only given me in public but have also been coming to my residence and giving me their own purses. I count all these handsome donations also as part of this purse.

In one way my visit to Ceylon draws to a close today though technically speaking I will be leaving your hospitable shores on the

evening of the 29th from Jaffna. Somehow or other I feel that I am going to a different place in going to Jaffna. I am carrying away with me very pleasant recollections of your extraordinarily beautiful climate and equally pleasant recollections of the people of Ceylon. I assure you that I am leaving Colombo not without a heavy heart and if I could at all have managed it, I would certainly have stayed here longer. But I have in front of me a tour in Orissa, one of the most, or rather the most, afflicted parts of India. It is now suffering from a visitation of very heavy floods. I dare not therefore postpone that visit.

From His Excellency the Governor down to the pettiest official, from the great merchant class and other capitalists down to the poorest labourer I have experienced nothing but the warmest kindness and you, Sir, have truly stated that all the people without distinction of caste, colour or creed have united in showering their affection unstintedly upon me and so far as the object of my mission was concerned you have certainly realized fully the expectations that were raised by you.

I assure you that it would not require much pressure to bring me out again to Ceylon and as you have put it, for a leisurely stay if God spares that time for me and spares me for the purpose. But whether I am able to return to this fair island again or not you may be sure that my spirit will be always with you and I shall be watching your careers with a great deal of personal interest.

When I decided to visit your country, I had imposed upon myself a strenuous limit that I would not express myself upon your political problems nor do I desire at the present moment to do so. But I know that an important Commission is just now enquiring into your political condition. So far as time has permitted it, I have been endeavouring to follow its proceedings and I may be permitted to hope that its proceedings and its findings may be so wise and so good as to be an unmixed blessing to this one of the fairest spots on the earth.

Without dwelling upon the political questions I may be also permitted to express the hope that even as you have united in offering this welcome to a humble individual like me, you will unite for realizing your political ambition, sink all your differences, think not in water-tight compartments as Hindus, Buddhists, Christians, Mussalmans and what not, but think as one people of this great land and realize the highest of your political ambition. Personally, I have

never been able to understand why a numerical minority should ever consider that it will not have its claim properly examined and given to it, if it is not separately represented. It has always seemed to me that an attitude of that character betrays want of national consciousness.

I have this morning in addressing my own countrymen given expression to the view which I wish to repeat again that it is the duty of those who have made Ceylon the land of their adoption and where they make more than their livelihood, to subordinate their own interest to the general interest of the indigenous population, the Sinhalese. But I know that I must not go deeper into this subject.

I would like now to devote a sentence or two to the subject of which I have been ceaselessly speaking at all meetings, viz., the question of caste in connection with its concentrated evil, untouchability.

Everybody with whom I have discussed this subject has assured me that there is no warrant whatsoever for caste distinctions, let alone untouchability, in Buddhism, and yet, strange as it may appear, even among the Buddhists of this country you have water-tight compartments, you have superiority and inferiority even bordering on untouchability as in the case of the Rodyas who, I was glad to be told this morning, were now no more than 600. I know that, if India may take pride in having sent you Mahinda and the message of Buddha to this land, it has also to accept the humiliation of having sent you the curse of caste distinctions. How I wish you could take more and more of the spirit of the Buddha if it is still to be found in India, and do away with the curse that you have inherited from that great land.

Nor is there the slightest warrant so far as I have been able to study Buddhism and conferred with the leaders of public opinion here, for the drink evil in your midst. It has delighted me to find that you have the right of local option in your midst and that you are taking advantage of that right, but I know from painful experience that this blighting curse is not one to be trifled with nor does it admit of any patience. I would therefore respectfully urge you to hasten the pace and rid this country of this great evil which is sapping the vitality as also the morality of at least the labouring population. I do hope that you are not going to make the mistake of giving favoured treatment to foreign liquors. I have known them to produce the same mischief that indigenous liquors do. So far as I have been able to observe conditions and discuss this question with many medical

friends with experience of temperance question, I have no doubt whatsoever that we who live in the temperate zone have no excuse for indulging in this intemperate habit.

I would now devote a sentence or two to the message of the spinning-wheel, in so far as it may be applicable to you. I know, and I am happy to know, that you in this land are strangers to the gnawing pauperism that we have in India and which starves millions of people from day to day. The spinning-wheel therefore has perhaps no economic importance for you but I have no doubt it has a great cultural value for this fair land. Its living message of simplicity is applicable to all lands and you will admit that if your boys and girls and even grown-up men and women devoted an hour every day to self-spinning and if you become self-reliant and self-contained regarding your clothing requirements, it would do not only no harm to you but would add dignity and self-confidence to this nation.

I have been watching not without considerable anxiety the craze for fashion which I see has seized your young men and women belonging to the higher classes. Little do they know how by becoming slaves to this hypnotic dazzle from the West they are isolating themselves from the poor of the country who can never aspire after such fashion. I cannot help thinking that it would be a great national catastrophe, a great tragedy, if you were to barter away your simplicity for this tinsel splendour.

But whether you appreciate this cultural side of the spinning-wheel or not, you have from many a platform voluntarily declared your allegiance to India by affectionately calling her the Mother-land. You have by your generous purses given tangible evidence of that allegiance. May I appeal to you to forge this link stronger and make it a living thing by finding in your wardrobe ample room for khaddar which will be produced as a result of your donations.

I have no power in me to make any the slightest return for the lavish kindness that you have showered upon me, but I have no doubt that the dumb and starving millions on whose behalf you have opened your purses will certainly bless you for the help that you have rendered to them, and as a self-appointed humble representative of those millions I can pray to the Almighty that He may bless you and endow you, the people of this fair island, with all the blessings that you may deserve. I also thank the volunteers and the members of the Reception Committee for all the kindnesses shown to me and my companions during our stay here.

With Gandhiji in Ceylon, pp. 117-21

294. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, JAFFNA

November 26, 1927

I am deeply obliged to you for all these addresses and various purses.

I appreciate the spirit with which you have refrained from insisting on reading all your addresses, but the Reception Committee had courteously and consideratiely provided me with copies of all the addresses in advance. I have carefully read all the addresses before coming to this meeting and one of them very correctly remarked that it was the young men of Jaffna who brought me to Ceylon.

In having come to Ceylon and having enjoyed the lavish hospitality of the Ceylonese, I am able to tell you that I have nothing but the pleasantest recollections of my visit to your fair island.

Having come to Jaffna, I do not feel that I am in Ceylon, but I feel that I am in a bit of India. Neither your faces nor your language are foreign to me. Though I cannot identify every one of you by your features I know that I have met many of you in India itself.

So I suppose, that was why you considered that you need not be satisfied with merely extending your lavish hospitality to me but that you might also exact some work from me. Whilst I was in the south and central parts of Ceylon, I was not overwhelmed with conundrums sent to me by correspondents, as I have been overwhelmed even in Colombo with correspondence from Jaffna presenting me with all kinds of conundrums.

I do not mention this to complain about it, but I mention this in order to tell you that I appreciate the motive that lies behind all this correspondence. It is, I know, a token of your confidence in my ability to assist you in arriving at a solution of some of your problems. It is also a demonstration of the friendship that I enjoy, because it is a special privilege of a friend, not merely to extend his hospitality, but to take his friend into his confidence.

You will, I know, forgive me if I do not straightway present you with a solution of the questions that have been propounded by the correspondents in their letters, but bearing in mind all that correspondence, I propose to imbibe from the atmosphere around me during the four days I am in your midst as much as I can of the inwardness of the many questions that have been presented to me. If I did otherwise, I feel sure that I should be unjust to you and unjust to

myself for having arrived at hasty decisions on questions on which I am not sufficiently enlightened.

I congratulate you upon your village communities. I have gone through the paper that was very kindly prepared for my edification on the progress and working of the several village organizations in your midst. I agree with the writers of that note that the successful working of these village organizations is undoubtedly a key to the attainment of final swaraj. Let me tell you from my own experience that a successful village organization does not depend upon good legislation, but it depends upon good men to work it. There will have to be a number of young men and even old men taking a deep and personal interest in their villages just as much as they do in their own families. After all, the truest test of nationalism consists in a person thinking not only of half a dozen men of his own family or of a hundred men of his own clan, but considering as his very own the interest of that group which he calls his nation.

From the book that was sent to me whilst I was in Colombo and the literature that I have since received, I have learnt enough of your activities to know that you have got all the material that will go to make for very successful village organization. You are a small well-built organization, containing people speaking the same language and possessing apparently very well-managed educational institutions. Apparently, you have not yet lost a love for all that was noble and good in ancient civilization. You have not yet evidently become giddy with the onrush of splendour from the West. It is therefore quite easy for you to become the architects of your own fortune.

It has given me the greatest joy to discover that you are nearly on the point of becoming perfectly dry. Your closing of the pestilential taverns and liquor dens is a great step in the right direction. You deserve the heartiest congratulations of not only the people of this place, not only the people of Ceylon, but of the motherland. It gives me additional joy to have your promise that you are determined to see that in the very near future you will have attained total prohibition, but I have discovered that you have internal difficulties in your way.

A correspondent has sent me a communication enclosing a pamphlet which is evidently designed to counteract the activities of those who are working for total prohibition. That pamphlet, I must confess, is ably written and, on the face of it, seems to claim to my painful surprise the support of some religious divines. In his eagerness

to be witty and smart, the author of the pamphlet has not, I am sorry to say, hesitated to wound the susceptibilities of those whose mission he has set about opposing. He does not hesitate to laugh at the very artistic plantain leaf on which rice and curds are beautifully and simply served, nor does he hesitate to laugh at the simple life of those who are satisfied with a mere dhoti to cover themselves and call them half nude. In spite of my attempt to be fair and just to him, I have not been able to discover the slightest connection between the serious subject of prohibition and his light-hearted laugh at the simplicity of his own countrymen, if the author of the pamphlet is an Indian.

But whether you have difficulties internal or external I hope that you will persist in your effort to secure total prohibition.

As I always believe in giving the critics their due and in learning from them what is worth learning, I would like to make two suggestions which have been derived from this pamphlet. The first thing is to avoid the slightest shadow of compulsion or untruth. No reform worth the name has yet been achieved by compulsion, for whilst compulsion may lead to seeming success, it gives rise to so many other evils which are worse than the original evil itself. But I must not be misunderstood. I do not regard legislation declaring total prohibition as in any shape or form compulsion. When there is honestly and clearly expressed public opinion in favour of total prohibition, it is not only the right of the people but it is the sacred duty of the people to declare total prohibition by legislation and take all effective steps to enforce that legislation.

Of instances of untruth cited by the author of this pamphlet are examples, as he suggests, of people taking part in prohibition meetings, themselves being given to the drink habit. If there are any such hypocritical people who are working this prohibition campaign, I have no doubt that the movement is doomed to fail. In a cause so eminently just, noble and humane I hope that you will take special precautions to rid yourselves of hypocrites.

The second suggestion which I shall place before you is that having obtained legislation you may not, you dare not sit still.

The writer of that pamphlet insinuates that prohibition in America has been a failure. I happen to know better from Americans themselves. Difficult, almost impossible, as prohibition for a big country like America may appear to us, it is not a failure, but it is gradually succeeding. Compared to the difficulties that the brave

reformers in America have to face, you have absolutely no difficulty to face in this land, but I would like you to take a leaf out of the book of those great reformers. They are not only not sleeping over the legislation which they have obtained after an incessant struggle stretching over a long period, but they are doing great, gigantic constructive work. For, when the drink evil takes possession of a man, it is the most difficult thing to wean him. Americans are therefore devising all kinds of means to deal with this class of people.

With the drunkard, the drink craze is a disease, and you will have to take him in hand, as you will an ailing brother or sister of yours who may be diseased. In the place of taverns you will have to give them refreshment rooms, and all kinds of innocent recreations in order to keep the drunkards busy at something in which they may be interested. If you, who have got all the facilities for achieving this reform, are entirely successful, you will set a noble example to all India.

Lastly, you will not be impatient or angry with the opponent who may be working against you. I do not know whether the same condition prevails in Jaffna as it prevails in India and other parts of the world, but I do know that in India, in England, in America, the anti-prohibitionists have not only on their side able unprincipled writers to help them but they have also brewers' money.

But if you will follow the prescription that I have ventured to place before our own country which you call the mother country, viz., of truth and non-violence, you will disarm all these clever writers in spite of the money at their back.

Now, I come to the depressed or rather the suppressed classes. I was delighted to receive two addresses from them. I must confess to you that I was not prepared to find this evil existing in your midst to any extent at all. I had thought that you left this evil in the mother country and that in this island you had turned over a new leaf. Living in a country over which the spirit of the Buddha is brooding, I had felt you would be free from this taint of untouchability. After all Gautama was a Hindu. He was no more than one of the greatest among Hindu reformers. Let no Hindu then be ashamed of learning from him the secret of human love. Let us realize that it is a sin to consider a single human being as inferior to ourselves or untouchable. If you believe in an all-wise and all-loving God, as you must believe, you will immediately fling the doors of your temples open to receive the

suppressed brethren.

To the suppressed brethren I would like to say one thing. I do not know how you stand over the drink question. I know that many of the suppressed brethren in India are given to the drink habit. If there are any amongst you who are given to it I hope you will give it up and if there are any who are given to eating carrion or beef, they would in order to be true to the Hindu faith give these up.

I have copious correspondence before me about a little storm in a tea cup, as I call the differences that have arisen between Christians and Hindus. This correspondence has given me a painful shock. I have not yet been able to understand the cause of these differences. I therefore do not propose to say much upon them. I would like to be told before I leave Jaffna that you have yourselves settled all your differences. Surely, you are after all numerically a small enough community to be able to handle these little differences in a satisfactory manner. So far as I have been able to understand from the correspondence, there is really very little reason even for a split between the two, but I shall hope to have to say more on a future occasion on this point. I can only here say that I invite everybody who is interested in this question to write to me freely, briefly and intelligently. It will give me very great pleasure and joy to be of any service to you in this matter.

Lastly, since you have been so generous in giving me your purses, and I know that many more purses are still to come, I beseech you to continue your love for the motherland and your sympathy for the starving millions of India by finding a place in your wardrobe for khadi. It will be a living bond between yourselves and the famishing millions. I know that our women are the greatest offenders in this respect, and I individually appeal to them to moderate their taste for fine and silken saris and be satisfied with what their famishing sisters can produce for them. Then and then only will they be somewhat representative of Sita whose sacred feet hallowed this land as the legend has it. I give them my assurance that they will not look any the less handsome, because of their khadi sari. I would like to give them a warning too that I expect a lot of jewellery from them before I have left these shores.

I must not forget one thing. You have overloaded me with heavy things. I thought that you who claim close kinship and intimacy with me knew that if you gave me heavily framed addresses, they would be returned to you and you would be made to pay for them. You have

not only spent upon heavy frames, but you have had your addresses illuminated. Unless you had all these things done with a mental reservation that you will be called upon to pay high price for these addresses, you have deprived the famishing sisters of so many rupees.

With Gandhiji in Ceylon, pp. 121-8

295. *SPEECH TO STUDENTS' CONGRESS, JAFFNA*

November 26, 1927

I thank you for the beautiful address that you have presented to me this evening. You have taken upon yourselves, and very rightly, the credit of bringing me to this fair island, but you must remember also that those who take credit for anything have also to take discredit if any mishap occurs.

It is very difficult for me this evening to give you a message for the simple reason that I do not know your Congress sufficiently, nor do I know sufficiently the composition of my audience but your worthy Chairman has informed me of the objects of your Congress. I shall try to give you some thoughts that occur to me on some of those objects.

If I understand him rightly, your first object is to revive ancient culture. You have then to understand what that ancient culture is and it must be necessarily culture which all students, whether they are Hindus, Christians, Buddhists or to whatever faith they belong, would be interested in reviving, because I take it that by ancient culture you do not want to confine yourselves purely to Hindu students. I take it that this Students' Congress includes all students, Hindus, Christians, Muslims and Buddhists. Though today it has on its rolls no Muslim student or Buddhist student, it does not much matter for my argument for the simple reason that your ultimate object is attainment of swaraj, not merely for the Hindus and Christians of Jaffna, but for all the inhabitants of this island of which Jaffna is but a part. What I have said with reference to the inclusion of students belonging to these religions must hold good. That being so, we hark back to the question, what ancient culture it is we want to revive. It must, therefore, be such as to be common to all these elements and such as to be acceptable to all these elements. Therefore, whilst that culture will undoubtedly be predominantly Hindu culture, it can never be exclusively Hindu. The reason why I say that it must be predominantly Hindu is because you who are seeking to revive ancient culture are predominantly Hindu,

and are all the while thinking of that country which you rightly and proudly delight to call your motherland.

In Hindu culture, I venture to submit, Buddhistic culture is necessarily included for the simple reason that Buddha himself was an Indian, not only an Indian, but a Hindu amongst Hindus. I have never seen anything in the life of Gautama to warrant the belief that he renounced Hinduism and adopted a new faith. My task becomes easy when I consider also that Jesus himself was an Asiatic, and therefore it becomes a question really to consider what Asiatic or ancient Asiatic culture is. For that matter then, Mohammed was also an Asiatic. Since you can only wish to revive all that is noble, all that is permanent in ancient culture or revival, you cannot revive anything antagonistic to any of these faiths. The question then amounts to this, to find out the common factor, the greatest common measure, belonging to all these great faiths, and thus you will come, according to my own estimate of things noble, to this very simple factor, viz., that you want to be truthful and non-violent, for truth and non-violence are common to all these great faiths. You cannot possibly seek to revive many of the customs that you and I might have even forgotten, that may have at one time formed part of Hinduism. I recall one great thought that the late Justice Ranade expressed when he was speaking of ancient culture. He told his audience that it would be difficult for any single person in the audience to say exactly what ancient culture was and when that culture ceased to be ancient and began to be modern. He also said that a prudent man would not swear by anything because it was ancient, but he told the audience that any culture ancient or modern, must be submitted to the test of reason and experience. I am obliged to utter this warning to this Congress of students who are to be makers of the destinies of this land because of so many reactionary forces gathering round us not only here, but throughout the world. I see from my own experience in India that many who are professing to revive ancient culture do not hesitate under the name of that revival to revive old superstitions and prejudices.

After apologizing for his low voice and the necessity for reproducing or translating his speech, Mahatmaji continued :

I was describing to you from my own experience some of the reactionary forces that had been set in motion in the motherland itself. Ancient tradition and ancient laws have been dragged almost out of the tomb to justify the hideous doctrine of untouchability. A similar

attempt, some of you may know, is now being made to justify the institution of *Devadasis*.

You will not, therefore, consider that I have given you an elaborate statement in warning you against being misled into wrongdoing under the name of revival of ancient culture. Perhaps, you will understand the significance of this warning coming as it does from a man who is himself not only a lover of ancient culture but has been endeavouring in his own life, to the best of his ability, to reproduce all that is noble, that is permanent in ancient culture. In trying to explore the hidden treasures of ancient culture, I have come upon this inestimable boon that all that is permanent in ancient Hindu culture is also to be found in the teachings of Jesus, Buddha, Mohammed and Zoroaster. So I have come to this workable arrangement for myself—if I find anything in Hinduism wherein the ancients agreed that is repugnant to my Christian brother or my Mussalman brother, I immediately begin to fidget and doubt the ancientness of that claim. So I came by a process of examination to this irresistible conclusion that there was nothing so very ancient in this world as these two good old things—truth and non-violence—and arguing along these lines of truth and non-violence, I also discovered that I must not attempt to revive ancient practices if they were inconsistent with, call it if you will, modern life as it must be lived. Ancient practices may have been perfectly good and perhaps absolutely necessary at the time when those practices were adopted but they might be entirely out of date with modern needs and still not be contrary to truth or non-violence. Then you can see how safe the road becomes in front of you and me when we summarily and merci lessly reject untouchability, the *Devadasi* institution, drunkenness, sacrifice of animals in the very name of God whom we call Compassionate, All-merciful, Forgiving. We can unhesitatingly and summarily reject all these things, because they do not appeal to our moral sense. So much with reference to the negative side of it, but there is a positive side to it which is just as important as the negative.

In putting before you the positive side let me draw for you one very necessary corollary to the doctrine of non-violence. I put it before my very dear friends, the reformers, a very small body of staunch workers in Chettinad. The corollary or deduction is this. If we accept non-violence, we must then not wish for anything on this earth which the meanest or the lowest of human beings cannot have. If that is a sound proposition, and I claim that it is a direct corollary from the

doctrine of non-violence, if you accept it and then if it is a sound proposition it follows that we may not barter away our ancient simplicity for anything on this earth. Now, you will perhaps understand my determined opposition to the modern rush, the hypnotic dazzle that seems almost to overcome us and overtake us and that is coming to us with such violent force, and the West. I have taken great pains in my writings as also in my speeches to distinguish between the modern methods adopted in the West, the multiplicity of wants and material comforts, and the essential teaching of the Sermon on the Mount. So, in the opening sentences of my speech I threw out the hint of what was to come when I told you that after all Jesus was an Asiatic, Mohammed was an Asiatic, to draw that sharp distinction between the preaching and message of Jesus and what is today going on in America, in England and other parts of the world. I have been able to live at least with thousands upon thousands of my Christian friends in South Africa and now, because the circle is growing ever larger throughout the world, so you Hindus and a handful of Buddhists here, if there is even a handful of Buddhists, well, if you will be true to your ancient culture, refuse to have anything whatsoever to do with this hypnotic dazzle even though it may come to you in the so-called Christian garb. If you have an immovable faith in yourselves, if you will also cultivate it inexhaustibly, you will find that the Christian friends, even though they come to you with the Western dazzle behind them, will shed all that dazzle and be converted to the doctrine of simplicity which alone can satisfy the test of the corollary that I have ventured to draw before this audience.

If you have closely followed my reason, you will at once understand the message, the imperishable message of the spinning-wheel. It is because I see in the spinning-wheel the hand of God working; it is because I see in the spinning-wheel the satisfaction of the needs of the meanest of human beings, that in season and out of season I think about it, work at it, pray about it and speak about it. If there is any other thing which can bring you nearer to the famishing people of the earth, that could put you at once on the level of the scavenger, I withdraw the spinning-wheel and hug the other thing. You will perhaps also understand that I go about from door to door shamelessly and ceaselessly with the begging bowl and beg everyone to put something into it if they will do so with a willing heart. I have now overstayed my time. I must not exhaust your patience and I must now therefore leave you to dot the 'i's and cross the 't's of this

speech. I have to talk to the student world several other things, because I have the honour to enjoy their confidence, but tonight I must not go any further with my remarks.

I thank you from the bottom of my heart for all that you have done and are doing and if you will act in accordance with the paper that some of you sent me, when I was in Colombo, you will certainly have done a brave thing. There was one thing in that paper which I would have liked to correct, but I must seek some other occasion to do so. I thank you for the patience with which you have listened to me.

The Hindu, 1-12-1927 and *With Gandhiji's in Ceylon*

296. LETTER TO HARJIVAN KOTAK

JAFFNA,

November 27, 1927

Who are the persons for whom *brahmacharya* has proved to be a hard vow? I hope you yourself have not taken fright. Wake up and be on your guard. The whole world may perish, but a vow once taken ought not to be given up. Your idea of undertaking a fast is a good one. Try and see what peace you get through it. I hope you do not think about Sharada. Fix your thoughts exclusively on khadi. You will not find any-where in the world a woman like khadi; countless men may be wedded to her and yet she always remains a virgin. And a man who takes her alone as wife will still be an inviolate *brahmachari*. If you cultivate single-minded devotion to her, how can you get time to think of other things?

Why should you dwell in your mind on things which are not for you in this life? When a few persons like you and me keep firm in their vows, it is only then that we and the world can be saved from this conflagration.

[From Gujarati]

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

297. A LETTER

November 27, 1927

None of us can say how M's desire for sex-pleasure may die out. I know of course that it is not your duty to bring that about. It is not the duty of husband or wife to see that the partner's passion dies

out. The result should come through the free will of both. The world goes on, since all of us are sunk in passion. It is everyone's duty to control it. While striving to do so, some persons of extraordinary strength are fortunate enough to cross to the other shore.

[From Gujarati]

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

298. *DISCUSSION WITH CHRISTIAN MISSIONARIES,
JAFFNA*¹

November 27, 1927

Rev. W. A. Kathirgamer asked what would be the religious future of India and the share that Christianity would take in it and what Gandhiji wished it to be.

Mahatmaji replied that the first question was beyond his capacity to answer. The second question he could. For years past his wish had been that all religions should flourish in India in their true light, because he did not consider any one religion to be exclusively true. That being his position and having a tolerant nature all through his life, he had no like or dislike. He endorsed the appeal made by the Dewan of Mysore to missionaries and Mussalmans who believed in conversion to make the untouchables better Hindus. He thought that if all men belonging to the different great faiths became better by contact with one another the world would be a much better place to live in. So long as there were different points of view they would have large classifications such as Christianity, Islam, and Hinduism and in all of these religions no two persons thought alike. If, however, they examined the religion of . . . the respective parties from their own standpoints all should agree quickly. He did not expect the India of his dream to develop one religion only, but expected it to be respectful to all faiths working side by side without exciting the slightest suspicion on jealousy which he noticed even in Jaffna.

Rev. J. Bicknell asked : "You have been working towards Hindu-Muslim unity in India. Is there any likelihood of unity among them?"

MAHATMAJI : O yes. Most decidedly.

REV. BICKNELL : The one is a cow-worshipper and the other is a cow-eater; the one is an idol-worshipper and the other is an idol-breaker?

Mahatma Gandhi admitted that there were differences on the surface and as he was a bit of a cook he knew what happened when he took dirty salt and a bit of dirty sugar. Put them in the melting pot and add a little water. All the dirt would come up to the surface; and if he were an unskilled cook he would come to the conclusion that it was all dirt and therefore in his impatience he would throw it away; but being fairly a

¹ At the Missionary Conference

skilled cook he knew that the dirt should be easily removed from the surface and that pure crystals of salt and sugar could be separated. So it was with Hindus and Mussalmans. Today they were fighting like dogs, he might say, but they were fighting only to come together and they were fighting really not because one was an idol-worshipper and the other an idol-breaker, because the one was cow-eater and the other was a cow-worshipper; but it was the mutual fear which was working upon them and mutual distrust which was always the first-born of fear. That was what was happening today and unfortunately both the communities were ill-advised and both had forgotten the fundamental precepts of their respective faiths. The Hindu had undoubtedly forgotten the principle of ahimsa, although he was never tired of saying “*ahimsa paramo dharmah*”. The Mussalmans seemed to think that in Islam there was ample room for violence as there was for non-violence, but when he cross-questioned his Mussalman friends they had stated that non-violence was always the law, but if they could not be non-violent, then it was permissible to be violent. In any case therefore non-violence was really common between the two. It was not Islam and Hinduism that were fighting, but it was the hooligans belonging to each faith. So when the hooligans were exhausted they would settle down, or if that did not happen, as a man of faith which could not be easily assailed, he was convinced that the good Hindus and the good Mussalmans, who were in the background, were of intensely prayerful nature and that their prayers would be heard and the hooligans would ultimately be confounded.

Q. Your work in South Africa interested me immensely and I rejoiced in the work that you did in South Africa. Are you satisfied so far with the result in South Africa?

MAHATMAJI: I was going to say “very much”, but perhaps that will be too much to say; but very fairly satisfied. At the present moment things are looking pretty. The Rt. Hon. Sastri is doing very great work indeed.

To a question as to how the New Testament and the *Bhagavad Gita* were sources of inspiration and comfort to him. Mahatmaji said that he had derived very great consolation and comfort from the New Testament—from the Sermon on the Mount, because that was exactly working in his mind. He studied the *Gita* later and he had not been able to see any difference between the Sermon on the Mount and the *Bhagavad Gita*. What the Sermon on the Mount had done in a graphic manner, the *Bhagavad Gita* had reduced to scientific formula. It was in one way a scientific book, in another way it was not a scientific book because there was no scientific treatment but the *Bhagavad Gita* had deduced the Law of Abandon, or as he would call it the Law of Exclusive Love, not in the sense of love for some and not for others, but exclusive of all hate which he found argued out in the *Bhagavad Gita*. He gave the history of how

he read the Old Testament and then with great joy read the New Testament and how he came to the *Bhagavad Gita* so that they could draw their own conclusions as to the source of his inspiration.

The Ceylon Daily News, 1-12-1927

299. *SPEECH AT INDIANS' MEETING, JAFFNA*

November 27, 1927

Ever since I have come to Lanka the conviction has been growing upon me that I am not in Lanka but in India glorified. A glorified edition of India Lanka certainly is from a scenic point of view. Though I was prepared for the scenery in Lanka, the scenery I have actually witnessed has surpassed all my expectations and so I could not help saying at a recent meeting that Ceylon seemed to be a fragrant, beautiful pearl dropped from the nasal ring of India. If the people of Lanka are really, as they should be, inheritors of this culture of India, they also should represent in their lives a glorious edition of mother India.

After all, was not Gautama Buddha one of the greatest of Hindu reformers? And why should not the people of Lanka who have inherited and adopted the teachings of the great Master do better than the children of the motherland? Alas! today the source from which the strength of Lanka was derived in the days of your seems almost to have dried up. We of India seem at the present moment to have fallen on evil days. We are ourselves struggling for our very existence, so much so that according to English historians at least one-tenth of the population of India is living in a state of perpetual starvation.

It is in order to remove the sting of this growing, grinding pauperism that I have been ceaselessly wandering from place to place, exciting the sympathy of moneyed people on behalf of these men and women who do not know what a full meal can be. And it has been a matter of the greatest consolation, indeed, a sense that sustains me in spite of darkness surrounding us on all sides, that wherever I go I receive a ready response from our countrymen.

It causes me, therefore, no surprise that you have brought me here to meet you and given me your tangible sympathy. But you do not need to be told by me that the sympathy that you have given me in the shape of money is by no means enough. I can only take it as a token of your desire to render still more help, and therefore I must repeat for the thousandth time what I have been saying to every

audience, that you will not have done your elementary duty by these famishing brothers and sisters of ours unless you follow up your donations by a fixed determination never more to make your cloth purchases in anything but khadi.

And the sisters who are also to be found in this hall must really help and respond to the dumb appeal of the famishing millions. Neither they nor the men may contemptuously tell me that khadi is too dear, that khadi is not fine enough, that it does not satisfy their taste. I have not yet heard a single mother to complain of the want of beauty of her children nor have I ever heard a mother complain that her children were a burden upon her purse. If you really feel for these famishing millions, if you really believe that they are famishing and that they are your own blood-brothers and blood-sisters, how can you complain of the price or quality of khadi? What right have you to think of fashion or of prices when you find that there are millions of people hungry for food and can be fed by you if only you will wear khadi which is manufactured by their sacred but shaking hands?

Will you not take a leaf out of the book of Englishmen and Germans who taxed themselves, suffered untold privations and suffered all kinds of difficulties, including death, under circumstances too terrible to relate, and all for what they believed to be the honour of their country? How much more then should you deprive yourselves of your manufactured tastes and notions about fashionable dress and pay a little higher price for khadi when it is not merely the honour of your sisters which is at stake but when it is their very existence which is in danger.

I wish therefore that it was possible for you to besiege Sjt. Rajagopalachari with your orders for khadi and even for fine embroidered saris if you must have fashionable saris. But I must pass on to another subject.

Whenever I have gone to countries outside India and even to the different provinces in India, I have advised the people from other parts who have settled in those regions to subordinate their interests to the interests of the land to which they have migrated. Whether you are Hindus or Massalmans or Parsis, no matter to which province you belong, I feel it to be your bounden duty to live amongst the people of the land where you go, not as thorns in their sides, but like sugar in milk. You must be in the midst of such people as trustees of your own culture, and you should make common cause with those people alike in their joys as well as their sorrows.

With Gandhiji in Ceylon, pp. 134-6

300. SPEECH TO CEYLON HINDUS, JAFFNA

November 27, 1927

This is the last of a series of many meetings, whose number even I cannot now remember, that I have been addressing today.¹ Precious as all of them have been, this to me is the most precious, because you have conceived a meeting of Hindus specially to be addressed by me. This I take to mean that I must speak to you Hindus as a Hindu. And it gives me the greatest pleasure to have been invited to do so. As you know, though my claim has not been accepted by those who call themselves orthodox Hindus I persist in calling myself an orthodox Hindu. But by making that claim I, a votary of Truth, must not mislead you in any way whatsoever. If orthodox Hinduism consists in dining or not dining with this man or that man, and touching this man and not touching that man, or in quarrelling with Mussalmans and Christians, then I am certainly not an orthodox Hindu. But if orthodox Hinduism can mean an incessant search after what Hinduism possibly can be, if orthodox Hinduism can mean an incessant striving to live Hinduism to the best of one's lights, then I do claim to be an orthodox Hindu. I am also an orthodox Hindu in the sense in which the author of the *Mahabharata*, the great Vyasa, would have it. He has said somewhere in the *Mahabharata* to this effect : Put Truth in one scale and all sacrifices whatever in the other; that scale which contains Truth will outweigh the one that contains all the sacrifices put together, not excluding *rajasuya*² and *ashvamedha yajna*³. And if the *Mahabharata* may be accepted as the fifth Veda, then I can claim to be an orthodox Hindu, because every moment of the twenty-four hours of my life I am endeavouring to follow truth counting no cost as too great.

Having thus registered my claim in the presence of this audience, I now wish to tell you as an orthodox Hindu what in my humble opinion your duty is in Jaffna, and in Ceylon. First of all I want to speak to you about your duty towards the predominant population in this island. And I wish to suggest to you that they are

¹ Gandhiji had addressed nine gatherings before this meeting.

² A great sacrifice performed by an emperor (in which the tributary princes also took part) at the time of his coronation as a mark of his undisputed sovereignty

³ A sacrifice in which the wanderings of a sacrificial horse established the extent of the jurisdiction of a conquering king

your co-religionists. They will, if they choose to, repudiate the claim. For they will say that Buddhism is not Hinduism and they will be partly right. Many Hindus certainly repudiate the claim of Buddhism to be part and parcel of Hinduism. On the contrary, they delight in saying that they successfully drove Buddhism out of India. But I tell you that they did nothing of the kind. Buddha himself was a Hindu. He endeavoured to reform Hinduism. And he succeeded in his attempt to a very great extent and what Hinduism did at that time was to assimilate and absorb all that was good and best in the teachings of the Buddha. And on that account I ventured to say that Hinduism became broadened, and having assimilated the best of Buddhism, it is true that Hinduism drove out from India what might be termed the excrescences that had gathered round the teachings of Gautama. And the way in which you can demonstrate this to the Buddhists of Ceylon is by living the broadened Hinduism in their midst. The one thing that the Buddha showed India was that God was not a God who can be appeased by sacrificing innocent animals. On the contrary, he held that those who sacrificed animals in the hope of pleasing God were guilty of a double sin. So if you will be true to Hinduism, you will take care that you will not defile a single temple of yours by indulging in animal sacrifice. I am prepared to declare against the whole of Hindu India that it is wrong, sinful and criminal to sacrifice a single animal for the purpose of gaining any end whatsoever, or for the purpose of propitiating God.

The second thing that Gautama taught was that all that caste means today—as it meant in his time also—was wholly wrong. That is to say, he abolished every distinction of superiority and inferiority that was even in his time eating into the vitals of Hinduism. But he did not abolish varanashrama dharma. *Varna* dharma is not caste. As I have said in so many speeches in South India, and as I have written fairly exhaustively on *varna* dharma in *Young India*, I hold that there is nothing in common between caste and *varna*. Whilst *varna* gives life, caste kills it, and untouchability is the most hateful expression of caste. You will therefore banish untouchability from your midst. I make bold to say that there is no warrant whatsoever in Hinduism for untouchability as it is practised today. If therefore you want to live your Hinduism in its purity in the midst of Buddhist countrymen, you will take care that you will not consider a single human being as an untouchable. Unfortunately the Buddhists in Ceylon have themselves borrowed this curse from Hindus. They should never have had this

institution of caste in their midst. For heaven's sake forget that some are high but others are low; remember that you are all Hindus—brothers in arms.

I have a letter from a Jaffna Hindu telling me that there are some temples in this place where you have dances by women of ill fame on certain occasions. If that information is correct, then let me tell you that you are converting temples of God into dens of prostitution. A temple, to be a house of worship, to be a temple of God, has got to conform to certain well-defined limitations. A prostitute has as much right to go to a house of worship as a saint. But she exercises that right when she enters the temple to purify herself. But when the trustees of a temple admit a prostitute under cover of religion or under cover of embellishing the worship of God, then they convert a house of God into one of prostitution. And if anybody no matter how high he may be comes to you and seeks to justify the admission of women of ill fame into your temples for dancing or any such purpose, reject him and agree to the proposal that I have made to you. If you want to be good Hindus, if you want to worship God, and if you are wise, you will fling the doors of all your temples open to the so-called untouchables. God makes no distinction between His worshippers. He accepts the worship of these untouchables just as well and as much as that of the so-called touchables, provided it comes from the bottom of the heart.

There are still certain things that demand your attention. You have to live at the present moment in a world which has Christians and Mussalmans, great communities owning great faiths. In Jaffna you have a very small Mussalman population, hardly two or three per cent. The Christian population is ten per cent. But you have to live your life in the midst of these, whether they are two per cent or twenty per cent. And if I know Hinduism aright, Hinduism is nothing if it is not tolerant and generous to every other faith. And since they are also as much inhabitants of this peninsula and this island as you, it is your duty to regard them as your brothers. Unless you do so, you will never evolve the truly national spirit that is necessary, and therefore you will not evolve the necessary Hindu and the humanitarian spirit. You have a right to control the education of your own children, and I am glad that you have got your own board of education. I would like you to strengthen that board in the right spirit as much as you can, but that should mean no jar whatsoever with the rival institutions of the Christian missionaries. If you have got an ably-manned staff of

educationist and provide the necessary facilities for the Hindu children, naturally all the Hindu children will come to your institution. And I can see no reason whatsoever for mutual jealousies in the matter of education as I understand there is somewhat. I was delighted to find that only up to recent time, Hindus, Christians, and Mussalmans were living in absolute friendship. A jar has been created only recently as between the Christians and yourselves. And seeing that you are in a vast majority, it is up to you to make advances and settle all your disputes. And if you will get rid of the wretched caste spirit which has crept into Hinduism, you will find that all the difficulties will disappear.

And remember that since you are in a vast majority, the responsibility rests on your shoulders to make Jaffna, and through Jaffna Ceylon also perfectly dry. Hinduism does not permit you to drink. And if the board of education will do its duty, you will encourage Sanskrit study in your schools. I regard the education of any Hindu child as incomplete unless he has some knowledge of Sanskrit. And so far as I have been able to see we have in Hinduism no book so compact and so acceptable all round as the *Bhagavad Gita*. If you will, therefore, saturate your children and yourselves with the spirit of Hinduism, you will endeavour to understand the spirit of the teaching of the *Gita*. You should also cultivate a common knowledge of the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana*.

Lastly, I know no solution of the many difficulties that face the whole of the human family except the two things that I am saying everywhere. Speak the truth and remain non-violent also at any cost. I know as certainly as I know that I am sitting in front of you and speaking to you, that if I could but persuade you to understand the spirit of these two and act up to them, every one of our difficulties will disappear like straws before wind, and God will descend from His Great White Throne and live in your midst and He will say, 'You Hindus have done well'.

Young India, 15-12-1927

301. TELEGRAM TO MIRABEHN

JAFFNA,
[November] 28 [1927]¹

TO
MIRABAI
ASHRAM
SABARMATI

HAS DOCTOR OPENED WOUND? BERHAMPUR OR NEIGHBOUR-
HOOD TILL SIXTH. LOVE.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 5295. Courtesy: Mirabehn

302. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

November 28, 1927

CHI. MIRA,

What could be so bad with your foot? But all these visitations are part of the suffering and discipline. I have replied to your two wires². You will not take any hasty step. If the foot requires doctoring, it would be better not to leave the Ashram. For I think I told you that there would be some touring in Orissa also. I shall not be allowed to rest in one place. But you will do what gives you most peace. If you cannot be happy, being there, you will come whether you are limping or well. And if you can restrain yourself, we meet in January in any case. But I am not going to interfere with your wishes. You will just do as the Spirit moves you.

The change you describe in your dress does not appear to be anything furious.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 5297. Courtesy: Mirabehn

¹ Gandhiji was in Jaffna on this date.

² *Vide* the preceding item.

303. LETTER TO ABBAS TYABJI

JAFFNA,
November 28, 1927

MY DEAR BHRRR¹

Have read the story of Shireen and Farhad? Have you ever known lovers tire of hearing from or about the loved ones? Now do you wonder why I was thirsting for your letter? Similar is the story of how I discovered Raihana.

Now love.

Yours,
BHRRR

From a photostat: S.N.9560

304. LETTER TO SURENDRA

November 28, 1927

Devdas's state is extremely pitiable. Rajaji is not likely at all to let him marry Lakshmi, and rightly so. Lakshmi will not take one step without his consent. She is happy and cheerful, whereas Devdas has gone mad after her and is pining for her and suffering. If he had such love for God, he would have been revered as a saintly man and become a great dedicated worker.

But how can even Devdas act against his nature? He wishes to obey me, but his soul rebels against him. He seems to believe that it stand in the way of his marriage with Lakshmi and so feels angry with me. I do not know at present how he can be brought out of this condition. Try and see if you can help him recover peace of mind and explain to him his dharma. It is possible that I have not understood him and am, therefore, doing him injustice. See if you can give him peace of mind through a letter. I of course write to him frequently.

Personally, I clearly see that impure desires in his mind are the cause of his many diseases. Such desires secretly eat away person from within. I have no doubt about this. Devdas is right in believing that he is pleasure-loving, but pleasure-loving is rather a mild word.

¹ This was a form of greetings used by Gandhiji and the addressee for each other.

His thoughts run after sex-pleasure. Since he cannot see this clearly, it consumes him secretly.

[From Gujarati]

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

305. LETTER TO ASHRAM WOMEN

JAFFNA,

November 28, 1927

SISTERS,

This region is also part of Ceylon, but it is very different from South Ceylon. The people inhabiting this part are Tamils from India, and they observe Indian manners and customs. This part, therefore, does not look very different from South India. It is true that women here appear to live a little more freely than in South India.

There is a Gujarati couple here. The lady (Kashibai) belongs to a good family from Rajkot, and her husband is the son of the well-known Haragovinddas Kantawalla of Baroda. He is a Judge here. They are highly respected. Half the number of my meals come from Kashibai. So Ba may be said to be on a holiday.

We are leaving this place tomorrow. We are now going to a land of human skeletons, and I am anxious to see them in order to rouse my heart and to discover a still deeper meaning of the spinning-wheel.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3678

306. LETTER TO T. B. KESHAVA RAO

November 29, 1927

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter. I am quite sure that everybody has the right to study and understand the *Gita*. I hope to deal with your letter¹ in the pages of *Young India* when I get the time.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: G.N. 159

¹ Presumably Gandhiji discussed it in "Distortion of Truth", 8-12-1927.

307. LETTER TO RAMESHWARDAS PODDAR

Margashirsha Shukla 5 [November 29, 1927]¹

BHAI RAMESHWARDAS,

Your letter. I shall begin the return voyage tomorrow. Peace will certainly come to you by sincerely reciting Ramanama.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 189

308. SPEECH AT ST. JOHN COLLEGE, JAFFNA

November 29, 1927

If you had been looking forward to meeting me under this roof, I can say that I was no less looking forward to meeting you. Though I receive, and receive with thankfulness, money from millionaires, it is a source of much greater pleasure to me to receive small gifts, no matter how small they may be, from boys and girls who are still making their lives. It gives me greater pleasure for two reasons. One is, the gift that spring from innocent boys and girls fructifies much more than gifts of those who may be considered worldly-wise men. The second reason is that gifts such as yours give me a keener sense of responsibility that perhaps I should otherwise have. . . .²

I have not the power to make any return for your kindness and your generosity. I can only pray to God that He may bless you for all the good things that you may do in life. I know that mere mental training is nothing if it is not accompanied by a true training of the heart. And may your heart extend in the manner that your minds may. I thank you once more.

The Hindu, 2-12-1927

309. SPEECH AT CENTRAL COLLEGE, JAFFNA

November 29, 1927

I am deeply grateful to you for the generous purse that you have given me on behalf of the semi-starving millions of India. You, Sir, sent me due notice yesterday of the very important question that

¹ Gandhiji started on his return voyage from Ceylon on November 30, 1927; the source bears a Ceylon postal stamp.

² Gandhiji then dwelt on khadi and untouchability.

you have repeated this morning¹. I have many engagements between now and 10.30; therefore, and also for other reasons into which I do not want to enter, I would fain have avoided this question. But on the principle that has guided my life that I must take things as they come to me, unless I find it utterly impossible for me to cope with them, I propose to devote the very few minutes that I have at my disposal to answer that question.

I say in one sentence that for many many years I have regarded Jesus of Nazareth as one amongst the mighty teachers that the world has had, and I say this in all humility. I claim humility for this expression for the simple reason that this is exactly what I feel. Of course, Christians claim a higher place for Jesus of Nazareth than as a non-Christian and as a Hindu I have been able to feel. I purposely use the word 'feel' instead of 'give', because I consider that neither I, nor anybody else can possibly arrogate to himself the claim of giving place to a great man. The great teachers of mankind have had the place not given to them, but the place has belonged to them as a matter of right, as a matter of service that have rendered, but it is given to the lowest and the humblest amongst us to feel certain things about certain people. The relation between great teachers and ourselves is somewhat after the style of relation between a husband and wife. It would be a most terrible thing, a tragic thing, if I was to argue out intellectually for myself what place I was to give to my wife in my heart. It is not in my giving, but she takes the place that belongs to her as a matter of right in my heart. It is a matter purely for feeling. Then I can say that Jesus occupies in my heart the place of one of the great teachers who has had considerable part in finding that place in my heart. Leave the Christians alone for the present. I shall say to the 75 per cent Hindus receiving instruction in this College that your lives will be incomplete unless you reverently study the teaching of Jesus. I have come to the conclusion, in my own experience, that those who, no matter to what faith they belong, reverently study the teaching of other faiths broaden their own, instead of slackening their hearts. Personally, I do not regard any of the great religions of the world as false. All have served in embellishing mankind and are even now serving their purpose. A liberal education to all should include, as I

¹ The Principal of the College had asked Gandhiji what place he would give to Christ among the great world teachers not as a divine instructor, but as a man and a teacher.

have put it, a reverent study of other faiths, but I do not want to labour this point, nor have I the time to do so.

There is one thing which, as I am speaking to you, occurs to me, which comes to me from my early studies of the Bible. It seized me immediately I read the passage:

But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.¹

I tell you that if you will understand, appreciate and act up to the spirit of this passage, you won't even need to know what place Jesus or any other teacher occupies in your heart. If you will do the proper scavenger's work, clean and purify your hearts and get them ready, you will find that all these mighty teachers will take their places without invitation from us. That, to my mind, is the basis of all sound education. Culture of the mind must be subservient to the culture of the heart. May God help you to become pure!

The Hindu, 2-12-1927

310. SPEECH AT UNDUVIL GIRLS' COLLEGE, JAFFNA

November 29, 1927

It has given me very great pleasure indeed to meet you this morning. I do not at all appreciate the idea of your little gifts coming right from the bottom of your hearts having been merged in the general purse, but I am going to put the best construction possible upon the fact of your purse having been merged in the general purse that you, being more most than boys, do not want me to know that you had given anything at all, but having met thousands or tens of thousands of girls all through India, it is difficult for girls nowadays to hide from me any good things that they do. Now, there are some girls who do not mind even telling me the bad things that they do. Let me hope that of all these girls before me, there is not one single girl who does a bad thing. Not having the time to cross-examine you, I am not going to weary you with questions, but if there are any girls in our midst who do bad things let them know that their education is useless if they do bad things.

Your parents do not send you to school to become dolls; on the contrary, you are expected to become Sisters of Mercy. Do not make the mistake of thinking that only those may be called Sisters of Mercy

¹ *St. Mathew, vi. 33*

who wear a particular dress in hospitals. When she becomes a Sister of Mercy, immediately she thinks less of herself and more of those who are poorer and more unfortunate than herself, and you have done the work of Sister of Mercy in giving your mite to the purse that has been presented to me, because that purse has been presented for those who are unfortunately poorer than yourselves. Giving a little bit of money is easy enough; to do a little thing oneself is more difficult. It you really feel for the people for whom you give money, you must go a step further and wear khadi that these people manufacture. When khadi is brought before you and if you adore it, and say: 'Khadi ia a bit coarse, we cannot wear it,' then I know you have not the spirit of self-sacrifice in you.

It is such a very nice thing that here there is no distinction between high class and low class, touchables and untouchables and if your hearts are also working in that direction, and you do not consider yourselves superior to some other girls, it is a very good thing indeed. May God bless you !

The Hindu, 2-12-1927

*311. SPEECH AT SIR RAMANATHAN GIRLS' SCHOOL,
JAFFNA*

November 29, 1927

It has given me great joy indeed to be able to come here this morning as if to put a finishing touch to the whole round of visit to different scholastic institutions in Jaffna. The exquisite taste and simplicity with which the whole of this ceremony has been arranged this morning, I assure you, has not escaped my observation. I appreciate also the generous purse of Rs. 1,111, which too unlike most purses is given in a khadi bag. To crown all, Lady Ramanathan has placed in my hands a kind telegram from Sir P. Ramanathan who himself is unable to attend this function. I should have always regretted if I had not been able to visit this institution, the monument of Sir Ramanathan's generosity and thoughtfulness. Lady Ramanathan had furnished me very considerately with an advance copy of your address and the report of this institution and two copies of your magazine.

Your promise in your address that you are going to observe this day as an annual function and devote it to collections for khadi work has touched me to the heart. I know that this is no idle promise on

your part, but that you are going to fulfil that promise religiously. If the famishing millions on whose behalf I am touring could possibly understand this determination on the part of their sister, I know it will gladden their hearts, but you will be pained to be informed by me that these dumb millions in whose behalf you have given me this purse and so many purses have been given in Ceylon would not even understand such things, if I attempted to tell them. No description that I can give you of their miserable life can possibly give you a proper perspective of what that position means.

This immediately brings me to the question—what are you to do for these and such people. It is easy enough to suggest a little more simplicity, a little more harness in life, but that would be merely tinkering with the question. Thoughts and thoughts like this brought me to the spinning-wheel. I said to myself, as I say to you now, that if you could but establish a living link between those famishing millions and yourselves, there is some hope for you, for them and for the world. Religious instruction you have, and very properly, in this institution. You have got also a beautiful temple. I see from your time-table that you begin the day by offering worship, all of which is good and elevating, but it may easily amount to a beautiful ceremonial and nothing else if that worship is not translated day after day into some practical work. So, I say, in order to follow out that act of worship, take up the spinning-wheel, sit at it for half an hour and think of those millions that I have described to you and say in the name of God: 'I spin for the sake of them'. You will find at once, if you do it with your heart, with knowledge, that you are the humbler and the purer for that real act of devotion. If you will dress not for show, but for covering your limbs, you will certainly not have any hesitation in wearing khadi and establish that bond between you and the millions. This is not all that I want to say to the girls of this institution.

If you will be deserving of the care and attention that Sir Ramanathan has bestowed upon you and that is being bestowed upon you by Lady Ramanathan and the staff working under her care, you will have to do many more things. I saw in your magazines mention made with some degree of pardonable pride of what some of the old schoolgirls had been doing. I saw notices after this style. So and so married so and so—four of five notices. There is, I know, nothing wrong in a girl who has come of age, about 25 or even 22 years old, in getting married. But I miss in these notices a single mention of a girl who had dedicated herself to service only. So I propose to tell you

what I told the girls of His Highness the Maharaja's College for Girls in Bangalore that we get a poor return for the great efforts that are being made by educationists and by lavish charities, if you all become mere dolls and disappear from life as soon as you are discharged from such institutions. A vast majority of girls disappear from public life as soon as they are discharged from schools and colleges. You of this institution have no such business. You have the example of Miss Emery and the example of others who have been superintending, and who have been, if I am not speaking incorrectly, maidens. Every girl, every Indian girl is not born to marry. I can show many girls who are today dedicating themselves to service instead of serving a single man. It is high time that Hindu girls produce or reproduce an edition, and if possible a glorified edition, of Parvati and Sita. You claim to be Saivites¹. You know what Parvati did. She did not spend money for a husband, nor would she allow herself to be bought, and she to day adorns the Hindu firmament by being classed with one of the seven *satis*—not because of the degrees in an educational institution that she received, but because of her unheard-of *tapasya*. Here I understand that there is the fateful system of dowry where-by it becomes most difficult for young women to get suitable matches. The grown-up girls—some of you are grown up—are expected to resist all such temptations. If you will resist these evil customs, you will, some of you, have to begin by remaining maidens either for life, or at least for a number of years. Then, when it is time for you to marry, and you feel that you must have a partner in life, you will not be in thirst of one who has money, or fame, or beauty of person, but you will be in search of one even as Parvati was, one who has got all the matchless qualities which can go to make good character. You know how Naradji described Siva to Parvati—a mere pauper smeared with ashes, no handsomeness about him and a *brahmachari*; and Parvati said—that is my husband. You won't have several editions of Siva unless some of you will be content to offer *tapas*, not for thousands of years as Parvati did. We frail human beings cannot afford to do it, but you can do so at least during your lifetime. If you will accept these conditions, you will refuse to disappear in the kingdom of dolls, but will aspire to be *satis* like Parvati, Damayanti, Sita and Savitri. Then and not till then, in my humble opinion will you have deserved an institution of this character. May God fire you with this ambition, and

¹ Worshippers of Siva

if you are inspired, may He help you to realize this ambition.

The Hindu, 2-12-1927

312. SPEECH AT TELLIPALLI WEAVING SCHOOL, JAFFNA

November 29, 1927

Mahatmaji congratulated the management in having established the weaving school but told them that it would not make a thorough success unless they introduced hand-spinning also. The success of weaving school was not to be measured by the necessity of those who were trained in it to make a few rupees per month, but was to be measured by the manner in which it could make the community rich and make the institution self-supporting. They would be thoroughly disappointed if they separated hand-spinning from hand-weaving and demanded wages for the former. He hoped that the spirit of Hindus and Christians in joining together to welcome him would continue to guide all their relations.

The Hindu, 2-12-1927

313. SPEECH AT JAFFNA COLLEGE, JAFFNA

November 29, 1927

It has given me the greatest pleasure to visit so many educational institutions in this peninsula of yours. Amongst these pleasures, not the least is visiting this, which, I understand, is the oldest educational institution in this peninsula. Moreover, I am given to understand that many old boys of this institution are today distinguished servants of the country. Lastly, I had the pleasure of meeting your Vice-Principal in Bangalore and the two secretaries of the Reception Committee are also old boys of this school. It always gives me pleasure to see the smiling faces of boys and girls. I know also that the work that I have the privilege of doing is today being done by so many grown-up boys who have given their all to the service of the motherland. Your purse therefore is very precious to me. I know that all the moneys, and by no means a small sum, that I have received from boys and girls, will bear greater fruit than the moneys received from old and wise men. Your money comes with the stamp of innocence upon it, and it goes also to millions or some of the millions of men and women who are innocent, and deliberately perhaps, because they cannot be otherwise. . . .¹

The Hindu, 2-12-1927

¹ Then Gandhiji spoke on khadi, truth and love.

314. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, RAMNAD

November 30, 1927

MR. CHAIRMAN AND FRIENDS,

I am obliged to you for the addresses, all these yarn garlands and the various purses. Truly God is great. And if we have eyes to see we can see His greatness from moment to moment. At half past five when it poured in torrents, I had made up my mind that there would be no meeting. But my fears have been falsified, the clouds have cleared away and we see a large gathering here. I am not so arrogant as to suppose that God has disposed of these things just for my sake or for your sake. But I am humble enough to recognize the greatness of God in events as they march past us and make themselves accommodating to us. And we should be humble enough not to quarrel with God or think that He is not great enough when events seem to go wrong and everything seems to be in our way. If you like you have a demonstration of the nothingness of human wishes even as I am speaking,¹ and I would like you all, although you may open out your umbrellas to recognize the littleness of man and the greatness of God in the rain that seems to be threatenng us. But I have not come here to lecture on the greatness of God. Nor does He require any advertisers like myself to advertise His greatness. It is written in indelible letters on the vast page of time. Let us therefore bow down our heads in reverence to Him and pass on to our work.²

I was looking forward to coming to this place as soon as I ever could, and it grieved me when I was within thirty miles of this place that I could not at that time come here. It therefore gives me great pleasure now to be able to fulfil the wish that I had to come here and receive your purse. Let me tell you that before I came here I went to a women's meeting. They wanted no speech; they would have no speech. They were, from what I could see of them, very poor women. All they wanted to do was to pay almost all they had. And if they had two coins tied in one of the corners of their saris, then one coin was given by themselves and another they made their babies to surrender. And it gave me great joy when I saw pice after pice coming into my lap. Those eyes and those hands showed me unmistakably that pice as

¹ There was a gentle shower of rain and several in the audience opened out their umbrellas.

² The rain had by now completely stopped.

they were, they were hearts' gifts and all that the possessor had. And perhaps you will agree with me when I say that the gifts of these pice were richer gifts than the calculated gifts made by the donors who put their donations in this purse that has been handed to me. I have brought in this incident and this comparison not in any way to criticize or belittle your purse. I have brought in this incident, one amongst hundreds that I have had the good fortune to witness, in order to give a physical, visible, striking demonstration of the fact that this is a movement on behalf of the paupers of India. I have brought in this incident also to show you that our women are not to be despised and not to be considered beneath the notice of man and to be treated only as slaves or objects of man's lust. I have brought in this incident to ask you to fill yourselves with the faith, the immovable faith of these simple sisters of ours. Lastly, I have brought in this incident in answer to the opening paragraph of your address.

You want me to take in leading the political struggle in India. As I said at Coimbatore, I feel that I am doing my humble best in the political struggle also, in as much as I devote my whole time to the spinning-wheel. But taking the word 'political' even in the sense in which you are using it, that spiritualizing of politics that you have mentioned in your address is impossible of achievement unless we have the faith of these simple sisters. It is no faith that calculates, that is afraid, that hesitates. When a child nestles itself in the bosom of its mother and feels absolutely secure, the child does not calculate and ask itself whether the mother is strong enough to protect it or not. And if those of us who are politically-minded, who are in the habit of attending meetings, speaking on platform or being spoken to, if those politically-minded people had that wonderful faith in the destiny of India, if they had that implicit faith in the simple message of the tiny charkha, I have no doubt that we would have been in possession of swaraj a long time ago. Let not the charkha be a solution of the economic problem of India. Let it tend at least to be a test of our faith. I have presented the matchless economics, the irrefutable economics of the charkha, to my calculating countrymen. But if we had faith there would be no necessity of demonstrating the economics of the spinning-wheel. It should be enough that it is a harmless thing; it is a somewhat useful thing for those who use it, that it has given some employment to some women; it is enough if these things are capable of enabling us to stretch forth our faith and for millions to swear by it. For it is easy enough for man or woman to see that if we

the millions can but pin our faith to some such thing as this, there is at once set free an energy on the part of the whole nation, a united energy such as would become irresistible. I have that faith in the charkha and therefore I am content to wait till there is that general awakening and a consequent general faith on the part of the people of this great but distressed land.

You mention in your address the Statutory Commission. Being in that beautiful scented island. I was isolated for nearly 17 days or more, strictly speaking 23 days, from all the happenings in India save for the scraps that I was able to pick up from the local papers in Colombo. Having reentered the country I shall pick up the threads of events. But meanwhile I can repeat what I said to the reporters in Ceylon, that in the matter of the Statutory Commission I had surrendered my conscience to the President of the Congress and the Congress in general.¹

You ask me to make this a khadi centre. If it was at all possible I have no doubt that the Council of the All-India Spinners' Association will certainly open a branch here. I know that so far as spinning and weaving are concerned this is a favourable centre. But three things are necessary to enable the Association to open centres in various parts of the country—proper workers, a suitable atmosphere and money. Money is no difficulty, and even if there was you have now given a purse. Favourable circumstances there are. But everywhere workers are the greatest difficulty. Self-sacrificing, industrious workers who will study the technique of the spinning-wheel and the loom and of the khadi trade are very few in the country. And if you have honest workers of the qualities that I have described, I would invite you to correspond immediately with Sjt. Ramanathan, Secretary of the Tamil Nadu branch of the All-India Spinners' Association.

I was glad indeed to receive the two purses from the students of the school here. The address of the Raja's High School boys apologizes for the slenderness of the purse. And some of the boys in Ceylon have given as much as one thousand per school as the Ramanathan Girls' College gave only yesterday. The Students' purse, if the moneys are to be counted, is slender enough. But I don't count the slenderness or richness of the purse by its contents. If like the purse from the contributions of the sisters whom I have already described, if like that purse, the students' purse also represents all that

¹ *Vide* "Interview to the Press", 13-11-1927.

they could possibly save, then there need be no apology for the slenderness of their purse. Whereas, if the students have contributed stingily, let them reconsider their position and give the best they can. I was glad indeed of the promise in the students' address that they propose henceforth to buy as much khadi as they possibly can. Having made that promise, I ask them to fulfil it in the best manner possible. The students should know that they should realize that in their hand lies the future of the country. And that future is not hopeful at all if the students do not develop a fine character, if they do not possess pure minds and purer hearts and if they are not true to their promises. Let the students realize that all literary knowledge without the backing of a strong character is worse than useless.

Two words to this general audience. Those who are given to the drink habit must give up drink and all should work for complete prohibition in this land. And it is high time that we forget that there ever was any such curse like untouchability in this land. I tell you that I was ashamed when I discovered in Ceylon that our neighbours had also been tainted by this curse. And if we are really desirous of swaraj let us forget that some of us are superior to some others.

The Hindu, 2-12-1927

315. HINDU-MUSLIM UNITY

Dr. Ansari told me when I was recently in Delhi that he heard in Calcutta from reliable men that I had lost faith and interest in Hindu-Muslim unity and that I was avoiding Mussalman friends such as the Ali Brothers. Dr. Ansari therefore proposed that in order to dispel any illusion and disarm suspicion, I should make a declaration of my faith before a public meeting in Delhi. I could not accept the proposal if only because the old Delhi of Hakim Saheb Ajmal Khan and Swami Shradhanandji had become the new Delhi of hooligans where it was difficult for me to stay and much more so to address public meetings. I however promised Dr. Ansari that I would clear my position as early as I could through these pages. This I do now.

My interest and faith in Hindu-Muslim unity and unity among all the communities remain as strong as ever. My method of approach has changed. Whereas formerly I tried to achieve it by addressing meetings, joining in promoting and passing resolutions now I have no

faith in these devices. We have no atmosphere for them. In an atmosphere which is surcharged with distrust, fear and hopelessness, in my opinion these devices rather hinder than help heart-unity. I therefore rely upon prayer and such individual acts of friendship as are possible. Hence I have lost all desire to attend meetings held for achieving unity. This however does not mean that I disapprove of such attempts. On the contrary, those who have faith in such meetings must hold them. I should wish them all success.

I am out of tune with the present temper of both the communities. From their own standpoint they are perhaps entitled to say that my method has failed. I recognized that among those whose opinions count, I am in a hopeless minority. By my taking part in meetings and the like I could not render any useful service. And as I have no other interest but to see real unity established, where I cannot serve by my presence I regard it as some service if I abstain.

For me there is no hope save through truth and non-violence. I know that they will triumph when everything else has failed. Whether therefore I am in the minority of one or I have a majority, I must go along the course that God seems to have shown me. Today non-violence as a mere policy is a broken reed. It answers well as a policy when there are no active forces working against it in your own camp. But when you have to reckon with those who believe in violence as a creed to be enforced under given circumstances, the expedience of non-violence breaks down. Then is the time for the out-and-out believer in non-violence to test his creed. Both my creed and I are therefore on our trial. And if we do not seem to succeed, let the critic or the onlooker blame not the creed but me. I know I am often obliged to struggle against myself. I have not become incapable as yet of violence in thought at least. But I am striving with all the might God has given me.

Now perhaps the reader understands why I am not found in the company of the Ali Brothers as often as I was before. They still hold me in their pockets. They are still as dear to me as blood-brothers. I am not sorry for having thrown in my lot with the Mussalmans in the hour of their need. I should do so again if the occasion arose. But though we have a common cause we have not common methods today. They would have had me at Simla and Calcutta.¹ Since the

¹ A Unity Conference of Hindu and Muslim leaders was held at Simla under the chairmanship of M. A. Jinnah in the beginning of September 1927; and another such conference was convened by the All-India Congress Committee in Calcutta on October 27, 1927.

Kohat riots¹ we have not been able to agree as to the reading of facts. But friendship that insists upon agreement on all matters is not worth the name. Friendship to be real must ever sustain the weight of honest differences, however sharp they may be. I regard our differences to be honest, and therefore let those who suspect a breach or even coolness between us know that my friendship with the Ali Brothers and other Mussalman friends whom the reader can easily name remains as firm as ever.

Young India, 1-12-1927

316. HELP FROM AMERICA

Owing to continuous travelling I have not been able to publish earlier the following letter from the Rev. John Haynes Holmes² :

When the news came to me of the terrible floods which swept through your country in August, I published the story at once in *Unity*. I have followed this up now with a public appeal in co-operation with Professor Harry Ward, for contributions to what we are calling a 'Gandhi Relief Fund'. We are printing our appeal in various religious newspapers and liberal magazines, and I hope for some good results.

Meanwhile, *Unity* has established its own Fund, and I am sending you herewith a money order representing exchange on the initial gift of \$ 100.00. We will send along other funds as fast as they come in.

May I express to you my profound sympathy over this great disaster which has befallen you and your people? I am particularly distressed that Ahmedabad should have suffered so terribly and that the Ashram should have been in the midst of the calamity. Any further information you can send me, may be of great help in raising further funds.

I am sure the reader will not look at the amount received from America. We have no right perhaps to expect any help from distant lands in our local calamities, such as the recent floods in Gujarat. It is therefore the motive behind the unsolicited and unexpected American contribution that counts.

Young India, 1-12-1927

¹ *Vide* "Kohat", March 19, 1925.

² American clergyman, author of *My Gandhi*

317. KHADI ECONOMICS

I have two pamphlets before me, one called *Economics of Khadi* by Sjt. Rajendra Prasad of Bihar, to be had of Bihar Charkha Sangha office, Muzaffarpur, for three annas. This pamphlet is the first of a series to be issued by Bihar Branch of the Charkha Sangha. The other is the report and accounts of the Gandhi Ashram, Tiruchengodu, conducted under the direction of Sjt. C. Rajagopalachari. This can be had from the Secretary, Gandhi Ashram, Tiruchengodu (S. India), for one-anna postage stamp.

The first is a sustained argument put in a popular style and in a brief manner so as to enable the average busy reader to understand the economics of khadi. I must not attempt to resummarize the argument which is itself a summary of the case for the spinning-wheel. But it may be stated that after examining all the arguments for and against, Rajendra Babu has shown that only the spinning -wheel can successfully displace foreign cloth, and only the spinning-wheel can give a supplementary occupation to the twenty-two crores and forty lakhs of agriculturists of India who without the wheel are living, and must continue to live, in a condition of semi-starvation because they are and must be in a condition of unemployment at least for 120 days in the year.

Sjt. Rajagopalachari's report is a a scientific study in facts and figures, and seems entirely to illustrate and fortify Rajendra Babu's argument. The reader will be interested to learn that 85% of the Ashram goes to the spinners and weavers, $9\frac{1}{2}$ % to the workers, and $5\frac{1}{2}$ % for other establishment charges. The report contains instructive and illustrative tables showing the earnings of spinners and weavers and dhobis, all of whom probably and the spinners certainly, but for the advent of the charkha,would not be getting the income they are receiving today. The report contains also a certified account of the income and expenditure of the Ashram activity. It devotes a page to show how the price one pays for khadi is distributed. Here are the figures:

Cotton grower	37 p.c.
Spinners and weavers	54 p.c.
Workers	6 p.c.
Other expenses	3 p.c.

and it says:

“Dress you must have, but if you choose to buy khadi, you help the re-construction of rural India.”

This Ashram alone has distributed within $2\frac{1}{2}$ years Rs. 1,24,536 among the poorest villagers surrounding it, and that not by way of charity but against work done in their own homes. The Ashram maintains a free dispensary, which during the past 11 months attended to 10,145 patients. 148 operations were performed during the period. The patients included the so-called untouchables.

Young India, 1-12-1927

318. INTERVIEW TO THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

MADRAS,

December 1, 1927

To the several questions put by the pressman Gandhiji declined any answer. He said:

I am too raw from Ceylon to answer any question. . . .

Gandhiji's attention was next drawn to his Ceylon statement¹ with regard to the Statutory Commission² that his conscience was in the keeping of the President of the Congress. Gandhiji was asked if he still adhered to that statement and whether he agreed to the Congress President's view that the need of the hour was a revision of the Gauhati programme in the direction of the revival of organized mass action on the issue of the policy underlying the appointment of the Statutory Commission.³ Would the Mahatma personally lead such a movement? Gandhiji repeated his answer that for the past few weeks he had been out of touch with events in India. He did not want to say anything just at present before he had had time to study the question more fully. Gandhiji remarked:

My conscience is still in the keeping of Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar⁴ until Dr. Ansari⁵ mounts the throne at Madras.

The Hindu, 2-12-1927

¹ *Vide* “Interview to the Press”, 13-11-1927.

² *Vide* Appendix “The Indian Statutory Commission”.

³ For extracts from the Viceroy's statement, *vide* Appendix “Extract from Statement by the Viceroy on the Indian Statutory Commission”, November 8, 1927.

⁴ The outgoing Congress president

⁵ The President-elect of the Congress

APPENDICES
APPENDIX I
BRAHMIN-NON-BRAHMIN QUESTION ¹

[A CATECHISM]

During Gandhiji's tour in South India Non-Brahmin friends in various places sought interviews with him, and discussed the various aspects of the Brahmin-Non-Brahmin question. The same questions were often asked at various places, but the scope of the answers depended on the receptivity of the questioners at each place. I have brought all of them together, and arranged them in the form of a catechism. This covers all the talks in Tanjore, Chettinad, Virudhunagar and Tinnevely. I was not present during the conversations at Madura, but I think the collected talks will cover the topics discussed there also. I omit, of course, the references to the question in public speeches at Cuddalore, Tanjore and Coimbatore which I have already given in these pages, and I omit also talks already summarized, as for instance the one at Tirupur on superiority and inferiority.

—MAHADEV DESAI

CLEAR THE ISSUE

GANDHIJI : I want you to make your position clear to me, as I do not want to be told that I refuse to try to understand or sympathize with your viewpoint. The impression left on my mind is that the real cause of the movement is political.

NON-BRAHMIN FRIEND : The movement is older than the exponents of its political aspect. There is the social and the religious aspect as well.

A CHRISTIAN FRIEND : The rise of the Justice Party is due to the feeling that the Brahmins have a monopolizing tendency and hence cannot be trusted. I am speaking in reference only to the South Indian Brahmins of today.

[At this stage there were swift questions and answers. I summarize below Gandhiji's replies only.—MAHADEV DESAI]

GANDHIJI : But should you not in considering the question consider the course that Brahminism has taken in North India? In North India whatever status a Brahmin enjoys has been given him by the Non-Brahmins. He has no independent status. In fact the consideration in North and West India is not whether a particular leader is a Brahmin or a Non-Brahmin, but whether he can lead. In the Punjab Lalaji, a Non-Brahmin, is supreme as a leader. In the U.P. there is Malaviyaji, a Brahmin. In Bengal Surendranath Bannerjea, a Brahmin, was as much respected by the Non-Brahmins as by Brahmins. In Gujarat the Patel Brothers, Non-Brahmins, are as much

¹ *Vide* "Speech at Tanjore", 16-9-1927

respected by the Brahmins as by Non-Brahmins.

In South India you seem to have divided Hinduism not only into two camps, but divided India into Brahmins and Non-Brahmins, which term may include Mussalmans and Christians as well. Now I want you to have a clear-cut crystallized notion of your own aims and ideals.

Supposing your aim to be merely political, that of destroying the alleged Brahmin monopoly of places of power, I can perhaps understand your inclusive definition of the term Non-Brahmin, though even here I see many difficulties.

But if you aim also at reform, or the removal of religious and social disabilities, I should find it difficult to follow your definition of Non-Brahmin so as to include Non-Hindus. There is the question of untouchability or templetry, for instance. With the best of motives in the world, how can a Non-Hindu effectively interfere? May a Non-Muslims dictate the reform of Islam? I fear that all Non-Hindu interference in the matter of religion will be looked upon with the gravest suspicion.

I want you therefore to have the issue as clear-cut as possible. So far as your disabilities are concerned, there can be no question about them. They are there, and for their removal you have to offer stubborn battle. But have no illusions about the disabilities either. As to places of power, if I had any choice in the matter, I should strongly advise all Brahmins to leave them all for you, but when you raise the cry of Brahmin monopoly in Khadi Service I simply cannot understand it. The whole movement serves primarily the Non-Brahmin masses, practically all members of the executive committee of the A.I.S.A. are non-Brahmins. In South India can you in fairness contend that the Brahmins who are in Khadi Service have joined it for material gain? And so far as voluntary service is concerned, is it at all proper to raise the cry of monopoly? But even there, give me Non-Brahmins who will satisfy my requirements, and I promise that all Brahmins will vacate their places. So far as I know, the majority are there at considerable sacrifice.

THE LAW OF VARNA

QUESTION : We do not understand your emphasis on *varnadharma*. Can you justify the present caste system? What is your definition of *varna*?

ANSWER : *Varna* means pre-determination of the choice of man's profession. The law of *varna* is that a man shall follow the profession of his ancestors for earning his livelihood. Every child naturally follows the 'colour' of his father, or chooses his father's profession. *Varna* therefore is in a way the law of heredity. *Varna* is not a thing that is superimposed on Hindus, but men who were trustees for their welfare discovered the law for them. It is not a human invention, but an immutable law of nature—the statement of a tendency that is ever present and at work like Newton's law of gravitation. Just as the law of gravitation existed even before it was discovered so

did the law of *varna*. It was given to the Hindus to discover that law. By their discovery and application of certain laws of nature, the peoples of the West have easily increased their material possessions. Similarly, Hindus by their discovery of this irresistible social tendency have been able to achieve in the spiritual field what no other nation in the world has achieved.

Varna has nothing to do with caste. Caste is an excrescence, just like untouchability, upon Hinduism. All the excrescences that are emphasized today were never part of Hinduism. But don't you find similar ugly excrescences in Christianity and Islam also?

Fight them as much as you like. Down with the monster of caste that masquerades in the guise of *varna*. It is this travesty of *varna* that has degraded Hinduism and India. Our failure to follow the law of *varna* is largely responsible both for our economic and spiritual ruin. It is one cause of unemployment and impoverishment, and it is responsible for untouchability and defections from our faith.

But in quarrelling with the present monstrous form, and monstrous practices to which the original law has been reduced, do not fight the law itself.

Q. How many *varnas* are there?

A. Four *varnas*, though it is not a rigid division inherent in *varna* itself. The *rishis* after incessant experiment and research arrived at this fourfold division—the four ways of earning one's livelihood.

Q. Logically, therefore, there are as many *varnas* as there are professions?

A. Not necessarily. The different professions can easily be brought under the four main divisions—that of teaching, of defending, of wealth-producing, and of manual service. So far as the world is concerned, the dominant profession is the wealth-producing, just as *grihasthashrama* is the most dominant amongst all *ashramas*. Vaisya is the keynote among the *varnas*. The defender is not wanted if there is no wealth and property. The first two and the fourth are necessary because of the third. The first will always be very few because of the severe discipline required for it, the second must be few in well-ordered society, and so the fourth.

Q. If a man practises a profession which does not belong to him by birth, what *varna* does he belong to?

A. According to the Hindu belief he belongs to the *varna* in which he is born, but by not living up to it he will be doing violence to himself and becomes a degraded being—a *patita*.

Q. A Sudra does an act which belongs to a Brahmin by birth. Does he become a *patita*?

A. A Sudra has as much right to knowledge as a Brahmin, but he falls from his estate if he tries to gain his livelihood through teaching. In ancient times there were

automatic trade guilds, and it was an unwritten law to support all the members of the profession. A hundred years ago, a carpenter's son never wanted to become a lawyer. Today he does, because he finds the profession the easiest way to steal money. The lawyer thinks that he must charge Rs. 15,000 as fees for the exercise of his brain, and a physician like Hakim Saheb thinks that he must charge Rs. 1,000 a day for his medical advice!

Q. But may not a man follow a profession after his heart?

A. But the only profession after his heart should be the profession of his fathers. There is nothing wrong in choosing that profession; on the contrary, it is noble. What we find today are freaks, and that is why there is violence and disruption of society. Let us not confound ourselves by superficial illustrations. There are thousands of carpenters' sons following their fathers' calling, but not even a hundred carpenters' sons who are lawyers. In ages gone by there was not the ambition of encroaching on others' profession and amassing wealth. In Cicero's time, for instance, the lawyer's was an honorary profession. And it would be quite right for any brainy carpenter to become a lawyer for service, not for money. Later, ambition for fame and wealth crept in. Physicians served the society and rested with what it gave them, but now they have become traders and even a danger to society. The medical and the legal professions were deservedly called liberal when the motive was purely philanthropic.

Q. All that is under ideal conditions. But what do you propose today when everyone is hankering after paying professions?

A. It is a sweeping generalization. Put together the number of boys studying in schools and colleges and determine the percentage of boys going in for the learned professions. Highway robbery is not open to everyone. The present seems to be an agitation for highway robbery. How many can become lawyers and Government servants? Those who can be legitimately occupied in earning wealth are Vaisyas. Even there when their profession becomes a highway robbery, it is hateful. There cannot be millions of millionaires.

Q. So far as Tamil Nad is concerned, all Non-Brahmins want to take up professions to which they were not born.

A. A reject your claim to speak on behalf of the 22 million Tamilians. I give you a formula—*Let us not want to be what everyone else cannot be.* And you can work out this proposition only on the basis of *varna* as I have defined it.

Q. You have been saying that the law of *varna* curbs our worldly ambition. How?

A. When I follow my father's profession, I need not even go to a school to learn it, and my mental energy is set free for spiritual pursuits, because my money or rather livelihood is ensured. *Varna* is the best form of insurance for happiness and for real

religious pursuit. When I concentrate my energy on other pursuits, I sell away my powers of self-realization or sell my soul for a mess of pottage.

Q. You talk of releasing the energies for spiritual pursuits. Today those who follow their father's professions have no spiritual culture at all—their very *varna* unfits them for it.

A. We are talking with crooked notions of *varna*. When *varna* was really practised, we had enough leisure for spiritual training. Even now, you go to distant villages and see what spiritual culture villagers have as compared to the town-dwellers. These know no self-control.

But you have spotted the mischief of the age. Let us not try to be what others cannot be. I would not even learn the *Gita* if everyone who wished could not do it. That is why my whole soul rises against learning English for making money. We have to rearrange our lives so that we ensure to the Millions the leisure that a fraction of us have today, and we cannot do it unless we follow the law of *varna*.

Q. You will excuse us, if we go back to the same question over and over again. We want to understand it properly. What is the *varna* of a man practising different professions at different times?

A. It may not make any difference in his *varna* so long as he gains his livelihood by following his father's profession. He may do anything he likes so long as he does it for love of service. But he who changes profession from time to time for the sake of gaining wealth degrades himself and falls from *varna*.

Q. A Sudra may have all the qualities of a Brahmin and yet may not be called a Brahmin?

A. He may not be called a Brahmin in this birth. And it is a good thing for him not to arrogate a *varna* to which he is not born. It is a sign of true humility.

Q. Do you believe that qualities attaching to *varna* are inherited and not acquired?

A. They can be acquired. The inherited qualities can always be strengthened and new ones cultivated. But we need not, ought not, to seek new avenues for gaining wealth. We should be satisfied with those we have inherited from our forefathers so long as they are pure.

Q. Do you not find a man exhibiting qualities opposed to his family character?

A. That is a difficult question. We do not know all our antecedents. But you and I do not need to go deeper into this question for understanding the law of *varna* as I have endeavoured to explain to you. If my father is a trader and I exhibit the qualities of a soldier, I may without reward serve my country as a soldier but must be content to earn my bread by trading.

Q. Caste, as we see it today, consists only in restrictions about inter-dining and intermarriage. Does preservation of *varna* then mean keeping these restrictions?

- A. No, not at all. In its purest state, there can be no restrictions.
- Q. Can they be omitted?
- A. They can be, and *varna* is preserved even by marrying into other *varnas*.
- Q. Then the mother's *varna* will be affected.
- A. A wife follows the *varna* of her husband.
- Q. Is the doctrine of *varnadharma*, as you have expounded it, to be found in our Shastras, or is it your own?
- A. Not my own. I derive it from the *Bhagavad Gita*.
- Q. Do you approve of the doctrine as given in *Manusmriti*?
- A. The principle is there. But the applications do not appeal to me fully. There are parts of the book which are open to grave objections. I hope that they are later interpolations.
- Q. Does not *Manusmriti* contain a lot of injustice?
- A. Yes, a lot of injustice to women and the so-called lower 'castes'. All is not Shashtra that goes by that name. The Shastras so called therefore need to be read with much caution.
- Q. But you go by the *Bhagavad Gita*. It says *varna* is according to *guna* and karma. How did you bring in birth?
- A. I swear by the *Bhagavad Gita* because it is the only book in which I find nothing to cavil at. It lays down principles and leaves you to find the application for yourself. The *Gita* does talk of *varna* being according to *guna* and karma, but *guna* and karma are inherited by birth. Lord Krishna says, "all *varnas* have been created by me—चतुर्वर्ण्यं मया सृष्टम्," i.e., I suppose by birth. The law of *varna* is nothing, if not by birth.
- Q. But there is no superiority about *varna*?
- A. No, not at all, though I do say Brahminism is the culmination of other *varnas*, just as the head is the culmination of the body. It means capacity for superior service, but no superior status. The moment superior status is arrogated, it becomes worthy of being trampled under foot.
- Q. *Kural* you know. Do you know that the author of that Tamil classic says there is no caste by birth? At birth, he says, all life is equal.
- A. He says it as an answer to the present-day exaggerations. When superiority was claimed by any *varna*, he had to raise his voice against it. But that does not cut at the root of *varna* by birth. It is only the reformer's attempt to cut at the root of inequality.
- Q. The recent practice is so distorted that may it not be the best thing to give it up altogether and begin on a clean slate?
- A. Only if we were creators. We cannot by a stroke of the pen alter Hindu nature.

We can find out a method of working the law, not destroying it.

Q. When authors of Shastras created new *smritis*, why not you?

A. If I could create a new creation! My state then would be far worse than Vishvamitra's and he was far greater than I.

Q. So long as you do not destroy *varna*, untouchability cannot be destroyed.

A. I do not think so. But if *varnashrama* goes to the dogs in the removal of untouchability, I shall not shed a tear. But what bearing has *varna* as defined by me on untouchability?

Q. But the opponents of reform quote you in support.

A. That is the lot of every reformer. He will be misquoted by interested parties, but you also know that some of them want me to relinquish Hinduism. Others would banish me if they could from the Hindu fold. I have gone no-where to defend *varnadharma*, though for the removal of untouchability I went to Vykom. I am the author of a Congress resolution for propagation of khadi, establishment of Hindu-Muslim unity, and removal of untouchability, the three pillars of swaraj. But I have never placed establishment of *varnashrama dharma* as the fourth pillar. You cannot, therefore, accuse me of placing a wrong emphasis on *varnashrama dharma*.

Q. Do you know that many of your followers distort you teaching?

A. Do I not know it? I know that I have many followers only so called.

Q. Buddhism was driven out of India because Brahmins dominated the organization. Similarly they will drive Hinduism out, if it does not serve their end.

A. Let them dare. But I am certain that Buddhism has not gone out of India. India is the country that imbibed most of the spirit of the Buddha. Buddhism must be distinguished from the spirit of the Buddha as well as Christianity from the spirit of the Christ. They were successful in driving out Buddhism, because they had assimilated the central teaching of the Buddha.

Q. The same Brahmin who assimilated the good things of Buddhism has committed the worst crime, worse than the Amritsar wrong, by not allowing untouchables entry into temples and imposing on them cruel disabilities.

A. You are right to a certain extent. But you are wrong in fixing the guilt on Brahmins. It is the whole of Hinduism that is responsible. *varnadharma* having become distorted gave rise to untouchability. There was no deliberate wickedness, but the result was a human tragedy.

Q. But so long as you use the word *varnashrama dharma* it brings in with it the evil associations of today.

A. The moral is, destroy the evil associations and restore *varnadharma* to its purity.

MY PROGRAMME FOR YOU

Q. There is a state of utter confusion. How shall we go back?

A. All I have to say to you is do not destroy the foundation, let us try to purify. Instead you are trying to deliver a new religion to receive which no one is prepared. Brahminism is synonymous with Hinduism. That is to say, the only term we had for Hinduism was Brahminism, i.e., *Brahma Vidya*, and in trying to destroy that you are trying to destroy Hinduism. Fight the Brahmin inch by inch, when he encroaches on your right and try to reform him. But it is no use blackguarding every Brahmin. There are Brahmins and Brahmins. One is an out-and-out reformer, the other is an opponent of reform. You must range the best of the reformer Brahmins on your side, and with their help carry out the constructive part of your programme, which can bring about the salvation both of Brahmins and Non-Brahmins.

Fight the opponents of reform and tell them, 'We shall not call you Brahmins. You pursue wealth and power, and you are not learned and are not able to teach us the true religion.' Then you will not evoke any opposition from them. You will carry on a fierce agitation to bring about reform, you will boycott the schools and temples which discriminate against any Non-Brahmins. You will insist upon priests of pure character, of learning and without worldly ambition. You may build new temples if the old ones refuse to admit the so-called untouchables.

Then there is the question of inter-dining. I should not make that a ground for quarrel with anybody. But I should boycott a function where there was a dividing line.

Then I would fraternize with untouchables and try to deal by them as I should with a blood-brother, and break to pieces all little castes and sections. And therefore when I marry my boy I will go out of my way and seek a girl from other sub-sections. We are really so hide-bound today by wretched custom that you will not give me a girl to domicile in Gujarat, and you will not take a girl from Gujarat to settle in Tamil Nad.

Then I would give the untouchables religious education, a grounding in the principle of Hinduism and morality. They are leading a purely animal life today. I would induce them to refrain from eating forbidden food and live a pure and clean life. You can easily expand these questions and work out a big constructive programme.

WHAT HAS HINDUISM DONE FOR US?

Q. We see you swear by Hinduism. May we know what Hinduism has done for us? Is it not a legacy of ugly superstitions and practices?

A. I thought I had made it clear already. Varnashrama dharma itself is a unique contribution of Hinduism to the world. Hinduism has saved us from *bhaya*, i.e., peril. If Hinduism had not come to my rescue the only course for me would have been

suicide. I remain a Hindu because Hinduism is a heaven which makes the world worth living in. From Hinduism was born Buddhism. What we see today is not pure Hinduism, but often a parody of it. Otherwise it would require no pleading for me in its behalf, but would speak for itself, even as, if I was absolutely pure, I would not need to speak to you. God does not speak with His tongue, and man in the measure that he comes near God becomes like God. Hinduism teaches me that my body is a limitation of the power of the soul within.

Just as in the West they have made wonderful discoveries in things material, similarly Hinduism has made still more marvellous discoveries in things of religion, of the spirit, of the soul. But we have no eye for these great and fine discoveries. We are dazzled by the material progress that Western science has made. I am not enamoured of that progress. In fact, it almost seems as though God in His wisdom had prevented India from progressing along those lines, so that it might fulfil its special mission of resisting the onrush of materialism. After all, there is something in Hinduism that has kept it alive up till now. It has witnessed the fall of Babylonian, Syrian, Persian, and Egyptian civilizations. Cast a look round you. Where is Rome and where is Greece? Can you find today anywhere the Italy of Gibbon, or rather the ancient Rome, for Rome was Italy? Go to Greece. Where is the world-famous Attic civilization? Then come to India, let one go through the most ancient records and then look round you and you would be constrained to say, 'Yes, I see here ancient India still living.' True, there are dungheaps, too, here and there, but there are rich treasures buried under them. And the reason why it has survived is that the end which Hinduism set before it was not development along material but spiritual lines.

Among its many contributions the idea of man's identity with the dumb creation is a unique one. To me cow-worship is a great idea which is capable of expansion. Its freedom from the modern proselytization is also to me a precious thing. It needs no preaching. It says: "Live the life." It is my business, it is your business to live the life, and then we will leave its influence on ages. Then take its contribution in men; Ramanuja, Chaitanya, Ramakrishna, not to speak of the more modern names, have left their impress on Hinduism. Hinduism is by no means a spent force or a dead religion.

Then there is the contribution of the four *ashramas*, again a unique contribution. There is nothing like it in the whole world. The Catholics have the order of celibates corresponding to *brahmacharis*, but not as an institution, whereas in India every boy had to go through the first *ashrama*. What a grand conception it was! Today our eyes are dirty, thoughts dirtier and bodies dirtiest of all, because we are denying Hinduism.

There is yet another thing I have not mentioned. Max Muller said forty years

ago that it was dawning on Europe that transmigration is not a theory, but a fact. Well, it is entirely the contribution of Hinduism.

Today varnashrama dharma and Hinduism are misrepresented and denied by its votaries. The remedy is not destruction, but correction. Let us reproduce in ourselves the true Hindu spirit, and then ask whether it satisfies the soul or not.

Young India, 24-11-1927

APPENDIX—II

KHADI COLLECTIONS IN SOUTH INDIA AND CEYLON¹

1. COLLECTIONS IN SOUTH INDIA

Collections made during Gandhiji's tour in Tamil Nad, Kerala and South Kanara :

Chettinad

Karaikudi, Rs. 6,524-9-7; Devakotta, Rs. 4,218-13-4; Paganeri, Rs. 4,120-10-3; Kottayur, Rs. 2,532; Kanadukathan, Rs. 2,416-9-6; Kadiapatti, Rs. 1,267-11-6; Amaravatipur, Rs. 1,186-6-1; Siravayal, Rs. 1,099-11-9; Kothamangalam, Rs. 701-4; Pallathur, Rs. 601; Nachiyapuram, Rs. 505; Nemathanpatti, Rs. 501; Kulivarai, Rs. 401; Nachandupatti, Rs. 301; Lakshmiapuram, Rs. 250; Virachilai, Rs. 121; Panayapatti, Rs. 101; Jayakondapuram, Rs. 101; Manachai, Rs. 100; Mahanagari, Rs. 13; Total Rs. 27,062-12-0.

Madras City

Total Rs. 21,772-9-4.

Madura

Madura, Rs. 13,472-7-6; Tirumangalam, Rs. 782-13-8; Tevaram and Gudalur, Rs. 143-0-7; Kombai, Rs. 100; Total Rs. 14,498-5-9.

Coimbatore

Coimbatore, Rs. 4,720-15-9; Tiruppur, Rs. 3,117-2-6; Pollachi, Rs. 2,204-3-6; Gobichettipalayam, Rs. 1,231-15-11; Erasanampatti, Rs. 270; Vellakoil, Rs. 100; Kinattukadavu, Rs. 100; Avinasi, Rs. 34-11-9; Cheyur, Rs. 13-4-0; Total Rs. 11,802-5-5.

Trichinopoly

Trichinopoly, Rs. 8,132-12-11; Srirangam, Rs. 113-9-2; Lalgudi, Rs. 1,957-13-3; Karur, Rs. 896-10-3; Manachanallur, Rs. 151; Total Rs. 11,251-13-7.

¹ *Vide* "Speech in Reply to Municipal Address, Trichinopoly", 17-9-1927 and "Speech to Chettiar Community, Colombo", 13-11-1927.

Tanjore

Mayavaram, Rs. 3,282-3-2; Mannargudi, Rs. 3,040-14-11; Kumbakonam, Rs. 2,923-10-11; Tanjore, Rs. 1,041-7-10; Rajapayan Chavadi, Rs. 288-12-0; Valangiman, Rs. 201; Needamangalam, Rs. 104; Tiruvadamarudur, Rs. 79-12-0; Papanasam, Rs. 23; Morupatti, Rs. 15; miscellaneous, Rs. 5; Total Rs. 11,004-12-10.

Tinnevelly

Tinnevelly, Rs.3,165-6-0; Tuticorin, Rs.2,616-5-4; Koilpatti, Rs.1,416-11-1; Srivaikuntan, Rs. 1,016-4-0; Nanguneri, Rs. 654-1-6; Panagudi, Tisayanvilai, Selvamarudur, etc., Rs. 434-13-6; Sivagiri, Rs. 530-9-6; Shankarankoil, Rs. 227-14-0; Kalladakurichi, Rs. 142-6-11; Sivakasi, Rs. 79-8-0; Tentiruperai, Rs. 51; Kalugumalai, Rs. 51; Kariyalur, Rs. 34-8-0; Mudukumindam, Rs. 31; Sankarankoil, Rs. 16; Total Rs. 10,467-7-9.

British Malabar

Calicut, Rs. 4,113-9-4; Palghat, Rs. 2,236-2-7; Otapalam and Shornur, Rs. 1,205-15-0; Agatitera, Rs. 314-1-9; Taliparamba, Rs. 101; Ponnani, Rs. 69-15-0; Badagara, Rs. 542-5-6; miscellaneous, Rs. 11; Total Rs. 8,594-1-2.

Ramnad

Rajapalayam, Rs. 3,642; Virudhunagar, Rs. 1,832-14-6; Paramakudi, Rs. 1,179-7-8; Sattur, Rs. 516-9-3; Tirupatur, Rs. 431-15-6; Srivalliputtur, Rs. 66-8-6; Total Rs. 7,669-7-5.

North Arcot

Vellore, Rs. 2,626-11-11; Arni, Rs. 2,178-10-5; Gudiyatham, Rs. 1,312-4-2; Arcot, Rs. 626-15-3; Pallikondan, Rs. 76-2-6; Tiruvannamalai, Rs. 50; Total Rs. 6,870-12-3.

Travancore

Trivandrum, Rs. 2,389-4-9; Nagercoil, Rs. 1,253-2-1; Alleppey, Rs. 974-9-0; Quilon, Rs. 858-2-9; Haripad, Rs. 335; Karuvatta, Rs. 313-0-3; Kartigapalli, Rs. 235-5-3; Kayangulam, Rs. 105; Changannur, Rs. 111; Karunagapalli, Ochara, Ayagrampur, Tottapali, Rs. 80-2-3; Total Rs. 6,654-10-4.

Cochin

Ernakulam, Rs. 2,519-0-1; Trichur, Rs. 1,898-11-5; Cochin, Rs. 900; Ollur, Rs. 885-13-0; Tirupanithura, Rs. 272-5-6; Machad, Rs. 13-8-0; Total Rs. 6,489-6-0.

South Arcot

Cuddalore, Rs. 3,087-12-7; Chidambaram, Rs. 1,965-7-6; Tindivanam, Rs. 260; Total Rs. 5,313-4-1.

Chingleput

Conjeevaram, Rs. 1,410-13-9; Adambakkam, Rs. 1,219-9-3; Tiruvallur,

Rs. 775-13-5; Poonamallee, Rs. 369-3-4; Sripermbudur, Rs. 56-7-6; Total Rs. 3,831-15-3.

Salem

Krishnagiri, Rs. 2,201-1-7; Hosur and Shoolagiri, Rs. 705-10-0; Pudupalayam, Rs. 205-6-0; Total Rs. 3,112-1-7.

Pudukkotta

Total Rs. 1,156-11-0.

Miscellaneous, Rs. 299-5-5.

Grand total : Tamil Nad and Kerala, Rs. 1,57,851-13-0.

Karnatak

South Kanara and Miscellaneous, Rs. 5,944-6-5.

Received for Gujarat Flood Relief, Rs. 130; Total receipts Rs. 1,63,926-3-5.

Less bank expenses, Rs. 20-13-8, Rs. 1,63,905-5-9

In Urban Bank, Mylapore, Rs. 1,54,777-13-9; in Tiruppur Khadi Vastralaya, Rs. 5,810-5-0; in A.I.S.A., Erode, Rs. 3,317-3-0; Total Rs. 1,63,905-5-9.

Young India, 10-11-1927

2. KHADI COLLECTION IN CEYLON

(We give below a consolidated list of khadi collections in Ceylon during Gandhiji's tour. Donors and contributors are requested to scrutinize the list and draw attention to discrepancies or omissions, if any, to Sjt. C. Rajagopalachariar, Gandhi Ashram, Tiruchengodu. —MAHADEV DESAI)

Colombo : Sea Street Chettiars, Rs. 4,001.00; Sea Street Clerks, Rs. 2,335.50; Sea Street Cooks, Rs. 103.25; Indian Youth's Sangha, Rs. 101.00; Vivekananda Society, Rs. 2,050.00; Nalanda Vidyalaya, Rs. 400.00; Ananda College, Rs. 400.86; Kaili Merchants, Rs. 205.00; Maruthuvakula Sangha, Rs. 401.00; Hewavitarana, Weaving School, Rs. 330.50; Sindhi Merchants, Rs. 1,754.50. Ceylon Labour Union, Rs. 2,726.71; Nadar Sangham, Rs. 201.00; Sea Street Lodge, Rs. 102.00; Zahiria College, Rs. 400.00; Tamil Ladies' Union Rs. 1,445.00; Sinhalese Ladies, Rs. 1,000.00; Young Men's Hindu Association, Rs. 101.00; Colombo Tamil Union, Rs. 1,251.50; Parsis, Rs. 1,001.00; Vidya Vinoda Sabha, Rs. 629.20; Reddiyar Mahajana Sangham, Rs. 3,001.00; Gandhi Sangham, Rs. 75.00; Slave Island General, Rs. 1,101.00; Young Bharatars' League, Rs. 110.11; Marava Community, Rs. 351.00; Ceylon Indian Association, Rs. 1,801.00; Young Lanka League, Rs. 60.00; Young Men's Buddhist Association, Rs. 615.45; Law College, Rs. 320.00; Malayalis, Rs. 260.00; Proprietors of Rice and Curry Shops, Rs. 1,250.00; Clerks of Rice and Curry Shops, Rs. 550.00; Ceylon National Congress, Rs. 600.00; General Reception, Colombo, Rs. 6,408.00; Auction, Rs. 350.00.

Sjt. Velliappa Nadar, Rs. 76.00; Sjt. Phillipiah, Rs. 50.00; Mrs. H. C. Abeywardne, Rs. 50.00; Mr. And Mrs. W. D. Fernando, Rs. 500.00; Mrs. W. A. DeSilva, Rs. 500.00; Dr. A. T. Kuriyan, Rs. 15.00; Sjt. B. V. Bhimiah Chettiar, Rs. 50.00; Mr. Billimoria, Rs. 25.00; Mr. K. S. Narayana Aiyar, Rs. 25.00; Mr. A. E. DeSilva, Rs. 200.00; Mr. H. W. Periera, Rs. 100.00; Mr. Velayutham Pillai, Rs. 51.00; Miss Bandaranayake and others, Rs. 110.00; other miscellaneous collections, Rs. 365.85; Further collections general, Rs. 285.00; Total, (Colombo) Rs. 40,195.43.

Kurunagala : Chettiars Rs. 1,021.00; General, Rs. 1,500.00; Puttalam and Kalpitiya Clerks, Rs. 35.00; Kandigama and Hellipola, Rs. 112.00.

Negombo, Rs. 1,812.00; Kochukadawn, Rs. 432.00; Paligoda National League, Rs. 30.72.

Chilaw, Rs. 1,530.82; Nainamadama, Rs. 128.06.

Matale : Maruthuwakula Sangham, Rs. 55.00; Buddhist School, Rs. 25.00 General Rs. 1,093.20; Mr. Ponniah, Rs. 150.00; School foundation, Rs. 251.41; Total Rs. 1,574.61.

Kandy : Dharmaraja College, Rs. 111.00; Shri Rahula School, etc., Rs. 91.00; General, Rs. 4,500.00; Indian Youths' Sangham, Rs. 71.16; Maruthuwakula Sangham, Rs. 141.00; Indian Association, Rs. 1,187.50; Mr. P. S. Devadasu Pillai, Rs. 10.00; Miscellaneous Rs. 38.50; Total (Kandy) Rs. 6,150.16.

Pandarawela, Rs. 601.63; Diyatalawa, Rs. 103.00; Haputala, Rs. 351.50.

Badulla : General, Rs. 4,000.00; Y.M.C.A., Lunugala, Rs. 215.00; Meeting collections, Rs. 289.37; Miscellaneous, Rs. 35.60; Total Rs. 4,539.97.

Dikoya, Rs. 135.00; Talawakale, Rs. 315.00; Nannwaya, Rs. 150.00; Wellimada, Rs. 215.25; Dikawela, Rs. 500.00.

Nuwara Eliya : General, Rs. 4,097.15; Meeting collections, Rs. 555.31; Total Rs. 4,652.46.

Hatton : Carfax Labourers, etc., Rs. 100.00; Castlereagh Labourers, Rs. 135.00; Kanganis' Association general purse, Rs. 2,500.00; Bazar, Rs. 558.00; Miscellaneous, Rs. 210.00; Total Rs. 3,503.00.

Prigatana, Rs. 194.20; Wattawela, Rs. 230.50.

Nawalapitiya : General, Rs. 1,322.39 $\frac{1}{2}$; Y.M.W.A., Rs. 39.61; Miscellaneous Rs. 77.90; Total Rs. 1,439.90 $\frac{1}{2}$.

Kadugancholai, Rs. 45.00.

Gampola : General, Rs. 175.00; School, Rs. 51.00; Cooks, Rs. 41.00; Maruthuwakula Sangham, Rs. 41.00; R. Letchmanan Chettiar, Rs. 250.00; Miscellaneous, Rs. 16.34; Total Rs. 2,149.34.

Tekkala Mahajana Sabha, Rs. 364.00, Kadugannawa, Rs. 864.14.

Kegala : General, Rs. 762.40; Auction, Rs. 30.00; Meeting collections, Rs. 110.17; Total Rs. 902.57.

Attangalla, Rs. 210.00; Miscellaneous from Kandy to Colombo, Rs.162.68 $\frac{1}{2}$.

Ambalangoida : Tamils, Rs. 265.85; Miscellaneous, Rs. 14.73; Total Rs. 280.58; Balpitiva, Rs. 50.00; Dadunduwa, Rs. 55.65; Tirangama, Rs. 129.21; Telawala School, Rs. 11.30.

Moratuwa, Rs. 588.90; Kalatura, Rs. 1,695.85; Horanna, Rs. 472.93; Panadura, Rs. 1810.00.

Galle : Udugama Kanganis, Rs. 200.00; Tamilians, Rs. 58.00; Mahajana Sabha, Rs. 180.45; Chettiars, Rs. 501.00; Kanakupillais, Rs. 351.00; Dramatic Performance, Rs. 200.00; Mahinda College, Rs. 465.00; Auction, Rs. 20.00; Miscellaneous, Rs. 16.00; Further collections general, Rs. 49.10; Total Rs. 2,040.55.

Matara : General, Rs. 899.45; Chauffeurs' Union, Rs. 100.00; School-children, Rs. 100.00; Maruthuwakula Sangham, Rs. 60.45; Miscellaneous, Rs. 30.00; Individual gifts : Mrs. Prasad, Rs. 50.00; Mr. N. Gunasekara, Rs. 50.00; Mr. J. B. Cardozo, Rs. 25.00; Mr. Sundaram Pillai, Rs. 25.00; Hon. Aweyasekhara, Rs. 500.00; Total Rs. 1,839.90.

Godagama, Rs. 150.00; Akmimana, Rs. 250.00; Ambalawatta, Rs. 21.60; London Ceylonese students by T.M.O., Rs. 53.00; another by M.O. Rs. 6.00; Ganeunulla, Rs. 200.54.

Trincomalee, Rs. 392.00; Auction, Rs. 10.00; Total Rs. 402.00.

Palai, Rs. 20.51; Nathandiya Estate, Rs. 45.50.

Total for mofussil excluding Colombo and Jaffna : Rs. 46,529.54.

Jaffna : General, Rs. 1,957.10; Depressed Classes Service League, Rs. 180.00; Village Committees, Rs. 709.75; Meeting Collections, Rs. 32.49; Parameshwara College, Rs. 536.60; Manipari Hindu College, Rs. 501.00; Malayan subscribers through *Hindu Organ*, Rs. 852.50; Chunnakam, Rs. 651.46; Auction, Rs. 25.00.

Hindu College, Rs. 707.00; Kandarodai School, Rs. 223.59; Indians in Jaffna, Rs. 1,301.25; Vishvakarma Co-operative Society, Rs. 115.45; Chunnakam Depressed Class School Foundation, Rs. 10.00; Indians' meeting Rs. 47.06; Anurudhapura, individual, Rs. 30.00; Chavalacheri, Rs. 213.50; Koppai, Rs. 144.00; Tondamanuru, Rs. 400.00; Viyamagatunur temple, Rs. 90.81.

Valvettiturai, Rs. 470.25; Auction, Rs. 6.00.

St. Pedro, Rs. 1,014.49; Through Secretary, Jaffna Urban Council, Rs. 52.42; Chivateru, Rs. 259.57; Jaffna labourers, Rs. 594.98; Meeting, Rs. 48.95 $\frac{1}{2}$; Chemma Street, Rs. 107.00; St. John's College, Rs. 258.80; Central College, Rs. 276.00; Ramanathan Girls' College, Rs. 1,111.08; Malakan English School, Rs. 101.00; Tellipalai, Rs. 617.20; Chulipuram and Chenkanai, Rs. 309.00; Victoria College, Rs. 280.00; Sithankarai School, Rs. 105.00; Vaddukkodai, Rs. 35.00; Jaffna

College, Rs. 600.00; Karainagar, Rs. 538.40; Jaffna Railway Station collections and through Lady Ramanathan, Rs. 129.60; Morlay and Kolapuram, Rs. 280.40; Island Kayts, Rs. 650.03; Pandateruvur English School, Rs. 31.32; Hospital matron and nurses, Rs. 10.00; Vavuniya, Rs. 125.00; Madavadri, Rs. 106.75; Auction, Rs. 1,147.00; Miscellaneous, Rs. 297.25; Total Jaffna collections, Rs. 18,291.05 $\frac{1}{2}$.

Grand total	Rs. 1,05,016.02 $\frac{1}{2}$		
Less deficit in value of sovereigns (54) at 7 cents			3.78
Bad coins			12.12 $\frac{1}{2}$
Net total			1,05,00.12
			= 1,05,000-2-0
		Rs.	A. P.
Deposited in the Bank (M.C.U.B.)	1,04,487	5	4
Cash on hand	148	9	5
Cheques awaiting realization having been returned as irregular	364	3	3
		<hr/>	
	Total	1,05,000	2 0
		<hr/>	

Young India, 22-12-1927

APPENDIX III INTERVIEW TO C. KUTTAN NAIR¹

October 4, 1927

Mr. T. K. Madhavan has received a wire² today from Gandhiji asking him to start civil disobedience in regard to the ban on untouchables in regard to the use of Thiruvarpvu temple roads.

Mr. C. Kuttan Nair, a co-worker of Mr. Madhavan, interviewed Gandhiji this morning at Virudhunagar in regard to the Thiruvarpvu temple roads questions. Mahatma Gandhi went through all the papers which Mr. Kuttan Nair submitted . . . and after ascertaining the real facts . . . said :

From the facts before me, I have no hesitation in saying that a very strong case has been made out for starting satyagraha in the matter of opening out the roads to the *avarna* Hindus in Thiruvarpvu.

Asked whether by satyagraha he meant that form that was adopted at Vaikom, he said emphatically "No". He said it should be comprehensive enough to include all

¹Vide "Speech at Trivandrum", 10-10-1927.

² Not available

forms of civil disobedience. He said he was even for mass civil disobedience at Thiruvarpvu, provided there is an atmosphere of non-violence. Failure on the part of the Travancore Government to follow up the Vaikom settlement in logical way resulted in the present muddle and that, he said, would strengthen the demand for temple-entry for *avarnas*. “Yes”, he said, “temple-entry is coming.”

Gandhiji promised to try to visit Thiruvarpvu on his way to Ernakulam.

The Hindu, 6-10-1927

APPENDIX IV

INTERVIEW WITH SHRI SHANKARACHARYA OF KANCHI¹

In the latter half of 1927, Mahatma Gandhi was touring the South to popularize Congress objectives and collect funds. Gandhiji, who had already heard about the Acharya through Mr. A. Rengaswamy Iyengar, Manager, *The Hindu*, and Mr. S. Satyamurti, decided to call on him. The historical meeting took place on October 15, 1927 in a cattle-shed adjoining the Acharya's camp at Nellicheri in Palghat. Only a few persons were present, but no Press reporter.

Gandhiji paid his respects to the Acharya in the traditional Hindu style. The overwhelming saintliness of the sannyasi, clad in ochre-coloured khadi and seated on the floor, made a deep impression on Gandhiji mind. A spell of silence ensued. Then the Acharya spoke a few words in Sanskrit by way of welcome and asked him to be seated. Gandhiji sat down and said that he was not used to speaking in Sanskrit, but could understand the language somewhat, and wanted permission to speak in Hindi. Since the Acharya could understand Hindi, this arrangement suited both. Gandhiji spoke in Hindi and the Acharya in Sanskrit.

The Acharya expressed appreciation of Gandhiji's efforts to spiritualize politics, since healthy national life should be based on spiritual foundations and nations devoid of religion and dependent on materialistic forces were bound to perish. On the question of temple-entry for Harijans the Acharya thought that it might amount to a form of *himsa* to wound the feelings of those who still believed in the supremacy of Shastras and tradition. The discussion continued on spiritual matters; it was open-hearted and reflected mutual regard. There was no disputation or polemics. . . .

The conversation went on for about an hour. . . . On taking leave, Gandhiji said that he was immensely benefited by this visit, and that he would keep the Acharya's wishes in mind and fulfil them to the best of the capacity.

¹ *Vide* second footnote to “Conversation with Depressed Classes Deputations”, October 15, 1927.

As Gandhiji would take no food after 6 p.m., Mr. C. Rajagopalachari went and reminded him about his meal at 5.30 p.m. But Gandhiji said : “This talk with the Acharya is my food for the day.” Then the Acharya offered to Gandhiji a big citrus fruit which he gladly accepted, saying he had a special liking for the fruit.

Later at a public meeting held at Coimbatore the same evening, when Gandhiji was questioned about his discussion with the Acharya, he said that it was private and confidential and hence Press reporters were kept out.

[From Tamil]

Shri Jagadguru Divya-Charitram, pp. 121-3

APPENDIX V

GANDHI-IRWIN INTERVIEW¹

I

. . . When he saw the Viceroy, the interview was a cold affair. Lord Irwin placed in his hands the Secretary of State’s announcement regarding the Simon Commission, and when asked whether that was all the business, Lord Irwin said “Yes”. Gandhiji felt that a one-anna envelope would have reached it to him. . . .

The History of the Indian National Congress, Vol. I (1885-1935), p. 315

II

In fact, Gandhi and Irwin had a long conversation at this first meeting at which they listened to one another with exemplary patience and courtesy. Gandhi was in good humour . . . promising to convert the Viceroy to khaddar.² He listened to Irwin attentively, and, after he had finished, developed his own general political philosophy at length. He saw no need for British tutelage. He was prepared to wait indefinitely rather than ask India to impair the self-respect she ought to have. Parliament, he said, should give India what India desired. Therefore he felt remote from all these things. Congress was trying to serve an idea—the idea of non-co-operation which would ultimately impress itself upon the mind of Parliament, Communalism would pass; the communities had been trying to absorb India.

It was Irwin’s experience of the Mahatma’s incoherent political technique. He found him vague . . . but without bitterness, and in conversation pleasantly reasonable. But there was little in his . . . discourse on which the Viceroy’s practical mind could take hold. . . . Only when Gandhi and the others said that they attached

¹ On 2-11-1927; *vide* “Letter to C. F. Andrews”, 11-11-1927.

² *Vide* “Letter to Lord Irwin”, 26-4-1928.

little importance to the procedure by which the representatives from the Indian Legislature would be invited to confer with the English Parliamentary Committee did Irwin seize the chance of telling them sharply that if they refrained from availing themselves of this opportunity, they would be committing a political blunder of the first magnitude and would hopelessly prejudice British opinion against their case.

Halifax : The Life of Lord Halifax, p. 246

III

It is believed in certain quarters that His Excellency the Viceroy was prompted by a mandate from Whitehall that India should accept as *fait accompli* an absolutely parliamentary Commission consisting of representatives of all British political Parties; and that those who might prove to be pestilential agitators should be told beforehand that the Government would stand no more bluff and nonsense.

Indians will, however, be associated in the work of the Commission in the capacity of assessors. Even in regard to the selection of assessors the communal clamour will be heard; but this can be silenced by appointing only official Indians as assessors. This is believed to be the substance of the Viceroy's lecture.

Mr. Gandhi said that such a Commission would be a failure as self-respecting Indian opinion could not but resent such deliberate insult. It can lead only to boycott of the Commission. However, to him, and to those of his way of thinking the Commission was not of any consequence, however well composed it might be and however liberal its terms of reference. Asked if he would advise his countrymen, particularly the Swarajists, to co-operate with the Commission in its investigation, Mr. Gandhi said that it was none of his business. He was not prepared to induce anybody to co-operate with the Commission. The Swarajists were all veterans in political warfare and not children to be dictated to. Mr. Gandhi, however, assured His Excellency that he would not himself initiate a movement for boycott of the Commission as he had long since abdicated the political functions of leadership to the Swarajists. Mr. Gandhi, in conclusion, said that he would not—as indeed he could not—prevent anyone from participating in the work of the Commission.

The Hindu, 9-11-1927

APPENDIX VI

EXTRACT FROM S. D. NADKARNI'S LETTER¹

. . . What *varna* nearly always has been is the artificially maintained, hard-and-fast division, otherwise called 'caste'. Be it fourfold, as it was 'once upon a time', or

¹ *Vide 'Varnashrama and Its Distortion' 17-11-1927.*

forty-thousand-fold, as it is today, it is in essence the same. It is a system of monopolies and restraints distributed according to mere birth. . . .

. . . Now, Mahatmaji, if you and I will be true Hindus, and not 'Vaishya' and 'Brahmin' only—for I own to 'Brahmin' parentage—then we are bound to worship the memory of Shambuka, the 'Sudra' ascetic of Rama's days, as the oldest asserter of religious freedom we know, and the first martyr on record in India or perhaps the whole world. Mahatmaji, are you prepared to do that with me? Thus only may the sting be taken out of the anti-Brahmin agitation, and a united Hinduism arise out of the ashes of this age-old struggle. I say, let Shambuka be vindicated, if Hinduism is to live yet and prosper. . . .

. . . If it were so, all Gandhis should stick to grocery and Ramanama, and never—take to social and political reform of their country, unless perhaps, after finishing the householder's life, they have formally entered upon the fourth *ashrama* at the prescribed age. Else, it would be trenching upon "the spiritual" of Brahmins and Kshatriyas for a Vaisya to take to politics! But would it be a salutary rule? And how stands the law of heredity? . . .

. . . If we but think over it, it will be clear as daylight that we have overdone the principle of heredity by investing it with tyrannous sanctions in the name of religion. . . .

. . . Just as you of Vasya parentage hold the Vaisyas as a class responsible for the economic downfall of India, so I who happen to be Brahmin by birth have no hesitation in declaring that the Brahmins as a class are responsible for the enslavement, both spiritual and economic, of all India. From those to whom much was given, much was expected. But alas, a narrow bigotry born of a short-sighted selfishness stood in the way of their giving of their best to the community. And great has been the fall of all Brahminists, and with them of the Brahmins.

Young India, 17-11-1927

APPENDIX VII

EXTRACT FROM STATEMENT BY THE VICEROY ON THE INDIAN STATUTORY COMMISSION¹

November 8, 1927

When the Commission has reported and its report has been examined by the Government of India and His Majesty's Government, it will be the duty of the latter to present proposals to Parliament. But it is not the intention of His Majesty's Government to ask Parliament to adopt these proposals without first giving a full opportunity for Indian opinion of different schools to contribute its view upon them.

¹ *Vide* "Interview to the Associated Press", 1-12-1927.

And to this end it is intended to invite Parliament to refer these proposals for consideration by a Joint Committee of both Houses, and to facilitate the presentation to that Committee both of the view of the Indian Central Legislature by delegations who will be invited to attend and confer with the Joint Committee, and also of the views of any other bodies whom the Joint Parliamentary Committee may desire to consult.

In the opinion of His Majesty's Government the procedure contemplated fulfils to a very great extent the requisites outlined above.

Such a Commission, drawn from men of very British political party and presided over by one whose public position is due to outstanding ability and character, will evidently bring fresh, trained, and unaffected judgment to bear upon an immensely complex constitutional issue.

Moreover, the findings of some of its own members can count in advance upon a favourable reception at the hands of Parliament, which will recognize them to speak from a common platform of thought, and to be applying standards of judgment which Parliament will feel instinctively to be its own. For myself I cannot doubt that the quickest and surest path of those who desire Indian progress is by the persuasion of Parliament, and that they can do this more certainly through members of both Houses of Parliament than in any other way. The Indian nationalist has gained much if he can convince Members of Parliament on the spot, and I would therefore go further and say that if those who speak for India have confidence in the case which they advance on her behalf, they ought to welcome such an opportunity being afforded to as many members of the British Legislature as may thus to come into contact with the realities of Indian life and politics.

Furthermore, while it is for these reasons of undoubted advantage to all who desire an extension of the Reforms that their case should be heard in the first instance by those who can command the unquestioned confidence of Parliament, I am sanguine enough to suppose that the method chosen by His Majesty's Government will also assure to Indians a better opportunity than they could have enjoyed in any other way of influencing the passage of these great events. For not only will they, through representatives of the Indian Legislatures, be enabled to express themselves freely to the Commission itself, but it will also be within their power to challenge in detail or principle any of the proposals made by His Majesty's Government before the Joint Select Committee of Parliament, and to advocate their own solutions. It should be observed moreover that at this stage Parliament will not have been asked to express any opinion on particular proposals and therefore, so far as Parliament is concerned, the whole field will still be open.

IRWIN,

Viceroy and Governor General

India in 1928-29, pp. 372-3

APPENDIX VIII

THE INDIAN STATUTORY COMMISSION¹

Whereas We have deemed it expedient that the Commission for which provision is made in Section 84A of the Government of India Act should forthwith be appointed for the purpose of inquiring into the working of the system of government, the growth of education, and the development of representative institutions, in British India, and matters connected therewith, and should report as to whether and to what extent it is desirable to establish the principle of responsible government, or to extend, modify or restrict the degree of responsible government then existing therein, including the question whether the establishment of second chambers of the local legislature is or is not desirable :

Now know ye that We, reposing great trust and confidence in your knowledge and ability, have on the advice of Our Secretary of State for India acting with the concurrence of both Houses of Parliament authorized and appointed, and do by these presents authorize and appoint you, the said Sir John Allsebrook Simon (Chairman); Harry Lawson Webster, Viscount Burnham; Donald Sterling Palmer, Baron Strathcona and Mount Royal; Edward Cecil George Cadogan; Stephen Walsh²; George Richard Lane-Fox and Clement Richard Attlee to be Our Commissioners for the purposes aforesaid.

And for the better effecting the purposes of this Our Commission, We do by these presents give and grant unto you, or any three or more of you, full power at any place in Our United Kingdom or in India or elsewhere in Our Dominions to call before you such persons as you shall judge likely to afford you any information, upon the subject of this Our Commission : and also whether in Our said Kingdom, or in India, or elsewhere in Our Dominions to call for information in writing; to call for, have access to and examine all such books, documents, registers and records as may afford you the fullest information on the subject, and to inquire of and concerning the premises by all other lawful ways and means whatsoever, including the appointment by the Commission with the sanction of Our Secretary of State for India, of any person or persons to make subordinate enquiries and to report the result to the Commission :

And We do by these presents authorize and empower you or any of you to visit and inspect personally such places as you may deem it expedient so to inspect for the more effectual carrying out of the purposes aforesaid :

And We do by these presents will and ordain that this Our Commission shall

¹ *Vide* "Interview to the Associated Press", 1-12-1927.

² Stephen Walsh having resigned for reasons of ill-health, Vernon Hartshorn was appointed in his place on December 7, 1927.

continue in full force and virtue, and that you, Our said Commissioners, or any three or more of you, may from time to time proceed in the execution thereof, and of every matter and thing therein contained, although the same be not continued from time to time by adjournment :

And We do further ordain that you, or any three or more of you, have liberty to report your proceedings under this Our Commission from time to time if you shall judge it expedient so to do :

And Our further will and pleasure is that you do, with as little delay as possible, report to Us under your hands and seals, or under the hands and seals of any three or more of you, your opinion upon the matters herein submitted for your consideration.

Given at Our Court at Saints James's the Twenty-sixth day of November One thousand nine hundred and twenty-seven; in the Eighteenth Year of Our Reign.

By His Majesty's Command

W. JOYNSON-HICKS

India in 1927-28, pp. 385-6