

## 1. HINDUSTANI<sup>1</sup>

Shri Kakasaheb Kalelkar writes:

If the Muslims of the Indian Union affirm their loyalty to the Union, will they accept Hindustani as the national language and learn the Urdu and Nagari scripts? Unless you give your clear opinion on this, the work of the Hindustani Prachar Sabha will become very difficult. Cannot Maulana Azad give his clear opinion on the subject?

Kakasaheb says nothing new in his letter. But the subject has acquired added importance at the present juncture. If the Muslims in India owe loyalty to India and have chosen to make it their home of their own free will, it is their duty to learn the two scripts. It is said that the Hindus have no place in Pakistan. So they migrate to the Indian Union. In the event of a war between the Union and Pakistan, the Muslims of the Indian Union should be prepared to fight against Pakistan. It is true that there should be no war between the two dominions. They have to live as friends or die as such. The two will have to work in close co-operation. In spite of being independent of each other, they will have many things in common. If they are enemies, they can have nothing in common. If there is genuine friendship, the people of both the States can be loyal to both. They are both members of the same Commonwealth of nations. How can they become enemies of each other? But that discussion is unnecessary here.

The Union must have a common inter provincial speech. I will go a step further and say that if the two States are friends, Hindustani should be the common speech between the two. This does not mean that Urdu and Hindi will cease to exist as distinct forms of speech. They must continue to live and progress. But if the Hindus and the Muslims or rather people of all religions in India are friends, they must accept a common language evolved from Hindi and Urdu. They should learn the two scripts. This will be a test for the Muslims and the Hindus in the Indian Union.

It would be wrong to say that if the Muslims of the Union refuse to learn the Nagari script, Hindustani cannot become the national language. Whether the Muslims learn the Nagari script or not, the Hindus and the people of all other religions ought to learn the two scripts. It is possible that in view of the poisoned atmosphere of the

<sup>1</sup> The Hindi original of this appeared in *Harijan Sevak*, 5-10-1947.

day, people may not appreciate this simple proposition. If the Hindus wish to, they can boycott the Urdu script and Urdu words, but they will be the losers thereby. Therefore those engaged in Hindustani Prachar should not weaken in their faith or efforts. I agree that people like Maulana Azad and other prominent Muslims of the Indian Union should be the first to adopt Hindustani and the two scripts. Who will take the lead if not they? Difficult times lie ahead of us. May God guide us aright.

NEW DELHI, September 27, 1947

*Harijan*, 5-10-1947

## 2. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

*September 27, 1947*

CHI. NARANDAS,

One may say you are now approaching old age. You certainly have my blessings. May you serve the people for many more years. When you are too weak to serve I am not going to wish you the same. Why should you ever become too weak?

*Blessings from*

BAPU

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

## 3. LETTER TO PREMA KANTAK

*September 27, 1947*

CHI. PREMA,

You have lost your father, but if you think calmly, you will realize that you have gained many fathers in place of one. All who are our seniors in age or superior to us in knowledge should be as fathers to us or, if they are women, mothers. Those who are our equals in age are our brothers and sisters, and our juniors are our sons and daughters. Then the world will never die for us. Why then do you grieve over the passing away of your father? Death, moreover, is man's true friend. Why then should we be unhappy when our dear ones meet their dearest friend? When our dear ones leave us, we should engross ourselves in service with still greater devotion.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 10456. Also C. W. 6895. Courtesy: Prema Kantak

#### 4. LETTER TO SAYED MAHMUD HAD

[September 27, 1947 ]<sup>1</sup>

BAHI SYED MAHMUD HAD,

Your letter has been redirected to me by the *Navajivan* office. It is not necessary to publish it. I had said enough about it at Calcutta.

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

#### 5. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,

September 27, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

Shall I tell you who is my special physician? He is good for me and also good for you. My physician today, in my thought, speech and action, is Rama, Ishwar, Rahim. How can He become our physician? We heard a *bhajan* addressed to the Lord who removes all miseries of mind, body and soul which human beings are subject to. Hence I felt that the best, unfailing remedy is Ramanama. I can suggest no other remedy to those who come to me. Then take some earth and water treatment. I know that one who has Ramanama inscribed in his heart needs neither earth nor water for treatment. If we are destined to live we shall live. If we have to die, let us die. No one can ride two horses at the same time. If I have faith in Ramanama I must remain firm in that. Anyone not doing so will perish. Rama is the saviour. Does the person who has installed God in his heart ever die? This body is transitory. It may be living this moment and may die the next. How then can I be proud of it? It is futile to keep the body alive when the moment of death has arrived. Guru Nanak was a great religious leader. Other Gurus who came after him did write songs of devotion but they mentioned the name of Nanak in the refrain. This is the culture of India. Perhaps such things happen in many other countries. Whatever that may be, I can only talk of the Indian culture. Mirabai was a great devotee. Mira's name is found at the end of countless *bhajans*. It was not she who used her name. But Mira's disciples found great satisfaction in attributing their

<sup>1</sup> The letter is written on a sheet of paper on which this date is scribbled.

compositions to her. This is a wonderful thing. It is said that Arjun Dev<sup>1</sup> was a great Guru and a great poet. He said: "One may recite Ramanama or Khuda's praise, one may serve *Gosain* or Allah". It is remarkable that this thing occurs in the Granth Saheb. The allegations against the Sikhs today are, if true, a violation of the teachings of Guru Nanak. That is not the way to bring glory to the Granth Saheb. Nor can the Sikhs make any progress that way. Some Sikh friends had a plain talk with me. They told me that Guru Arjun Dev did not doubt the identity of Rama and Rahim or Krishna and Karim. Then they told me that whether one went on pilgrimage or *haj* it meant one and the same thing. One may perform *puja* or bow his head, one may worship God in a temple or bend oneself low in the name of God, one may read the Vedas or the Book. The Book meant the Koran. One may dress oneself in blue clothes or in white. The Muslim wears blue clothes and the orthodox Hindu wears white. Then, one may be called a Turk or a Hindu. Turks means Muslims. [Nanak] says that he who truly follows God's laws knows His secret.

If I had the time I would have narrated so many things from the Hindu *bhajans* and *kirtans* that you would wonder whether the religious sentiment depicted there belonged to Hinduism or Sikhism. why do we say today that the Muslims have got to leave this country? Why is it said that the plan of settling the Muslims with the Hindus is a mistake and the fourth blunder of the Congress? Whether the Congress implements it or not, it is my plan and if it is a mistake it is my mistake. Others come to me and challenge my being a Mahatma and charge me with ruining Hinduism. But I tell them that what they call my mistake is not a mistake. The real thing is that we are all possessed by a madness today and talk all sorts of things. When we get over that madness, we shall talk sense. That is why I say that what I am saying cannot be a mistake. Those who think I am making a mistake are themselves mistaken. The whole world would blame you if you threw out  $4\frac{1}{2}$  crore Muslims. Would you then point at what is happening in Pakistan? Because Pakistan is not following its religion should I start teaching the Hindus that they should also give up their religion? I have never learnt such a thing. If we protect our Muslim brethren and remain pure ourselves, it would have its own effect on Pakistan. That is my reply to them. Today we should consider what a Christian sister whom you know, Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, has to say.

<sup>1</sup> Fifth Guru of the Sikhs

She is the Health Minister. She wishes to help everybody in the refugee camps, whether Hindu or Muslim. But what can she do without support from others? She cannot be partial. She is trying to do her best for everybody. She is partly Christian and partly Muslim and also partly Hindu. Hence, all religions are the same to her. She went there accompanied by some girls. They all went there for doing service. What was there to fear when they were out to do service? But they told me that they were warned against serving the Muslims and were asked to go back if their intention was to serve the Muslims also. I laughed when I heard that. That merely said these things. They were not going to do anything. After all, those Muslims and a few Christians are not going to indulge in any rioting. How will they do it? What do they possess? They are in a bad shape. What is the point of threatening them? Hence I thought I should mention this to you so that we should be on our guard and not indulge in such talk.

In the end I want to tell you that I had purposely mentioned war. But our journalists always like to exaggerate things. They have given the headlines that I wanted war. There are telegrams coming from Calcutta that Gandhi also talks of war. Will there be a war then? What I had said was that I could not think of war even in a dream. After all, would I give up my creed at a critical time? My creed is non-violence. I have never waged war, nor should anyone else do so. How can we achieve anything by fighting? What I said was that if Pakistan was committing mistakes or if India was committing mistakes, with both the countries having their own independent Governments, how was it possible for one Government to secure justice from the other? It would be different if the two Governments worked in co-operation. Let them have an arbitrator if they cannot work together. If even that cannot be done, then we shall helplessly be dragged into war. Does this imply advocating war? I want to tell both India and Pakistan that they must come to a mutual settlement or accept an arbitrator. But if the Pakistanis insist on taking India by force, then, as I said yesterday, India would have no alternative except to fight. If I am given the charge of the Government I would follow a different path, because I have no military and police force under me. But I am the only one to follow that path. Who would support me? Your Government will do what is expected of it when the time comes. I would continue to chant only one refrain. But, if people do not understand non-violence, to whom can I address myself?

[From Hindi]

*Prarthana Pravachan*—I, pp. 352-6

## 6. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,  
September 28, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

Is there anybody in the meeting who is against the recitation from the Koran?<sup>1</sup>

I shall respect your opposition, though I know that the rest of the people would be disappointed that the prayers will not take place.<sup>2</sup> With my unflinching faith in non-violence, I can do nothing else. Even so I cannot help saying that you should not disregard the opinion of such a big majority which does not agree with you. From that point of view your behaviour is improper. From what I am going to say later you must realize that the intolerance that you have shown under somebody's instigation is the evidence of petulance and anger prevalent all over the country today, which has provoked Mr. Churchill to say many bitter things about India. Let me explain to you in Hindustani Mr. Churchill's speech a summary of which has been sent by Reuter and published in the newspapers this morning:<sup>3</sup>

The fearful massacres which are occurring in India are no surprise to me. We are, of course, only at the beginning of these horrors and butcheries, perpetrated upon one another, with the ferocity of cannibals, by the races gifted with capacities for the highest culture, and who had for generations dwelt, side by side, in general peace, under the broad, tolerant and impartial rule of the British Crown and Parliament. I cannot but doubt, that the future will witness a vast abridgment of the population throughout what has for sixty or seventy years been the most peaceful part of the world and that, at the same time, will come a retrogression of civilization throughout these enormous regions, constituting one of the most melancholy tragedies which Asia has ever known.

You are all aware that Mr. Churchill is a great man. He belongs

<sup>1</sup> Two persons raised their hands.

<sup>2</sup> *The Hindustan Times*, 29-9-1947, reports that the prayer was however held after the speech "inside Gandhiji's room with only members of his party".

<sup>3</sup> The paragraph from Winston Churchill's speech of September 27, is reproduced from *Mahatma*.

to the blue blood of England. Marlborough family is very famous in British history. Mr. Churchill took the helm when Great Britain was in great danger after the Second World War started. No doubt he saved the British Empire from a great danger at the time. It would be wrong to argue that Great Britain could not have won without the help of the United States or other Allied nations. Who else except a man of Mr. Churchill's sharp political diplomacy could have brought all the friendly nations together? Great Britain acknowledged the services of Mr. Churchill who in those days preserved the honour of that country. But after winning the War the nation did not hesitate to choose the Labour Government in order to recover from the terrible loss of life and property which the British Isles had undergone during the War. The British people saw the signs of the times and decided in favour of voluntary abdication from power to end the Empire and establishing instead the imperceptible rule of hearts. India has been divided and then both the countries have voluntarily announced their decision to join the British Commonwealth. The honourable step of granting independence to India was taken by all the parties representing the entire British nation. Mr. Churchill and his party were also in line with others. It may be a different thing that the future may or may not justify this step of the British people. And this had nothing to do with my suggestion that because Mr. Churchill has been a party to the transfer of power, he is expected not to say or do anything which would deprive this measure of its value. There is no doubt that in modern history there is no instance which can be compared with the transfer of power by the British. I am reminded of the sacrifice of Priyadarshi Ashoka. But Ashoka is incomparable and, moreover, he does not belong to modern history. That is why I was pained to read the Reuter's despatch of Mr. Churchill's speech. I take it for granted that this renowned news agency has not misreported Mr. Churchill's speech. By his speech Mr. Churchill has harmed his country which he has greatly served. If he knew that India would be reduced to such a terrible state after freeing itself from the rule of the British Empire, did he, for a moment take the trouble of thinking that the entire responsibility for it lies with the builders of the British Empire and not with those "races" which, in Mr. Churchill's opinion, are capable of giving birth to the greatest civilization? In my view, Mr. Churchill has been too hasty in his sweeping generalization. India's population is several millions. Out of these a few lakhs have taken to the path of barbarism. But these people hardly count. With confidence I invite

Mr. Churchill to come to India and study the situation himself. But he must come not as a representative of his Party with fixed opinions, but as an impartial Englishman who values the prestige of his country more than any Party's and intends to help the British Government in making this task a grand success. This unique step of Great Britain would be judged from its consequences. The vivisection of India unwittingly invited the two parts of the country to fight each other. Granting freedom separately to the two parts seems like a blot on the graceful gift of freedom. It is no use saying that either side is free to come out of the British Commonwealth. This is easier said than done. I do not wish to say anything more on that account. What I have said is enough to show why Mr. Churchill should have been more careful while speaking on this subject. He has run down his colleagues without even studying the situation.

Many of you have given ground to Mr. Churchill for making such remarks. You still have sufficient time to reform your ways and prove Mr. Churchill's prediction wrong. I know nobody listens to me these days. Had it not been so, and had the people continued to listen to me as they did before the negotiations for freedom started, there never would have been that show of barbarism which Mr. Churchill has described with such relish and gross exaggeration. And also you would have been well on the way to solving your economic and other domestic problems.

[From Hindi]

*Prarthana Pravachan*—I, pp. 356-9

## 7. TELEGRAM TO NARANDAS GANDHI

NEW DELHI,  
*September 29, 1947*

NARANDAS GANDHI  
RAJKOT

YOUR LETTER. AWAIT REPLY BEFORE DOING ANYTHING.

BAPU

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

## 8. LETTER TO MANIBEHN PATEL

*September 29, 1947*

CHI. MANI,

Herewith a letter from Narandas Gandhi. I have wired<sup>1</sup> to him not to take action till he hears from me. But ask Sardar and let me know what should be done.

I also enclose Pattani's<sup>2</sup> wire. You may have received an identical wire there. What should be done about it? I am under the impression that whatever Shamaldas does is done with the Sardar's consent.<sup>3</sup> Please ask the Sardar what reply I should send and let me know.

Send back both the enclosures.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

*Bapuna Patro-4: Manibehn Patelne, p. 144*

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* the preceding item and "Letter to Narandas Gandhi", 1-10-1947

<sup>2</sup> Anantrai P. Pattani, Dewan of Bhavnagar

<sup>3</sup> The reference is to setting up a "Provisional" Government under Shamaldas Gandhi.

## 9. LETTER TO HARISINGH GOUR

September 29, 1947

DEAR SIR HARISINGH<sup>1</sup>,

Many thanks for your letter.

I see that you can be carried away by your ideas. But I cannot understand why you should disregard facts. No one has displaced English from the great role belonging to it as an international medium. No Indian to my knowledge has ever desired to banish English from India as a second language for study. But some of us have undoubtedly desired to dethrone it from the place it has usurped.

Again what a fund of misinformation in your note, a copy of which you have been good enough to send me. But I have neither time nor inclination to enter into a discussion with you. Time will determine the issue.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

SIR HARISINGH GOUR

SAGOR

From a copy: Pyarelal papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

## 10. LETTER TO KISHORELAL G. MASHRUWALA

September 29, 1947

CHI. KISHORELAL,

I am surprised to learn that you didn't get my letter. All the while I was waiting for your reply and you have not received my letter. I think I told Bhimsen to keep a copy of it and have now told him to send the same to you.

The day before yesterday I got your letter regarding language. I am pained to know that you saw violence in my article.<sup>2</sup> Those who wish to take the worst out of the best will certainly find it. In short, am I not aware that the present holocaust is a result of my teaching of ahimsa? I have also analysed the whole thing. The defects that you see regarding my language have their root in the same. We are bound to err if we try to separate the two. I have come to this conclusion that

<sup>1</sup> An economist: founder of Sagar University

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "Take Care", 11-9-1947.

either ahimsa is not meant for society, as some of our leaders feel, or, if it is, there is some defect in my way of teaching it. I am quite sure that the first defect is not there. There is a possibility of the second one. If there is some defect in [my teaching of ahimsa] I am trying hard to discover it but have not as yet found it. It is because of this that I am striving here. There may be, as you say, some very painful results from it. I hope I shall not be alive to see them.

I intend to discuss some of your views in *Harijan* without mentioning your name.

I am happy to know that both of you are more or less all right. Chimanlal writes to say that you have left the house at sevagram for good. However, please do return if you change your mind. I have talked to Aryanayakum about this. It has been built for you according to your plan.

Harisingh Gour's letter is enclosed. I am not convinced about what he writes. The examples he has quoted are alarming.<sup>1</sup>

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a Gujarati original: C. W. 10731. Courtesy: Gomatibehn Mashruwala

## 11. LETTER TO KANTA R. VYAS

*September 29, 1947*

CHI. KANTA,

I got your letter today and am replying promptly. I had a talk with Ghanshyamdas. He can accommodate both of you at Pilani, not at any other place. The administration at Nasik is in the hands of Gopalrao with whom he would not interfere. Does a voluntary worker go about choosing places? He should render service as and where he has an opportunity. But Ramprasad<sup>2</sup> wants to have a choice. It was the same in the Ashram too. Under the circumstances I became helpless. Ramprasad is efficient. He should find his own way. I am not so rich a man as to produce as much money as I want. Why, I even have to think of my own expenses. It is as it should be and I get as much as I need. I have no preferences. I insist on cleanliness which I must ensure myself.

The burden of children is bound to be with parents. This is the

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* also the preceding item.

<sup>2</sup> Addressee's husband

limit to which I can go.

May you all be happy and live in peace. The sooner you can leave the Ashram the higher you will rise.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

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

## 12. LETTER TO DR. SYED MINHAJUL HASSAN

NEW DELHI,

*September 29, 1947*

BHAI DR. HASSAN<sup>1</sup>,

I received your English letter. I did not like it. There is so much work that I am unable to reach all the letters.

Your letter reveals some anger. In fact I find that you no longer enjoy the confidence of Shuklaji<sup>2</sup>. If that is correct I regard it as useless for you to remain in the Cabinet. There can be no question of your going away to Pakistan. But if God's will is otherwise that is quite a different matter. The times are very delicate. Do not rely upon newspapers. Appeal only to God for justice and go on doing your duty. Do whatever service you are assigned. What have Dada Dharmadhikari and others to say?

*Blessings from*

BAPU

DR. HASSAN

NAGPUR

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

## 13. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,

*September 29, 1947*

My reference to the possibility of a war between the two sister Dominions seems, I am told, to have produced a scare in the West. I do not know what reports were sent out by newspaper correspondents. Summaries are always a dangerous enterprise except when they truly

<sup>1</sup> Minister, Medical and Public Health, Central Provinces

<sup>2</sup> Ravi Shankar Shukla, Chief Minister, Central Provinces

reflect the speaker's opinion. An unwarranted summary of a pamphlet<sup>1</sup> I had written about South Africa in 1896 nearly cost me my life. It was so hopelessly unwarranted that within twenty-four hours of my being lynched, European opinion in South Africa was turned from anger into contrition that an innocent man was made to suffer for no fault that he had committed. The moral I wish to draw from the foregoing version is that no one should be held responsible for what he has not said or done.

I hold that not a single mention of war in my speeches can be interpreted to mean that there was any incitement to or approval of war between Pakistan and the Union unless mere mention of it is to be taboo. We have among us the superstition that the mere mention of a snake ensures its appearance in the house in which the mention is made even by a child. I hope no one in India entertains such superstition about war.

I claim that I rendered a service to both the sister States by examining the present situation and definitely stating when the cause of war could arise between the two States. This was done not to promote war but to avoid it as far as possible. I endeavoured, too, to show that if the insensate murders, loot and arson by people continued, they would force the hands of their Governments. Was it wrong to draw public attention to the logical steps that inevitably followed one after another?

India knows, the world should, that every ounce of my energy has been and is being devoted to the definite avoidance of fratricide culminating in war. When a man vowed to non-violence as the law governing human beings dares to refer to war, he can only do it so as to strain every nerve to avoid it. Such is my fundamental position from which I hope never to swerve even to my dying day.

*Harijan*, 12-10-1947

<sup>1</sup>Green Pamphlet; *vide* "The Grievances of the British Indians in South Africa: An Appeal to the Indian Public", 14-8-1896.

#### 14. NOTE TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

[September 29, 1947]<sup>1</sup>

So far as the war is concerned my speeches have been quite clear. The summaries sent to America and elsewhere may be quite the contrary of what I might have said. I shall deal with the question more fully in my written speech today. As to the deteriorating situation I have told you quite firmly that you should dispense with Sardar, or he you. He won't shoulder the burden without you, hence you should take it up and reform the Cabinet with one mind. Rajen Babu should give up food portfolio. He will do so gladly.

I have always looked upon the wholesale accessions of States with suspicion. They are probably a liability rather than an asset. This sums up my reaction. We may discuss these things more fully when I can speak.

Jawaharlal Nehru Papers (Undated). Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

#### 15. TELEGRAM TO SUDHIR GHOSH

September 30, 1947

SUDHIR GHOSH  
CARE HICOMIND  
LONDON

PARTISAN SUMMARY DANGEROUS.<sup>2</sup> AM QUITE FIRM ON  
NON-VIOLENCE. GLAD SHANTI<sup>3</sup> SUCCEEDED. LOVE.

BAPU

Sudhir Ghosh Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

<sup>1</sup> From the reference to the "written speech today" in which Gandhiji clarified his stand on the war; *vide* "Speech at Prayer Meeting", 29-9-1947.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* the preceding item.

<sup>3</sup> The addressee's wife, who was doing a post-graduate course in medicine in London

## 16. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,  
*September 30, 1947*

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

It seems to me that we have all become savages. Both Hindus and Muslims have turned savage. Who can determine who has committed more crimes and who has committed less? We cannot go into these details. The Government should try to recall the refugees from Pakistan, which can be done only in consultation with the Government there. There are so many complications. The Government is there to solve those complications. The Government should look after its people or resign. I have no doubt at all about it. Today our Government is something which we can strengthen or bring down. That is democracy. People themselves should remain under control and exercise restraint. They must know the meaning of discipline and observe it. If they do not do this, they become worthless. We must learn this thing if we want to stick to our duty. We must inculcate this in our children from the time they start showing some understanding. You must tell your children that the place of religion is in their hearts and it is not in your power to protect it. You must tell them that you are their father and as their father you have to give them that training. I have taught my children that they must protect their own religion. One of my sons<sup>1</sup> is in South Africa. Another<sup>2</sup> is drinking away somewhere. I do not even know his whereabouts. One son<sup>3</sup> is at Nagpur eking out his living with great difficulty. One son<sup>4</sup> is here. I cannot say that he is earning his livelihood with difficulty. Shall I keep worrying about the religion of each one of them? I am not worrying. why should I? They are all grown up. I could protect their religion if they were young. And that too in what manner? I would tell them that if they were true Hindus they must have the courage to die for their religion, they could not save it by killing. Now suppose one boy is having a lathi and another a revolver. The boy having the revolver would kill the boy with the

<sup>1</sup> Manilal Gandhi

<sup>2</sup> Harilal Gandhi

<sup>3</sup> Ramdas Gandhi

<sup>4</sup> Devdas Gandhi

lathi. But that is not the way to save religion. Why? As the boy with the lathi is killed his relatives appear. The boy with the revolver being alone brings his revolver, or a brengun or a stengun. And the people on the opposite side would bring ten stenguns. They would force him to embrace Islam or Christianity and threaten him with their numbers and warn him that his weapons would not save him. And then, although frightened, he would cry out that despite the compulsion he would still consider his religion dearer to him than his life.

Following any religion means belonging to God. The same thing happened in the case of Prahlad. He used to repeat the name of Rama. His father said he should stop it, but Prahlad replied that he could utter no other name. There is a beautiful *bhajan* about it: Prahlad writes the name of Rama while his guru is dictating another name. He says that he can write no other name and he knows no other name. It is a very sweet *bhajan*. Prahlad says that his pen can shape no other name. It is said that Prahlad was a mere boy of twelve. Well, that twelve-year-old boy opposed his father and saved his religion. I need not describe how he protected his religion. All Hindus are familiar with the story. But the important thing is that he could protect his religion all by himself. Innumerable instances of this kind can be found in all religions. Now we have our boys and girls. If one believes that woman is weak, I would say that no woman in the world is weak. All are strong. All those who have firm faith in their religion are strong, not weak. So I would suggest that we should first teach our boys and girls that they are not weak. Children have their religion to strengthen them. When people come to me I tell them that the Government should do everything in its power. But it would be wrong to think that unless the Government did something everybody would be converted to Islam. Millions of Muslims are living in India today. It should be carefully considered who they are. Not many of them have come from Arabia. Those who came from Arabia did not constitute the millions. Those millions who became Muslims were all Hindus. Or, say, they were Buddhists. What is the difference between Buddhists and Hindus? In my view there is no difference. Should we not have proper knowledge as to who inhabited Afghanistan? Badshah Khan told me that the Afghans were originally Buddhists and later embraced Islam. But, for that matter, have they forgotten their ancient culture? How could they forget? He told me that even the names of their villages were originally in Sanskrit. They have changed their names, dress and everything else; but they could not change what was

lying deep within. How could they forget it? And then, whether in Madras or Bengal or anywhere else, they were all Hindus. You ask them as I ask myself, why they chose to embrace Islam. I am to be blamed for their conversion to Islam. I must do penance; you must, too. Of course, if they have done the correct thing and accepted a religion which is nobler than Hinduism, then let us follow in their footsteps, recite the *Kalma*, swear by Islam and raise the cry for the victory of Islam! But nothing like that happened. Whom then shall we beat up and whom shall we drive out? They are our own people. They were all Hindus at the time of our grandfathers and great grandfathers, say, four generations ago, and got converted to Islam. I have gone round all over the country and reminded the Hindus of their wickedness in considering untouchability part of their religion. What has been the result? One part of our community has become the fifth *varna*. Originally there were four *varnas* and we made them five and considered the fifth *varna* as *Ati-Shudras*. We kept the fifth *varna* segregated from us. We kept their food separate and declared that they could not live in our midst. We decided to treat them as our slaves. Later they turned to Islam. So all of them were not originally Muslims. Later on some Brahmins also were converted to Islam. Quite a few of them also came from among Kshatriyas as also Vaishyas. But their number was very small. I have shown you how the present crores of Muslims had embraced Islam. Untouchability drove them to Islam. Today we are creating such uproar in India and want to beat up and harass the Muslims and drive them out of the country by any means. No one ever bothers to think from where they should be driven out and where they should be pushed out. We must realize that when someone is attacked and forced into accepting Islam, afterwards he is doomed for no fault of his. But I move about among Muslims and my Muslim friends tell me that Islam has never advocated forcible conversion. People may accept it voluntarily. They may be made aware of the greatness of Islam. But they cannot be brought to accept Islam by cheating or by paying money. The Muslims in this country are all our blood-brothers. That is why I say that we must act only after careful thought. We must consider why they were drawn to Islam. Did they accept Islam for money? Even if you want to earn money or do anything else, go anywhere in the world, you take your religion with you. If you discard religion, you have discarded everything. I want to tell you only one thing and it is that we should not try to kill any Muslim. Let them kill if they want. If they kill that

is bad. We would consider them bad. But if they are bad, why should we be bad in return? We can return their wickedness with goodness. If they drink liquor, should we also do the same? I would call upon all Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs to come to their senses and see what religion teaches. As Iqbal said, “religion does not teach mutual hatred”. When Iqbal said this he was in London. He was a great poet. He had come to attend the Round Table Conference. I was invited to a dinner arranged in his honour. I went for the dinner. He said that he was a Brahmin? Why was he a Brahmin? Because his forefathers were Brahmins. Where did they live? In Kashmir. He said he belonged to Kashmir and was a Brahmin who was converted to Islam. They were all converted to Islam not recently but long ago. But they had Brahmin blood and Islamic culture in them. So Iqbal said that religion did not teach us to hate one another. Afterwards he wrote many other things but that is another matter. Now Iqbal is no more. But let us learn at least this much, that our religion does not teach us hatred. That is why I would like to call upon you to be human. If we become human, we raise the stock of India. Today we are bringing the country down. God forbid that we should bring about India’s downfall.

[From Hindi]

*Prarthana Pravachan*—I, pp. 360-5

## 17. LETTER TO KANTI GANDHI

*Morning: 4.45, October 1, 1947*

CHI. KANTI,

The description you give is interesting. It was well done. Let Saru<sup>1</sup> gain experience in jail. Explain this to her. Perhaps you have already done so. Going to jail is not an absolute duty. If the cause is just and if one has the right to offer satyagraha, one may plunge into it. I know that Saru has it. I see in your action both modesty and wisdom.

Your first argument is generally correct. One can conceive of circumstances in which, even though no constructive work may have been done, it may be one’s duty to offer satyagraha. Whether or not that is so in the present case can be judged only after examining the local circumstances.

<sup>1</sup> Saraswati, addressee’s wife, was undergoing one month’s imprisonment for participating in the agitation for self-government in Mysore State.

The second argument is perfectly correct.

The third also is correct. As regards the fourth, if the facts are as stated by you they are terrible.

Do not give publicity to these views. One must not confuse [people's] judgment.

I am of the opinion that khadi workers today lack both purity of character and intelligence.

I am returning your questions, thinking that you might not remember what they were.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

[PS]

Herewith a letter for Saru<sup>1</sup> and your questions.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C. W. 7386. Courtesy: Kanti Gandhi

### *18. LETTER TO SARASWATI GANDHI*

*October 1, 1947*

CHI. SARU,

I am writing this early in the morning. It is good that you went to jail. Kanti has given me a detailed account. I am happy. You seem to be spending your time properly even in jail. All three of you are rising higher.

I didn't have your letter, if you had written one from the jail.

A person undergoing imprisonment would prove himself qualified to court imprisonment if he stopped thinking of the outside world.

How can I have time to write other things?

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

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

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* the following item.

## 19. LETTER TO RAMDAS GANDHI

October 1, 1947

CHI. RAMDAS,

I have your frank letter. You have done well to write about yourself. To me it is a great thing that you have developed confidence in yourself. It will be enough if you improve your health. Happiness in the first place consists in keeping oneself healthy. But only if the term "Oneself" is interpreted in the widest sense is this statement true. If it is interpreted too narrowly, only damnation will result.

I write this after the morning prayer.

You are fully entitled to write to me as you did concerning my fast; but you have not thought over it deeply. You might have had doubts about my earlier fasts, but you should not have the slightest doubt about the recent one. Even my opponents have welcomed it. No one has been compelled to do anything for fear of my death. The fast awakened their goodness. What dharma is it to behave as a brute towards a brute? The country and Hindu dharma are declining because of what is happening today. Think over this and write to me if you feel like it. I hope all of you are all right.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

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

## 20. LETTER TO DR. JOHN MOTT<sup>1</sup>

NEW DELHI,  
October 1, 1947

DEAR DR. MOTT,

I got the sixth volume of your speeches and your letter yesterday for which many thanks.

I often wonder if we all don't speak and write much and do little.

*Yours sincerely,*  
M. K. GANDHI

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

<sup>1</sup> Dr. John R. Mott; American evangelist; Chairman, International Missionary Council

## 21. LETTER TO MANILAL GANDHI

*October 1, 1947*

CHI. MANILAL,

I got your letter and liked it very much. You are progressing.

I very much like your dietetic experiments. It is difficult to say just now how far your progress in these experiments will take you.

What you say regarding Sita seems correct to me. But it is no use worrying about it, let alone being angry. When children grow up, they may do what they like. Why may we not hope that Sita will wake up one day and understand the truth?<sup>1</sup>

But Sushila must have arrived there now. She will tell you everything and I hope that will calm you down. Sita seems to be lost to me. She does not write to me at all.

I hope Sushila's arrival there has lightened your burden.

Sushila Pai or somebody else will give you the rest of the news.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 5014

## 22. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

*October 1, 1947*

CHI. NARANDAS,

I got your letter and sent a prompt reply<sup>2</sup> by wire after which I passed on your letter to the Sardar. The concerned department is with him, and he believes that your going at present will be of no benefit. You should, therefore, watch things for the time being and in no way actively participate in whatever may happen. If I alone were to consider it I would welcome the step you contemplate. But now the powers that be are our own people. Hence there can be no occasion to oppose the Government and do something so soon.

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

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* also "Letter to Sita Gandhi", 23-7-1947 and "Letter to Sita Gandhi", 28-7-1947.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "Telegram to Narandas Gandhi", 29-9-1947.

### 23. LETTER TO ANANTRAI P. PATTANI

[October 1, 1947]<sup>1</sup>

CHI. ANANTRAI,

I have your wire. You sent a similar one to the Sardar, which was quite right. Now that the whole administration has come into India's hands, let us caution the person in charge of the department concerned. That should suffice. Act as the Sardar advises.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

ANANTRAI PATTANI

BHAVNAGAR

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

### 24. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,

*October 1, 1947*

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

A lady writes to me in a letter that she is desirous of doing service and her husband also wishes to do the same, but no one shows them the way. There are many people who pose such questions. I have given only one reply to all of them and it is that the scope for Government jobs is very limited whereas the scope for service is immense. Hence there is no need to ask anyone what should be done. Anyone who wishes to serve can do so. But we have become so helpless that we have to consult others. Shall I then tell you what they should do? After all, how much reputation does Delhi enjoy for being clean city? There are so many camps here, and I know how clean they are. People fall ill while they are there. It is equally filthy where there has been bloodshed and destruction of property. The Delhi Municipality has never been known for cleanliness. Had Delhi been a clean city the hearts of the people would have been clean too. Wherever we may be, if we keep our places clean, it will have its impact on the whole city. Let every man keep his own house, his own heart clean. I will tell that lady that if she is really keen to do service, not in name but in the true spirit of devotion, then there is ample

<sup>1</sup> The letter is placed in the source among those of this date.

scope for service in Delhi. She need not inform me anything about her work either. If she can work to clean the hearts of the people of Delhi, clean the hearts of all refugees here, then she will have done a great thing, and then, she and her husband will become an ideal couple. Others will start following their example.

I have just received two telegrams. One of the telegrams which is from a Muslim friend states that Indians used to be considered very sensible and that Hindus and Muslims were supposed to be living in amity. But now what has gone wrong that they cannot sit together and are fighting with each other, indulging in mutual killing and behaving as savages? Let us take the example of Delhi. The Hindus and Sikhs of Delhi are willing to accept the Muslims in their fold provided they declare their loyalty to the Indian Union. Those who wish to remain in the Indian Union, whether it is I or you or anybody else, have got to abide by this. This condition is applicable not only to the Muslims but to everybody. Then, the Muslims possess plenty of arms. Quite a large stock of these arms has been recovered. But not all arms have yet been surrendered. Searches are going on with the help of the police. But everything cannot come out with the help of the police. So, if they are honest at heart and do not wish to fight against India, they should be loyal to the Union. They should even fight any Muslim power attacking India. And if they do not wish to fight against India, why do they need the arms? There are very few Christians here, but they too would have to fight on behalf of the Union in the event of a war with another country like Germany or any other Christian country and will have to remain loyal to the country. If the Muslims are loyal and they have no intention of fighting against India, why do they need the arms? They must voluntarily surrender their arms. This is all very well. But the way this was said contained poison. Today there are nearly 50,000 Muslims in the camps. We have driven them out of Delhi. Some have been killed. However brave a person may be, he does not welcome death. Somebody may want to do business or something else. He takes comfort in the fact that he will at least be alive. Where could they go after running away? So they have taken shelter in the Purana Quila, and on the grounds near Humayun's tomb. They get wet in the rain and have to face a lot of hardship. They are not able to have proper medical aid also. Dr. Sushila Nayyar gives me the report of their condition. She gives them four hours every day. There are many pregnant women among the refugees. Those women have to be delivered, for which some nurses are required. Also some

medicines and many other things are needed. All these things take time to arrange. Why are those people living in such a condition? The Hindus say they have driven them out and they have done nothing wrong in doing that. They say that they can be brought back provided they become loyal to the country. I say that they can be brought back only when their hearts become clean. Granting that the Muslims are not loyal to the country and they refuse to surrender arms, does it mean that they should be slaughtered? There are 400 to 450 million Muslims in India. Out of these, suppose one lakh or even one crore have hidden arms in their houses. Is your army, your police, not powerful enough to unearth those arms from their houses? The police does not belong to the British nowadays. You must realize what would be the outcome of slaughtering the Muslims, killing their children and their women. I have already told you that we have fallen. We became an independent nation on August 15 when we celebrated our Independence Day. For a few days after that we all lived like brothers. Everything seemed well at that moment. But today we have forgotten that we are brothers. If they are killing us, the blame lies with the Muslim League. There was anger at heart. But in the glow of independence we forgot that they were our enemies at one time. I witnessed this in Calcutta. That was the condition all over the country. But that spirit disappeared later and they were ready to slaughter the Hindus and the Sikhs and drive them away.

I have already said that along with those two conditions if we add one more condition, we can carry on our work in peace. That condition is that we shall not take the law into our hands. It is not up to us to punish them. We admit that we had lost our senses. I agree that the Muslim League was the first to be unreasonable. As I have already said, let us show goodness in a greater measure than they do. But if we try to compete with them in wickedness, it would bring about our downfall as well as theirs. If they are doing wrong things our Government will set it right. If any of our people are in Pakistan, whether Hindus, Sikhs or Christians, who are in a minority over there and are not well protected, if they are slaughtered and their daughters are kidnapped, if they are being deprived of their property or forcibly converted to Islam, our Government will take up the matter with Pakistan. Who are we to retaliate? I begin to think that there are some amongst us who are really murderers. I do not quite know who they are, but they are definitely there, and are working to carry out pre-planned murders, arson and forcible occupation of buildings. I do not

know where they are but if they do these things, that is sure to bring about our downfall. That is why we have got to admit that it is foolishness [to retaliate in this manner]. Let us rid ourselves of that unreasonableness and bring back the people who are there. The Government has to see that Pakistan requests all those to come back who have suffered in Pakistan and who have been ruined. And all those who have their properties in Lahore should get them back. They have to be returned the houses which have been confiscated. What wonderful buildings I have seen there? And what about all those educational institutions for girls? Nowhere in India are there greater educational facilities than in Lahore. Lahore used to lead in the field of education. Where is that Lahore today? The Government at Lahore has played no part nor given any financial aid in building all those institutions. The people of the Punjab come of a sturdy stock. They are business-minded and produce wealth. There are great bankers there who know how to spend money as well as earn it. I have seen all that with my own eyes. They have built all those buildings, all those colleges for men and women, and then all those grand hospitals and they should be returned to them. A whole caravan extending to fifty miles is moving on. Those people are in a bad state. We stop being barbarians if we pass on the responsibility of taking counter-measures to the Government. I have already told you this. I have received a telegram from the Muslims living abroad.<sup>1</sup> They ask why people have lost their reason. They say that we should all live like brothers. They say that even though they are Muslims they do not wish to fight— Islam does not teach that. I have already said that you should wake up. And let me tell you that you may or may not accept what I say, but I do not wish to be a witness to these things. I do not wish to see such a downfall. My only prayer to God is that He should take me away before that happens. If the situation does not improve, the terrible fire raging in my heart will consume me. My heart tells me that I shall gain nothing by seeing such a thing. I tried to sacrifice my life for India's freedom. I did not lose my life; but freedom came. But what is the point of remaining alive to see this happening in the wake of freedom? So I pray to God day and night that He should take me away. Or He should give me the power to extinguish this fire.

There is a hospital in Delhi where a large number of wounded Muslims are kept. Not all the inmates of that hospital are Muslims.

<sup>1</sup> From Amman and another place in Middle East

There are some Hindus too. Somebody assaulted and tried to kill those Muslims. There is some group which has come from a village. The members of the group attacked not from the doors, but from small windows and fled after killing four or five patients. I do not know of a greater act of barbarism than this. Such a thing does not happen even during a war. Often hospitals have been bombarded during wars but such a thing has never happened.

And let me tell you another thing. When a train arrives five persons fling a man out of the window as if he were a piece of luggage. He is bound to die. This is what happened today but what I said about that hospital happened yesterday, or maybe the day before yesterday. Who should hang his head in shame for that? You and I and all Hindus must hang our heads in shame. I understand Muslims also are accused of similar crimes. Let the Government demand an explanation for what is happening in West Punjab.

[From Hindi]

*Prarthana Pravachan*—I, pp. 365-70

## 25. DISCUSSION WITH DOCTORS

[October 2, 1947]<sup>1</sup>

Doctors pressed him to take penicillin but Gandhiji refused.<sup>2</sup> Ramanama was his penicillin, he said. He would rather fall a martyr to his researches in the science of Ramanama than a casualty to theirs. The doctors argued: Science had definitely established that there are specific causes for specific ailments. You eradicate the cause and the disease goes. On the other hand, anyone can be given cholera by introducing cholera germs into his system. The laws of science are inviolable.

GANDHIJI: I call this arrogance. Science has yet much to learn. It has so far touched only the hem of the garment. All illness is the result of the violation of the laws of nature, in other words, the penalty of sin against Him—since He and His law are one. Therefore, when Ramanama holds full sway, all illness vanishes. People have no idea of the full potency of Ramanama. I am out to demonstrate it. I must wish to live only to serve Him and live, therefore, through His grace alone. I have plunged into this fire to discover the science of Ramanama just as a doctor or a scientist rushes into an area where an epidemic is raging to discover the laws of physical science. I must discover it or perish in the attempt.

*Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase*, Vol. II, p. 455

<sup>1</sup> From *Dilhiman Gandhiji*—I

<sup>2</sup> Gandhiji was suffering from a severe attack of cough and flu.

## 26. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,  
October 2, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

A Sikh gentleman came to look me up today. He said that somebody had remarked to him that it was all right that I had narrated the words of Guru Arjun Dev, but what did I have to say about the changes made in those words by Guru Govind Singh? History says that Guru Govind Singh was a born enemy of the Muslims. But there is no reason to believe in any such thing, because the 10th Guru almost repeated the words of Guru Arjun Dev. And as for Guru Nanak, he recognized no distinction between the Hindus, the Muslims and the Sikhs. It is all the same whether one worships in the temple or says *namaaz*. If a Brahmin offers *puja*, it does not mean that the person belonging to other religion curses God. Instead the Muslims say *namaaz*. *Puja* and *namaaz* are one and the same. All human beings are the same, though their languages are different. Guru Govind Singh has said that all human beings are essentially one and their manifestations are many. If that is so, I believe that we are all one and also many. Though we appear different we are essentially one. There are crores of individuals but they have the same human nature. Guru Govind Singh has said that there is “the same air, the same body, the same word.” Then he says that whether called a god or a demon, a Yaksha or a Gandharva or a Turk, they are only different forms. That is exactly what Guru Govind Singh says: “There are many forms to be seen but in essence they are the same.” Words mean the speech. And speech is only one. And the sun is one. Can you say that there is one sun for the Muslims and another sun for us? It is the same sun for all of us. He says the air and water are also the same for everybody. The Ganga as it flows does not forbid a Turk from taking its water. Nor do the clouds that shower water say that they are bringing water not for the Muslims or the Parsis but only for the Hindus. It is not as if the Union Government was meant only for the Hindus. That can never happen. Whether you mention the Koran or the *Gita* or the *Puranas* it is all the same. Only the forms are different. If you write in Arabic you say it is the Koran. And then you write in Sanskrit or in the Devanagari script but if you understand well what is written, you will find it is the same thing. So he ends by saying that we are all one. That is what Guru Govind Singh has taught. I told

the gentleman that even if Guru Govind Singh had been an enemy of the Muslims, it was a wrong thing. In the event of war both the Hindus and the Muslims died and got wounded. But a sensible disciple of the Guru Saheb supplied water to the soldiers who were alive. He gave water to the Hindus, the Muslims and the Sikhs. He said it was the teaching of Guru Maharaj that there were neither Muslims nor Sikhs nor Hindus; they were only human beings and whoever needed water had to be provided. Surely Guru Maharaj did not say that if the wounded person was a Hindu he should be given medical aid and if he happened to be a Muslim he should be left unattended? He said that Guruji had fought against the Muslims. So he did, but he fought against those Muslims who had abandoned the path of justice, and who had given up their religion. He was a man given to charity, he was unattached, he was an incarnation of God. For him there was no question of whether people belonged or did not belong to him. But there is no doubt that he did defend himself and he did fight. It would be a mistake on the part of Sikhs to claim to be non-violent. They keep *kirpans*. But Guruji taught that the *kirpan* is meant for the protection of the innocent. It is meant to fight against the tyrant who harasses people. The *kirpan* is not meant for killing old women. It is not meant for killing women and children, the innocent who are not guilty. That is not the function of the *kirpan*. The *kirpan* would be thrust into the belly of one who is guilty whether he is a Muslim or anybody else or even a Sikh whose guilt has been proved. The way people pull out their *kirpans* these days is an act of barbarism. It would not be wrong to deprive these people of their *kirpans*, because they have given up their religion. The Sikhs have abused the *kirpan*.

Today is my birthday.<sup>1</sup> I do not celebrate my birthday in the usual way. I would say that on this day we must fast, spin and pray. That, in my view, is the most appropriate way of celebrating one's birthday. For me today is the day of mourning. I am surprised and also ashamed that I am still alive. I am the same person whose word was honoured by the millions of the country. But today nobody listens to me. You want only the Hindus to remain in India and say that none else should be left behind. You may kill the Muslims today; but what will you do tomorrow? What will happen to the Parsis and the Christians and then to the British? After all, they are also Christians. They have faith in Christ and are surely not Hindus. At present we

<sup>1</sup> Vide Appendix "Note on Gandhiji's 78th birthday", after 25-9-1947.

have some Muslims in our midst who belong to us. If we are ready to kill them, let me tell you that I am not for it. Ever since I came to India I have made it my profession to work for communal harmony, and I wish that though our religions are different we may live in amity like brothers. But today we seem to have become enemies. We assert that there can never be an honest Muslim. A Muslim always remains a worthless fellow. In such a situation, what place do I have in India and what is the point of my being alive? I have now stopped thinking about living for 125 years. I have stopped thinking in terms of 100 or even 90 years. I am entering my 79th year today; but even that pains me. I would tell those who understand me—and there are quite a few who do understand—that we should give up such bestiality. I am not worried about what the Muslims do in Pakistan. It is not that the Muslims become great by killing the Hindus they only become brutes. But does it mean that I should also become a beast, a barbarian, insensitive? I would stoutly refuse to do any such thing and I must ask you too not to do so. If you really want to celebrate my birthday, it is your duty not to let anyone be possessed by madness and if there is any anger in your hearts you must remove it. I would appeal to the people not to take the law into their hands but leave it to the Government to decide the issue. If you remember this much, I would consider it a good act on your part. This is all I wish to tell you.

[From Hindi]

*Prarthana Pravachan*—I, pp. 371-4

## 27. *OUTRAGEOUS ANALOGY*

A correspondent, who from his name appears to have Hindi as his mother tongue, writes thus in English:

This is with reference to your many and continued appeals to treat Muslims as brothers and guarantee their safety so that they do not migrate from here to Pakistan. A man was walking along one cold day, when he came across a snake lying frozen with the cold. Taking pity on the reptile, he picked it up and thinking to give it warmth, put it in his pocket. The warmth soon revived the snake, and the first thing it did was to dig its poisonous fangs into his saviour and kill him.

Anger has betrayed this correspondent into an outrageous analogy. To liken a human being, however degraded he may be, to a snake to justify inhuman treatment, is surely a degrading performance. To damn crores of human beings for the faults of a few or many belonging to a particular faith seems to me to be the height of madness. The correspondent should also remember that I have known rabidly fanatical Muslims to use the very analogy in respect of Hindus. No Hindu would like to be regarded as a snake.

To treat a man as a brother is not to say that he should be trusted even when he is proved untrustworthy. And is it not a sign of cowardice to kill a man and his family for fear that he may prove untrustworthy? Picture a society in which every man is permitted to judge his fellow. Yet that is the state to which we are being reduced in some parts of India.

Lastly, let me, for the sake of snake-kind, correct a common error [and say] that eighty snakes out of every hundred are perfectly harmless and they render useful service in nature.

NEW DELHI, October 3, 1947

*Harijan*, 12-10-1947

## 28. APT LINES

A friend sends the following apt lines from George Matheson:

It is by my fetters that I can fly;

It is by my sorrows that I can soar;

It is by my reverses that I can run;

It is by my tears that I can travel;

It is by my Cross that I can climb into the heart of humanity;

Let me magnify my Cross, O God!

NEW DELHI, October 3, 1947

*Harijan*, 12-10-1947

## 29. LETTER TO RANCHHODDAS PATWARI

October 3, 1947

RESPECTED RANCHHODDBHAI<sup>1</sup>,

I read your letter after the morning prayer, that is, at 4.30 a. m.

May you live long. For myself, I have now given up that desire. I can't bear to see Hinduism being destroyed by Hindus. Even the so-called Mahatma seems to have become an *alpatma*<sup>2</sup> today.

What *adharma* it is that people like you believe it to be dharma to prevent by legislation the killing of cows by others, while Hindus themselves continue to kill them.

I like what you say regarding the well.

*Pranams from*

MOHANDAS

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 5015

<sup>1</sup> Gandhiji's family friend who helped him to go to England for his studies. Vide "Letter to Ranchhoddas Patwari", 11-1-1933.

<sup>2</sup> Small soul

### 30. LETTER TO SHYAMLAL

October 3, 1947

CHI. SHYAMLAL,

Sushila Pai has left for Bombay today. She hopes to reach Sevagram on *Bhadrapad Krishna* 12 after a halt of a day or two at Bombay. I had a talk with Bapa<sup>1</sup>. His demand is that for the time being, say, for a year, she should hold the post of acting . . .<sup>2</sup> in place of Suchetabehn<sup>3</sup>. I have discussed the matter with her and she has agreed to devote a year. We shall have to arrange for her accommodation.

I would say that we ought to pay her as much as we were paying Suchetabehn. I should have discussed this point but I forgot it. It was casually mentioned, I do not remember it. It was only this morning that we could have a proper talk but then we talked about some spiritual matters. Sushilabehn has talked over the subject with Suchetabehn at great length. She has no preference as to where she should be lodged as she does not know Wardha so well. If there is room enough in Bajajwadi to accommodate her, and if she can also have some privacy, I would consider it excellent. If this is not possible she could probably be accommodated in the Mahila Ashram or Kakawadi. I cannot give any definite advice, you have to think over the matter yourself.

Copies have been sent to Sushila Pai and Bapa.

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

<sup>1</sup> A. V. Thakkar, Secretary, Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial Trust

<sup>2</sup> Illegible in the source

<sup>3</sup> Sucheta Kripalani, Organizing Secretary, Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial Trust

### 31. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,  
October 3, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

I find satyagraha being carried on in many places in the country. I really wonder if what people describe as satyagraha is satyagraha or *duragraha*. What is happening in the country is that people talk of one thing and act quite to the contrary. Today every employee, whether belonging to the Post Office or the Telegraph Office, or the Railways or to the Indian States, must examine wherever he is trying to offer satyagraha, whether it stands for truth or untruth. If it is for untruth, there is no need to offer it and if it is for truth it should surely be offered under all circumstances. Whatever is done with a selfish motive cannot be called satyagraha. That would be like insisting on untruth. I have explained quite a few conditions for satyagraha. I have said that two things are essential in satyagraha. One is that the point on which we insist should be truth and another that our insistence should be necessarily non-violent.

Those who are carrying on satyagraha today should act with due deliberation. If the basic thing is not truth and there is recourse to force in pressing for the demand, then it would be well to give it up. If the thing is poisonous, if it is *duragraha* and an untruth and if we go on demanding what we possibly cannot get, then let me tell you that we cannot remain non-violent in making such a demand. This cannot be non-violence, it is only violence. It is impossible that anyone should make an unjust demand and at the same time claim to be non-violent.

If I am in charge of the refugee camps I would tell the people living in those camps that they must clean their places themselves. Should they only play cards and dice and gamble or simply remain idle? I know there is not enough food and water for them. But if for that reason they start refusing to do any work, they will fall a prey to vices. And then there are not just half a dozen persons in those camps. Thousands are living in those camps. No one can say when they will be able to return to their homes. We shall certainly provide food for them; but let them at least do some work to earn it.

They can start by cleaning their camps and then offer to do other jobs like spinning, weaving, carpentry, smithery, tailoring, etc.

There are plenty of things one can find to do in India. These people may have been millionaires yesterday; but today they have lost their millions. Such things happen often in the world. Then it becomes necessary to begin afresh and start working. If somebody comes and says that he was once a millionaire and cannot work, all our plans will be upset. We cannot then succeed. Very respectfully I would like to say that we cannot proceed that way. Whatever work we carry on should be ideal from every point of view. It should be clean and there should be nothing shoddy. Let me tell you that our difficulties are likely to be solved to a great extent if people do their own work. And if we get absorbed in our work our anger will also subside. The desire for revenge in our hearts will also die out. Goodness lies in recognizing evil as evil and then meeting it with goodwill. Therein lies the good of the country. We will not inflict suffering on anyone but will try to make others happy by undergoing hardships ourselves. If we do this, we shall be acting not only for the good of India but of the world. Today the world is watching how India is conducting herself. Now is the real moment of our test. We have attained independence. What are we going to do now?

[From Hindi]

*Prarthana Pravachan*—I, pp. 374-6

### 32. LETTER TO MARGARETE SPIEGEL

*October 4, 1947*

CHI. AMALA,

I got your postcard. I suppose one may say you have at last settled down now.

I am pulling on somehow.

Abha, Manu, Dr. Sushila and Rajkumari are doing very well.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

DR. SPIEGEL  
PRINCIPAL  
MAHARANI HIGH SCHOOL  
BARODA

From Gujarati: Spiegel Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

### 33. LETTER TO AVANTIKABAI GOKHALE

October 4, 1947

CHI. AVANTIKABEHN,

How is it that you have cancer? I learnt about it only from your letter. Is there any hope of its being cured? Please write to me in detail.

Why do you remember the dhotis even now? You have observed the rule<sup>1</sup> long enough. Overcome that attachment now.

I hope Baban Gokhale<sup>2</sup> is well.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

[From Gujarati]

*Adarsh Hind Mahila*, p. 1

### 34. LETTER TO PRABHAVATI

NEW DELHI,

October 4, 1947

CHI. PRABHA,

I have your letter. You are not to worry on my account. I have pointed out to you your dharma. It will be enough if you observe it. My health continues to be as it has been. There is no cause for anxiety.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

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

<sup>1</sup> The addressee used to send dhotis to Gandhiji on his birthday.

<sup>2</sup> Addressee's husband

### 35. LETTER TO KAILAS NATH KATJU

NEW DELHI,  
October 4, 1947

BHAI KAILAS NATH KATJU<sup>1</sup>,

I heard attentively both your articles read out to me, but as I am their subject how can I reproduce them in *Harijan*? Nowadays even praise of any kind hurts me like poison. We have become like beasts.

I asked Dr. Jivraj about your blood-pressure. He suggests that you should take *sarpagandha*. The *sarpagandha* extract is available at the Tropical Medicine School in Calcutta. Would you like me to send it from my stock? Is it not a *sevak's* dharma to keep his body healthy?

Blessings from  
BAPU

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

### 36. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,  
October 4, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

How can I convince you that all these things that are happening today would not have happened if we had not lost our heads. I have no doubt about it at all. Because the Muslims have lost their senses, the refugees are fleeing Pakistan. Why should the Hindus leave that country if they were comfortable there? Why should they run away from West Punjab? It is indeed tragic that people are running away from other parts of Pakistan as well. We should give thought to why the Hindus are running away. Suppose that the Muslims there have become tyrants, should we, in turn, become tyrants too? Should we take the law into our hands and kill the young and the old, women and children because the Muslims are killing them there? I have repeatedly stated that that is the law of the jungle. I cannot remain alive while such a law prevails. So far I had been praying to God that He may keep me alive for 125 years so that I could render some more

<sup>1</sup> Governor of Orissa, 1947; later Central Minister of Home and Defence; Chief Minister, Madhya Pradesh

service to the country. And I can rest in peace only when the Kingdom of God, *Ramarajya*, prevails in the country. Then only I can say that India has become truly independent. But today it has become a mere dream. Let alone *Ramarajya*, at present there is no rule whatever in the country. What can a man like me do under these circumstances? If this situation cannot be improved, my heart cries out and prays to God, that He should take me away immediately. Why should I remain a witness to these things? And if He wishes that I should remain alive, I appeal to Him at least to grant me the strength I once possessed. I used to take pride that I could convince the people. Formerly when I went to the people and warned them against doing something, they listened to me. Such was their love for me. I would not say that people love me less today. But whether it is more or less it should be followed by action. And it is action that is lacking. Hence I would say that my influence is on the wane. My work went on well while we were in bondage. But I am not able to do anything now when we are independent. I could teach the same lesson to our people today which I did then. If you can heed that advice today, we can go very far.

What I wanted to tell you was that for you the days of winter are coming. As for me, you see this shawl brought by these girls lest I catch a chill. I have got some cough too. But there is much improvement and this cotton wrap is sufficient for the time being. But what about all those refugees in the camps and in the Purana Quila? You can ask why you should give [blankets] for the Muslims, but I cannot think that way. For me Muslims, Sikhs, Parsis, Christians are all the same. I cannot make any distinction. What will happen to all those people in this winter? If you tell me that it is the job of the Government to give them blankets, I would say that the Government cannot do so. The Government will make all efforts, but where is the stock? From where will the Government produce the blankets? It is not true that it can easily procure them. Today things are not available even in Europe or in the United States. Nobody can send us anything from there. Even if someone sends ten or twenty thousand blankets out of pity, what purpose will be served by them? We have to provide blankets to lakhs of people. How can everyone get it? I would like to tell all those who are present here that it is not proper that all those people should suffer the rigours of winter. At the same time you cannot pass on all your blankets to them. But I know there are a number of people among us who have many more blankets than they

need. There are a large number of poor people in Delhi who can hardly afford to have blankets. Give as many blankets as you can spare. You can start giving things like this from today. You should not wait and think that since the Government is doing something you need do nothing. The cold has already started though it is still bearable. But when I had gone to the Viceregal Lodge after [September]<sup>1</sup> 17, I found the fire already ablaze in the fire-place. That was because it had already become cold and Delhi winter is such that it is more than one can bear. The cold increases rapidly from October onwards and becomes severe. November, December, January and February, are the pleasant months of winter. Those who have plenty to eat and piles of clothes and who can go about heavily clothed, can wear boots and socks, can afford to call the winter months pleasant. But I am a witness to what happens to those who do not have these things. You too may be a witness to that. Hence I would say that we should try to save as many of such people as possible. It is possible that those who have clothes for winter may not have woollen blankets. Even if there are no woollen blankets there may be at least some quilts. A thick cotton sheet is good enough. If it is in good shape you can bring that too. Even a thick, heavy sheet used in olden days, can serve the purpose. A thick khadi sheet would do. I do not want any other clothes. It may be a woollen wrap, or a quilt or a thick khadi sheet—let me have whatever you can easily spare. You must give these things on your own. If you start sending things, somebody will be in charge of collecting them. I am not going to take charge of them personally. Nor will these things rot in the godowns or be delivered to undeserving persons. I assure you that whatever wraps and clothes you give will go only to the deserving men and women. I do hope you will not tell me that you are giving these things for the Hindus or the Sikhs. Human beings are all one. Let on one come and tell me later on that these things are not to be given to the Muslims. A large number of Muslims have been killed here and many have fled. We have driven them out. I do not know what property remains in the possession of those who have been left behind. If the Muslims remaining in India send the blankets to me and insist that they should be given to the Muslims I will give them to the Muslims. But I hope that all those who have been hearing my words and are going to hear me on the radio will not embarrass me. Let them rather tell me that

<sup>1</sup> The source has “October”.

they have dedicated those things to God. In that case, they will go to the deserving people. I hope and trust that you will do this much. If you do it, I will say that you have done a great thing. But do not send dirty and torn things that I may have to wash and darn. If the clothes are dirty, try to wash them before sending. Take that much trouble. There is no need to send them to the dhobi. You can wash them in plain water and bring them to me nicely wrapped. I shall be very glad if you should do that.

[From Hindi]

*Prarthana Pravachan*—I, pp. 367-80

### 37. NO DEPRESSION

This is from one of the many messages of birthday congratulations:

May I suggest that the present situation should not depress you? In my opinion this is the final attempt of the forces of evil to foil the divine plan of India's contribution to the solution of the world's distress by way of non-violence. You are today the only instrument in the world to further the divine purpose.

This is a telegram sent more out of personal affection than knowledge. Let us see.

It is perhaps wrong to describe my present state of mind as depression. I have but stated a fact. I am not vain enough to think that the divine purpose can only be fulfilled through me. It is as likely as not that a fitter instrument will be used to carry it out and that I was good enough to represent a weak nation, not a strong one. May it not be that a man purer, more courageous, more far-seeing is wanted for the final purpose? This is all speculation. No one has the capacity to judge God. We are drops in that limitless ocean of mercy.

Without doubt the ideal thing would be neither to wish to live 125 years nor to wish to die now. Mine must be a state of complete resignation to the Divine Will. The ideal ceases to be that when it becomes real. All we can do is to make as near an approach to it as possible. This I am doing with as much energy as I can summon to my assistance.

If I had the impertinence openly to declare my wish to live 125 years, I must have the humility under changed circumstances openly to shed that wish. And I have done no more, no less. This has not been

done in a spirit of depression. The more apt term perhaps is helplessness. In that state I invoke the aid of the all-embracing Power to take me away from this “vale of tears” rather than make me a helpless witness of the butchery by man become savage, whether he dares to call himself a Muslim or a Hindu or what not. Yet I cry—“Not my will but Thine alone shall prevail.”<sup>1</sup> If He wants me, He will keep me here on this earth yet awhile.

NEW DELHI, October 5, 1947

*Harijan*, 12-10-1927

### 38. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,  
October 5, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

Let me first say something about my health because today also there is a mention in the Press about my illness. I do not know who has sent out that information. It cannot be by the doctors who are always around me. But innumerable visitors come here and see that I am having cough and occasional fever and they make mountains out of molehills. Why? I think they write about my health because, the Mahatma that I am, the news is spread throughout the world. What will happen if Gandhi dies? If everyone has to die, Gandhi has to die too. Nobody has come to this world with the gift of eternal life. I do have some cough and weakness. But what is the point in giving publicity to these in the Press? Let me tell you that those who gave out that information have done no good to me or to anyone else. As you see, I come here and also talk. Nothing comes in the way. I do hope people will refrain from doing any such thing.

The next thing is that I had requested<sup>2</sup> you yesterday to spare, if possible, blankets, quilts and such other coverings which will be useful in winter, which is fast approaching. Three persons have sent blankets today. Two of them are living in the nearby areas. I have forgotten their names, though. The two blankets sent by them are in a fairly good condition. There is another person whose name also I have forgotten. He has given ten blankets that can only be new. All these

<sup>1</sup> *St. Luke*, xxii. 42

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* “Speech at Prayer Meeting”, 4-10-1947.

blankets are kept in safe custody as I told you yesterday. They will be given to deserving men and women. I hope that if you are convinced by what I have told you today you will give me whatever you can spare.

I have just received a telegram sent jointly by many persons. The telegram is lying right before me. I am not happy about the contents of the telegram. Of course they have every right to send such a telegram. The senders of the telegram say that if the Hindus had not behaved the way they did, I too would not have remained alive. This is a very serious thing. I acknowledge no other power except God that can keep me alive. I can remain alive as long as He wishes and no one can kill me till that moment. What is true for me is true for everybody. Why then should they write such a thing? I must admit that they have been inspired by love to write what they have written. But I firmly believe that God alone can keep me or anyone else alive.

These people proceed to say (they also mention some names which I want to omit) that I am too naive to continue to have faith in the Muslims. Not just one person but a large number join together to tell me that the Muslims are going to betray at the last moment. They say that they are going to side with Pakistan and fight against India to support Pakistan. They say that 98 out of every 100 Muslims are traitors. Let me tell you that I do not hold this view. These  $4\frac{1}{2}$  crore Muslims, most of whom live in the villages and a few in the cities, have become Muslims from among us and they all cannot be traitors. Should we enter the house of each Muslim and finish him on the presumption that all Muslims are traitors and disarm each one of them? Their suggestion only implies that Muslims should all be finished or driven out from here. I would tell those friends that this is cowardice. I would stress only this, that supposing they are all like that, then prove it to the Government. Tell the Government to settle the matter. If we followed the suggestion of these friends the two communities would remain enemies, and the result would be only war. If both the sides insist on fighting, both are going to be destroyed and the freedom we have achieved will be lost. No Hindu can preserve his Hinduism by being servile to others. While the British were ruling over us we thought that our religion was being preserved. But that was a mistake.

When I was a child I read a poem by a very great poet who was blind. "Well, let us forget our animosities and live in peace, for , now,

the British have come.” There was a time when we were fascinated by the British and felt ourselves safe under their protection. Let us rectify that mistake. Now if we become such cowards as to think of driving away 4½ crore Muslims we will only prove ourselves to be feeble-minded. We will not save our religion by following such methods. I do not believe that Hindus and Muslims are born with a feeling of mutual animosity. If we become enemies, how can India survive? Are both Hindus and Muslims going to be enslaved again and are they going to forget their religions? How is it possible? It is our duty to furnish all the relevant information to the Government.

Let me tell you today that I meet and keep in touch with the Ministers. Panditji visits me almost every day. The Sardar also pays me almost daily visits, though not as often as Panditji does. But both of them come. They are both my friends and are with me. Both of them have even differed from me in all earnestness. I do not mean to say that I shall not be able to tell them anything. The Government has to protect all—Hindus, Muslims, Parsis, Christians. Then only can they claim to be true Congressmen. The function of Hindu Mahasabha is to protect Hinduism. It is their job to protect the religion of the Sikhs and the Hindus and to overcome the forces of evil. Who else is going to do it? Can religion ever be saved through anybody’s favour? If we ask someone to save our religion, we are only bargaining. We say all this because we want to save ourselves. We may wear one robe now and another the next day. Does that mean that we are following any religion? That is why I say that these people who have sent me the telegram have not done any good.

Next I want to talk about something else. Mr. Churchill has repeated his earlier view<sup>1</sup> in an exaggerated manner. That pains me. That is because I am a friend of the British. I have no feeling of animosity towards anyone. Several among the British are very nice people and they have acted courageously in granting freedom to India. I don’t care what result this may have later on. Mr. Churchill assails this action and says, as he had said in his earlier speech also, that he has always held the view that the Indians are what they are. If he had known it all along, where was the need to repeat his view?

But he seems to have attacked the Labour Government only in the interest of his own Party, so that the Labour Government should fall and his own Party should return to power. It is the working class

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* “Speech at Prayer Meeting”, 28-9-1947.

that is ruling Britain today. Britain is a small island; but it has progressed so much on the strength of its working class and industries that it has become renowned in the world. Mr. Churchill aspires to overthrow the present Labour Government in that country. In order to pull down that Government he points out that the Labour Government has done a foolish thing and behaved in a clumsy manner and ruined the Empire. He says it is a folly that Britain should have lost India and now the same thing is going to be repeated in Burma. How can I tell Mr. Churchill that we are too familiar with British history, how they acquired Burma and how they consolidated their power in India. I do not think anyone can be proud of such a history.

What we are doing today is sheer savagery. We are trying to destroy the freedom we have won. I admit that today I am useless in your eyes. I have no influence on you. Nevertheless, let me tell you that if the British people listen to Mr. Churchill's words and the Conservative Party defeats the Labour Government it would be a great misfortune. Let me tell you that the whole world says that we have become free through some power. What is that power? It was the working class that was in power at the time Britain had a Socialist Government and that Government granted us freedom. Who can wipe out socialism? Neither Mr. Churchill nor anyone else can do so. I have come to realize that their Government cannot function in any other way. Supposing the British nation loses its salt and the working class is defeated and Mr. Churchill comes back to power, would he give us an ultimatum that he is going to enslave us again, and attack us? Let us see how he does it. For the life of me I cannot think how he can ever do it. The people of our country may be anything, good or bad; they may become scoundrels or lose their heads. But they alone have taught me that freedom is the greatest thing. In such freedom you are entitled to commit all the mistakes. It is not that freedom is given to us when we are good and may be taken away from us when we cease to be so. How can one talk like that? That was not the law for the British people. It was not the law for the other nations of the world. If freedom was meant only for the good, looking at the things happening in the world how would one find freedom anywhere? It is the British themselves who have taught us that freedom is preferable to slavery. A British writer has said that the British would choose to remain free even if they were to just drink and rot but they would not like to be reformed under slavery. But we in India accept their bad points and not the good points.

India has seven lakh villages. Today the people of these seven lakh villages have not run amuck. If the people of these seven lakh villages went mad, the map of India would be completely changed. I would however be happy if even though they should go mad, they remained free. But if, anybody casts an evil eye on India and tries to subjugate her because our people have gone mad he is not going to succeed.

I have already told you that even if we continue to be crazy the British are not going to return. They cannot come back. Once they have thrown out something, are they going to swallow it back? But the world is watching all that is happening. How will the world react when it sees what is happening here? The world will not allow such a thing to happen to India. Nor will India allow it to happen. But if other powers under the U. N. O. come her for investigation, we will not be able to stop them. If then we continue to be mad and lose our heads we will lose our freedom to them.

Even if I am the only one left I will continue to warn the world that it may completely destroy us if it so wishes, but it can never enslave us again. It is my vow never to be a slave again. It is for all of you to adhere to that vow, to make it a reality. I alone cannot do it. I cannot save India single-handed.

How can I be sure about myself? Who can say how long I am going to be alive? How is India going to be affected if God takes me away? How can I save India all by myself? It all depends on God. If He is by my side and is merciful, India can be saved. I think that so long as I am alive, nobody can take advantage of the disturbed conditions in the country and say, let us enslave it and capture it. I only wish that God may fulfil this desire of mine through you.

[From Hindi]

*Prarthana Pravachan*—I, pp. 380-5

### 39. FRAGMENT OF LETTER TO PYARELAL

[Before *October 6, 1947*]<sup>1</sup>

Of course I need you here. . . .<sup>2</sup> There is so much to do. Besides I have of late resumed active editorship of *Harijan*. . . .<sup>3</sup> That makes the need for you to be here all the greater. Still I give the first priority to Noakhali. While you are all there, I can feel at peace with myself. Supposing you all were to come away from Noakhali, I would then feel compelled to give up everything else and go there, even all by myself, to 'do or die'.

*Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase*, Vol. II, p. 528

### 40. LETTER TO MAGANBHAI P. DESAI

NEW DELHI,

*October 6, 1947*

CHI. MAGANBHAI,

I could read your letter only today. It is 5.15 a.m. now when I am writing this. It took me fairly long to read the letter.

Your reply cannot be published in *Harijan*. If it is published, we should also discuss the subject in *Harijan*, I am not prepared for that. Moreover I am of an entirely different view. Plans about a new university seem untimely to me just now. Besides, so long as separate States have not been formed, why raise the question of a separate university? According to our, or rather only my, view, education at all levels must be self-supporting. And finally, when the very existence of India is being threatened and the people are engaged in a fratricidal war, is it proper to discuss schemes like this?

If, however, you wish me to think over the matter further you may write to me.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 11001

<sup>1</sup> Quoting this letter after the one dated October 6, 1947, the addressee says: "In a previous letter he had asked me whether I could not be spared from Noakhali. I had replied that it was all a matter of comparative need. If he needed me at Delhi, I could come." To which this was Gandhiji's reply.

<sup>2</sup> Omissions as in the source

<sup>3</sup> *ibid*

#### 41. LETTER TO PYARELAL

October 6, 1947

There is a fresh exodus of Hindus from East Bengal. What does it portend? I have taken it that Noakhali will not be reenacted in the Dacca area. It is said that the Muslims are not allowing the Hindus to celebrate their festivals with music. Among the Muslims there are said to be two groups. One group maintains that the Hindus have every right to do so. The other says they won't allow it. There is panic among the Hindus as a result. Write to me in full detail after full inquiry.

*Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. II, p. 528*

#### 42. LETTER TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL

October 6, 1947

CHI. VALLABHBHAI,

Maulana Saheb came yesterday evening and was with me for a short while. He wants the three of us to meet together. The time for the meeting is to be fixed by you. He wants one hour any time on Tuesday. Please let me know the time and inform him also.

*Blessings from  
BAPU*

[From Gujarati]

*Bapuna Patro-2: Sardar Vallabhbhaine, p. 375*

#### 43. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

October 6, 1947

DAUGHTER AMTUL SALAAM,

Bari Khan<sup>1</sup> is here. He meets me often. All your brothers were worried about the relatives who were in Patiala. Whatever information I could gather with great difficulty is enclosed. Bari Khan has been given all the information. Now all of them have reached Pakistan safely. But that is no relief. There is hardly any Muslim left in Patiala. Many were murdered. What brutalities are going on! What a sequel to Pakistan! People are trying to see that there is no Hindu left in

<sup>1</sup> Addressee's brother

Pakistan and no Muslim in Hindustan. I am [striving] here. Either things will improve here or I have to die. God knows best.

If you can stay there peacefully, do so. In my opinion there is no other alternative.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 588

#### *44. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING*

NEW DELHI,

*October 6, 1947*

Those who ought to know all about our food problem have gathered together on the invitation of Dr. Rajendra Prasad to give him the benefit of their advice on the grave food crisis. Any mistake made on this important matter may mean avoidable starvation and death of millions therefrom. India is not unfamiliar with starvation and death of tens of thousands, if not millions, due to famine, natural or man-made. I claim that in a well-ordered society there should always be pre-arranged methods of successful treatment of scarcity of water and food crops. This is, however, not the occasion for describing a well-ordered society and for showing how it would deal with the matter. Our concern, for the present, is to see whether we can, with a fair hope of success, deal with the present food crisis.

I think we can. The first lesson we must learn is of self-help and self-reliance. If we assimilate this lesson, we shall at once free ourselves from disastrous dependence upon foreign countries and ultimate bankruptcy. This is not said in arrogance but as a matter of fact. We are not a small country dependent for our food supply upon outside help. We are a sub-continent, a nation of nearly 400 millions. We are a country of mighty rivers and a rich variety of agricultural land, with inexhaustible cattle wealth. That our cattle give much less milk than we need is entirely our own fault. Our cattle wealth is any day capable of giving us all the milk we need. Our country, if it had not been neglected during the past few centuries, would today not only be providing herself with sufficient food, she would also be playing a useful role in supplying the outside world with much-needed food-stuffs of which the late war has unfortunately left practically the whole world in want. This does not exclude India. The

distress is growing instead of showing signs of decreasing. My suggestion does not include ungrateful rejection of free supply that any foreign country may wish to offer us. All I say is that we must not go begging. It demoralizes. Add to this the difficulty of internal transport of food-stuffs from one place to another. We have not the requisite facility for rapid movement of grains and other food-stuffs from place to place. Further add to this the remote possibility of delivery of uneatable stuff. We dare not lose sight of the fact that we have to deal with human nature. In no part of the world is it to be found perfect or even very nearly so.

Next let us see what possible foreign aid we can get. I am told that not more than three per cent of our present wants. If this information is correct, and I have had it checked by several experts who confirm the figure, I am sure the case for reliance on outside help falls to the ground. The slightest dependence on outside help is likely to deflect us from exploring to the fullest extent our immense internal possibilities in the shape of utilizing every inch of arable land for growing crops for daily food in the place of growing money crops. We must reclaim waste land which is capable of being placed under immediate cultivation.

Centralization of food-stuffs, I apprehend, is ruinous. Decentralization easily deals a blow to black-marketing, saves time and money in transport to and fro. Moreover the villager who grows India's cereals and pulses knows how to save his crops against rodents. The movement of grain from station to station makes it liable to be eaten by rodents. This costs the country many millions and deprives it of tons of grain, every ounce of which we badly need. If every Indian were to realize the necessity of growing food wherever it can be grown, we should most probably forget that there was scarcity of food-stuffs in the land. I have by no means dealt fully with the fascinating and absorbing subject of growing more food, but I hope I have said enough to stimulate interest and turn the wise towards the thought of how every individual can help in the laudable enterprise.

Let me now show how to deal with the three per cent of grain we might possibly get from outside. Hindus observe a fast or a semifast every eleventh day each fortnight. Muslims and others are not prohibited from denying themselves, especially when it is for the sake of the starving millions. If the whole nation realized the beauty of this partial self-denial, India would more than cover the deficit caused by

the voluntary deprivation of foreign aid.

Personally I hold that rationing has very limited use, if any. If the producers were left to themselves, they would bring their produce to the market and everyone would get good and eatable grain, which today is not easily obtainable.

I shall close this hurried review of the food crisis by drawing attention to President Truman's reported advice to the American people that they should eat less bread, and thus save the much-needed grain for starving Europe. He added that Americans would not lose in health by the recommended act of self-denial. I tender my congratulations to President Truman on this philanthropic gesture. I must decline to endorse the suggestion that at the back of this philanthropy there is a sordid motive of deriving a pecuniary advantage for America. A man must be judged by his action, not the motive prompting it. God alone knows men's hearts. If America would deny herself for the sake of hungry Europe, should we fail to do this little act of self-denial for ourselves? If many must die of starvation, let us at least earn the credit of having done our best in the way of selfhelp, which ennobles a nation.

Let us hope that the Committee that Dr. Rajendra Prasad has called together will not disperse without presenting a work-able solution of the food crisis that faces the country.

*Harijan*, 19-10-1947

#### 45. LETTER TO SHAH NAWAZ KHAN

DELHI,

*October 7, 1947*

DEAR GENERAL SHAH NAWAZ,<sup>1</sup>

Your letter.

If the work you are doing there<sup>2</sup> does not go to the dogs in your absence, you may leave it to go to the Punjab—Pakistan.

BAPU

Copy to Dev Prakash

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

<sup>1</sup> The superscription is in the Devanagari script.

<sup>2</sup> In Masaurhi in Bihar

46. LETTER TO DEV PRAKASH NAYYAR

DELHI,  
October 7, 1947

CHI. DEV,

You must pay Hunar's<sup>1</sup> salary from there only. Why does he write to us?

Sushila has a slight fever. Just now at 5 o'clock in the morning she is sleeping.

A copy of the letter I have written<sup>2</sup> to General Shah Nawaz and his own letter are enclosed.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

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

47. LETTER TO M. A. HUNAR

DELHI,  
October 7, 1947

CHI. HUNAR,

Why should your salary be paid from here? It should be drawn from Patna because isn't the work done there meant for Patna? Probably there will never be an occasion for us to stay together.

I don't know what to do.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

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

<sup>1</sup> Muhammed Ahmed Hunar, Gandhiji's Secretary for Urdu work, who accompanied Gandhiji on his Noakhali and Bihar tours

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* the preceding item.

48. *LETTER TO SUDHIR GHOSH*

DELHI,  
October 7, 1947

MY DEAR SUDHIR,

Your note.

I hope you have my message as also my wire.<sup>1</sup>

I am quite clear. You should leave that place.<sup>2</sup> More from Horace.

Reuter's summary is quite fair. You can't help people who would see red in everything. I hope however the storm has blown over.

I am glad Shanti has passed one test.

Love.

BAPU

Sudhir Ghosh Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

49. *LETTER TO SAROJINI NAIDU*<sup>3</sup>

DELHI,  
October 7, 1947

MY DEAR SINGER,

Your letter.

Who says you are old?

Dr. Bidhan is coming but he has not. What matters when [he] comes? One and the same thing to you.

Love to the whole family.

*Yours,*

SPINNER<sup>4</sup>

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Telegram to Sudhir Ghosh", 30-9-1947.

<sup>2</sup> The addressee was posted as Public Relations Officer at India House, London. He was finding it difficult to function under V. K. Krishna Menon who had been appointed High Commissioner in London on August 15, 1947.

<sup>3</sup> The addressee was Governor of the U.P.

<sup>4</sup> The addressee used to call Gandhiji "Spinner of Destiny".

## 50. LETTER TO KHATEEB AHMED HUSSAIN

DELHI,  
October 7, 1947

DEAR FRIEND,

Your note is good. it will be useful when both have honestly the same mind.

*Yours sincerely,*  
M. K. GANDHI

KHATEEB SIR AHMED HUSSAIN  
HYDERABAD, DECCAN

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

## 51. TALK WITH MANU GANDHI<sup>1</sup>

[October 7, 1947]<sup>2</sup>

[Gandhiji] answered<sup>3</sup> that it could do more, it could attune one completely to the divine will. Such a person would have the faith that though crippled, he could conceivably serve as a more effective instrument for the execution of His purpose than one with a whole limb and that, after all, was the *summum bonum* of life.

*Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase*, Vol. II, p. 456

## 52. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,  
October 7, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

In my speech yesterday there was no mention at all of what is going on between Hindus and Muslims these days. But today something has happened and I should not keep quiet about it. It has happened not here but at Dehra Dun. A Muslim gentleman was murdered. As far as I know, he had committed no crime. Nor had he taken the law into his own hands. But he was killed because he happened to be a Muslim. I was pained about it and wondered where we would stop if we went on at this rate. Today I find that I have a large number of Muslim friends. I feel hesitant to tell them to leave

<sup>1</sup> From *Dilhiman Gandhiji*—I, p. 85

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*

<sup>3</sup> Gandhiji was asked: “Could Ramanama set a broken bone?”

this place. How would they go away? I find that today the Muslims are not safe in the trains. Anyone who so pleases throws them out of the compartments or slaughters them. I understand that a similar thing is happening in Pakistan. But what are we going to gain by continuing to behave in this manner? Let us at least know ourselves. Let us at least recognize our religion. Everyone follows his own religion. What does our religion teach us? Or are we acting without any regard for our religion? Has the Congress lost its senses? After all, what did the Congress do for 60 years? If the Congress has been making a mistake so far, it is the enemy of the country, and I would say that it should be removed from the scene. Let even those who profess to be Congressmen say it in clear terms that they are leaving the Congress and forming another party. There is no room for any complaint about it. Do whatever you like but this much I can say before the whole world and our people that we should not take the law into our own hands. If we do it, we shall be driving ourselves to ruin and lose our independence and then, if some other power comes and subjugates India, we shall realize with shock what a terrible blunder we had made. This is not a good thing. There was a mongoose which killed a snake to save a child. Its mouth was smeared red with blood. The child's mother had gone to the well to fetch water. When she returned, the mongoose rushed to her jumping as through saying that it had saved her child. But she thought it had killed the child and threw the pitcher on the mongoose. The water was gone, the pitcher was broken and the mongoose died. When the woman entered the house she saw the child playing in the cradle and the dead snake lying nearby. Then she realized that the mongoose had been her friend. She felt sad and remorseful. So let us not do anything which we may regret later like that mother, and feel sorry for not having co-operated with our Government. We have set up our own Government. Are we going to ruin it?

Today we have got power in our hands. We have got our own ministers. Our Prime Minister is Jawaharlal. He is a true jewel and he has served his people well. Then there is the Sardar and there are others too. Is it that we do not like them? Today it is said Jawaharlal is no good. It is said he is not a good Hindu. People want a person who will follow their dictates, who will not support the Muslims and will drive them out. I must admit that Jawaharlal cannot do so. Nor can I do so. I consider myself a sanatani Hindu. But I am not that sanatani who would not let anyone except the Hindus live in India. Whatever

the religion one may follow, one belongs to India if one is loyal to the country, and is as much entitled to live in India as I am. It makes no difference if one belongs to the minority community. That is what religion teaches me. Right from my childhood I have been taught that in *Ramarajya* or the Kingdom of God no person can be unworthy just because he follows a different religion. You must realize that I am such a Hindu. I have no power in my hands and I am not a minister. Jawaharlal is a minister and you can remove him if you want. Then there is the Sardar. Do you know who he is? He is the Sardar from Bardoli. Do you listen to him? He also has many Muslim friends. His friend Imam Saheb was the Congress leader in Gujarat and he is dead. Imam Saheb's son-in-law<sup>1</sup> is at Ahemedabad and I think he is the chief of the District Congress. He is a very goodhearted man. I know him very well. He married Imam Saheb's daughter<sup>2</sup>. It is the same Imam Saheb who came away with his wife from South Africa, leaving his business there, and stayed with me. He is dead and his grown-up daughter is left behind. Should I discard her and tell her that I have nothing to do with her because she is a Muslim? She is a Muslim no doubt, but I can say that she is a good-hearted girl. She does not know that she might have to leave. If the Sardar lets her go, where is she going to stay? Let us not take the law into our own hands. Law may be made by the Sardar or Jawaharlal, but they cannot fist issue ordinances and then leave the matter to the public. Today we cannot have such ministers. Granted that that was done during the days of the British. But does it mean that we should do so even now? Shall we invite the same criticism about us which we used to fling at the British? We will not tolerate it. That is all I want to say.

[From Hindi]

*Prarthana Pravachan*—I, pp. 389-91

<sup>1</sup> Ghulam Rasool Qureshi

<sup>2</sup> Amina

### 53. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,

October 8, 1947

A gentleman often comes to see me. He is good man. He was travelling from Dehra Dun. The train was quite crowded. At one station (I have forgotten the name) a man entered their compartment. All others in the compartment were Hindus and Sikhs, some carrying swords and some carrying knives. They gave the newcomer a close look. They asked him who he was. That poor man was alone and he replied that he was *chamar*. But those people were suspicious. When they examined his hand they found his name tattooed there. Sometimes people have their names tattooed on their hands. And thus he proved to be a Muslim. Somebody drove a knife into his body and as the train approached the Jumna he picked him up and flung him into the river. The whole thing was done by only one man, but all those other men also witnessed it. The gentleman who narrated the incident to me could not bear the sight and turned his face away. I told him that if he had so much pity in his heart and he did not like the man being killed, why did he not stop the offender from doing such a savage act? There were some fifty or sixty Hindus and Sikhs in the compartment and the victim was a helpless Muslim among them. What kind of humanity is it that someone should kill such a lone man and throw him in the Jumna? That man was not even completely dead. He had been stabbed and wounded and he was just thrown into the river. If the gentleman who came to me had so much pity, why did he not intervene and why did he not save him from death? He told me that though he felt distressed he failed to do his duty. He said he could not think of doing anything. I told him that was not a good thing, that was not human. We are so many and if a solitary Muslim comes in our midst we kill him and throw away his body. Anyone who tries to do such a thing should be restrained and persuaded with love that he should have mercy. He should be told: 'What are you doing? Whom are you killing? Don't kill him, he has not done anything.' And if this had no effect, I would be happy if the gentleman had sacrificed his life in saving that Muslim. What is so great about fifty or sixty persons killing a single man? But there were so many people present and one of them decided to kill a man and actually killed him while others looked on, who probably approved of

the act. Let me tell you that those who are given to this way of thinking are mistaken. In the midst of those who kill there are also those who do have pity in their hearts and do not approve of killing, but because they are afraid for their own lives they do nothing and forget how they should act on such occasions. But how can one forget? If somebody indulges in an act of savagery, you must stop him. How very shameful that even the people who do not approve of such savagery merely look on? I want to tell you this because I have seen with my own eyes that there are people who do not approve of such things but do not have the courage to come forward and intervene. I will appreciate if there is even a single individual who shows the courage to stand up and prevent such an act saying that he would hold the hand of the offender if he tries to strike and if the offender does not listen, would sacrifice his own life, rather than let the victim be killed. A man like me would stand by non-violence. He would not kill even if he had to die himself, instead he would save a person's life by laying down his own. I have no doubt that that man would have been saved if somebody had shown such courage. And if, in an attempt to save, he himself had got killed, he would have proved himself truly brave. This is true non-violence. True non-violence does not mean that we remain non-violent before the strong and use force on the weak.

We used non-violence against the British, but now we are resorting to violence. Against whom are we using violence? Against our own fellowmen. The non-violence we used against the British was not the non-violence of the brave. The country is facing the consequences now. I am facing the consequences. So are you. I must admit that I could not teach you true non-violence. I am showing you what the non-violence of the brave can be. There are Muslims living here today. And there in Pakistan the Muslims are ill-treating the Hindus. But should we, in turn, ill-treat the Muslims? Are they behaving particularly like brave people? Let me tell you that what is happening in Pakistan is deplorable, and if we are going to follow it in our Union it is equally deplorable. And then arguing about which side was the first to take the offensive and which committed more excesses than the other is not exactly the way of establishing friendship. The true way of friendship is that we should always be on the side of justice and maintain our good behaviour. If we follow that path, even the savage and those who may have lost their senses will come round. We don't want to go into the question of who is more guilty and who

less, or who started it. In my view that would be sheer ignorance. That is not the way of becoming friends. If those who were enemies till yesterday want to be friends today, they should forget the past enmity and start behaving as friends. What is the point of remembering animosity? There can be no friendship if people think that they would be prepared to fight if necessary but would remain friends if they could. That is not how true friendship grows.

Now I may as well talk a little about another point. The Press has become a very powerful medium in the world today. When a country becomes independent the Press becomes all the more powerful. When there is freedom, there can be no restrictions on the Press regarding the reports and the news to be published. But public opinion can be very useful at such times. When the newspapers do dirty propaganda or publish unfounded reports or incite people, the Government should come down on them to put an end to these or take legal action against them. But in doing so the riot situation worsens and there is more trouble. The Government cannot resort to that course. Things were different during the days of the British. What did they care? They caught hold of a man like Tilak<sup>1</sup> and put him behind the bars for six years. He had written something in his paper. It was nothing much. Still he got six years' deportation and had to complete the entire term. Like him many people had to go to Jail. I was also jailed for six years.<sup>2</sup> It is another matter that I did not remain in jail for six years. But I was sentenced to six years because of an article I wrote in *Young India*. I did not write anything bad, but I was sentenced. Now such thing cannot happen when we are free. Today all the correspondents, editors and owners of newspapers must become truthful and serve the people. No false information should appear in the newspapers nor should they publish anything that would incite the people. Today, when we have become independent, it is the duty of the public not to read dirty papers but to throw them away. When nobody buys those papers they will automatically follow the right path. I feel ashamed at the fact that today people have got into the habit of reading dirty and undesirable things. Such newspapers are widely circulated. I read about an incident at Rewari. A newspaper published a report saying

<sup>1</sup> Bal Gangadhar Tilak was deported in 1908 for writing two articles in *Kesari*. Vide "Sentence on the Great Tilak", 1-8-1908.

<sup>2</sup> Gandhiji was sentenced to six years' imprisonment on March 18, 1922, but was released for health reasons on February 5, 1924.

that the members of the Meo community killed all the Hindus, set fire to their houses and looted their property and cattle. I was shocked to know that the Meos had indulged in such terrible things. The next day there was no information about Rawari in the papers. It was all a cooked-up story. I wondered how that news about Rewari ever came to be published in the paper. I would like to say that the man who wrote about the Rewari incident should give an explanation. He must explain whether he had written that story on wrong information or it was deliberate mischief. He is guilty of great crime before God. Such a thing should not have happened. If anyone behaves that way, our work can never progress. The Government cannot keep a watchful eye on the Press today. You and I should keep a watch on the newspapers. Let us purify our hearts and show no inclination to take in dirty things. Let us give up reading dirty things. If we do this, the newspapers will do their duty properly. I shall finish after discussing one more point.

Our military and police also are in the same position as the Press. The military and the police were divided at the time of the Partition. I admit that it was not their doing. It just happened like that. The military here is composed of Hindus and Sikhs. The Muslim soldiers have gone over to Pakistan. If the Hindu and Sikh soldiers and police start thinking that because they themselves are Hindus and Sikhs they will only defend the Hindus and Sikhs and try to cover up the crimes committed by them and refuse to protect the Muslims because they are not meant to protect them, we shall be nowhere. Nor would it be any good if the Muslim army and the police started killing the Hindus saying it was not their business to protect the Hindus. The Government has the military and the police. But I need neither the military nor the police. I would ask the people to become the military and the police for us. If the Hindus kill the Muslims here they have got to be saved. We must not give up. I shall not step aside even if I have to lay down my life. Such will be my Government. I am not talking in the air. I am telling you what is right. I would like to say the same thing to the army and the police which belong to the Government. Their primary duty is to protect the handful of Muslims living here. If they are attacked by the Hindus and Sikhs, they should come to their rescue. They should protect them even at the risk of their own lives. Then only can they be called true soldiers and policemen. The freedom achieved by India is indeed a remarkable phenomenon. The whole world says and I say it too that no

government has ever transferred power to the people of any other country in this way. We have attained our independence without any fighting and bloodshed. Hence our military and police should not be there to fill their pockets. They should be content with what they are getting. They should not think in terms of extravagant meals complete with sweets. A soldier must satisfy his hunger with whatever meagre meal he may be getting and perform his duty. But if he starts thinking about other people's children going to schools and colleges, and about their cars and cycles and decides to resort to corrupt means to get similar thing for himself, he will cease to be a true servant. That is why I say that a true soldier and a true policeman is the one who is satisfied with whatever food he gets and does his duty without any religious bias. If he is a Hindu he should never think of harming the Muslims. It is a different thing to apprehend a Muslim and have him punished if he is guilty of a crime. But should an innocent Muslim be punished here because the Muslims elsewhere are guilty of grave crimes? If a Hindu harms a Muslim, it is the duty of a policeman to protect the Muslim. I must say that a policeman who acts in this manner is true to the Indian salt. If our military and police do not behave thus, they are not true to the salt of their country.

I will say the same thing about the military and the police in Pakistan. But I can do nothing about the situation there. To whom should I address my words? But I have no doubt that if things happen here as I have suggested, similar developments are bound to take place there. Today the people have lost their balance. They say, when their own brethren are being ill-treated in Pakistan, why should they not retaliate here? But it is not human to say such a thing. Hence so long as I am alive I shall proclaim at the top of my voice that we must keep ourselves pure, we must be good, our newspapers and our military and police should remain good. Without this our Government cannot function and we shall be ruined. We must remain civilized, whatever happens in Pakistan. Even if they turn mad, we have to remain good. So, under any circumstances, we have to remain civilized. Do at least this much. If you do not listen to me, let me tell you that we are all going to be ruined.

[From Hindi]

*Prarthana Pravachan*—I, pp. 391-8

## 54. DISCUSSION WITH H. S. SUHRAWARDY

[October 9, 1947]<sup>1</sup>

SUHRAWARDY: Today I shall have to tell you some bitter truths.

GANDHIJI (laughing): Lay on; I am ready.

Jinnah says I have allowed myself to be taken in by you.

There cannot be a worse libel on me. You should know that I am incapable of deceiving anybody or wishing anybody ill.

Jinnah speaks very highly of Pandit Nehru.

Maybe. He has never done so in public. But that is neither here nor there. Neither Pandit Nehru nor the Sardar cares for praise or blame. If only you could get Jinnah to do the right thing, peace between the two Dominions might return.

Jinnah says he has never asked the Hindus to go out of Pakistan.

You surprise me. Why do you not speak out to Jinnah and Liaquat Ali? You know the facts. Does not your 'peace mission' require you to uphold truth and justice fearlessly and courageously at any cost?

You do not know how unpopular with the masses the Pakistan Government has become. Some are even abusing Jinnah and Liaquat Ali.

That is neither my concern nor yours. Your mission to Karachi was not to report who is abusing whom but to put the facts as you know them before Jinnah and ask him what he proposes to do to implement the agreements which the two Dominions have entered into. The minorities on both sides should be able to live in their original homes. The main thing is to get the Pakistan Government to square their declarations with their performance.

*Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase*, Vol. II, p. 480

<sup>1</sup> From *Dilhiman Gandhiji*—I, p. 91. The discussion took place after Suhrawardy's second trip to Karachi.

## 55. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,  
*October 9, 1947*

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

Every day I keep talking about the same thing in one form or the other. I am feeling helpless. I continue to be here merely for that work. I must thank you for your generosity and goodness and for hearing me patiently. I can only thank you. But with me it is not the end of the matter when I say something and you listen to it patiently. That does not satisfy me. So many of our people are in a sad plight. There is plenty of land here. What should we do for them? What is the duty of those people? What is the duty of the Government? We must understand the people who are creating a kind of unhealthy atmosphere and we must try to dissuade them from doing so. My voice will then reach even those who are living in other places.

Some harassed people came to see me. They are all nice people, belonging to West Pakistan. They came to me ten or twelve days ago. At first I requested them to give me everything in writing. They gave a written statement so that I might do something about their problem. They said unless some arrangements were made for the Hindus in Pakistan to come over to this side, they would not be able to leave that country. They say that there is danger on the way. They have foodgrains but how can they bring their stocks with them? Who will allow them to carry foodgrains? For the present they can be brought here only by air or by road. The train journey is very difficult these days. The trains are not running as they used to. What has been the fate of those who have not been able to come, nobody can say. Under these circumstances, they say, it will be better if they can come away. As for me, I am wondering what is our position and where we are going.

Now let me turn to Bengal. I have done considerable work there too. I have worked in East Bengal as well as West Bengal. I had gone to Noakhali<sup>1</sup> in East Bengal which is now in Pakistan. I travelled long distances on foot there. I visited different places every day. I talked to the local people. I tried to remove fear from the hearts of Hindus men

<sup>1</sup> On November 6, 1946.

and women. I could do it only with the help of Ramanama. While reciting the name of God if somebody kills us, let us be killed. Why should we be so much attached to life? Should we give up Ramanama for the sake of remaining alive? Should we give up the name of God out of fear? Should the women who are accustomed to putting *kumkum* marks, stop doing so? Women in that region, if they are not widowed, wear bangles of shell. That is a symbol of their married status. Widows do not wear bangles. Should they, out of fear, give up wearing bangles even when they are not widowed? When I found those women hesitating to wear the shell-bangles as an auspicious mark, I persuaded them that they should not discard their bangles. They were convinced and assured me that they would wear the bangles again. Now I hear that people are slowly coming away. I did not know about it. My own people are there. Perhaps I have told you that all my good co-workers are there. Pyarelal, people from the Khadi Pratishthan, Kanu Gandhi—are all there. Many capable persons, including Satis Chandra, are there. They are all trying to build up the morale of those people. In spite of that people are running away from there. No doubt they must be facing many hardships there. But what is the point in running away from there? Where will they run away and what will they do? Let them consider this point. Here in Kurukshetra we have 25,000 refugee men and women. Some women are pregnant. It is no wonder that some of them die, because, in any case, who is there to treat and nurse them? There is no accommodation and people feel distressed for they had to flee from the Punjab. I am therefore thinking what advice I should give them. The number of refugees who are still there is much larger than those who have arrived. We can convince them and take care of them if they are in tens or twenties, or even some lakhs. But their number goes into several crores and they are spread over this vast country. It is not a small matter transferring these people from one place to another. They are facing such hardships that they die before their time and are starved to death. The Government cannot provide everything to everybody even if it tries hard. The Government has its military and police forces. But all these cannot be used as they were during the British days. Nor should it be so. The army can carry on its functions only with the help of the people. If the people wish, they can be the hands and the feet of the Government. The Government cannot do anything unless the people co-operate with it. I am telling this to the Ministers also. As I see, the Government is not shirking the

responsibility. I meet the Ministers almost every day. Let me tell you that they too are upset and disturbed. But what could they do? After all, they have no experience of running a government. They ran the Congress organization. But it was only an organization of a handful of people. All the persons whose names were on the Congress register never gathered together. And the workers in the office were small in number. They had to work with limited resources. Today they have to work for crores of people. Crores of rupees are there and thousands and thousands of people have to be looked after by a few officials.

How can the work be done? It is to be considered how these 25,000 people can get their food in time. Thousands of people come into the country daily, and they remain hungry. They do not have enough clothes to wear and the winter is round the corner. The situation in Pakistan is the same as here. It is not as if it was heaven for people in Pakistan and hell for those who are here. Or, one may even say that it is not as if it was heaven here. I see this with my own eyes. Nor can it be said that it is all hell in Pakistan. After all, there are human beings living in both the countries. Some of them are good and some are wicked. But who would determine how much goodness and how much wickedness exists there and here? And what would we gain by it? The greatest question before me is, and it should also be the question before you, that of giving all possible protection to the people who have already come or want to come. But with regard to those who have come we should try and see that they return to their homes. Let me tell you that they must go back to their homes. I know that those who were living in villages will not like to leave their places. Even if a villager owns an acre of land, he will make any sacrifice to preserve it. If people migrate by thousands and millions, where can they be accommodated and how can they live? They are dying on the way. That is why I say that even if we have to die, we should continue to live wherever we are. We shall see what happens later on. It is not as if God will not protect us if we live in Pakistan. God is always there to take care of us. And then, there is the Government to take care of us even if there is no one else.

I just mentioned that all my co-workers are in Bengal. Let the West Bengal Government report to the East Bengal Government about the situation obtaining here. But even there, in fact everywhere, people do not follow the instructions from their Government. Even officials do not follow the instructions from their Government. They have become so arrogant that they think that now that independence has

been achieved there is none to question them. The British, whose mere frown used to frighten them have already gone. Now what has happened? I am a witness to their being afraid of the British. But now if everybody starts thinking that there is no one to question him, that he is his own general and police, that he has attained freedom and he can do as he pleases, let me tell you that things cannot go on like that.

If both the Governments are anxious to do justice, that will encourage [the people] to do something. But what will happen if the Governments do not wish to do justice? What will be the outcome after all? I am not a man keen on fighting. I may run away from fighting. But those who have weapons, the police and the army, will naturally want to fight. What else can they do? I can do nothing. But those who can do something must necessarily do what they want to do. Then there will have to be a war. People who share my creed, wherever they are, cannot go on living in distress. We shall have to do something. This I am saying with regard to both the Governments. It is for both to do something. One who is a tyrant has no right to punish another tyrant. When a Government does not or cannot protect its people well, how can it challenge another Government for the same fault? How can anyone ever do such a thing? I can understand if we die fighting for justice and our Government has to go in the process. But should we run away from there out of fear and die as we flee? Half the people die on the way and the remaining reach here. But where to accommodate them? How are we going to feed them? Should they simply stay here doing nothing? If not, they will have to be provided with jobs. When crores in our country are starving and crores are unemployed and we are able to do nothing about them, how are we going to find jobs for those who are coming from outside, not from outside the country but from another province? How will they find their own occupation here? What will they do and how? That is a great problem which creates ill feeling. This ill feeling will not be there if my suggestion is accepted. Then people will become courageous. They will master the art of dying. If they learn the art of dying, they will be doing good to us and the world. If we can convince India about the solution I have suggested it will be to the benefit of all. If we become brave, I have no doubt that the whole world will admire us.

[From Hindi]

*Prarthana Pravachan*—I, pp. 398-402

## 56. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,  
October 10, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

Today also I have received quite a few blankets. Some persons have even given some money. I have received a telegram from Baroda saying that they can send quite a few blankets from there. I think they have said that some 800 blankets are ready but the railways people are not in a position to accept the consignment. It is true that there is so much pressure on the railways today that everything cannot be accepted. If possible I shall secure instructions from the Government so that the blankets may be brought. Then we will have sufficient stock of warm coverings. We do not have enough woollens just now. But I hope that God willing we shall somehow have enough things to go by and no one will have to shiver in cold.

A lady sent a ring to me a little while ago. Just now I can use that ring only for buying quilts and blankets and shall try to do so.

Now we have before us a grave problem about which I have talked enough. We are facing food shortage and that creates a lot of trouble. We have won our independence no doubt, but with the coming of independence our troubles seem to have multiplied. I feel that if we can digest true independence we should not be faced with such troubles. How should truly free people behave? Ours is such a remarkable freedom that to win it we did not have to fight like soldiers. We did have a fight of some kind, but it was fight which the whole world admires. When we have won our independence through such a struggle it must mean a great deal to us. But we do not value it so much. That is our weakness. I have made<sup>1</sup> a very simple, practical suggestion about not importing foodgrain. But I find that people are shocked by such a practical suggestion. Why? They say they are accustomed to importing grain. True, we have got into that habit. But it is not a very old habit of many years. It cannot be said that it is our habit to eat only when somebody feeds us. It is impracticable that we

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Speech at Prayer Meeting", 6-10-1947.

should go on issuing permits for whatever quantity of foodgrain can be provided. But my suggestion is absolutely practical. And what is there to be upset about it? India is vast country inhabited by hundreds of thousands of people. We have got sufficient land, and by the grace of God, sufficient water. I know there are certain desert areas in the country where water is not available. But it cannot be said that water is not available anywhere in India. When we have so much water, land and a population of millions why should we be afraid.

All I want to say is that people should realize that they have got to produce foodgrain by their own labour to satisfy their hunger. That would electrify the atmosphere and that zeal alone would solve half the problem. It is said, and rightly, that people die more through fear of death than by real death. There was a man who started thinking that he was going to die very soon. Why talk of some other man—take my own example. If I started thinking that I was going to die because I had a cough, what would happen? I shall die only when my time is up. That is in the hands of God. But if I start worrying about it right from now imagining myself on the point of death, it is dying without actual death. And being in such panic about death daily I would be creating trouble for people around me as well as for myself, and would be squeezing myself out day after day. I would be always lamenting about the approaching death. The better thing would be to take it easy till the moment of death and convince ourselves that there is no one who can kill us except God. He will take us away whenever it pleases Him. If we give up the fear of death our problems will also leave us, and we will be free of our troubles. I tell you, when we do this we shall not be troubled. Nobody should think of getting food through anybody's favour. Instead we should produce our food by our own labour. That is why I say that we should not die except by natural death. Let us give up this business of issuing permits and rationing which is the method of killing unnaturally. This much with regard to the food problem.

The same is true about cloth. I have already said that we can have four times more cloth than is available now. Why should there be shortage of cloth in our country? I am absolutely certain that there should be no shortage of cloth in India even if there may be some shortage of food. Why? Because India grows much more cotton than it needs. There are many people in India who can spin and weave cloth for their own requirements, and easily wear clothes made by

themselves. And thus we become truly independent as regards food and cloth and then do not have to depend on mills. At present we are not free in this sense, and if it is so, it is the result of our own ignorance. I had hoped that we would achieve such self-sufficiency. Those days are gone when I used to go round the country propagating khadi. I used to ask women to spin as much as they could. And they did spin, but it was without realizing its implications. They were not bothered about the wages. They spun and produced cloth. But now the picture is different. Today you do not have cloth. I say that we should produce cotton for our cloth, spin it and get it woven. There is no trouble weaving cloth for one's own requirements. But even if people don't do that they can certainly buy cloth from a shop. The Government can buy cloth from the mills and then distribute it to the people. Apart from this, those who can manage should take a vow not to buy cloth for a month or two. Let them buy khadi for their use and avoid buying chintz and cloth of fine varieties. When we don't buy cloth for a certain period, it does not mean that we will go naked. If we produce enough khadi in the meantime, we shall have solved the problem of protecting ourselves in winter. Here it is not the question of making blankets and such other things. The question is only of making enough khadi cloth for our personal use, and not buying from the market. If we do this much, prices will at once come down. Today prices of cloth have also gone up. Prices of all commodities are going up. But we do need some yards of cloth to make shirts, *kurtas* and other things. Let us buy khadi cloth for that purpose. As I have already said the idea thing would be to produce that much cloth ourselves. Let us decide not go to the shops. If we take a vow not to buy any cloth for a few months, let me tell you that the trouble will be over and we will be self-sufficient in the matter of clothing and food. Another advantage in my view is that it gives a feeling of self-confidence to the people and they become self-reliant and cease to be worried by shortage of cloth. They feel confident that they can produce their own clothing and their own food. If we do all this, the result can be great. We have become free, but only politically. The economic condition of crores of our people has not improved. But we do not realize this. We will realize it when we know that we are producing our own food and demand any price for it we want. We shall know it when we produce enough cloth to meet our needs. We have got enough cotton. We can even procure it from the mills. We should realize that it is not possible to have all our cloth from the

mills. But let us at least know this that we will not have to face any hardships. Then we can be at least economically free, and even the poor will feel that they have become free. Let us do this much and the consequences will automatically follow.

Today we are engaged in fighting among ourselves; but we can fight only when we have time to fight. But when we are occupied in work and all of us become workers, we will have no time left for quarrels and fights. We have got provision for food and clothing. Let us give up the habits of drinking and gambling. If we proceeded thus step by step in the right direction we would have no shortcomings left in us. We would on our feel that we do not want to fight. There would be no question of anyone being a Hindu or a Muslim. If anyone created trouble we would face it bravely. We would fight with him if we wanted to. But why should we die today under unnatural circumstances?

That is why I have tried to impress upon and convince you of this and if it appeals to your hearts, and we decide to follow it up in action, we shall rise very high and we shall not have to look to others for help. Whose help do we need? It is God who is going to help us. And whom does God help? God helps only those who are willing to help themselves.

[From Hindi]

*Prarthana Pravachan*—I, pp. 402-7

### 57. LETTER TO D. B. KALELKAR

NEW DELHI,

*October 10/11, 1947*

CHI. KAKA,

I gave to Kamalnayan your letter of the 8th. Naturally, I did not have the time to talk to him. I wanted to talk to Jawaharlal and also to Shaheed Saheb. I could read the whole letter only in the morning. In connection with (the memorial to) Dharmananda you have to collect an amount of Rs. 25,000. Kamalnayan may do the collection, if he can, without putting you to any trouble. Otherwise I am in any case going to take up the burden. You should, therefore, remain completely free from worry. The entire amount should be received at

one time.

Please note that the same applies in the case of the Hindustani Prachar [Sabha]. It will be all right if Kamalnayan can do it without bothering you. Otherwise I am mentally prepared to take up this burden too to the extent of Rs. 50,000. You will have to worry about it if my eyes close before that.

I am glad that finally you had to come to the conclusion that the headquarters of the Hindustani Prachar [Sabha] cannot be shifted to any other place. We should carry on the work taken up by the Jamnalal where he had launched it. If that cannot be and if it can be accommodated in another place without any difficulty, I will not be inconvenienced in any way by the transfer. I shall try to lay my hands on some person from around Delhi if I come across one.

I do believe that we should hurry up with the reorganization of linguistic provinces. But the atmosphere here is so vitiated that no work can be done speedily. I am vigilant all the same. There may be an illusion for the time being that different languages stand for different cultures, but there is also the possibility that with the establishment of linguistic provinces it may disappear. I shall write something [about it] if I get the time. Here again, I believe, we are not going to gain anything by rushing through it. I am not unaware that a class of people have been saying that linguistic provinces are wrong. In my opinion, this class takes delight in creating obstacles. I don't remember in what context, when and what I had said about the culture of the Bengali-speaking population. What is the use of recalling it? Even if I, who believe in the unity of India's culture, were to deliver myself of a contrary statement in some context, it ought to be regarded only as a seeming contradiction. We cannot but accept the sub-divisions of one culture.

I don't like what you say about Gangadharrao Deshpande. What does it matter whether people applaud him or forget him? Contentment or discontent are only products of the mind. Please ask Gangadharrao to wake up and know his own self. This is a new age in which new people will come to occupy positions and the old will be eased out. There is no reason to be happy or unhappy about it.

Politics will and ought to have non-polluting relationship with the constructive programme. The fact is that neither the people nor the Congress ever digested the programme. Had they been able to do

it [they would have realized that] it included politics. There is no question of the constructive programme being dependent on anything. And if it is it will not survive.

What you say about the Navajivan Trust is true, but we can do nothing about it. If changes are to be made in an already established trust, they can be made only according to the procedure laid down in the trust deed.

If the Hindustani Prachar Sabha had any source of income, it would have been its undoing. Either the institution has public utility or it hasn't. If it has, the public should support it. Many instances can be cited to prove that whenever such institutions possessed funds of their own the very purpose of the institution was defeated. The case of Anandji Kalyanji is much too well known. What does he do [now]?

Do what is necessary for Sushila Pai. You should see that she is not embarrassed. I know from any experience in Noakhali that she can do a lot of work. I have now fully replied to your letter.

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

### 58. *LETTER TO M. A. JINNAH*<sup>1</sup>

[*October 11, 1947*]<sup>2</sup>

MY DEAR QAID-E-AZAM,

Shaheed Saheb has reported to me your reactions to my endorsement on the suggestions drafted by him. I am sorry to learn about it.<sup>3</sup> I would never intend to give my casual remark the sinister meaning you are reported to have given it. In any case Shaheed Saheb's suggestions I endorse subject as follows:

<sup>1</sup> Originally drafted by Suhrawardy this bears corrections in pencil by Gandhiji.

<sup>2</sup> This was written two days after Gandhiji's discussion with H.S. Suhrawardy, *vide* "Discussion with H. S. Suhrawardy", 9-10-1947.

<sup>3</sup> In place of this and the following two sentences, the original draft had: "I am sorry if I have given you offence; that was not my intention; I only hoped that the suggestions would be given effect to. Shaheed Saheb has also shown to me the letter he sent to you before leaving Karachi as well as the declarations annexed to the letter. I agree with the suggestions made by him with the following addition."

In paragraph 2 (4) of his letter to you<sup>1</sup>—I would add:“and will submit to a tribunal of permanent arbitration selected from Indians alone (i.e., from the members of the two Dominions).” In Paragraph 2 (8) or in any other suitable place, I would like the following idea to be brought out: “Each State will induce the refugees to return and occupy their respective homes.”

I find that this idea to some extent is brought out in paragraph 3 of the declaration. It should be emphasized and steps taken to implement it.

In my opinion some such agreement as suggested by Shaheed Saheb should precede any move for hearty co-operation between the two States. What is wanted no doubt is like mind, like work and like action between the two.<sup>2</sup>

From a facsimile: *Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase*, Vol. II, between pp. 496 and 497

<sup>1</sup> The words, “of his letter to you”, have been added by Gandhiji.

<sup>2</sup> In place of this paragraph, the original draft had: “You have been good enough to ask Shaheed Saheb to let you know precisely what I would like you to agree to. I adopt the letter written by Shaheed Saheb and the declarations annexed as my own views, and would request you to agree to them, or at least let me know your reactions. I suggest that a conference may be convened at the highest level, in which you should participate if possible, when these points may be considered, and agreed to in the main. In my opinion such an agreement will immediately ease the tension and inaugurate a new era of co-operation beneficial for both the States.”

## 59. LETTER TO GOPINATH BARDOLOI

October 11, 1947

MY DEAR BARDOLOI<sup>1</sup>,

All the three grounds<sup>2</sup> are sound, assuming of course that there is no mistake about facts. You should certainly take the much-needed rest. I am saying all this without knowing the situation. I feel like the blind leading the blind. Therefore I am perhaps a worthless guide. May not Kakasaheb be your guide today? The best thing for you is to pray and do the best you can, health or no health.

This is a poor letter. But I can give you nothing better.

Yours,

BAPU

From a photostat: G. N. 5

## 60. SPEECH AT RECEPTION BY GUJARATIS

NEW DELHI,

*Rentia Baras, October 11, 1947*

When Nandlalbhai<sup>3</sup> told me that the Gujaratis wanted to see me and would also present a purse I was at once tempted to accept the invitation as I am a greedy man. But I did not know that I would have to make a speech.

As long as I was in South Africa I did not know that my birthday was important. When I came here the nuisance started. But I was lucky as the spinning-wheel was associated with it and that is how *Rentia Baras* came to be celebrated. These days the spinning-wheel is getting out of date. It is an emblem of ahimsa though nowadays it is very difficult to have even a glimpse of ahimsa anywhere. That is why I wonder why we should celebrate *Rentia Jayanti*. But it is in man's nature to go on trying. So I let people do so. I hope the Gujaratis wherever they are will work for ahimsa. But it is doubtful whether they will spin. It was after much effort that Gujarat has accepted khadi. Personally I wish that there is no foreign cloth in Gujarat and not even

<sup>1</sup> Chief Minister, Assam

<sup>2</sup> The addressee was thinking of resigning as Chief Minister due to health and other reasons.

<sup>3</sup> Nandlal Mehta

mill cloth. What shall I say about the great virtues of the spinning-wheel? I will be satisfied if all Gujaratis ply the wheel wherever they may be.

At the moment there is plunder going on in the name of religion. According to me this is a very sorry state of affairs. Now we are free and the days of slavery are over. Is this the way to make use of our freedom? Is licentiousness to prevail?

I have been told here that Gujarati children are taught Hindi also. Gujaratis have welcomed Hindi and many of them sit for examinations also. Hindi, that is, Hindustani, in the Nagari and Urdu scripts, can be easily understood. Punjabis will use only Urdu and those who do not know Urdu will use Sanskritized Hindi. That is why I showed the middle course of Hindustani. Learn both the scripts. Keep in mind that the villagers will not be able to follow Sanskritized or Persianized language, and you will be committing no sin at any rate by adopting Hindustani.

Thanks for the purse. We do need the blankets very badly. It is for us to provide all this. Government cannot do this. It is much easier for the Government, if we arrange these things among ourselves.

[From Gujarati]

*Dilhiman Gandhiji*—I, pp. 99-100

## 61. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,

October 11, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

Today is the twelfth day of the latter half of *Bhadrapad*. In Gujarat, that is, in Kathiawar and Cutch, the day is known as *Rentia Baras*. On this day people's attention is drawn towards the charkha and allied activities. People do not give up once they start on something, but today I think the atmosphere is unfavourable for an enthusiastic celebration of *Rentia Dwadashi*. I have given a wider interpretation to the charkha and India has accepted it as a symbol of non-violence. Today that symbolic meaning is lost. Had that meaning been retained, we would not have witnessed what we see today. Even then let me remind you of that meaning. It was enough that my

birthday was celebrated on October 2. But for the past many years my birthday has been celebrated according to the Hindu calendar also and the days in between are utilized for plying the charkha with great zeal. But today I do not find the atmosphere for it. Even so, if by the grace of God some regard the charkha as a symbol of non-violence it would indeed be good. It would be gratifying if even five persons take it as such, and still better if a crore do so. But even if there is one such person it will be good. That is why I have drawn your attention to it.

There is Mandal Saheb in Karachi who is a Minister in the Pakistan Cabinet. It is said that he is a Harijan from Bengal, but the Qaid-e-Azam has given him a place in the Cabinet. On his suggestion something was accepted. Some two or three others whose names I have forgotten also support his view. It is not possible for all the others to be with him. But what does it matter if even one or two are supporting him? A circular has been issued that all the Harijans in Sind should wear a badge round their arms, with the words indicating that they are untouchables, so that no one should harass them and throw them out. According to me the logical result of this would be (it would be fine if it was only my suspicion) that all those Harijans would for the present get employment, but later on if they stayed on there (all of them are not going to stay there; some have already left and some are going to leave, according to reports I have received from many letters) they would have to embrace Islam ultimately. If this is to be the result, it would be a dangerous situation. If any person wants to give up his religion and accept some other religion and thinks he is doing a good thing, he is entitled to do so. Today I regard myself a sanatani Hindu. Tomorrow if I start disliking sanatana dharma I am free to give it up. But this is a very serious matter. Who can stop me if I do not accept my religion? I am not tempted to become a Christian in order to improve my economic condition or gain some other advantage. I will have settled my accounts with God and would act in accordance with my conscience even if the world protests. I believe that no Harijan has any such conviction. I can say this with authority because I have become a Harijan, an untouchable, and I have accepted their religion. I expect that as far as the Harijans and others in Pakistan are concerned, it should be declared that they are safe. Then there would be no need for anyone to put on a badge. It should be declared in respect of all that, even if any individual says he has changed his religion of his own accord, his conversion will not be considered valid. Religion is a matter of the heart. It is between a

man and his God. But under the present Government in Pakistan no one can claim that he has changed his religion of his own free will. It is understood that anyone doing so has done it from fear or compulsion. That is why the Pakistan Government has to declare that there can be no conversion.

Then there is one more thing. There are going to be two festivals this month. One is Dussehra, which is a great festival. The Hindus all over India celebrate this and attach great importance to it. But it has a greater significance in Bengal. I know this since I have stayed in Bengal. Exactly two days after this, comes Bakr-Id. In former times there was not so much ill feeling amongst Hindus and Muslims. They did not fight as they do now, though there used to be some mutual bickering. Even the British Government had to be prepared in case something untoward happened on that day and Hindus and Muslims clashed. Any provocation was possible, like slaughtering the cow or taking the decorated cow in procession to provoke the Hindus. On the Dussehra Day everything is decorated, music is played and men and women wear gay dresses, some go in carts and some ride horses. But it can be a provocation for the Muslims and provide a ground for clash and then the Bakr-Id Day would similarly provide a ground to the Hindus. I would say that those Hindus and Muslims who wish to live together as friends are duty bound to exercise restraint when they celebrate these festivals. They should do nothing that may provoke the other side. Even without that our hearts are full of anger at present and our reactions are exaggerated. Under these circumstances, we should not do anything provocative.

While departing the British Government has done one thing wrong. They divided the country and now there are two Governments. Today they are like enemies. Maybe they will never fight. But events are following such a course that it is difficult to predict about the future. But let us hope that sanity will prevail on both the sides. But if this does not happen we may lose our independence. Letting the country be enslaved will be betraying one's religion. It would be a grave mistake to surrender our freedom. It is my prayer that God may grant wisdom to all of us and all of us should be purified. That would be a good thing. One more thing I would like to say is that our countrymen in South Africa may be careful when they carry out their

plan.<sup>1</sup> The two Governments here should give all possible help to those who are there and encourage them in their struggle.

[From Hindi]

*Prarthana Pravachan*—I, pp. 407-10

## 62. A STUDENT'S PERPLEXITY<sup>2</sup>

Here is an extract from a pupil's letter to his teacher who sends it to me for comment:

Two things completely possess me: my nationalism and my overbearing carnal passions. These always create seeming contradictions in my behaviour, and inconsistency in my decisions. I want to be the first servant of my country and at the same time enjoy the physical pleasures of the world. I must confess I do not believe in God although I am sometimes terribly afraid of Him. All existence seems to me to be an enigma. I do not know what awaits me at the end. I have seen dead bodies burning; my mother's was the last, and the scene influenced me terribly. I cannot bear to think that such shall be my fate. I feel sick at the sight of a wound; and to think that my body shall burn one day! I know, there is no escape. To me, there does not seem to be any life beyond. That is why I am afraid.

There are only two courses open to me: either to brood over it and pine away, or to enjoy the physical pleasures of the world, be lost in them and forget the end. I confess (I have confessed to you things which I have never confessed to anybody else) that I have chosen the latter course.

This world is the only reality; its joys are worth having for anything. Feeling for my wife who died recently was genuine feeling; but that feeling was not because she was dead but because I was left alone. For the dead there are no problems; for the living there are all. I do not believe in any pure love; the so-called love is nothing but sex. If there were anything like pure love, I should have felt more attachment for my parents than for my wife; but the reverse was the case. I have been a loyal husband but I could not have assured my wife that I would love her even after her death. My feeling would perhaps arise from the inconvenience that her passing away might cause me. You might call this cynicism but there it is. . . . Please write to me and guide me.

This extract covers three things. (1) Conflict between carnal

<sup>1</sup> According to a report in *Harijan*, 19-10-1947, it was proposed to resume the satyagraha in South Africa on October 12.

<sup>2</sup> The Gujarati original of this appeared in *Harijanbandhu*, 19-10-1947.

desire and nationalism, (2) God and future life and (3) Undeified love and sex.

The first is well stated. Carnal desire was the reality, nationalism was the fashion of the day. Nationalism in the sense of power politics is quite consistent with satisfaction of carnal desire. Instances from life can be multiplied. I have in mind nationalism in the sense of a burning love for the nation including the poorest. It must burn as it always has burnt carnal desire and the like. Thus there is no conflict but always victory of the latter over the former. All-embracing love of the nation leaves not a minute for any occupation that interferes with that ruling pursuit. He is lost who is possessed by carnal desire.

Uncertain faith in God and the future springs from the lust for life. This lust unhinges a man or a woman. Indecision consumes him or her. Faith in God will live when the animal passion dies. The two cannot co-exist.

The third enigma is a mere restatement of the first. Undeified love between husband and wife takes one nearer God than any other love. When sex is mixed with undeified love, it takes one away from one's Maker. Hence, if there be no sex consciousness and sexual contact, it is a question whether there is any occasion for marriage. The pupil truly says that there was no unselfish love felt for his wife. Had it been unselfish, death of life's partner would have enriched life for, the memory of the disembodied partner would have resulted in greater dedication to the service of down-trodden humanity.

NEW DELHI, October 12, 1947

*Harijan*, 19-10-1947

### 63. LETTER TO TEVANI AND DEBORAH

NEW DELHI,

*October 12, 1947*

DEAR TEVANI AND DEBORAH,

I have your letter. At the end of your letter you tell me that the Deputy Commissioner has promised to help you. May your wish be fulfilled. I think I told you when you were in Delhi that the whole thing would depend upon the manager there.

*Yours,*

M. K. GANDHI

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

## 64. LETTER TO PREMA KANTAK

October 12, 1947

CHI. PREMA,

I got your letter. I have no time at all.

I wrote on my own what I did. I never write anything at somebody else's suggestion.

I understand the reproach in your letter. What shall I say? I would never write anything which I know would pain you.

Shankarrao<sup>1</sup> brought the dhotis with the utmost care but through oversight they were sent for washing.<sup>2</sup> I intended to wear them unbleached. On asking for them, I came to know what had been done. But what does it matter? Thanks to the care of you all, at least I got them on the 11th if not earlier.

More when you come.

*Blessings from  
BAPU*

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 10457. Also C. W. 6896. Courtesy: Prema Kantak

## 65. LETTER TO SAMANT N. MARWARI AND OTHERS

NEW DELHI,

October 12, 1947

(Subject: Case of Ramji Gopalji Sabarmatiwallah)

BHAI SAMANT NANJI MARWARI, BHAI MOOLDAS BHOODHARDASJI VAISHYA AND BHAI MADHAVJI P. PARMAR,

I have your letter. I am surprised. Everything possible has been done for Bhai Ramji. Nor has Bhai Ramji spared (us) any trouble.

It is not worthy of him to entertain suspicions of even such noble men as Lakshmidasbhai, Naraharibhai and Parikshitbhai.

No one refuted what I said, what I gave in writing. It is not for me to interpret what I have written. We cannot stick to an interpretation which is prompted by self-interest. My advice therefore is that we should follow the interpretation offered by such eminent

<sup>1</sup> Shankarrao Deo

<sup>2</sup> The addressee used to send a pair of dhotis to Gandhiji on his birthday.

people as Dada Mavalankar. And then the last remedy is open for everybody. So let a court of law interpret it. Please offer appropriate advice to Ramji from what I have said so far.

Who can tell why my letter did not reach you? The vagaries of the postal department are nowadays too common. However, truly speaking, my wire should have been enough.

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

## 66. LETTER TO DILKHUSH DIWANJI

DELHI,  
*October 12, 1947*

CHI. DILKHUSH DIWANJI,

I got the khadi woven from the yarn left by Mother. I shall use it lovingly. Her blessings, I know, are ever with me. What if her mortal frame is no more?

I have no time to write more.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

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

## 67. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,  
*October 12, 1947*

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

Today also quite a few blankets have been received. As for the quilts I may say that they are being made by the mills as well. Those quilts too will be arriving. From the way blankets and quilts are coming, I have started hoping that the people who have been put here, that is, in Delhi and its neighbourhood, will have no trouble during winter. Arrangements are also being made to reach blankets, quilts and warm clothing to the needy. One thing should be remembered that the blankets that are being received will wear out in the end, but just now they can give protection against rain and dew. But the trouble with the quilts is that it will not be possible to save them from rain. God willing, it may not rain during the winter, but the dew is inevitable. Everybody may not get a blanket. I even doubt if there will

be enough tents to accommodate all. I had mentioned one thing while talking to some people, and I want to mention it here too. Those who get the quilts can protect themselves against the dew if they spread newspapers on the quilts. Then the dew will not pass through. Another remarkable thing about the quilts is that the amount of cotton used for making them gives sufficient warmth. When cotton breaks and forms into lumps the quilt can be opened up, the cover washed and the cotton used again after carding. With this the quilt becomes a new piece. It is a very useful thing for those who use it carefully.

A great calamity has befallen us. But those who think of God and work in the name of God find something to learn even from such a calamity. Two things are possible. One thing is that a person gets panicky or becomes enraged in the face of a calamity, and makes himself more miserable. But even in the midst of trouble if he thinks that he is having trouble for no fault of his own and yet he is never going to give up God and is always going to seek His help, he can create for himself happiness even in the midst of misery. Many of the people who have come as refugees here were well-to-do. They had lots of money and other property. They had big mansions, now all lost and gone. I have already said that till the people who have left their homes go back and are able to live in safety they will be a great burden on both the Governments. If we want to survive, if we want to remain free, we shall have to atone for the sin of this exchange of population. Atonement means making amends for our mistakes. Then only would it be true expiation. It cannot be done in any other way. When somebody really rectifies the mistakes he may have committed, he has done sufficient expiation. If we mean to correct our mistakes, then the people who have come here to save their lives must be in a position to go back. This may happen when the time comes, but what will you do in the meantime? I wish to suggest that in the meantime if good doctors are available—among the refugees there are doctors, lawyers and many others—they should give medical service and those under them also do the same, they can render really great service and even from these troubled times we can learn a new lesson.

When I went to visit the refugees I was told that 75 per cent of them were businessmen. It was a shock to me and I wondered how so many traders would be able to do their business here. Millions of traders have arrived here and if all of them start doing business all at once, everything will be in a mess. If they decide to put in some effort, learn to do something new, then it will be somewhat better. Let those

traders who were earlier engaged in business forget their past. It is a rule in the world that when we cannot get one particular thing, we must look for something else. Let us not sit idle, or waste time in gambling and drinking. We have got to do some work. Let us work hard. Those who are businessmen but are able-bodied and can use their hands and feet should do some work. There are quite a few jobs that do not require any particular training. Let them concentrate on such things and co-operate with one another. At the same time let them develop an attitude of working together. Then out of this hellish situation which has been created for us, we shall be able to create heaven.

I had decided to tell you about all this and thought that today I would explain everything in detail and through you convey it to everyone. The refugees and also the country would derive great benefit from it. And then, out of the misery that has befallen us we shall create happiness.

In this connection I want to say what we should do about the quilts we have not yet received but are going to get from various places. What shall we do about them? The cloth used in the quilts can be removed and washed if it has become dirty. The cotton can be kept back. Cotton does not get spoilt at all. It can be dried and cleaned with hand. We do not even need a carding-bow. It is another matter if we want to use that cotton for spinning. That cotton can be easily used for making new mattresses or quilts. I think if we make these things ourselves, they will be made cheaper and quicker. There is enough cloth lying with the mills. I do not wish to discuss the food problem at this stage. There is enough stock of cotton out of which quilts can be made in a short time. If these quilts are given to the people they would have protection in winter. These people must be taught how to prepare these things and given hope in the midst of despair which surrounds them. There is a *bhajan* which says that hope springs from unending despair. This is true. It is a poetic expression. We desire to have a glimpse of hope concealed in the deepest despair. What should we do to have that glimpse? The people who have been thrown on the streets must first realize that they belong to India, not to the Punjab or the North-West Frontier Province or Sind. All those provinces are in India and so the people from those parts also belong to India. They can become and remain Indians only on the condition that they are not a burden on others. Just as milk becomes sweet when you add sugar to it and then you cannot separate sugar from the milk and the milk

remains what it was, they too should mix and mingle with people wherever they go like sugar in milk and not quarrel or nurse hatred towards each other. They must be mutually helpful and co-operative and put in hard work. Then they can reform the province where they go and the people belonging to that province will say that they are willing to accommodate any number of such persons.

It is my hope that those among the refugees who are able to work and whom my voice can reach must persuade others to be good men. They should not be a burden anywhere but should live, as I have said, in amity and mutual adjustment. They should not cheat anyone. We should not waste our time. Let every moment of our time be dedicated to God, work and service. We were born to serve. If we live like this, we will forget that we were once plunged in misery and sorrow. There are millions of people around. Let them engage themselves in service. We were born to render service. Let us resolve to raise our country high, not bring it down. I think it will be a blessed moment when we realize this and then there will be no need to worry about anything. We may make mistakes. To err is human. But it is also human to correct the errors. When we rectify our mistakes, we become truly human.

[From Hindi]

*Prarthana Pravachan*—I, pp. 411-4

## 68. A BITTER LETTER

A Muslim friend writes:

I am a Muslim of nationalist views. Throughout my life, if I may be allowed to call my twenty-one years' existence so, I have never been able to think of myself in terms of Hindu or Muslim, however hard my elder brother, father and other relatives tried to make me do so. Naturally the Islamia College, Jullundur, would not admit me as I was a Quisling to my community.

My father with my other relations left Jullundur in April but I did not accompany them because East Punjab, and more so India, was equally my country as it was for my friends of the other creed. But brutal happenings of August have disappointed me beyond words. Even those boys who had organized processions with me in January, 1946 when Indian National Army people were being tried, wanted to have my life. After all I was a Muslim for them by killing whom they would get applause from members of their own

community. So I had to run for my life to Delhi where I thought that this treatment could not be meted out to those who believed in United India rather than in Pakistan. But it is worse here. Even my friends with whom I am putting up look upon me with suspicious eyes.

Now tell me, my dear apostle of liberty and equality, whether I should go back to my parents in Western Pakistan to be their but throughout my life and against my conscience, or I should stay in India as a hostage whose life is always sought against crimes committed by his inhuman co-religionists.

I have condensed the foregoing but little. The bitterness has not been touched. Assuming that the letter is accurate, there is ample excuse for bitterness. A persons's worth is, however, tested under the most adverse circumstances. Fair-weather friends are many. They are worthless, "a friend in need is a friend indeed." Have not persons belonging to the same faith, fought against one another exactly as the Hindus and the Muslims are doing now? What was to be expected of ordinary human beings after uninterrupted preaching of the hymn of hate all these

long years? If the correspondent will justify his nationalism, he must not deny himself at the crucial moment. We must avoid imitation of Judas Iscariot.<sup>1</sup> Hence I have no hesitation in advising the correspondent to return to his home in Jullundur even if he is to be cut to pieces by his erstwhile friends. Such martyrs will be saviours of Hindu-Muslim unity. If he proves as good as his word, I prophesy that his parents will receive him with open arms. Is it not the lot of us mortals that the innocent suffer for the guilty? It is as well that they do. The world is the richer and better for the sufferings of the innocent. I need not be an "apostle of liberty and equality" to reiterate this plain truth.

NEW DELHI, October 13, 1947

*Harijan*, 19-10-1947

<sup>1</sup> One of the twelve disciples of Jesus Christ, who betrayed him to the priests

## 69. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING<sup>1</sup>

NEW DELHI,  
October 13, 1947

Yesterday I made some remarks about the refugee camps which were missed in the English condensation. Let me extend them this evening as I attach great importance to them. Though we have our fairs, religious and other, and have our Congress sessions and conferences, as a people we are not accustomed to camp life strictly so called. I have attended many Congress sessions, conferences, and other camps. I attended the Kumbh Mela of 1915 at Hardwar and had the privilege of serving in the Servants of India Camp together with my co-workers who had returned from South Africa. Though I have nothing to record except kind personal attention to me and mine, my observation of the camp life our people lived is none too happy. We lack the sense of social hygiene, the result being dangerous insanitation and dirt with the attendant risk of outbreak of infectious and contagious diseases. Our latrines are generally beyond description. Absence of this class of provision is perhaps an apt description. People think that they can perform these functions anywhere not excluding even the much-frequented banks of the sacred rivers. Spitting anywhere without the slightest consideration for the neighbours is almost accepted as a right. Nor are our cooking arrangements any better. Flies are everywhere welcome companions. We forget that they might have sat a moment ago on any kind of dirt and thus might have become easy carriers of infection. Accommodation is not always planned. This is not an exaggerated picture. I must not omit the babble of noise one has to tolerate in these camps.

For method, planning and almost perfect sanitation, give me a military camp. I have never recognized the necessity of the military. But that is not to say that nothing good can come out of it. It gives valuable lessons in discipline corporate existence, sanitation, and an exact time-table containing provision for every useful activity. There is almost pindrop silence in such camps. It is a city under canvas brought into being inside of a few hours. I would like our refugee camps to approach that ideal. Then there is no inconvenience, rain or

<sup>1</sup> Since Gandhiji was observing silence his written speech was read out after the prayers.

no rain.

These camps become quite inexpensive provided that all work including the building up of this canvas city is done by the refugees who are their own sweepers, cleaners, road-makers, trench-diggers, cooks, washermen. No work is too low for them. Every variety of work connected with the camp is equally dignified. Careful and enlightened supervision can bring about the desirable and necessary revolution in social life. Then indeed the present calamity would be turned into a blessing in disguise. Then no refugee will become a burden wherever he goes. He will never think of himself alone, but always think of the whole of his fellow-sufferers and never want for himself what his fellows cannot have. This is not to be done by brooding but by prompt action under wise supervision and guidance.

Blankets and quilts continue to come. Soon it will, I hope, be possible to say that there will be no dearth of this protection against the coming winter.

*Harijan, 26-10-1947*

### *70. LETTER TO VIJAYA M. PANCHOLI*

NEW DELHI,  
*October 14, 1947*

CHI. VIJAYA,

I have your letter. If we are unable even to pour a bucket of water over a raging fire, can we aspire to live up to a hundred and twenty-five? To me this is clear enough. Why are you afraid? Nobody can harm one whom Rama protects.

I hope you are all well.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

CHI. VIJAYABEHN  
GRAM DAKSHINAMURTI  
AMBLA

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 7152. Also C. W. 4644. Courtesy:  
Vijaya M. Pancholi

## 71. LETTER TO JAYA

October 14, 1947

CHI. JAYA,

I got your letter. Forget about me. May your wish be fulfilled and may you go on serving for many more years to come.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

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

## 72. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,  
October, 14, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

Today also many blankets have been received. There is an institution called the Arya Kanya Vidyalaya here. Two teachers and some students from that institution came today. They have collected money to buy blankets. How much could they have collected? They got a few blankets. But they told me something which I thought was a great thing and I was happy when they started talking about keeping a fast. I told them that every lunar month has two halves, the bright fortnight and the dark fortnight. If they fix one day in each fortnight and keep a fast on that day, we shall be saving all the food that we get from outside. I consider it a grave mistake to spend money and get food from outside. By observing such fasts we save ourselves from making such a mistake. After they heard my suggestion the teachers of the Vidyalaya had a consultation with the girls. They did not compel anyone. But they decided to keep a fast on every Thursday and give in charity whatever they would be saving thereby. They would try to give whatever they were able to save. They also said that they would grow food on some land they had. They have taken upon themselves two tasks—to eat less and grow more food. I appreciated this much more than the blankets that have come from them. They were followed by the Ambassador of Iran and his wife. They sat for a little while but left behind a big pile of blankets. They wanted me to distribute the blankets if I could. I told them I was a beggar and would

receive whatever was available and pass it on to the needy.

Many Sikh gentlemen came to me. They came in two or three groups. I discussed many things with them. There is no point in telling you what I discussed. There was nothing secret about it. But the gist of my discussion which they and all others should well understand is that we are going to achieve nothing by indulging in such mutual fights. Passing judgments, giving punishment, acting in retaliation and so on are the things to be done by the Government. Let us do whatever we can through the Government. I think they were all in agreement with this. The rest of the discussion I shall leave out.

Then I heard another thing. Some people have been arrested. We are having our own Government and if it arrests some people it is free to do so. Quite often it is possible that innocent people get arrested. Our Government should not deliberately make the mistake of arresting innocent persons. Nor should it arrest anyone wilfully. But whatever we may do, a human being is a human being after all. He is prone to make mistakes. He is no angel. And he is certainly no God. So he is bound to make mistakes. If by mistake some innocent persons were arrested, what was the need to launch an agitation? But I hear there is some agitation going on against the arrest of some innocent persons. It is for the Government to decide whether or not those persons are guilty. I can understand if some evidence is placed before the Government to establish the innocence of a particular person. But harassing the Government in this manner, getting somebody released by resorting to agitation, is not the proper thing to do. When we fought against British imperialism and were jailed we used to demand the release of the prisoners saying that they were not guilty. That was indeed true. But they were guilty in the eyes of the Government, not ours. In those days we agitated against the British in protest against the arrest of our leaders. But against whom should we agitate now? Our Government in effect is a Panchayat Raj. The leaders represent the Panchayat. It is we who have made them leaders. That is why I say this is not the time to intimidate our Government by resorting to agitations. First and foremost, it is our own Government. It does not have the military strength which the British used to have in India. The British had the entire Navy at their command, because of which it used to be said that they were invincible and unrivalled. It is another matter if that claim cannot hold good today. Whatever it is, they had everything at their command. By dint of that force they

ruled over us. Now we are our own rulers. If we know that no other power is ruling over us and those who are ruling over us have been elected by us, we can also remove them. That is why I say that we should not take such an agitational approach.

The next thing I want to mention, about which I have already told you a number of times, is how we can establish perfect peace in India. It is a very complicated problem. I am not all that happy that there is not much trouble in Delhi. There may be stray murders here and there, but it is not a regular feature as it used to be. This is good. The Government can be happy about it, but I cannot. This is because I have not come here to rule. I have stayed on here by sheer coincidence. I stayed here in the hope that I would bring together both the sides which are riven with hatred and would be helpful in doing that. These communities used to quarrel in the past too. But they used come together once the quarrel was over. But today our hearts are poisoned, as if we had been enemies for several centuries. This is unthinkable. We should not be cowards, neither the Muslims nor the Sikhs, nor the Hindus. Then we would be frightened of nobody. The Muslims should cease to be frightened of the Sikhs and stop running away in fear. The Hindus and the Sikhs should give up fear of the Muslims. The Hindus, the Sikhs and the Muslims should no longer fear one another, if we wish to become a great military power. And, if we choose, India can develop a great non-violent and invincible army. We have two alternatives before us and there is no third way out. The way we are following is no way at all. It is the way of barbarism. There is no way in it to march forward. Thus, I wish to point out the way that can bring us close to one another. The most important thing is that the Hindus, the Muslims and the Sikhs should stop blaming one another as they are doing now. Let them all see their own mistakes and see them magnified like a mountain. The Muslims should not say that even though they committed mistakes at one time, the mistakes the Hindus and the Sikhs are committing today are so great that their earlier mistakes count for nothing. Nor should the Hindus retort by saying that even though they have committed mistakes, their mistakes are nothing compared to what the Muslims have done. What is so very great in answering mistakes with mistakes? If we Hindus and Sikhs try to satisfy ourselves by saying that that has always happened in the world, I would say that it is not the correct way. That way we can never sit together with a clean conscience. Today things have reached such a stage that the Pakistan Government

refuses to take in such a large number of Muslims. And then we begin to wonder if this is due to treachery on their part. What treachery could there be? But how does it affect us if it is there and they have some hidden motive? If we do not have enough courage not to be driven by suspicion, we are going to perish. But let me not talk about it. I wish to say only this much to the Muslims, the Hindus and the Sikhs, that they should not even hint at the faults of others. They should only acknowledge their own faults. If we know that we have committed a mistake, we must admit it. I had said yesterday that it is a vicious thing that the Muslims should regard the Hindus as their enemies. If we become such enemies, the result can be only unfortunate. What if Pakistan has come into being? Let us not give way to frenzy. We were enemies till yesterday. Let us be friends from now on. When we become friends, let us say that we were enemies at one time but now we are friends and we have forgotten our animosity. The Government should frankly tell the Hindus, Sikhs and all others staying in the country that it has made some mistakes and they must also realize the mistakes they might have made. But why should we make any mistakes? We will not do so. If we mutually resolve that we shall have healthy competition and instead of giving two blows for one shall remain calm even in the face of provocation and resolve to remain free from guilt, compete in being good, then let me tell you that all is well with us. And then I can leave Delhi with an easy mind. If I have got to stay on and even die in Delhi, I shall do so. I know how to do it. I have learnt nothing else. We have to die one day in any case. If we cannot do anything, let us at least die. But let us not kill. I am exhorting everyone to learn at least that much. Let us do or die. There is no third alternative. Let us not run away now. We cannot change our fate. We have animosity against none. Nursing animosity is no way of establishing peace in India. Only when we do not quarrel with anyone and abandon all fear can India pave the way to peace. If the Muslims want to live here let them live. Are they going to kill us? How will they kill us and why? Should they all go away from here? Why should they go away and where should they go? Today the people of Pakistan say that they are [not] in a position to absorb so many Muslims. But the Muslims are spread all over India. Pakistan is a small country. How can they all be crowded there? If Pakistan says no more Muslims can be taken in, we shall have to listen. Why should we imagine there is some duplicity involved? In any case, how does it affect us? But let us realize that we have our own fellowmen living

with us. If the Muslims are traitors let them be taken to task and treated according to law. Shoot or do whatever else you want if you find someone being a traitor and not being loyal to India. Shoot five, fifty or four crores; I am not bothered. I can at least understand that. But when one man comes and kills another just for nothing, how can we tolerate it? We should not tolerate it. And why should we, on our part, lose our heads? Why should we become such cowards? That is why I have said that if both the Governments have to function peacefully, let us compete with one another in being good. We are not going to win merely by saying that their mistakes are bigger. But we must realize that if we have made mistakes, we must remedy them. When we clear up everything, things will be well. I can talk much more, but it will be enough if you absorb what I have said today.

[From Hindi]

*Prarthana Pravachan*—I, pp. 416-21

### 73. LETTER TO MAHARAJA OF MORVI

[After *October 14, 1947*]<sup>1</sup>

I have both your telegrams. There was a time when I could send replies to individual messages. I am no more in that position, hence I have acknowledged them all through the newspapers without mentioning names and places. The same fate awaited those that came from abroad.

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

### 74. LETTER TO AMRITLAL T. NANAVATI

*October 15, 1947*

My estimate was Rs. 5 0,000, and it is approximately correct. I shall proceed accordingly. I shall write to people and do whatever else may be necessary for the purpose.

When I wrote<sup>2</sup> “I don’t know how long I shall be alive’, it was only a manner of speaking. You know that I am not going anywhere. The pile of work is so much that I can’t even find time to write. I am here to ‘do or die’ and am fully engrossed in work.

<sup>1</sup> In the source the letter is placed between those of October 14 and 16.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* “Letter to Amritlal T. Nanavati”, 24-9-1947.

I have already had a talk with Kisansinh of Baroda. He has agreed and says that he will give priority to our work. He will not think of convenience or inconvenience in this matter. So we will not have much trouble, though there may be a bit of difficulty.

Kakasaheb and you should think about the Press as also about the library.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 10816

## 75. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,  
October 15, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

Many persons come to see me every day. Some of them leave with me blankets and money for the refugees. A lady has given me today a cheque for Rs. 2,000. Two persons also came to see me on behalf of the Muslims. They have collected blankets and some money which they have passed on to me. They are craftsmen. They have not even given their names. I asked them to distribute those things themselves among their own fellowmen who have suffered. But they said they wanted to hand over the things in Gandhi's hands, because such things should be distributed among the Hindus and the Sikhs who have suffered in West Punjab. I was touched by their sentiment. In the present conditions even if a few Muslims or Hindus or Sikhs do things like these, they must be written down in letters of gold. They said that at one time they considered me an enemy of the Muslims; but now they were convinced that I was a friend to everyone. So am I, and I claim to be one. I do not need a certificate from anyone for that. I have lived in that spirit not for five or seven years but for the last 60 years.

It is generally said that every Sikh regards the Muslim as his enemy and *vice versa*. But this is absolutely incorrect. It is true that a considerable number of Sikhs went wild, as did a large number of Hindus and Muslims. But for that reason to say that the whole community of Sikhs is like that or that all Muslims are the same is quite unjust. I have with me innumerable instances showing how the Sikhs and the Hindus saved Muslims and the Muslims saved the Sikhs and the Hindus by keeping them in their own houses. Not only from

the Punjab and the Frontier Province but from every place such instances have been reported. The newspapers should give proper publicity to these things. Let them give up publishing the news about the Hindus and the Muslims killing each other. That does nothing but harm. The Press has become very powerful in the present world. It can render great service if it so chooses.

One-fourth of the entire Muslim population is concentrated in the U. P. They speak Urdu. If we want them to stay there the Devanagari script should not be forced on them. Malaviyaji too had worked much in the interest of Hindi. But I never heard him say that the Urdu language should be wiped out. Those who are in power in the U. P. today are big people and they are good workers. They keep the Muslims with them. But if on the one hand we say that the Muslims should not go from here, and on the other hand go on insulting them and try to keep them as slaves, then on their own they will be compelled to go away from here. Should our being in majority make us so arrogant that we would not tolerate the presence of others? We should never be like that. Everybody should learn both the Hindi and the Urdu scripts. If the Muslims want to go away to Pakistan of their own free will, they should be allowed to do so. But we must do our duty. After all, Muslims have left their stamp all over the U. P., and there are grand Muslim monuments in Agra, Lucknow, Deoband, Azamgarh and other cities. There are many nationalist Muslims in those places. Besides, there are many Hindus who know only Urdu. Tej Bahadur Sapru is a great Urdu scholar. Should he be compelled to write in the Devanagari script? Should he be asked to forget Urdu? Are we going to cut off our own hands? If we were to do any such thing, our excesses would reach the limit. I have no doubt that we will not be able to protect Hinduism in this way. We should not follow the example of Pakistan. Hence I call upon the U. P. Government in a spirit of love, even though I have no control over it, to withdraw its circular<sup>1</sup>.

[From Hindi]

*Prarthana Pravachan*—I, pp. 422-4

<sup>1</sup> A report had appeared in the Press that the official language of the U. P. would be Hindi in the Devanagari script.

## 76. ACTION IN INACTION<sup>1</sup>

A Correspondent writes:

In your article “My Duty”<sup>2</sup> you say that you have not reached that state. The sentence looks simple enough but I would like you to expand the meaning a little.

There is a stage in life when a man does not need even to proclaim his thoughts, much less to show them by outward action. Mere thoughts act. They attain that power. Then it can be said of him that his seeming inaction constitutes his action. I must confess that I am far from that state. All I can say is that my striving is in that direction.

NEW DELHI, October 16, 1947

*Harijan*, 26-10-1947

## 77. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

NEW DELHI,

*October 16, 1947*

DAUGHTER AMTUL SALAAM,

I read your letter to Abha. Consider it your duty to please Satis Babu<sup>3</sup>. I did all that I could for your brothers. Patiala is now but a dream. Bari Khan is here. I told him to write to you. All are safe but they had to leave Patiala for good!

Stay there in peace and do your work. Do not hesitate to write to me.

Abha is no doubt weak. I shall see what I can do.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 589

<sup>1</sup> This appeared under “Notes” which appeared in the Hindi original of *Harijan Sevak*, 26-10-1947.

<sup>2</sup> The source has “Action in Inaction”, which is a slip; *vide* “My Duty”, 22-9-1947.

<sup>3</sup> Satis Chandra Das Gupta, under whom the addressee was working

## 78. LETTER TO SUNDARLAL

NEW DELHI,  
*October 16, 1947*

CHI. SUNDARLAL,

I got your two letters. The description<sup>1</sup> that you have given does not tally with that of the others.

I have carefully gone through Mirza Saheb's<sup>2</sup> statement. Yesterday I gave it to Jawaharlal to read. He has taken it with him. Tell Mirza Saheb that I received his telegrams and did what was possible. But what could I do? The statements on the two sides were such that I had to keep silent. You must realize that I have very little power. The Government is not in my hands and I do not want to interfere in the affairs of the Government. Nor can I do so. I understand my limitations.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

SHRI PANDIT SUNDARLALJI  
C/O LALA ACHINTRAM  
BRADLAUGH HALL

From a copy of the Hindi: C.W. 10266. Courtesy: Purushottam Prasad

<sup>1</sup> The addressee had toured Pakistan and sent a brief account of his experiences.

<sup>2</sup> Speaker of Pakistan Assembly

## 79. LETTER TO ANAND AND GANGI HINGORANI

NEW DELHI,  
October 16, 1947

CHI. ANAND AND GANGI,

I have your letter. The condition of Sind is distressing. I am pained by Father's condition. I just don't know what to do. Do what both of you consider your duty.

If you have understood and assimilated my point, why should you go to America? However, if you feel depressed all the time because you are hard of hearing, go to any place in the world and get yourself cured.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

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

## 80. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,  
October 16, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

I have been forgetting to talk about Mysore. You must be aware of what has happened there. Sir Ramaswamy Mudaliar is the Dewan of Mysore. Mysore has joined the Indian Union. The people of that State are well educated. They have resorted to satyagraha quite often. This time too the people offered satyagraha. They wanted adequate share for the people in the administration. The Prince would remain and the people would be loyal to him; but he should withdraw from administration. This should have actually happened, but it did not. Hence the satyagraha. The people sent me a telegram before launching the satyagraha. They informed me that there was no cause for me to worry. They said they had decided to resort to satyagraha after a great deal of thought and they would strictly conform to the rules of satyagraha. They were ready to face any hardships in the pursuit of their goal. But the Dewan, Sir Ramaswamy Mudaliar, is a very great man. He has travelled all over the world. He realized that

the people could no longer be ill-treated. How long could it go on? The result was that all those who had been taken prisoners were released and the issue was settled between the Mysore State and the people. All the legitimate demands of the people were accepted by the State. The ruler, the Dewan and the people should be congratulated on this settlement. The State has agreed to rule with the consent of the people. There are many other such Princes. Let them also follow this example and, like the King of England, rule with the consent of the people. How wonderful it would be if they abided by the will of the people and did not overstep the limit!

Another thing which I want to say is that the place where I stay belongs to the Birla brothers. They allow everyone to come in. We must appreciate their good gesture. Usually lakhs of people attend the prayer meetings. But here the prayer meetings have been small. Actually I did not expect even the present number. Those attending these prayer meetings also include people who have come from the Punjab. I was very pained to learn that some people picked fruits from the trees around. Nobody should touch a single fruit on the trees. Why talk of fruit, not even a leaf should be plucked. The gardener would not at all like people picking fruits like that. There is a time even for picking fruits. They should not be plucked before their time. People who come here come to worship. Let our hearts be pure at least during the prayer meeting. During that period we should think of nothing but God. How then can we resort to stealing? It may be that we are all passing through troubled times. But let us not give up our good behaviour.

I have received another complaint too. People keep coming to see me throughout the day. Some of them say that by praising Government officers, the police and the military I have given them a certificate of efficiency. I have not said any such thing. Even if I did, it was a folly on my part or I must have been off my guard. But I have not said it at all. What I said was that they should all rise to the occasion. Not that they have already reached that level. It is one thing to say that a person should have such and such qualities and another thing for him to have those qualities. In any case, since I do not know anyone of them, how could I give them any certificate? How do I know that they are all working according to the law? Our duty is to abide by the instructions of the police and the military, because they are given a certain authority.

If we wish to have Panchayat Raj the first rule is that we should follow its orders. We have not yet achieved the full benefits of Panchayat Raj. Had we been truly non-violent, this would not have been so. Even so, the British rule has ended. The Governor-General, though he is a high-ranking officer in the Navy and belongs to the royal family, has remained here as our servant. He has to go by the opinion of our cabinet of Ministers. He is not our master. Rather, we are his masters. Thus ours is a democratic government and we must all abide by the laws made by it. If anyone has any complaint against Government officers the remedy lies in approaching Government or getting the complaint published in the newspapers. If any officer has taken to bribery or is inefficient, action should be taken against him. Those who indulge in graft are committing a crime against themselves and against the country. Recently some military officers were found flogging people at the railway station. No officer has a right to flog anyone. But in retaliation if we also start whipping we fall victims to the same evil. Before independence, Government officers used to behave like our masters and not servants. They were loyal to the British Government, and if they took bribes in those days, they were committing a crime against the British Government. But if the officers take bribes now, they are committing a crime against India. There is such a lot of difference in this.

Some people from Noakhali have also come to me. East Pakistan is no small country after all. Places like Dacca and Tripura are in East Pakistan. Those people tell me that the Hindus in Dacca are fleeing. They fear some atrocities there. Those Bengali friends have requested me to say something. I can say only what I have been saying all along. Nobody should leave his country or his home like that. The brave have nothing to fear. If at all, they are afraid only of God. They should not run away in cowardice. They must have the courage to die. They must tell the Pakistan Government that they wish to remain loyal to Pakistan and stay on there. They must assure it that they will not betray and cut at the roots of Pakistan. They must say that the Government may kill them, but cannot abduct their daughters. If the Government forbids the name of Rama they must insist on uttering that name. If it says they should not beat drums on the Dussehra Day, they must insist on doing so and explain that that is part of their religion. But it is very wrong that influential people run away from there in order to save their lives while the poor, helpless people stay on there. There is a large population of Shudras there. How can they be expected to show the requisite courage? If I am a

businessman possessing a lot of money, should I run away? That is not my dharma. If the lawyers, doctors, tradesmen, etc., find that they have got to leave their places, they should see that the poor have found their safety first. It is not human to run away leaving the poor behind. That can never bring glory to Hinduism, Islam or Sikhism. Wherever you go, you should always keep the poor with you. Unfortunately I am not in East Pakistan today. God has not given me the power to be present everywhere. I am just a human being and helpless at that. But I can certainly make my voice reach them all, and that I am doing.

Those Bengali friends told me that I should request Dr. Ambedkar to do something in the matter. He has done considerable work among the depressed classes. On this occasion he too should say a few things to the people there. Let him tell them that it is sinful to keep alive at the cost of one's religion. Such words would give them some strength.

I am also requested to send Suhrawardy Saheb over there. It would be proper too that he went there. But Suhrawardy Saheb is not here. He should be here in a day or two. But Khwaja Nazimuddin is already there. He too says that no Hindu or Sikh will be killed in Pakistan. Suhrawardy Saheb too will go there to help him. How can he avoid going there? Today, it is in the interest of everybody that Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs should live in amity. If this does not happen, both India and Pakistan will perish.

[From Hindi]

*Prarthana Pravachan*—I, pp. 424-8

### 81. NOTE TO SUNDARLAL

[About *October 16, 1947*]<sup>1</sup>

My first objection is in regard to the language. It seems you have forgotten Urdu. If so I shall write the letter. Raja Saheb<sup>2</sup> I am sure, knows his language. I am surprised. Somehow I do not approve of your letter. My cold is very troublesome. I cannot revise the letter now. There are other things to be attended to. So I will not revise it today but tomorrow I may.

From the Hindi original: C. W. 10267. Courtesy: Purushottam Prasad

<sup>1</sup> According to the addressee this was written about the same time as the letter dated October 16; *vide* "Letter to Sundarlal", 16-10-1947.

<sup>2</sup> Ghazanfar Ali Khan, Minister for Relief and Rehabilitation in Pakistan

## 82. LETTER TO JULIAN HUXLEY<sup>1</sup>

[Before October 17, 1947]<sup>2</sup>

I learned from my illiterate, but wise, mother that all rights to be deserved and preserved came from a duty well done.

The very right to live accrues to us only when we do the duty of the citizenship of the world. From this one fundamental statement perhaps it is easy enough to define the duties of man and woman and correlate every right to some corresponding duty to be first performed. Every other right can be shown to be usurpation hardly worth fighting for.

*The Hindustan Times*, 19-10-1947

## 83. A PUZZLE<sup>3</sup>

A friend writes:

It would be well not to discuss even by way of joke the possibility of a war between our two States. But you have gone so far as to express the opinion<sup>4</sup> that in the event of a war between the two, the Muslims of the Union should fight against those of Pakistan. Does it not then follow that the Hindus and other non-Muslims [of Pakistan] should do likewise? Now if such a war arises out of the communal question, no argument is likely to make the Muslims of the Union fight those of Pakistan and likewise the Hindus and the Sikhs of Pakistan. If, however, a war takes place between the two for other than the communal cause, you will not contend that the Hindus of Pakistan and the Muslims of the Union should fight Pakistan.

It is undoubtedly true that the possibility of a war between the two States should not be discussed by way of a joke. The adverb “even” does not fit in. For, if the possibility be a reality, it would be a duty to discuss it. It might be folly not to do so.

<sup>1</sup> This was one of the 60 replies to a request by UNESCO to thinkers and philosophers throughout the world for their opinions. On the basis of the answers a report was to be submitted to the U. N. Human Rights Commission in Geneva in December.

<sup>2</sup> According to a Reuter report, dated “Lake Success, October 18”, the letter was published in the United Nations’ Weekly Bulletin of October 17.

<sup>3</sup> The Gujarati original of this appeared in *Harijanbandhu*, 26-10-1947.

<sup>4</sup> *Vide* “Speech at Prayer Meeting”, 26-9-1947 and “Hindustani”, 27-9-1947.

It is my firm opinion that the rule that applies to the Muslims of the Union must in the same circumstances apply to the Hindus and other non-Muslims of Pakistan. I have expressed this view in my after-prayer speeches as also in my talks with friends here.

Of course, behind the opinion lies a train of reasoning. Loyalty cannot be evoked to order. If circumstances do not warrant it, it may be said to be impossible to achieve. There is a large number of people who do not believe in the possibility of such genuine loyalty and hence laugh at my opinion. Surely there is nothing to laugh at in conceiving such a possibility. The Muslims of the Union will fight those of Pakistan when they regard it as a duty, in other words, when it is clear to them that they are being fairly treated in the Union and that the non-Muslims are not so treated in Pakistan. Such a state is not beyond the range of possibility.

Similarly if the non-Muslims of Pakistan clearly feel that they are being fairly treated there and that they can reside there in safety and yet the Hindus of the Union maltreat the minorities, the minorities of Pakistan will naturally fight the majority in the Union. Then the minorities will not need any argument to induce them to do their duty.

It was our misfortune that the country was divided into two parts. The division was avowedly by reason of religious cleavage. Behind it might be economic and other causes. They could not have brought out the cleavage. The poison that fills the air arose also from the same communal cause. Irreligion masquerades as religion. It sounds nice to say that it would have been better if there had been no communal question. But how could the fact be undone?

It has been repeatedly asked whether in the event of a war between the two, the Muslims of the Union will fight against the Muslims of Pakistan and the Hindus of one against those of the other. However unlikely it may appear at present, there is nothing inherently impossible in the conception. There is any day more risk in distrusting the profession of loyalty than in trusting it and courageously facing the danger of trusting. The question can be more convincingly put in this way: Will the Hindus ever fight the Hindus and the Muslims their co-religionists for the sake of truth and justice? It can be answered by a counter question: Does not history provide such instances ?

In solving the puzzle the great stumbling-block in the way is

that truth is at a discount. Let us hope that in this holocaust, there are some who will stand firm in their faith in the victory of truth.

NEW DELHI, October 17, 1947

*Harijan*, 26-10-1947

#### 84. LETTER TO CHAMAN KAVI

NEW DELHI,

*October 17, 1947*

BHAI CHAMAN KAVI,

You seem to be after me. Your letter went to Pyarelal. He is in Noakhali. I keep moving about. Your letter therefore, after much wandering, reached me only yesterday. You are far away. You do not know the situation here. I have been away from the Ashram for a long time. I went away to Bihar, leaving Pyarelal in Noakhali. You do not know all this and yet you indulge in wild guesses. Pyarelal has already written to you. Do you know where I was, where Pyarelal was, after Mahadev passed away? Do you know that from the prison I wrote letters to no one? After my release from jail<sup>1</sup> I was ill for some time and as soon as I was a little better I started my incessant touring. If, therefore, I have failed to cope with some of your letters, it is nobody's fault; only the circumstances are to blame. It is only your latest letter that makes me aware that you are a Muslim. Nonetheless this awareness will be only momentary. What more can I write? There is nothing worth writing about. What can I say about the atmosphere which is full of poison?

Let us all pray. My resolve is to 'do or die'. The Lord, our Master, is there to see me through it. Noone can undo what He has willed. Won't you now have a hearty laugh?

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

<sup>1</sup> On May 6, 1944

## 85. INTERVIEW TO THE PRESS<sup>1</sup>

October 17, 1947<sup>2</sup>

Q. In case the UNO fails to do justice by the Indians in South Africa, what line of action would you advise the South African Indians to take?

A. I cannot even think of failure in satyagraha. It never fails. This is my firm belief.

What effect do you think the failure of the UNO to deal justly with the South African-Indian dispute will have on the future of that organization?

If the UNO fails to deal justly with the South African-Indian dispute, the UNO will lose its prestige. I have no doubt that the UNO can prosper only if it is just.

And what will be the effect of the failure on the world?

About the effect on the world no one knows. At least I do not.

Racial inequality must be removed if there is to be peace in the world. What is your advice to those who agree with this but do nothing to fight the evil of racial inequality?

Those who agree that racial inequality must be removed and yet do nothing to fight the evil are impotent. I cannot have anything to say to such people. After all the underdogs will have to earn their own salvation.

What remedy do you propose for the elimination of racial prejudice and antagonism from the affairs of mankind?

The solution is largely in India's hands. If everything is all right in India internally, she is likely to play an effective part in straightening out affairs.

What message have you for our countrymen overseas living in a distracted world?

The spirit of India at its best should be exhibited by each one in his own person. Our shortcomings must be buried in India.

*Harijan*, 26-10-1947

<sup>1</sup> This appeared under the title "Indians Overseas". The interview was in Gujarati.

<sup>2</sup> From *The Hindustan Times*, 18-10-1947

## 86. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,  
October 17, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

People write to me and also enquire personally, why my cough is not still cured. Whenever I speak a little after the prayer I start coughing. I am not taking any treatment either from a doctor or a vaid. Doctors tell me that I have allowed it to continue for three weeks while the cough can be cured within three days by taking penicillin. But according to me Ramanama is the greatest medicine. It is infallible. Like the arrow of Rama which never failed to hit the target, this medicine too never fails. But one must be patient. I can think of no other alternative in the present circumstances and in the context of what is happening in Delhi and all over the country there is no other help except God. Whatever I try to do as a human being results in failure. There was a time when my words carried much weight. Today they have no impact. Have I done anything wrong? Or is it that I no longer talk from my heart as I did in former days? But I do speak from my heart and you also listen. But times have changed. Every age has its own feature. It should be so and it is so. But it will not have any effect on me. I do not let that happen. I am what I have always been. I know that I have been saying now what I have said all along. I have the same faith in non-violence and truth as I had before. Maybe, my faith is much deeper now. The times have changed but I have not. Prayer has an effect on those who listen to it in good faith. Man can act only according to his own nature. There is no room for hypocrisy in this.

What I am doing today is in the name of God. I trust Him. Why should I give up Ramanama just for the sake of this minor illness? Either this illness has to go or I have to be overcome by it. What is so very great if man dies? Everyone is ordained to die from the time of his birth. If God wants something done through me He will keep me alive, otherwise He will kill me by this cough. The *bhajan* which the girl sang a moment ago says that one should repeat Ramanama. One should forget desire, anger, attachment, infatuation, but never forget Ramanama because He is one's sole refuge. It is for one to sing the *bhajan* and meditate on it. But when I start coughing at such moments, doctors or v aids ask me to take penicillin. Where is

Ramanama in this? When I do not have faith in Ramanama regarding trivial matters, how can I succeed in bigger things by relying on it? If I do not put in my own effort I would go down and become worthless. Others may not take that view, but I would have fallen in my own eyes. Why should I forget Ramanama in order to cure this ordinary cough?

As usual some blankets have been received today also. Some cheques too have been received. With great enthusiasm a Muslim gentleman came and left a quilt containing two and a half seers of cotton. He wants it to be given to someone who had nothing to cover himself with. Arrangements are being made to do that. It is being remarked that things are not being given to the people with as much enthusiasm as would be expected. As for myself I want to express my gratitude to the people that they are sending blankets and money so promptly. Some people send money because they cannot buy blankets at cheaper rates. They want us to buy the blankets at a cheaper price on their behalf.

Rajendra Babu had called a committee to discuss the food problem. The committee did not discuss anything about the problem of cloth. With regard to food and cloth I continue to hold the same views that I have held the past few months. I agree that the poor are put to greater hardship and they would be worse off. Some people write to me and those who are working among the peasants came and told me that the peasants were happy about what I have said. They feel that it would help them to get rid of the controls imposed on them. They would have at least some opportunities. Their granaries are full. Are they going to consume the entire stock of grains? Even if they want to earn money, would they resort to black-marketing? Peasants are simple-hearted people. Why should they resort to black-marketing? They are happy if they get a small margin of profit. What have they got to do with scheming or black-marketing? And so, let me tell you, and through you the Government, that we should have at least that much faith in the people. Why do we not have the courage to scrap rationing? We need not fear any untoward consequences. Why have you assumed that people have become wicked and are hiding their food stocks? After all, you yourselves are the Government. You can again revert to controls if you find that the situation has worsened. There is no justification for making people after if you do not have that much courage. Things should be done according to the practice of Panchayat Raj.

Mill-owners say they have piles of cloth stocked with them. But how can they release it when there is control on it? I do believe that they are not talking about their own profits. They are talking purely in the interests of the people. If they are given freedom they can bring out their stocks and cloth can reach the people. How terrible it is that there is enough stock of grains in the country but it does not reach the people it should. It seems to me that there is something basically wrong about it. Our bureaucrats wish to work sitting at their desks. They have in front of them their tables and red tape and wax. All that they have to do is to put red tape and make the file. Have they ever lived among the peasants? Have they ever acquainted themselves with the peasants? Very respectfully, I wish to tell them that they should not take it for granted that people will die. With open eyes we see that people are dying because of controls. Those who are given to evil things and acts of madness continue to indulge in their activities, but their strong points are not seen. I would say that both these controls should be removed as early as possible. Even if there are some hidden stocks, people will become vigilant. The soaring prices of cloth, food-stuffs and other things will come down. Now there is no war and nothing is going out of the country. But the prices are still going up. I feel it is most disgraceful and our heads should hang in shame. The Government should trust the people and have courage. It should act boldly and remove controls as early as possible. This is my firm belief which is increasing day by day.

Today we are all agitated. All through the day we fear death at the hands of the Muslims or the Hindus or the Sikhs. We are obsessed by that fear and can think of nothing better. There is animosity between these communities, but we cannot get over it by brooding over it. Our scriptures also say that man becomes what he thinks. The poison spreads in our system. It affects our thought and then the Hindus want to kill the Muslims and the Muslims want to kill the Hindus and the Sikhs. If we continue to think along these lines, it would become our second nature. Are we going to be reduced to this state after attaining independence? I can never call this Panchayati Raj.

I have received a telegram from South Africa. It says that I have done them a great favour. What favour have I done? I have merely stated<sup>1</sup> what I believe to be good. This is one great thing about

<sup>1</sup> Vide "Speech at Prayer Meeting", 11-10-1947.

satyagraha. When the Punjab was under Martial Law, a reign of terror was let loose. Hundreds of thousands of men had to crawl on their bellies. They crawled on their bellies because they loved their lives. I have forgotten the name of that narrow lane in Amritsar. They crawled on their bellies simply in order to remain alive. They were threatened with death if they refused to crawl. But why should anyone do such a thing merely in order to live? They could have stood up and refused to crawl, saying, "Never to accept defeat even if we have to die."<sup>1</sup> It is perfectly in tune with the spirit of satyagraha to say that we shall not be defeated even if we have to die and lose all our possessions. This involves truth. A wrong action involves falsehood. What does it matter if there are only a handful of people in South Africa? How can there be millions to offer satyagraha? In any case, the population there is only a few lakhs. Even if a few hundred, even if only ten persons come forward, they will add to the prestige of India. They ask me why I do not also request the people here to send money. That pains me. They are not poor people. They have gone to South Africa to make money. They have not gone there to oblige us. Those who are carrying on the struggle there do not have much money, and the moneyed people do not give them anything. Those who own money begin to love only money. They see their honour and respect only in money. Our people in South Africa say they are fighters, but don't have much money. If they don't have money, how have they carried on so far?

There is a large number of our people in East Africa. The entire East Coast is full of our people. I would ask them to send money. Our country is almost impoverished today. With what face can I ask anybody here to send money? We do have millionaires in our country and they make millions too, but even they are left with little money because of heavy taxation. And to our misfortune the people are fighting among themselves, and that also results in the loss of millions. How can I ask them to spare money for South Africa? When I was in South Africa people from here used to send money, Gokhale<sup>2</sup> used to send money. The Punjab and the whole of India had sent me something between 5 to 7 lakhs. I don't think I can ask people to do any such thing today. There are many Indians in Mauritius. They are

<sup>1</sup> The first line of the verse written by Pandit Rambhuj Dutt Chowdhary, during the Martial Law in the Punjab

<sup>2</sup> Gopal Krishna Gokhale

coolies there. There is no communal problem in that place. There is a large number of Indians in Mombasa. They are pretty rich. They do not drink, nor do they go to prostitutes. They need money only for their food. How much money does one need for food? Our people in South Africa can say that they are fighting not for themselves but for India. Of course, I cannot stop people from sending money there, but I cannot ask them to do so, either.

[From Hindi]

*Prarthana Pravachan*—I, pp. 428-33

## 87. NOTES

### TRUE ADULT EDUCATION

Of all the numerous letters and telegrams received for the Charkha Jayanti, a letter in Hindustani received from the Indore Adult Education Association most arrested my attention. The purport of it is that the Association in question instead of wasting time in performing some flattering function, devoted the *Jayanti* week to doing urgent and useful work, i.e., young and old, rich and poor, official, and non-official, banded together in destroying a noxious weed harmful to man and beast. If such co-operation became the abiding feature of any locality, it would constitute the best education for young and old and change the face of the society in which it was done.

### SEASONABLE QUOTATIONS

From among letters and telegrams received during my little fast in Calcutta in September last, I kept the following for the *Harijan*. It is from Prof. Horace Alexander.

This morning's news from Calcutta fills us all with grief; but we must not despair. God has shown us during this past fortnight what can happen to those who have faith in Him. The devil trips us up again but you, through your fast, bring us back to God again. I am reminded of two sayings:

From Browning:

“To dry one's eyes and laugh at a fall,

And baffled, get up and begin again,

So the chase takes up one's life, that's all.”

And from the Old Testament:

“Though He slay me, yet I will trust Him.”

NEW DELHI, October 18, 1947

*Harijan*, 26-10-1947

## 88. LETTER TO GOMATI K. MASHRUWALA

NEW DELHI,  
October 18, 1947

CHI. GOMATI,

I understand your letter. Your pain is from ignorance. I also referred<sup>1</sup> to [your letter] in yesterday's prayer speech without giving your name. My cough is almost cured. It is not troubling me any more but I do cough a little when I speak. It is almost like "Those who are in it enjoy rare happiness, the spectators are scorched." It is not that I have been careless about it, though I am more and more inclined towards relying on Rama. One who relies on Rama can never be careless. He becomes more and more indifferent as to outer treatment and in doing so it can be tested whether or not Ramanama has reached his inner being. Don't worry about me at all. If God grants me strength and reason I wish to do or die here.

I hope now you understand everything.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C. W. 10732. Courtesy: Gomati K. Mashruwala

## 89. LETTER TO DEV PRAKASH NAYYAR

October 18, 1947

CHI. DEV,

Enclosed is a cheque for Hunar.

I too had a letter regarding Chand's<sup>2</sup> illness. Chand will probably come here in a few days. I had thought that Sushila must have written to you. She has gone to Kurukshetra today. There is no cause for worry about Chand. I do not see any necessity of your going to Sevagram. I shall write on receiving further news of Chand.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Hindi original. Courtesy: National Archives of India

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Speech at Prayer Meeting", 17-10-1947.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* also "Letter to Chandrani", 20-10-1947.

## 90. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,  
*October 18, 1947*

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

Blankets and cheques are still coming, but not at a satisfactory rate.

I have seen the statement issued by Sardar Patel in which he has extended his hand before the people. That shows that if we sit back depending on the Government no work can be accomplished. The Government cannot cope with the situation. It is just as well that Sardar Patel has issued the statement. It will indeed be good if we can provide some protection to the people who have nothing with which to face the cold.

That is exactly what Dr. Sushila Nayyar is doing. She regularly goes to the Purana Quila and to many other places. Today she has gone to Kurukshetra because a new camp has been set up there. People are making arrangements there, but she is a big doctor. Another lady doctor too has accompanied her. Mrs. John Matthai and many others also have gone there. Let us help them as much as we can.

I talked to you about Hindustani yesterday. Now many people are writing to me to say what a ridiculous thing I am doing. I do not think it is ridiculous. I think I am doing a very good thing for Hindustani and the Union. I serve them by doing so. Those people write to me that the trend towards Hindustani started during a period when we had fallen on evil times and were under subjugation. But we forget the fact that those people, even though they came as invaders, settled in this country. They started to think how they could settle down in this country. As a matter of fact, Urdu was born out of this fusion and it acquired a distinct form as in course of time they crammed Arabic and Persian words into the language. They even put a new garb on it. Its grammar also comes from those languages. That is not the case with Hindustani whose grammar belongs to this soil. Whatever Persian words there are in Urdu have been there for ages. It is not for us to pick out those words and remove them from the language. The people who came as invaders settled down here and adopted local customs. I think if we hate them now it will be as good

as hating ourselves. But today I am mentioning this for another reason. I have written sufficiently about it. As far as the English language is concerned it was different. The British came here to build an empire. They had no intention of settling here. They never came to belong to India. They always considered themselves outsiders here, and wanted to remain as such. They wanted their children to be brought up outside India. Later they also introduced the English language. Slowly they gave it a particular shape. Nothing happened to English similar to what happened in the case of Urdu. Urdu came into being from avadhi or other languages spoken at that time. But that is not the case with English. Now the British rule has ended in India. But what will be our fate if the English language continues to dominate us and we cannot carry on our administration without that language? Will the millions of India then learn English? Will English become our national language? Let me tell you very plainly that that is not possible. Let us not even try to do any such thing. We are sure to ruin ourselves if we ever try to do so.

A gentleman writes to me to say that I am mistaken. He says that all those who carry on the work in the country have studied English. But only a handful of people have studied English. It is true that they carried on their work in English in courts and offices, because they could thus exercise their authority. Those who have lived in slavery get used to liking the language of the State. That is all right. But when the poor Hindustani or Hindi-speaking people go to courts and offices where the work is carried on in English, they understand nothing at all. This is only betraying our intellectual bankruptcy. We just do not want to understand anything. We do not even want to know where our interests lie. The British rule has gone. Now the English language too will have to come down from the pedestal on which we have installed it and where it should never have been. A gentleman writes to me that quite another interpretation will be given to what I am saying. For people never see the intended meaning in things.

Today we have all lost our heads. All that is left is that the Hindus fight the Muslims, cut their throats, refuse to sit with them. Rajkumari Amrit Kaur who returned from Simla only yesterday or the day before, told me that poor Muslims who had lived in Simla for many years had to be removed from there merely because they were Muslims. We have become so uncivilized. What hardships they must have suffered while moving from there! There are large numbers of Hindus in Pakistan. They also complain about the same thing. These

things follow one after the other.

Some people say that Sanskritized Hindi is the national language of India. That English is now on the way out but people will carry on their work in the language of their province. There is a justifiable fear of conflict in this matter which is bound to create mutual hatred. English cannot continue, because there are only a handful of Englishmen here. And it is not up to them to carry on the Government.

[From Hindi]

*Prarthana Pravachan*—I, pp. 433-5

### 91. LETTER TO THADANI

NEW DELHI,  
October 19, 1947

MY DEAR THADANI,

Here is a postcard from Prof. Desai<sup>1</sup>. You see his verdict. Don't be carried away by the praise that people may bestow upon your work. Profit by their criticism when it is not based on ignorance or prejudice.

Of course I had all your previous letters and I have your books before me.

Love.

BAPU

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

### 92. LETTER TO VIKRAM V. DESAI

October 19, 1947

CHI. VIKRAM<sup>2</sup>,

I got your postcard. You should write bigger characters. The lines you draw to rule the paper should be even. The space between two lines should be uniform and wide enough for bigger characters.

<sup>1</sup> Valji G. Desai

<sup>2</sup> Son of Valji G. Desai

The characters should be as neat and well formed as pearls. Can one ever forget you?

*Blessings from*

BAPU

CHI. VIKRAMADITYA  
C/O PROF. VALJI DESAI  
14 GANESHWADI  
POONA-4

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C. W. 3173. Courtesy: Valji G. Desai

### 93. *LETTER TO VALJI G. DESAI*

*October 19, 1947*

CHI. VALJI,

I have sent as many of your articles as I could read. It would be better if you could translate the English articles into Gujarati, too.

*Blessings to all of you from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C. W. 3173. Courtesy: Valji G. Desai

#### 94. LETTER TO RAIHANA TYABJI

NEW DELHI,  
October 19, 1947

CHI. RAIHANA,

I understand your anxiety. I made enquiries on the basis of what Kakasaheb had told me. The result (of my enquiry) can be seen overleaf. May I hope you will not be depressed any more? What is unhappiness for people like us, or even happiness for that matter?

God bless you.

*Blessings to you and Saroj<sup>1</sup> from*

BAPU

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

#### 95. LETTER TO D. B. KALELKAR

NEW DELHI,  
October 19, 1947

CHI. KAKA,

I made all the arrangements I could on the basis of your letter. I informed the Sardar and made prompt inquiries. Now please send this very letter to Raihana. The papers enclosed pertain to your side.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

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

#### 96. TALK WITH LORD AND LADY HANDES<sup>2</sup>

October 19, 1947

LADY HANDES: Which are the thoughts uppermost in your mind when you observe silence? Or what do you think of while observing silence?

GANDHIJI: I think of God.

What is your prayer to God for your people?

Only that they become good and righteous. This girl Manu is

<sup>1</sup> Saroj Nanavati

<sup>2</sup> Who came to see Gandhiji at 12 noon

my granddaughter. She was the only person who accompanied me all the way in my Noakhali tour. During that tour she found a melodious tune. Of course she has not composed it. It is more true to say that God Prompted her to say: “*Ishwar Allah tere nam sabko sanmati de Bhagawan.*” But I don’t pray to God begging for something. God is Omnipotent, Omnipresent and omniscient. He dwells in the hearts of all. His ways are not like the ways of imperfect men. It is not that He gives us something only when we ask for it. He knows best what we need and what is beneficial for us.

He gives what is good for us without our asking for it. He is so generous and kind-hearted that His heart melts for the poor. Where is the need for asking anything?

Often you observe silence, not only on Mondays. What is the object behind this daily silence?

Physical rest. Observing silence on Mondays is an altogether different thing. It has a spiritual significance. For one who has learnt the art of silence, it is a means of introspection. Observing silence has become a part of my life. I don’t have to make any effort for it.

In the end Lady Handes asked Gandhiji about his programme and what his permanent residence in Delhi would be. Gandhiji said:

I wish to do or die here, so I am here till then. There are only two plans at present. Either permanent peace is established here or I die in the attempt to establish it.

[From Gujarati]

*Dilhiman Gandhiji*—I, pp. 121-2

## 97. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,

October 19, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

You feel that if the prayer is started at 6 p. m. it gets quite late as the days are becoming short. Each day becomes shorter by two to three minutes and by December 23 the day becomes very short. As it gets dark quite early these days we shall start the prayer at 5.30 p.m. from tomorrow.

You have already heard the *bhajan*<sup>1</sup> today. I think I have not

<sup>1</sup> No. 151 in *Ashram Bhajanavali*.

narrated to you the touching story of the *bhajan*. There is an *Ashram Bhajanavali* and all the *bhajans* in it have history behind them. Not all of them are well selected, though some are. But the whole collection was prepared in the Ashram. There used to be a great devotee in the Ashram who was also a musician. His name was Pandit Khare<sup>1</sup>. He prepared this collection of *bhajans*. Of course, he did take help from Kakasaheb and others. This *bhajan* was included in the collection. My nephew Maganlal Gandhi used to sing this *bhajan*. He stayed with me for a long time at the Ashram in South Africa. It is not that only Pandit Khare has prepared such a collection. Many others have also done so. For those were the days of our non-violent struggle for freedom. After some years many people felt frustrated that we had not yet won freedom. It could only be concluded that there was something wrong with us. Good people should never think that when something goes wrong the reason is to be sought elsewhere. It is not right to think that the blame lies with our neighbours or our brothers but not with us. That is no the right way but the wrong one. It is incorrect to think that when things go wrong the fault lies with others and never with us. All devotees of God have said this. Tulsidas has said the same thing. So also Surdas who sings: “Who can be so crooked, wicked, or dissolute as I?”<sup>2</sup> Neither Tulsidas nor Surdas was such a person; but they regarded themselves as such. The more they remained away from God, the more unhappy they felt, even if they were surrounded by brothers, sisters, sons, friends and everybody else. They reflect with a sigh that there is none as crooked, wicked or dissolute as themselves. It is good that they searched within themselves for faults. This *bhajan* also expresses the same sentiment. Here the poet asks why he is alive though he has no seen God so far. As a rule it was Pandit Khare who used to sing this *bhajan*; but sometimes when he was not present or was ill, Maganlal used to sing it. Maganlal was no musician but he had a good voice. That *bhajan* as he sang it, still rings in my ears. He was the pillar of the Ashram. He was like a rock in the management of the Ashram. He was very sturdy. He would be always ahead of everyone else in digging with the pickaxe. He used to have a very strong body when he was in South Africa. But when he came here he lost weight, though he was not ill. Though he had to shoulder the entire responsibility there, here the unusual thing was that

<sup>1</sup> Narayan Moreshwar Khare

<sup>2</sup> No. 106 in *Ashram Bhajanavali*.

he had to work among crores of people. He shared considerable responsibility of the constructive programme. How can we dispense with the constructive programme? What can swaraj mean without the constructive programme? We have attained independence, but what is its worth? What if we have achieved independence? Today we realize that if we had done sufficient constructive work in those days we would not be witnessing the scenes we see today. Is this the swaraj we had in mind? If we had done that much in those days, India's history would have been different. I have no doubt about it at all. Maganlal's God was in swaraj. His swaraj was *Ramarajya*.

God can be seen only in swaraj. After all, God does not possess any physical form. Some say He is a four-armed figure bearing in His hands the conch, the disk, the mace and the lotus. This is all our own imagination. How can God bear the conch, the disk, the mace and the lotus? He is *niranjan*<sup>1</sup> and *nirakar*<sup>2</sup>. When He is beyond physical existence how can He have a physical form? We create an image of God and then believe in it. Where, then, should we look for our God? Let us see Him in our actions. When we do anything considering it as *yajna*, we install God in our hearts. For instance, when a person plies the charkha, he sees God in the yarn he spins. When he realizes that the whole world belongs to him and his world consists of India where the poor, who do not get enough to eat, live, and that he is spinning for their sake or for *Daridranarayana*, he sees God in the yarn he spins. Swaraj was far off in those days. But when the Ashram was not functioning well, many a time Maganlal used to sing with a sigh: "Still does cruel life cling obstinately to the body". Then the *bhajan* goes on to say that the four *prahara* passed like four *yugas*. It means that even though the whole night has passed, life has not yet gone from me. The four quarters of the night have passed like four ages. That is, the night of four quarters passed but my body did not perish. He finds four quarters as long as four ages. I also find them as long. We had not won our freedom then. Now I admit that we have won it on August 15. But I do not regard it as true swaraj. It is not the swaraj of my conception. Nor can this swaraj be called *Ramarajya*. Today we have come to regard each other as enemies. Muslims are enemies of the Hindus and the Hindus and the Sikhs are enemies of the Muslims. But swaraj of my conception means that we do not want to regard

<sup>1</sup> Spotless

<sup>2</sup> Formless

anyone as our enemy, nor do we want to be enemies of anyone. That swaraj has not yet come. Should the Hindus and the Muslims in India consider themselves enemies of each other? Will our brothers live in mutual animosity? Why do I say this? I had mentioned this briefly once, but I wish to say it again and again that if we truly desire to rise higher, we should all live like brothers. We have fallen at the moment and are probably still going down. Our hearts are full of murderous thoughts and hatred. We get incensed at the very sight of a Muslim. If we find him praying in the mosque we go and kill him. We regard him as our enemy and wonder how we should drive him out and turn his mosque into a temple. But think, what wrong has he done in praying in a mosque? The temple and the mosque are one and the same. Then why is it that the Muslims should destroy the temples and the Hindus destroy the mosques? They are equally at fault in the eyes of God. How can we say there is swaraj when what we Hindus do hurts the Muslims and what the Muslims do hurts the Hindus? We have reduced ourselves to this state, but we wish to come out of this fire.

I have already said that I shall either do or die in Delhi. I have come here with that intention. I have not done anything yet. True, these days we do not hear much about communal, clashes, and apparently we are living like brothers. But this is like deceiving ourselves. The police and the military are posted here just because there is some danger. Are the Muslims who are here free from fear? Will I also be free from it? I don't think so. Some Muslims are here with me too. Would you insult them right here? Would you kill them right before my eyes? Before you kill them you will have to kill me. Sheikh Abdullah was sitting behind me here yesterday. There were also some Kashmiri Pandits with him. The Sheikh is our friend. Somebody killed our Rafi Saheb's<sup>1</sup> brother at Mussoorie. He was an innocent man. He was our *sevak*. His widow is sitting right here. I do not wish to narrate that tragic tale here lest it should arouse repugnance in the people. My heart is full of many things. I know quite a few things. But I do not wish to prolong the talk. However let me give you the gist at least. If all of us long for death because we have not been able to see God, as we sing in the *bhajan*, the first step towards it is to see our faults as big as mountains and overlook the faults of others. If we declare before the whole world that the entire fault lies with us, and others are all good men, it is not cowardice. We

<sup>1</sup> Rafi Ahmed Kidwai's

do not fall on that account, rather we raise ourselves high and become courageous.

If we wish to bring about the rule of God or *Ramarajya* in India, I would suggest that our first task is to magnify our own faults and find no fault with the Muslims. I do not say that the Muslims have done no wrong. They have caused a lot of harm. There is no question of covering up those wrongs or pretending ignorance about them. But knowingly I do not see them. If I start thinking about those wrongs, I shall go crazy and I shall not be able to serve India. What if I begin to think that I have no enemies and expose my own faults before the world and close my eyes to those of others? God is there to see them. What does it matter if someone slaps me or cuts my ears or throat? One has to die some time. There is God to do justice. In whatever I do, I should not forget Him. That is why I want to repeat again and again that you must keep your hearts so pure that none in the world may complain to me against you. Today when I went there<sup>1</sup> I was asked about the situation in Delhi. I had to hang my head in shame. For, even now, the Hindus and the Muslim are not one at heart. It is good that because of the police and the military arranged by the Sardar and Jawaharlal, they are not cutting each other's throats. But what of that? Even the British used to make such arrangements. We do not wish to see what is happening in Delhi. Today my wings are clipped. If I could grow my wings again, I would fly to Pakistan and see even there what crimes the Hindus or the Sikhs have committed. But what even if they have done anything? Why should they not stay in their own homes there? But do I have the face to say that today? I can only reason with people and tell everyone that if we wish to see God and establish true swaraj, we must all unite and declare that India is not a fallen country. The result will be that our prestige will rise and we will also have time to banish hunger and thirst from our country.

Today the whole world is watching at us, because it is felt that if Asia has to rise high and the negroes of Africa have to make progress, India must be helped to rise high. India has always been the centre of Asia or Africa or, one may say, even Europe. If India is able to achieve something, the whole world will be able to take courage from it.

The world is shivering in cold. If the world is to have any warmth, it would be only through India. It is my prayer to God and

<sup>1</sup> To Lord Mountbatten

also to you that we should behave in such a manner that all of us should feel warm and through us the whole world should get warmth. People throughout Asia and Africa are looking towards us. If they feel convinced that something is going to happen here, then the whole world will follow our example.

[From Hindi]

*Prarthana Pravachan*—I, pp. 436-41

### 98. NOTE TO MANU GANDHI<sup>1</sup>

NEW DELHI,

October 20, 1947

Perhaps you don't know that I greatly value people who abuse me. Thereby their anger is spent and their hearts are cleansed. I like such critics a thousands times better than those who worship me, applaud me, but at the same time commit murders and disregard what I say. For those who abuse me are candid and if I can convince them they work wonders. In my life I have often had such experience.

[From Gujarati]

*Dilhiman Gandhiji*—I, pp. 124-5

### 99. LETTER TO SHARDA G. CHOKHAWALA

October 20, 1947

CHI. BABUDI,

I have two letters from you to answer. Both Chokhawala and you are right in the interpretation which each of you has put upon my words. The two interpretations are not contradictory. Think over this.

One must never stop trying. The effort may be either good or evil, holy or unholy. That effort which respects no limits is evil, while that which does respect some limit is good. Much depends on the nature of this limit. I do not like that you should get even a slight temperature. I would prescribe the limit of water and earth treatment, but it is not your or anybody else's dharma to accept the limit which I prescribe. That which the heart spontaneously feels is one's dharma.

<sup>1</sup> Gandhiji had directed the addressee to reply to an abusive letter. The addressee wanted to know why Gandhiji should care to reply to a man who only heaped abuses on him.

Give up attachment even to Anand. It will be enough if, knowing that it is your dharma to look after him since he is your son, you discharge that dharma.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C. W. 10079. Courtesy: Sharda G. Chokhawala

### *100. NOTE TO HIRALAL SHASTRI*

*October 20, 1947*

If the public is prepared the Princes will themselves see the signs of the times.<sup>1</sup> None of the Princes should be insulted in this connection. The task is to be handled tactfully, lovingly and through persuasion.

[From Gujarati]

*Dilhiman Gandhiji*—I, p. 124

### *101. LETTER TO PIROJ SHAH*

NEW DELHI,  
*October 20, 1947*

BHAI PIROJ SHAH,

I am helpless if you don't get the reply I have written or if it fails to satisfy you. I cannot have all the time that you have. Cheer up.

*Vandemataram from*  
MOHANDAS GANDHI

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

<sup>1</sup> The addressee, General Secretary, All-India States People's Conference, had met Gandhiji in the morning and discussed the situation in Rajasthan. Gandhiji told him that there should be a Union of the States of Rajasthan.

*102. LETTER TO SUSHILA PAI*

NEW DELHI,  
*October 20, 1947*

CHI. SUSHILA,

Have you been given any accommodation? How are you getting along? Write to me in detail. Sushila Nayyar will be there by the end of this month when she will surely see you.

Enclosed please find a letter for Shyamlal. Pass it on to him wherever he is. There was a letter from Prema which is good enough, considering her nature. And of course it must carry a rebuke for me! But then a milch cow's kick too is sweet, isn't it?

With me it is 'do or die' here. Things here are difficult.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

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

*103. LETTER TO SHYAMLAL*

*October 20, 1947*

CHI. SHYAMLAL,

I read your letter a second time today; it is good that you wrote it. I am sending this to Sushila Pai; she will deliver it to you wherever you may be.

I do not so far know what arrangements have been made for her lodging. It will be enough if she can have some peace at last.

Pakvasa<sup>1</sup> is a man of very simple habits.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

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

<sup>1</sup> Mangaldas Pakvasa

104. LETTER TO CHIMANLAL N. SHAH

NEW DELHI,  
October 20, 1947

CHI. CHIMANLAL,

I have written to Babudi.<sup>1</sup>

Are you having fever? Be careful.

What is wrong with Chand? Enclosed is a letter to me from Champa and my reply to her. Please read both the letters. Pass on the one addressed to her. What did she happen to see that she should feel unhappy? Do ask her. If you are lying ill, don't bother about anything at all. Just hand over the letter to Champa and then she may stay or leave as she likes. If she stay on, she will have to observe all the rules barring those from which she has been exempted.

Chhaganlal should write to me if you cannot, or Balvantsinha. I take it, may I, that you three get along harmoniously.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

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

105. LETTER TO JAYAKUNVAR M. DOCTOR

NEW DELHI,  
October 20, 1947

CHI. JEKI,

What can I do? All I can say is that Manilal should return to India and try his luck here. If he finds Aden otherwise agreeable I would not advise him to quit the place. Illness does not leave one wherever one might go. If he has earned enough he should wind up [his business] and come over. You and the children are surely no more a burden to him. He should stay with you and utilize whatever opportunity he gets to serve. But he must not practise law. It would be well if he could easily get some job with the Government.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

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

<sup>1</sup> Sharda G. Chokhawala, addressee's daughter; *vide* also "Letter to Sharda G. Chokhawala", 20-10-1947.

*106. LETTER TO CHANDRANI*

*October 20, 1947*

CHI. CHAND,

You must have received my letter. Dev is extremely worried.<sup>1</sup> Who could have written such a letter from there? Is your illness of a serious nature? I did not gather this impression even from the letter I have from Prabhakar. Do send a wire if need be. It will be well if you send a wire also to Dev. I do hope that your ailment is not so serious.

Sushila is going there at the end of this month. She will stay for at least two or three days. If necessary you may come with her. She will see what may need to be done if you are not fit enough to travel. How can you leave in this condition? You are cheerful, I hope. Do write if you have enough strength to write. Otherwise get someone else to write on your behalf.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

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

*107. LETTER TO DAMODARDAS KHANDELWAL*

NEW DELHI,  
*October 20, 1947*

BHAI DAMODARDAS,

I have your postcard. I don't know what work I should suggest to you. All I can say is that you should take up any work of service you like. About emoluments, who knows better than you? Blessing to Chi. Krishna.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

DAMODARDAS KHANDELWAL

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

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Letter to Dev Prakash Nayyar", 20-10-1947.

*108. LETTER TO DEV PRAKASH NAYYAR*

*October 20, 1947*

CHI. DEV,

One letter I have already sent through Prabhavati, two days ago. This is the second. You must have received the wire I sent you about Chand. She is so much in your thoughts you must go to her. As for myself I am not worried. I saw Dr. Manu's report today. That also does not indicate anything serious. Sushila will certainly reach there. I have sent a letter. Still you must do whatever your hearts says. Be cheerful.

Mahesh is well I hope.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Hindi: Documents relating to Gandhiji. Courtesy: National Archives of India

*109. LETTER TO DEV PRAKASH NAYYAR*

BIRLA BHAVAN,  
*October 20, 1947*

CHI. DEV,

Why do you worry so much? Am I not doing everything? And Sushila is of course there. . . .<sup>1</sup>

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Hindi: Documents relating to Gandhiji. Courtesy: National Archives of India

*110. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING<sup>2</sup>*

NEW DELHI,  
*October 20, 1947*

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur informed me last night after the prayer that a Muslim Health Officer was butchered yesterday while he was on

<sup>1</sup> Two words here are illegible.

<sup>2</sup> As Gandhiji was observing silence, his written speech was read out.

duty. He was, she told me, a good, conscientious officer. He leaves behind a widow and children. The widow was so distracted that her one wish was that she and her children were also similarly butchered, now that their caretaker and bread-winner was removed from their midst by cruel hands. What was the point in living after that?<sup>1</sup>

I told you only last evening that all was not well with Delhi as it appeared on the surface. So long as tragedies such as I described continue to occur, there is little ground for rejoicing over the silence that reigns on the surface in Delhi. Is it the silence of the grave as was once said of the surface silence during his Viceroyalty by the then Lord Irwin, now Lord Halifax?

The Rajkumari added that it was no easy task to get together a sufficient number of Muslim friends who would perform the burial rites in strict accord with the Koran.

This narrative must cause any sensitive mind, as it causes me, a shudder. Should Delhi come to such a pass? It is a sure sign of cowardice for the majority to dread a minority, however powerful it might be.

I hope that the authorities will trace the perpetrators of the crime and bring them to justice.

If it was the last of such crimes, I should have little to say, deplorable though even such a crime would always be. But I very much fear that it is a pointer. The conscience of Delhi must be quickened by it.

Money for blanket continues to pour in. My thanks go out to all the donors. It is good, too, that not one donation is earmarked for this community or that.

It is my painful duty to draw attention to another menace. if it be one. I do not know whether this danger is real or not.<sup>2</sup> A Britisher writes in an open letter "To whom it may concern":

Several of us are living in a lonely spot in a disturbed area. We are pure British and for years we have devoted ourselves at great personal sacrifice to the welfare of the people of this country. . . .<sup>3</sup> We now find that a secret word has gone out that all the British left in India are to be murdered. I read in the newspapers Pandit Nehru's assurance that the Government will protect the persons and property of all loyal citizens of the State. But there is no

<sup>1</sup> This sentence is taken from the speech recorded by the All India Radio.

<sup>2</sup> This sentence is taken from *Prarthana Pravachan*—I, p. 442.

<sup>3</sup> Omission as in the source

protection for persons living in little country places or almost none. None at all for us. It is a physical impossibility.

There is much else in this open letter which can be quoted with advantage. I have reproduced enough to warn us of the lurking danger. Of course, it may be only a scare and there may be nothing beyond it. There may be no secret circular. There is, however, prudence in not disregarding such warnings. I am hoping that the writer's fears are wholly groundless. I agree with him that all promise of protection by authority in isolated places is vain. It simply cannot be done, no matter how efficient the military and police machine may be which, it must be admitted, it is not at present. Protection must come first from within, that is, from rocklike faith in God and secondly, from the goodwill of the neighbouring population. If neither in present, the best and the safest way is to leave India's inhospitable shores. Things have not come to such a pass.

The duty of all us is to regard with special attention all the Britishers who choose to remain in India as its faithful servants. They must be free from any kind of insult or disregard. The Press and public bodies have to be circumspect in this as in many other respects, if we are to render a good account of ourselves as a free and self-respecting nation. Those who respect themselves cannot make good the claim, if they will not respect their neighbours, however few or insignificant they may be.

*Harijan, 2-11-1947*

### *III. A NOTE*

*October 21, 1947*

This is top heavy. Direct election appears to be cumbersome and expensive.

It is a paper programme not workable.

The last section is scrappy. It is an inflamed appendix fit only to be removed.

The whole is too vast for my grasp. I am sorry.

M. K. G.

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

*112. LETTER TO STEPHEN HOBHOUSE*

NEW DELHI,  
*October 21, 1947*

DEAR FRIEND,

Many thanks for your cheering letter. The look of things here is certainly ugly. Let us see what God has in store for the whole of humanity. I wonder if really man's duty is to be the helpless witness of tragedies being enacted in front of him.

Your special task is very difficult indeed.

*Yours sincerely,*  
M. K. GANDHI

STEPHEN HOBHOUSE, ESQ.  
20 ST. CATHERINE'S  
BROX BON RUE  
HERTS, ENGLAND

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

*113. LETTER TO D. G. TENDULKAR*

*October 21, 1947*

MY DEAR TENDULKAR,

I am sorry that I have not been able to attend to yours of 11th August earlier.

I cannot recall why the Gujarati article was not translated for *Young India*. Perhaps at the time it was not thought necessary to broadcast the facts to the English readers. In any case I see no objection to your incorporating the English rendering in your forthcoming volume.<sup>1</sup> Herewith is a copy of the rendering as revised by me. It was unfortunate that I have not got the Gujarati article before me. If your translator sees any flaw in my corrections please do not hesitate to draw my attention to it.

I am writing to Pyarelal about the August 1942 speech.<sup>2</sup> He is in inaccessible parts of Noakhali.

<sup>1</sup> *Mahatma: Life of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi*, in eight volumes

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "Speech at A. I. C. C. Meeting", 8-8-1942.

As to the Diary<sup>1</sup>, I have no objection to your seeing it. I am writing to Narahari.<sup>2</sup> Thanks for the cheque for Rs. 100.

Yours,  
BAPU

1 Enclosure

From a facsimile: *Mahatma*, Vol. I, pp. VI-VII

*114. LETTER TO NARAHARI D. PARIKH*

*October 21, 1947*

CHI. NARAHARI,

An old letter of D. G. Tendulkar written in August last has been lying with me. I could read it fully only yesterday.

He is writing a big volume, or probably has finished one. He has impressed me as a very industrious man. He wants to see Mahadev's diary. He writes and tells me that Bablo<sup>3</sup> and Paramanand<sup>4</sup> are agreeable. If you have no objection, I see no harm in letting him see it. Think it over and let me know.

I hope everything has been properly attended to.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S. N. 9146

*115. LETTER TO SITA GANDHI*

*October 21, 1947*

CHI. SITA,

I had got your note. I received today the first letter from Sushila after she reached Phoenix. Since I have received one, I think you also must have.

I shall be satisfied if you keep healthy in body and mind and in your conduct. One must think carefully before giving a promise, and keep a promise once given.

I suppose you have now abandoned the idea of a medical

<sup>1</sup> Of Mahadev Desai

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* the following item.

<sup>3</sup> Narayan Desai, son of Mahadev Desai

<sup>4</sup> Paramanand Kapadia

career. What do you intend to be now? What will you do? If you like writing to me, tell me all this when you are free.

I hope Vijayabehn is all right.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 5016

### *116. LETTER TO OM PRAKASH*

*October 21, 1947*

BHAI OM PRAKASH,

The law of ahimsa is that one does not hit back at the assailant, faces the attack in a spirit of love and dies in the process. When one dies facing the assailant's attack in a spirit of love, a change of heart takes place in him. It is not always easy to say if the love was true or when the change of heart on the part of the assailant comes about. But while practising ahimsa, it is enough to keep in mind the law of ahimsa and the way it works.

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

### *117. TALK WITH LALJIBHA<sup>1</sup>*

BIRLA HOUSE, NEW DELHI,  
*October 21, 1947*

How can I ask anyone not to leave the land of his birth? The leaders were able to come so easily with their families and belongings but the poor, helpless villagers are in a sad plight. If even one of you had died there I would have danced for joy. I would not have been distressed in the least. That the teachers of a national institution like Sharda Mandir and a hundred leaders like you chose to put on fez caps rather than die, what does it show? Jinnah says he has provided protection for all and still people flee. But if a few of you had continued to wear khadi caps and Hindu dress as you used to and carried on your normal vocations and if then you had been killed, I could have asked Jinnah what had happened to his promise. But how can I say anything today? And so his lie carries the day. People are being coerced and it is being said that they are needlessly frightened.

<sup>1</sup> A Congress leader from Sind

In all that I am telling you I attach no blame to you. It is I who am to be blamed. There has been some flaw somewhere in my ahimsa. And this was bound to have its effect on the people. How otherwise could they suddenly have lost the power of self-sacrifice? I must analyse this. I must undergo further penance. If even people like you are coming away, how can I tell the refugees not to leave their homes but to die there, or that they must go back to their homes?

[From Gujarati]

*Dilhiman Gandhiji*—I, pp. 128-9

### 118. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,

October 21, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

Today also I heard of an incident. In this it was not a Muslim who was killed but a Hindu. He was a Government employee. He was doing his duty where he had been sent when somebody shot at him. I have not heard that he had committed any crime. The man with the revolver felt that the victim did not do what he was told and so he killed him. All that I wish to say is that we have got into the habit of killing. It is just the beginning of our independence, and right from now such are the thoughts that have come to possess us. We want to kill simply because we possess a revolver. It is like a person aiming at a flying bird and killing it. Great hunter that he is, he aims at a flying bird. Similarly a man makes an officer his aim. That officer had received orders to carry out a certain task at the place. But the killer had a fancy to kill him. If we continue like this, we are going to land ourselves in a terrible situation. No man can then live in peace. It is said that there are many countries inhabited by savages where no one can live in safety because those who possess arms murder people and they have no qualms about it. The one who kills a person cannot bring him back to life. This is a fact. It is also a law that only he who gives life can take it away. But that is what only God can do. When a human being cannot create life, what right has he to take it? Is it up to man to create life? But the Hindus desire to pounce upon the Muslims and the Muslims want to pounce upon the Sikhs and the Sikhs want to jump at the Muslims. They may do this now, but when the enemies are

gone, they will start killing one another. This is the law of the world. We have started following that very law. Hence I thought I might mention this incident.

Another thing is that the authorities have arrested many people. In the past we were not free. Today also we should presume that we are not free. In those days also people were arrested. At the most they could make an appeal to the Viceroy and could be released at his word. But the Viceroy could not release them on his own. He had to work within the limits of the law even when martial law was in force. He had his own officers functioning under the law. If they agreed that somebody might be released he was released. As for the others the Viceroy would say he could get them released only after investigation. This is a perfectly legal position. Those arrested under the law, would be sentenced if found guilty. But now the Government is in our hands. We had not run the Government so far. If someone minister thinks that just because he is a minister he can release whomever he wants to, then we will be finished. It should not be that murderers are arrested and later released. We should not follow the practice of arresting culprits and then releasing them. In such a situation I would say that once somebody has been arrested under the law by the police the Government cannot release him because there is some complaint or appeal for it. On what grounds can it release him? Is it for nothing that we have the police, courts and prosecutors? How can I acquit somebody because he happens to be some relative or a friend of mine or because his case has been recommended by somebody? How can he be acquitted? In my view he cannot be acquitted. He cannot be punished at all if he is not guilty. Thus, we must keep our entire judiciary clean. We must have judges of that calibre. The police and the prosecutors should not carry on a case just for doing so and they should not think that a particular number of cases should be settled by the court. Only those who have got to be punished should be punished. But legally these matters fall within the jurisdiction of the courts. Supposing a man complains that a particular person has assaulted him and should be arrested, and the offender is arrested, should I then go to a minister to secure his release? The minister would suggest that the matter be taken to the court. If the complainant then says that there is no point in arresting him as it would only aggravate the feeling of animosity, the offender would be acquitted on the complainant's request. If the complainant says that even though he had filed a complaint he wishes that the arrested man should be

acquitted, then the court can acquit him. That leaves the prosecutor. The court can recommend the same thing to him too. But if there is a case of murder actually committed, the accused cannot be acquitted even if the complainant wants it. If the guilty man is acquitted, our work cannot proceed. I have practised law and secured the release of many. How? The murderer must plead guilty of the murder and then assure the court that his mind is now pure and plead for mercy. The complainant can also say that the accused should not be punished because the two have become friends. What will he gain by getting him hanged now when he killed under provocation? Now the accused has become a friend who can be of help and who may turn his mind to God. He may start praying to God and, if so, why should he prevent him from doing so? Then the accused will also plead guilty of the act of number and pray for mercy and seek to be acquitted saying that the complainant is prepared to forgive him and maybe he will do good deeds and serve the society. That is the way to secure the acquittal of the murderer. It is possible to make his procedure legal. But let us not misuse the power we have now. If we do so people will insist on any number of guilty persons being released. What would even the poor minister do? Supposing he wrongly orders somebody's release. It is within his power to order the release of a person, but he should not do so. Even if it is his own brother or friend or wife who has committed a crime, he should refrain from doing so. He should say the appeal should be made to the court or the prosecutor or the complainant, for he cannot do anything in the matter. We cannot get on with our work unless the ministers are pure at heart.

Please know that I have received a suggestion that I should not speak for more than 15 minutes. I do not even wish to speak longer. I have talked enough. I am not particularly fond of speaking at length. I speak only when there is a need to talk. But I am told that it would be to the greater benefit of people if I did not speak for more than 15 minutes. People would listen with greater attention because they would be keen to listen to my words. That would also become a habit and I would not speak for longer than 15 minutes.

[From Hindi]

*Prarthana Pravachan*—I, pp. 444-7

*119. LETTER TO FRANCISCA STANDENATH*

NEW DELHI,  
*October 22, 1947*

CHI. SAVITRI,<sup>1</sup>

I have your short note. I have sent you replies to all your letters. I do hope they are all in your hands.

We are passing through most anxious times here. Heaven knows what will happen in the end. For the present I am fixed up here.

I am glad you are free from your illness.

You there have to pass through a time of scarcity in food and clothing. I wonder how the people face [it].

Love.

BAPU

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

*120. LETTER TO SUBODH CHANDRA ROY*

*October 22, 1947*

DEAR PROF. ROY,

I thank you for your gift. I do not know when and where I shall have time to read it. I shall certainly glance through it.

It is a great pity that you have missed me even though you tried so often. There is no prospect of my ever going to Sevagram. For the time being I am in Delhi. How long I shall be here I do not know.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

PROF. SUBODH CHANDRA ROY  
TATA INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCE  
BOMBAY

From a photostat C. W. 10577

<sup>1</sup> Gandhiji gave this name to the addressee. The superscription is in the Devanagari script.

121. LETTER TO DOROTHY HOGG <sup>1</sup>

BIRLA HOUSE, NEW DELHI,  
October 22, 1947

MY DEAR DOROTHY,

I have your comforting letter. How nice it would be if your dream that “I have little doubt that India has touched bottom only to rise to immense heights” becomes materialized during the present generation. The cross of which Mahadev wrote<sup>2</sup> to you years ago whilst he was yet alive was nothing compared to the cross that presses one today.

All the three points that are mentioned are good. How very few people would confirm to them. You are right—love and prayer are the need of the hour. I would add fasting after prayer.

At the time of writing this Horace is not here. He is in Lahore. He told me when he left a few days ago that he would return within a fortnight. He leads a life of selfless service.

Love to you all.

BAPU

MISS DOROTHY HOGG  
144, OAK TREE LANE  
SELLY OAK, BIRMINGHAM 29

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

<sup>1</sup> Only one sentence of this is reproduced in Vol. LXXXIX, P. 383.

<sup>2</sup> In 1941, Mahadev Desai had, *inter alia*, written to the addressee: “You have a terrible cross to bear—not only that of bombing, homelessness and starvation, but of making ignorant people understand that we in India are friends, and not enemies. It is a frightfully difficult task, I know, but you who know and understand Bapuji so well can cope with it.”

## 122. LETTER TO SAURENDRA

NEW DELHI,  
October 22, 1947

CHI. SAURENDRA,

Your letter. I can say this much that no one should stay there and be a coward. The task is difficult. Consult Satis Babu and act as he advises. I cannot say more from here. And I cannot get away from Delhi.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

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

## 123. DISCUSSION WITH CHRISTIANS

BIRLA HOUSE, NEW DELHI,  
October 22, 1947

QUESTION: If we do not follow the conditions necessary for observing ahimsa all our lives, how can we find the strength for it at times of crisis? You tell us that we must maintain peace but how can peace be maintained?

GANDHIJI: I have said that this ahimsa was half-baked. Maybe God had cast a veil over my eyes. Nevertheless, I am becoming increasingly certain that if we are to be happy, that is, if every man is to be happy and to see others happy, there is no other way. When one sees that one has made a mistake and sets about rectifying it without losing single minute one rises very high. But if one tries to hide the mistake, attempts in various ways to gloss over it, one degrades one's character and one betrays one's dharma. No sin could be greater than this.

Why do those who are pacifists not keep themselves away from the rest? They can shape their life anew separately. Then their position will become stronger. It will also test their faith. But they should not remain inactive. As for me, even if I should be left all alone I will cling to my principles. For this is the only non-violent way to battle with the terrible violence that confronts us. Maybe our countrymen will not agree. But that is no reason to believe that non-violence is ineffective. The reason may be my own imperfection. If the faith of the satyagrahis is firm as a mountain, the satyagrahis should be able to

prove that this way alone is true.

[From Gujarati]

*Dilhiman Gandhiji*—I, pp. 131-2

## 124. TALK WITH MUSLIMS

BIRLA HOUSE, NEW DELHI,

*October 22, 1947*

Time goes on doing its work. Occasionally it favours us. Sometimes it becomes our enemy. Today that seems to be so. Hindu-Muslim unity has been my lifelong ambition. Muslims always considered me as their true friend and guide. Was it not at the bidding of a Muslim that I went to South Africa? How is it then that today I am an enemy of Muslims? You know that today because of you I have become an eyesore to everyone. Hindus are very much annoyed with me. You should be knowing, if you do not, how furious Hindus are with me. I shall not be surprised if one day I fall a prey to this fury. It is so not only in my case, but also in the case of these girls. Last time I came to Delhi, Manu even received a letter threatening her life. Here at the Bhangi Colony she was being repeatedly threatened on the telephone by certain Hindus. But she has come prepared for death and so is not frightened. I know that there is a third party that does not let this unity be achieved. You have seen with your own eyes the futility of violence. If this terrible and meaningless slaughter continues I really cannot foresee what mankind has in store for it. But even in the face of this reality I remain an optimist. I will therefore carry on with my mission till my last breath.

[From Gujarati]

*Dilhiman Gandhiji*—I, pp. 132-3

## 125. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,

*October 22, 1947*

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

First of all let me inform you that blankets continue to come. I have just come to know that two hundred blankets have arrived today. The blankets and also money arrive every day. I hope that the people

who are in the camps here will have enough things to cover themselves with. More of them will be available. It is good that there is this much generosity still left in our people.

A gentlemen approached me. I hardly ever read any Urdu newspaper, not to speak of reading it daily. I do read Urdu but only with some difficulty. When a child has to learn his alphabet he starts reading gradually. I am in a similar position. I know a little more than a child, but I cannot read fast. So that gentleman read out to me a couple of items from an Urdu newspaper. I was pained to hear the contents. I do not intend to narrate the details. The newspaper stated that people had made up their minds. I hope it is only the editor of that paper and not the whole country that has resolved that all Muslims should migrate to Pakistan and that those who remain will be either slaughtered or sent away to Pakistan. If things turn out to be what this paper or its editor predicts, it will be a matter of great shame. Such things should not have come from the pen of an editor. Such newspapers should not be published at all. If that editor is convinced about what he says, he is free to express his view to the people. But when he does so, it would amount to proclaiming from the house-tops that the Muslims should either go away to Pakistan or they will be slaughtered. As I said yesterday, what Hindus would do when Muslims went away to Pakistan? Would they fight among themselves? Somebody has informed me that internal fights have already started. This is inevitable. Once one has a taste of killing, one can't resist the temptation. The same thing is going to happen to us. But the editor of that paper has not been wise in publishing his opinion. Our people have become crazy after newspapers. They are not concerned with the *Gita* or the Bible or the Koran; the newspaper is their *Gita* and whatever is published in newspapers is gospel truth for them. It is very unfortunate that people should be so gullible that newspapers exploit their credulity and publish such things. I do not wish to say any more about this.

Now another thing is that complaints are pouring in from all corners. It may have been that during the British days the native States acted as they liked. The British Government exercised some control. This had to be done for the maintenance of the Empire. But now that Government is no more. Today their department is in the hands of Sardar Patel; so let him do something. But what can poor Sardar do under the circumstances? He has his own way of saying things. He has always served India. That is why he is the Sardar. But he has neither

arms nor army in his possession. He is not a man of the army in any case. He is no commander whose order would be automatically obeyed. So long as the soldiers think that they eat the salt of India and he is their master, that is, if they consider him to be a great servant [of the people], things will go right.

Now the Princes of the States say that they have signed the instruments of accession, but that does not mean that they have been deprived of anything. They too have got their police. They were mere puppets during the British rule, but they are no longer so. The States can do anything they want. I too belong to a State. Hence I know what the States can do, and how much good they can do. I wish very respectfully to tell the Princes of the States that they cannot hope to survive if they think in their arrogance that they can beat up their subjects and slaughter them. I have told them that the Princes will have place for themselves if they remain trustees of their subjects. If they want to be the rulers of their people and exploit them and oppress them, they will find no place for themselves. I have no doubt about it. God alone knows what the situation in India is going to be. The Princes do not have an alternative. They can never rule India, even if we become slaves. Would the Princes like to become slaves then? The days when the rulers could act arbitrarily are gone. That was another age. The British rulers found good use of the Princes who were there, through whom they could rule. The British only acted in their self-interest. How then are they to blame? But it is our misfortune that today we have lost our heads and fight among ourselves. Whichever side wins, a third power or a few of the powers would get together and devour India. Along with India Princes, too, would be devoured. If they remain loyal to India and become servants of their people, it will be well. I would say to the people of the States that they should not be cowards. What if the Princes possess arms and they are unarmed? We too fought against the Empire. And we were unarmed then. We did not possess any arms secretly. Had it been so, I should have had some information about it. Millions of people fought against the Empire with the force of their conviction. We thought even if they killed, they might kill one lakh, two or even three lakhs. But how many could they have killed after all? It was a question of population of 400 millions. Their hands would have trembled if they had set out to kill all of us. These 400 millions were bound to win their independence. What we do with that freedom is another matter. I would say that the Princes should not lose their heads. They should realize that they cannot act

arbitrarily lead immoral lives. They must not drown themselves in alcohol all day long. I have conveyed my view to you and through you to the Princes.

I mentioned once that Dussehra was coming soon. And Bakr-Id is just the day after it. These two festivals almost coincide. The Hindus and the Muslims are always filled with fear during these days. There is a greater scare here today because excesses can be only on one side. If Hindus get excited and think that they have got their chance because of Bakr-Id, they can slaughter the Muslims thinking they were celebrating Dussehra. What is Dussehra? That is the day for celebrating Rama's victory. It is said that on the *Ekadashi* Rama and Bharata would be reunited. By these things we have to learn restraint and goodness. We have to learn what is dharma. If we learn this we can celebrate Dussehra in the right spirit. Durga *puja* is conducted on the Dussehra day. What does worship of Durga imply? It does not mean that we should be bloodthirsty. Durga signifies *shakti*, great power. We can raise ourselves by worshipping here.

Similarly, Dussehra does not mean that we should have fun and entertainment throughout the day. In Gujarat this festival is called *Navaratri*.<sup>1</sup> When we were young my mother used to tell us that we should not have regular meals during the *Navaratri*. We could have fruit or at the most milk, but no solid food. Of course the best thing would have been to observe complete fast. My mother used to undertake fasts quite often, and I could hardly compete with her. My elder brother could not do it at all, though I tried to do it a little. But considering my mother's capacity to fast I am a mere toy, just a child. That is the significance of Dussehra for us. Later, when Dewali comes, we can eat nice things and enjoy ourselves, but none of these things during Dussehra. This is the meaning of *Navaratri*. Shall we abandon its essence and start killing? Then there is Bakr-Id. We have frightened away our Muslim fellowmen. There are nice people among them. Even the nationalist Muslims are very much upset at the moment. They are aware of the situation. But where can they go? Should we become so heartless as to drive away even these people? What sort of peace would we have then?

Are you going to annihilate all the three-and-half or four crore Muslims? Or would you like to convert them to Hinduism? But even that would be a kind of annihilation. Supposing you were so

<sup>1</sup> The nine days preceding Dussehra

pressurized, would you agree to become Muslims? Supposing you were forced to read the *Kalma* and threatened with death if you refused? I would be the first person to say that they might rather cut our throats than suggest this. We must have at least that much courage. It is senseless to ask Muslims to accept Hinduism like this. I don't want such Hindus. Am I going to save Hinduism with the help of such Hindus? I want Hindus who can exercise restraint. Why should I be so arrogant and ruthless? One cannot become a tyrant and follow dharma at the same time. On these two occasions therefore let us maintain peace and atone for our sins and meet each other as brothers. If you can do this much, you will not find me here after Id.

A Hindu gentleman has asked me if I would go to the Punjab. I asked him if he would send me to the Punjab. Yes, if I went there I would fight with the people there also. You already know about my method of fighting. I would talk to them to my heart's content. Millions of Hindus and Sikhs are coming here. Why do they not stay on in their homes? I shall have no peace till this happens. Then Muslims have to be brought back here. You may say that that cannot be done. According to me that can be done and the key to the situation lies in Delhi. I do hope that during those two days we prove that both the Hindus and the Muslims are good and are going to live together in harmony.

[From Hindi]

*Prarthana Pravachan*—I, pp. 447-52

### 126. QUOTATIONS FROM GURUDEV

A Bengali gentleman has sent the following quotations from the collections he received from Gurudev along with his autograph. I give here the quotations in the original language<sup>1</sup> with their meanings in Gujarati:

The fight in which brother kills brother is a fight against God.

He who nurses enmity in the name of religion, withholds his offerings from God.

The darkness in which one cannot see one's brother is blindness to one's own self.

One can see the smiling face of God only in the light where one

<sup>1</sup> The quotations in Bengali are not reproduced here.

sees one's brother.

When one is totally absorbed in love for a brother, then alone one's hands join of their own accord in obeisance to God.

NEW DELHI, October 23, 1947

[From Gujarati]

*Harijanbandhu*, 2-11-1947

### *127. LETTER TO LORD MOUNTBATTEN*

NEW DELHI,  
*October 23, 1947*

DEAR FRIEND,

I have spoken to Pandit Nehru. But he is adamant. He is firmly of opinion that no change<sup>1</sup> should be made until the weather has cleared. If it does, it may take two or three months. In this estimate I agree with him.

*Yours sincerely*  
M. K. GANDHI

H. E. LORD MOUNTBATTEN OF BURMA  
GOVERNMENT HOUSE  
NEW DELHI

*Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1944-47, pp. 280-1*

### *128. LETTER TO N. R. MALKANI*

NEW DELHI,  
*October 23, 1947*

MY DEAR MALKANI,<sup>2</sup>

Your letter. You are too sanguine. My time is not yet. You should do your best.

*Yours,*  
BAPU

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

<sup>1</sup> The addressee had expressed a desire to retire from the Governor-Generalship of India.

<sup>2</sup> A constructive worker devoted to Harijan uplift and propagation of khadi

*129. LETTER TO SITA GANDHI*

*October 23, 1947*

CHI. SITA,

I got your postcard. You must have received the letter<sup>1</sup> I wrote to you. May you live long and be a sincere worker.

It is a matter for joy that Vasant<sup>2</sup> has given birth to a son and that both mother and son are well.

*Blessings to you all from*

BAPU

CHI. SITA GANDHI  
MASHRUWALA BHAVAN  
AKOLA

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 5017

*130. LETTER TO JIVANJI D. DESAI*

*October 23, 1947*

CHI. JIVANJI,

Herewith two items, handwritten. There is no time now to get them typed. The handwriting is clear. It is not possible to send a translation of the third item, the letter from a Muslim. Get it translated there as well as you can. Or leave out the translation. I shall see about constructive work.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 9985. Also C. W. 6959. Courtesy: Jivanji D. Desai

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Letter to Sita Gandhi", 21-10-1947.

<sup>2</sup> Wife of Kanti Mashruwala, addressee's maternal uncle

### 131. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,  
*October 23, 1947*

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

Two persons have written to me “We are refugees. We are living under the protection of our friends. We are very much troubled on account of the cold weather. Kindly let us know from where we can get blankets and quilts. Is there any such provision for refugees?” They say they belong to Rawalpindi. Like that there are innumerable people. However, the quilts and blankets are actually being collected for the people accommodated in the refugee camps, and who as is very evident have nothing to cover themselves with. Hence provision is being made for them. Quite a large stock has been distributed and more will be distributed. These are not just a handful of people. They are there in thousands. Quite likely, there are lakhs and lakhs of such people who should get these things. One of the camps at Kurukshetra has been taken over by the Central Government. A large number of people are accommodated there and many more keep coming.

There are many such camps even in the city of Delhi. At least three, perhaps four, camps are in East Punjab. In those camps also the people should receive the things provided in the camp here. They too are refugees. But in my view, it is for the friends with whom the refugees stay to arrange for those things. Very likely those friends may be managing blankets or quilts for their own families with great difficulty. Then, how can they provide them to those whom they have given shelter? I don't say such a thing is not possible. But it seems to me we will not be able to give quilts to all who need them. Moreover, I do not think that everyone who asks for these things is honest about it. It is not as if people asked for these things because they needed them. I have seen several camps. I have always been engaged in this type of work. I had to do these things even when I was in South Africa, and so I am familiar with the difficulties of such work. I have heard no complaints against the two persons who have written to me, and I have nothing to say against them. But I have no doubt that these things should reach the people who are really needy and who do not have them. But how would I know about these people? I do try to find out. It is not as if I am not trying to get any information at all. Nor do I

presume that no one would ever deceive me. And it is not that anyone can have things from me for the asking. Can these friends point out any such instance to me? I cannot send those things myself but I think these persons will somehow get them from somewhere. I do have blankets with me. But they are all meant to be sent to Kurukshetra. Other people are collecting these things too. They can send the blankets to these two people.

People are still coming here every day. They go to the Birla Mandir and that place is all full. Now there is no room for any more people. The people in the temple have taken as many people as they can. They have always shared the sorrows of others. They are working day and night. They go to meet people and collect blankets and food from them which they distribute among the needy. But as people pour in day after day, they too get tired. How long can they go on giving things to them? The same is the problem for us. I would only tell these people that they should do something for themselves. It is true that when these things are done for everybody they should be done for these persons also. The same rule should apply to all. We cannot carry on work on a large scale if we have one rule for some people and another rule for others. And we have to work on a large scale. That is why I have taken so much time in explaining these things. How shall we face the cold which is increasing every day? I do not wish that anyone should suffer from it even for a day. This is one thing I wish to say.

I heard another thing today. Since many shops were open today a poor Muslim thought he would also open his shop, and so he started out to open his shop. He used to repair spectacles. Such persons must be hardly earning a few rupees a day. I do not know who he was. I do not even know his name. He was murdered as he was about to open his shop. It is a matter of shame for the whole of Delhi. Who could have committed that murder? Was it one person or two who did it? But how could two persons do it? Where had the military and the police disappeared? The shop was not in a lonely corner. Nor did the incident take place at night. No shop can be run secretly. People keep coming and going. Why did no one try to stop the killing? How did the assailants dare to commit that murder? People are just indifferent and quiet their conscience with the thought that a Muslim has been done to death. They feel that if the Muslims kill the Hindu and the Sikhs, why should they not kill the Muslims? Their hearts are possessed by such thoughts of revenge. Thus must be stopped. If we

do not stop it, Delhi will lose all its character. Do you think that only the Hindus and the Sikhs will be living in Delhi? In that case that will be the end of Delhi. The world will not accept such a situation. Delhi has a long history behind it. It would be madness even to try to erase that history.

Today I wish to say something about the people who have become victims of leprosy. There are quite a number of such people even in India. They are not found on the roads because they arouse a feeling of repugnance. It is not as if people having leprosy are sinner and others suffering from other diseases are not. It is true that those who suffer from a disease must have violated some how of nature, but that is another matter. I feel I have violated nature's law because I am suffering from persistent cough. And I do believe that violating nature's law is being sinful. Everybody is prone to cough. But I am not prepared to agree that there has been no mistake on my part. So whatever rules I make for myself would be applicable to the whole world. Leprosy is a skin disease. How it is caused is a long story. I believe it is disease of the body and there is no difference between leprosy and cough. A victim of leprosy suffers more pain and when he starts losing his thumbs, hands and nose, he becomes really very ugly. But it is not that he suffer more pain because he becomes ugly. I would say that we should have greater contempt for people who have wicked hearts. A person who has an unclean body which is the result of an unclean mind and who has a perverse outlook, instead of listening to the *bhajans* is interested in listening to the stories of wicked men, is a real leper. There are countless people suffering from this disease, and nobody ever bother about them. But since everybody does not contract the disease of leprosy, we are repelled by those who have it. We used to have a number of Christians amongst us. All the leprosy hospitals were and still are in the hands of the Christians. They serve the lepers out of sheer philanthropy. Today there are some people in India also who work for the lepers out of a feeling of altruism. One such philanthropist is Manohar Diwan. I should like to call him a *mahatma*. He lives at Wardha and is a great disciple of Vinoba. Bhave. Vinoba is a very great man indeed. Manohar felt that he also should do something. He chose to serve the lepers. Vinoba also inspired him to do that work. He remains detached. He is not bothered about money. He is no doctor, but he has made sufficient study of the disease. Many people seek his help. A small conference is being organized at Wardha very soon through a committee. People

engaged in this work will be meeting there on the 30th of this month. Dr. Sushila Nayyar too is going there for the same purpose. Actually Dr. Jivaraj<sup>1</sup> and Rajkumari were to go there. Rajkumari is even more familiar with this work because she has lived with me at Sevagram. But as she is deeply involved in the work here she cannot go there. No one can compel her to go there. And who would insist? It is a matter of rendering service. Anyone who chooses to go can go there. But they cannot go because they are hardpressed for time. There is a man called Jagadisan<sup>2</sup>. He is himself a victim of leprosy. He belongs to Madras. He is a very good man and great scholar. He is a great follower of Srinivasa Sastri. He has devoted himself to this work. He is also attending the conference along with many other. It is a tragic and at the same time an interesting story. Many people are involved in that work. There is a very big leprosy hospital in Calcutta. It functions on a large scale. All this work is being done in the spirit of altruism and is growing day by day. When I was in Calcutta I was taken there and asked to write some comments. But I was making arrangements to come here. There are many other leprosy hospitals in different parts of the country. But this work is not being carried on as large a scale as it should be. I do not suggest that everybody should take interest in this work. But let us at least know that when we have so much idle time we may as well engage ourselves in such type of work. Shall we remain busy only destroying each other? I would say that this is the worst type of disease, the worst type of leprosy. We disregard good work and destroy ourselves in mutual fighting. The Hindus kill the Muslims and the Muslims kill the Hindus and the Sikhs. How long shall we continue to indulge in mutual killing? How much better it would be if we made good use of our time and devoted ourselves to activities that would promote feelings of love!

[From Hindu]

*Prarthana Pravachan*—I, pp. 452-6

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Jivaraj N. Mehta, Director-General of Health Services in India

<sup>2</sup> T. N. Jagadisan, who was looking after leprosy work sponsored by Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial Trust

132. MESSAGE TO HINDU AND SIKH REFUGEES IN  
N.W.F.P.

[Before October 24, 1947]<sup>1</sup>

My advice is unalterable. They should remain where they are, if they are brave enough to die and even in the act of dying forgive the enemy. If they have not assimilated this truth they should of course come away as soon as they can.

*The Hindu*, 26-10-1947

133. WHITHER AHIMSA, WHITHER KHADI?<sup>2</sup>

A correspondent from Kathiawar writes:

As in many other districts or provinces so in Kathiawar people are fast losing their faith in khadi and ahimsa. Many Congressmen and Gandhians have begun to ask how non-violence can work in matters political.

The writer of the letter adduces a number of arguments giving illustrations. I have, however, satisfied myself with quoting the salient part of the letter. It contains three errors.

I have been explaining of late that neither in Kathiawar nor in other parts of India have people real faith in non-violence or khadi. It is true that I had deceived myself into believing that people were wedded to non-violence with khadi as its symbol. As a matter of fact, in the name of non-violence people manifested only the outward peaceableness of the impotent. They never even attempted to drive violence from their hearts. He who runs can see for himself the verification of this fact. It had become patent to everyone, when I went to Rajkot in connection with the Rajkot imbroglio, that there was no Rama in Rajkot and, therefore, Kathiawar. Hence it is hardly correct to say that their faith is only now beginning to wane.

It is equally improper to question now the efficacy of non-violence in matters political. What was the people's fight against the foreign power, if it was not a political matter? Indeed, the disgraceful fight between brother and brother that we are witnessing today is much less political. Today, irreligion is stalking the country in the name of religion. Even the outward peace that we were able to observe

<sup>1</sup> The message reported under the date-line: "Peshawar, October 24".

<sup>2</sup> A translation of this also appeared in *Harijan*, 2-11-1947.

in the fight against the foreign power is conspicuous by its absence today.

The third error consist in the distinction the correspondent makes between Congressmen and Gandhians. The distinction is baseless. If there is any Gandhian, it must be I. I am not so arrogant as to make any such claim. A Gandhian means a worshipper of Gandhi. Only God has worshippers. I have never claimed to be God. How then can I have worshippers? Moreover, how can it be said that those who call themselves Gandhians are not Congressmen? There are innumerable servants of the Congress although they are not four anna members registered in the Congress register. The reader should know that I myself belong to that category. Hence the distinction made is false.

I have repeatedly said that I have neither any part nor any say in many things that are going on in the country today. It is no secret that the Congress willingly said good-bye to non-violence when it accepted power. Again I believe that the method of rationing of food and clothing is highly injurious to the country. If I had my way, I would not buy a grain of food-stuff from outside India. It is my firm belief that even today there is enough food in the country. It has been hidden because of the rationing. Again, if people followed me, there would be no deadly quarrel between Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims. It is clear that my writ does not run any longer. Mine is a voice in the wilderness.

As for khadi, it has some kind of a place, if we separate it from ahimsa. But it does not have the pride of place it would have had as a symbol of ahimsa. Those who are in the political field wear khadi as a matter of convention. Today we see the triumph not of khadi but of mill-cloth, for we have assumed that but for the manufactures from our mills, millions would have to go naked. Can there be a greater delusion than this? We grow enough cotton in the country. We have any number of handlooms and spinning-wheels. India is not unused to the art of hand-spinning and hand-weaving, but somehow or other the fear has seized us that the millions will not take to hand-spinning and weaving hand-spun yarn for their own needs. A haunted man sees fear even when there is no cause for it. And many more die of fright than of the actual disease.

[From Gujarati]

NEW DELHI, October 24, 1947

*Harijanbandu*, 2-11-1947

134. LETTER TO T. R. VENKATARAMA SASTRI

DELHI,  
October 24, 1947

DEAR SASTRIJI,<sup>1</sup>

How shall I thank you for the care and promptness with which you have copied out the verses from the *Mahabharata* and appended your note<sup>2</sup> on them.

My complaint is that the author of the great epic has reserved the virtues recited by him for forest-dwellers only. One wonders whether the author of the *Gita* was the same as that of the rest of the work.

Have you any right to expect the change in one like J. who labours under hallucination?

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

From the original: T. R. Venkatarama Sastri Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

135. LETTER TO JAL PAVRY

NEW DELHI,  
October 24, 1947

BHAI JAL PAVRY,

I have your letter. You cannot imagine the burden I am carrying. I did not know about your father's<sup>3</sup> death. It was good that you informed me. He lives even though he is no more. Why grieve then? Let us who are left behind continue his mission of service.

*Yours,*

M. K. GANDHI

DR. JAL PAVRY, M.A., PH.D.  
TAJ MAHAL HOTEL  
BOMBAY

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C. W. 10826. Courtesy: Bapsybanoo Pavry

<sup>1</sup> (1874-1953); advocate of Madras; student and life-long friend of V. S. Srinivasa Sastri

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "Futility of Arms", 9-1-1947.

<sup>3</sup> Khurshedji Erachji Pavry (1866-1947); High Priest of Parsis in India

### 136. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

October 24, 1947

CHI. NARANDAS,

Read this letter<sup>1</sup>. Send it on to Nonabhai<sup>2</sup>. Let me know what you think after reading it. Ask Nanabhai also to let me know what he thinks. I have written something about this in *Harijan*, which you will read in the course.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C. W. 8646. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

### 137. LETTER TO NARASINHDAS GORDHANDAS

NEW DELHI,

October 24, 1947

BHAI NARASINHDAS,

I have your letter. I have given a brief reply to it through *Harijan*. I don't propose to go further than that. My relatives are those who follow me. I have passed on your letter to Sjt. Narandas,<sup>3</sup> adding that he should also show it to Nanabhai Bhatt.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

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

### 138. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,

October 24, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTER,

Probably the news appeared in the newspapers four or five days ago that a labour conference is being held here which will be attended by many representatives from Asia. The conference will be held on

<sup>1</sup> From Narsinhdas Gordhandas. For Gandhiji's reply, *vide* the following item and "Whither Ahimsa, Whether Khadi", 24-10-1947.

<sup>2</sup> Nrisimhaprasad Kalidas Bhatt

<sup>3</sup> *Vide* the preceding item.

the 27th of this month. The newspapers also said that I will be inaugurating that conference. I knew nothing about it. Nor do I think I mentioned it to anyone. I asked one of the journalists how he got that information. I told him to contradict the report. Our Labour Minister Shri Jagjivan Ram had come to see me. I told him the same thing. He said I had got to be present at the conference, and as it would be a Monday and since I was already in Delhi, he thought there was no need to ask my consent. Such are our newspapers. When I told Jawaharlal that I might have consented by mistake, he was really astonished. There is no need for me to go there at all, for I have ceased to be useful for any purpose other than unity. Today I have only one task before me, and even that is more than I can attend to. I feel that if I succeed in that I shall have accomplished my life's mission. We all belong to the same country and let us all be one. If all the Hindus, Sikhs, Muslim, Parsis and Christians remain united, I shall not worry about anything else. They all belong to India and they have to live here. Why then should they indulge in fighting?

It is a great shock for a person, who has been dreaming of freedom from his childhood days and who strove hard to achieve it, that when freedom came, this poison has come along with it. This pains me very much. What could be worse than this? I want to stop this evil. My duty is but to try. I may succeed or I may not. "Let those who will, praise; and those who will, blame"—that is what we heard in the *bhajan*<sup>1</sup> today. Abuse or praise, it is all the same, for I only worship Rama and have dedicated everything to Him. But I must continue with my effort and devote my whole life to it.

As usual blankets have been received today also. They are being sent to whom they should be. The need is very great. So many blankets are required that we cannot satisfy everybody. Providing for everybody is a big job. God will meet the needs of all. Will those who are helpless and have been reduced to poverty from the state of prosperity be kept naked and hungry ? If we are pure at heart, God will provide food for us. But if we continue to be unworthy we shall have to go without food and clothing.

I mentioned one thing yesterday about the people who have become victims of leprosy. I referred to Jagadisan in that connection. He is a great scholar. He used to suffer from this disease. He is not completely cured of it; but it is very much under control. He does

<sup>1</sup> No 159 in *Ashram Bhajanavali*.

considerable work among the lepers and takes much interest. He mixes freely with them. He is of course a very hard-working man. He lives in Madras, not in Wardha. But he has been there for the past several days. He had corresponded with me about this matter. I got his letter a few days ago, but I read it only today. I found in it one suggestion, which I wish to explain to you. The gentleman has said that the victim of leprosy should not be called a leper. People give a bad meaning to that word and consider him even worse than an untouchable. After all an untouchable does not harm anybody. We believe that we become fallen by coming into physical contact with the untouchables. I have already said that real leprosy is the unclean state of mind. Hatred towards one's fellow-beings and speaking ill of the people of some community or class is a sign of mental perversity which is worse than leprosy. If such people are worse than the victims of leprosy, why should that name be attached to the latter ? Let these people be described as victims of leprosy and not as lepers. If people are believed to be bad because of a bad name, they should not be called by such a name. You may call a rose by any name, but that flower would never be without its fragrance—even if it is called by the worst possible name. If this is that Jagadisan says, he is right that there is not just one disease which can be passed on to others by physical contact. If a person suffering from scabies touches another person, he is likely to pass on his disease. Leprosy is such a disease and is contagious like cold, cholera, plague, etc. Why then should people suffering from that disease be looked upon with contempt ? When a person gets really affected by leprosy, people start looking at him with contempt. They refer to him as a lowly creature. But real lowly creatures are those who show contempt. We must get rid of this leprosy of contempt. That is why I decided to talk again about this thing today.

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur was to attend the conference at Wardha on the 30th. She should have gone. Dr. Jivraj was also to go. He should have gone. But how can they go ? They are tied down to their work. They can get away from it only for a day. But it would take them two days because they cannot return the same day. No aeroplane goes to Wardha. It goes only to Nagpur. They can return only after two days.

I wish to mention an important thing. Brajkishan has informed you that tomorrow I shall go and pray in the jail. The inmates of the jail desire that I should hold the prayer there. This will please me and

also please you but you will not be able to join me there. It is a prison and only prisoners can go there. I am going there because they have invited me. We shall meet here again the day after tomorrow.

[From Hindi]

*Prarthana pravachan*—I, pp. 457-9

### 139. OF NEW UNIVERSITIES<sup>1</sup>

There seems to be a mania for establishing new universities in the provinces. Gujarat wants one for Gujarati, Maharashtra for Marathi, Karnataka for Kannada, Orissa for Oriya, Assam for Assamese and what not. I do believe that there should be such universities if these rich provincial languages and the people who speak them are to attain their full height.

At the same time I fear that we betray ourselves into undue haste in accomplishing the object. The first step should be linguistic political redistribution of provinces. Their separate administration will naturally lead to the establishment of universities where there are none. The province of Bombay absorbs three languages : Gujarati, Marathi and Kannada and, therefore, stunts their growth. Madras absorbs four : Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam and Kannada. Thus, there is overlapping also. That Andhra Desha has an Andhra University is true. In my opinion it does not occupy the place it would, if Andhra was a separate administrative unit, free from foreign control; India attained that freedom only two months ago. The same thing can be said of the Annamalai University. Who can say that Tamil has come to its own in that University ?

There should be a proper background for new universities. They should have feeders in the shape of schools and colleges which will impart instruction through the medium of their respective provincial languages. Then only can there be a proper milieu. University is at the top. A majestic top can only be sustained if there is a sound foundation.

Though we are politically free, we are hardly free from the subtle domination of the West. I have nothing to say to that school of politicians who believe that knowledge can only come from the West. Nor do I subscribe to the belief that nothing good can come out of

<sup>1</sup> A Gujarati version of this appeared in *Harijanbandhu*, 2-11-1947.

the West. I do fear, however, that we are unable as yet to come to a correct decision in the matter. It is to be hoped that no one contends that because we seem to be politically free from foreign domination, the mere fact gives us freedom from the more subtle influence of the foreign language and foreign thought. Is it not wisdom, does not duty to the country dictate, that before we embark on new universities we should stop and fill our own lungs with the ozone of our newly got freedom ? A university never needs a pile of majestic buildings and treasures of gold and silver. What it does need most of all is the intelligent backing of public opinion. It should have a large reservoir of teachers to draw upon. Its founders should be farseeing.

In my opinion it is not for a democratic State to find money for founding universities. If the people want them they will supply the funds. Universities so founded will adorn the country which they represent. Where administration is in foreign hands, whatever comes to the people comes from top and thus they become more and more dependent. Where it is broad-based on popular will, everything goes from bottom upward and hence it lasts. It is good looking and strengthens the people. In such a democratic scheme money invested in the promotion of learning gives a tenfold return to the people even as a seed sown in good soil returns a luxuriant crop. Universities founded under foreign domination have run in the reverse direction. Any other result was perhaps impossible. Therefore, there is every reason for being cautious about founding new universities till India has digested the newly acquired freedom.

Then take the Hindu-Muslim question. The poison has assumed such dangerous proportions, that it is difficult to forecast where it will land us. Assume that the unthinkable has happened and that not a single Muslim can remain in the Union safely and honourably and that neither Hindu nor Sikh can do likewise in Pakistan. Our education will then wear a poisonous form. If, on the other hand, Hindus, Muslims and all the others who may belong to different faiths can live in either Dominion with perfect safety and honour, then in the nature of things our education will take a shape altogether pleasing. Either people of different faiths having lived together in friendship have produced a beautiful blend of cultures, which we shall strive to perpetuate and increasingly strengthen, or we shall cast about for the day when there was only one religion represented in Hindustan and retrace our steps to that exclusive culture. It is just possible that we might not be able to find any such historical date and if we do and

we retrace our steps, we shall throw our culture back to that ugly period and deservedly earn the execration of the universe. By way of example, if we make the vain attempt of obliterating the Muslim period, we shall have to forget that there was a mighty Jama Masjid in Delhi second to none in the world, or that there was a Muslim University in Aligarh, or that there was the Taj in Agra, one of the seven wonders of the world, or that there were the great forts of Delhi and Agra built during the Mughal period. We shall then have to rewrite our history with that end in view. Surely today we have not the atmosphere which will enable us to come to a right conclusion about the conflicting choices. Our two-months-old freedom is struggling to get itself shaped. We do not know what shape it will ultimately take. Until we know this definitely, it should be enough if we make such changes as are possible in the existing universities and breathe into our existing educational institutions the quickening spirit of freedom. The experience we will thus gain will be helpful when the time is ripe for founding new universities.

Last but not least remains Basic Education. It is an infant not more than eight years old. Therefore actual experience does not take us beyond what may be termed the matriculation stage. Thus, though it is limited in scope, the mind of those who are engaged in making the experiment has grown far beyond that stage. It would be unwise for any educationist to put aside the recommendations of a body which has behind it the solid experience of eight years. It should be borne in mind that this Basic Education has grown out of the atmosphere surrounding us in the country and is in response to it. It is, therefore, designed to cope with that atmosphere. This atmosphere pervades India's seven hundred thousand villages and its millions of inhabitants. Forget them and you forget India. India is not to be found in her cities. It is in her innumerable villages. The cities rose in answer to the requirements of foreign domination. They exist as they were two months ago, for though foreign rule has disappeared, its influence has not and cannot quite so suddenly. Thus I am writing these lines in New Delhi. If I know nothing of the villages of India how can I draw, sitting here, a true picture of the villages ? What applies to me applies more forcibly to the ministers.

Let us now glance at the fundamentals of Basic Education :

1. All education to be true must be self-supporting, that is to say, in the end it will pay its expenses excepting the capital which will

remain intact.

2. In it the cunning of the hand will be utilized even up to the final stage, that is to say, the hands of the pupils will be skillfully working at some industry for some period during the day.

3. All education must be imparted through the medium of the provincial language.

4. In this there is no room for giving sectional religious training. Fundamental universal ethics will have full scope.

5. This education, whether it is confined to children or adults, male or female, will find its way to the homes of the pupils.

6. Since millions of students receiving this education will consider themselves as of the whole of India, they must learn an inter-provincial language. This common inter-provincial speech can only be Hindustani written in the Nagari or Urdu script. Therefore pupils have to master both the scripts.

Therefore, it is hoped that all educationists will come to the conclusion that judicious delay is necessary for founding new universities.

NEW DELHI, October 25, 1947

*Harijan*, 2-11-1947

### *140. LETTER TO BALVANTSINHA*

NEW DELHI,

*October 25, 1947*

SHRI BALVANTSINHA,

Your letter to Manu was read out to Bapu. He says : Why are you disheartened like this ? The dairy has not really come to an end. It has merely expanded. Try to improve the plight of the village cattle, increase the milk yield, improve the breed, and educate the people to be honest and sell only pure milk. Devise a scientific test for the detection of water mixed with milk and so on. All this you can do and should do. This would be real service to the cow.

SUSHILA

From a photostat of the Hindi : G. N. 1989

## 141. TALK WITH COMMUNISTS

BIRLA HOUSE, NEW DELHI,  
October 25, 1947

The communists have got hold of something to keep themselves busy. Hardly one man in a thousand can be found who practises communism in everyday life. Communists have come to consider it their supreme duty, their supreme service, to create disaffection, to generate discontent and to organize strikes. They do not see whom this discontent, these strikes, will ultimately harm. Half knowledge is one of the worst evils. The best is either full knowledge or ignorance. We are thus caught in isms and take pride in them and consider it a fashion to belong to this or that ism. People seek knowledge and instruction from Russia. Our communists seem to be in this pitiable state. I call it a pitiable rather than shameful state, for I feel that they are to be pitied, rather than blamed. For, because of our slavery, they have had no opportunity to get full knowledge. And now when we have got our freedom everybody has got an opportunity to thrust himself forward to such an extent that a sixteen-year-old boy or girl can identify himself or herself with some ism and become a leader. These people have now been fanning the fire of disunity bequeathed to us by the British. Soon they will find that they cannot control the flames. What we have to do is to find out what will suit our ignorant masses and act accordingly. For instance we need foodgrain. If the youth of the country would only learn the techniques of farming and engaged themselves in producing more food they would have no time for quarrelling and the country would become prosperous.

[From Gujarati]

*Dilhiman Gandhiji*—I, pp. 142-3

## 142. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI

October 25, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

I was very happy when I received the invitation to hold the prayer before the prisoners of this jail and to address them in my usual manner, after the prayer. All the prisoners are probably not aware that I am myself an old time prisoner right from my days in South Africa. I was not guilty from my point of view; but from the point of view of the Empire I was guilty. I have served all kinds of imprisonments and I have seen many jails. Jail rules in South Africa are very strict. And then the Indians count for nothing there. Even if one was a barrister, it made no difference. All Indians were considered coolies. There were the Indians on the one hand and Negroes on the other, and then the British—all living in their own worlds. When the satyagraha started<sup>1</sup>, thousands of satyagrahis joined it, for in a satyagraha there would not be just a couple of persons. At the time of my first imprisonment<sup>2</sup> 150 of us were taken prisoners. In the beginning there were not many people. I was there and four or five others were with me; but in due course our number grew to 150. We were all packed together in one ward along with the natives. We got quite fed up because of such crowding. I would like to tell you how strict the jail rules were and how ruthlessly they were observed. Here in India we make much fuss by making a distinction between political prisoners and criminals. No such distinction is made in South Africa. All prisoners are regarded as criminals there. I do not believe that among the prisoners political prisoners belong to a higher category and criminal prisoners belong to a lower category. In the eyes of the law, all those who have broken it are equally guilty. Why then distinguish between the guilty ones? But here we were not only political prisoners, but even belonged to A, B and C categories. Was it not because ours was a mighty struggle? We were millions in the field and among us there were also some big people. But who was big among those poor creatures there? They were all small business men. There were Hindus, Muslims, Parsis and others. Nobody made any

<sup>1</sup> In July 1907.

<sup>2</sup> On January 10, 1908; *vide* "Trial at Johannesburg", 10-1-1908.

distinction between Hindus, Muslims or Parsis. They were all called coolies, or, say, Indians. So we could not even pose to be big and insist on being put in A category and those who were lower in B and the lowest in C category. I do not even believe in these divisions. But here we did all that. I believe that anyone who goes to prison is a prisoner. I do not believe that a prisoner alone has committed a crime and that those who are outside, well-dressed people, are not guilty. I have been incarcerated ten times.<sup>1</sup> I do not remember exactly, but I have spent quite a few years in prison and so I know about these things. The jail superintendents and others had become my friends. There used to be a superintendent who was a very good man and a great jailer. He once told me that he had been in charge of prisoners but the world had no idea of the crimes he had committed himself. He told me that the prisoners under him had come to spend their four or five years of imprisonment or they had come with death sentences which had been later condoned. But he wondered how many ever knew the crimes he had committed. He said perhaps God alone knew about his crimes. So he did not relish the idea that he should be the chief jailer and those others should be prisoners. I also share this belief of his. So I wondered with what attitude I should come and meet you. The British rule has now ended. They have withdrawn themselves. It was a nice thing they did. But what should we do with our prisons now? I have been a witness to the conditions that prevailed in the jails during the British days and I know very well how good or bad they were. But now that the Government is in our own hands, our prisons, far from remaining prisons, should become hospitals. If somebody has committed a murder or a theft or turned an outlaw, or committed any of the crimes mentioned in law books, I consider all these to be a kind of disease. It is a malady. No one commits a crime for its own sake. If

<sup>1</sup> Namely—

1. January 10 to 30, 1908—Johannesburg
2. October 7 to December 12, 1908—Volksrust
3. February 25 to May 24, 1909— -do-
4. November 11 to December 18, 1913—Dundee
5. April 9 to 11, 1919—On train from Kosi to Bombay
6. March 10, 1922 to February 5, 1924—Sabarmati/Yeravda
7. May 5, 1930 to January 26, 1931—Yeravda
8. January 4, 1932 to May 8, 1933— -do-
9. August 1 to 23, 1933—Sabarmati/Yeravda
10. August 9, 1942 to May 6, 1944—Yeravda/Aga Khan Palace, Poona

somebody indulges in adultery or commits some other crime under the influence of liquor, he does not do it for pleasure. Now that I have grown old and have also acquired experience, I have realized that man's actions are guided by his nature. The prisoners should be taught how they should live. The superintendent and the deputy commissioner take care of the prisoners and order that such and such a prisoner should be flogged or such and such a prisoner should do a particular work by way of punishment. But I would suggest that the superintendents and the deputy commissioners should be like surgeons and doctors in hospitals and try to reform the prisoners as a doctor would try to cure an alcoholic. The addict's attention should be drawn to all the evil effects of alcoholism. And supposing somebody has kidnapped a girl—this is of course a grave crime—but even he should be made to realize that what he did was a sort of disease. If our jails could be so transformed, it would be a great thing and all the prisoners also would be happy. But by being happy they surely would not wish to remain in prison for ever. Do the patients who go to hospitals wish to live there for ever? Moreover hospitals have nice big buildings which is not the case with our prisons here. How can we have such buildings for our prisons? Ours is a poor country. We would go bankrupt if we started rebuilding our prisons like palatial hospital buildings. Such prisons are not found even in South Africa which is a land of gold. Even the prison cells for the English prisoners there are not like palaces. England is a rich country and hence it has such prisons. This I can say because I have seen the British prisons. Of course I have not seen the prisons in America. But we can at least make our prisons like hospitals where doctors treat the patients. When a patient leaves the hospital after recovering from an illness, he feels for ever grateful. The same thing should happen in our prisons. Let the prisoners have no ground to complain about the harsh treatment and atrocities in prisons or about the wickedness of the superintendents and jailers. Let them not get a chance to say that everything was bad. Let them say that they were looked after as if in a hospital, were fed properly and taught how to lead a good life. I have already said what the people in charge of the prisons should do. But ultimately it is not in their hands to do that. It is for the Government to decide. Or, it is for Panditji, the Sardar, say, the whole Cabinet, that is, the Government, to do these things. But the Government must tell the prison authorities that this is how they should behave. If the latter then violate the rules and adopt tyrannical methods, that would be

another matter. No criminal should be a jailer or superintendent or a commissioner these days. We have at least learnt this and they all work under the Government. The Government does not possess a large army, nor can it seek outside help to discipline the officials. They willingly obey the orders of their Government. Our entire administration would collapse if they did not carry out orders willingly and there would be chaos in the country. So, as for the officials, I have said that they should not violate the law. And there are some small things they can do without being instructed by the Government. For instance, they should be kind to the prisoners. What is there to learn in this? Let them regard prisons as hospitals and prisoners as patients. If they did this much, at least one thing would be accomplished.

Now I wish to address myself to the prisoners as a prisoner. I have also been imprisoned as a satyagrahi. A satyagrahi prisoner cannot indulge in a deliberate crime. He would never harass the jail superintendent or the jailer, or insult them. He has to be an ideal prisoner. Then only can he carry on his satyagraha well. Even the prisoners who have come here after actually committing crimes should become satyagrhis here. They should never defy the jail rules. They should accept the restrictions of prison life and be content with what they get. If the food given to the prisoners is not sufficient or properly cooked or is found to contain extraneous substances like grit and worms, they should complain to the superintendent or the jailer. These things do happen. I have seen them with my own eyes because I have lived in prisons. But even for these things why should the jail officials be approached? These things are in the hands of the prisoners themselves, for there are no professional cooks in prisons. The Government cannot manage the prisons if they start keeping cooks. The prisoners themselves are made to cook. Let them do the job with their hearts in it. Let them cook rice after cleaning it well and let them not keep chapatis half-baked. All that is in your own hands. You must do this work as if you were doing it in your own homes. You have come here after committing some crimes. Anyone can commit a crime. But some are detected, and some are branded guilty without their having committed any crime. Such things do happen. I think if you do this much, you can become ideal prisoners.

You can do one thing. Among you there must be Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs. Even among the Muslims there may be people belonging to different sects. But you can all live here like brothers.

Today a kind of poison has spread in our country. I hope that it will not spread at least in the jails. You must come out of the prison as ideal citizens. Then the Deputy Commissioner and the Jail Superintendent would tell me that I have done a good job. They would tell me that their work has become easier, they are not being harassed and the jail rules are being properly observed and all the prisoners are making efforts every day to reform themselves. I would only pray to God that you may become ideal prisoners and go out of here as ideal citizens and try to stop the people outside from doing evil things. You should tell them that they should forget that the Hindus are enemies of the Muslims and the Muslims are the enemies of the Hindus. Everyone is likely to commit mistakes.

Tomorrow is Id. I offer Id greetings to my Muslims brethren. I wish that all the Hindu and Sikh prisoners here should offer Id greetings to their Muslim companions. In the end, I wish to tell you that you must always live in amity.

[From Hindi]

*Prarthana Pravachan*—I, pp. 459-64

### 143. LETTER TO E. HEWITT

BIRLA HOUSE,  
NEW DELHI,  
October 26, 1947

DEAR CAPT. HEWITT,

I thank you very much for your considerate letter of 23rd instant making a free offer of your stock of blankets which may be condemned for reissue, but not unacceptable for purposes of protection. I am sending to a friend in Bombay the authority you have enclosed for use.

CAPT. E. HEWITT  
DIVISIONAL SEA TRANSPORT OFFICER  
SEA TRANSPORT HEADQUARTERS  
NAVAL HEADQUARTERS  
NEW DELHI

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

#### 144. ADVICE TO MUSLIMS<sup>1</sup>

NEW DELHI  
October 26, 1947

Ahimsa is always tested in the midst of *himsa*, kindness in the midst of cruelty truth in the midst of falsehood, love in the midst of hate. This is the eternal law. If on this auspicious day, we all made a sacred resolve not to spill blood for blood but to offer ours to be shed instead, we would make history. Jesus Christ prayed to God from the Cross to forgive those who had crucified him. It is my constant prayer to God that He may give me the strength to intercede even for my assassin. And it should be your prayer too that your faithful servant may be given that strength to forgive.

*Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase*, Vol. II, p. 511

#### 145. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI  
October 26, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

At the outset I would like to reply to a gentleman's question. He says: "You say that it is not good to harbour feeling of revenge. But don't your followers who are devotees of Rama excite the feeling of revenge by burning Ravana's effigy?" There are two fallacies in this. First of all, who are my followers? I do not even know about them. I should like to be a devotee of Rama. But I am not sure that I am. After all it is no easy thing to be a devotee of Rama. Hence it is wrong to refer to any devotees as my followers. I do not have any followers at all. But what happens is that people make an effigy of Ravana who is defeated by Rama. Thus we saw Rama vanquishing Ravana. But who amongst us is Rama and who is Ravana? If every man can become Rama, who would become Ravana? This is only a story in which Rama is portrayed as God and Ravana as His enemy. That is why Ravana has been described as inauspicious—a demon and an evil spirit, because he insisted on disregarding Rama and died without accepting Him. Then he had to die at the hands of God. This is a story. It does not

<sup>1</sup> Muslims including many old friends, started visiting Gandhiji from early morning on Bakr-Id. On seeing them Gandhiji muttered to himself, "With what face can I wish them a happy Id?" *Vide* also the following item.

mean that the effigy of Ravana is made with an idea of taking revenge. The lesson I draw from it is that it teaches man not to take revenge. Who would be more arrogant and foolish than I if I imagined myself to be Rama and other people sitting around here to be Ravana's? How do I know I am Rama? Who knows how much wickedness is hidden in me? Nobody knows whether I am a *mahatma* or a wicked person in the eyes of God. I myself do not quite know how wicked or good I may be. God alone knows it. He is far above us and sees everything. Nothing is hidden from Him. Man cannot take revenge on anyone. Even if someone has done any harm, what is the point in taking revenge on him? Imagine a man as being perfect, though man can never be perfect, for God alone can be perfect, but supposing there is one human being who is perfect while others are imperfect, should he then punish others or slay them? According to me, the making of Ravana's effigy on the Vijaydashami day means that it is not up to human beings to take revenge. Even if we do not call it revenge, God alone can harm or kill. Does it then mean that it is only for God to employ violence as well as non-violence? God has no attributes and is beyond all properties. To Him all these things mean nothing. But this story is an illustration which points out that God alone can destroy all the Ravana's in the world. Some people also presume that Vijaydashmi tells them that they are perfect and others are imperfect. Hence they take the law into their own hands and become the lords of the world and start injuring and slaughtering people.

All this is happening in India, too, because we have lost our senses. From the reply I have given, you and the gentleman who put the question will have understood that the Rama Ravana story teaches us that we should not become sinful but be virtuous. Taking the name of Rama on the one hand and indulging in acts of sin on the other is abusing God.

Now some of you can ask me whether, while I am taking of these things at such length, I am aware of what is happening in Kashmir.<sup>1</sup> Yes, I am quite aware of it. But I know only what has appeared in the newspapers. If all those reports are correct it is really a bad situation. All I can say is that we can neither save our religion nor ourselves in this manner. It is reported that Pakistan is trying to

<sup>1</sup> On October 23, about 2,000 Afridis and tribesmen had invaded the Kashmir State and indulged in large-scale loot, arson and murder.

coerce Kashmir to join Pakistan. This should not be so. It is not possible to take anything from anyone by force. I have no doubt about it at all. Today it is Kashmir. Tomorrow it can be Hyderabad. Next it may come to forcing Junagadh or some other State. I do not wish to sit in judgment on this issue. I only believe in the principle that nobody can force anyone.

It makes no difference to me whether it is the question of Kashmir or Hyderabad or Junagadh. Let no one be forced into anything. Let there be no coercion. But I must respectfully submit that today Kashmir is not ruled by its Maharaja. In other States too there are no Princes as we used to know them. They were the creation of the British. Now the British have gone. They had installed them as rulers because they could rule through them and exercise power. Kashmir has still to establish popular rule in the State. The same is the case with other States like Hyderabad and Junagadh. In my view there is no difference between them. Real rulers of the States are its people. If the people of Kashmir are in favour of opting for Pakistan, no power on earth can stop them from doing so. But they should be left free to decide for themselves. The people cannot be attacked and forced by burning their villages. If the people of Kashmir, in spite of its Muslim majority, wish to accede to India no one can stop them.

The Pakistan Government should stop its people if they are going there to force the people of Kashmir. If it fails to do that, it will have to shoulder the entire blame. If the people of the Indian Union are going there to force the Kashmiris, they should be stopped, too, and they should stop by themselves. About this I have no doubt at all.

I have discussed the problem of Kashmir with you. Now let me pass on to another point. I have received a telegram from Calcutta. I think I had told you about a Shanti Sena which was formed in Calcutta while I was there. That was indeed a grace of God. It had appeared very difficult to establish peace in Calcutta. But once the Shanti Sena was formed, it was easily done, and neither the Hindus nor the Muslims had to suffer much. Before that the Muslims had taken control of big localities and were driving away the Hindus from there. Then the Hindus also burnt the huts and other belongings of the Muslims and also terrorized them. That should not have happened. I do not want to go into the whole story. But when I went there, by the grace of God the Shanti Sena was organized and students and others joined it. Now they write to say that both Dussehra and Id were celebrated with great enthusiasm and the Hindus and the Muslims have started living like brothers. Id was celebrated in Calcutta

yesterday. But it is being celebrated in Delhi today. So the telegram has been sent to me mentioning both Dussehra and Id. They say that the Shanti Sena had spread out all over. There was no damage done anywhere, either in Calcutta or Howrah. Nobody was in a position to harass anyone. And people lived without trouble on both the days. They had even gone towards Dacca in East Bengal. I thought I should tell you about this thing because I am happy if somewhere in India the animosity between the Hindus and the Muslims ceases and instead of remaining enemies they start living as brothers. And then Calcutta is no small village. It is a city where business worth crores is carried on. Huge freighters come to the Calcutta port and the city is inhabited by the Hindus and the Muslims who do business. If we started treating one another as enemies there, would not the entire trade be destroyed? It is indeed very good if the Shanti Sena has taught the people of Calcutta to live as brothers. Why should we not learn a lesson from Calcutta? Why should we not have a Shanti Sena here as well? Some Muslims came to me today on account of Id. They know that I am not their enemy but their friend. I am a Hindu, and a sanatani Hindu at that. That is why I am as much a Muslim as a Hindu. Hence they came to me as to a friend. I did offer them Id greetings; but I told them that really I had not the face to do so.<sup>1</sup> Even today they live in great fear. They wonder if the Hindus would let them stay here. Or would they be killed? Of course all the Hindus do not kill. But they are in panic because many have been slaughtered. What if they are few in number? Should the people of the majority community attack and terrorize them? These atrocities have got to end, otherwise we will perish.

How nice it will be if we can do here what has happened in Calcutta. Then my heart will dance with joy. Today my heart bleeds. I cannot shed tears, because if I do so I shall not be able to do what I want to. But there is sorrow in my heart. Are the Hindus and the Muslims going to live like this in independent India? It is barbarous if people belonging to the majority community attack the minority community. No religion can be saved by attacking others. Religion can be saved only by practising its teachings in life. There is no other way.

I have received a telegram from Ratlam saying that the Ratlam Maharaja has made an announcement<sup>2</sup> about establishing responsible self-government in the State. The Maharaja would be like a trustee of

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* the preceding item.

<sup>2</sup> On October 24, 1947; *vide* "Harijans in Ratlam", 9-11-1947.

the State. The Secretary of the Harijan Sevak Sangh has written to me that now no distinction will be made in the State between the Harijans and other people. Along with the high castes, the Harijans also entered the Maharaja's temple. From now on untouchability will cease to exist in all the State temples. And the Harijans will also be able to draw water from the public wells. I was very happy to know about all these things. If Hinduism has to make progress, how can hatred and untouchability have any place in it? Untouchables are those who are sinful. It is indeed a great stigma to make an entire community untouchable. All traces of untouchability should be removed from the heart of every Hindu. From every State ruled by the Hindus untouchability should be removed as it is done in Ratlam. We would be raising Hinduism very high thereby. If untouchability as we understand it is banished from our hearts, are we going to make the Muslims or some other people untouchables? What we are suffering today is the consequence of the evil of untouchability. That is why these developments in Ratlam have made me happy, and so I decided to speak to you about the good things that have happened at Calcutta and Ratlam.

[From Hindi]

*Prarthana Pravachan*—I, pp. 465-70

#### 146. A LETTER

NEW DELHI  
*October 27, 1947*

DEAR FRIEND,

The problem you state is beyond me. I approach God through faith, not science. You should ask a scientist who knows.

*Yours sincerely,*  
M. K. GANDHI

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

#### 147. LETTER TO EDITH HUNTER

NEW DELHI  
*October 27, 1947*

DEAR MRS. HUNTER,

Dr. Tamhankar told me yesterday that your husband had gone to his rest. Death I regard as a friend. Hence when a dear one leaves

us, there is no cause for regret. May this knowledge of the function of Death sustain you.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

MRS. EDITH HUNTER  
C/O KERNE HILL ROAD  
LONDON S. E. 21

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

*148. LETTER TO UMRAO SINGH SHERGIL*

*October 27, 1947*

DEAR FRIEND,

Though you do not expect anything from me, I must say one word, to hope that God will grant you the courage to do what you know to be right.

Of course the Urdu script is not easy and it is imperfect. All the same I am glad you think that we should all learn both the scripts.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

SARDAR UMRAO SINGH SHERGIL  
THE KOHNE  
SUMMER HILL  
SIMLA W.

From a photostat: G. N. 7941

*149. NOTE TO H. S. SUHRAWARDY<sup>1</sup>*

*[October 27, 1947]<sup>2</sup>*

I am at a loss to understand what Pakistan really wants to do—whether they want the Hindus to stay there or not. . . . Please remember that to the minorities this is a life-and-death question. Fine phrases or impressive declarations on paper will not help. If you can

<sup>1</sup> This was written in the last week of October after one of the addressee's visits to Karachi. The silence day during this week fell on this date. *Vide* also the following item.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*

get the Pakistan authorities to implement its declarations in action, you will have rendered the greatest service to the Indian Muslims. It is my claim that though many heinous things have happened in the Indian Union, the Union Government has spared no effort to ensure complete security and protection to the Muslims. . . . The Sardar and Pandit Nehru have worn themselves out in putting down lawlessness . . . . You do not know how ill the Sardar is. Yet he carries on by his iron will. I do not know what the policy of the Pakistan Government is, but I know what is happening to the minorities in Pakistan—in the Punjab, in Sind and in the Frontier Province. . . . But I have faith, I have thrown myself entirely on Him, so I am at peace.

*Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. II, pp. 483-4*

### 150. LETTER TO H. S. SUHRAWARDY

*October 27, 1947*

MY DEAR SHAHEED,

I address you frankly. I would like you, if you can, to remove your angularity. If you think you have none, I withdraw my remarks.

Hindus and Muslims are not two nations. Muslims never shall be slaves of Hindus nor Hindus of Muslims. Hence you and I have to die in the attempt to make them live together as friends and brothers, which they are. Whatever others may say, you and I have to regard Sikhs and others as part of India. If anyone of them declines, it is their concern.

I cannot escape the conclusion that the mischief commenced with Qaid-e-Azam, and still continues. This I say more to make myself clear to you than to correct you. I have only one course—to do or die in the attempt to make the two one.

*Yours,*

BAPU

*Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. II, p. 484. Also Pyarelal Papers.*  
Courtesy: Pyarelal

151. LETTER TO J. C. KUMARAPPA

October 27, 1947

MY DEAR KU.,

Read this comment<sup>1</sup> and return. It is meant for publication but I don't want to do so, until I have your comment.

Hope you are flourishing every way. Are you properly aided?

Yours,

BAPU

From a photostat: G. N. 10198

152. NOTE TO MANU GANDHI<sup>2</sup>

October 27, 1947

We need hide something only if there is the slightest falsehood in us. A satyagrahi has nothing to conceal in his heart because he intends to serve everyone. What is there to hide then? I know he is not in a position to do anything; but he will at least carry my message to Jinnah. And what will he gain by deceiving me? In thought, word and deed I love the Muslims, Parsis and Jews and all mankind as much as I love the Hindus.

[From Gujarati]

*Dilhiman Gandhiji*—I, p. 153

<sup>1</sup> By Shantikumar Morarjee on the addressee's article, "An Abortive Conference", published in *Harijan*, 28-9-1947.

<sup>2</sup> The addressee had expressed her fear that Suhrawardy might harm rather than help Gandhiji.

*153. LETTER TO D. B. KALELKAR*

*October 27, 1947*

CHI. KAKA,

I have your letter. I shall, however, not write much. I like the divisions you have made. I cannot however swallow what you say about the Press. The times are such that I think we must not get involved in the matter. We cannot afford to forget that we are not millionaires, we are mendicants. In these difficult times let us do the best we can. Please remember that I have only one place from where to seek charity. I have therefore to consider every act before I undertake it. Your mind soars high but your body will not be able to keep it company. Bear this in mind before you proceed.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

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

*154. LETTER TO SUSHILA PAI*

*NEW DELHI October 27, 1947*

CHI. SUSHILA,

Your letter is beautiful. It will be a job done when you settle down finally. Surely whatever you get there is bound to be better than the palaces here. But I know you cannot have this weather. It will continue to be nice for a couple of months or more.

Would you require a monthly salary? I was not aware that Sucheta did not draw any remuneration. But that certainly does not mean that you should not accept anything. Write to me what your requirement is. I think I never asked you about your financial circumstances.

For the rest you will have to depend upon what Sushila Nayyar says and what Abha and Manu write.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a copy of the Gujarati: Pyarelal Papers. Co urtesy: Pyarelal

*155. LETTER TO G. SOMI REDDY*

*October 27, 1947*

DEAR REDDY,

Your letter<sup>1</sup> of 14th is good. I am doing all I can. More I cannot say.

*Yours sincerely,*  
M. K. GANDHI

SHRIG. SOMI REDDY, BAR-AT-LAW

From a copy: C. W. 10581. Courtesy: G. Somi Reddy

*156. LETTER TO PRABHAKAR*

*October 27, 1947*

CHI. PRABHAKAR,

Herewith a letter for Chi. Chand. Often my way of consoling people may at first appear harsh. You at any rate should understand this. Otherwise we would become mere sentimentalists and will prove to be useless.

A letter to Barrister Reddy<sup>2</sup> also is enclosed. Forward it. You may fix up Arjunrao's marriage in April. God alone knows where I shall be at the time. If you want it to be performed in my presence, then it can take place where I am. There is little chance of my coming to Sevagram. It all depends on where today's poison will lead us.

I have not sent a telegram about Chand. One reason is that we are poor. Nobody should forget this.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 9040. Also C. W. 9164. Courtesy: Prabhakar

<sup>1</sup> The addressee had written about the "soaring prices of commodities" and appealed to Gandhiji to "save the fast-crumbling economic edifice".

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* the preceding item.

## 157. LETTER TO CHANDRANI

October 27, 1947

CHI. CHAND,

Why have you been so upset by my letter? You came to me presumably as a wise person and with a weighty testimonial from Satyavati<sup>1</sup>. How can I believe that any illness can upset you so much? Be up and about. Sushila will tell you the rest. Perhaps you can come with her. But if you do come you must get rid of your illness in Sevagram itself before leaving.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

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

## 158. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING<sup>2</sup>

NEW DELHI

October 27, 1947

Complaints are being repeatedly made that Muslims are being forced to leave their ancestral homes in the Union and migrate to Pakistan. Thus it is said that in a variety of ways they are being made to vacate their houses and live in camps to await dispatch by train or even on foot. I am quite sure that such is not the policy of the Cabinet. When I tell the complainants about this they laugh at it and tell me in reply that either my information is incorrect or the Services do not carry out the policy. I know that my information is quite correct. Are the Services then disloyal? I hope not. Yet the complaint is universal. Various reasons are given for the alleged disloyalty. The most plausible one is that the military and the police are largely divided on a communal basis and that their members are carried away by the prevalent prejudice.

I have given my opinion that if these members on whom depends the preservation of law and order are affected by the

<sup>1</sup> Granddaughter of Swami Shraddhanand

<sup>2</sup> As Gandhiji was observing silence his written speech was read out after the prayer.

communal taint, orderly Government must give place to disorder and if the latter persists, to disruption of society. It is up to the upper ranks of these Services to rise superior to communalism and then to infect the lower ranks with the same healthy spirit.

It is suggested with much force that the popular Governments established in the country have not the prestige that the ability to overawe the Indian members of the Services gave the foreign bureaucracy. This is only partly true. For the popular Government wields a moral force which is infinitely superior to the physical force that the foreign Government could summon to its assistance. This moral force presupposes the possession of political morale that popular support would give to an indigenous Government. It may be lacking today. There is no means of checking it save by the resignation of the Ministry at the Centre.

What we are examining specially this evening is the condition of the Central authority. It must never be and, what is perhaps more important, never feel weak. It must be conscious of its strength. Therefore if it is at all true that there is the slightest insubordination among the Services, the guilty ones must go; or the Ministry or the Minister-in-charge must resign and give place to the one who would successfully deal with official disorderliness.

Whilst I voice, not without hesitation, the complaints that persistently come to me, I must cling to the hope that they have no basis and that if they have, the superior authority will satisfactorily deal with them in so far as they have any justification.

What is the duty of the affected citizens of the Union? It is clear that there is no law that can compel a citizen to leave his place of residence. The authority will have to arm itself with special powers to issue orders such as are alleged to have been given. So far as I am aware there are no written orders issued to anyone. In the present case thousands are involved in the alleged verbal orders. There is no helping those who will be frightened into submission to any order given by a person in uniform. My emphatic advice to all such persons is that they should ask for written orders whose validity in case of doubt should be tested in a court of justice, if appeal to the final executive fails to give satisfaction.

The public, in this case representing the majority community (that hateful expression), should rigidly refrain from taking the law into their own hands. If they do not, they will be cutting the very

branch on which they are sitting. It will be a fall from which it will be difficult to rise. Let wisdom dawn on them while there is yet time. Let them not be swayed by ugly events even when the report thereof happens to be true. They must trust the representative Ministers to do the needful for the vindication of justice.

*The Hindustan Times*, 28-10-1947, and *Harijan*, 9-11-1947

### 159. TELEGRAM TO H. C. DASAPPA<sup>1</sup>

NEW DELHI

[Before *October 28, 1947*]

HOPE YOU WILL WORK FOR SERVICE AND NEVER FOR POWER.

*The Hindustan Times*, 28-10-1947

### 160. LETTER TO JEHANGIR PATEL

NEW DELHI

*October 28, 1947*

CHI. JEHANGIR,<sup>2</sup>

Your letter. I shall show it to Dinshaw.

Of course I shall give you the time you want. Your letter to D. B. Jagtap is quite good.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

### 161. LETTER TO DEVCHAND PAREKH

*October 28, 1947*

BHAI DEVCHANDBHAI,

I have gone through Mansukhlal's letter. I have passed it on to the Sardar. Let us see now what happens.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 5681

<sup>1</sup> A minister in the newly-formed Mysore State Cabinet

<sup>2</sup> The superscription and subscription are in Gujarati.

*162. LETTER TO PREMA KANTAK*

*October 28, 1947*

CHI. PREMA,

I got your letter. Come when you can and spend three or four days with me. We shall then talk sentiment.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 10458. Also C. W. 6896. Courtesy: Prema Kantak

*163. LETTER TO ANANTRAI P. PATTANI*

NEW DELHI

*October 28, 1947*

BHAI ANANTRAI,

The Sardar has done what was necessary in connection with your wire.

Please read the reverse side of the enclosed letter from Jaisukhlal and do what needs to be done.

I hope you are all right.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

ANANTRAI PATTANI

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

## 164. LETTER TO JAISUKHLAL GANDHI

October 28, 1947

CHI. JAISUKHLAL,

I have forwarded your letter to Anantrai. I have no doubt that controls and rationing have led to widespread corruption. It will be as God wills. I am doing what I can.

Manu is quite well. There is no cause for worry about me. The cough has gone. The rest of the news will be given by Manu.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

[PS.]

According to me, you are in the prime of youth. You should aspire to live up to a hundred and twenty-five years and serve till the very end.

BAPU

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

## 165. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI

October 28, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

A gentleman from Delhi writes: "I had taken some screens and tents from a Muslim gentleman for the refugees. He has now gone away from here. Where should I keep them now?" He is a gentleman and that is why he is asking what he should do with those things. He is right. Since that man has gone away, should we appropriate those things to ourselves? But I do not have any arrangement for keeping them. This matter concerns the Home Department. The Sardar should have been consulted. Or the matter should have been referred to anyone who is handling it. Or Neogy Saheb<sup>1</sup> who has been appointed for the purpose should be consulted. If he can find the whereabouts of that Muslim gentleman, these things or their worth in money will have to be sent to him.

A few young men from the Aligarh University came to me.

<sup>1</sup> K. C. Neogy, Minister for Refugees and Rehabilitation, Government of India

Some students from West Punjab and North-West Frontier Province also study in that University. They could not reach the University and those who are here cannot leave the place. Why should they not be able to move freely? Now that Pakistan has been formed, does it mean that the Muslims should go there and the Hindus and the Sikhs should come here? The students wish to collect the blankets, etc., from Muslims and distribute them among Hindu and Sikh refugees who are facing hardships in the camps. Their intention is good and the refugees need them too. If they receive these things, it would also be an expression of love from Muslims. But really speaking, they should go to Pakistan and ask the Muslims why the Hindus and the Sikhs have to leave their homes at all. I have with me a whole pile of papers full of complaints. Those complaints are not unfounded. Of course I do feel that some exaggeration is quite possible in them. But even if there is exaggeration, there is substantial ground for those complaints. Why should the Hindus run away from their places? Call them back. Why should they not come and live in their own places? If the students are able to do this we can show to the whole world that we had never indulged in mutual fighting. Then we shall regain our honour which is sullied today. This is what I have told those boys. They have agreed to what I have said. God alone knows what they are going to do later on.

But what I want to tell you today is something very important. I think that while I was in Bihar people used to think that since they had won freedom there was no need to buy tickets for travelling by train. Not only this. They sometimes indulged in acts of high-handedness and coercion. People did not indulge in mutual fighting in those days, but now they think that having won their freedom they need nothing more. I wrote quite a bit on the subject and it did have some effect and such practices were given up. But now for the past few days the situation has so developed that all over the country people have started travelling without tickets. Even well-to-do people have started thinking that they have become the owners of the trains. The railways certainly belong to us now; but the practice of ticketless travelling has resulted in a loss of Rs. 8 crores. And Rs. 8 crores is no small sum. Even Rs. 1 crore is no small sum. How difficult it was and how many people had to go round when we had to collect Rs. 1 crore for the Congress! I too went round from house to house with the others to collect the funds. With great difficulty we were able to collect that amount. The people of our country are so poor. Today we spend a crore of rupees in no

time. If we get it we don't even notice how it is spent. We still do not know how to spend. We spend just because we have been put in charge of the work. If people start having free rides in trains or do not buy tickets when travelling in connection with work, it is a kind of violence. In my view it is plain robbery. At this rate India will be reduced to utter poverty and we shall be left without railways or anything else. Then we shall feel sorry wondering how we can travel. Eight crore rupees do not make a small sum after all. In former days the railways could earn interest on their capital out of their earnings. Millions of people travel by trains. If everybody pays his fare the railways can earn quite a lot. There used to be ticketless travellers even in those days; but not in thousands as today. There used to be inspectors on the trains and the accounts used to be properly kept. But now the situation is such that the guards and the drivers are attacked. Expenditure is going up day by day. Trains cannot be run for charity. The railway employees cannot agree to forgo their salaries because the passengers do not pay their fares. What will they eat if they do not have their salaries? Thus the expenditure on railways is millions and it also earns millions. The railways incurred no loss in former days. Earnings from third-class passengers used to be considerable, because the expenditure on them used to be little. But I was pained to hear yesterday about the loss of Rs. 8 crores. Nothing good can come to us if there is going to be such looting all sides. On top of this we indulge in mutual fighting and killing and plundering. These things do no good to anyone and result in loss of crores of rupees. When people are asked to leave their homes and go away to Pakistan, they surely do not go without taking anything. They have to be fed and clothed. We have to incur all that expenditure for nothing. After all, India is not a country of the rich that it can go on spending at this rate. That is impossible. Hence even if there is a single person travelling by train, let him not travel without paying his fare. He must pay his fare. During the British days, police constables and other officials used to swallow up considerable amount of money. I know about this because I have been a third-class traveller. In those days when I had gone to Hardwar<sup>1</sup> for the Kumbh Mela, I found that nobody could get there without paying some extra money to the station master. In this way, thousands of rupees went by way of bribes. Now I feel that everybody

<sup>1</sup> In April, 1915, for volunteer service organized by Hriday Nath Kunzru, under the auspices of the Servants of India Society

has become quite honest. The station masters, signalmen, inspectors, guards, etc., should take only their legitimate dues and live only by that. They should not grab money from people. The passengers should consider the railways as their own property. They should keep the trains clean. They should not spit and smoke in the trains and should not pull the chain without real need. And not a single passenger should travel without ticket. Then I would be able to say that we have attained true independence. Here there are not thousands of people to hear me, and so who would carry my words to those hundreds of thousands of people who travel by trains? Had I been a railway manager or a railway minister I would have given orders to people working under me to tell the passengers that though they would not be physically manhandled, the railways belonged to them and the railway officials were their servants, they would not be permitted to travel without paying the fares. Even if the train is passing through a forest, the railway authorities would stop the train right there. If the passengers still did not come round they would order the driver to detach the engine from the train and drive it away. Then there would be no occasion for abusing people or using force against them; the train just would not move till the passengers paid the fare. This method should be followed as long as the passengers travel without tickets. After all, it is not proper to board the train without tickets, to indulge in violence and stop the train just anywhere one likes. What I have told you is happening in India. But I have heard that in Pakistan too people travel in trains without tickets just as here. And why should they not do so? After all we were all born in the same environment, have eaten the same salt, then why should not the same things happen there as here? But if things continue in this manner, both the countries will go bankrupt. If we travel by train without buying tickets, take bribes wherever we can and go on beating up people, we will end up as robbers. The respect we have acquired by becoming independent will be completely lost. Hence let as many people as possible and the Minister listen to what I am saying, because I am saying as an experienced man, that if this trend does not stop you will have to stop running the trains. The trains will not move and in the trains that move no passenger will be allowed to travel without paying his fare.

[From Hindi]

*Prarthana Pravachan*—II, pp. 7-11

166. TELEGRAM TO LILAVATI ASAR

NEW DELHI  
October 29, 1947

LILAVATI UDESHI  
G. S. MEDICAL COLLEGE  
PAREL (BOMBAY)

YOU CAN COME WHEN YOU LIKE.

BAPU

From a photostat: G. N. 9613

167. LETTER TO CHHAGANLAL JOSHI

October 29, 1947

CHI. CHHAGANLAL,

I got your letter and the cheque from Wankaner.<sup>1</sup>

You do not seem to have noticed that His Highness has drawn the cheque in favour of the secretary. But one secretary is dead and the other is in Noakhali. I have, however, three or four persons here who are working as secretaries. Among them is Bisen whose merits need no proof,<sup>2</sup> who gets up at three and wakes us all up at 3.30. He is with me just now, at 4.15, after the morning prayer. He is sending you a cheque signed by him. I save a little money by this arrangement and your purpose also is served. You may cash the cheque for Harijan work. I am writing to His Highness.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

*Bapuna Patro-7: Shri Chhaganlal Joshine, p. 275*

<sup>1</sup> Raja Saheb of Wankaner used to give Rs. 1,000 on Gandhi Jayanti for Khadi, Harijan service and constructive work in Saurashtra; *vide* the following item.

<sup>2</sup> The Gujarati saying here reads : "To see one's bracelet one needs no mirror."

*168. LETTER TO RAJA OF WANKANER*

NEW DELHI  
*October 29, 1947*

YOUR HIGHNESS RAJA SAHEB,

Chi. Chhaganlal Joshi of the Harijan Sevak Sangh has forwarded to me a draft for Rs. 2,000 instead of the usual Rs. 1,000 for Harijan welfare, and has mentioned your indifferent health. May God grant you a long life and inspire you to serve your subjects.

I have returned the cheque to Joshi<sup>1</sup> to encash it for service of Kathiawar Harijans.

*Blessings from*  
M. K. GANDHI

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

*169. LETTER TO NAREN B. JOSHI*

*October 29, 1947*

BHAI JOSHIJI,

I have your report. Why is it in English? Why not in Hindustani? The report does not say what solid work has been done. We cannot gain anything by merely passing resolutions.

*Yours,*  
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 8939

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* the preceding item.

## 170. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI

October 29, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

Today you have heard a very sweet *bhajan*. The person who sang that beautiful *bhajan* may not be known to all of you. His name is Dilip Kumar Roy. He has visited many places. Few persons in India possess the melodious voice he has. I would even say that very few in the world have a voice like his. He came to me in the afternoon. I could not spare much time then. I could give just 10 minutes. He sang *Vandemataram*, which he has set to music, in his melodious voice. He must know this song because he is a Bengali. I heard him because he wanted to sing for me. I am no expert in music. He has an affection for me which people mutually develop. Then he sang for me *Sare jahanse achchha* of Iqbal. He has set that also to a new tune. I enjoyed it very much. He has been staying at Rishi Aurobindo's Ashram at Pondicherry for the past several years. He has not taken any training there. He has been a musician even when he went there. Later he developed his art.

The inner meaning of the *bhajan* is as Kabir says: "While you possess elephants and horses and wealth worth crores, my only possession is the name of Murari<sup>1</sup>. But having that name I am rich and all the wealth lying in your possession is worthless. That wealth is transient. But what I possess can never be taken away from me. The *bhajan* only shows the greatness of Ramanama. And what the *bhajan* says you have already heard. But you must also know about the Aurobindo Ashram. As it is, there is a continuous stream of visitors to the Ashram. A large number of people go there. Shri Aurobindo has many devotees. There is no hatred for anyone there, whether Hindu or Muslim or somebody else. I have seen that the late Sir Akbar Hydari used to visit the Ashram every year. Shri Aurobindo is a humble devotee. He does not meet anyone. But people visit him, whether they can or cannot have his *darshan*. They also entertain no feeling of hatred for anyone. Let us learn at least this much that we should not

<sup>1</sup> One of the appellations of Lord Krishna

have hatred for anyone.

But today I wish to talk about what is happening in Kashmir. And I must talk about it. You already know what is appearing in the newspapers. It is an astounding story. It happened three days ago. Nobody knew anything about it. Even I did not know what was going to happen. But one might say what has happened has happened. At the moment it is being said that the Afridis, and others have infiltrated there carrying arms with them. Some people even say that it is a mischief done by the Pakistan Government. It may be so, but I am not concerned with it. I am observing what is happening there. On the one side the invaders have gone right up to Punj and have further reached within 22 miles of Srinagar. From there it is a straight road with no obstructions for them.

When the Maharaja of Kashmir saw this he announced his decision to accede to the Indian Union. The Maharaja wrote a letter to Lord Mountbatten who welcomed his decision.<sup>1</sup> Now that he has taken refuge in the Indian Union he should be protected. But how could protection be given to him? Help could not be sent by road, but only by air. How many soldiers could be sent by plane? Only a few could be sent. Then they have to carry their arms, food supplies and clothes. And their clothes have got to be thick and heavy. Even an excess of one pound of weight becomes an extra burden. When the planes fly in the sky like birds, how many soldiers can go in them? About 1,000 or at the most 1,500 would have gone. On the one hand there are 1,500 soldiers and on the other a large number of men who have come from the North-West Frontier Province. Those men are also of a fighting stock and they are fighting. What can you or I think about it? After all, I have spent my life thinking over these things. I do not believe in armed fighting but I must know what it is. On the one hand are 1,500 Indian soldiers and on the other all those Afridis and others. And there is Sheikh Abdullah. He is called the "Lion of Kashmir". That is, he is like a tiger or a lion. He is a sturdy man. You must have seen his photograph. I know him and his Begum also. She is here these days. He is doing whatever a single individual can do. He is not a soldier. There are strong and sturdy Muslims in Kashmir and also strong and sturdy Hindus, Rajputs and Sikhs. So he has decided to do his utmost. He is a Muslim. Kashmir has a large Muslim population.

<sup>1</sup> Maharaja Hari Singh had signed the Instrument of Accession of Jammu and Kashmir State on October 27.

From here the soldiers have gone fully armed but what should the local Muslims do? Granted that we have all become barbarians—whether here or in Pakistan, no act of madness is left undone—should the people in Kashmir also turn barbarians and indulge in indiscriminate killing of women and children? Should Kashmir be reduced to such a terrible state? Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and his Cabinet came to the conclusion that something should be done and those soldiers were sent. What should they do? Let them fight to the end and die fighting. The job of armed soldiers is to march ahead and repel the attacking enemy. They die in fighting but never retreat. God alone knows what the outcome will be. As it is stated in the *bhajan*, our only wealth is Murari. Our wealth does not consist in money piled up in crores. Even the arms are not our wealth. Whatever is to be done is done only by God. But our duty is to make efforts. And that we should do. So these 1,500 soldiers have made an effort. But they will have really done their duty when all of them lay down their lives in saving Srinagar. And with Srinagar the whole of Kashmir would be saved. What would happen after that?

All that would happen would be that Kashmir would belong to the Kashmiris. I fully agree with Sheikh Abdullah who says that Kashmir belongs to the Kashmiris and not to the Maharaja. But the Maharaja has given all powers to Sheikh Abdullah, leaving it to the Sheikh's discretion to do whatever should be done and save Kashmir if he can. After all, Kashmir cannot be saved by the Maharaja. If anyone can save Kashmir, it is only the Muslims, the Kashmiri Pandits, the Rajputs and the Sikhs who can do so. Sheikh Abdullah has affectionate and friendly relations with all of them. It is possible that while saving Kashmir, Sheikh Abdullah would have to sacrifice his life, his Begum and his daughter would have to die and all women of Kashmir would have to die. And, if that happens, I am not going to shed a single tear. If we are fated to have a war, there will be a war. God alone knows, if it is going to be a war between the two only or others too would be involved. If the aggressors have no support or encouragement of Pakistan, I do not know how they can hold on. Maybe, there is no such encouragement. If the people of Kashmir die in the fighting, who would be left behind? Sheikh Abdullah would have gone, because his lion-heartedness consists in dying while fighting and saving Kashmir to his last breath. He would have saved the Muslims and also the Sikhs and the Hindus. The Sheikh is a devout Muslim. His wife also offers *Namaaz*. She had recited Auz-o-

Billahi to me in her melodious voice. I have even gone to his house. He would not let the Hindus and the Sikhs there die before the Muslims. What if the Hindus and the Sikhs are in a minority there? If this is the attitude of the Sheikh and if he has influence on the Muslims, all is well with us. The poison which has spread amongst us should never have spread. Through Kashmir that poison might be removed from us. If they make such a sacrifice in Kashmir to remove that poison, then our eyes also would be opened. The tribesmen are only interested in killing. So they invaded Kashmir and even showed their strength. I know all who are with them. But the result would be that if all the Hindus and Muslims of Kashmir sacrificed their lives, that would open our eyes also. Then we would know that not all Muslims were insincere and bad, there were some good men also among them. Similarly it is not true that all Hindus and Sikhs are either good and saintly or worthless and kafirs. I believe that there are good people among all, Hindus and Muslims and Sikhs. And it is due to these good people that the world goes on—not due to the people carrying arms.

This is the substance of the melodious *bhajan* we have heard today. I shall dance with joy even if everybody in Kashmir has to die in defending his land. There would be no sorrow in my heart. The world would go on as usual. All this is the play of God. But we have always to make the effort and that consists in dying while doing the right thing.

[From Hindi]

*Prarthana Pravachan*—II, pp. 12-6

171. LETTER TO YVONNE PRIVAT

October 30, 1947

MY DEAR BHAKTI<sup>1</sup>,

I have just read your consoling letter. I understand and appreciate your view point. Leave me in the care of the great Unseen and Unknown. I must not be deceived into the belief that all is well when it is not.

Psychoanalysis has been often. . .<sup>2</sup> I have never been able to find time to study it. You should go your way without caring to know what I think about these new modes of thought. "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and everything will be added unto you."<sup>3</sup>

I am glad you suffered and got well together in the same room. Do I not know how you used to bathe together in the same bathroom as if you were utterly innocent brother and sister!

My love to you both.

BAPU

MADAME EDMOND PRIVAT  
AVENUE DE LA GARE  
NEUCHATEL  
SWITZERLAND

From a photostat: G. N. 8804

<sup>1</sup> Gandhiji has given this name to the addressee.

<sup>2</sup> Two words are illegible here. *Vide* Vol. XC, "Letter to Yvonne Privat", 29-11-1947.

<sup>3</sup> *St. Matthew*, vi. 33

## 172. TALK WITH H. S. SUHRAWARDY

[October 30, 1947]<sup>1</sup>

Gandhiji told him that the only way for him to vindicate his good faith was sincerely and boldly to condemn the wrong policies and actions of Pakistan.<sup>2</sup> This he himself did not deny. There was, for instance, the invasion by tribesmen of Kashmir. Either Pakistan was behind it, as all circumstantial evidence went to show, or it was not. If Pakistan was involved in it, was it not his duty as an Indian national to proclaim his conviction? On the other hand, if even in the face of the organized forces in such strength in Kashmir, Shaheed maintained that Pakistan had no hand in it, was it not up to him to try to find out who was actually responsible for it?

I suggest to you that it is your duty to ascertain the truth. Nothing would please me more than to find that I was wrong and you were right.

*Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. II, p. 484*

## 173. TALK WITH SIND CONGRESSMEN

October 30, 1947

If I cannot convince the top leaders of the Congress who have been my co-workers for the last thirty years, I ask myself, 'Where do I stand?' You are in such a pitiable condition that you have come to me for guidance asking in which city of India you can stay peacefully and your children can have education. I pity you but I feel most unhappy with myself and wonder why I was so blind all this while. What I considered as the non-violent force of the brave was in fact passive resistance of the weak! You have come away with your families leaving thousands of your brothers and sisters because you got an opportunity or, allow me to say it, you somehow managed to escape. How could you desert those who trusted you and plunged themselves in the satyagraha struggle under your leadership? I don't find fault with you. But you have come out in your true colours and also made me realize that I had followed the wrong path. But I am an optimist.

<sup>1</sup> From *Dilhiman Gandhi*

<sup>2</sup> Suhrawardy had complained that nobody trusted him in the Indian Union.

This morning I talked to this girl<sup>1</sup> about faith and hope. God is really testing me, and if I am sincere in my effort to live up to my slogan of 'do or die' and if I am firm in my faith in Ramanama, I will, if I can do nothing else, cheerfully sacrifice myself in this *yajna* of unity with the name of the Faultless and Formless Rama on my lips and not run away from its flames however fierce they may be. It will be enough if I can prove at least by my example that God does grant one the strength to sacrifice oneself in such a manner.

You are just like children to me. Now that you have come to seek my advice, I wish to tell you that you should give up the temptation to settle in a city. If you do not have the necessary courage to go back to Sind, go to the villages with your families and take up some constructive activity. Once you give up this fascination [for cities] you will realize how much you and your families will rise [by living in the villages]. I can only express my view, but you don't have to do anything to please me. Follow the dictates of your heart, only then will you bring credit to yourselves. You will be thoroughly confused if you keep thinking what Bapu likes or does not like and I will not be able to ascertain the true state of affairs and the whole atmosphere will become artificial. I hope you know how much harm false pretences can do.

[From Gujarati]

*Dilhiman Gandhiji*—I, pp. 167-8

<sup>1</sup> Manu Gandhi

## 174. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI

*October 30, 1947*

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

I was aware of what had been happening here. It pained me very much. Here I wish to make it clear that Birla Bhavan is the house of a private individual. Nothing unbecoming should happen here. Those who wish to come are welcome, but after coming here it is not good manners to raise any objection. Today a gentleman said that he would not allow the prayer to take place. I wonder whether I should hold the prayer at all under the circumstances. The person who raised the objection went away because you told him to go. He returned and left again. This is not a good thing for me. It means that he is pained at heart. That way I think many of you must be pained because a portion from the Koran is included in the prayer. But I am helpless because it is an inseparable part of my prayer. Do you think I shall not pray if the prayer is not held here? On the one hand my duty tells me that I should pray. It is not that I shall cease to pray if I do not hold the prayer here. I shall pray even if there is none in the world to stand by me. One can pray within one's heart. Here I have to think from the point of view of non-violence. I must see my duty only in that light. I do not like that a man should go away in order that I might hold the prayer. I do not wish to hold the prayer today, nor enter into an argument, still I will because we are passing through a critical time and people are eager to hear what Gandhi has to say. I also wish to speak so that at least people might understand what I wish to tell them. But today I will not enter into an argument, because I am helpless.

I must decide whether I should discontinue the prayer and only continue the discussion. It is a big question. I shall have to think about it. Today I do not wish to say anything on this or argue about it. If I carry on the discussion I will have to leave out the prayer. I will issue a Press statement in this connection.

I came in when I saw that you people had arrived. My culture and non-violence tell me that I should reveal my heart to you and let you know who I am. For me, there is nothing in this world except

truth and non-violence. If you realize the meaning of truth and non-violence, great things can be done in the world. I do not wish to indulge in any big talk. Great things happen in the world. But who can change the Law of God? And God cannot change the laws of the world. I think we are all steeped in pride and ignorance and hence believe that truth is too great a thing to be applied to trade and business and in practical life. We wonder how non-violence can work. It is asked when somebody abuses twice, why not abuse him at least once and if somebody abuses why not retort by slapping him? But if we follow such a path, we can make no progress. And we do want to make progress. This, according to me, is the purpose of human life. I cannot remain still. Only God is immovable. But it is stated in the Upanishads that though God is immovable he is also moving. He is always moving—and He moves in such a way that that motion gives the impression of stillness. Did we know that the sun is stationary and the earth moves? But now we have learnt that what appears to be moving is stationary. Such is the creation of God. God alone is immovable and also moving. We are never still. We are always moving, and since we are moving we have to go ahead. We come out of our mother's womb and grow. In the course of time we grow old. That is the way of life. One who is born has to grow and march forward and he does go forward. Some people think old age is decline. But that is not my view. Old age is like the ripened fruit. That which is destroyed is body, not soul. The soul does not perish, nor does it decay. The soul is always in a process of evolution. And in this world we cannot live without truth and non-violence. Even today I claim that truth and non-violence should be learnt even by children. If the mother learns these things she can teach them to her children also. The mother cannot learn these things in an instant. But it is said that man has been in existence from the beginning of time, since millions and millions of years. We should consider our progress in that context. For that we must have patience. I do not wish to say anything more on this point; but nothing can be done without truth and non-violence. We cannot make any progress without them.

I do not wish to enter into a discussion today. You would be coming tomorrow also. If tomorrow also anyone raises an objection to the recitation from the Koran I shall decide whether I should discuss the matter. If anyone has got an objection he will say so, otherwise they will say that they will have both the prayer and the speech. But the others should know that they should not get angry. If later some-

body decides not to allow the people to listen to the prayer and starts shouting, maybe your violence will be provoked, and my non-violence will be put to test. It will also show how far you can go with me. If you will stand by me and adhere to non-violence, I can say with certainty that violence cannot remain unaffected before non-violence. But the condition is that you must do as I say. You must tell me that you will exercise restraint and will not be carried away by anger. That gentleman who protests against the recitation from the Koran is ignorant. What harm has the Koran-e-Sharif done? If the Muslims here have gone astray it does not mean that the Koran is at fault. The Koran written in Arabic is sublime and eternal. I do not think anyone can be more ignorant than one who shows contempt for the Koran. You must convince the man who objects, in this manner. Of course, if somebody says that he does not want to listen to the prayer at all, I will have the prayer and also make the speech. But I cannot tolerate that you should beat up anybody because I discontinue the prayer. If I am left alone and five persons come up to me wanting to kill me, I would say that my head is ready for them. I would ask why there should be five persons to do that. Even a single man could cut my throat. But still I would hold the prayer. When one's heart is filled with such feelings, one would neither kill a person nor be angry with him. Even if the person raising an objection, whom we could call an uncultured man, shouts at the top of his voice, we will have our prayer. Tomorrow we shall have the prayer as well as the speech. If anyone raises an objection tomorrow, let him do so and leave. I do not wish to ruin myself for his sake. I can carry on my work only by controlling my anger and being patient. Today this is all I wish to say. Now please go home quietly without arguing among yourselves. Think over this at home.

[From Hindi]

*Prarthana Pravachan*—II, pp. 16-20

### 175. LETTER TO SATIS CHANDRA DAS GUPTA

*October 31, 1947*

CHI. SATIS BABU,

I have your letter. I have read the whole of it or, rather, heard it. What you say is right. But we need a lot of money for quite some time. Must we spend so much for each and everything? Should I beg

for so much? What does our duty dictate? There is no question of leaving Noakhali. The only question is whether or not we can be self-supporting there, whether the Hindus of Noakhali can bear our expenses. After all, our expenses will not be much. The expense on refugees should be kept separate. My advice is that you think over all this and meet Pyarelal, Jiwan Singh, Kanu and the people at Sodepur and let me know. We must not accept defeat. We should not be short of funds. All good causes get money, that is, there is no need to make special efforts for it. I think I must have been at fault somewhere.

I hope you are well.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 9286

### *176. LETTER TO RAMESHWARDAS*

*October 31, 1947*

CHI. RAMESHWARDAS,

Your letter must have been received. Sushilabehn probably forgot about it. Now she is at Wardha. She will come after some time. Vinoba's father passed away. It is as it should be. Have not all of us to go? The person who gave away his sons for the service of others was indeed a great man. Let us learn from him the lesson of sacrifice.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 170

## 177. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI

*October 31, 1947*

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

In my view, disappointing 300 persons for the sake of two or three is also a kind of violence. These people certainly have a right to protest, but courtesy demands that they should not exercise that right in this place which personally belongs to Birla. But who can stop them if they do so? In that case, the remaining members of the audience must put up with them. Let them not be angry with the persons who are protesting or say anything to them either here or outside. I shall carry on the prayer and the recitation from the Koran if you are agreeable to this. Because you are in the majority, you should not think that you can ignore the people who are protesting. If you think you can ignore them, you would be following the path of violence. We must be more concerned about the people who are in the minority. This is what I have been trying to teach all along. In future too I shall, above anything else, try to teach how non-violence works.

The basic principles of truth and non-violence are not difficult to understand. No special degree is needed to learn those principles. Why talk of English, we need not learn even our own mother tongue for it. Whatever is needed for the purpose we learn from our parents in childhood. Practising those principles is even easier. Hence, if you can put up with this much of protest, I shall have the prayer in spite of the protest. Courtesy demands that if anyone is against the recitation from the Koran, he should express his view and leave; he may explain to me later in what way I am harming the Hindu religion. I am a sensible man. If, therefore he is able to convince me, I shall accept his view. Personally, I think I have only done some good to Hinduism. I am not doing this only today—I have been doing this for a long time and, I think, Hinduism has not been tarnished in any way. Through this practice of reciting from the Koran I am able to draw my Muslim friends nearer to me. I have not done anything wrong in this. How nice it would be if I could in the same manner draw the whole world to me and there were none who was my enemy or opponent! But how can that be? I am not so perfect that no one can protest against me. But let me at least learn to put up with those who oppose me. If you

also learn to put up with their protest, say nothing to them and accept them with goodwill, they will think that you are all gentlemen. If all of us can follow this path, there is no doubt that the face of India will change. That is why I am asking you if you will put up with these people. Let the police also say nothing to them.<sup>1</sup>

If things go on like this, the result is bound to be good. In today's prayer Shri Dilip Kumar Roy sang: "Let there be love in the temple of your heart." I was pleased by his melodious voice and his art of singing. The sentiment expressed is nothing uncommon but the way it was presented is what we call art. The *bhajan* says that we should make our heart like a temple and install love in it. So this also teaches us non-violence. The composer of this *bhajan* asks man why he should behave like a foolish and ignorant man. He says that if one can light the lamp of love even if only in the temple of one's heart, one will have won the goal of one's life. After that he will see light and brightness in the whole world. There will be no darkness anywhere. Similar miraculous power is to be found in truth and non-violence. This is a very simple and obvious thing. But if we learn even this much, our task in the world will become easier.

I found in Noakhali that the rich had run away from there, leaving the poor behind. The villages in that area are full of people whom we, in our foolishness, call untouchables. As I have toured the area, I know that the people there are very much in distress. The women in that place had even forgotten to wear bangles or apply *sindoor*<sup>2</sup>. Even among the people who have come here from the Punjab and elsewhere I have found that the people with financial resources somehow carry on some occupation or the other. They have money and they also acquire friends. But what can the poor do? Where can they go? In Noakhali there were only the Hindus who were in distress; but in Bihar I found the Muslims also in distress. I told them that those who were dead among them were dead and gone and those who had money and wished to go away could do so, but as for the poor, God alone was their protector. But God does not work with His own hands or mouth. He inspires people and gets His work done through them. But should the rich become such hard-hearted

<sup>1</sup> The audience expressed its approval and then the prayer was held. After the prayer Gandhiji thanked the objectors for remaining silent and also complimented the rest of the gathering for tolerating their protests.

<sup>2</sup> Vermilion mark, sign of married status

materialists that they should forget God altogether and regard mammon as their God? The rich fled from that place and the poor who are left behind write to me that I should do at least something for them. They look up to me because I have worked for the poor for many years. But what can I do? I have neither strength nor power. But I know about their situation just because they keep me informed.

There are a large number of poor people in the refugee camps in Delhi. There are some rich people too and among them there are some nice people who first feed the poor before eating themselves. That is why I say that the people who have come here should not discriminate between the rich and the poor. If the rich look upon the poor with contempt they will be not religious but irreligious. That is why I would plainly say that the rich should keep the poor along with them. Then alone can we live together in peace and unity.

Recently a European couple visited some of our camps. They were happy to have seen those camps. They said that though there were distinctions between the rich and the poor, the people lived well all the same. The couple have come here only with the intention of serving. If we all work with the name of God on our lips, the refugees from the Punjab would mingle with the people of Delhi even as sugar dissolves in milk.

There are still a large number of Muslims in Delhi. I have seen a list today which, if there is no exaggeration, indicates that hundreds of Muslims have been forcibly converted to Hinduism or Sikhism. I would like to tell the people who have been subjected to forcible religious conversion that even though they have changed their Muslim appearance, if God is installed in their hearts there is no need to shave off their beards or to keep a tuft of hair. Those who wish to read the *Gita* of their own accord may do so by all means. It should be in the spirit in which I read the Koran and derive inner joy. But if somebody compelled me to read the Koran and threatened me with death if I did not oblige, I would say that I had no need of the Koran even if it contained jewels. That is why I would tell those Muslims who have become Hindus or Sikhs that they must stick to their religion. If we compel them to follow our religion, we are destroying Hinduism. Such a thing cannot go on in India forever, and if it does, it will ruin us, and we will lose our independence. I have no doubt that in that case our independence will have become a mere dream. That is why I would like to tell all the Muslims here that they should live without

fear. Those who have changed their religion should say that they were in panic at that time, but now they have realized that people who have faith in God are never afraid, and, if at all, they are afraid only of God. It is a good thing to be afraid of God because He is the abode of love, an ocean of compassion. If we are afraid of God we are blessed. But we should never be afraid of man. Hence they would say that they would rather die than change their religion. They can tell the Hindus that the latter might send them to Pakistan if they wished, but cannot drive them out through force.

It is agreed between Liaquat Ali and our Prime Minister that those who wish to go to Pakistan are free to leave, but even Liaquat Ali, the Sardar and Jawaharlal cannot force anybody. There is no such law. So we should keep with love the Muslims who are here. If I am alive, I do not wish to see anything else. There was a time when I cherished the desire to live for 125 years; but now I have given up that desire. If India is destined for bad times, let God take me away. And if India is destined to be great and the situation is going to change, as it should, let God change the hearts of the Muslims and fill them with thoughts of God. They do take the name of God but they are not doing His work. Similarly, if the Hindus take the name of Krishna or Rama but indulge in killing, their taking those names has no meaning.

Some people say the war has started and they wonder what is going to happen in Kashmir. I say nothing is going to happen. The people of Kashmir are brave. The Hindus, Muslims and the Sikhs are living there in unity. The invaders should be told by the Kashmiris that they should go back to their homes. If they are going to attack, they will have to march on their dead bodies. They cannot win Srinagar so easily. Then nobody will touch our soldiers there. If they die, they will become immortal. Then we can dance with joy and sing. If such a situation arises there, I would ask Shri Dilip Kumar Roy to sing such a *bhajan* that people would start dancing—because those who would have died would become immortal and those surviving would be as good as dead. I would not be pained at all about this. Of course, I would be pained if people here lost their senses and Pakistan also went mad. The Afridis are like our brothers and the North-West Frontier Province is our own. Then why should they indulge in such acts? We should know who is giving them help. I would only pray that God may dwell in their hearts and the temples of their hearts be illumined with the flame of love. Then the darkness around us will vanish and we will see light all round. This is my prayer. May you all

join me in my prayer that such light should pervade both India and Pakistan that people live together in mutual love. Then we may concentrate our efforts to produce food and clothing which are scarce in the country today. Let us forget that there was ever any animosity among us, and become friends. I only wish that we may devote ourselves to this task.

[From Hindi]

*Prarthana Pravachan*—II, pp. 20-6

### 178. TELEGRAM TO KHARAK SINGH<sup>1</sup>

[Before November 1, 1947]

I HOPE YOU WILL BEAR THE LOSS.

*The Hindustan Times*, 1-11-1947

### 179. HINDUSTANI WRITTEN IN NAGARI ONLY<sup>2</sup>

Raihanabehn Tyabjee has written a well-argued letter to me favouring Hindustani as the inter provincial language written exclusively in the Nagari. She rigidly excludes the Urdu script. As all her main arguments have been answered herein, the letter is not being translated.<sup>3</sup> Her letter demands full consideration. Raihanabehn sees no distinction between a Hindu and a Muslim. Both, she holds, come from the same source and she acts accordingly. I have always held that there is no distinction between the two. Even though their observances differ, these do not separate them. They undoubtedly profess different religions but they, like others, come from the same root.

Nevertheless, I detect certain flaws in her arguments.

We are not two nations. Those who believe the Hindus and the Muslims to be two nations harm both the communities and India. It

<sup>1</sup> The addressee, an 88-year-old Sikh leader, had lost his only son, Prithipal Singh, who fell into a ravine while trekking from Kulu to Mandi.

<sup>2</sup> A Hindi version of this appeared in *Harijan Sevak*, 9-11-1947, under the title "Why Both Scripts?"

<sup>3</sup> The correspondent had argued that insistence on the Urdu script, in pursuance of the policy of appeasement, would only encourage the separatist tendency among the Muslims and they would continue to live like foreigners in India.

should not matter that the Qaid-e-Azam believes the Hindus and the Muslims of India to be two nations or that there are Hindus too who entertain the same belief. Surely, it does not follow that because the whole world is in error, we, who believe otherwise, should follow it. This should never happen.

If Hindustani is taken to be the inter-provincial language of India, it follows that both the scripts, Nagari and Urdu, should be equally acceptable. If the State recognizes only Nagari as the character in which Hindustani should be written, it would certainly be unjust to our Muslim brethren and when it is remembered that they are a minority the guilt is enhanced.

I have never contended that all the forty crores of Indians have to learn both the scripts. I have, however, held that those who have inter-provincial contacts and who want to serve not merely their own province but the whole of India should know both the scripts. The reason is obvious. They ought to be able to read letters written whether in the Nagari or the Urdu script. Hence, it is necessary that both the scripts are accepted as national.

If Hindi is to be the national language, naturally Nagari alone will be the national script and if Urdu is to take that place, Urdu script alone will be the national script. But, if Hindustani, which is a resultant of the junction of Hindi and Urdu, is to be the national language, a knowledge of both the scripts is essential in the manner indicated by me.

It is worth remembering that in reality neither the Urdu character nor the Urdu form of the same language is the exclusive property of the Muslims of India. There is quite a large number of Hindus and others whose mother tongue is Urdu and who know only the Urdu character. It is further to be remembered that the necessity of knowing both the scripts was stressed by me on my return from South Africa in 1915. I submitted the same proposition to the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan in Indore as its President.<sup>1</sup> So far as I recollect, there was hardly any opposition to the proposition. It is true that then I did not suggest any alteration in the name<sup>2</sup>. The definition, however, was the same as that of today. When perfect anarchy prevails in the thought world and we express different views without regard to facts, it is obligatory that we should have one helm to weather any storm.

<sup>1</sup> Im March, 1918.

<sup>2</sup> Of the national language, viz., Hindustani

In so far as it is believed that the Muslims only are concerned with the retention of the Urdu character, at this juncture it becomes our special duty to emphasize the necessity of Hindustani written in either character. This should appear self-evident. Whatever were the reasons in justification, it must be admitted that within the Union in many places the Muslims have been dealt with harshly. It would be beside the point to contend that Pakistan made the beginning with harsh treatment against the Hindus and the Sikhs. For the State to ordain that the inter-provincial script in the Union shall be only the Nagari, it would be an imposition upon the Muslims. If the result of the act of justice is to be that the Muslims are to confine themselves to the Urdu character and gratuitously regard the word Hindustani as synonymous with Urdu, it would amount to cussedness and perhaps a sign that their hearts are not in the Union.

It would be confusion of thought for Raihanabehn to argue that keeping of the Urdu character side by side with the Nagari would be construed to be in pursuance of the policy of appeasement. Though the word has come to have a bad odour about it, I would submit that appeasement can be a praiseworthy duty, as it can also be at times a blameworthy gesture. Thus, for instance, it can conceivably be a duty on the part of a brother to walk with his brother towards the North whilst alone he would have gone to the South. But it would certainly be criminal for him, a confirmed teetotaler, to drink spirituous liquors with his drunken brother in order to appease him. He would then harm both himself and his brother. I must not recite the *Klama* in order to appease or flatter my Muslim brother, as he must not recite the *Gayatri*<sup>1</sup> in order to appease or flatter me. It would be another matter if both of us recite either at will because we believe the two incantations as one in essence. I hold that it is so. Hence it is that in the daily recital of the Ashram prayers, among the eleven observances occurs equal respect for all the accepted religions in the world. The upshot of all this argument is that the policy of appeasement is not always bad. It may even become a duty at times.

This sister further says that the Nagari script is, comparatively speaking, fairly perfect, whereas the Urdu script is imperfect and difficult to decipher. To write Sanskrit words in Urdu script is, she holds, well nigh impossible. There is some force in these three statements. They amount to this that the Devanagari script though

<sup>1</sup> The sacred hymn invoking the creative energy of the sun

comparatively perfect admits of improvement and the Urdu script demands it because it is imperfect. It will be difficult for Raihanabehn to sustain the charge that it is not possible to write Sanskrit words in the Urdu script. I have in my possession the whole of the *Gita* transcribed in that script. Improvement is possible only when fanaticism has died out. After all, what is the Sindhi alphabet but an improved edition of the Urdu script?

Lastly, I suggest to Raihanabehn that her letter under discussion is a fine specimen of Hindustani. She has woven in that letter Urdu words as freely as Sanskrit words. The beauty of Hindustani is that it has no quarrel either with Sanskrit or with Arabic words. In order to strengthen Hindustani consistently with its genius, if a language can be said to have a 'genius', it must borrow from all the languages of the world. Its grammar must remain as it always has been in indigenous Hindi. Thus the plural of 'Hindu' in Hindustani will always be Hindu-o (हिन्दुओ) and not Hunud (हुनुद) as it is in highly Arabicized Urdu. Raihanabehn is an Urdu scholar. Though not a scholar in Hindi, she knows it well. She reads and writes both the Nagari and Urdu characters. When I was in the Yeravda prison she and Zohra Ansari<sup>1</sup> were my Urdu teachers. Naturally, they taught me through correspondence. My advice, therefore, to her is that she should devote her energy to the strengthening and spreading of Hindustani and making the teaching of the two characters as easy as possible. This work she can only do, if her ignorance, as I call it, is removed. If what she has now begun to believe is true, I could have nothing to say to her. Then indeed, I shall have to unlearn the past and learn a new lesson and displace the Urdu character from the position which I think it should occupy.

NEW DELHI, November 1, 1947

*Harijan*, 9-11-1947

<sup>1</sup> Adopted daughter of Dr. M. A. Ansari, married to Shaukat Ansari

*180. LETTER TO MOHAN SINGH*

BIRLA HOUSE,  
NEW DELHI,  
*November 1, 1947*

BHAI MOHAN SINGHJI,

I have your letter with two enclosures. I have read the pamphlets hurriedly but I do not like them in English. It is not your or my mother tongue. I write in English with difficulty and never know authoritatively that it is idiomatically correct. I hope you are aware that the masses have no knowledge of English. As a language, it is understood only by an insignificant minority. I therefore suggest your writing in Hindustani either in Nagari character or Urdu, preferably in both.

As to blessings, I told you I think quite clearly that every good work carries its own blessings. Therefore, I have repeatedly made it clear blessings of the mightiest are superfluous for a good enterprise and when the enterprise is bad, underserved blessings become a curse.

I hope that your organization<sup>1</sup> is open to non-Hindus including Muslims as it is open to Hindus and Sikhs.

*Yours,*  
M. K. GANDHI

SENAPATI MOHAN SINGH  
MAJITHA HOUSE  
AMRITSAR

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

<sup>1</sup> The Desh Sewak Sena which was formed in Amritsar on October 21.

181. LETTER TO H. C. DASAPPA

BIRLA HOUSE,  
NEW DELHI,  
November 1, 1947

CHI. DASAPPA,

I have your letter. I am glad that Yashodhara is not going to forsake her post, no matter where your headquarters are.

The second paragraph of your letter staggers me. If you are really a responsible Government you have every right to interfere with the Civil List which seems to me to be monstrous. Nor should the revision of pay of officers have been bequeathed to you when responsible Government was imminent. However, it makes no difference though I recognize that your difficult position, as it is in every case, is made much more difficult by the intrigues you refer to.

If you all remain at the work unselfishly and never for power, that itself is a blessing. Any other is superfluous. If the condition I have just mentioned is not satisfied, then any blessing received from outside is a curse. Therefore, rest on your oars.

Love to you all.

*Yours,*  
BAPU

[PS.]

Your second letter arrived after this was dictated. I would now have to go to Mysore. I dare not. I have to 'do or die' here. I am tied up in a knot. Will it ever be untied? God knows. Please share this with Reddy.

BAPU

SHRI H. C. DASAPPA  
CRESCENT HOUSE  
BANGALORE

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

182. LETTER TO SONJA SCHLESIN <sup>1</sup>

BIRLA HOUSE,  
NEW DELHI,  
*November 1, 1947*

DRAR MISS SCHLESIN,

Chhaganlal has redirected your letter of 15th ultimo to my address at New Delhi where I am fixed up to 'do or die'.

Usually your letter are models of accurate thinking. The one before me is not. You talk of my "decision to live 125 years". I never could make any such foolish and impossible decision. It is beyond the capacity of a human being. He can only wish. Again I never expressed an unconditional wish, nor did I, so far as I remember, advise you to entertain any such unconditional wish. I think if you re-read my letter you will find that my wish was conditional upon a continuous act of service of mankind. If that act fails me, as it seems to be failing in India, I must not only cease to wish to attain that age but should wish the contrary, as I am doing now.

More when you come to India and if I am alive when you do. The rest of your letter is full of inaccurate information.

As to the paragraph on different scripts, I feel that you have to be in India in order to understand the intricacies of the problem. I am quite clear that for generations to come, the Roman script has no chance of having a foothold in India on a national scale.

Dr. Mrs. Besant undoubtedly contributed to the cause of freedom of India.

The only way you can get any information about Darjeeling is by writing to the Prime Minister of West Bengal, in which Darjeeling is included. There is no position analogous to the Town Clerk in South Africa, but I need not worry you about the intricacies of the Indian system. If you will tell me what you wish to know about Darjeeling, I

<sup>1</sup> The addressee, who had been Gandhiji's secretary in South Africa, had written: "Far from losing your desire to live until you are 125, increasing knowledge of the world's lovelessness and consequent misery should cause you rather to determine to live longer still. . . . You said in a letter to me some time ago that everyone ought to wish to attain the age of 125, you can't go back on that."

might be able to help you more quickly than anyone else.

*Yours sincerely,*  
M. K. GANDHI

MISS SONJA SCHLESIN  
P. O. BOX 2284  
JOHANNESBURG

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

*183. LETTER TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL*

BIRLA HOUSE, NEW DELHI  
*November 1, 1947*

CHI. VALLABHBHAI,

When you came to see me yesterday, I simply forgot that it was your birthday.<sup>1</sup> I could not, therefore give you my blessings personally. Such is my plight today.

I write this for special reasons:

1. Refugees are crowding near the Birla Mandir. It is not possible for all of them to live there and they huddle together somehow. They must be removed to a camp and that too quickly.

2. I enclose a letter regarding mosques. It is only one of many such. A statement should be issued that all of them will be protected from abuse and whatever damage they might have suffered will be repaired by the Government.

3. It should be announced that those who were forcibly converted to Hinduism or Sikhism will be regarded by the Government as not having changed their religion and will receive adequate protection.

4. No Muslim will be forced to leave the Union.

5. Those who have been compelled to vacate their houses or whose houses have been illegally occupied by others, should be assured that such occupation will be regarded as null and void and that the houses will be reserved for the original owners.

I think it is necessary to issue such a statement.<sup>2</sup>

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

*Bapuna Patro-2: Sardar Vallabhbhaine, pp. 376-7*

<sup>1</sup> The addressee had completed his seventy-second year on October 31.

<sup>2</sup> Defining the Government's policy the addressee issued a statement on November 6, assuring adequate protection to Muslims who owed allegiance to the Indian Union.

## 184. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

NEW DELHI

*November 1, 1947*

DAUGHTER AMTUL SALAAM,

I have your letter.<sup>1</sup> You are needlessly finding fault with your brothers. When all had lost courage they too did not risk their lives. It is enough if we ourselves stand firm. Let us not sit in judgment on others though they may be our relatives.

You are fickle-minded. It is one and the same whether you are in Noakhali or in the Punjab. It is not that your place is only in the Punjab. Your place is everywhere. Nevertheless you are your own mistress. Do as you wish. Where is the need for my permission? If it is really needed then my words should go deep into your heart. You should have that much faith. Look into your heart and do as it bids. Do not bother about me.

Keep well.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 590

## 185. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI

*November 1, 1947*

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

Brajkishan tells me that the gentleman who protested yesterday is protesting today also. I like his protest and at the same time I do not like it. I like it because of its peaceful and dignified nature. If he disapproves of something, why should he not express it? And you too maintained silence here and outside and did not argue with him. So, from that point of view I liked the protest. But what pains me is that he is not convinced by what I explained yesterday with such humility and

<sup>1</sup> The addressee, who was working in Noakhali to establish communal harmony, had written to Gandhiji that she felt it was her duty to go and live in Patiala since her brothers had come away from there and hardly a Muslim was left there.

firmness. It was not such a difficult matter after all, and could be grasped by people with ordinary intelligence. But when a person is angry at heart, I feel happy when that anger is expressed in a peaceful manner. That is why I am happy as well as sad. I take it for granted and hope that today also you will not show any anger and treat him with love as you had done yesterday. Then of course I would start my prayer. I do not see any harm when people protest with such politeness. Such a protest would carry for us a lesson in peace and we would learn how the lofty principle of non-violence works. If we continue to behave like this, we will realize what miraculous strength ahimsa possesses.<sup>1</sup>

Today also you heard a *bhajan* in the same melodious voice. Is it not said in the *bhajan* that “we belong to a land where there is no sorrow and no suffering”? Then the *bhajan* also says that “there is no illusion and no greed, and such other enemies of ours are also not there”. But where can we find such a land? On an earlier occasion when Sucheta Devi<sup>2</sup> had sung that *bhajan* for us I had given two interpretations.<sup>3</sup> My first interpretation was that the poet had India in his mind. He had a wish, a dream of what he would like his country to be. But that is not the situation at present. The *bhajan* was composed before August 15, but such was not the condition even then. Anger, greed, attachment, pride, infatuation, jealousy, all these six enemies of man were there. There six include all other enemies of humankind. Then there was hunger and there was poverty and there were no clothes to wear—we were then surrounded by all those troubles. But did the poet not wish that his country should be free from those troubles? But how could our country be free from these troubles? This calls for the second interpretation. Is this not the country which has been described in the *Gita* as Kurukshetra<sup>4</sup> as well as

<sup>1</sup> After this the prayer went off peacefully. Dilip Kumar Roy sang the *bhajan*, “We belong to a land where there is no sorrow and no sigh.”

<sup>2</sup> Sucheta Kripalani; in-charge, Foreign Department in A. I. C. C.; Joint-Secretary, Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial Trust; Member, Constituent Assembly; President, Delhi Central Refugee Committee; Minister of Labour, U.P., 1962; Chief Minister, U. P., 1963

<sup>3</sup> *Vide* “Speech at Prayer Meeting”, 17-5-1946 and “Speech at Prayer Meeting”, 22-5-1946.

<sup>4</sup> Literally ‘field of Kuru’—the scene of war between the Kauravas and the Pandavas. Symbolically it means a battlefield.

dharmakshetra<sup>1</sup>. If our mind is the temple of God then it is *dharmakshetra*, but if the mind gives itself up to self-indulgence it becomes Kurukshetra, a battlefield. We have innumerable enemies like the Kauravas<sup>2</sup> whose father was blind. But isn't Yudhishtira<sup>3</sup> the symbol of *dharmakshetra*? That is why Yudhishtira was named Dharmaraja. Such is our land where there is no sorrow and no suffering. We can all be like this; but have I not mentioned the conditions we have to fulfil to be so? Then ours would be the land where God resides. Later on, the poet has also called it *swadesh* and *swaraj*. And he is right. After independence India would be a country without misery and sorrow. But I have never found our country in a poorer state than today. Even the history that I have read from my childhood days does not depict India as I find her today. This *bhajan* is intended only to end that situation. It is said in the *bhajan* that everything will be well if we make our mind a temple and install God in it.

While there are people who are hungry and have nothing to wear, here we are seated fully clothed. I have also wrapped myself in a sheet so that I may not feel cold. A lady doctor came to me today. She came from Kurukshetra<sup>4</sup>. She had been doing a lot of work in the Punjab. She had been nursing Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and the rest. She had to run away from there and had come as a refugee. Sushila<sup>5</sup> suggested to her to work at Kurukshetra as there was nothing else to be done, and took her with her. Today she has come here to report the situation there. Today our Munshiji is present here. His daughter too has become a doctor. Instead of just sitting idle she said she would do something. So she also went there. That lady doctor told me today that people did receive medical attention there but there were not enough doctors. So many people have been crowded into that place and there is so much hardship and suffering that two or three lady doctors are not enough. A large number of doctors in needed there. If doctors go there they will be of some help. They are not quacks like me. They should have allopathic medicines since they are allopathic

<sup>1</sup> The field of duty; Ch. I, 1

<sup>2</sup> The hundred sons of Dhritrashtra. The Kauravas represent the forces of evil.

<sup>3</sup> The eldest of the five Pandava brothers, known for his righteousness. The Pandavas represent the forces of good.

<sup>4</sup> More than twenty-five thousand Hindu and Sikh refugees were living in the refugee camp at Kurukshetra.

<sup>5</sup> Dr. Sushila Nayyar

doctors. They do not have enough medicines with them, but medicines should be supplied to them. There are women and there are children. Those women were not always beggars. There are also women with one child in the womb and another in the lap. Such is our condition at present.

Whom should we blame for this? Somebody may say that the Government is inefficient. But did the Government know that there would be so much trouble? We had never had any experience of ruling the country. It is just two months since the Government came into power. How could we have coped with such a calamity? We have got to put up with it. But, while putting up with it if we lose our heads and do not control our anger and insist on giving two blows for one, this thing will never end. We shall then have no right to sing this *bhajan*. If we sing the *bhajan*, we should do so with genuine feeling. If we possess a melodious voice it should not be confined only to singing sweet songs. It should be used for worshipping God. It will be well if that melody kindles a divine feeling in some heart.

On the one hand we are facing such a situation and on the other is the problem of Kashmir. From the number of planes going from here, I guess they are all carrying soldiers.<sup>1</sup> Some cowards are running away from there. Why should they do so? And where will they go? Why should they not put up a brave fight and lay down their lives? At this rate even if the whole of Kashmir is razed to the ground I am not going to be affected. I would gladly ask you also to rejoice over it, but on the condition that everybody, young and old, should die there valiantly. If anyone asks why the children also should die there, I will say that the children cannot go anywhere. In any case they stay with their parents. Those people are all there in Kashmir, how can we provide them with arms? A person like me does not need arms. After all, if we are alive, we have to sacrifice our lives. Then alone can we say that the soul is immortal. If we do not do this, it means that we confuse our soul with our body and worship the body. But the body has to die one day. If the child is on the mother's lap, when the mother dies he also dies. And when one has got to die, let him die willingly. Let them say that if the Afridis have come to destroy them they will prefer to perish of their own accord. Even the soldiers who have gone there would die with pleasure. They have gone there to die.

<sup>1</sup> Besides the Indian Air Force transport, a large number of civilian aircrafts were commandeered by the Government to fly soldiers and ammunition to Kashmir.

When can they remain alive? Only when they know that everything is safe and there is no invasion on Kashmir and peace is well-established. Now Kashmir is in the hands of Sheikh Abdullah. He regards the Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs as his brothers. He is a friend of all foreigners, including the Englishmen, who go and live in Kashmir. He invites everyone to enjoy the beauty of Kashmir and taste its fruits. Kashmiri crafts are wonderful. People weave beautiful cloth with their own hands and charge any price they want. Why should they not do so since Kashmir ultimately lives by its crafts? So, the Sheikh is now the ruler of Kashmir. The Maharaja is there of course. But the Sheikh is the ruler in the name of the Maharaja. The Maharaja himself has told him that he may do whatever he wants. If Kashmir is to remain it will remain and if it has to pass out of their hands it will pass out.

Look at what is happening at Kurukshetra on the one hand, and Kashmir on the other, and also think of all the hardships that have to be faced here. So many Muslims have fled to Pakistan. Those who are running away without any reason may well do so. Who can stop them? But some of them also go away because they are afraid of us. I feel ashamed when some Muslim friends come and tell me that they can no longer stick to their places, for they do not know when they might be killed. It pains me that fear has taken such roots in their hearts. Then a woman came and told me that she was feeling scared because a Pathan was after her. My heart cries out when I hear such things. Still I ask, why should there be any fear of a Pathan or anyone else when one has the support of God? But one can be fearless only when one knows that one has God with him. When a chaste woman faces a rogue who may be a Pathan or a Hindu or a Sikh—for it is not that only the Pathans are rogues; there are rogues to be found everywhere and they too can be as lustful—she would tremble at the sight of him. But why should she be scared? You do believe that Sita was never scared. She was not frightened even when Ravana carried her away on his shoulder. She went on repeating that her husband was Rama and he was right beside her. And as Rama was God incarnate, she warned Ravana that he would be reduced to ashes if he dared to touch her. She was just a tiny woman but she was pure and because of her purity she was not afraid. Purity is the most powerful weapon. If we wish to free ourselves from such a misfortune, we must all follow what is said in the *bhajan*. If all the women and men who come to attend the prayer follow this, this transformation will spread throughout the country like the fragrance of the rose. Today we have all lost our

senses. But with the coming of purity the present calamity will be swept away like dirt. I would only pray to God that we may all be good, that Kashmir may be free from the present trouble and all may be well with the people who have come here as refugees.

As that lady doctor has reported, some goondas have entered the Kurukshetra Camp. Even after getting a blanket, the same person comes again for a second blanket. Such persons do not realize that all the people there do not have enough to wear and cover themselves. There are countless women at Kurukshetra who are still wearing the same clothes with which they had arrived. I cannot even bear to hear about these things—who knows what will happen if I have to see these things? Surely that lady doctor cannot be exaggerating when she claims to have seen with her own eyes that that is the way things are going on there.

All I wish to say is that we should realize where our *adharmā*<sup>1</sup> is taking us. We should think whether or not we are settling down at any point and then ask ourselves if we are residing in a land where there is no suffering and no sorrow.

[From Hindi]

*Prarthana Pravachan*—II, pp. 26-32

<sup>1</sup> Failure to act according to one's duty

## 186. INTERVIEW TO RONALD STEAD<sup>1</sup>

[Before November 2, 1947]

Ronald Stead discussed with Mahatma Gandhi the crucial issue of how best to combat India's internecine violence. In a single brief sentence Gandhiji defined his long range objective "to replace communal hatred by communal brotherhood".

Stead reports:

Mahatma Gandhi makes it clear that he is reluctant to discuss the recent troubled past.

He has criticized the misbehaviour of Muslims and non-Muslims alike. In this connection he observes with a little smile:

I used to be represented as an enemy of the Muslims. Now, because I castigate the Hindus for misdemeanours which they, like the Muslims, have been guilty of, I am being represented in some quarters as an enemy of the Hindus. The fact is, I am an enemy only of wrongdoing.

Mahatma Gandhi describes the situation in Calcutta as satisfactory but says that Delhi is decidedly otherwise. That is why his original plans were altered. He asks:

How can I go on to the Punjab, when so much remains to be done here?

Mahatma Gandhi's longrange plans for supplanting communal animosity by communal tolerance are the same as those he is executing now. That is to say, he is going to address the maximum number of persons in public now. Evening prayer meetings furnish regular opportunities for doing this. He is going to hold counsel with as many responsible leaders as seek to discuss matters with him. He is going to visit refugee concentrations and address himself to reassuring the minorities, urging them not to migrate and seeking to foster among the majority the tolerance that will justify such persuasion.

*The Hindustan Times, 2-11-1947*

<sup>1</sup> Correspondent of *Christian Science Monitor* of Boston

### 187. LEST WE COPY THE BRITISH

Whilst I cannot vouch for the figures given by Prof. Bang, there is no hesitation in endorsing his remarks about the high salaries he refers to and the gross disparity between the highest and the lowest salaries paid to their servants by our Governments.<sup>1</sup>

NEW DELHI, November 2, 1947

*Harijan*, 9-11-1947

### 188. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI

November 2, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

The interpretations of some critics of the Koran are not correct.<sup>2</sup> By reading the Koran I do not fall from Hinduism, rather, I rise high. It is my claim that I am in no way less of a Hindu than the greatest of Hindus, in India or outside, since I believe in the Vedas, read the *Gita* and follow its principles in action. I have been taught from my childhood that there is no place in the world where there is no God.

Brajkishan tells me that the number of persons who have raised objection is somewhat large today. These people say that they are very much against the recitation from the Koran, but they put up with it because they wish to hear me. But where is the need for putting up with it? It would bring no good to them or to me. If they wish to join me in the prayer, then it is well to put up with it. Let them not put up with it because I am *Mahatma* or because I have rendered service to the country and they wish to see me. That is why I am asking if you are truly keen on having the prayer.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Prof. T. K. Bang's article under this title is not reproduced here. The Professor had written that the announcement of the salaries of the Governors being fixed at Rs. 5,500 per month was contrary to the Congress Resolution and it falsified the hope that along with the Imperialism the top-heavy expensive administration would go. He questioned, "how could the entire administrative machine work as one man with enthusiasm towards the social and ameliorative legislation when there was such a colossal difference between the salary of the peon and that of the Governor." In his opinion the Government could not afford to pay fabulous sums.

<sup>2</sup> Some persons had again protested against the recitation from the Koran.

<sup>3</sup> Gandhiji continued his speech after the prayer with everybody's consent.

are truly keen on having the prayer.<sup>1</sup>

You must have read in the newspapers, but I also have some information about what is happening in Kashmir. It should be said that things are quite all right there now. By that I mean that Srinagar is still intact.<sup>2</sup> The freebooters have not yet been able to take possession of the city. Later on it should become all the more difficult to do so. The plunderers are no fighters. The whole world is going to look down upon them because they have not gone there by right. With the passage of time terrorism is diminishing. Things are in favour of the army which has gone there and it is gaining time. We cannot send a very large army by air, for it involves a lot of trouble. But I gather that the Government is being helped in every way. [Private airlines] are all willingly helping and that is why troops are easily sent by planes. The planes do not belong to the Government. The private companies owning the planes have handed them over to the Government with the idea of helping in a worthwhile cause.

One thing more—we all praise Subhas Babu's intelligence and courage for mobilizing the Azad Hind Fauj. And he does deserve our praise, for while he was out of the country he felt it would be worth while to organize an army. He was not a soldier. He was an ordinary Indian like any lawyer or barrister. He had no military training. He might have learnt horse-riding as is usual with men in the Civil Service. But he must have studied military science later on. Now, I gather that two officers<sup>3</sup> of the army he had raised, and whom I had met while they were in prison and outside also, have joined the aggressors in Kashmir. This hurts me very much. They used to carry out special assignments under Subhas Babu and used to be always with him. Subhas Babu could not have kept anything secret from the army personnel because he had to work through them. It hurts me that those very persons are now going about as leaders of the freebooters. Through the newspapers, if they are getting any, or if they care to listen to me, I would ask them in my failing voice why they should involve themselves in this affair and bring down Subhas Babu's name. Why should they side either with the Hindus or the Muslims? They should not take a communal stand. That was not

<sup>1</sup> Gandhiji continued his speech after the prayer with everybody's consent.

<sup>2</sup> The tribesmen advancing on Srinagar, were repulsed by the Indian troops.

<sup>3</sup> According to the *Daily Express* correspondent in Kashmir, one of them was Major Khurshid Anwar.

against the Harijans or anyone else. There was no communal distinction among the Indians in that army. Of course all of them adhered to their respective religions, none of them had abandoned it. Subhas Babu had taken possession of their hearts, not of their bodies. It was not as if those who refused to join the Azad Hind Fauj were to be slain. He was not going to bring freedom to India by killing people like this. That is how he became great and earned fame. Why should these people now stoop so low and get involved in such mean things? If they really want to do something, let them do something for the whole of India. Let them restrain the Muslims and the Afridis from committing atrocities, plundering the people and burning the villages. Let them persuade them to write to the Maharaja and Sheikh Abdullah that they want to meet them. They must tell them that they have not gone there to plunder. If they do so I can understand their point that they have gone there to show that Islam is being crushed. Then they would be lending glory to Subhas Babu's name and would become true teachers of the Afridis. I do not know how the Afridis live and if there are any plunderers among them. But in my view even they are human beings. The same God resides in their hearts and hence they are my brethren. If I were to live among them I would ask them why they indulge in loot and plunder and show anger towards others. I would not ask them to give up their arms. I would ask them to keep their arms, but in order to protect the people who are scared, to protect the indigent, the women and children. What does it matter if they are Hindus or Muslims? I would tell those two officers, whose names I have already come to know, that they should remember Subhas Babu. He is dead but not his name and not his work.

Now my mind turns to Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah. I know him well. I used to go to his house. Once I had visited him 18 times. I consider it a penance. Even on a later occasion we two had put our signatures on a document<sup>1</sup> and had become responsible for it. I used to have cordial talks with him even then. That is the reason why I would ask him, Liaquat Ali and his Cabinet what had prompted them to accuse a man like Jawaharlal of fraud.<sup>2</sup> Where was the need for him and his

<sup>1</sup> In April, 1947, *vide* "A Joint Appeal", 12-4-1947.

<sup>2</sup> Refusing to accept Kashmir's accession to the Indian Union, the Government of Pakistan issued a Press communique on October 30 saying, "In the opinion of the Government of Pakistan the accession of Kashmir to the Indian Union is based on fraud and violence and as such cannot be recognized."

Government to act fraudulently in this? I would tell them that Jawaharlal is not a man who will deceive anyone. He is true to his name. I also know the Sardar and other men in his Cabinet. They too are no cheats. If they want to negotiate with [the Maharaja of] Kashmir it does not mean that they are trying to misguide him. Jawaharlal had been having talks with him even earlier and fighting single-handed with him for the sake of Sheikh Abdullah.<sup>1</sup> Why then should he deceive? Can India or any country be saved by deceiving? Why then do they say such a thing? The Afridis who have infiltrated into Kashmir must be receiving some encouragement from Pakistan for indulging in their activities. How could they do it otherwise? If I had been in Pakistan I would have stopped them from indulging in such things. If Pakistan was disinterested, they could not resort to such things. But here Pakistan is not indifferent but very much involved.

Two Hindu gentlemen have come to me—one from Karachi and the other from Lahore. The man from Karachi tells me that the situation had been bad in Karachi but now things are improving day by day. So now, they asked, would I appeal to the people there not to panic? The Sindhi Muslims there have lived with the Hindus in amity. They have quarrelled on many occasions, but have become friends again. I have been a witness to that. It is not that things have become perfectly normal there. But the Cabinet wants it to be so. The other gentleman tells me that all the big mansions in Lahore have been destroyed. There are not many Hindus left in Lahore—only a handful of them are there. But the Cabinet desires that the Hindus and Sikhs, all should live there. Of course, there is some objection about the Sikhs staying there. Nevertheless, quite a few Sikhs are there. A wonderful thing I learnt about Lahore is that a Muslim gentleman has kept a Sikh in his own house. The gentleman who came to me narrated what he had seen with his own eyes. He said that that Muslim had kept an open copy of the Guru Granthsaheb in one of the rooms of his house with due respect. He has saved that Sikh because he happens to be his friend. This makes me very happy. Subsequently a Sikh gentleman came and told me that such things have happened in many places where Muslim friends gave shelter in their houses to

<sup>1</sup> The Government of India had earlier taken up the matter of Sheikh Abdullah's incarceration with the Kashmir State authorities. Sheikh Abdullah who was sentenced to three years' imprisonment for demanding a responsible government in the State, was released in September, 1947.

many places where Muslim friends gave shelter in their houses to Sikhs. I have received such information from both the places. Then why should the Muslims in such large numbers be driven away to Pakistan? And why should Hindus and Sikhs run away from Pakistan and seek refuge here? Where will it all lead to? Would it not be that we will all be ruined? People cannot live in comfort when they leave their homes. One can live in comfort only in one's own home. When one leaves the home he can have neither proper food nor proper clothes. Right now people in the refugee camps are shivering in cold. They ask why they have been treated thus. They want to know why their Government did this to them. What was their fault that they have to face such hardships? They feel that there they were surrounded by the Muslims and here they are surrounded by the Hindus. How long will this continue and what would be the result? God alone knows the result. But all the same, these things pain me very much.

Why does the Qaid-e-Azam of Pakistan say that the Hindus and the Sikhs are the enemies of Muslims? There are evil-minded men among the Hindus and Sikhs and also among the Muslims. But it is wrong to condemn the entire community. With all humility I would request the entire Cabinet and people that they should all become good if they wish that India should not be destroyed and passed on into the hands of others.

I cannot thank enough those persons who protested in such a courteous manner against the recitation from the Koran today. This would enable them to work non-violently. They acted rightly when they expressed their disapproval of the verses from the Koran. I am glad that they allowed the prayer to be conducted without any obstruction. In this way, we are creating divine power for India. It is a gradual process. It cannot happen as if by magic. But ultimately such a power would be created. It is my prayer to God that He may grant good sense to the two senior officers of the Azad Hind Fauj and that the ship of India, which at the moment is unsteady, may start sailing smoothly in calm waters.

[From Hindi]

*Prarthana Pravachan—II, pp. 32-7*

189. LETTER TO CHAMPA R. MEHTA

NEW DELHI

November 3, 1947

CHI. CHAMPA,

I got your letter. It does not satisfy me. Nor does Dhiren's<sup>1</sup>. All sorts of doubts occur to me. I need not mention them. How can I spare so much time? It will be safe if you follow Bhansali's advice. Never mind if my views don't agree with his. He is a man of great renunciation and a pious man, and has seen both the good and the evil in the world. He respects you as a good woman and trusts Dhiren. He doesn't believe that the Ashram is a true ashram. But what does even that matter? He says what he sincerely believes to be true. My consent, therefore, is not at all necessary. I shall not be able to give my blessings. For me Sevagram itself is good enough, and I don't mind whether or not it is called an ashram. Moreover, Chimanlal and Bhansali also are not of the same view. You may, therefore,

marry Indira<sup>2</sup> to Dhiren but should leave the Ashram. I am sure you would not wish to live as a burden on the Ashram. Bhansali will be able to make some provision for you in the Sevagram village. After Dhiren's marriage, you will be able to stay with them. Moreover, they are a large family and, if they all bless the marriage, you will be able to live even in Wardha. Even if the rent is high that will be no cause of worry for you. You may therefore do as all the members of that family advise you.

Neither Indira nor Dhiren, nor you need come here. I don't wish to involve myself in this matter. Moreover, I cannot spare a single minute to discuss this problem. It will, therefore, be best to be guided by the elders there.

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

<sup>1</sup> Dhirendra, son of Amrita Lal Chatterjee

<sup>2</sup> Addressee's daughter

*190. LETTER TO GOPALJI*

NEW DELHI  
November 3, 1947

BHAI GOPALJI,

The selected flowers from the *Ramayana* which you sent are welcome. I will enjoy their fragrance occasionally. How can I ever forget it?

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 5700

*191. LETTER TO VALLABHRAM*

NEW DELHI  
November 3, 1947

BHAI VALLABHRAM,

I got your letter.

I cannot excuse your falling or remaining ill. How can a *vaid* who remains ill himself cure other people? This applies to you *vaid*s as to *hakims* and doctors.

You can stay in the bungalow at Panchgani. It is meant to be given rent free only to Harijans. But it is given on rent to other respectable people also when it is not occupied.

You may use the accompanying letter<sup>1</sup>.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a copy of the Gujarati: C. W. 2924. Courtesy: Vallabhram Vaidya

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* the following item.

192. LETTER TO BULSARIA

NEW DELHI  
November 3, 1947

BHAI BULSARIA,

Please lease out to Vaidyaraj Vallabhram as large a portion of your bungalow as you can spare.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

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

193. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

November 3, 1947

When you write in English, I consider it an affront to me, to yourself and to the whole country. Don't you know the Gujarati proverb that 'the first impression which the new bride creates at home and the new king creates in the public tends to become permanent'? In the same way now that we have swaraj and still use English instead of Hindustani, to whom shall I address myself? The ocean is on fire. This much should suffice. I have no time at all nor the zest to write more. . . .<sup>1</sup>

[From Gujarati]

*Dilhiman Gandhiji*—I, p. 187

<sup>1</sup> Omission as in the source

## 194. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

November 3, 1947

I saw your letter only now, after listening to the sweet and sad *bhajan* containing Draupadi's prayer<sup>1</sup>: "O God, guard me against insult." I am also in a similar predicament today. Draupadi had mighty Bhima and Arjuna and the truthful Yudhishtira as husbands; she was the daughter-in-law of men like Dronacharya, Bhishma and Vidura, and yet amidst an assembly of people it appeared she was in a terrible plight. At that hour, she did not lose faith and prayed to God from her heart. And God did protect her honour. This *bhajan* has a deep significance. One can go on expatiating on it. Today I also am seated in a 'palatial' house, surrounded by loving friends. Still, I am in a sad plight. Yet there is God's help, as I find each day. Ultimately Delhi will decide the destiny of the whole country. Our hearts have also become filled with much dirt. I am striving to remove it. But if I do not succeed I would not wish to remain a helpless spectator. I have therefore given up my desire to live for 125 years. May God give good sense to all.

[From Gujarati]

*Dilhiman Gandhiji*—I, pp. 186-7

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Ashram Bhajanavali:112", 18-8-1930.

*195. FRAGMENT OF LETTER TO AN ASHRAM WOMAN*

*November 3, 1947*

I notice that differences of opinion have cropped up among my political co-workers, though there are a good many exceptions, I am speaking of the general situation. Similarly, I understand that in the Ashram also purity has become a thing of the past. God alone knows what the real situation is inside the Ashram, since I have been out of it for the past one year. And yet I continue to live because, for me, life itself is a great truth. I look upon life as a particle of God and take care of it as His gift.

[From Gujarati]

*Dilhiman Gandhiji*—I, p. 188

*196. NOTE TO MANU GANDHI*

*November 3, 1947*

There is a lesson for us in these two letters<sup>1</sup> coming together. We should learn to absorb pleasure as well as pain with equanimity.

[From Gujarati]

*Dilhiman Gandhiji*—I, p. 188

<sup>1</sup> Gandhiji had received two letters. One of them addressed him as “Shrikrishna Bhagawan” and praised him, while the other addressed him as “Mohammed Gandhi” and condemned him.

197. NOTE TO K. M. MUNSHI

November 3, 1947

I have not been able to swallow all the arguments that have been put forward in support of control. I am getting more and more confirmed in my view that there must be no control.

[From Gujarati]

*Dilhiman Gandhiji*—I, p. 188

198. LETTER TO M. A. HUNAR

NEW DELHI

November 3, 1947

CHI. HUNAR,

I have your letter. Pandit Sundarlal<sup>2</sup> was with me yesterday. I told him also about all that was happening. I had asked Jivanji. I am sending on his opinion. There is no work for you there and I, of course, have no work for you. Therefore Sundarlal says that he will utilize your services or make some other arrangement for you. I do not want to keep you in suspense, nor do I wish your services to remain unutilized. Now please write to me what would be the right thing to do.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

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

<sup>1</sup> The addressee had come to discuss the food situation with Gandhiji.

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

## 199. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING<sup>1</sup>

NEW DELHI

November 3, 1947

If two quantities of poison mix together, who will decide which was first on the field and if such a decision could be arrived at what end would it serve? We know this, however, that the virus has spread throughout the Western Pakistan area and that it has not as yet been recognized as such by the powers that be. So far as the Union is concerned, it has been confined to a small part of it. Would to God that the virus would remain under isolation and control! There would then be cause for every hope that it would be expelled in due time and that soon from both the parts.

In view of the fact that Dr. Rajendra Prasad has called a meeting of the Premiers or their representatives and others to help and advise him in the matter of food control, I feel that I should devote this evening to that very important question. Nothing that I have heard during these days has moved me from the stand I have taken from the beginning that the control should be entirely removed at the earliest moment possible, certainly not later than six months hence. Not a day passes but letters and wires come to me, some from important persons, declaring emphatically that both the controls should be removed. I propose to omit the other, i. e., cloth control for the time being.

Control gives rise to fraud, suppression of truth, intensification of the black market and to artificial scarcity. Above all it unmans the people and deprives them of initiative, it undoes the teaching of self-help they have been learning for a generation. It makes them spoon-fed. This is a tragedy next only, if indeed not equal, to the fratricide on a vast scale and the insane exchange of population resulting in unnecessary deaths, starvation and want of proper residence and clothing the more poignant for the coming inclement weather. The second is certainly more spectacular. We dare not forget the first because it is not spectacular.

This food control is one of the vicious legacies of the last World War. Control then was probably inevitable because a very large

<sup>1</sup> It being Gandhiji's silence day, his written speech was read out after the prayers.

quantity of cereals and other food-stuff were exported outside. This unnatural export was bound to create a man made scarcity and lead to rationing in spite of its many drawbacks. Now there need be no export which we can avoid if we wish to. We would help the starving parts of the world, if we do not expect outside help for India in the way of food. I have seen during my lifetime covering two generations several God sent famines, but have no recollection of an occasion when rationing was even thought of.

Today, thank God, the monsoons have not failed us. There is, therefore, no real scarcity of food. There are enough cereals, pulses and oil-seeds in the villages of India. The artificial control of prices, the growers do not, cannot, understand. They, therefore, refuse willingly to part with their stock at a price much lower than they command in the open market. This naked fact needs no demonstration. It does not require statistics or desk-work civilians buried in their red-tape files to produce elaborate reports and essays to prove that there is scarcity. It is to be hoped that no one will frighten us by trotting out before us the bogey of over-population.

Our ministers are of the people, from the people. Let them not arrogate to themselves greater knowledge than those experienced men who do not happen to occupy ministerial chairs—but who hold the view strongly that the sooner the control is removed the better. A physician writes to say that the food control has made it impossible for those who depend upon rationed food to procure eatable cereals and pulses and therefore, he says, the people needlessly suffer from ailments caused by rotten stuff.

In the place of controlled food, the Government can easily run the very stores for selling good grain which they will buy in the open market. They will thus bring about automatic regulation of prices and set free the hoarded cereals, pulses and oil-seeds. Will they not trust the grain dealers and growers? Democracy will break under the strain of apron strings. It can exist only on trust. If the people die because they will not labour or because they will defraud one another, it will be a welcome deliverance. The rest will then learn not to repeat the sin of being lazy, idle or cruelly selfish.

*Harijan*, 16-11-1947

## 200. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

November 4, 1947

I have your long letter. I shall give my reply in the prayer today.<sup>1</sup> I do not have time even to read long letters, much less to write them. But I have read all your arguments. If you don't mind shall I tell you a few things? You are more than a son to me; hence it is my duty to tell you what is right. Many people consider themselves smart and intelligent when they can argue about something. But one who does not bear in mind the time, the place, the circumstances and the occasion for it, ultimately loses his place in society. Keep this rule in mind. I am all right. I am in the midst of this violent conflagration. Although I am in a house as big as a palace in the grand city of Hindustan, I think of the plight of innocent children and thousands of women in this cold season. My heart bleeds but I do not cry. I do not believe in crying. In the end I have to do or die. I wish God grants this humble prayer of mine.

You wish to come here to serve me. But what will you do? It is enough if one who wishes to serve me joins me in this prayer and spreads the feeling of brotherhood wherever he is. I am dictating this letter to Manu immediately after the morning prayer. My Bengali lessons are going on all right.

[From Hindi]

*Dilhiman Gandhiji*—I, pp. 192-3

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Speech at Prayer Meeting", 4-11-1947.

## 201. LETTER TO J. P. BHANSALI

NEW DELHI  
November 4, 1947

CHI. BHANSALI,

I have your letter. Please read my letter<sup>1</sup> to Champa. You will be able to see from it how I feel. I did not approve of your decision. But that makes no difference. How can I say that I am right and you are wrong? You are on the spot and I am far away. And, moreover, Champa has implicit faith in you. I have, therefore, asked her to follow your advice and I still hold the same view. But that does not mean that she can stay wherever she likes in the Ashram without Chimanlal's consent.

You have lost faith in the Ashram and Champa has no respect for it at all. Since I cannot welcome Champa's step, I believe that she should leave the Ashram. Find some place for her outside the Ashram or the Talimi Sangh. If she intends to marry off Indira soon, she might probably prefer to stay with Dhiren. I simply cannot understand how a girl of sixteen can be married. But do what seems best to Champa and you.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

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

## 202. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

November 4, 1947

I am convinced that nature cure of my conception is bound to bring great relief to crores of poor villagers. For example, if a villager has to undergo X-ray treatment, the poor man will have to run to a city or wherever there is electricity. This he has to do at his expense and at the expense of his family. Why should he not benefit from the limitless grace of the sun-god who rises in his village every morning? Add to this an intelligent use of air, water, diet, earth, and so on accompanied by the recitation of the name of one's family deity. I have no doubt that if all these things are carried on with perseverance even an incurable disease will disappear without a pie having been spent.

[From Gujarati]  
*Dilhiman Gandhiji*—I, pp. 193-4

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Letter to Champa R. Mehta", 3-11-1947.

### 203. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER<sup>1</sup>

November 4, 1947

Should even a woman like you make a distinction between a son and a daughter? My experience so far has been that sons hardly ever have that feeling for parents with which daughters eagerly serve them. Can even a wise woman like you have such an antipathy towards womankind? Of course, all your children have my blessings. May all the four children contribute their mite to the progress of the country.

[From Gujarati]

*Dilhiman Gandhiji*—I, p. 194

### 204. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI

November 4, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

Today only our old courteous friend has objected to the recitation from the Koran. Hence, I would discuss a pathetic letter from a Punjabi Hindu refugee. He has suffered a great deal in the Punjab. And he has objected to the recitation from the Koran. I do not know if that gentleman is present here. He may or may not be here, but I cannot ignore his letter. It is a letter written with deep pain. He has put forth fairly good arguments in the letter. But then it is full of ignorance born out of his anger. Every line he has written expresses his anger. These days practically all my time is spent in listening to the tales of woe from the Hindu or Sikh refugees or the Muslims of Delhi who are in distress. I also feel the same distress in my heart and am equally hurt. But I would not be truly non-violent if I started shedding tears or became gloomy. If non-violence made me so very soft, I would be crying the whole time, and there would be no time left to worship God, and to eat and sleep. But right from childhood, being a follower of non-violence, I have made it a habit of hardening my heart instead of shedding tears while hearing or seeing any tragedy, so that I would be able to face them. Have not our saints and sages taught us that one who is a worshipper of ahimsa should be

<sup>1</sup> The addressee had sought Gandhiji's blessings for her new-born child, a son, after three daughters.

softer than a flower and harder than a stone? I have tried to live according to this teaching. That is why when I receive complaints like those in this letter or hear the angry and sorrowful tales from the visitors coming to me, I steel my heart. That is the only way I can face the present situation. The letter has been written in the Urdu script and hence I asked Brajkishan to write for me the important points of the letter.

The first charge levelled against me is that I have broken a promise. The letter says: "Have you not said that even if there is a single individual in your prayer meeting objecting to the recitation from the Koran, you would respect his wish and cancel the prayer for the evening?" This is a half-truth which is more dangerous than a total lie. When I had first cancelled the prayer<sup>1</sup> because there was an objection, I had declared that I was cancelling the prayer for fear that the large numbers attending the prayer may start showing their anger against the objector and may even manhandle him. This was several months ago. Since then people have learnt the art of restraint. And, when people assured me that they would not have anger in their hearts nor any ill feeling for the objector I agreed to hold the public prayer. And, as far as I know, the result has been good. The behaviour of the persons who object is extremely courteous and apart from voicing their objection they create no obstruction in the prayer. Thus, I hope the writer of this letter will appreciate that I have not gone back on my word. And the result of continuing the prayer despite the protest has so far been good. I would like to assure you that as far as I know myself, in this long life of public service I have never been guilty of breaking a promise.

The second charge the writer of this letter has made against me is that while I have the recitation from the Koran and claim that all religions are equal, I do not have recitations from the *japji*<sup>2</sup> and the Bible. This remark only betrays the ignorance of the writer. He is not aware of my statement in which I explained how the entire *Bhajanavali* was prepared.<sup>3</sup> The *Ashram Bhajanavali* contains quite a few psalms from the Bible and *bhajans* from the Granthsaheb.

His third complaint is that many eminent Congress leaders have

<sup>1</sup> On April 2, 1947, *vide* "Speech at Prayer Meeting", 2-4-1947.

<sup>2</sup> The opening part of the Guru Granthsaheb

<sup>3</sup> *Vide* "The Reason for Addition", 5-8-1947, "Speech at Prayer Meeting", 19-10-1947 and "The Ashram Prayer", 2-2-1942.

come away from West Punjab and other parts of West Pakistan; but having come to the Indian Union they do not share the trials and tribulations of other refugees. These leaders have acquired more spacious buildings than what they had occupied in Pakistan and are living in great comfort and luxury. These Congress leaders have completely isolated themselves from the refugees who have no houses to live in nor woollen clothes to protect themselves against winter. Many of the refugees do not even have a change of clothes, not to speak of the woollen clothes. They do not even get good food. If there is truth in this complaint, it is really shameful. In my prayer speeches I have denounced those well-to-do refugees who, instead of sharing the hardships of the poor refugees desert them and live in luxury. This is not religion but irreligion. The rich must share the joys and sorrows of their poor brethren.

Then that friend has taunted me that even though I intended going to Pakistan I have not yet gone. He wants to know why I am in Delhi. He asks me why I prefer to help my Muslim friends instead of going to Pakistan and help the Hindus and the Sikhs who are in distress. But the person who makes such a complaint does not realize that I cannot disregard my duty here in Delhi and go to Pakistan in the hope of helping the Hindus and the Sikhs there. I admit that I am a friend of the Muslims and others because I am equally a friend of the Hindus and the Sikhs. when I serve anyone, it is because I am inspired by the thought that he is a part not only of India or one particular religion but of the whole of humanity. The Hindu and Sikh refugees and others here have to prove by being friendly with the Muslims here that I need not stay on in Delhi any longer. Then I would rush to Pakistan with full confidence that my going there would not be in vain.

The person who has made these complaints has not spared even the Kasturba Fund. He asks how the Kasturba Fund is being utilized and why it could not be utilized for giving relief to the refugees. The first thing is that the Fund was raised for a particular purpose when I was in jail.<sup>1</sup> In other words, the Fund was raised for the purpose of serving women and children in the villages of India. There is a Board of Trustees to look after its management. The ever-vigilant Thakkar

<sup>1</sup> After Gandhiji's release from Jail, a purse of Rs. 80 lakhs was presented to him on October 2, 1944 on behalf of the Trustees of the Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial Fund. *Vide* "Speech at Kasturba Memorial Trust Meeting", 2-10-1944.

Bapa<sup>1</sup> is its Secretary. He keeps an account of every single pie. The accounts are open for the public to see. Hence, the Fund cannot be spent for the refugees as this friend suggests. And there is no need to do so. Money is being generously given for the relief of the refugees. Everybody knows about the generous response to my appeal<sup>2</sup> for blankets. Sardar Patel has issued a special appeal. It has received, and it still receiving, whole-hearted public support.

The last complaint of the writer is that when Pakistan has put a ban on the slaughter of pigs why cannot India prohibit cow-slaughter? I am not aware about a legal ban on the slaughter of pigs in Pakistan. If the information given by this friend is correct, I am sorry about it. I know that Islam forbids the eating of pork. But even so, I do not think it is proper to stop the non-Muslims from eating pork.

Has not the Qaid-e-Azam proclaimed that Pakistan is not a theocratic State and religion would not be imposed by law? But, unfortunately, it is true that this claim is not always put into practice. Would India become a theocratic State and would the principles of Hinduism be imposed on non-Hindus? I hope not. If that happens India would cease to be land of hope and promise. Then it would not be a country to which not only all the races of Asia and Africa but the whole world would look with hope. The world does not expect from Hindustan whether as Indian Union or Pakistan meanness and fanaticism. It expects greatness, goodness and generosity from Hindustan so that the whole world can learn a lesson and find light in the midst of the prevailing darkness.

I do not lag behind anyone in my devotion to and worship of the cow. But such feeling of worship and belief cannot be imposed on anybody by law. It can be created by increasing friendly relations and proper behaviour with the Muslims and all other non-Hindus. The Gujaratis and the Marwaris are supposed to be leading all others in the matter of protecting the cow. But they have forgotten the principles of Hinduism to such an extent that they would gladly impose restrictions on others while they may themselves illtreat the cow and her progeny. Why are the cattle of India the most neglected lot in the whole world?

<sup>1</sup> A. V. Thakkar (1869-1951); joined Servants of India Society in 1914; established Bhil Seva Sadan in 1922; Secretary, Harijan Sevak Sangh; President, Gujarat Antyajya Seva Mandal; Secretary, Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial Trust, 1944-51

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "Speech at Prayer Meeting", 4-10-1947.

As it is generally believed, why have these cattle become a burden on the land because of their extremely low yield of milk? As beasts of burden why are the bullocks treated so badly?

The pinjarapoles of India are not such that one can be proud of. A lot of money is spent on them but the cattle are hardly tended scientifically or intelligently. These pinjarapoles cannot give a new lease of life to India's cattle. This can be done only by treating the cattle with sympathy and kindness. I claim that more than any other Hindu, I have saved a larger number of cows from the butcher's knife without the assistance of law, because of my being able to cultivate friendship with the Muslims.

[From Hindi]

*Prarthana Pravachan*—II, pp. 40-5

### 205. FRAGMENT OF LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI<sup>1</sup>

November 5, 1947

This is just a love letter. Take no interest in politics till you are completely free from tuberculosis. Everything is all right here. My cough has gone.

[From Gujarati]

*Bapuni Prasadi*, p. 220

### 206. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER<sup>2</sup>

November 5, 1947

. . .<sup>3</sup> If self-control has taken root in one's heart, why should one wear saffron robes or withdraw oneself into the forests? And one whose heart is not firm is not likely to gain anything whether he goes to a forest or anywhere else. I believe that the man who observes self-control in thought, word and deed in the midst of the world is verily a great ascetic. If things do not bind us, if we are not attached to things even when they are easily available that, according to me, is a greater test of our detachment than mere withdrawal to a lonely forest.

[From Gujarati]

*Dilhiman Gandhiji*—I, p. 200

<sup>1</sup> Gandhiji's grand-nephew; ex-Mayor of Bombay

<sup>2</sup> The addressee had sought Gandhiji's advice for taking *sannyasa*.

<sup>3</sup> Omission as in the source

## 207. LETTER TO SHRIKRISHNA SINHA

NEW DELHI

*November 5, 1947*

BHAI SHRIBABU,

I have not written anything about your Diamond Jubilee celebration. What was there to write? May you serve more and more.

The [enclosed] letter is only one amongst many of this kind that I have received. I have not sent any reply to the writer nor do I wish to.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

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

## 208. INTERVIEW TO CHINESE DELEGATION<sup>1</sup>

*November 5, 1947*

I consider myself a Chinese.

Gandhiji added he was no stranger to the Chinese. He had lived among them in South Africa and many of them were in jail with him during the passive resistance movement there.

India is a great friend of China. In Pandit Nehru, China has a guarantee of that friendship.

*The Hindustan Times, 6-11-1947*

<sup>1</sup> The members of the Chinese Delegation to the Asian Regional Conference of International Labour Organization met Gandhiji in the evening. The workers' representatives from Britain, France and the U. S. A. also accompanied the Delegation.

## 209. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI

November 5, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

I do not intend saying anything today about the objection to the recitation from the Koran. I consider this a blessed moment for myself. There is one person who has objection, but he has now become our friend. He does object but very courteously. Once he has expressed it, he remains quiet. I do not even take his protest as a protest. Even if everybody starts protesting in such a manner, we are not going to lose anything. He himself has told me that once he has voiced his protest, he is absorbed in the prayer. So, it is a good thing in itself.

You have heard today a *bhajan* sung by a Harijan boy. You have already heard his sweet voice. He led the *Ramadhun* also very well. This is not an isolated experience for me. I live among the Harijans and in the course of my frequent travels round the country I have come in contact with the Harijans all over the country. If we do not already know somebody to be a Harijan and if no one introduces him as such, we can never make him out to be a Harijan. They have the same characteristics as other human beings. They have some bad qualities too, but these qualities are not peculiar to them. Other people have such bad qualities too. After all everyone has good as well as bad qualities. But I have noticed a special trait among the Harijans, and it is that, when a Harijan child is given even a little training in music, he makes great progress. Because we have oppressed them so far, if anyone talks to them with affection and teaches them something with love, they concentrate and work hard and make good progress. The well-to-do boys are conceited and knowing that their parents have a lot of money, do not concentrate on their work. But because the Harijans are generally poor and are treated as untouchables, when someone gives them a seat next to him and eats and drinks with them, they are overwhelmed. Not all Harijans take this attitude. I have also seen ungrateful Harijans who would not show any appreciation however much you did for them. But all Harijans are not the same. For hundreds of years they have been oppressed under the Hindu dharma. Still they have remained steadfast in their own religion and

compared to others, are found to be having greater qualities.

You may not have heard about a place called Pandharpur. It is a place for pilgrimage in Maharashtra. There are innumerable legends about the idols in that place, but I do not want to narrate them to you. The temple at Pandharpur was not open to Harijans. Sane Guruji<sup>1</sup> installed himself there and argued with the Trustees that when all other temples were thrown open to Harijans, there was no reason why the Pandharpur temple should not be opened to them. When his request was not granted he went on fast<sup>2</sup>. Sane Guruji is a great devotee, and how could the trustees therefore allow him to die? Sense dawned on them and they were moved to pity. But they told him they were helpless in the face of a number of technical difficulties, which had to be first removed. Then Mavalankar<sup>3</sup> joined him there and Sane Guruji was persuaded to give up his fast<sup>4</sup>. But he ended his fast on the condition that he would resume the fast if the temple was not opened to Harijans. Now I have received a telegram that the necessary Bill has been passed and that the temple has been opened to Harijans. The temple was willingly opened and people thronged there in thousands. There were no protests. There may have been some stray protests among those thousands. So, after all, that great temple of Pandharpur had to be opened to Harijans after so much effort. If all those excesses we have been perpetrating on the Harijans become a thing of the past the country would rise very high. But right now we are following a downward path because we are possessed by feelings of animosity. But it is my hope that India will not be forever possessed by such madness. The rest God alone knows.

I have been asked a few questions. Actually, these questions have been asked in separate letters but I have grouped them together. The first question is asked by a Muslim friend. As I said yesterday, nobody can be compelled to give up eating beef. We can only request him and convince him. The person concerned may be convinced and he may give it up. It would indeed be wonderful if he would give it up out of love. But there are a large number of Hindus who eat meat, it may be fish or some other meat. There are very few Hindus who do

<sup>1</sup> P. S. Sane; *vide* "Telegram to P. S. Sane", 1-5-1947, "Letter to P. S. Sane", 3-5-1947 and "Telegram to G. V. Mavalankar", 7-5-1947.

<sup>2</sup> On May 1, 1947

<sup>3</sup> G. V. Mavalankar (1888-1956); Speaker, Legislative Assembly, Bombay, 1935-45; Speaker, Lok Sabha, 1947-56

<sup>4</sup> On May 10, 1947

not take meat for religious reasons. Are you then going to compel them to give up eating meat and if they do not comply tell them that they should leave India, otherwise you would kill them? If this cannot be done, what wrong have the Muslims done? Why should they be compelled? I know there are some fanatical Hindus who are compelling them. I would call this an atrocity from which we should keep away.

The next question is raised by a Hindu friend. He writes to say that it is indeed true that all Hindus do not have in them the feeling of animosity. But he refers to my advice to the Muslims that they should not leave their houses, and, if needs be, die. He says that in spite of this wise talk of mine, wisdom does not dawn on the people. On the one hand, he says, I go on with my wise talk, and on the other hand the Muslims are harassed to such an extent that they cannot even come out of their houses. They are being threatened with death if they refuse to go away. If the Muslims come out of their own localities they are being killed. But how can they earn their living if they do not come out? Many of them are craftsmen and labourers. Take for instance a weaver. If the Hindus decide not to use the cloth woven by him and threaten to kill any Hindu insisting on using his cloth, then there is no point in allowing him to stay here. How can a labourer confine himself to his own locality? He would then be worse than a slave. In a poor locality how can he maintain his family if he cannot come out? No well-to-do Muslim stays in such poor localities and how can the poor people staying there maintain themselves if they cannot go out? It is absurd if on the one hand we harass them to such an extent and on the other people like me ask them to die.

We boast that everything is under control in Delhi and no big incidents take place. But I would say that even if there is a little trouble, it should hurt us. I would go on repeating that if such things continue to happen in India, with what face can we tell the Muslims that they should stay in India? If all the Muslims go away to Pakistan and all the Hindus and Sikhs come to India, then we would become permanent enemies. And then we would be fighting to our hearts' content. Let us save ourselves from such an absurd situation.

The third question is rather complicated. It is complicated and at the same time, it is not complicated. A Muslim friend writes that he and all Muslims will be happy if I answer the question.<sup>1</sup> But, no matter

<sup>1</sup> Here Brijkrishna Chandiwala pointed out that the question was put by a Hindu.

who has asked, it is a question all right. It is worth asking and also not worth asking. The question is: "You advised even the British to follow the path of non-violence when they were facing defeat. You advised them to give up arms and become non-violent. You could show that much courage there; then why don't you ask the Government of the country to fight a non-violent battle?" I have already stated that I am a nobody and no one listens to me. People say that the Sardar is my man and Panditji also is but mine and Maulana too is my man. They are all mine and also not mine. I have never abandoned my non-violence. I have been training myself in non-violence and it was acceptable till we attained independence. Now they wonder how they can rule with non-violence. And then there is the army and they have taken the help of the army. Now I am of no value at all. But why am I still with the people when I have lost my value? It is in the hope that they may perhaps listen to me. At least a few persons like you do come and quietly join me in the prayer. Others may follow your example and ultimately wisdom may dawn on everybody. Maybe my words will have some effect. It is only with that hope that I am continuing to be here and doing all these things. I do not know how long God wants me to work. He can stop me working this very day if He so wishes. I would die right here if He takes away my breath. Hence, I still stand by what I had conveyed to Hitler,<sup>1</sup> Mussolini,<sup>2</sup> Churchill<sup>3</sup> and the people of Japan.<sup>4</sup> I say the same thing to our Government. But in Kashmir Sheikh Abdullah is giving a brave fight—I have always admired bravery. It is true that he believes in violence but it requires courage and I do admire it. I admire even Subhas Babu not because I approved of his violence but because I could have never formed the Azad Hind Fauj. When I see something good and fail to give it due credit, I cannot be truly non-violent. I have no doubt that if Sheikh Abdullah fights it to the last and keeps the Hindus and the Sikhs with him, it is bound to have a great impact on the people here. However, if I could have my way of non-violence and everybody listened to me, we would not send our army as we are doing now. And if we did send, it would be a non-violent army. It

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Letter to Adolf Hitler", 23-7-1939 and "Letter to Adolf Hitler", 24-12-1940.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*

<sup>3</sup> Presumably the reference is to Gandhiji's appeal *vide* "To Every Briton", 2-7-1940.

<sup>4</sup> *Vide* "To Every Japanese", 18-7-1942 .

doing now. And if we did send, it would be a non-violent army. It would be a non-violent fight if our people went there and gladly met their death at the hands of the Afridis. It would be a non-violent war because they would be dying remaining non-violent. Sheikh Abdullah too would tell the Afridis that they could take Srinagar but only when all the fighters were dead. But they are all fighting with arms and fighting bravely. They too can become non-violent—though it would not be the true form of non-violence. Supposing an army of a lakh of armed Afridis invaded the place and a handful of people offered armed resistance in order to protect the innocent children and women and died fighting, then they could be called no-violent in spite of their using arms. But to whom can I say this? Today poison has spread on all sides and people kill each other in a barbarous manner. In this situation even I am not able to teach this simple lesson in non-violence. In his time Mr. Churchill could not say, but today, Sheikh Abdullah and the army which has gone there can tell me that my non-violence has failed in Delhi where acts of barbarism are being committed and what they are doing is not barbaric. And I must admit that they have a right to say that. But they cannot tell me anything if I can convince all the Hindus, Muslims and the Sikhs of the Union about my non-violence. In that event, I could myself go with a non-violent army to Kashmir or Pakistan or any place, and then my work would become very easy. And then, the impact of non-violence would be so great that it would be worth seeing. But when can I hope for such an occasion? If you listen to my words and act in accordance with them, if my words have greater power and my heart greater strength, if my penance, however great it may be becomes still greater and every word of mine becomes so powerful that it grips the whole of India, my task will be accomplished. But today I am helpless. If you also pray to God that He may put strength into my words and take me further than where He has taken me and get still more work out of my body, then India may have greater impact on the world.

The delegates from Britain, China, the U. S. A. and Pakistan who came to attend the Asian Regional Conference<sup>1</sup> praised me for my work. But their praise hurts me. Today I have become bankrupt. I have no say with my people today. What I said in the past has no value. I will be worthy of praise only when I can influence people. But

<sup>1</sup> Of the International Labour Organization which was held in Delhi. *Vide* also "Interview to Chinese Delegation", 5-11-1947.

that is not the situation today. I am merely expressing my helplessness before you.

[From Hindi]

*Prarthana Pravachan*—II, pp. 45-52

## 210. TWO AMERICAN FRIENDS' CONSOLATION

Of the many letters that come to me from American friends whom I do not know, the following extracts from two such friends are worth quoting:

Your great distress due to the unhappy situation in your country demands that I intrude upon your contemplations of the painful events now taking place in India, to remind you that your beautiful words have taken root in all the corners of the earth.

That you should feel a degree of disillusionment because of these sad happenings is natural. That that disillusionment should be measured and certainly not turn into discouragement is the purpose of my letter.

Never does the seed turn directly into a beautiful fragrant flower without first going through certain phases of growth and development. And, if at some stage of its development—or growth—it falters, the presence of the gardener is more than ever required. In the complete absorption of the selfless task of nursing the ailing plant, the gardener perhaps cannot fully observe the growth of other plants in his garden, to join with him in his compassion for their stricken brother.

I plead with you to give consideration to the countless numbers of people in all countries on earth, of all classes, races and creeds, who are now also praying for peace. These people, whose hopes you have so well expressed and who took fresh courage from these victories which you did achieve with the Science of Peace, must now join me in prayer that the Master bless you and preserve you to continue your noble work, so much of which is still to be done.

What they say may prove true and that the senseless bloodbath through which India is still passing, though the original fury seems to have abated, may be nothing unusual as history goes. What India is passing through must be regarded as unusual. If we grant that such liberty as India has gained was a tribute to non-violence as I have repeatedly said, non-violence of India's struggle was only in name, in reality it was passive resistance of the weak. The truth of the statement we see demonstrated by the happenings in India.

NEW DELHI, November 6, 1947

*Harijan*, 16-11-1947

## 211. "FOR MUSLIMS ONLY"<sup>1</sup>

A correspondent draws attention to the fact that whereas I have condemned the use at railway stations of different pots of water for Muslims and Hindus,<sup>2</sup> now there are compartments reserved for Muslims only and non-Muslims or Hindus. I do not know how far the evil has spread, but I do know that this distinction is a matter of great shame for the Hindus and the Sikhs. I suppose it became necessary for the railway administration to make the distinction for the simple protection of Muslim life. It is any day possible (the sooner the better) to stop the practice, by the Hindus and the Sikhs making up their minds never to dispose of Muslim fellow-passengers, as if they were chattels and to assure the railway administration that the offence will never be repeated. This can happen when there is an open confession of sin and return to sanity. This I say, irrespective of what has happened or may still happen in Pakistan.

NEW DELHI, November 6, 1947

*Harijan*, 16-11-1947

## 212. LETTER TO C. RAJAGOPALACHARI

NEW DELHI

*November 6, 1947*<sup>3</sup>

MY DEAR C. R.,

You are right. Your air mail letter came into my hands this morning 4.20 a. m.

On the surface things are sufficiently nice but the under-current leaves little hope. I wonder if Bengal will hold out for all time. Let us hope. More when we meet, if we do.

Love.

BAPU

[PS.]

Yes, Rama is our only refuge.

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal. Also *Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase*, Vol. II, p. 512

<sup>1</sup> This appeared under "Notes".

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "Hindu and Mussalman Tea, etc.", 7-3-1946

<sup>3</sup> *Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase*, however, gives the letter under "November 5".

### 213. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

November 6, 1947

If we neglect the charkha—that is, constructive activities like khadi, village industries, etc., after the attainment of freedom, we will be acting like a man who remembers God in sorrow and forgets Him when He showers happiness. If we neglect the charkha in free India, we will degenerate like the man who forgets God in his days of happiness. . . .<sup>1</sup>

[From Gujarati]

*Dilhiman Gandhiji*—I, pp. 208-9

### 214. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

November 6, 1947

. . .<sup>2</sup> has made great progress in cultivating faith in Ramanama. I am surrounded by fire on all sides and yet I am not consumed by it. This is so only because of Ramanama. I derive profound peace from it. There is no doubt that I have benefited a lot from Ramanama despite this intolerable cough. . . .<sup>3</sup>

[From Gujarati]

*Dilhiman Gandhiji*—I, p. 209

<sup>1</sup> Omission as in the source

<sup>2</sup> Omissions as in the source

<sup>3</sup> *ibid*

### 215. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER<sup>1</sup>

November 6, 1947

Don't you know that I was a barrister and Ba was almost illiterate? And, yet, whatever progress I have been able to make in my life today is all due to my wife. You have not been able to mention any other defect in your wife. But your letter suggests that you may have fallen in love with some college girl. Is that so? To wed another girl because the first wife is illiterate is sheer tyranny perpetrated by boys over girls. Allow me to say that you are the person who is really uneducated. I have not the slightest hesitation in calling you uneducated in spite of your being literate. It is because you are not able to teach your wife who is willing to learn. I, therefore, pity you. Try to understand, if this will make you understand.

[From Gujarati]

*Dilhiman Gandhiji*—I, pp. 209-10

### 216. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

November 6, 1947

Liberty does not mean license. If we work under somebody we appreciate his love for us. Didn't Lord Krishna become Arjuna's charioteer? If you can understand what I mean by this I have told you all that I wished to in these few words.

[From Hindi]

*Dilhiman Gandhiji*—I, p. 208

### 217. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

November 6, 1947

You must have seen my yesterday's prayer speech in the newspapers. I have admitted there that these days nobody listens to me.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless I am trying hard to have the controls removed. Let us see what God ordains. I feel God will take me away soon. Now there is no question of wishing to live for 125 years. I feel all the while that God will certainly give me [eternal] rest, in the near future. So much work piles up that it leaves me no breathing space during the day.

[From Hindi]

*Dilhiman Gandhiji*—I, p. 209

<sup>1</sup> The addressee was a college student.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "Speech at Prayer Meeting", 5-11-1947.

## 218. DISCUSSION AT FOOD CONFERENCE<sup>1</sup>

November 6, 1947

RAJENDRA PRASAD: All of us have become nervous about what you have said as regards removing the [food] control. They are forced to listen [to you]. So it is better that you yourself say something.

GANDHIJI: In a way I feel happy that you people are quite shaken by what I have said. Since the Government is in your hands I will have to convince you. I have been holding this view for the last so many months. When I had gone to Bengal<sup>2</sup> it had been through a famine. I went and saw the Governor and went through all the reports and told him that the famine was man-made and not a natural calamity.<sup>3</sup>

When the War was going on many people had gone out of the country and a lot of foodgrain was exported. At that time it was British rule and I had called their strategy Martial Law.

Now the times have changed. Nobody will ask you to export food. We have enough stock with us and still if we import foodgrain, crores of rupees will go out of the country. Where is the money for that? You may call mine a voice in the wilderness, if you wish to. My stay in Delhi has had no effect. [Hindus and Muslims] still have ill feeling towards each other. Maulana Saheb who was till now our President and who is now a minister cannot go amongst the Hindus. If he takes courage in both hands and tries to do so, he will be killed. The good Muslims cannot live in peace and that is why I can do nothing for the Hindus in Pakistan. I am deliberately speaking about this unfortunate thing because these days nobody listens to me. If they do hear me, I dare say it would change the face of Hindustan.

I am sure you people do not presume that only you know everything and I know nothing. You will be sadly mistaken if you think that we who have elected you do not know anything. I get so many letters asking me to do away with rationing.

<sup>1</sup> The Conference, convened by Rajendra Prasad, was held on November 5 and 6 to discuss the recommendations of the Foodgrain Policy Committee. It was attended by Food Ministers from provinces and States and their representatives.

<sup>2</sup> In December 1945

<sup>3</sup> *Vide* "Silence Day Note to R. G. Casey", 3-12-1945 and "Statement to the United Press of India", 7-2-1946 and "Letter to R. G. Casey", 8-2-1946.

I did not know that the business magnates would agree with me in this. You should carry out the wishes of the people in an efficient manner. If I were to become a minister I would have to ascertain the views of everyone. What a pity that rice which used to cost Rs. 2 now costs Rs. 40. The farmers have foodgrain with them. If the control is removed they will automatically bring it out. I am myself a farmer. I have seen that farmers who grow foodgrain do not use their own produce for consumption. They have to eat the rotten stuff sent from the city. What sort of transaction is this? I did not know that Dr. Rammanohar Lohia<sup>1</sup> also agreed with me. We have to make the people strong by removing control. They are not going to die. Rajendra Babu should firmly tell them that they will in no way suffer by the removal of control. On the contrary it will benefit them. Of course I have grown old but not senile. My views are those of the man in the street.

When I was told that Ministers of all the provinces are in favour of rationing, I told Rajendra Babu that I would like to see them.

This year we have had good rainfall. Now there is no foreigner here any more. We have now to feed only our own people and we can produce foodgrain here. If you teach them how to grow food the stock would automatically increase. There was a campaign of “grow more food” during the War. Your agriculture department is rotten. It is not meant for people. Why do we import rice from Burma? Why are we worried when we cannot get rice from there? You should tell the people how much rice per acre is produced in different parts of the world and how it can be done here. Make the people industrious. Control is only to feed the lazy ones. I feel very much pained about this. If we give work to the people they will not indulge in killing. It is control that has made us idle and that is why we are indulging in this killing.

R. Travancore-Cochin does not produce enough foodgrain. It meets only two-third of the demand. They are apprehensive as to what they will do now. Earlier they were getting rice from Burma.

G. The land of Mysore, Travancore-Cochin is not such that nothing will grow there. We can send foodgrain from one province to

<sup>1</sup> (1910-67); one of the founders of the All-India Congress Socialist Party; Secretary of the Foreign Department, A. I. C. C., 1936-38; left Congress in 1948; General Secretary, Praja Socialist Party, 1953-54; member, Lok Sabha, 1963-67

another. For example there is a lot of cocoanut produced in Travancore-Cochin. And fish and bananas are also there. Still, they beg for things. This question only implies that the British rule was better because then we could get rice from Burma. Why should we become so helpless? We will die if we depend for food on others. If we lose courage people will become easy-going and listless. This old man is telling you that we should not become crippled like this. Prices are rising day by day. Why should it be so? A *void* writes to say that from among his patients many suffer ailments because of this rotten stuff. You are the ministers. For you this sort of stuff should be like poison. We will never overcome our difficulties if we do not remove the drawbacks that were there during the British rule.

A FRIEND: The poor will be ruined if control is removed. The advantage of rationing is that people will eat only as much as they should. Not a single grain will be wasted and if control is taken away people will start eating in large quantities resulting in diseases.

You have asked for blankets for the refugees. Earlier the price of a blanket was Rs. 8. Now it is Rs. 18. However much you advise, people have no honesty. They will only create more trouble. . . .<sup>1</sup>

G. I feel like laughing when I hear this. After all a man will eat only as much as he can. The fact that you are in favour of rationing shows that you have not taken into account the 40 crores. Rationing is meant for just a few. Later on people will turn into rebels and will kill the minister. They will not be afraid of him. Or else people should understand that now our ministers are of the people and from the people and there is no need to be afraid of them.

I did not know that a blanket now costs Rs. 18. But if it is so I will say that we are foolish and I don't blame myself for this. If I insist that the Government should arrange for everything, how much burden would it be for it? I have served the Government by [asking for blankets]. Now I will give cloth and cotton to people and they will themselves make quilts. In this way we can teach people to live honestly if prices go on rising.

The Nizam's State has almost become a foreign country. If all of you who have come from there unite, it will change the face of Hyderabad. I wish to work with the united intelligence of all.

Today you have power in your hands. This power is not of Wavell or the Viceroy, it is of the people and for the uplift of the

<sup>1</sup> Omission as in the source

poor. How could we work if we did not trust our people? What would be our fate then?

I talk of “free trade” after careful thinking. It would be a selfish policy if Pantji<sup>1</sup> were to say that he would not give good seeds to Bengal. The “free trade” is necessary for England but we cannot run our economy on their pattern.

It is our own helplessness if people of Madras say that they just cannot eat anything besides *idli* and cannot eat Bombay bread. We will have to get used to eating wheat, rice, *bajari* or *jawar*. We are not men if we cannot do without a particular thing. Man should not become a slave of anything.

ANNADA BABU<sup>2</sup>: Though we have food, it is not enough. Should we still remove control?

G. I do not believe that we do not have enough food. Yes, one province may be having more and the other less. If we collect whatever is produced in the whole country there is no scarcity of food. And only in this way we will be tested. Those who have become millionaires today owe it to the British and to their exploitation of the poor. We have become corrupt due to controls. Now we are independent. In our attempt to convert India into a paradise let us not turn it into a hell. No doubt we have achieved independence but we are suffering its ill-effects. There is peace in name but we are restless within. We should understand what our duty is. We will be saved only if we give up our selfish attitude.

ANNADA BABU: Suppose people die, won't it be the Government's responsibility?

G. Supposing there is no rice in Bengal, it will have to be taken from Assam. All the provinces of India have to live together or die together. We will be worthy of our independence only when we understand this. If the provinces start competing with each other we will be finished.

[From Hindi]

*Dilhiman Gandhiji*—I, pp. 212-7

<sup>1</sup> Govind Ballabh Pant (1887-1961); Premier of the U. P., 1937-39 and 1946-55; Home Minister, Government of India, 1955-61

<sup>2</sup> Annada Chowdhary

## 219. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

November 6, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

I know the name of the writer but I do not intend to reveal his name or the contents of what is written in those two extracts<sup>1</sup>. I merely want to say that those articles have been written with the intention of serving Hinduism but they contain deliberate lies. When new points cannot be put forth, facts are presented in a distorted form. But I dare say that no purpose, certainly no religious purpose, can be served by resorting to such means. When accusations are based not on facts but on lies, they can do no harm to the person who is being attacked. I warn the public that they should not support such newspapers no matter how renowned the writers may be.

The Committee<sup>2</sup> of the non-officials appointed by the Food Minister has presented its report to him. I had a meeting with the provincial Ministers or their representatives who had come to Delhi to help Dr. Rajendra Prasad in reaching a decision on the recommendations of that Committee.<sup>3</sup> When I learnt about the meeting, I requested Dr. Rajendra Prasad to give me a chance to put my views before them so that I could dispel their doubts. For I am quite sure that I am absolutely right in my opinion that control on food should be removed. Dr. Rajendra Prasad readily agreed and I could place my views before those Ministers and their representatives. I was very happy to meet my old friends. I have been constantly complaining that no one takes me seriously in the matter of communal strife. But I am glad to say that the same is not the case with regard to my advice on the food question. Ever since I met Mr. Casey, the Governor of Bengal, I have been of the view that in India there is no need at all to have control on food or cloth. At that time I did not know whether I had any backing or not. But during the current discussion I was quite surprised to know that I had a very large support from the known and unknown members of the public. Among the countless letters I receive about the food problem, I do not

<sup>1</sup> The reference is to two newspaper cuttings sent by a friend.

<sup>2</sup> The Foodgrain Policy Committee

<sup>3</sup> *Vide* the preceding item.

remember a single letter in which its writer has expressed an opinion other than mine. I do not know what Shri Ghanshyam Das Birla<sup>1</sup> and Lala Shriram<sup>2</sup> think about this. Nor do I know if the Socialist Party would support my view. Of course, when Dr. Rammanohar Lohia met me he fully agreed with me about removing food control. I do not hesitate to say that in the present situation of food scarcity through which the country is passing, Dr. Rajendra Prasad should be guided by one or more members of his Committee and not by his entire staff.

Let me now come to control on cloth. Even though I am more certain about removing control on cloth than control on food, I am afraid I do not have as much support in the removal of cloth-control as in the removal of food-control. The Congress had gladly supported my view that khadi could take the place of the mill-cloth, whether Indian or foreign. It had set up a Khadi Board under the late Jamnalalji<sup>3</sup> which was expanded into the All-India Spinners' Association after my release from the Yeravda Prison. India has a population of 400 million. Even after discounting the portion of the population of Pakistan, India would still have more than 300 million. India grows enough cotton for the entire population. There are sufficient number of persons to spin that cotton into yarn. And, there are more than sufficient number of weavers to weave cloth out of that yarn. Without a large investment we can easily manufacture in the country spinning-wheels, looms and other accessories that we need. All that we need is robust faith in ourselves and a determination to wear no other cloth but khadi. You know that we can make khadi of the fine quality with designs that would be far superior to those of the mills. Now that India is free from the foreign yoke, there will no longer be opposition to khadi which was characteristic of the representatives of foreign rulers. That is why I am surprised all the more that even when we are completely free to do what we want, we neither talk about khadi nor have faith in the potentialities of khadi. And, we think of nothing but mill-cloth to meet India's needs in this respect. I have not the slightest doubt that khadi economics can be the only true and sound economics for India.

[From Hindi]

*Prarthana Pravachan*—II, pp. 52-4

<sup>1</sup> Industrialists

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*

<sup>3</sup> Jamnalal Bajaj

## 220. INTERVIEW TO CHINESE DELEGATION

NEW DELHI,  
November 6, 1947

Peace in Asia depends on India and China. These two countries are large. And if they build their edifices on the foundation of ahimsa they will become known among the great countries of the world. When I had met Chiang Kaishek<sup>1</sup> I told him the same thing.

[From Gujarati]

*Dilhiman Gandhiji*—I, p. 218

## 221. OUTSIDE HIS FIELD<sup>2</sup>

Major-General Cariappa is reported to have said as follows:

Non-violence is of no use under the present circumstances in India and only a strong army can make India one of the greatest nations in the world.

I fear, like many experts, General Cariappa has gone beyond his depth and has been unwittingly betrayed into a serious misconception of ahimsa, of whose working in the nature of things, he can only have a very superficial knowledge. By reason of lifelong practice of ahimsa, I claim to be an expert in it, though very imperfect. Speaking in absolute terms, the more I practise it the clearer I see how far I am from the full expression of ahimsa in my life. It is his ignorance of this, the greatest duty of man in the world, which makes him say that in this age non-violence has little scope in the face of violence, whereas I make bold to say that in this age of the atom bomb, unadulterated non-violence is the only force that can confound all the tricks put together of violence. It would have become the General, unaided as he can only now be, by his British teachers of military science and practice not to have gone out of his depth. Generals greater than General Cariappa have been wise and humble enough frankly to make the admission that they can have no right to speak of the possibilities of the force of ahimsa. We are witnessing the tragic insolvency of military science and practice in its own home. Should a bankrupt, who has been by the gamble in the share-market, sing the praise of that particular form of gambling?

NEW DELHI, November 7, 1947

*Harijan*, 16-11-1947

<sup>1</sup> On February 18, 1942

<sup>2</sup> This appeared under "Notes".

## 222. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

November 7, 1947

I am trying to sail on my own raft of dried gourd. I shall either swim or sink. There is no middle path in this religious sacrifice.

[From Gujarati]

*Dilhiman Gandhiji*—I, p. 220

## 223. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

November 7, 1947

. . .<sup>1</sup> Yesterday I talked at length on [food] control at the Ministers' meeting. I hope I have satisfied all of them. Let us wait and watch. My only prayer is: May God grant good sense to everyone.

[From Hindi]

*Dilhiman Gandhiji*—I, p. 220

## 224. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

November 7, 1947

These days I get so exhausted that at night I am totally lost to the world. The work goes on increasing and there is a great deal of mental exhaustion. According to me if Ramanama is enshrined in my heart I will not feel mentally exhausted. It has such miraculous power.

[From Hindi]

*Dilhiman Gandhiji*—I, p. 220

<sup>1</sup> Omission as in the source

## 225. MESSAGE TO MALAYA<sup>1</sup>

November 7, 1947

The attainment of freedom by India has a unique importance in the annals of world history. Let Asia benefit from it. All neighbouring countries should work unitedly rather than separately. It is my earnest prayer and wish that God may grant them the strength to do this.

[From Gujarati]

*Dilhiman Gandhiji*—I, pp. 222-3

## 226. TALK WITH INDONESIAN VISITORS

NEW DELHI,

November 7, 1947

A VISITOR: You say that you see darkness all around you, and there is such fraternal strife going on in the country. And yet you look so cheerful. Whence do you derive such strange power? What is it that sustains you Bapuji?

I look after my health with care, because I believe that my ahimsa can be tested only when confronted by violence. I have decided to live cheerfully even in this atmosphere of darkness and inhumanity. Moreover, I consider no one as my enemy. I am endeavouring to serve the whole of Creation, for I consider it a part of God and I feel that serving mankind is the same as serving God. This thought lends me unflinching power. It is this power that sustains me. I also resort to certain outward remedies. You see that even while guests such as you are visiting here I lie with a mud-pack on me. Do please forgive me my lack of manners. But I have no other time to spare. And I could not help having you just at this time.

Oh! please why do you say that? It is such a privilege to have ten minutes with such a great man. If you do not mind, perhaps you will tell me why you use a mud-pack.

Oh! to enumerate the virtues of mud is like enumerating the virtues of one's mother. I got rid of chronic constipation with the use

<sup>1</sup> This was given to a Malayan representative who met Gandhiji in the afternoon.

of mud. Mud costs nothing and yet I have used it in cases of typhoid, pneumonia, blood-pressure, many diseases of women and skin diseases. In every case the experiment was successful.

The visitor said he would also try it. As the visitors rose, they thanked Gandhiji for sparing his valuable time for them.

The pleasure is mutual. I have also been very happy to meet you. If you have occasion to come this way and I am still alive, do come and see me. I am neither a great saint nor a Mahatma such as you describe me. I am a humble servant. I am only human as you are.

[From Gujarati]

*Dilhiman Gandhiji*—I, pp. 223-4

## 227. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,

*November 7, 1947*

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

It pains me to know that the Muslims of Tihar<sup>1</sup> and the neighbouring areas have to suffer unnecessary hardships. Many of them are landowners but are unable to till their land for fear of harassment. They have sold away their cattle, ploughs and other implements. They are being protected by the army.<sup>2</sup> More than two thousand of those distressed people had gathered round me. Through their leader they conveyed to me their desire to go to Pakistan, because life had become impossible for them here. They said that a large number of their friends and relatives had already gone to Pakistan. Hence, it would be a mercy if the Government could arrange to send them to Lahore. They said they had nothing to complain against the army. However, I would not like to devote the whole time in giving an account of that meeting. I told those people that I had no power in my hands, but I would gladly convey their message to the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister, who is also the Home Minister.

<sup>1</sup> Gandhiji had visited Tihar village at 4 p. m. and met the Muslims there.

<sup>2</sup> While Gandhiji was returning to Delhi, his car was stopped by a number of Indian soldiers who saluted him and assured him that they were providing full protection to those in distress. Gandhiji smiled and said that providing protection and kindness without distinction of caste or creed was the attribute of a soldier.

I am told that the refugees have become a problem in Delhi and that because they have suffered atrocities in Pakistan, they think they have special privileges. When they go to buy things in the market they expect the shopkeeper to give them what they want without charging them anything or at a considerably reduced rate. At times, a single person buys things worth hundreds of rupees. Some refugees expect the tongawallahs to give them free rides or charge a very nominal fare. If this report is true, it is my duty to say that the refugees have failed to learn the lesson that sufferers generally learn through hardships. Thereby they are harming themselves and the country and making the already complicated problem more complicated. If they continue to behave like this, they are sure to lose the sympathy of the Delhi traders.

At the same time, I cannot understand how the refugees who have come from Pakistan after losing everything, can buy things worth hundreds of rupees. I would also wish that except on rare and necessary occasions, the refugees should not use anything other than their God given feet for moving about. Apart from this, I am also told that ever since lakhs of refugees started coming to Delhi, there has been a steep rise in the revenue derived from spirituous liquor. As a matter of fact, those people should realize that when the Central and the Provincial Governments accede to the demands of the Congress, neither hard liquor nor other intoxicants like opium and hemp would be available in the Indian Union. The same situation can be created in Pakistan too, because our Muslim friends would not need a Congress resolution to declare total prohibition. Can the refugees, who have undergone so many hardships, not restrain themselves from taking intoxicants and indulging in luxuries? I hope the refugee men and women will take the advice I have given them through my earlier speeches that wherever they go, the refugees should mix with the people like sugar in milk, and make a firm resolve not to be a burden on them. Let the rich and the poor refugees live in the same camps and work in full co-operation, so that they can become ideal and self-supporting citizens.

[From Hindi]

*Prarthana Pravachan*—I, pp. 55-7

## 228. ACT AS YOU THINK

From a letter received by Rajkumari from Dr. Maude Royden and which she has given to me for reading, I have extracted the following relevant passages:

I marvel that the best Christian in the world should not be a Christian! I have been reading these last two or three weeks a new biography of Albert Schweitzer<sup>1</sup> and there again I have this same paradox. I don't know if the name of Schweitzer is known in India but to my mind he is perhaps alone in the world in his greatness. . . . And as you may perhaps know, Schweitzer is regarded with suspicion by the "orthodox" because it is held that he has not a sufficiently exalted view of our Saviour. And yet there is not a Christian in the entire world who has followed Christ with the same heroic faith and utterly selfless devotion. And when I read of his philosophy, his "reverence for life", and how he constantly refers himself to Jesus of Nazareth, I know that no one has ever exalted Jesus to such a height in the minds of those who read Schweitzer. . . . He differs from most philosophers only in the fact that he must live all that he thinks, writes or says. I realize now why his thought strikes one as having such stark and terrifying honesty. If you are engaged in thinking without thought of action, it is easy to think all sorts of untrue things. If you know that you are going to live everything that you think, with what a searching eye and with what profound sincerity you are going to think!

NEW DELHI, November 8, 1947

*Harijan*, 23-11-1947

<sup>1</sup> (1875-1965); philosopher, theologian, musician and doctor; devoted his life to missionary work in Africa; was awarded Nobel Peace Prize in 1952

229. *LETTER TO K. C. NEOGY*

BIRLA HOUSE,  
NEW DELHI,  
*November 8, 1947*

DEAR NEOGY,

I am sorry that we have not met after your appointment as Minister of Refugees and Rehabilitation.

You will excuse me if I draw you attention to the complaints that have come under my notice. One of them is that people have no ready access to you and when they do succeed in getting an audience of a few moments, they are summarily dismissed with a rebuff. What they expect is a patient hearing. Not all the refugees belong to the poor class. Some of them are professional men. But I contend that rich and poor, all alike, are entitled to perfect courtesy and patient hearing from their Ministers. These refugees are ill-covered, illfed, in some cases wander about aimlessly, even going without food. I am not giving you all the numerous complaints that have been daily pouring into my ears. I have ventured simply to give you a few samples from which you may infer the rest. If there is, in your opinion, nothing whatsoever in these complaints, you will dismiss the letter from your consideration, forgiving me at the same time for intruding upon your valuable time. I know you have been called to an office which must occupy all your attention.

*Yours sincerely,*  
M. K. GANDHI

SHRI K. C. NEOGY  
NO. 5 HASTINGS ROAD  
NEW DELHI

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

### 230. A LETTER

November 8, 1947

Under the present circumstances as long as Pakistan does not do what she says I certainly cannot advise the refugees to return to Pakistan. I shall leave Delhi only when something tangible is achieved here.

I am hoping that controls by and large will be removed. If that happens I have no doubt that it will produce a salutary effect among the people.

It is God's grace that my body is working beyond its strength.

[From Gujarati]

*Dilhiman Gandhiji*—I, p. 229

### 231. A LETTER

November 8, 1947

We have certainly no right to advise a neighbour to clean his house as long as our own house is not clean. I am a Hindu by birth and by practice. It is my duty to bring glory to this religion, and my religion is all-embracing.

[From Gujarati]

*Dilhiman Gandhiji*—I, p. 230

### 232. A TALK<sup>1</sup>

NEW DELHI,

November 8, 1947

Nature cure means taking advantage of what nature has given us. Cures may be brought about through sun-bath, fresh air, mud and water therapy and the inclusion of fruit and leafy vegetables in the diet and suitable exercises. That is why I was attracted to this. Had nature-cure experiment been carried on in Uruli under my

<sup>1</sup> With two visitors who were in favour of using modern electrical appliances in nature cure

supervision I would have ensured its complete success. But today I have become ineffective. You see what even men like General Cariappa are saying?<sup>1</sup> Responsible people have no sense of responsibility left. Nevertheless I still persevere in my effort to achieve the state of a *sthitaprajna*, that is to say, mental equipoise. I have made considerable progress in this direction and have already arrived at the conclusion that Ramanama is the cure for all ailments and it is my hope that when I die I shall die with Ramanama in my heart. This faith becomes stronger in me each day. You see there was a time when even my opponents took my guidance. Today, let alone my being assailed by my opponents, even my co-workers, friends and close relatives who are like sons to me, do not see eye to eye with me. Still, I am mentally in such excellent health that it surprises me that with the flames raging around me I remain untouched by their heat or sparks. The reason for this is that God is filling me with strength and I am sustained by Ramanama. Just as men derive vigour and vitality from the daily nourishment and sleep I derive my strength from Rama.

[From Gujarati]

*Dilhiman Gandhiji*—I, pp. 228-9

### 233. MESSAGE FOR CITIZENS OF CHANDRANAGORE<sup>2</sup>

NEW DELHI,

November 8, 1947

I hope the news that has reached me is not true. I believe the French are a brave and great nation and would not like to suppress or enslave any people whether black or white.

[From Gujarati]

*Dilhiman Gandhiji*—I, p. 232

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Outside his Field", 7-11-1947.

<sup>2</sup> Arunanshu from Chandranagore, met Gandhiji and informed him that Gandhiji's statement regarding Chandranagore, *vide* "Speech at Prayer Meeting", 17-8-1947, was being misused by the authorities to suppress the satyagraha there and that assistance from the French Government was being sought.

## 234. INTERVIEW TO BURMESE DELEGATION<sup>1</sup>

November 8, 1947

Gandhiji paid credit to Burmese people as they were able to declare independence, which was “probably a stage higher than in India”.<sup>2</sup> He also referred in the course of the talks to Mr. Churchill’s recent speech and advised

the people, “to profit by it and without being angry to so conduct their affairs as to falsify Mr. Churchill’s forebodings”<sup>3</sup>. Gandhiji said:

I have been to Burma thrice<sup>4</sup> and I am not a stranger to Burmans. I was struck by the customs of the Burmese people and their hospitality.

Gandhiji was sorry that unrest had broken out in Burma.

*The Bombay Chronicle*, 10-11-1947

<sup>1</sup> The members of the Burmese delegation to the Asian Regional Conference of the International Labour Organization met Gandhiji in the afternoon. The delegation was led by U Win, High Commissioner for Burma in India.

<sup>2</sup> The Burmese Constituent Assembly, elected in April 1947, had resolved in favour of complete independence. A treaty of agreement was signed between Britain and Burma in London on October 17, 1947, under which Burma was to leave the Commonwealth and become a sovereign republic in January 1948. The Burma Independence Bill was passed by the House of Commons on November 14, 1947.

<sup>3</sup> Winston Churchill, Leader of the Conservative Opposition, announcing his party’s decision to vote against the Burma Independence Bill had declared in the House of Commons on November 5, that “the bloody welter” which had already begun in India would soon begin in Burma and said “these horrors and disasters must for ever haunt the consciences of the principal actors in this tragedy.”

<sup>4</sup> In January-February 1902, March 1915 and March 1929. The source however has “four times”.

## 235. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,  
November 8, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

Will you fulfil the primary condition that you will not harbour any feeling of anger or revenge against the persons who are raising the objection and sit in silence and concentration till the end of the prayer?<sup>1</sup>

I have received a letter from a Sikh friend. He has said that he always attends the prayer meeting and likes doing so. He appreciates the spirit of tolerance in the prayer, especially my comments about the *Granthsaheb*, *Sukhmani*<sup>2</sup>, *Japji*, etc. He writes to say that if I select some portions from the Sikh scriptures included in the *Bhajanavali* and have a daily recitation of them during the prayer, it will have a great effect on the Sikhs. He feels that he can say this on behalf of the entire Sikh community. He says that he is ready to read out those selected passages to me. I agree with his suggestion. But I would take a decision only after I have heard some *bhajans* from that friend. He must get an appointment from Brajkishan for that purpose.

I had once stated that cotton, calico, needles, etc., should be made available to the refugees so that they can make their own quilts.<sup>3</sup> Thereby we can save millions of rupees and the refugees can easily have something to cover themselves. In response to my appeal the cotton merchants of Bombay have written to me that they are ready to supply these items. In this way, the refugees will rise in their own eyes and will learn the first lesson of healthy co-operation. The number of textile mills in Delhi itself is by no means small. There are quite a few mills in the city. Still, I welcome this gift from Bombay, because I do not want to place any unnecessary burden on voluntary donors. The larger the number of persons willing to give charity, the better will it be for the refugees and the country. Hence, I hope that the cotton merchants of Bombay would quickly send as many bales as they can.

<sup>1</sup> The people, including four objectors, unanimously assured Gandhiji that they would observe silence and the prayer was held without any obstruction.

<sup>2</sup> A part of the *Granthsaheb*

<sup>3</sup> Vide "Speech at Prayer Meeting", 12-10-1947.

Such co-operation from the rich would lessen the burden of the Government. Now that we are a free nation, every individual can willingly participate in the activities of the Government of the country, provided he fulfils his duties by realizing the full responsibilities of the citizen of an independent country.

I have no doubt that when the bales of cotton arrive I will be able to persuade the mill-owners to supply enough chintz for quilts. The talk about bales of cotton reminds me of cloth-control. In my opinion, it is possible and also easy for the people of India to manufacture enough khadi by hand. The only condition is that sufficient cotton should be available in the country. I do not know if there ever was a famine of cotton in the country. We can never have scarcity of cotton, because we always produce more cotton than the country needs. Tens of thousands of bales of cotton are being exported from the country. Still, there is never a shortage of cotton for the textile mills of the country. I have already drawn your attention to the fact that it is possible to have within the country all the implements necessary for carding, spinning and weaving by hand. At the same time, there are also people in large numbers wanting to work. Hence, I can only say that it is nothing but inertia which makes people think that there is scarcity of cloth in the country. Today nobody in the country wants cloth-control—neither the mills, nor the mill-hands nor the buying public. Controls are increasing the band of lazy people and thus ruining the country. Such people, for want of any work, are a constant source of mischief.

If the refugees are determined to occupy themselves in useful work, they would first make their own quilts, and then all—women and men—would spend their time in ginning, carding, spinning, weaving, etc. The energy generated by the co-operative effort of so many lakhs of refugees would electrify the country. They would inspire the people to spend all their spare time in growing more food and producing khadi in their own homes. Let it be remembered that if the cotton, instead of being packed into bales, is directly made available to the spinners one process would be saved. The cotton would not be damaged, carding would become easy and the seeds would be saved for the villages.

Lady Mountbatten had come to meet me. She has become an

angel of mercy. She keeps visiting both the Dominions,<sup>1</sup> meets the refugees in different camps, looks up the sick and distressed people and tries to console them as much as she can. When she paid a visit to the Kurukshetra camp, people asked her when I was expected to go there. All of them were so keen to see me that Lady Mountbatten was convinced that I should undoubtedly go there. I assured her that she was justified in anticipating my visit. To tell you the truth, I have made arrangements to visit Panipat, where both the Hindus and the Muslims are anxious to see me. I had decided to combine the visits to Kurukshetra and Panipat. But now I have come to know that I cannot combine the two. Hence, it has become necessary to postpone my visit to Kurukshetra until after the forthcoming meeting of the A. I. C. C.<sup>2</sup> Nonetheless, it has been suggested that even though it is difficult to arrange for loudspeakers in a sprawling camp like Kurukshetra, it should not be difficult to talk to them over the radio, provided the necessary speakers are installed in the camp. If such an arrangement is made, I would be able to speak to them on Tuesday or Wednesday and would go and see them later. In the mean time, I hope to complete my visit to the Panipat camp.

[From Hindi]

*Prarthana Pravachan*—II, pp. 57-60

<sup>1</sup> As Chairman of the United Council for Relief and Welfare

<sup>2</sup> Scheduled to be held on November 15 and 16

### 236. HARIJANS IN RATLAM

The following is the text<sup>1</sup> of the Ratlam Proclamation to which I referred in one of my postprayer speeches.<sup>2</sup> It was issued on Vijayadashami day, i.e., the 2nd September,<sup>3</sup> 1947.

1. All State temples be thrown open to Harijans for *darshan* and *pooja* just as they are open to any one of my caste Hindu subjects.

2. All existing public wells and wells constructed by the State hereinafter, tanks, water taps, etc., shall be invariably open to Harijans.

3. All public places such as dharmashalas, hotels, restaurants, shops, theatres, cinema houses which have not been for the exclusive use of any one section of the community before the passing of this Order shall be thrown open to Harijans and they shall be given the same facility or service as any other caste Hindu is given. They are hereby allowed to make use of public conveyances licensed by Government or the Municipality.

4. Harijans shall have unrestricted admission to State educational institutions and no tuition fees shall be charged from them.

5. There shall be no restriction in the matter of recruitment of Harijans to State services.

6. All State public offices, courts, hospitals and other State buildings are open to Harijans for entry.

7. There shall be no restriction on the wearing of ornaments and good clothes, the taking out of processions and performance of ceremonies by Harijans.

8. There shall be no restriction on Harijans owning lands and houses in any part of towns and villages of the State.

*Harijan*, 9-11-1947

<sup>1</sup> Of which only extracts are reproduced here

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "Speech at Prayer Meeting", 26-10-1947.

<sup>3</sup> Obviously a slip. Vijayadashami fell on October 24.

## 237. FUTILITY OF ARMS

Advocate [T. R.] Venkatarama Shastri of Madras sends me some relevant verses from the *Mahabharata* with his brief comment. They are reproduced below with his comment and English translation. I have omitted from the comment what was meant only for me.

Having won the great Mahabharata War and attained his supreme end, Yudhishtira (धर्मर्त्मा), deeply affected by the death of those near and dear and by the general havoc and destruction wrought by force of arms, reflected thus:

आत्मानमात्मना हत्वा किं धर्मफलमाप्नुमः ॥  
धिगस्तु क्षात्रमाचारं धिगस्तु बलमौरसम् ।  
धिगस्तु चार्थं येनेमाम् आपदं गमिता वयम् ॥  
साधु क्षमा दमः शौचम् अविरोधो विमत्सरः ।  
अहिंसा सत्यवचनं नित्यानि वनचारिणाम् ॥  
वयं तु लोभान्मोहाच्च दंभं मानं च संश्रिताः ।  
इमामवस्थां संप्राप्ताः राज्यक्लेशबुभुक्षया ॥

“Having destroyed ourselves by our own hands, what righteous result can we obtain?

Fie upon military practice,

Fie upon physical force,

Fie upon the purpose in pursuit of which we have been led into this calamity.

Good is forgiveness, self-restraint, clean life, no enmity, no quarrel, ahimsa and true speech—virtues obligatory to forest-dwellers (retired from life's conflicts).

But we in our greed and folly inspired by vanity and pride, have landed ourselves in this situation, in our desire to enjoy a kingdom's sorrowful burden.”

Thus wailed Yudhishtira (firm-in-battle) who was also Dharmaputra (son of righteousness).

The ideal of realizing both freedom and justice under equal laws is the ideal for countries like India—and that is, or should be, the ideal of the world.

NEW DELHI, November 9, 1947

*Harijan*, 9-11-1947

238. LETTER TO DEVPRAKASH NAYYAR

NEW DELHI,  
November 5/9, 1947

CHI. DEV,

I have your letter. I have sent the letter for Sushila to Wardha. She will return from there after the 10th instant. She might come even earlier. Chand<sup>1</sup> will accompany her. It will be only good if you turn into the type of soldier you write about. Then all your anguish will vanish. You did well in not going to Wardha. Now even Dr. Gilder and Dr. Jivaraj Mehta. . . .

I had to leave the letter unfinished as some work had cropped up. I am now completing it on the 9th. I have seen the X-ray too. All say that there is nothing the matter with the heart. There is a telegram now from Sushila to send over Chand's mother. Nobody here knows where her mother has gone. She did not leave any address with me while leaving. Chand stayed on because Sushila has stayed on. I do not know the reason behind it. Whatever it be, there is no cause for worry.

I think I have answered the rest of the points. I have had a talk with Anugrahbabu too.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Hindi original. Documents relating to Gandhiji.  
Courtesy: National Archives of India

<sup>1</sup> Chandrani, whom the addressee married later

239. *LETTER TO LORD MOUNTBATTEN*

BIRLA HOUSE,  
NEW DELHI,  
*November 9, 1947*

DEAR LORD MOUNTBATTEN,

This little thing<sup>1</sup> is made out of doubled yarn of my own spinning. The knitting was done by a Punjabi girl who was trained by Abha's husband, my grandson.<sup>2</sup> Lady Mountbatten knows Abha. Please give the bride<sup>3</sup> and the bridegroom<sup>4</sup> this with my blessings, with the wish that they would have a long and happy life of service of men.<sup>5</sup>

I hope you will have a happy time and safe return according to your time-table.

*Yours sincerely,*  
M. K. GANDHI

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal. Also *Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase*, Vol. II, p. 514

<sup>1</sup> A table-cloth

<sup>2</sup> Kanu Gandhi

<sup>3</sup> Princess Elizabeth and Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, nephew of Lord Mountbatten

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>5</sup> Lord and Lady Mountbatten personally delivered the gift to Princess Elizabeth. It was prominently exhibited among the wedding gifts at St. James'. On his return, Lord Mountbatten conveyed to Gandhiji a personal message of appreciation and thanks from the Princess and the Prince consort. The Princess, Mountbatten reported, was extremely touched that Gandhiji should have made this very fine gesture to them and she said that she always intended to keep it in a place of safety as a precious souvenir and not to use it as a tea-cloth as she valued its historic association.

240. LETTER TO DR. B. C. ROY

November 9, 1947

DEAR DR. ROY,

Nowsher Ali<sup>1</sup> should not have convened his conference at this juncture. He should have awaited the result of S[uhrawardy]'s step.<sup>2</sup> Having called it, let him not criticize the M[uslim] Leaguers but adopt a constructive line. My suggestion to the nationalists to join the League was meant to strengthen them. If they could not be accepted as Congressmen they could not have joined.

I have read your American thesis. It is good. Correctly represents my views to the extent that it goes into them. You can now enforce the law of love in your dealings with the Muslim friends including S[uhrawardy] and guide them along the right path.

As to the zonal Congress branches, await the result of the A. I. C. C. meeting. It has to give guidance.

BAPU

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

<sup>1</sup> The former Speaker of the Bengal Legislative Assembly. He had convened a conference of the Nationalist Muslims at Calcutta on November 9, which called upon the Muslims to join the Congress and make it stronger in order to keep reactionary forces down. It characterized the move of H. S. Suhrawardy as "disruptive".

<sup>2</sup> H. S. Suhrawardy had convened a conference of Muslims in the Indian Union at Calcutta on November 9 and 10. It adopted a resolution that the solidarity of Muslims should not be impaired so that they might work as a whole for the welfare of the State to which they belonged as well as safeguard their rights and liberties. It urged upon the Governments of both the Dominions to settle their differences by peaceful methods and demanded that both the Governments should guarantee fullest protection to the minorities.

## 241. LETTER TO HARJIVAN KOTAK

NEW DELHI,  
November 9, 1947

CHI. HARJIVAN,

I was very glad to see your handwriting. I learn through friends all about you from time to time. What is joy or grief to one who knows that life and death are one and the same thing? I am glad about your decision. Ramanama alone is the unfailing remedy. All else is vain effort. Fasting is an aid to Ramanama. Live on without worry or pass out free of care.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

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

## 242. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER<sup>1</sup>

November 9, 1947

It seems the Kathiawar issue is becoming more and more complicated. I just cannot get out of this place. I sometimes feel that a new and unique India may be born out of this bloodshed that is increasing day by day, because the *Gita* says, “For whenever Right declines and Wrong prevails, then O Bharata, I come to birth”.<sup>2</sup> This verse gives me a lot of consolation.

Still, how strange it is that I learn from a leader of Kathiawar, who is a votary of non-violence and can be counted among its ardent followers, that it is not possible to do without arms in a small State like Junagadh.<sup>3</sup>

[From Gujarati]

*Dilhiman Gandhiji*—I, p. 237

<sup>1</sup> The English original is not available.

<sup>2</sup> *Bhagavadgita*, iv, 7

<sup>3</sup> The Nawab of Junagadh after consenting to accede to India, revoked his decision, fled to Pakistan and executed an Instrument of Accession on September 15 whereby the State was declared to have acceded to Pakistan. The Government of India refused to accept the accession of Junagadh to Pakistan in the circumstances in which it was made.

The Junagadh State subjects, resident in Bombay, at a meeting held on September 25, challenged the decision of the Nawab of Junagadh and set up a Provisional Government led by Shamaldas Gandhi. The Provisional Government was empowered to take all steps necessary for Junagadh’s formal accession to India.

### 243. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

*November 9, 1947*

I appreciate generosity. But if generosity admits of no restraints it leads to extravagance. Extravagance is a vice.

I have endless work here. I get utterly exhausted by the end of the day. There is a constant stream of visitors. How can I refuse to listen to their sorrows? Very often my own grief becomes overwhelming. Is this what our truth and non-violence have come to? Still, I retain my faith. That is why I derive solace from the dictum that “adversity is the mother of progress”.

[From Gujarati]

*Dilhiman Gandhiji—I, p. 239*

### 244. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

*November 9, 1947*

I shudder at the thought of the condition of thousands of refugees in the severe cold here. It shows how much poison there is in us. Death is bound to overtake us who have been born. What can be better for us than to die at the hands of our own brothers? I cannot convince the people of this. It would be enough if I could demonstrate it in my own life.

[From Gujarati]

*Dilhiman Gandhiji—I, p. 240*

## 245. LETTER TO MAHESH DUTT MISHRA

*November 9, 1947*

CHI. MAHESH,

I have your letter. If you can be spared from there, come over here. I am so busy that I do not know how much time I can give you.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 6724. Also C. W. 4468. Courtesy: Mahesh Dutt Mishra

## 246. SILENCE-DAY NOTE

*November 9, 1947*

I see that the people of India are terror-stricken. Out of sheer fright they do not come out with the truth. I had the same experience in Noakhali. Similarly women in the Punjab who have been abducted are also terrorstricken. Mridulabehn<sup>1</sup> is working hard for them. Let us see what can be done. I will go to Panipat tomorrow. Maulana Saheb and Rajkumari are accompanying me. . . .<sup>2</sup>

[From Hindi]

*Dilhiman Gandhiji*—I, pp. 239-40

<sup>1</sup> Daughter of Ambalal Sarabhai

<sup>2</sup> Omission as in the source

247. NOTE TO U.P. MUSLIM LEAGUE MEMBERS<sup>1</sup>

November 9, 1947

I shall certainly make inquiries. Pantji<sup>2</sup> has promised that the Government would make every effort to protect each and every Muslim in the U.P. But shall I venture a suggestion? If you desire complete protection for Muslims and wish to serve your brethren, you should show sympathy towards the Hindus who have come from Pakistan. You should serve them in their camps and convince them that you are their brothers. I must say that I have not yet come across a single Muslim who would do this. We shall discuss this matter at leisure some other time.

[From Gujarati]

*Dilhiman Gandhiji*—I, p. 240

248. NOTE TO MANU GANDHI

November 9, 1947

We will be saved a lot of botheration if we cease to think of how we appear to others and concentrate on what is beneficial to us. Knowingly or unknowingly, we resort to many artificial aids to please or appear good to others. As a result, we become miserable. The same thing applies to this hat.<sup>3</sup> If I care for appearances, I will have to face the sun and damage my health for no reason. Do you understand this? Well, I have taught you a good lesson after many days. If we analyse it minutely, our barbaric behaviour and Hindu-Muslim tension are also due to our preoccupation with how we appear to others. A man's thoughts play a major role in his life. That is why, as you also know, the proverb says: "As one's food, so one's belching; as one's thoughts, so one's deeds. . . ."<sup>4</sup>

[From Gujarati]

*Dilhiman Gandhiji*—I, p. 241

<sup>1</sup> The visitors had complained that adequate protection was not being provided to the Muslims in the U. P.

<sup>2</sup> The source has "Panditji".

<sup>3</sup> Manu Gandhi had joked about the funny appearance of Gandhiji when he wore a Noakhali hat to protect himself from the sun.

<sup>4</sup> Gandhiji stopped here as Jawaharlal Nehru came to see him.

## 249. NOTE TO AMRIT KAUR

[November 9, 1947]<sup>1</sup>

He defended himself through and through. He was docile but claimed utter innocence of all wrongdoing.

From the original: C. W. 4196. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G. N. 7832

## 250. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING<sup>2</sup>

NEW DELHI,

November 9, 1947

I regret that as I have to go to Panipat tomorrow, I had to take silence early today so as to be able to speak to the Hindus and the Muslims of Panipat on reaching there. I hope to return to Delhi in time for the prayer tomorrow evening when I shall be able to speak. The newspapers wrongly report that I am going to Kurukshetra tomorrow. I said definitely that I did intend to go to the Kurukshetra camp though not before the conclusion of the forthcoming A. I. C. C. meeting. I expect to speak to them through the radio probably on Wednesday at a time to be announced in due course.

Diwali will be on us in a few days. A sister who is herself a refugee writes:<sup>3</sup>

Whilst I admire this sister and others like her, I cannot help saying that she and those who think like her are wrong. It is well known that a family which is overtaken by sorrow abstains from participation in festivities according to capacity. It is an illustration of the doctrine of oneness on a very limited scale. Break through the crust of limitation and India becomes one family. If all limitations vanish, the whole world becomes one family, which it really is. Not to cross these bars is to become callous to all fine feelings which make a man. We must not be self-centred or being falsely sentimental ignore

<sup>1</sup> The note is written on the back of a telegram dated November 8, 1947. Gandhiji observed silence on November 9.

<sup>2</sup> Since Gandhiji was observing silence, his written speech was read out after the prayers.

<sup>3</sup> The letter is not reproduced here. The correspondent had suggested that forgetting the sorrows of the past, the coming Diwali, being the first in independent India, should be celebrated by all.

facts. My advice to abstain from the rejoicings<sup>1</sup> is broadbased on many solid considerations. The refugee problem is there, affecting lakhs of Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs. There is as well want (albeit man-made) of food and clothing. The deeper cause is dishonesty of the many who can mould public opinion, obstinate refusal of sufferers to learn from their sufferings and extensive inhumanity of man to man. I can see in this misery no cause for joy. A resolute and wise refusal to take part in festivities will be an incentive to introspection and self-purification. Let us not do anything which will throw away a blessing which has been won after hard toil and tribulation.

I must now refer to a visit of friends from French India<sup>2</sup> during the week. They complained that what I had said regarding what was claimed to be a satyagraha in Chandranagore,<sup>3</sup> was misused to suppress the aspirations of the people in French India for the fullest measure of autonomy under the Indian Union, whilst retaining at the same time, the wholesome influence of French culture. They also told me that, as under the British Government, there were, in French India, those who might be likened to fifth-columnists, who, in order to serve their selfish purpose, co-operated with the French authorities who, in their turn, were aiming at suppressing the natural aspirations of the inhabitants of French India. I would be very sorry indeed if the account given by the visitors from French India were accurate. Anyway, my opinion is quite emphatic. It is not possible for the inhabitants of these small foreign settlements<sup>4</sup> to remain under servility in the face of the millions of their countrymen who have become free from the British rule. I am surprised that my friendly act towards Chandranagore could be distorted by anyone to suggest that I could ever countenance an inferior status in the little foreign settlements in India. I hope, therefore, that the information given to me has no foundation in fact, and that the great French nation would never identify itself with the suppression of people, whether black or brown, in India or elsewhere.

*Harijan*, 16-11-1947

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Speech at Prayer Meeting", 9-8-1947.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "Message for Citizens of Chandranagore", 8-11-1947.

<sup>3</sup> *Vide* "Speech at Prayer Meeting", 17-8-1947.

<sup>4</sup> *Viz.*, Goa, Daman, Diu, Mahe, Pondicherry and Chandranagore

251. LETTER TO J. C. KUMARAPPA

NEW DELHI,  
November 10, 1947

MY DEAR KU.<sup>1</sup>,

You mean meeting in New Delhi if I am alive till then. In N. D., I cannot think of any other item than the policy of the A. I. V. I. A. in view of the existing situation.

BAPU

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

252. NOTE TO MANU GANDHI

November 10, 1947

Only on condition that you will not over-exert yourself.<sup>2</sup> Of course I would very much like you to do so. Your handwriting will improve and my slips if any can also be corrected. But bear in mind that if you over-exert yourself in order to fulfil your desire I will order you to give it up. I see violence in doing a thing like that. The work which becomes a burden or for which we have to overstrain ourselves at the cost of our health amounts to physical violence. If that happens it is better to give it up.

[From Gujarati]

*Dilhiman Gandhiji*—I, p. 244

<sup>1</sup> Secretary, All-India Village Industries Association

<sup>2</sup> The addressee had expressed the wish to keep with herself the original writings in Gandhiji's hand and send the copies made by her to the persons concerned.

## 253. A LETTER

November 10, 1947

While each province develops and its regional language becomes the medium of instruction, each province will still remain an indivisible part of India. Since there will be crores of students to derive the benefit of education and as they look upon the whole of India as their motherland, they will need a language commonly understood by students from all provinces. In addition to the regional language, there will be the need for a language which has wide currency. Hindi or Hindustani alone can play this role. Hence all students should learn it in both the scripts as a compulsory second-language.

[From Gujarati]

*Dilhiman Gandhiji*—I, p. 245

## 254. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,

November 10, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

If we too become servants of God alone like Mirabai, all our troubles would be over.<sup>1</sup> You would realize the significance of this after you have heard what I am going to say. You must have read about Junagadh in the newspapers.<sup>2</sup> I am satisfied after receiving two telegrams from Rajkot that the news published in the Press is absolutely correct. The Prime Minister of Junagadh, Shah Nawaz Bhutto, and the Nawab are in Karachi. The Deputy Prime Minister, Major Harvey Jones, is in Junagadh. They are all responsible for Junagadh acceding to the Indian Union. From this you have a right to infer that Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah also has given his sanction in this

<sup>1</sup> Gandhiji was referring to the *bhajan* by Mirabai, *Mhane chakar rakhoji*, sung during the prayer.

<sup>2</sup> According to a Press communique issued by the Government of India “the Regional Commissioner of Rajkot was approached . . . by Major Harvey Jones. . . with a letter from the Junagadh Dewan, appealing to the Government of India to take over the Junagadh administration. This request was made in order to save the State from complete administrative break-down.

The Government of India took over the administration of the Junagadh State on November 9. The Indian troops entered Junagadh city at 6 p. m.

matter. If that is so, you can come to the conclusion that the troubles in Kashmir and Hyderabad<sup>1</sup> would also be over. And I would even say that the trend now would be towards peace. Both the Dominions would develop friendly relations and would work in mutual co-operation. I do not think about the Qaid-e-Azam as the Governor-General. As the Governor-General the Qaid-e-Azam has no legal right at all to interfere in the affairs of Pakistan. In that capacity he is in the same position as that of Lord Mountbatten in India who is only the constitutional Governor-General. Lord Mountbatten has gone for the wedding of a person who is more than a son to him and who is getting married to the future queen of England. He could go there only after taking permission from his Cabinet and would be coming back by November 24, 1947. Hence in my opinion Jinnah is the maker of the present Muslim League and nothing can be done in Pakistan without his knowledge and sanction. That is why I feel that if Jinnah has a hand in Junagadh's accession to the Indian Union, it is a happy augury.

I wish to tell you something about my visit to Panipat. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad accompanied me during my visit. Rajkumari was also expected to accompany me, but she was at the Government House and I could not wait beyond 10.30 according to my watch. I am glad I went to Panipat. I saw the Muslim patients in the hospital there.<sup>2</sup> Some of them have been badly wounded. But they are being given the best possible attention, because Rajkumari has sent there four doctors, nurses and medical assistants. After that we met the representatives of the Muslims, local Hindus and the refugees. More than 20,000 refugees are reported to be in Panipat. We were told every day more and more refugees are pouring in. The Deputy Commissioner and the Police Superintendent see great danger in this trend. I am glad to say that these officers have earned great praise from the Hindus as well as the Muslims. And, as for the refugees, they have nothing to complain. They are satisfied with them.

We could also meet the refugees who had gathered near the

<sup>1</sup> The Nizam wanted "Hyderabad to be an independent sovereign state" and refused to accede to India. Prolonged discussions between the Government of India and the Nizam were conducted by their emissaries. The Nizam utilized the interregnum provided by the negotiations to build up his armed strength by importing weapons from Europe.

<sup>2</sup> Gandhiji spent a few minutes with every patient, occasionally covering a patient properly with the sheet.

Municipal House. The refugees had to undergo terrible hardships in Pakistan and are still suffering the same hardships in the disorganized life at Panipat. Some of them are living on railway platforms, and quite a few of them in the open, right under the sky. Nevertheless, I was very happy to notice that there was no anger in their hearts or on their faces. They were very happy that we had been there. I felt the authorities had been quite callous in collecting so many refugees in Panipat without giving advance notice to the Deputy Commissioner and the people concerned. The officials at Panipat came to know about the exact number of refugees only when the trains arrived at the station. This is most unfortunate. There are women, children and aged people among the refugees at Panipat. I was told that among the refugees there are also women who had delivered babies on the railway platform.

All this is happening in East Punjab where Dr. Gopichand<sup>1</sup> is the Chief Minister. Dr. Gopichand is my co-worker. I have great respect for him. I have known him for many years as a capable organizer having great influence on the Punjabis. He has done considerable work for the Harijan Sevak Sangh, the All-India Spinners's Association and the All-India Village Industries Association. I should not think that the task in East Punjab is beyond him. But, if Panipat is the sample of his efficiency, it is a matter of great shame for his Government. Why were so many refugees brought to Panipat without any notice? Why are the arrangements for accommodating them so inadequate? Why should not the officers be informed in advance as to who and how many refugees are being sent to Panipat? Along with this I have also received the information yesterday that there are about three lakh Muslims in Gurgaon district who have left their houses in panic. They are lying in the open on both sides of the road hoping to cover a distance of 300 miles along with their women, children and cattle in this biting cold of the Punjab. I do not believe this story. I think there is some mistake in what my friends have told me. I still hope that this information is incorrect or is a gross exaggeration. But what I saw at Panipat has shaken my dis-belief in such reports. None the less, I hope that Dr. Gopichand is Cabinet would take a warning while there is still time and would not rest till proper arrangements are made for looking after the refugees. Such arrangements can be made only be foresight and extreme caution.

[From Hindi]

*Prarthana Pravachan*—II, pp. 63-8

<sup>1</sup> Gopichand Bhargava

### 255. *WHEN A BLESSING BECOMES A CURSE*

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

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

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

NEW DELHI, November 11, 1947

*Harijan*, 23-11-1947

### 256. *A PSYCHOLOGICAL EXPLANATION*

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

Though because of my ignorance I am hesitant, yet I venture to send you an idea that seems to me not only to explain with perhaps less moral blame a part of the recent communal violence in India but also to offer hope for the future.

It seems to me probable that much of this violence is an expression not so much of inter-communal suspicion and hatred, but rather, and more deeply and originally, of the long-pent-up resentments of the masses because of their oppression. The oppression was not only by foreign political rule but by foreign modern social, economic and financial ways which are contrary to the ancient habits of dharma which were a very part of the nature of the masses. By

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

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

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

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

Though many psychologists have recommended a study of psychology, I am sorry I have not been able, for want of time, to study the subject. Mr. Gregg's letter does not mend matters for me. It does not fill me with any impelling enthusiasm for undertaking the study. Mr. Gregg gives an explanation which mystifies the mind instead of clearing it. "Hope for the future" I have never lost and never will, because it is embedded in my undying faith in non-violence. What has, however, clearly happened in my case is the discovery that in all probability there is a vital defect in my technique of the working of

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

NEW DELHI, November 11, 1947

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

### 257. LETTER TO R. B. GREGG

November 11, 1947

MY DEAR GOVIND,

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

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

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

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* the preceding item.

<sup>2</sup> Addressee's wife

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

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

Love to both of you.

BAPU

Enclosure: 1

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

From a photostat: C. W. 4524

## 258. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

November 11, 1947

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

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

[From Gujarati]

*Dilhiman Gandhiji*—I, p. 256

<sup>1</sup> Shamaldas Gandhi, son of Gandhiji's elder brother, Lakshmidas Gandhi

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

In response to a request from the Dewan of Junagadh, the Indian troops entered Junagadh city and the Government of India took over its administration on November 9. *Vide* also "Speech at Prayer Meeting", 11-11-1947.

<sup>3</sup> Omission as in the source

259. *FRAGMENT OF LETTER TO A WOMAN WORKER*<sup>1</sup>

*November 11, 1947*

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

[From Gujarati]

*Dilhiman Gandhiji*—I, p. 257

260. *EXTRACT FROM A LETTER*

*November 11, 1947*

. . . <sup>2</sup> Who knows, my ahimsa might be tested at the fag end my life. A proverb says that

‘a dying flame burns the brighter before it burns itself out.’

Maybe my end is approaching. I am fully prepared. Everyone should be prepared. I write all this to explain to you what passes in my mind as I see the way things are going, as I see the explosion of

<sup>1</sup> The addressee had reported lack of enthusiasm among villagers regarding education of their children.

<sup>2</sup> Omission as in the source

violence and the disappearance of human kindness. Try to understand this if you can; otherwise just watch whatever unfolds itself.

[From Gujarati]

*Dilhiman Gandhiji*—I, p. 257

### 261. LETTER TO SAHASRABUDDHE

NEW DELHI,  
*November 11, 1947*

BHAI SAHASRABUDDHE,

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

You must have recovered fully by now.

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

## 262. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

*November 11, 1947*

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

I told you yesterday that the Provisional Government had entered the State of Junagadh at the request of its Prime Minister<sup>1</sup> and Deputy Prime Minister<sup>2</sup>. I was surprised as well as happy to tell you this because I had not expected that the struggle which was being carried on behalf of the people of Junagadh would have such a happy ending.<sup>3</sup> I had also expressed the fear that if the request of the officials of Junagadh did not have the sanction from the Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah<sup>4</sup>, it would not be proper to feel happy about it right now. Hence, you would be amazed and distressed to know that the officials of Pakistan have protested against the Provisional Government assuming power on behalf of the people of Junagadh. They have demanded “withdrawal of Indian troops from the State territory and relinquishment of the administration to the rightful Government and stoppage of violence and invasion of the State by people from the Indian Union”. They also say that neither the Nawab nor the Dewan of Junagadh has any legal authority to negotiate permanent or provisional settlement with the Indian Union. According to Pakistan the action of the Government of India is “a clear violation of the Pakistan territory and a breach of international law”.

Looking at the Press reports that have appeared yesterday, I find that there was neither a breach of international law in this matter, nor any operation by the Union Government to establish control over the

<sup>1</sup> Shah Nawaz Bhutto

<sup>2</sup> Major Harvey Jones

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

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

<sup>4</sup> Governor-General of Pakistan

State. As far as I can see, there is nothing illegal in the campaign carried on by the Provisional Government on behalf of the people of Junagadh. It is true that the Union Government sent military help for the safety of the whole of Kathiawar at the request of the rulers of Kathiawar. For that reason, I find nothing illegal in this whole action. As against this; whatever the Dewan of Junagadh did by publicly changing his stand was illegal. I look at the whole situation like this—the Nawab of Junagadh had no right at all to accede to Pakistan without the consent of his people, of which I am told 85% are Hindus.<sup>1</sup> The sacred hill of Girnar and all the temples on it are part of Junagadh. The Hindus have spent a lot of money on those temples and thousands of pilgrims go to the Girnar on pilgrimage from all parts of India. In free India, the whole country belongs to the people. Not even the smallest portion of it is the private property of the Princes. They can retain their claim only by becoming trustees of the people and that is why they would be required to give evidence of popular support for every action of theirs. True, the Princes have not yet realized that they are the trustees and representatives of the people. And it is also true that with the exception of the alert subjects of some States, the people of all States have not yet realized themselves as the true rulers of their States. But that does not diminish the value of the principle I have laid down.

Hence, only the people of a particular State have a legal right to accede to one of the Unions. If the Provisional Government does not represent the people of Junagadh at any stage, it is merely a group of people who are unjustly occupying seats of power in the State and it should be driven out by both the Dominions. If any ruler joins any of the Unions in his personal capacity, the Dominion cannot stand before the world to justify his action. From this point of view, I think that the Nawab's accession has been baseless from the very beginning till it is proved that the people of the State have given their consent to the accession by the Nawab. The dispute as to which Union Junagadh would finally accede to can be resolved only by taking public opinion, that is, by referendum. This task should be properly carried

<sup>1</sup> The Nawab of Junagadh after consenting to accede to India, had revoked his decision, fled to Pakistan and executed an Instrument of Accession on September 15 whereby the State was declared to have acceded to Pakistan. The Government of India refused to accept the accession of Junagadh to Pakistan in the circumstances in which it was made.

out and should not involve violence or show of violence. The stand taken by the Government of Pakistan and now also by the Prime Minister of Junagadh, has created a strange situation. Who was to decide whether Pakistan was in the right or the Union Government? One cannot even think that it can be decided by an appeal to the sword. The only honourable way is to decide the matter through arbitration. We can find many impartial individuals in the country itself but, if the parties concerned cannot agree to arbitration by Indians, I for one will have no objection to any impartial person from any part of the world.

Whatever I have said about Junagadh equally applies to Kashmir<sup>1</sup> and Hyderabad<sup>2</sup>. Neither the Maharaja of Kashmir nor the Nizam of Hyderabad has any authority to accede to either Union without the consent of his people. As far as I know, this point was clarified in the case of Kashmir.<sup>3</sup> If it had been only the Maharaja who had wanted to accede to the Indian Union, I could never support such an act. The Union Government agreed to the accession for the time being because both the Maharaja and Sheikh Abdullah<sup>4</sup>, who is the representative of the people of Jammu and Kashmir, wanted it. Sheikh Abdullah came forward because he claims to represent not only the Muslims but the entire masses in Kashmir.

I have heard people talking in whispers that Kashmir could be

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

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

<sup>3</sup> The Government of India, while accepting the accession of Jammu and Kashmir to India, had "made it clear to the Maharaja that, as soon as the invaders have been driven from the soil of Kashmir, the people of the State should decide the question of accession".

<sup>4</sup> Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah (1905-82), President, All-India States' People's Conference; President, Jammu and Kashmir National Conference. After Kashmir's accession to the Indian Union he was sworn in Head of the Emergency Administration in Jammu and Kashmir on October 31, 1947.

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

[From Hindi]

*Prarthana Pravachan—II*, pp. 66-9

### 263. LETTER TO MORARJI DESAI

*November 12, 1947*

BHAI MORARJI<sup>1</sup>,

I am dictating this letter to you at 4 in the morning. Dr. Dinshaw and Jehangir Patel are at present with me. We sat together and came to the conclusion that Dr. Dinshaw should earn as much as he needs for his maintenance by charging fees for the nature-cure treatment he offers outside the Trust<sup>2</sup> formed in Poona. There was a time when we had thought of paying Dr. Dinshaw his maintenance allowance out of the Trust funds. But it was something Dr. Dinshaw could not bring himself to accept. Then it was thought that he should engage himself in some other occupation and earn enough for his maintenance. That also is not possible at present. He should therefore accept fees from the townspeople, offering them treatment in his own style and practise nature cure as he conceives it. He should do it either by expanding his own clinic which he runs in Bombay or with the assistance of the hospital unit at Purandar. From a broader point of view, between the two I would prefer Bombay to Purandar. Neither institution has a place for nature cure as I conceive it. It can be practised only with village background and nowhere but in a village. At the root of it lies the great question of changing individual life as well as social life. This Trust therefore must maintain its separate identity. If the treatment is meant for the townspeople it must have

<sup>1</sup> (b. 1896); Minister, Bombay, 1937-39 and 1946-51; Chief Minister of Bombay, 1952-56; Minister, Union Cabinet, 1956-58, 1958-62; Deputy Prime Minister, 1967-69; Prime Minister, 1977-79

<sup>2</sup> All-India Nature Cure Trust

Government's aid, without which nowadays no accommodation can be had. In Bombay extra floors will be required where Dr. Dinshaw carries on his practice, or he will have to have another building to meet his requirements. The point is that you should offer Dr. Dinshaw the necessary accommodation in Purandar through a non-government source at a reasonable rent or cost without bestowing any special favour on him. The main consideration here could be nothing but service to the public. The rich can get nature-cure treatment also by paying for it. We can expect such accommodation for a person whom the Government regards as suitable. This letter will not be out of place if only the Government of Bombay could think about it from this point of view.

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

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

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

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Letter to Jagtap", 12-11-1947.

## 264. LETTER TO JEHANGIR PATEL

November 12, 1947

CHI. JEHANGIR,

I have read your letter carefully.

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

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

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

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

Love.

BAPU

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

## 265. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

November 12, 1947

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

[From Gujarati]

*Dilhiman Gandhiji*—I, p. 262

<sup>1</sup> Omission as in the source

266. *FRAGMENT OF A LETTER*

*November 12, 1947*

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

[From Gujarati]

*Dilhiman Gandhiji* — I, p. 262

267. *FRAGMENT OF A LETTER*

*November 12, 1947*

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

[From Gujarati]

*Dilhiman Gandhiji*—I, p. 262

<sup>1</sup> Wife of E. W. Aryanayakum; Joint-Secretary of Hindustani Talimi Sangh; Editor of *Nayee Talim*, an organ of the Hindustani Talimi Sangh

268. *LETTER TO D. B. JAGTAP*

*November 12, 1947*

BHAI JAGTAP,

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

etc., on the premises I am asking for. If you take all the land these expensive additions will be of no use to you. Now you may do whatever you think proper. You can have a further talk in this connection with Dr. Dinshaw and Jehangir.

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

### 269. A LETTER

*November 12, 1947*

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

[From Hindi]

*Dilhiman Gandhiji—I, p. 262*

### 270. TALK WITH MUSLIM STUDENTS

NEW DELHI,

*November 12, 1947*

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

[From Gujarati]

*Dilhiman Gandhiji—I, p. 263*

*271. BROADCAST TO REFUGEES AT KURUKSHETRA  
CAMP<sup>1</sup>*

*November 12, 1947*

MY SUFFERING BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

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

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

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

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

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

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

<sup>2</sup> The following two sentences are reproduced from *The Hindustan Times*.

<sup>3</sup> On September 13, 1931. *Vide* "Broadcast to America", 13-9-1931.

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

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

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

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

Now that all governments, whether central or provincial, belong to the people, it does not befit one to throw the blame on the other.

<sup>1</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru

<sup>2</sup> Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, Minister for Health in the Union Cabinet

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

<sup>4</sup> Earthen lamps

All must work together for the general good. I tell you this in order that you may realize your own responsibility also.

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

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

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

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

The response to my appeal for warm clothing and quilts and blankets<sup>2</sup> has been very good. People have responded well to the

<sup>1</sup> In April-May 1919

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "Speech at Prayer Meeting", 4-10-1947.

Sardar's<sup>1</sup> appeal too. Your share of these is also there. But if you quarrel among yourselves and some take more than their due, it will not be well with you. Your suffering is grave even now but wrong action will make it even worse.

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

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

<sup>1</sup> Vallabhbhai Patel, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister-in-charge, Home, States and Information and Broadcasting

## 272. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

November 12, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

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

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

With what a sad heart has Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru returned after seeing wounded Kashmir! He was unable to attend the Working Committee meeting yesterday and also this afternoon. He has brought some flowers from Baramula<sup>4</sup> for me. I always cherish such gifts of nature. But today loot, arson and bloodshed have spoiled the beauty of that lovely land. Jawaharlal had been to Jammu also. There too all is not well.

<sup>1</sup> According to the Gujarati calendar

<sup>2</sup> "Light thy heart and sweep out from there evil thoughts and anger." *Vide* "Ashram Bhajanavali", hymn 251, 13-12-1930.

<sup>3</sup> Ranchhod

<sup>4</sup> After a brutal attack by the raiders the town was recaptured by the Indian troops.

Sardar Patel had to go to Junagadh at the request of Shri Shamaldas Gandhi and Dhebarbhai<sup>1</sup> who had sought his advice. Both Jinnah and Bhutto are angry because they feel that the Indian Government has deceived them and is pressing Junagadh to accede to the Union.

It is the duty of everyone to banish hatred and suspicion from his heart in order to establish peace and goodwill in the country. If you do not feel the presence of God within you and do not forget your petty internal quarrels, success in Kashmir or Junagadh would prove futile. Diwali cannot be celebrated till you bring back all the Muslims who have fled in fear. Pakistan also would not survive if it does not do likewise with the Hindus and Sikhs who have run away from there.<sup>2</sup>

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

[From Hindi]

*Prarthana Pravachan—II*, pp. 69-71

<sup>1</sup> U.N. Dhebar (1905-77); organized Rajkot Mill Kamdar Mazdoor Sangh; Minister of Saurashtra, 1948, President, Indian National Congress, 1955-59; Chairman, Scheduled Tribe Areas Commission, 1960; elected to Lok Sabha, 1962; President of Bharatiya Adim Jati Sangh, 1962-64

<sup>2</sup> Gandhiji then referred to his visit to the Broadcasting House.

273. LETTER TO MANIBHAI B. DESAI

NEW DELHI,  
November 12, 1947

CHI. MANIBHAI,

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

I am glad that the inauguration is to be done by Kakasaheb<sup>1</sup>.

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

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

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

The division into nature cure, village uplift work and Ashram

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

<sup>2</sup> Dr. A. K. Bhagwat

<sup>3</sup> Balkrishna Bhawe, younger brother of Vinoba Bhawe

<sup>4</sup> The addressee was manager of the Nature Cure Clinic at Uruli Kanchan

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

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

Jehangir told me about everybody.

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

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

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

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

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

*Blessings from*

BAPU

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

<sup>1</sup> Jayakrishna P. Bhansali

<sup>2</sup> Prema Katak, Agent of Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial Trust, Maharashtra

## 274. NO INCONSISTENCY

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

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

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

*November 13, 1947*

*Harijan, 23-11-1947*

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Speech at Prayer Meeting", 23-7-1947.

275. *FRAGMENT OF A LETTER*

*November 13, 1947*

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

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

“The path is surrounded by thick darkness; will that arrest your step?”<sup>1</sup>

[From Gujarati]

*Dilhiman Gandhiji—I, p. 270*

<sup>1</sup> A Bengali song by Rabindranath Tagore

## 276. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

November 13, 1947

. . .<sup>1</sup> The restoration of peace in Calcutta was due to the Muslims there and the credit should go to them.<sup>2</sup> Suhrawardy and his co-workers had helped me there. The situation in Delhi is quite different. Here I don't find a single responsible Muslim who can approach the Hindus, if only to die, or whose word weighs with the Muslims. Maulana Saheb<sup>3</sup> and the nationalist Muslims have also lost this strength. Hence my work here is much more difficult than it was in Calcutta. I am doubtful whether I shall fulfil my vow of doing something here. But my other vow, that of dying, will certainly be fulfilled. For that I have not the least worry. May God take from me whatever work He intends me to do.

If all of you stay there and carry on constructive work, it will certainly have its impact. We had recognized the need for constructive work when we were slaves. We will need it many times more to transform swaraj into *surajya*<sup>4</sup>. Let not anyone think that the 18-point programme<sup>5</sup> is of no use now that we have attained freedom.

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

[From Gujarati]

*Dilhiman Gandhiji*—I, p. 271

<sup>1</sup> Omission as in the source

<sup>2</sup> At the instance of Muslim friends Gandhiji had prolonged his stay in Calcutta in August, 1947. He stayed with H. S. Suhrawardy, the ex-Chief Minister of Bengal, under a Muslim roof in a disturbed area and they went round together to establish harmony between the two communities.

<sup>3</sup> Abul Kalam Azad (1888-1958); President, All-India Khilafat Committee, 1920; President of Unity Conference (Delhi), 1924; President, Indian National Congress, 1923 and 1940-46; Minister for Education in the Union Cabinet

<sup>4</sup> Good government

<sup>5</sup> For Gandhiji's booklet on the Constructive Programme, *vide* "Constructive Programme: Its Meaning and Place", 13-12-1941.

## 277. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

November 13, 1947

I have your letter. I was very much pained to read it. . . .<sup>1</sup> Where are we going today? What is happening to us? I fail to understand why we think or say that we should not have a single Muslim in our country. If that happens, let me tell you that you will once again be slaves. I intentionally write “you” because I do not wish to see slavery again. I hope God will take me away before such a day comes.

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

[From Hindi]

*Dilhiman Gandhiji*—I, pp. 270-1

## 278. TALK WITH DAHYABHAI AND YASHODA PATEL<sup>2</sup>

NEW DELHI,

November 13, 1947

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

[From Gujarati]

*Dilhiman Gandhiji*—I, pp. 272-3

<sup>1</sup> Omission as in the source

<sup>2</sup> They had come to Gandhiji with their little son. On Gandhiji’s offering him a piece of bread the mother insisted that the child should say ‘thank you’.

## 279. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

*November 13, 1947*

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

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

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

I told you yesterday that I would say something about the meetings of Congress Working Committee. There was no time yesterday because I did not want to take more than fifteen minutes. Today is the third day of the Congress Working Committee meeting. It is still in session. One important thing that I am entitled to tell you is

that the members of the Working Committee and others<sup>1</sup> who have been specially invited by Acharya Kripalani<sup>2</sup> have been sitting together in the meetings for the last three days. It is a good thing that they are unanimously of the opinion that it has been the policy of the Congress since its inception, that is, for the last sixty years, that Congress is not an institution that propagates any particular religion. There are people of all religions in the Congress or, say, because it belongs to people of different religions, it does not belong to any one particular religion. It is an organization of the masses and it has to function only for political goals. It does not remain a religious body if it functions that way. Supposing one of the policies of the Congress is to provide food to all the people, to be true to its name it must provide food for everybody. If the Congress provides food only to those who are with it or, say, only to the Hindus and the Sikhs because they are in a majority and allows others to starve and says that it is not bothered about them, it would be a religious body superficially but in fact it would become an irreligious organization. If it advocates service of only those who are its followers and wants others to be killed, it would not be dharma, but *adharma*<sup>3</sup> in the name of dharma.

If I am a worshipper of Rama and do not worship any god, the law cannot force me to do so. It is another matter if I act against my faith or become a coward and say that a particular man is carrying a sword and that if I do not obey him he would kill me. But, if I am not a coward, when I am forced to worship Allah instead of Rama, I should have, and I have, a right to insist that I would worship only Rama and not Allah. All that the other person can do is to cut my throat. Let him do so. Then it is a matter of faith, which we call personal or individual dharma. There is no power on earth which can destroy one's personal dharma. Of course, it can be destroyed when the individual himself wants to do it, or when, instead of light, there is only darkness in one's heart. In such circumstances, when he cannot make up his mind he takes help from someone or just follows the

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

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

<sup>3</sup> Contrary to dharma

bidding of some other person because he is surrounded by darkness. But the person who is steadfast in his faith would listen to the command only of God and none else. Likewise, when an organization functions for the welfare of the people, only the things which are consistent with dharma apply to everybody and nothing else. And in this way it embodies dharma and not *adharma*. That, in my view, is the true meaning of politics and the Congress has followed this from the time of its inception. You should be happy that it is so, whether you belong to the Congress or not. Even I do not belong to the Congress. But so what? After all, I have been a Congress worker and have served it. What does it matter if I do not pay four annas for membership? I must pay the membership fee of four annas if I want to be its President. But that is not the question. If all of you think like me, it is really remarkable. It is good if you have registered yourselves as Congress members. It is well, too, if you are serving the Congress from outside. I have been sitting with the Congress Working Committee for the past three days. There are many differences of opinion in the Working Committee. The members are human beings after all, they are not stones. One member says one thing and another member says something else. There may be differences of opinion, but there should be no contradiction in behaviour. That is why they spent three days in discussing these differences. But they are all united about one thing, that is, that the Congress should continue to be what it has been so far. If in the process it has to perish, let it perish. Of course it cannot be completely wiped out, though it can remain in minority. And I doubt if it is in majority at present. For there should have been no Pakistan if the Congress were in majority. I can quote many instances to show how much the Muslims have been oppressed in India. But what should I say? You know more than I do. Have the Hindus and the Sikhs in Pakistan been oppressed less? But let us not talk about it. It is not for us to think of those things. Should I stop following my religion because others in the world do not adhere to theirs? That is why the Congress, whether it is in majority or minority, must adhere to its original objective. It is framing its resolutions from that point of view. It wants to present its views in a straightforward, sincere manner. What can be more straightforward than that we do not wish to compel a single Muslim to go away from here? The point is not whether the Muslims are good or bad. Can we claim that only angels have a right to live in India, and, if not angels, only good people can remain here? And, if only the good people can live here,

are there no bad or wicked people among the Hindus and the Sikhs? And if there are wicked people among them, what would you say to them? Would you order them to leave and threaten to cut their throats with a sword if they refused to oblige? You have no right to consider anybody wicked or to kill him. We have committed excesses against the Muslims. There may be some exaggeration in the reports I receive every day. But ultimately I find that there is truth in those reports. When anything is done in the name of the Congress, the A. I. C. C. has to be summoned. The plenary session of the Congress is held once a year. It is like a big show and because there is such a big crowd nobody can even think clearly. But they know that the A. I. C. C. carries on its work with due deliberation and so they put their seal on what it does. Thus the A.I.C.C. is always on the alert. It is going to meet the day after tomorrow. It is the Working Committee which has to place the agenda before the A. I. C. C. It is subservient to the A. I. C. C. If the Working Committee does not place the agenda before it, then the A. I. C. C. can say that they have not functioned well and the members of the Working Committee have to resign. The A. I. C. C. can form the Working Committee or terminate it. If the A. I. C. C. does not accept its proposals or makes great amendments to those proposals, then also it should resign. That is why the Working Committee says that it wants to do everything in the name of the A. I. C. C. If it does anything in its own name, it does not have the same effect. For, what is the use of 15 individuals proclaiming that not a single Muslim should be killed? If the same thing is done in the name of the A. I. C. C., its effect is much greater. That is why I have been advising the Congress Working Committee for the past three days that it should categorically state that this is the only thing it wishes to carry out. Let us not worry if this pleases the people or displeases them. If we are true servants of the Congress, then this is the only thing we have to do. Let the A. I. C. C. brush it aside if it so wishes. After all we, and also Pakistan, have to stand before the world. We do many things because we are worried about what the world may say. I would say that you should do only what you think is correct. Then the world too would regard it as correct. It is said that the word of the *Panch*<sup>1</sup> is like the word of God. The world is like the *Panch*. That is why what the world says is divine justice in the true sense.

The Working Committee is in session today. It would be meeting

<sup>1</sup> Elected members of a village panchayat; also, an arbitrator

again tomorrow. It is my prayer that it should place before the A. I. C. C. such a resolution which would bring victory to India and everybody would be able to live in peace here. It does not mean that we should let the traitors do as they please. But we should not take it for granted that a particular person is a traitor. If someone is proved to be a traitor, you may kill him, hang him, shoot him. But if you say that no Muslim can ever be loyal or that only the Hindus and the Sikhs have a monopoly of loyalty, then I would say that it would be a grave thing. I am confident that the Congress would never do such a thing. You must also pray that through the advice of the Congress we and the whole country as well as other parts of the world rise high. The Congress is meant only to raise the country high. But the Congress does not wish to raise itself by depriving anybody of his wealth or other property. The Congress would die for the sake of the whole world, but would not kill anyone. This has been the objective of the Congress, not since I entered it, but for many years. The Congress has tried to prevent the Europeans who come here from looting the country, so that people of Asia and Africa could live in peace. India has to remain alive for this purpose. It is for this that India has attained her independence and for no other purpose.

[From Hindi]

*Prarthana Pravachan—II*, pp. 71-7

## 280. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

BIRLA HOUSE, NEW DELHI,  
November 14, 1947

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

[From Gujarati]

*Dilhiman Gandhiji*—I, p. 278

## 281. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

November 14, 1947

. . . .<sup>2</sup> In no other country are widows insulted as much as they are in our country. But I place widows in the category of spiritual *rishis*. I do not have the least hesitation in advising you and other sisters to organize yourselves and see that if widows are not allowed to be present on auspicious occasions, or if restrictions are imposed on their diet or dress, the same rules apply to widowers. It is another matter if a wife voluntarily makes a sacrifice on the death of her husband. But I have no doubt that the rigidity of social customs and conventions must be broken.

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

<sup>2</sup> Omission as in the source

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

*Blessings from*

BAPU

[From Gujarati]

*Dilhiman Gandhiji—I*, pp. 278-9

## 282. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

*November 14, 1947*

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

*Yours,*

M. K. GANDHI

[From Hindi]

*Dilhiman Gandhiji—I*, p. 279

### 283. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

November 14, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

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

I would like to mention only one thing in that connection, and it is that I survived for 21 days not because of the amount of water I used to drink, or the orange juice which I took for some days, or the extraordinary medical care, but because I had installed in my heart God whom I call Rama. I was so much attracted by the lines of this *bhajan* that I instructed the persons concerned to send me the correct words by telegram, as I had forgotten those words at the time. I was very happy when I received the whole *bhajan* by reply telegram. The essence of the *bhajan* is that Ramanama is everything and other gods count for nothing compared to Him. I am mentioning this instructive episode in my life because I want the A. I. C. C. members to think and deliberate with God in their hearts when they meet for the important session on Saturday. They will have to do so because they are representatives of all Congressmen. Hence, if the leading Congressmen have Satan instead of God in their hearts they are not true to their salt.

The Working Committee discussed for full three hours the resolutions to be placed before the A. I. C. C. During the discussion the question arose as to how the Hindu and the Sikh refugees could be honourably and safely sent back to their homes in West Punjab. They came to the conclusion that the trouble started from the Pakistan side,

<sup>1</sup> From February 10 to March 3, 1943.

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

<sup>3</sup> Nee Madeleine Slade; joined Gandhiji in 1925

<sup>4</sup> Mahadev Desai (1892-1942); Gandhiji's private secretary from 1917 till his death on August 15, 1942

<sup>5</sup> और नहीं कुछ कामके, मैं भरोसे अपने रामके 1 "I depend solely on my Rama, all others are of no avail," a *bhajan* by Tulsidas

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

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

[From Hindi]

*Prarthana Pravachan—II*, pp. 78-9

#### 284. MESSAGE TO STUDENTS' PEACE CONFERENCE<sup>1</sup>

NEW DELHI,

[On or before *November 15, 1947*]

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

*The Hindustan Times*, 16-11-1947

<sup>1</sup> The Conference began at Agra on November 15.

285. LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

NEW DELHI,  
November 15, 1947

CHI. MATHURADAS,

It is with great difficulty that I am dictating this letter when it is time for my afternoon sleep. I am lying in the sun with a mud-pack. It feels very nice to be in the sun.

I cannot be convinced that no improvement in your health is possible now.

I have no faith in the prognosis of doctors. I would rather that regardless of what they say you had faith in God and let things happen as they would. In your condition, instead of reading newspapers, should you not read books? Read Sanskrit or Gujarati. There are beautiful translations of Sanskrit books in Gujarati. Whatever occurs to you while reading, you can dictate. Why don't you engage a person who would take dictation and read out what you wish to hear? Waccha had almost gone blind but till the last moment he had his favourite books read out to him. Several such instances can be cited.

I am aware that I cannot see truth if I am impatient. It means nothing that I am free of pride in the eyes of the world. If it should be untrue, ahimsa would still be a long way off. The same about truth. In that case the very idea of the success of non-violence cancels itself out. Where there is non-violence, failure is impossible. So, wherever there is failure, all that can be said is that there had been no non-violence. It is another question as to who can distinguish between success and failure. I cannot be a witness to faults like pride, impatience, etc., I may be having. To a certain extent, only outsiders can be witness. The true witness is only God.

It should not even be imagined that the Hindus are being chided too much.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

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

286. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

November 15, 1947

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

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

Blessings to all.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

[From Gujarati]

*Dilhiman Gandhiji*—I, pp. 284-5

<sup>1</sup> The name has been omitted in the source.

287. *FRAGMENT OF A LETTER*

*November 15, 1947*

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

[From Gujarati]

*Dilhiman Gandhiji—I, p. 286*

288. *LETTER TO CHANDRANI*

NEW DELHI,

*November 15, 1947*

CHI. CHAND,

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

*Blessings from*

BAPU

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

<sup>1</sup> Omissions as in the source

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*

<sup>3</sup> Dev Prakash Nayyar

## 289. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

*November 15, 1947*

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

[From Hindi]

*Dilhiman Gandhiji—I, pp. 285-6*

## 290. SPEECH AT A. I. C. C. MEETING

*November 15, 1947*

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

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

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

<sup>1</sup> On September 9

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

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

The Congress is held responsible for whatever happens today. The situation has changed since August 15. I am leaving out of consideration what happened before that date. I do not wish to hear what part you played in the events that have happened since August 15.

I have not the right to sit here. I have much work to do outside this hall. That is why I had requested that I might be allowed to have my say and then take your leave. You might ask me any questions you like at the end of my speech, though there ought to be no necessity for such questions. I wish only to show you a little of the way so that you might find it easier to carry on your deliberations.

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

you had no part in it. We cannot absolve ourselves of our responsibility for what has happened. I have to fight against this insanity and find out a cure for it. I know and I confess that I have not yet found it.

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

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

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

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

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

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

It is held by some that if we perpetrate worse atrocities on Muslims here than what have been perpetrated on Hindus and Sikhs in Pakistan, it will teach the Muslims in Pakistan a salutary lesson.

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

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

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

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

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

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

servants of their people. If they wish to rule, they can do so only as trustees of their people's welfare.

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

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

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

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

## 291. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

November 15, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

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

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

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

[From Hindi]

*Prarthana Pravachan*—II, pp. 80-1

## 292. LETTER TO PYARELAL<sup>1</sup>

[After November 15, 1947]

I did receive copies of your correspondence with Nazimuddin . . . .<sup>2</sup> I liked the whole of it. Here are replies to your questions:<sup>3</sup>

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

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

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

I cannot regard the Noakhali situation as 'normal' in any sense

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

<sup>2</sup> Omissions in the letter are as in the source.

<sup>3</sup> The addressee had drawn Gandhiji's attention to a statement by Khwaja Nazimuddin, Chief Minister of East Bengal, that even cultivation of public opinion in favour of a reunion with India would be treated as treason against the State. For extracts from the addressee's letter, *vide* Appendix "Extract from Letter from Pyarelal", After 23-11-1947.

so long as the corruption is not rooted out. Death at a stroke is better than death by inches.

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

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

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

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

### 293. LETTER TO CHAMPA R. MEHTA

NEW DELHI,  
*November 16, 1947*

CHI. CHAMPA<sup>2</sup>,

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

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

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

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

<sup>2</sup> Wife of Ratilal Mehta

<sup>3</sup> E. W. Aryanayakum, Secretary, Hindustani Talimi Sangh

294. LETTER TO ABBAS

NEW DELHI,  
November 16, 1947

CHI. ABBAS,

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

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

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

295. LETTER TO CHIMANLAL N. SHAH

November 16, 1947

CHI. CHIMANLAL,

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

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

<sup>1</sup> Shrikrishnadas Jaju, Treasurer of Hindustani Talimi Sangh and Secretary of A.I.S.A.

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

How is the problem of Champa now?

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

### 296. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

*November 16, 1947*

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

[From Gujarati]

*Dilhiman Gandhiji*—I, p. 290

## 297. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

November 16, 1947

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

Yes, what you say is true. The political atmosphere has become vitiated. But you are forbidden to worry over it until you are fully recovered. And if the Congress has become rotten, I have no doubt that it is bound to die. Rotten things cannot last long in the world and if a rotten thing is kept in some place it emits foul odours. I hope you know this. So repeat Gurudev's<sup>1</sup> words "It will not do to worry" like a *mantra* and get well.

Blessings from

BAPU

[From Gujarati]

*Dilhiman Gandhiji*—I, pp. 290-1

## 298. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

November 16, 1947

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

M. K. GANDHI

[From Hindi]

*Dilhiman Gandhiji*—I, p. 291

<sup>1</sup> Rabindranath Tagore

## 299. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

November 16, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

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

The ruler of the Rampur State is a Muslim. But that does not mean that it is a Muslim State. The late Ali Brothers<sup>1</sup> had taken me there many years ago<sup>2</sup> and I stayed with them. I had the pleasure of meeting the then Nawab also, for he was a friend of the well-known nationalist Muslims of the day, the late Hakim Ajmal Khan<sup>3</sup> and the late Dr. Ansari<sup>4</sup>. In those days the Hindus and the Muslims used to live there more peacefully and in greater harmony than today. But the Hindu friends who came last Sunday from that place to meet me had an altogether different tale to tell. They told me that though that State had acceded to the Indian Union it was still under the insidious influence of the Muslim League. Had that been the only obstacle, it could have been easily overcome. But there is also the Hindu Mahasabha assisted by members of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh who wish that all the Muslims should be driven away from the Indian Union.

The problem is how the Congressmen who are loyal to the Congress objectives can strengthen their position. Can they offer satyagraha with any hope of achieving success? They were happy to know that the A. I. C. C. is firm about the Congress objectives and is

<sup>1</sup> Mahomed Ali and Shaukat Ali

<sup>2</sup> On March 6, 1919

<sup>3</sup> (1863-1927); Chief physician to Nawab of Rampur, 1892-1902; President of the Indian National Congress, 1921; First Chancellor of Jamia Millia Islamia, 1920-27

<sup>4</sup> Dr. M. A. Ansari (1880-1936); eminent physician and surgeon, Member, Congress Working Committee; General Secretary of Indian National Congress in 1920, 1922, 1926, 1929, 1931 and 1932; its President in 1927; Chancellor, Jamia Millia Islamia, 1928-36

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

These days it is a fashion to describe any armed opposition or opposition of any kind as satyagraha. That only harms society. Hence, if you understand the true meaning of satyagraha and realize that the living God, in the form of truth and love, is with the satyagrahi, then you would not hesitate to believe that no one can ever succeed against satyagraha. I am sorry to say what I was constrained to say about the Hindu Mahasabha and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh . I would be happy to know if I am wrong. I have met the Chief<sup>1</sup> of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh. I had attended one of the meetings of that organization.<sup>2</sup> Ever since, I have been reprimanded for having attended its meeting and have received many letters of complaints about the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh.

Though all of us are engaged in extinguishing the fire of communalism in the country, we should not forget our fellow-beings living outside India. You are well aware that the Indian Delegation<sup>3</sup> to the United Nations is fighting for the rights of the Indians in South Africa with great courage and unity. All of you know Smt. Vijayalakshmi Pandit<sup>4</sup>. She is the leader of the Indian Delegation not because she is the sister of Jawaharlal Nehru, but because she is

<sup>1</sup> M. S. Golwalkar, known as Guruji

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "Speech at R. S. S. Rally", 16-9-1947.

<sup>3</sup> Which consisted of Vijayalakshmi Pandit, M. C. Setalvad, K. M. Panikkar and Maharaj Singh

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

able and carries on her work efficiently. She is accompanied by a good team and they all speak there with one voice.<sup>1</sup> I was pleased most by the speeches of Zafrullah Khan<sup>2</sup> and Ispahani<sup>3</sup> which appeared in the newspapers today. At the United Nations, they said in plain words that Indians in South Africa were not given the same treatment as the whites. They are being insulted there and boycotted as if they were outcastes. It is true that the Indians in South Africa are not poor and hungry. But man cannot live by bread alone. Money has no value before human rights. And the South African Government does not give these rights to Indians there. The Hindus and the Muslims in India do not have divided views on the problems concerning the Indians living abroad. This only proves that the two-nation theory is incorrect. The lesson which I have learnt from it and which is also the lesson people should learn after my mentioning it today is that love is the highest thing. If the Hindus and the Muslims can speak unitedly outside India, they can certainly do so here as well, provided there is love in their hearts. Man is prone to commit mistakes. But he can rectify his mistakes if he wants to. This too is natural for man. It is always possible to forgive and forget. If we can do this today and can speak with one voice here as we do outside, then we would get over our present troubles. As far as South Africa is concerned, I hope their government and the whites there would profit by what is being openly said by distinguished Hindus and Muslim with one voice.

[From Hindi]

*Prarthana Pravachan—II*, pp. 81-4

<sup>1</sup> During the debate at the United Nations Political Committee on November 15, M. C. Setalvad, protesting against the treatment of Indians in South Africa said: "Human rights and fundamental freedoms, which this Committee and Assembly are called upon to vindicate, are not only a matter of concern to the 250,000 Indians and other Asians settled in South Africa, they affect millions of human beings all over the world who look to this organization to protect them against the vicious doctrine of racial superiority and racial arrogance."

<sup>2</sup> Mohammad Zafrullah Khan, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Leader of the Pakistan Delegation to U. N. O., supported the Indian stand and said: "I do not know the Bible very well but I have been told that the Boers of South Africa are deeply attached to the Bible. Is the treatment of Indians in the Union in accordance with the teachings of a Christian civilization?"

<sup>3</sup> M. A. H. Ispahani, Pakistan's Ambassador to the U. S. A., stated during the debate: "The grievance of Indians is with regard to measures which entrench upon their own legitimate rights as nationals of the Union of South Africa and which reduce them to a position of inferiority and subservience to European settlers."

### 300. HOW TO GROW MORE FOOD<sup>1</sup>

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

Here is the promised list<sup>2</sup> of vegetables. As it takes up a lot of space, the hot weather list will be carried over into the next issue of the *Harijan*. Mirabehn's is an apposite question. It will be interesting to know how many are profiting by her hints. Will such please send their names to the editor of the *Harijan*, Ahmedabad?

NEW DELHI, November 17, 1947  
*Harijan*, 30-11-1947

### 301. CONTROLS

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

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

Experts and officials genuinely feel that we do not have sufficient foodgrain in our country. I not only hold the contrary view, but I say that the deficit of foodgrain if any can be met with a little effort by a large number of people. What can the Government do if

<sup>1</sup> This was the fourth and last of a series of articles on the subject by Mirabehn.

<sup>2</sup> This is not reproduced here.

people become lethargic or indulge in malpractices and as a result suffer death? The Government should find out ways and means to remove lethargy and take steps to eradicate malpractices. It should not procure foodgrain by fair means or foul and encourage malpractice and lethargy.

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

NEW DELHI, November 17, 1947

[From Gujarati]

*Harijanbandhu*, 23-11-1947

### 302. LETTER TO LORD ISMAY

November 17, 1947

DEAR LORD ISMAY,

Will 3 p. m. on Wednesday next suit you?<sup>1</sup> If you would prefer any other time, please tell me.

While I shall be glad to welcome you where I am staying please be sure that I could as easily come to you. You shall decide.<sup>2</sup>

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

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

### 303. FRAGMENT OF LETTER TO ABDUL GHAFFAR KHAN<sup>3</sup>

November 17, 1947

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

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

<sup>1</sup> The addressee, Chief of the Viceroy's Personal Staff, had sought an appointment with Gandhiji.

<sup>2</sup> In his letter dated November 18, the addressee confirmed the appointment with Gandhiji.

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

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

<sup>4</sup> Gandhiji had suggested to the addressee "openly to leave the Frontier Province and develop the non-violent technique from India".

<sup>5</sup> The addressee, "in reply, sent word to Gandhiji not to worry but just send him and his associates his blessings and prayers".

304. LETTER TO PRABHUDAS GANDHI

NEW DELHI,  
November 17, 1947

CHI. PRABHUDAS,

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

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

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

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

<sup>1</sup> Widow of Jamnalal Bajaj

305. *LETTER TO INDU PAREKH*

*November 17, 1947*

CHI. INDU,

Your letter. I learnt just now that you had a younger brother<sup>1</sup>. I don't remember to have received any letter in that connection. Why need Father grieve over the event? Illness comes and goes. But while illness is bad, death is a friend. Surely, Jayanti<sup>2</sup> would marry some day, is it not? Would the desire for marriage spare even a communist? See me when you come.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

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

306. *LETTER TO JIVANJI D. DESAI*

*November 17, 1947*

CHI. JIVANJI<sup>3</sup>,

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

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

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

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

<sup>1</sup> Madhu Parekh

<sup>2</sup> Jayanti Parekh, addressee's brother

<sup>3</sup> Manager, Navajivan Press

### 307. A LETTER

November 17, 1947

You will find in *Harijanbandhu* my recent article<sup>1</sup> on controls. I have no doubt in my mind that controls will mean controls over our minds too, and we shall not be able to taste the sweet fruit of freedom. Many people argue the case before me; but when I start asking questions they cannot answer them. I agree that it would be good if we could provide jobs for the staff that will be retrenched when controls are removed. I feel like laughing when these people, motivated by their self-interest for the time being, argue that a revolt would erupt in India if there were no controls. But at the same time I also feel depressed. I would remove controls even at the cost of a revolt. That has always been my way. I have travelled thus far through fiery ordeals. And I have limitless faith in God. Don't we have a proverb, "He who has provided the teeth will also provide the food?" There is an element of truth in it. But there must also be full effort.

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

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

[From Gujarati]

*Dilhiman Gandhiji*—I, pp. 295-6

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Controls", 17-11-1947.

308. A NOTE<sup>1</sup>

November 17, 1947

I find that talk of khadi and village industries does not interest people any more. Here I am sitting in the capital. Refugees are lying all round shelterless and shivering. Thousands are pouring in every day. How long will you feed them without giving them any work? I am sure everyone will remember this old man one day when it is realized that India has no alternative except to develop village industries.

Any government formed by any party—Congress, Socialist or Communist—will be forced to accept this truth. We do not realize this today, but we shall realize it after we stumble in our attempts to compete with America or Russia.

[From Gujarati]

*Dilhiman Gandhiji*—I, p. 296

309. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

November 17, 1947

I feel very sad that we still write to each other in English. When both of us know Hindi quite well, why do we still write [in English]? I will not feel that we are independent and free so long as we do not pay attention to these small little things. Why need I tell you all this? or is it that I have become old and senile? So much for today. . . .<sup>2</sup> Things are getting worse here. Let us see how God guides us.

*Yours,*

M. K. GANDHI

[From Hindi]

*Dilhiman Gandhiji*—I, p. 296

<sup>1</sup> This was addressed to a member of the All-India Village Industries' Association.

<sup>2</sup> Omission as in the source

### 310. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING<sup>1</sup>

*November 17, 1947*

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

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

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

It is worthy of note that Dr Barnard evidently doubts whether the entry was a great event. And then he treats the Natal Indian Congress with the gratuitous advice that the Indians of South Africa should emigrate to India and become “missionaries of the gospel they have been taught in South Africa, namely, to live in peace and order and not to fight in communal riots”. I very much fear that this message is typical of the average white man’s mind in the South African Dominion. Hence the series of disabilities on our countrymen

<sup>1</sup> As Gandhiji was observing silence, his written message in Hindustani was read out.

for the crime of being Asiatics and having a coloured pigment. I appeal to the best western mind of South Africa to revise this anti-Asiatic and anti-colour prejudice. They have an overwhelming African population in their midst. They are worse treated in some respects than the Asiatics. I urge the European settlers to read the signs of the times. Either this prejudice is wrong from every point of view or the British people and their fellow-members of the great Commonwealth have made an unpardonable mistake in admitting Asiatic countries as members. Burma is about to get her independence,<sup>1</sup> Ceylon will presently become a member of the Commonwealth.<sup>2</sup> What does it mean? Membership of the Commonwealth is, I am taught, as good as independence, if not superior to it. Responsible men and women of these independent States need to ponder well as to what they will do with their independence. Is all this movement towards multiplying independent States, though proper and healthy in itself, to result in another war more deadly, if possible, than the last two, or is it to end, as it should, in the promotion of universal brotherhood?

“A man becomes what he thinks”, says an *Upanishad mantra*<sup>3</sup>. Experience of wise men testifies to the truth of the aphorism. The world will thus become what its wise men think. An idle thought is no thought. It would be a serious mistake to say that it (the world) will become as the unthinking multitude act. They will not think. Like a mob they will follow.<sup>4</sup> Independence should mean democracy. Democracy demands that every citizen has the opportunity of receiving wisdom as distinguished from a knowledge of facts so called. South Africa has many wise men and women as it has also

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

<sup>2</sup> Under the Ceylon Independence Bill, passed by the House of Commons on November 26, Ceylon was to become a self-governing “near-Dominion” within the Commonwealth in February 1948.

<sup>3</sup> यथाकारी यथाचारी तथा भवति । साधुकारि साधुर्भवति । पापकारी पापो भवति पापः पापेन । अथो खल्लाहुः काममथ एवार्थं पुष्प इति । स यथाकामो भवति तत्कृतुर्भवति तत् कर्म कुरुतेः । यत्कर्म कुरुते तदभिसंधते ।  
—Brihadaranyadopanishad, 4. 4.5

According as one acts, according as one behaves, so does he become. The doer of good becomes good, the doer of evil becomes evil. One becomes virtuous by virtuous action, bad by bad action. Others, however, say that a person consists of desires. As is his desire, so is his will; as is his will, so is the deed he does, whatever deed he does, that he attains.

<sup>4</sup> This sentence has been translated from *Prarthana Pravachan*—II.

many able soldiers who are equally able farmers. It will be a tragedy for the world if they do not rise superior to their debilitating surroundings and give a proper lead to their country on this vexed and vexing problem of white supremacy. Is it not by this time a played-out game?

I must keep you for a moment over the much-debated question of control. Must the voice of the people be drowned by the noise of the pundits who claim to know all about the virtue of controls? Would that our ministers who are drawn from the people and are of the people listened to the voice of the people rather than of the controllers of the red-tape which, they know, did them infinite harm when they were in the wilderness! The pundits then ruled with a vengeance. Must they do so even now? Will not the people have any opportunity of committing mistakes and learning by them? Do the ministers not know that they have the power to resume control wherever necessary, if decontrol is found to have been harmful to the people, in any instance out of the samples, by no means exhaustive, that I am giving below? The list before me confounds my simple mind. There may be virtue in some of them. All I contend is that the science, if it is one of controls, requires a dispassionate examination and then education of the people in the secret of controls in general or specified controls. Without examining the merits of the list I have received I pick out a few out of the samples given to me: Control on exchange, investment capital issues, opening branches of banks and their investments, insurance investments, all import and export of every kind of commodity, cereals, sugar, *gur*, cane, and syrup, *vanaspati*, textile, including woollens, power, alcohols, petrol and kerosene, paper, cement, steel, mica, manganese, coal, transport, installation of plant, machinery, factories, distribution of cars in certain provinces and tea-plantation.

*Harijan*, 30-11-1947

### 311. A LETTER

*November 18, 1947*

CHI. . . .<sup>1</sup>

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

I must admit that only the intellectuals and political leaders are responsible for the present distressing atmosphere. The poor peasants in the villages do not even know that India has become free. Hence I have not the least hesitation in saying that we are grossly abusing the intelligence and energy which God has bestowed upon us. Now you will understand what it is I am trying to put across or what pain fills my heart. My prayer today is “one step enough for me”<sup>2</sup>. I am keeping well in spite of all that is happening and I hope you are also well. The fact that one can keep fit physically and mentally, whatever the circumstances be, is a sign of one’s nearness to God. My Rama is not a man with two hands and two feet. But if I am perfectly fit it is due to Rama’s grace. Chi. Manudi is well trained. But after all she is only a girl, in the playful age of 16 or 17—she is almost a child. When I discuss with her or dictate to her such spiritual subjects, it occurs to me how dense I was at the age of 18. As compared to that, this girl has developed quite well. At the same time I am also conscious that I may be putting too heavy a burden on her tender mind with my discussions or dictations of such highly pedantic matters. But she is always very happy and keeps cheerful. Only she does not take care of herself, because of which I have to scold her

<sup>1</sup> The name is omitted in the source.

<sup>2</sup> From “Lead Kindly Light” by Cardinal Newman

often. These days she has been making notes and summaries of my interviews with visitors, and she has been doing it quite well. Of course she shows me all she writes down. While she is growing in other directions, her physical growth has been stunted. There is such a rush of visitors and so much writing work to be done that I am unable to talk to her however much I may wish to.

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

*Blessings from*

BAPU

[From Gujarati]

*Dilhiman Gandhiji*—I, pp. 304-5

### 312. TALK WITH RAJENDRA PRASAD

*November 18, 1947*

I realize that just when you started devoting yourself to agriculture you have to give it up.<sup>2</sup> But there is no alternative. Either this institution [Congress] has to be disbanded or if it has to be kept alive we will need a man of dynamic personality. You should tour the whole country and if possible go to the villages also. The people are agitated but nobody is there to listen to their grievances. We have given innumerable promises in our speeches that we shall ensure the welfare of the people. It is enough that we humbly admit that we are unable to fulfil our promises, and give them a sympathetic hearing. . . .<sup>3</sup>

[From Gujarati]

*Dilhiman Gandhiji*—I, pp. 305-6

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

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

<sup>3</sup> Omission as in the source

### 313. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

November 18, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

You must have read the resolutions<sup>1</sup> passed by the All-India Congress Committee. Some of those resolutions are useful in our life—in a good part of our life. It may as well be said that they are useful in the life of every man. They are not the resolutions merely to be implemented by the Government. For instance, the resolution on controls is the one which has to be implemented by Jawaharlal, Rajendra Prasad—now Rajendra Prasad is out—and also by others. They have to implement the policy of control on food, cloth and every other thing. We too have to do the same thing. If we resort to cheating and do not abide by the law, the result would be disastrous. When we can do with one yard of cloth, why should we buy ten yards and try to convince ourselves that no harm will be done if it is bought and tucked away in the house? If we develop such an attitude, become self-centred and not think of India we will turn into rogues.

The resolutions of the All-India Congress Committee are so important that I wanted to explain them to you one by one. I am still here, and I shall say something about the resolutions if I get a chance. But let me at least tell you the substance today. There is a resolution about bringing back the people who have left their homes in panic and this resolution applies to everybody. All of us, from Kanyakumari to Kashmir, belong to India. What if India has been divided All of us have to shoulder the responsibility because we are all brothers. If only one individual goes on stuffing his belly and does not care for the poor—if he eats for pleasure—he is stealing and commits a crime against India. What if India does not possess all the foodgrain she requires? The poor also should get foodgrain. If the rich get just a few *chhataks*<sup>2</sup> and are able to manage with the same I would consider that the rich and the poor have become equal. Apart from anyone else, let me talk about the rich person in whose house I am living. If you ask me whether Shri Ghanshyamdas manages with his legitimate quota, I would say he does not. I have got to tell the truth after all. Because he

<sup>1</sup> Vide Appendix “A. I. C. C. Resolutions”, 15/16/17-11-1947.

<sup>2</sup> One-sixteenth of a seer

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

The most important thing is that we cannot rest in peace till all the refugees go back to their homes. It is madness to kill the Muslims or drive away those who have run away from Pakistan in panic leaving their property there. Now the All-India Congress Committee has issued orders that people have to be kept wherever they are, and in comfort, and those who wish to return to their homes have to be sent back. Thousands of millionaires managed to come away even leaving their beautiful houses, but the poor are still left behind. I do not intend speaking about every point today. But the resolution shows where our duty lies. And that is the most important thing. If we take it for granted that the Muslims are a worthless lot, it is a grave sin. It is the supreme duty of all of us not to drive away anyone. People have seen the Working Committee resolution three or four days ago and they have also seen the indications in the Press. In spite of that the Muslims are running away. People say that the A.I.C.C. accepted this resolution because of my insistence. They say that the Muslims should go away, otherwise they would be killed. People ask me if I would be a witness to the slaughter of Muslims. I have already said what I would do—I would 'do or die,. When I am ready to die, the Muslims too should be ready to die if the need arises. We have become so heartless that we want them to walk 300 miles in this cold winter. It is said that there are not too many deaths in the camps—some ten or twenty die every day. Now, out of five, ten or fifty thousand if so many people

die, has anyone tried to estimate how many people would die in India at this rate? Should it not be our concern as to how they die? Some of them do not get food, some have cholera, some get dysentery, or something else happens to them. But does anyone bother to know why these people die? We are worried about the availability of food and all the other things we need. We are always on the look-out for settling the Hindus and the Sikhs in the houses of Muslim evacuees. Of course, the situation is not the same everywhere. But it is certainly so in many places. This has pained me very much and I have conveyed my feelings to you many times. Now even the A.I.C.C. has said that what has happened is highly deplorable. This thing has to be conveyed to the millions and it cannot be done in one day. There are great men in the Government—Jawahar, the Sardar, Rajendra Babu (but Rajendra Babu is not there now)—and how could [other members] displease them? That is why they agreed to it. I have heard that now there are even some Congressmen who think that the Muslims should not live here. They think that only then can Hinduism prosper. But they do not know that Hinduism is degenerating day by day. It would be dangerous if they did not change their attitude. All the members of the A.I.C.C. are the representatives of India as a whole. If they are all one at heart, as they should be, then the entire face of India would change. It is their duty not to allow anything else to happen. Their primary task is to find out how they can bring back all those who have fled from here. We would be restless till we brought back all the Muslims who have gone away from India. We have to create the necessary climate and that is not difficult. It is a great thing that there are still 350 million Muslims in India. Nobody knows how many have gone away and how many are going to come. Supposing all those who have gone away came back, it would mean no expenditure, for us, for they would be living in their own houses, since they have their houses here. Our job is only to return their houses to them. But are all those houses vacant? Refugees have occupied those houses by force. But they would have to be accommodated in spite of that. If we act without proper thought and if our hearts are not clean, outsiders would wonder if the representatives of India were hypocrites. I think they are not. Those days are over when we used to be angry with the Muslims and wanted them to go away. Today we consider them as our brethren.

I would like to believe that the people of Delhi and Gurgaon have become good. When I had been to Panipat recently, I saw people

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

[From Hindi]

*Prarthana Pravachan*—II, PP. 88-93

314. LETTER TO MUNNALAL G. SHAH

NEW DELHI,  
November 19, 1947

CHI. MUNNALAL,

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

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

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

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

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

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

<sup>1</sup> Addressee's wife

315. *LETTER TO KANCHAN M. SHAH*

NEW DELHI,  
*November 19, 1947*

CHI. KANCHAN,

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

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

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

316. *FRAGMENT OF A LETTER*

*November 19, 1947*

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

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

[From Gujarati]

*Dilhiman Gandhiji*—I, p. 311

### 317. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

*November 19, 1947*

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

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

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

[From Gujarati]

*Dilhiman Gandhiji—I, pp. 311-2*

<sup>1</sup> A Gujarati saying

318. LETTER TO M. A. HUNAR

[November 19, 1947]<sup>1</sup>

CHI. HUNAR,

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

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

319. LETTER TO RATANDEVI

[November 19, 1947]<sup>3</sup>

CHI. RATAN,

I got your beautiful letter. Have I not written at length on the subject of blessings?<sup>4</sup>

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

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

<sup>1</sup> In the source the letter is placed among those of this date.

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

<sup>3</sup> In the source the letter is placed among those of this date.

<sup>4</sup> *Vide* "When a Blessing becomes a Curse", 11-11-1947.

### 320. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

*November 19, 1947*

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

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

[From Hindi]

*Dilhiman Gandhiji—I, pp. 312-3*

### 321. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

*November 19, 1947*

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

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

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

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

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

<sup>1</sup> Meat cutlets

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

[From Hindi]

*Prarthana Pravachan*—II, pp. 93-8

### 322. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

*November 20, 1947*

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

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

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

I was happy to find the camp<sup>1</sup> admirably clean. There are dharmashalas at various places for the pilgrims who come there during the fairs. These fairs are organized there periodically. At present these dharmashalas are being used for the refugees. There is some difficulty about water supply, which the officials are trying to remedy. I have no doubt that if water supply can be guaranteed, many more refugees can be accommodated there.

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

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

In a locality called Kishanganj in Delhi a goshala is having its annual function. Acharya Kripalani is going to preside over that function tomorrow and I am being pressed to attend the function at least for ten minutes. I felt that I should not attend any function just for show. I cannot do or see anything in ten minutes. Moreover, I am so much involved in these communal problems that I have no time to attend to other things. Hence, I expressed my helplessness and, realizing my difficulty, the organizers excused me. They told me that they would be satisfied if I would say something about *gosev*—especially about goshalas, during the prayer meeting. I readily agreed to do so. I have stated in plain words that the task of preservation and increasing the cattle wealth of India and taking proper care of the cow and calf is much more difficult than attaining political freedom.<sup>2</sup> I

<sup>1</sup> The Okhla camp which Gandhiji had visited in the afternoon along with Sucheta Kripalani and others

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* “How to Save the Cow”, 22-8-1947.

claim that I am working with faith and devotion in this field. I also claim that I have true knowledge of how the cow can be saved. However, I do admit that so far I have not exercised any influence on the public which may lead them to give to the problem the attention it deserves. Those who manage the goshalas know how to spend money or collect funds for the purpose. But they have no knowledge at all about rearing the cattle scientifically. They do not know how to rear the cow so that it may yield more milk. They do not know how to rear the oxen or improve their breed.

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

[From Hindi]

*Prarthana Pravachan*—II, pp. 98-101

323. LETTER TO WALTER RITTER

BIRLA HOUSE,  
NEW DELHI,  
*November 21, 1947*

DEAR FRIEND,

I was delighted to receive your letter. I am glad that your son is in India and hope he is doing well.

I fancy that I remember most things about my stay at Villeneuve in 1931. I know about Romain Rolland's death<sup>1</sup>.

You should know that I am a much misrepresented man if I am also a somewhat esteemed man. I have been learning all my life to remain unaffected by praise or blame. My attempt has not altogether been vain. Whatever I said during the war about Japan or Great Britain was published in the newspaper I was editing till it was suppressed. But it would be wrong to say that "my sympathy went with Japan against Great Britain". As a matter of fact, I wrote strongly against Japan's misdeeds as I did against those of Great Britain and I put down in writing the non-violent way of resisting Japan's aggression on India.

Much more baseless is the charge about my "agreement to the use of weapons in case of a brother-war between Hindustan and Pakistan." My writings would show the contrary. My views against war and non-violence remain just as strong as they ever were.

*Yours sincerely,*  
M. K. GANDHI

WALTER RITTER, ESQ.  
ENGINEER  
LUSTER SWITZERLAND

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

<sup>1</sup> In Switzerland on December 30, 1944

324. LETTER TO ULI RITTER

BIRLA HOUSE,  
NEW DELHI,  
November 21, 1947

DEAR RITTER,

Herewith enclosed is my answer<sup>1</sup> to your father's letter as per his advice that I should send it to you.

I hope you are flourishing in Bombay.

*Yours sincerely,*  
M. K. GANDHI

ENCL: ONE  
ULI RITTER, ESQ.  
ENGINEER  
C/O MESSRS VOLKART BROS.  
BOMBAY.

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

325. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

November 21, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

While I am making my speech before you, the goshala is probably celebrating its annual function about which I told you yesterday. I would like to mention one thing. In the course of my speech yesterday I did not mention about the dairies conducted for the soldiers all over India. Dr. Rajendra Prasad told me that these dairies are still in operation. Many years ago I had visited<sup>1</sup> the Central Dairy at Bangalore. It used to function under the supervision of Col. Smith. I had seen some beautiful cattle there. One of them was a prize cow. It was believed that she was the best cow in the whole of Asia. I

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* the preceding item.

<sup>1</sup> On June 12, 1927; *vide* "Letter to William Smith", 14-6-1927.

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

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

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

<sup>1</sup> *Cow in India*, published in two volumes. For Gandhiji's preface to it, *vide* "Foreword to *Cow in India*", 20-5-1945.

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

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

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

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

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

Even at the risk of having to stay longer than usual at the prayer meeting I would like to say one thing in the end as a matter of

<sup>1</sup> Sucheta Kripalani, *vide* "Speech at Prayer Meeting", 20-11-1947.

<sup>2</sup> Gandhiji then read out the A.I.C.C. resolution on this subject, *vide* Appendix "A. I. C. C. Resolutions", 15/16/17-11-1947.

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

[From Hindi]

*Prarthana Pravachan—II*, pp. 101-5

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Speech at Prayer Meeting", 21-10-1947.

### 326. RAYS OF HOPE

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

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

<sup>1</sup> Gangabehn Vaidya

<sup>2</sup> Ravishankar Vyas, who devoted his life to the uplift of the Baria tribe in Gujarat

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

NEW DELHI, November 22, 1947

*Harijan*, 30-11-1947

### 327. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

*November 22, 1947*

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

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

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

*Blessings from*

BAPU

[From Gujarati]

*Dilhiman Gandhiji*—I, p. 333

<sup>1</sup> The names are omitted in the source.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*

### 328. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

*November 22, 1947*

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

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

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

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

[From Hindi]

*Dilhiman Gandhiji—I, p. 332*

### 329. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

*November 22, 1947*

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

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

While discussing the subject with friends I was told that so long as the atrocities in Pakistan do not abate, not much improvement can

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Speech at Prayer Meeting", 21-11-1947.

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

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

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

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

the Union and local Governments. The world would admire the ideal life of these millions of refugees.

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

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

[From Hindi]

*Prarthana Pravachan*—II, pp. 106-8

### 330. LINGUISTIC REDISTRIBUTION

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

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

<sup>1</sup> Which is not reproduced here

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

But the reluctance to enforce linguistic redistribution is perhaps justifiable in the present depressing atmosphere. The exclusive spirit is ever uppermost. Everyone thinks of himself and his family. No one thinks of the whole of India. The centripetal force is undoubtedly there, but it is not vocal, never boisterous; whereas the centrifugal is on the surface, and in its very nature makes the loudest noise, demanding the attention of all. It manifests itself most in matters communal. This has given rise to fear in other fields. The history of the quarrel between Orissa and Andhra, Orissa and Bihar and Orissa and Bengal is fresh in our minds. The whole of it has not died out even now. This is but an illustration of an almost accomplished fact. The other provinces were never redistributed in law though they were in 1920 when the Congress had a brand new constitution<sup>1</sup> enabling it to put up a life-and-death struggle with perhaps the greatest empire that has ever been. How will Madras, though divided by the Congress divide itself into four provinces, and Bombay do likewise in law? Many other claimants have come to the fore. They are not recognized by the Congress but they are not less vocal or less insistent. The Congress does not command the prestige and authority it found itself in possession of in 1920. Despair has given place to hope. Now, when we have freedom, we seem not to know what to do with it. It is almost mistaken for suicidal anarchy. Even zealous reformers would postpone controversial issues to a more hopeful time when, in the interest of the country, the virtue of 'give and take' would be freely recognized and all sectional interests would be subordinate to the one interest of the good of India, which will include the good of all. Therefore, these who, like me, want constructive suggestions to come into play at this very moment, have to work to bring about a healthy atmosphere, promoting concord in the place of discord, peace in the place of strife, progress in the place of retrogression and life in the place of death. That happy day will be most manifest when the communal strife has died out. Meanwhile, will the Southern linguistic groups settle their disputes and boundaries, will Bombay produce an agreed scheme of redistribution according to language, and will the new candidates withdraw their claims at least for the time being? Then linguistic redistribution can come into being today without the

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Congress Constitution Adopted at Nagpur Session", December 1920.

slightest difficulty or fuss.

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

NEW DELHI, November 23, 1947

*Harijan*, 30-11-1947

### 331. UNBELIEVABLE

A correspondent writes:

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

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

NEW DELHI, November 23, 1947

*Harijan*, 30-11-1947

### 332. DEATH—COURAGEOUS OR COWARDLY

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

This argument seems to beg the question. Man does not live but to escape death. If he does so, he is advised not to do so. He is advised to learn to love death as well as life, if not more so. A hard

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

NEW DELHI, November 23, 1947

*Harijan*, 30-11-1947

### 333. NATIONAL GUARDS

A correspondent from East Bengal asks:

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

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

NEW DELHI, November 23, 1947

*Harijan*, 30-11-1947

### 334. IN PRAISE OF DECONTROL

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

By reducing rations from 1\_ lbs. to \_ lb. the Government has . . . created a bigger vicious circle. The . . . agriculturist . . . knows that the lesser the ration the greater is the demand of the black market. . . . He will hoard secretly. . . . The lower production figures will cause. . . . further reduction in the ration. . . .

If we think over what we import and what is being spoiled and thrown away at storage places, it will be realized that our wastage is greater than the imports! Hence we must not import. We must reduce wastage.

Why have our leaders kept themselves entangled in the net created for us for specific reasons by their predecessors, the British? How is it that things do not become clear to them? Why are they guided by the figures put before them by the officers which in some cases are neither complete nor accurate? . . .

Food crop production is not less today than what it was six years back. . . . During the war period a large quantity was supplied to the military with certain unavoidable wastages. Foodgrain were also supplied to the Middle East. These conditions do not obtain today. The public was then given 1\_ lbs. daily ration. Thus . . . more stock was then available . . . than today. Six years back . . . grain was stored according to old customs in underground stores. Every merchant. . . had big stocks of grain. . . . There were heaps of foodgrain . . . . Today, neither the consumer nor the businessman nor the Government has any stock. . . . The Congress, which is in power, is not able, owing to defects in the present procedure, to give to the public what as a matter of fact is really available in the country and the public is displeased and interested parties are taking advantage of this situation to make the Congress unpopular. It is only the Congress which can maintain peace in the country and if it once loses its hold over the public, which may happen if the situation does not show signs of improvement, and is allowed to deteriorate from day to day as it is doing, it will be very difficult, if not impossible, for it to avoid the storm that may come.

*Harijan, 23-11-1947*

<sup>1</sup> Only excerpts from which are reproduced here

335. LETTER TO ARNOLD HEIM

BIRLA HOUSE,  
NEW DELHI,  
November 23, 1947

DEAR DR. ARNOLD HEIM,

I was delighted to receive your letter of 18th ultimo. You unnecessarily fear that service for the good of humanity might, in my opinion, be less than prayer. *Laborare est prate*, if that labour is in the service of humanity. Though, therefore, there may be no fear of clash of ideals between us, I warn you against taking the trouble of coming to India for the mere satisfaction of meeting me.

Much as I should love to see you and to hear from you how you could exist in the Himalayas without alcohol and meat, I must not yield to the temptation. Very often I have found the saying "Distance lends enchantment to the view" verified. Moreover at the present moment, we in India have been overtaken by unexpected insanity, which has turned many of us into cut-throats. If, however, you feel that you must come to India even apart from your desire to see me, you would be most welcome.

I have shown your letter to my friend Prof. Horace Alexander who may write to you.

*Yours sincerely,*  
M. K. GANDHI

PROFESSOR OF GEOLOGY  
HOFSTRASSE 100, ZURICH  
SWITZERLAND

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

### 336. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

November 23, 1947

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

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

[From Gujarati]

*Dilhiman Gandhiji*—I, pp. 340-1

### 337. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

November 23, 1947

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

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

[From Hindi]

*Dilhiman Gandhiji*—I, p. 341

### 338. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING<sup>2</sup>

November 23, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

Gandhiji apologized to the radio men for his occasional breach of the rule that his speech should not exceed twenty minutes, not even fifteen, if possible. He said that he could not always observe the rule for his main purpose was to reach the hearts of the audience that was physically before him. The radio came next. He did not know whether there was any arrangement whereby the radio could record longer speeches. He was not in the habit of speaking without purpose or for the sake of hearing his own voice.<sup>3</sup>

A gentleman writes to ask me whether one should take to violence if one's rights are not granted. We cannot secure our rights through violence. I would even say that we can secure nothing through violence. Apparently, it seems we can get our things that way. But how? Supposing a child is having a rupee. If I slap him twice and

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Linguistic Redistribution", 23-11-1947.

<sup>2</sup> Gandhiji exhorted the audience to observe silence which was being disturbed by the murmur among women who were present in a large number. Complete silence was then restored.

<sup>3</sup> This paragraph is from *Harijan*.

take away that rupee, I may have the satisfaction of having got the rupee, but how much would I have lost in the bargain? What could the poor child do? But it would prick me that I snatched away the rupee from the poor child by beating him. Of course there are any number of such rogues in the world. But I cannot do such a thing. I have no right to deprive anyone like that. Snatching away something would have a bad result. That is why I say that we cannot demand rights with violence. There is only one way of securing our rights which I have already explained.<sup>1</sup> Everybody approved of it. I have stated my view about the rights of the people and how they can be achieved. I would say that there is nothing like a right. For the one who has no duties there are no rights either. In other words, all rights emanate from duties—if there is no duty, there is no right either. When I do my duty, it brings some result and that is my right. For instance, I eat because it is my duty to do so. If I eat for pleasure, I fall victim to some disease or other. If I eat because it is my duty to eat, if I pray to God, if I serve the world, that itself is my right. What is my right? It is the right to serve. You would ask me how that can be called a right. But you would understand this if you thought over it a little. I would say that that itself becomes the right. Suppose I work for the whole day and earn eight annas—I get those eight annas as my right. How did I have that right? Because I worked. If I do not work and take eight annas, I appropriate that amount, I do not have it as my right. I can have a right only when I fulfil my promise to work and that too sincerely in thought, word and deed. But if I do not work with my heart in it, if I exploit the employer and deceive him because he is not noticing it, then it is a sin. When I know that everybody is getting a rupee I too want to have a rupee for myself. But when can I have it? Only when I have the employer's permission. I would ask him why, when everybody is getting one rupee, I should work for eight annas only, and would ask for at least fifteen annas. He may say that I should work for eight annas or leave. What should I do in that case? Should I burn his property? Obstruct his work? Do picketing? Go on fast? If I say that I would resign but not work for eight annas, then I would be acting like a gentleman. I would say that whatever you do, you must do in a decent way. Decency means following one's religion, doing one's duty and earning one's rights non-violently by performing

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Speech at Prayer Meeting", 28-6-1947 and "Speech at Prayer Meeting", 29-6-1947.

one's duty. Let us not try to get anything through violence—that is the only way to sustain the world. Otherwise things go wrong in the world.

I have already talked to you about the Christians. Today I will tell you about the Harijans. It is a matter of shame for us that there are Harijans in Rohtak, or, say, in Rohtak district—they were there everywhere before and are still there. There are the Jats and perhaps Ahirs too. They felt that the Harijans were their slaves and they could get any work done by them. Once again the question of their rights came and they felt that the Harijans were born slaves. They may be given water and food but they can get nothing by right. I regard this as arrogance. This was prevalent during the days of the British and now it is all the more there. These poor Harijans are timid, so they came to me and asked me what they should do in the face of harassment. Should they remain slaves or die or leave Rohtak? It is quite understandable that they cannot leave the place. If they leave Rohtak, other people would suffer, because their work would be affected. But this means that Harijans have to remain slaves forever. And so, those poor people came. Some of them study in schools, some are studying further and some lag behind; some even learn crafts, but what can they tell those who are harassing them? We have now reached a stage when we do not stop to think where we are going. During the British days we used to be afraid of being beaten or killed. Now that the alien rule has ended we think that no one can do us any harm. We feel that we can even intimidate a judge if we are brought before him. We think that the judge can do nothing to us. We have become so arrogant. The result is that the Harijans are ruined. So, I suggested to them that they should go to Thakkar Bapa<sup>1</sup>. He was born just to serve the Harijans and the tribals. He does everything for the Harijans. So those people went to him and came back to tell me that he was not doing anything for them. I knew what they wanted. They are seated right here. I told them that they should go to Dr. Gopichand<sup>2</sup>. What if he has become the Premier now? He used to

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

<sup>2</sup> Gopichand Bhargava (1889-1966); President, Harijan Sevak Sangh in the Punjab; Chief Minister of the Punjab, 1947-51

attend to every work of the Harijan Sevak Sangh at one time. I decided to meet him since he was coming here today, and I met him. But what can be done when the people there have become such tyrants, resort to coercion and refuse to listen? The British rule is no longer there, and the people cannot behave like that. Then what should the Harijans do? So, I thought that today I should talk about the sad plight of the Harijans. Can we not do even this much? What is our duty today? So far we have acted against dharma in regarding the Harijans as untouchables and slaves. We committed that mistake, that sin, and the Harijan Sevak Sangh came into being<sup>1</sup> by way of expiation. The Sangh has done considerable work. But not all Hindus have taken the same stand. Millions of Hindus have not even accepted the Sangh. If all Hindus had accepted it, where was the need for me to narrate this sad tale? During the days of the British we used to abuse them and say that we would become good if the British did not rule us. Now the British have gone. But have we become good or bad? I would say that there is more degeneration now than before. We used to commit excesses and are committing them even now. First we oppressed the Muslims. This too was a sin. Forget that Pakistan has come into being, don't think of it. If one man commits a sin should we also do the same? You will realize that it is bad if you think over it. One wrong leads to another. We have killed a large number of people. We have acquired false courage and we are determined to kill the Christians, and then we want to have Jatistan, Ahiristan and so many separate states. But no one is keen about building up India. We must accept the Harijans. They too are Hindus like us. They are not the fifth caste. Hinduism has no fifth *varna*; there are only four, and these four *varnas* are not graded as high or low. Among these four *varnas* the first teaches religion, the second protects people, the third practises trade— to collect millions of rupees, not for personal use but for the welfare of the people—and the fourth serves the society. But people belonging to the four *varnas* can mingle with one another. It is not as though a Shudra, if he became a barrister, could not practise law. He can serve even after becoming a barrister. One who teaches religion serves, so does the one who practises trade and is in employment and also the one who

<sup>1</sup> On October 26, 1932, initially under the name of Anti-Untouchability League, with G. D. Birla as President and A. V. Thakkar as General Secretary

sweeps. All these four are fields of service. The one who teaches religion has to learn more. But that does not mean that he commits a sin by giving up his profession and going in for another. It is not that he cannot do that. Similarly, we created so many castes and now are creating the fifth *varna*. This is wrong, it is an act of wickedness. Everything will be all right if each follows his religion. Now, when we are having the reins of power in our hands, it seems to me that things would be all right if the Hindus and the Sikhs followed their respective religions. I have finished for the day and the meeting is also over.

[From Hindi]

*Prarthana Pravachan*—II, pp. 109-12

### 339. LETTER TO JIVANJI D. DESAI

*November 24, 1947*

CHI. JIVANJI,

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

*Blessings from*

BAPU

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

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

### 340. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

November 24, 1947

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

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

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

[From Gujarati]

*Dilhiman Gandhiji*—I, p. 347-8

<sup>1</sup> Omission as in the source

### 341. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

November 24, 1947

The situation is becoming quite delicate here. There is too much rancour among the Sikhs. Only yesterday some Sikhs went inside a Muslim house in Chandni Chowk and beat up the inmates.<sup>1</sup> What has become of us?

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

Blessings from  
BAPU

[From Hindi]

*Dilhiman Gandhiji*—I, p. 348

### 342. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING<sup>2</sup>

November 24, 1947

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

Those who attend the prayer should not only be free from rancour against one another, but should actively assist in re-

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* also the following item.

<sup>2</sup> As Gandhiji was observing silence, his written message in Hindustani was read out.

establishing the communal harmony which was our pride during the Khilafat days. Have I not attended the huge friendly gatherings of those days? They had gladdened my heart when I witnessed them. Will those days never return?

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

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

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

It is well to consider at this stage a long letter from Sardar Sant Singh of Lyallpur, former M. L. A. (Central). He has put up a forcible defence for the Sikhs. He has read into my prayer speech<sup>1</sup> of last Wednesday a meaning which the words do not bear and certainly never meant by me. Perhaps the good Sardar does know of my intimate connection with the Sikhs ever since my return from South Africa in 1915. There was a time when my word was law to them as to the Hindus and the Muslims. Manners have changed with the times. But I know that I have not. The Sardar, perhaps, does not view the present tendency among the Sikhs as I, their avowed, dispassionate friend without any axe of my own to grind, can and do. I speak freely

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Speech at Prayer Meeting", 19-11-1947.

and frankly because I am their true friend. I make bold to say that many a time the Sikh situation was saved because the Sikhs in general chose to follow my advice. I need, therefore, no reminder that I should be cautious about what I say about the Sikhs or any other community. Let the Sardar and every Sikh, who wishes well by them and is not carried away by the prevailing current, help in ridding the great and brave community of madness, drunkenness and all the vices that flow from it. Let them sheathe the sword which they have flourished loudly and used badly. Let them not be fooled by the Privy Council judgement if it means that the *kirpan* is a sword of any length. A *kirpan* ceases to be sacred when it goes into the hands of an unprincipled drunkard or when it is used anyhow. A sacred thing has to be used on sacred and lawful occasions. A *kirpan* is undoubtedly a symbol of strength, which adorns the possessor only if he exercises amazing restraint over himself and uses it against enormous odds against himself.

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

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

I know the vicious suggestion that the Hindus would be all right if they would sacrifice the Sikhs who would never be tolerated in Pakistan. I can never be a party to any such fratricidal bargain. There can be no rest for this unhappy land unless every Hindu and Sikh returns with honour and in safety to West Punjab and every Muslim refugee to the Union, barring of course those who do not choose to do so for reasons of their own. The sin of mass exchange of

<sup>1</sup> Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah; literally "the Lion of Kashmir"

population must be washed out if we are to live as peaceful and helpful neighbours.

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

*Harijan, 7-12-1947*

*343. LETTER TO CHAMPS R. MEHTA*

NEW DELHI,  
*November 25, 1947*

CHI. CHAMPA,

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

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

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

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

344. LETTER TO CHIMANLAL N. SHAH

November 25, 1947

CHI. CHIMANLAL,

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

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

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

345. LETTER TO HIRAGAURI

November 25, 1947

CHI. HIRAGAURI,

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

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

346. LETTER TO CHUNIBHAI

NEW DELHI,

November 25, 1947

BHAI CHUNIBHAI,

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

<sup>1</sup> Sharda, addressee's daughter, married to Gordhandas Chokhawala

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

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

*Blessings from*

BAPU

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

### 347. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

*November 25, 1947*

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

[From Gujarati]

*Dilhiman Gandhiji—I, p. 355*

### 348. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

*November 25, 1947*

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

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

<sup>1</sup> Hindustani Talimi Sangh

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

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

[From Gujarati]

*Dilhiman Gandhiji*—I, pp. 355-6

### 349. LETTER TO PRABHAKAR

NEW DELHI,  
*November 25, 1947*

CHI. PRABHAKAR,

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

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

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

### 350. LETTER TO KRISHNACHANDRA

*November 25, 1947*

CHI. KRISHNACHANDRA,

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

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

<sup>1</sup> Wife of Akbar Chavda

### 351. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

November 25, 1947

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

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

[From Hindi]

*Dilhiman Gandhiji*, I, p. 355

### 352. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

November 25, 1947

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

[From Hindi]

*Dilhiman Gandhiji*—I, p. 356

<sup>1</sup> Omission as in the source

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

<sup>3</sup> A Congress Seva Dal worker, who had come to see Gandhiji on November 23

### 353. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,  
November 25, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

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

Three types of people came to see me today. One type I would leave out altogether. The person had a big joint family in Lahore. He used to run some hotels, etc., and all his houses and property were left behind and he came here with his wife and children. He did not bring all the family members here. He narrated everything to me and requested me to find some accommodation for him. I told him that I had no authority, and even if I had, I would not fix any

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

He asked me: "Why should the Muslims living here not vacate their houses and go away? Why are they still here?" I was deeply pained to hear this. In the first place the Muslims are already running away in panic and even from among those who have stayed back

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

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

people coming from every place. Since they belonged to the Frontier Province they were asked to approach the Union Government.

Even though the Central Government does not have land, it would be nice if it could get land for these people. The Government should arrange to get for them oxen, ploughs, seeds, etc. I do not know if there is sufficient land in the province of Delhi. But those who want to use the plough should be settled somewhere. Had I been in charge of the Government, I would have set up a separate camp for them, where they could produce their own requirements of food. If that is not possible, let the Government give them loan to meet the expenses of these things. These people say that they do not have any money now, but they are industrious and if they could get facilities they would produce everything and would not sit idle. It seems to me that the country is losing much because such farmers are just sitting idle in so many places. They are our brothers and we must do something for them. I do not know whom I should approach in the Government. But through you I want to make it known to the Government that it is our duty to help such people. They ask me where they could go and stay and how they could eat. I would say that there should be a separate camp for them. But till that is arranged they should live and manage their things in the camps that are already there. If they cannot be given any place here, any vacant place anywhere in India is as good. They do not insist on being accommodated only here. They do not even say that they should be allotted any Muslim house. They say that they do not want to make others pass through the hardships they have known. They say they are poor people. They are strong enough but their strength is not for intimidating others. They want to live in whatever way they can with fear of God in their hearts. I told them that their trouble was only a passing phase. They wondered how that could be—just as somebody here wonders—how it could happen that the people who have come from Pakistan would go back there and the Muslims who have run away to Pakistan would return here, as I have been saying. I told them that it would happen, if not today, then tomorrow. But the condition is that we on our side should become good. Let us convince ourselves that there is none who is our enemy. Even the Muslims are not our enemies. Some people say that even here the Muslims are fifth-columnists. How could the poor things be fifth columnists? Nobody can harass us here and if anyone dares to do so, God will see to him or our Government will put him down. If we come to our

senses here today, everything will be well tomorrow; I too will be free. Today I am very much disturbed. My life has become a burden to me. I wonder why I am still here. I could become strong if Delhi were restored to sanity, and then I would rush to West Punjab and tell the Muslims who have gone away from here that I have prepared the ground for them and they could come back any time they wanted and live wherever they chose. Such an occasion is bound to come some time, for how long can crores remain enemies of each other? It is not possible to kill or drive away 350 to 400 million Muslims who are here in India. One cannot even dream of it and I do not want to entertain any such dream. But today I have become a sort of burden. There was a time when my word was law. But it is no longer so. Should I run away in that case? Whether I live or die, those who are living in misery will certainly return to their homes with honour and respect, not in order to pick up a fight with anyone but to meet their own brethren. Similarly, the Muslims should come back here. That is the only thing that can keep us alive and in no other way can we survive.

[From Hindi]

*Prarthana Pravachan*—II, pp. 117-22

### 354. LETTER TO B. BANERJI

BIRLA HOUSE,  
NEW DELHI,  
*November 26, 1947*

DEAR ADVOCATE BANERJI,

With reference to your letter of 24th instant about displaced Harijans,<sup>1</sup> you have forgotten to tell me where these displaced men are located or whether they are wandering about the streets without shelter. You have also omitted to inform me whether you have approached the Home Minister, because, as you should know, the Home Minister has jurisdiction over all these areas. In order to spare me, you have spared relevant facts and thereby added further burden upon me and harmed your clients. Please, therefore, take the trouble

<sup>1</sup> The addressee had said that the Harijans living in the slums between the Turkman Gate and the Delhi Gate had been displaced and were yet to be rehoused.

to give me full information without embellishment. Then it is possible that I might be helpful.

I must thank you for the information about *Kamins*, which is most interesting and instructive.<sup>1</sup>

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

SHRI B. BANERJI, M.A., L.L.M.  
ADVOCATE, FEDERAL COURT  
DELHI GATE  
DELHI

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

### 355. LETTER TO LILAVATI ASAR

*November 26, 1947*

CHI. LILI,

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

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

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

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

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From the Gujarati original: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

<sup>1</sup> The addressee had informed Gandhiji that Punjab Harijans, described as *Kamins*, could not live in and own land in villages or build *pucca* structures there.

### 356. LETTER TO PRABHUDAS GANDHI

November 26, 1947

CHI. PRABHUDAS<sup>1</sup>,

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

*Blessings from*

BAPU

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

### 357. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

November 26, 1947

The Hyderabad problem has erupted in a more unpleasant manner.<sup>2</sup> Kashmir is in the cauldron. I was not in favour of partition of India because I could foresee these developments. Hence I am not surprised at this crisis we are facing today. Those brothers and sisters who joined the Congress or courted imprisonment are scrambling for power and fame, as if they had done me a favour in doing what they did. I receive heaps of letters on this subject every day. They evoke not anger but pity in my mind at the mentality of our patriots. May God grant good sense to all.

[From Gujarati]

*Dilhiman Gandhiji*—I, pp. 361-2

<sup>1</sup> Son of Chhaganlal Gandhi

<sup>2</sup> The Nizam of Hyderabad had sent a second delegation to Delhi adopting the line that Hyderabad would prefer to remain an independent sovereign State “in close association with the two Dominions”.

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

### 358. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

November 26, 1947

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

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

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

[From Gujarati]

*Dilhiman Gandhiji*—I, p.362

### 359. LETTER TO S. M. QASIM RIZVI

November 26, 1947

BHAI SYED SAHEB<sup>2</sup>,

I am glad that we met. What you said amazed me. It was difficult to believe it. I had asked you if I could send you copies of some documents in my possession. I have many other complaints besides these about you and the Muslims of Hyderabad but I think these three samples are sufficient.

SYED MOHAMMED RIZVI

DARUSSALAAM

HYDERABAD

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

<sup>1</sup> Crisp, thin, paper-like *chapatis*

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

The addressee had persuaded the Nizam to dissolve the first delegation and to appoint another to resume negotiations with the Government of India.

### 360. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

*November 26, 1947*

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

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

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

[From Hindi]

*Dilhiman Gandhiji—I, pp. 362-3*

### 361. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

*November 26, 1947*

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

A gentleman has written a letter to me. It is accompanied with a cutting from a Bombay newspaper. It is stated in that cutting that Gandhi is only carrying on propoganda for the Congress, but people are not interested in hearing it. If the Congress uses the radio, etc., like this for its own propoganda, it is bound to bring about dictatorship in the end. It is absolutely incorrect to say that I sing praises of the Congress I do not sing anybody's praises and, if I do, I sing the praises of the whole world. The cutting also says that the talk of non-violence is just for show, the real purpose being self-glorification by the Government. But I would say that no government which indulges in self-glorification can survive. And I only want to serve dharma. I speak to you only about things related to dharma. Maybe, some people are not interested in hearing what I say. But there are others who write to tell me that they feel greatly encouraged by what I

say. Nobody forces people to listen to me against their wishes. If your mind is somewhere else, you are free to leave this place without listening to what I say. If you leave me alone, I would neither have the prayer here, nor deliver the speeches. I am not particular about speaking on the radio. I do not like it. Even here I do not come with a prepared speech.

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

A gentleman<sup>1</sup> remarks that supposing controls are removed and people start producing food for themselves in the villages and villagers start helping in harvesting the crops, etc., the prices will come down, but the prices will still rise if the farmers have to hire paid labour. It was customary at one time for one farmer to invite other farmers to help in harvesting and threshing and thus take the grains to the house. That practice is now forgotten, but should be revived. Nothing can be accomplished single-handed. That friend also suggests that at least one of the Ministers should be a peasant. Unfortunately, none of our Ministers is a peasant. The Sardar is a peasant by birth and has some knowledge of agriculture, but he is a barrister by profession. Jawaharlal is a scholar and a great writer, but what does he know about farming? More than 80 per cent of our population are peasants. In a true democracy, there should be the rule of peasants in our country. They need not become barristers. They should know how to be good farmers, how to increase their produce and keep the soil fertile. If we had such peasants, I would ask

<sup>1</sup> Secretary of a Provincial Congress Committee, who was a farmer

Jawaharlal to be their secretary. Our peasant ministers would stay not in a palace but in a mud-house, and would toil on the land throughout the day. Then alone can there be a true peasant rule.

[From Hindi]

*Prarthana Pravachan—II*, pp. 123-4

### 362. LETTER TO D. B. KALELKAR

*November 27, 1947*

CHI. KAKA,

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

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

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

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

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

### 363. LETTER TO SURENDRA MEDH

NEW DELHI,

*November 27, 1947*

CHI. MEDH,

I could read your letter only today. It reached here on the 22nd instant. May you have success in your resolve; take it as my blessing. You do remember your resolve, don't you, never to lose temper, to preserve your health in order to render service and to be fearless. The news you convey from there<sup>1</sup> is startling, yet not quite so. I know our

<sup>1</sup> South Africa

people there too well to be startled by the news. And I am alarmed that we have not yet learnt the true lesson. Are we ever going to learn it? How can I guide you from this distance? And where do I have the energy for that? Weigh everything on the scales of truth and non-violence and follow the resultant verdict. And don't be afraid. It should never turn out that you had gone there to exploit and instead were yourself exploited. The best way is not to bother about what any 'ism' says but to associate yourself with any action after considering its merit. Dr. Dadoo<sup>1</sup> has made a favourable impression on everybody here. Our Government here consults me on its various actions.

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

### 364. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

*November 27, 1947*

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

You would have perhaps seen [the report] or you would see, for you could not have yet seen, that I had called on the Governor-General<sup>2</sup>. Any time now it will be in the newspapers. Subsequently I called on Liaquat Ali also. I got an opportunity to visit both of them. We talked at length and they are working on something. I found that Liaquat Ali was not only ill but also confined to bed. He was having pain in the chest and palpitations. He is better now, but has gone very weak. He is staying at the Viceregal Lodge, hence I went and looked him up. He is the Prime Minister of Pakistan as Jawaharlal is the Prime Minister of India. Thus he and the Finance Minister<sup>3</sup> of Pakistan, whose name I have forgotten, Sardar Patel and two others met and they have arrived at some decision. I cannot give the full report. If it is carried out it is possible that we might to some extent come out of our present confusion and hardships. But what happens or does not happen is in the hands of God. Man, after all, can only try.

You must have read in the papers that Sheikh Abdullah has also come here. The Kashmiris refer to him as Sher-e-Kashmir. And so he is. He has done a lot of work; but the remarkable thing is that he has

<sup>1</sup> D. Y. M. Dadoo

<sup>2</sup> Who had resumed office on November 27 on his return from England

<sup>3</sup> Ghulam Mohammed

won over all the Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs. There Muslims are in a majority, and the Hindus and the Sikhs are just a handful. None the less, he carries them all with him. He does nothing that would keep them discontented. Then we saw that while coming here he also went to Jammu. There have been considerable excesses by the Hindus there. This has not been fully reported in the newspapers. The Maharaja and his new Premier<sup>1</sup> also went there. I asked Sheikh Abdullah jokingly if there were two Premiers. He said he also was not aware of it but this much he could say, that he was looking after the affairs of the Government there, whether there were one or two Prime Ministers. So he too went to Jammu. I do not know if what happened in Jammu was at the instance of the Maharaja or his new Premier. But those things happened there and it is a matter of great shame for us. Still Sheikh Abdullah did not lose his balance and the Hindus in Jammu fully supported him. Where then was the need to tell him anything? But he has still to convince Kashmir and the entire India that the only way for Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs is to live together in amity and to trust one another. Then alone can Kashmir and India live together. His attempts are no doubt in that direction, but there is one obstruction. It is a mountain region which is at a height of 10,000 if not 14,000 feet. It snows heavily there. That is why movement from one place to another is not very easy. The movement would be easy only through Pakistan. But who could say that Pakistan would allow the movement? Apart from that, fighting is already going on with the Afridi invaders who may well be said to belong to Pakistan. Under these circumstances, how can the Kashmiris come *via* Pakistan? The Government of the Indian Union has already sent help to them and they can have a straight road only through India. There is not much of trade in Kashmir, but the people of Kashmir are industrious and skilled in handicrafts. Kashmir is a huge fruit garden. But who would bring all those things from there and how? Everything cannot be brought by air. And how can those vendors travel by air? That is not possible. So, the only way is through Pathankot in East Punjab. It is a small road but at least there is one. But the Hindus of East Punjab have become so bad that no Muslim can cross that road. The Sheikh says that that is the greatest danger. He is a very big man but he says that even for him it is difficult to pass through that way. Not only the

<sup>1</sup> Mehrchand Mahajan, Judge of the Punjab High Court, was appointed Prime Minister of Jammu and Kashmir in November

police guards but even ordinary people try to enquire from anyone passing that way who he is and would like to lift his turban to see if he wears a tuft and do similar things. If he happens to be a Hindu, or a Sikh, well and good, but if he is a Muslim then he is doomed. Such is the situation prevailing there.

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

I have just received copies of the *Dawn* and the *Pakistan Times*. Both these are prominent dailies of Pakistan. When something appears in the *Dawn* or the *Pakistan Times* we cannot dismiss it. That way the people of Pakistan can dismiss the reports in *The Hindustan Times* or

*the Bombay Chronicle*, can't they? So this is a useless argument. I think the *Dawn* and the *Pakistan Times* are also good papers which are read by Muslims and run by leading Muslims. They write about the Muslims of Kathiawar in their papers. When the Sardar went to Junagadh I was happy to see that even the Muslims had welcomed him there. They said it was good he went there because they were in great trouble. When the Princes and the people of Kathiawar are all on one side, how long could Junagadh remain apart? Hence, I was happy that the whole problem was solved without any violence. They did not remain strictly non-violent, but whatever violence they used was after great thought and consideration. I was very happy to know all that. But now I hear and even the *Dawn* expresses the view that the Muslims in Kathiawar cannot live in peace. I have received a telegram from a Muslim at the right moment. Kathiawar is a region where the Muslims used to live in peace and nobody ever disturbed them. There were good Muslims there and also rebellious Muslims. They did not quarrel with one another, but struggled for livelihood. Now, in that same Kathiawar such a situation has developed that they wonder if they can live there at all. In such a situation, should all Muslims in Kathiawar run away or should the Hindus slaughter them all? They are terribly harassed, and for me, this is unbearable because I was born in Kathiawar, and I know all the Princes and thousands of people there. Shamaldas Gandhi, who is like a son to me, has become all in all there. He has also formed a Provisional Government there. What is the use of that Provisional Government if, in spite of it, innocent Muslims are killed? When people thus take the law into their own hands, how can the Muslims feel safe there? I cannot say what will happen if this state of affairs spreads to all other places. I do not know if all those things actually happened there, but I have read the report in the *Dawn* and have also received some telegrams. Later I asked some Hindus about it, and they said that there had been some cases of arson and loot, but they could not say if there were any cases of murder or abduction of Muslim women. But the *Dawn* reports that all the four things happened and that too on a wide scale. I had received several telegrams but only one telegram was shown to me and by mistake the others were not shown. Perhaps some fifty telegrams would have come to me from Muslims at different places. And they have a right to tell me that my son has become all-powerful there. But how can I take the responsibility for everything that my son may do? At the same time, how can I convince the world or the Muslims that way? What they

write is true. But when could I have conveyed my feelings to my son? I read about it only today. Hence, through you I wish to convey not only to my son but to the whole of Kathiawar that if the Hindus have become so bad—they can be only Hindus because there are no Sikhs living there except perhaps some who might have settled there to earn their livelihood—then Kathiawar cannot remain undivided. We have taken Junagadh, no doubt, but we have done it in such a way that we are going to lose it—just as we won our freedom but to lose it. Then they remind me of what the Sardar had said in Junagadh. He had said that nobody would touch even a Muslim child provided he was loyal to Kathiawar, that is, the whole of India. He said he would see how anyone could even touch a young Muslim girl. He could say that because he is at once the Sardar and the Home Minister of India. He had a right to say that. But after his saying it, what has happened? It pains me to see that such things could happen in Kathiawar and people could become so mad. We have lost our dharma, our ability to work, and in this way we are going to lose our country. It was my duty to put all these things before you. These things are not reported in our newspapers. But I get all the news. It was of course my duty to make inquiries, but where do I have time for it? Hence, I have told you what I have heard. Even when I met Liaquat Ali I told him that I would like to ask him a question if he permitted. He agreed. Then I asked him if he was aware of what was happening in Kathiawar. He said he knew everything—that such things had happened and all the four things had taken place—but he could not say on what scale. He is the Prime Minister of Pakistan. That is why he openly told me everything, whereas I was talking with great restraint. Then I thought I would convey to you this evening how pained I am by all this.

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

[From Hindi]

*Prarthana Pravachan*—II, pp. 125-31

### 365. NO COMPARISON POSSIBLE

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

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

NEW DELHI, November 28, 1947

*Harijan*, 7-12-1947

### 366. LETTER TO P. KODANDA RAO

*November 28, 1947*

MY DEAR KODANDA RAO,

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

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

I hope Mary<sup>1</sup> is all the better for the little relaxation she had in America, if it was relaxation.

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

With love to you two,

M . K . GANDHI

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

From a photostat: G. N. 6281

### 367. LETTER TO MANKUMAR NAG

NEW DELHI,  
*November 28, 1947*

DEAR MANKUMAR,

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

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

### 368. LETTER TO MANIBEHN

*November 28, 1947*

CHI. MANIBEHN,

I have your letter. I can understand your inability to come over after the receipt of the two resignations. It is your clear duty to bury yourself in your present work. I can understand the resignation by Vithaldas<sup>2</sup>. I was, however, not prepared for the one by Kakubhai<sup>3</sup>. Who can know a man's nature? If his views on non-violence undergo

<sup>1</sup> Addressee's wife

<sup>2</sup> V. V. Jerajani

<sup>3</sup> Purushottam K. Jerajani

a change, all that will remain will be trading in khadi which can be of no interest to him. I would certainly wish that with the change of his views he does not go over to the other extreme. I am returning both the letters.

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

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

### 369. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

*November 28, 1947*

It is my misfortune that Kasturba is not alive today.<sup>1</sup> Had she been alive, she would have actually demonstrated the kind of bravery that is expected from women in the present circumstances. And whatever place our women have achieved today is due to Kasturba's courage, purity and steadfast faith. She might have been a totally uneducated woman, but she possessed all the virtues which a woman should have. On the strength of these virtues, India and I have risen high. I do not hesitate to say that the country or any of her citizens can hardly repay the debt.

[From Gujarati]

*Dilhiman Gandhiji—I, p. 380*

### 370. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

*November 28, 1947*

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

[From Gujarati]

*Dilhiman Gandhiji—I, p. 380*

<sup>1</sup> The addressee had written: "Unfortunately Kasturba is not alive today. Had she been alive and had she been abducted, you would have understood our feelings."

### 371. SPEECH AT GURU NANAK BIRTHDAY FUNCTION

*November 28, 1947*

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

Today Baba Bachittar Singh came to me in the morning and insisted that I should attend the Guru Nanak birthday celebrations. He told me that probably over a lakh of men and women had assembled there, and that most of them would be sufferers from West Pakistan. I hesitated because I felt that many Sikhs had been displeased with me. The Baba nevertheless insisted and said that I should say my say before the meeting. I yielded and felt that even as a mother often gives bitter pills to her children, I would take the liberty of saying things, which might appear to be bitter. In reality and in effect they are meant for your good. My mother often used to administer bitter drugs, but I could not feel elsewhere the comfort that her lap provided for me. Whatever I have said to you up to now, I do not regret. I have said those things as your sincere friend and servant. I have with me Sardar Datar Singh's daughter. You perhaps know him. He has lost his all in the Punjab. He was the owner of large tracts of land and several hundred fine cattle. He has lost many relatives and dear friends in Montgomery, but I am glad to be able to tell you that he has not shed a single tear over the misfortune, nor has he felt any bitterness towards the Muslims. I would like you to follow his example. Sikh friends have told me that one Sikh is considered equal to 1,25,000 men. Where is that bravery today? Have things come to such a pass that a

minority of Muslims cannot live in your midst in perfect safety?

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

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

Let this auspicious day mark the beginning of a new chapter in your life. Let the disgrace of driving out the Muslims from Delhi cease from today. I found to my shame that as our motorcar was passing through Chandni Chowk, which used to be filled with Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims, I did not notice a single Muslim passer-by. Surely we have not come to such a pass as to be afraid of the minority of the Muslims scattered throughout the Indian Union. If there are any traitors in their midst, our Government is strong enough to deal with them. We must be ashamed of hurting children, women or old men. Every man must be considered innocent before he is found guilty by a properly constituted court of law.

I fervently hope that such misdeeds will become now a thing of the past. The *kirpan* is a symbol of sanctity to be exhibited and spent in defence of the helpless and the innocent. The tenth and the last Guru<sup>1</sup> undoubtedly wielded the sword, but never, so far as I know, at the expense of the weak. He had imposed many restraints upon himself. He had many reputed Muslim disciples. So had the other Gurus beginning with Nanak Saheb. Your bravery will be testified

<sup>1</sup> Guru Govind Singh

when all those who belong to different faiths including Muslims become your sincere friends.

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

*Harijan, 7-12-1947*

### 372. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

*November 28, 1947*

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

You know that today is Guru Nanak's birthday. Someone had sent an invitation to me also but at that time I had told him that I should be excused. But today Baba Bachittar Singh came to me and insisted that I should go. He came to me at 10 o'clock and we had to go in an hour's time. I then decided that I should go. Although I have done nothing from my side, my Sikh friends are angry with me today. Of course I have tried to push a bitter pill down their throat. But that is how things go on in the world. The Baba insisted on my going there all the same. He said there must be thousands of Sikh men and women and—some of them must be really in distress—who are eager to hear me. I agreed and told him that he should take me with him at 11 o'clock. He came at 11 a.m. with Sheikh Abdullah. He was also to be taken there. I asked him how Sheikh Abdullah could come there since the Sikhs and the Muslims could not bear to look at one another. But he said that Sheikh Abdullah had done one great thing. He had kept the Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims united in Kashmir and created a situation in which they would wish to live and die together. So I thought that Sheikh Abdullah too should go with us, and we took him along. I was very glad about it. There were thousands of Sikh men and women. I spoke but little; but Sheikh Abdullah spoke fairly at length, and people heard him with attention. There was no trace of disapproval even in their eyes, then where was the question of their creating noise? After all, we had been invited there. And then the Sikhs are a brave community, so it all turned out well. I felt I should pass on this little information to you.

I have received a letter from Bengal. It is from the Muslim Chamber of Commerce. I cannot reply to that letter; but I have thought about it and also enquired from Ghanshyamdas if he knew anything about it. He told me that the Muslim Chamber of Commerce wants to have dealings with the Government and wants to correspond with it. But the Government belongs to everyone, whether he be Hindu, Muslim or Parsi. Then, how can the Muslims, Hindus, Parsis and the Englishmen have separate Chambers of Commerce? Hence the Government has refused to recognize it. That gentleman says in his letter that it is indeed strange that while the Marwari and the European Chambers of Commerce are allowed to exist, only the Muslim Chamber is not being granted the permission. I could appreciate his point and it pained me. If the Government does not wish to have any dealings with the Muslim Chamber of Commerce, it cannot have anything to do with the Marwari Chamber of Commerce and should not have anything to do with the European Chamber of Commerce, either. All these existed till now and the European Chamber of Commerce came into being because Europeans were in power and since we were being ruled by them the Viceroy used to be its President. And since he had to go to Calcutta during Christmas, he used to deliver long speeches there. But now that practice cannot be continued. How can the Europeans, Muslims and Marwaris have separate Chambers of Commerce? There can be only one Indian Chamber of Commerce. If the Hindus, Muslims and Parsis start having their separate Chambers of Commerce, what is the use of India's independence? Especially the Europeans should yield now. They should not do anything by remaining in isolation. They should refuse to have any special privileges, and insist on having the same rights as others. That would become a great hallmark of India's independence. The European Chamber of Commerce used to invite the Viceroy every year. But, in my view, they cannot invite our Prime Minister or Deputy Prime Minister or even Lord Mountbatten. Lord Mountbatten can certainly go and meet them as a European. But the Chamber as such cannot invite him. I am a small man, but I have no doubt about my opinion. Similarly, the Marwari Chamber of Commerce cannot invite anybody from the Government. It can invite anyone as a Marwari, but not on behalf of the Chamber. They all exist because India exists. Even the Muslims cannot live here as a separate community. Let them live here as Indians. In the same manner, all Sikhs, Hindus and Europeans can live here only as Indians. They can

all stay here as loyal citizens of India, and in no other capacity. Hence I thought that I should convey to them this important point. It is better that they hear my voice before they receive what I write from here. If the Muslims insist on having a separate existence politically and otherwise, then that wish cannot be granted. The Europeans can live here as Christians and practise the wonderful things in Christianity. This, after all, is their social or religious sphere. But as far as administration and politics are concerned, they must all be treated on an equal basis. Similarly, trade also belongs to everybody. If the Marwaris, Gujaratis, Punjabis want to have their exclusive shares, what would remain for India? We cannot carry on our work in this manner.

I forgot to mention one thing, which I should not have forgotten. I had mentioned it at the meeting of the Sikhs. But here too there are Sikhs and also Hindus. And what applies to one also applies to the other. Then I would say that we must regard today as the New Year day for the Sikhs. Hence, from today, the Sikhs have a duty to consider all the rest as their brethren. Guru Nanak taught no other thing. He even went to Mecca and has written quite a lot [about communal harmony]. There are many such references in the *Guru Granthsaheb*. What did Guru Govind do? Many Muslims were his disciples and he even killed some people to accommodate them and protect them. He never killed anyone just for the sake of saving a Sikh. He did wield the sword, but he had accepted certain restrictions for its use. Thus, the Muslims may have done anything, but we do not have to imitate them. Let us all remain good and do our duty. When I went to address the meeting of the Sikhs today, I was pained that I did not find a single Muslim on the road. What would be more shameful for us than the fact that not a single Muslim could be found in Chandni Chowk? I found the area crowded with men and unending rows of cars. But there was no Muslim among them. The only Muslim, Sheikh Abdullah, was seated next to me. How can we succeed in these circumstances?

A gentleman writes to me about the renovation of the Somnath temple.<sup>1</sup> This needs money and the Provisional Government at Junagadh, formed by Shamaldas Gandhi, has sanctioned Rs. 50,000 for it. One lakh is promised from Jamnagar. When the Sardar came here I asked him whether even though he was in the Government, he

<sup>1</sup> Which was desecrated and destroyed by Mahmood Gazni during his invasion in 1025 A. D.

would acquiesce in its giving as much money as it liked for Hinduism from its treasury. After all, we have formed the Government for all. It is a 'secular' government, that is, it is not a theocratic government, rather, it does not belong to any particular religion. Hence it cannot spend money on the basis of communities. For it, the only thing that matters is that all are Indians. Individuals can follow their own religions. I have my religion and you have yours to follow.

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

I have learnt one thing more. You must have known that the Muslims in Pakistan have abducted our young girls. Attempts are being made and must be made to rescue them. Let us try to get back every abducted girl who is still alive there. If these girls have been raped, have they lost everything by it? At least, I do not think so. I had even talked about it yesterday. Coercion cannot make one change his religion. But I hear that there is some talk of making some payment to reclaim these girls. Some hoodlums come forward to bring back the girls if they are paid Rs. 1,000 per girl. Has this thing become a business then? If somebody kidnapped one of these three girls with me and then demanded at least a hundred if not a thousand rupees, I would tell him that he had better kill the girl. My daughter would return if God wished to save her. Why should he bargain with me for her? Not only did he abduct the girl but he also indulged in bullying. Having abandoned his own religion he had come to bully me because she was my daughter. I would refuse to give him even a cowrie. Similarly no parent should make such bargains for his daughter. They must think that their daughters are with God and God is everywhere. If a girl loses her husband, where would she go? It is of course a different matter if the girl wants to come over from there and we give her the fare if she does not have it. But if a hoodlum comes

and demands ransom money, his demand just cannot be accepted. I give such instances from there and also from here, because on our side too we have done such things and abducted Muslim girls. Would our Government indulge in such meanness? Should the East Punjab Government or the Union Government ask Jinnah Saheb to pay one lakh rupees for the return of Muslim girls in its custody? I would not give a single cowrie to the Government. How could it demand money as a reward for such abominable deeds? The Government should admit its mistake, make a solemn promise never to repeat it and return the girl along with a compensation. We are not going to achieve anything if we ourselves do not become pure and brave.

I had discussed Kathiawar yesterday. I told you whatever I had read in the Pakistani newspapers and subsequently heard from some Hindus. But today I consulted the Sardar when he came to me. I told him that when he went there he had made big speeches assuring that no one would touch a single Muslim boy or girl there, but then I heard that Muslims were being looted and beaten up, their property was burnt and their young girls kidnapped. He said that as far as he was aware, certainly not a single Muslim was killed nor a single Muslim house looted or burnt. All these things happened there in the chaos prevailing before he visited the place. There were some cases of looting and probably one house was burnt. But as for killing and abducting, these two things did not take place there even then. An agent of the central Government or some Commissioner was always present there. He had been ordered to see that such things were not allowed. He had been instructed to have perfect bandobast so that nobody even touched any Muslim, let alone robbing or killing. Subsequently, no such thing happened. I asked the Sardar if I could mention the thing in the prayer meeting in the evening. He said I could certainly do so. He said that if something had happened there, he would have pursued the matter. He also said that the Hindu Congressmen there at great risk to their lives saved the Muslims and their property. No hooliganism could persist there. The Sardar said that as long as he was there and was in charge of the Home Department, he would not allow such a thing to happen. I was very happy to hear all that and asked his permission to refer to it in public. He said that I could gladly do so and also mention his name. I was so happy that yesterday I had talked about it and today itself I got this information.

[From Hindi]

*Prarthana Pravachan—II*, pp. 131-8

### 373. LETTER TO YVONNE PRIVAT<sup>1</sup>

BIRLA HOUSE,  
NEW DELHI,  
November 29, 1947

DEAR BHAKTI<sup>2</sup>,

I was so glad to receive your argued letter of 27th August. I see that you have grasped the fundamental difference between passive resistance and non-violent resistance. Resistance both forms are, but you have to pay a very heavy price when your resistance is passive, in the sense of the weakness of the resister. Europe mistook the bold and brave resistance full of wisdom by Jesus of Nazareth for passive resistance, as if it was of the weak. As I read the New Testament for the first time I detected no passivity, no weakness about Jesus as depicted in the four gospels and the meaning became clearer to me when I read Tolstoy's *Harmony of the Gospels* and his other kindred writings. Has not the West paid heavily in regarding Jesus as a passive resister? Christendom has been responsible for the wars which put to shame even those described in the Old Testament and other records, historical or semi-historical. I know that I speak under correction for I can but claim very superficial knowledge of history—modern or ancient.

Coming to my own personal experience, whilst we undoubtedly got through passive resistance our political freedom, over which lovers of peace like you and your good husband<sup>3</sup> of the West are enthusiastic, we are daily paying the heavy price for the unconscious mistake we made or, better still, I made in mistaking passive resistance for non-violent resistance. Had I not made the mistake, we would have been spared the humiliating spectacle of a weak brother killing his weak brother thoughtlessly and inhumanly.

I am only hoping and praying and I want all the friends here and in other parts of the world to hope and pray with me that this blood-bath will soon end and out of that, perhaps, inevitable butchery,

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

<sup>2</sup> The name given by Gandhiji to the addressee

<sup>3</sup> Edmond Privat, whom Gandhiji addressed as "Anand"

will rise a new and robust India—not warlike, basely imitating the West in all its hideousness, but a new India learning the best that the West has to give and becoming the hope not only of Asia and Africa, but of the whole of the aching world.

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

As to the last paragraph of your letter, I must confess my ignorance of psycho-analysis. Richard Gregg of U. S. A. has put the problem in a more concrete form than you have. You must have seen his letter and my reply<sup>1</sup> in the columns of *Harijan*.

I hope this will find you both in the same vigour in which you used to be during those happy days that you passed with me in India. I wonder if you will ever again come to India and see it, not in her madness, but wisdom, inspiring every department of life.

Love to you both.

BAPU

MADAME EDMOND PRIVAT  
1 AVENUE DE LA GARE  
NEUCHATEL, SWITZERLAND

From a photostat: G. N. 2342

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* “A Psychological Explanation”, 11-11-1947.

374. LETTER TO ANASUYA SARABHAI

NEW DELHI,  
November 29, 1947

CHI. ANASUYABEHN<sup>1</sup>,

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

*Blessings to all the labourers*

BAPU

[From Gujarati]

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

375. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

November 29, 1947

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

[From Gujarati]

*Dilhiman Gandhiji*—I, p. 389

<sup>1</sup> Sister of Ambalal Sarabhai; President, Majoor Mahajan, a union of mill workers in Ahmedabad

<sup>2</sup> Labour Day, which was to be observed on December 4

### 376. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,  
*November 29, 1947*

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

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

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

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

The third thing is that a large number of our girls have been carried away to Pakistan. We do not know where they have been

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

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

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

<sup>1</sup> Jaggery

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

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

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

[From Hindi]

*Prarthana Pravachan*—II, pp. 138-43

### 377. *ITS WISE USE*

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

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

NEW DELHI, November 30, 1947

*Harijan*, 7-12-1947

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

378. LETTER TO KISHORELAL G. MASHRUWALA

NEW DELHI,  
November 30, 1947

CHI. KISHORELAL,

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

I am all right.

*Blessings to both of you*

BAPU

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

379. LETTER TO SATISH D. KALELKAR

[November 30, 1947]<sup>2</sup>

CHI. SATISH<sup>3</sup>,

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

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

*Blessings from*

BAPU

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

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Letter To Kishorelal G. Mashruwala", 29-9-1947.

<sup>2</sup> The letter is placed in the source among those of this date.

<sup>3</sup> Son of D. B. Kalelkar

### 380. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

November 30, 1947

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

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

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

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

*Blessings to all from*

BAPU

[From Gujarati]

*Dilhiman Gandhiji*—I, pp. 393-4

<sup>1</sup> Omission as in the source

### 381. LETTER TO RAIHANA TYABJI

November 30, 1947

DAUGHTER RAIHANA<sup>1</sup>,

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

To you both,

*Blessings from*

BAPU

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

### 382. LETTER TO MUSLIM CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

BIRLA HOUSE, NEW DELHI,

November 30, 1947

BHAI SALAJI,

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

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

<sup>1</sup> Daughter of Abbas Tyabji; a devotee of Lord Krishna

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "Hindustani Written in Nagari Only", 1-11-1947. .

<sup>3</sup> *Vide* "Speech at Prayer Meeting", 28-11-1947.

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

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

### 383. *SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING*

*November 30, 1947*

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

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

I have received many telegrams from Kathiawar. I have already told you<sup>2</sup> about what I heard and what subsequently appeared in the Pakistani newspapers. Those papers are read by thousands of people

<sup>1</sup> A small mat

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "Speech at Prayer Meeting", 27-11-1947 and "Speech at Prayer Meeting", 28-11-1947.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Having talked about the situation there, let me also talk about the situation here. The Sardar has made some arrangements and he is going to protect all the mosques we have here. You must have read the notice sent by him in the newspapers that the occupied premises of the mosques should be vacated in a week's time, otherwise they will be vacated with the help of the police. But I ask you what will he gain by sending the police? If some Hindus have installed an idol in some mosque—the idol may be of gold or silver or brass or earth or

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

A Muslim gentleman came to see me today. I could not make out what he wanted to say. But he was holding a copy of the Koran which was half burnt. Even that was sacred for him and so he had wrapped it in a very clean cloth. He opened the cloth and showed the

<sup>1</sup> Vermilion

burnt Koran to me. He did not say anything but looked at me with tearful eyes and then went away. He talked a few things with Brajkishan, since I was busy with my work. Similarly, if any Muslim comes here and instals the Koran here and beats you and me up, I would say that he is insulting the Koran. The Koran does not ordain that people should be compelled to accept it.

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

[From Hindi]

*Prarthana Pravachan*—II, pp. 144-50

### 384. TELEGRAM TO NAWAB MOHAMMAD ISMAIL KHAN

[November, 1947]<sup>1</sup>

VICE CHANCELLOR  
ALIGARH UNIVERSITY

DELEGATION SHOULD GO NOW. WORK PAKISTAN PEOPLE CREATE  
SUITABLE ATMOSPHERE. READ MY RELEVANT SPEECH.<sup>2</sup>

GANDHI

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

<sup>1</sup> This was scribbled on the addressee's telegram dated November, 1947 which read: "Many thanks for granting interview University Union Vice President. He informs that you approve of delegation of students going Punjab and induce non-Muslims to remain in their homes. I would prefer their going with you. Wire whether they should proceed now or later."

<sup>2</sup> Presumably, the reference is to Gandhiji's "Speech at Prayer Meeting", 4-11-1947.

385. LETTER TO PYARELAL<sup>1</sup>

December 1, 1947

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

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

386. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

December 1, 1947

CHI. NARANDAS,

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

*Blessings from*

BAPU

[From Gujarati]

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

<sup>1</sup> The addressee along with other workers was working in Noakhali to establish cordial relations between Hindus and Muslims.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "A. I. C. C. Resolutions", 15/16/17-11-1947.

387. LETTER TO NARANDAS NALIERWALA

NEW DELHI,  
December 1, 1947

BHAI NARANDAS,

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

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

I have sent the letter to Vaikunthbhai<sup>1</sup>.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

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

388. LETTER TO HEMPRABHA DAS GUPTA

NEW DELHI,  
December 1, 1947

CHI. HEMPRABHA,

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

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

*Blessings from*

BAPU

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

<sup>1</sup> Vaikunthbhai Lallubhai Mehta

<sup>2</sup> Taralika, addressee's daughter, who had lost her husband

<sup>3</sup> At Sodepur, established by the addressee's husband, Satis Chandra Das Gupta

### 389. NOTE TO LT. GEN. K. M. CARIAPPA

December 1, 1947<sup>1</sup>

You know something of my having written in my paper<sup>2</sup> about your statement on non-violence in London last month.<sup>3</sup>

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

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

### 390. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING<sup>4</sup>

NEW DELHI,  
December 1, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

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

The talk just now is about Kathiawar. Friends say that I gave currency to false allegations of atrocities on the Kathiawar Muslims. Most of the allegations were entirely unfounded. What little mischief might have occurred had been quickly brought under control. But if I

<sup>1</sup> From *Dilhiman Gandhiji*—I

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* “Outside his Field”, 7-11-1947.

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

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

<sup>4</sup> As Gandhiji was observing silence, his written speech was read out at the prayer meeting.

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

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

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

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

we should benefit from others seeing our shortcomings.

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

[From Hindi]

*Prarthana Pravachan—II*, pp. 151-3

391. LETTER TO BAPSY PAVRY<sup>1</sup>

NEW DELHI,  
December 2, 1947

DEAR SISTER,

All that you have told me about Lalkaka<sup>2</sup> is interesting. But there is nothing for me to write about it.

Let me answer your three questions:

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

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

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

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

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

*Blessings from*  
M. K. GANDHI

MISS BAPSY PAVRY  
TAJ MAHAL HOTEL  
BOMBAY

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

<sup>1</sup> Daughter of Khurshedji Erachji Pavry, High Priest of Parsis in India. She later became Premier Marchioness of Winchester, England.

<sup>2</sup> An artist who painted portraits

392. *LETTER TO GHULAM RASOOL QURESHI*

*December 2, 1947*

CHI. QURESHI,

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

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

Can you say that Amina<sup>1</sup> is perfectly all right?

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

393. *LETTER TO DILKHUSH DIWANJI*

*December 2, 1947*

CHI. DILKHUSH,

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

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

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

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

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

<sup>1</sup> Addressee's wife and daughter of Abdul Kadir Bawazeer

394. LETTER TO JAYASHANKAR PANDYA

December 2, 1947

BHAI JAYASHANKAR PANDYA,

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

JAYASHANKAR PANDYA

HEAD OF THE JUNAGADH STATE RAILWAY

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

395. LETTER TO JAMNA GANDHI

December 2, 1947

CHI. JAMNA<sup>2</sup>,

Your letter. I am keeping well. I have heaps of work. Kanu<sup>3</sup> can come over whenever he wishes; so also Abha<sup>4</sup>. I do not have to order them. Don't worry at all. One should give up one's desire to be looked after and served by one's children after having given them away for social service.

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

*Blessings from*

BAPU

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

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Speech at Prayer Meeting", 1-12-1947.

<sup>2</sup> Wife of Narandas Gandhi

<sup>3</sup> Addressee's son and daughter-in-law

<sup>4</sup> Who was running the Kushtha Ashram, an institution for leprosy patients, at Dattapur

### 396. LETTER TO SATYEN

December 2, 1947

CHI. SATYEN,

How did you bring up [the matter] of Manohar Diwan<sup>4</sup>?

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

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

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

### 397. LETTER TO RAIHANA TYABJI

NEW DELHI,

December 2, 1947

DAUGHTER RAIHANA,

I have your long letter. How can I argue with you? You must have received my last letter.<sup>1</sup>

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

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

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

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

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

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

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Letter to Raihana Tyabji", 30-11-1947.

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

### 398. TALK WITH MUSLIMS<sup>1</sup>

PANIPAT,  
*December 2, 1947*

You want to go to Pakistan of your own free will, don't you? When your leaders came to me and pleaded that I should visit Panipat, they told me that people were leaving for Pakistan against their will. But now from what you say I gather that you yourselves want to go to Pakistan. All the same I must tell you that this is your home. You should stay here. Your safety is the responsibility of Dr. Gopichand Bhargava—your Chief Minister—and he will fulfil that responsibility. Nevertheless all men have to die one day. There are 28,000 refugees here. If all of you are cut down to the last man at the hands of your brethren, you will have shown true bravery. It will have brought glory to your religion. You should say, 'Remove the military from here. The Hindus will protect us., I am sure if you show such trust the Hindus will certainly protect you.

[From Gujarati]

*Dilhiman Gandhiji—II, p. 6*

### 399. TALK WITH MUSLIM DELEGATION<sup>2</sup>

PANIPAT,  
*December 2, 1947*

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

What happens in Pakistan is a matter for God to see. But I shall never advise you to go away from here. If, of course, you want to go of your own will, no one can stop you. But you will never hear

<sup>1</sup> Gandhiji reached Panipat at about 11.30 a. m. and met the Muslim refugees who desired to go to Pakistan.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Gopichand Bhargava, Swaran Singh, Hifzur Rehman, Deshbandhu Gupta and the Deputy Commissioner were also present.

Gandhi utter the words that you should leave India. Gandhi can only tell you that you should stay, for India is your home. And if your brethren should kill you, you should bravely meet death. That is the way I am made. That is the way I would have people behave.

In Pakistan many Hindu girls have been forcibly converted and subjected to extreme barbarities. Hindus too have done similar things. But I am telling you how you should behave like true Muslims. You should seek help from the Pakistan Government and persuade your brethren there to console the young women who have been abducted. You should tell them: 'Sisters, you have been cruelly treated. We forgot that we were human. From now on you are our mothers, our sisters, our daughters., If you work in this spirit you can make Pakistan really *pak*— really pure. Of the three things—human dignity, life and property—you should make it your business to safeguard one and devote yourselves wholly to service. Then, I assure you, Hindus will worship you and you will be able to serve not only Pakistan but also the Muslims living in India. Geographically you are separated but no one in the world can separate the hearts. Where can you run away from friends and relatives? Someone among you said that Gurubachan Singh had behaved treacherously. I tell you that if a man himself is honest it can do him no harm if the other party is treacherous. I say this from personal experience. I am not preaching like a Christian. Deception and lies can never succeed. Otherwise truth would be at a discount in the world; anyone could get away with lies.

The Ministers have assured you that they will protect you even at the risk of their own lives. Still if you are resolved to go and do not place any trust in their word there is nothing further I can say to you. What can I do to reassure you? If I should die tomorrow you would again have to flee. Therefore you cannot go by what others say. You have to decide for yourselves after considering what your duty is towards the country, towards your brothers, towards the land that gave you birth, where you grew up. This will not be because Gandhi says it. There was a time when I wished to live a hundred and twenty-five years. Today I do not have that wish any more. I do not consider our present freedom as freedom. I consider it as the undoing of the country. You are destroying the independence that we have gained without shedding a drop of blood. You are cutting off your own feet. Today Punja Saheb cannot be visited by any Sikh pilgrim. What a sorry pass we have come to after we became free. If even now you

take up the work of service without asking where and by whom the present tide of violence was started, you can still taste the nectar of freedom. Where are all the proclamations of Jinnah ? The more I dwell on these matters the more unhappy I become. I do not believe in shedding tears. But today, having heard you and seen you, my heart weeps.

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

[From Gujarati]

*Dilhiman Gandhiji*—II, pp. 8-10

#### 400. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING<sup>1</sup>

PANIPAT,  
December 2, 1947

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

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

<sup>1</sup> The Gujarati version in *Dilhiman Gandhiji* has been collated with the report in *The Hindustan Times*.

<sup>2</sup> On November 10

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

that I should also go mad? To return evil for evil makes for the fall of both parties. No one can be forced to accept another's faith.

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

No one had imagined that the freedom that came would be such a terrible thing. But that was the will of God. If we can pass the present test we shall have risen very high. Sjhariar asks, if India fails what will become of his country? The whole of Asia today has its eyes fixed on us. God has given us a jewel in the person of Jawaharlal. The whole world likes him. We have a leader such as the Sardar. The two make an inseparable pair. Neither can do without the other. India has a name in the world because of Jawaharlal. Who otherwise would care about India? But Pandit Nehru will not be able to do his job without your co-operation. Let us not allow India's name to fall into disrepute.

To the refugees from West Punjab, Gandhiji said that he knew that they had encountered untold sufferings. It might also be a fact that the Muslims staying here might be having some property and enjoying themselves a bit. But, just because they had suffered, they should not deprive the Muslims of their property. He would not believe that all refugees were bad people.

There are 28,000 refugees in this camp. Not all of them can be good. If there are goonda elements among them you should pick them out and make of them good men by your love. They are all brothers here, so what need is there for the military? If there are two brothers in a family does it need any police force to guard them? Your salvation lies in learning to protect one another. You should go to your Muslim brothers and sisters and plead with them not to leave India. If you do not cast covetous eyes on their homes, I am sure Hinduism will live for ever. We must forget what has happened. In this alone lies our good. You may listen to an experienced old man if you care, for today my voice is a voice in the wilderness. However I must say what I consider my duty to say. Today I do not have the wish or the zest to go on living. Time was when I wanted to live 125 years and bring about Ramarajya. But if I do not have your co-operation what can I do all by myself ?

It was said, Gandhiji continued, that the Muslims had arms in their possession. There might be arms with the Hindus and Sikhs too. He said that all arms, whether they be with Hindus, Sikhs or Muslims, should be licensed.

*Dilhiman Gandhiji—II, pp. 10-2, and The Hindustan Times, 3-12-1947*

## 401. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,  
December 2, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

I had told you I should be going to Panipat today. I had intended to be back by four o'clock. But there was so much work that I could not come before thirty-five minutes—at any rate thirty-three minutes past five. Then I heard the prayer. I have said that the prayer should begin whether I am present or not and we must be regular. Then I went and washed myself. Hence the delay, for which I apologize.

I had already hinted at the purpose of my visit to Panipat. I had been hoping and I continue to hope even now that by some means or other the Muslims of Panipat should be stopped from going [to Pakistan]. It will be good for us, good for the whole of India and because it will be good for India it will be good for Pakistan as well.

There are people living in distress there—the refugees who have come from Pakistan—and they must continue to live in distress as long as they do not return to their homes. Similarly the Muslims who have been forced to flee to Pakistan will be unhappy there. You should have no doubt about it.

It was good that I went there. It was my duty to do so. Dr. Gopichand Bhargava had come and so had Sardar Swaran Singh, the Home Minister. I had no idea that Dr. Gopichand was coming. Sardar Swaran Singh had of course sent word that if he should be needed he would come. I said there would be no need for him to come because whatever had to be done would have to be done by me. Nevertheless he came. East Punjab is after all his region and it was his right to come. Deshbandhu Gupta had sent a message that he was ailing and so would not be able to come. I had agreed, but since he belongs there he did come. It was good that all of them came. Then there was the Maulana whom we often see here. I then spoke to people. I spoke to the Muslims separately, though the two Ministers were present.<sup>1</sup> They thought that the Ministers should be there, for

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Talk with Muslim Delegation", 2-12-1947.

what was the good of my saying something which the Ministers would not know about and which I would not be able to enforce ? The Muslims admitted that they had agreed in talks earlier not to go but that later the situation had worsened; that nothing had been done on the lines I had assured and they had felt harassed; their honour was not protected. When they could not protect their lives, their property and their honour, how could they stay? They said they would put up with the destruction of their houses, they would put up with arson, they would put up even with loss of lives but they would protect their honour to the last. If they could do that they would stay. I said that he who loves mankind loves God. He has nothing to fear.

I then spoke to the refugees there.<sup>1</sup> By the time I was done it was half past three. I had set out from here at 10.30 and reached there at about 11.30. My talks with the Muslims continued up to 3; there was so much to talk about. Then I spoke to the refugees. After me Dr. Gopichand Bhargava addressed them. But when Sardar Swaran Singh got up to speak there was pandemonium. People started shouting; not because they wanted to insult him but they could not contain themselves. They became angry that he dared to speak at all.

It was a large crowd. There must have been some twenty thousand people. The ground was filled to capacity. Roofs were covered with people. They heard me in silence. But when the others began, people stood up. It has become customary with us to give vent to anger. They stood up and began to shout that the Muslims should be expelled. I told them that it would not be good to drive out the Muslims. They had their homes, and they should not be forced to leave; that forcing the Muslims to leave would undo all our efforts there. I was ready to resume my seat but Sardar Swaran Singh, being the Home Minister and also a brave man, would not be cowed down, he said this would not do. He tried to speak but nothing came of it. People continued their shouting and continued to stand. Then their representative, their leader came forward. He began with a *bhajan* in Punjabi. I had not known that he was a poet. He knew that Punjabis like *bhajans*. Then he admonished them in Punjabi and told them that he was their representative and they must listen to him, that shouting would achieve nothing. What would they gain by disturbing the meeting. It would only harm them. Peace was restored at last but it took some doing. People sat down and the proceedings were

<sup>1</sup> Vide "Speech at Public Meeting", 2-12-1947.

continued in Punjabi.

I cannot speak Punjabi but I understand it. I liked what [Sardar Swaran Singh] said. When we were with the Muslim leaders he had assured them that whatever might happen in Pakistan we would not become inhuman. He said that ours was a democratic Government and would not let such things happen here. If any Muslim girl had been kidnapped she would be restored by every means. Help would certainly be needed for they would not know where an abducted girl was. But if it was known she would be brought back. The other thing they would do was about the Muslims who had been converted to Hinduism or Sikhism. They were still Muslims. Such conversion would not be accepted as lawful, for it was against morality. Similarly the Muslims who were still here would be protected whether or not Pakistan protected [the Hindus and Sikhs]. Thirdly, Sardar Swaran Singh said that the mosques would be protected. Of course, protection of life and property was a difficult matter. There was the police, the Government—they would do what they could, but if everyone took to plunder and pillage they could not be shot down. The Government was helpless. Our freedom was crippled and we had to confess our helplessness. They could certainly plead with people but they had to admit their helplessness. He was very persuasive. He pleaded with them saying that India's honour and dignity were in their hands, that the Government was theirs, for it was they who had elected the Ministers. And since the Government was there it would do its duty, do what it must and they must help. He explained all this. It took a long time. In the end there was peace at the meeting. Every time it happens that when people lose their temper on such occasions, they begin to understand things after a time when they calmly think over it. I saw this during the course of our struggle for freedom. There were many occasions when it looked as if the meeting would have to be terminated, but in the end they saw the point. Afterwards the representatives of the refugees came and followed me. I asked them to accompany me in the car. If I was not to do so, I would have been further delayed. I had to count every minute, for I wanted to reach here in time. I have forgone my siesta. When everyone is unhappy, how can I seek rest? I am certainly much more comfortable than they are. They tell me that the refugees there are in much distress. Of course something has been done. Things are certainly much better than I had seen them last. Some arrangements have been made. Some roofs have been put up. They certainly have tents to live in, but the

food is not all that it should be. The Governor of East Punjab<sup>1</sup> also saw it and admitted that it should be improved. As to clothing it seems all the decent clothing is taken away by some people. What shall I say as to who does it? The result is that the refugees get only rags. This should not be so. They must get the things that are intended for them. People die too, which is only natural. Two persons had died; there was no firewood to cremate them. A whole day was lost. I forget the name of the doctor in charge. He was not to be found anywhere. By then it was seven in the evening. Since no arrangement could be made for firewood, some people approached a relative of one of them and offered to raise a contribution of ten to fifteen rupees. But the relative who was a strong man refused to accept the donation. He said that if there was no firewood he would bury the dead. Burial is not common among the Hindus and I was sorry that he had to do it.

I learnt afterwards that well-to-do refugees are able to get things but not the poor ones because the arrangements are not in the hands of senior officers. The workers were taken from among the people there and everything is done through them. If they are good, altruistic and dedicated to service things go well. But if they do not have the spirit of service it becomes difficult. I like to have everything in the open. Let us not resort to physical violence. It generates poison. We have an alternative method and that is to speak up frankly. It does not do to hide things. One must call a spade a spade. What is lost by accusing those who indulge in evil practices? If they are guilty the charge should be made. That is why I tell you that it is a bad practice. We are already unhappy. Hundreds of thousands of people have been uprooted from their homes and have come here. If we indulge in such practices it would be very bad. Today a small boy confronted me. He was wearing a sweater. He took it off and stood glaring at me as if he would eat me up. He was just a child. What could he do? "You say that you have come to protect us", he said, "but my father has been killed. Get me my father back." But his father was dead. How could I bring him back. The boy became angry. I can imagine that if I had been of his age and in his position perhaps, I would have done the same. I was not annoyed. I felt sorry for him.

We see such scenes today. The refugees say that all of them at any rate are not bad; that the management should be entrusted to some of them, for after all magistrates and others were there to

<sup>1</sup> C. L. Trivedi

supervise. Other people too had to be supervised. At least the distribution of blankets should be entrusted to them. Their children should get milk but the milk does not reach them. The staff appropriates it. Would it not be better to give them the milk for distribution rather than that the members of the committee should drink it up? Then some of them have been receiving letters from other refugees elsewhere. They ask them in the letters to tell the Mahatma to attend to them too. It is good I went there. I told them to be peaceful and to persuade the Muslims to stay on. I told them that it would be something unique for Panipat which has been the scene of so many battles.

There are 28,000 refugees living in the camp. I told them, “If more refugees join you what can it matter to you? It is enough for you if you get food to eat, clothes to wear and a roof or even a tent to live under. You can get nothing more than this wherever you may go. You can create many things out of these three things. You should know what developments are taking place all over India, what problems are coming up and how we can solve them. The Government is there, but the Government cannot force you to do anything.”

Yesterday Jawaharlal said a beautiful thing. I happened to see it in the papers today; it is rarely that I get a chance to read anything. Jawahar says that he does not like being called Prime Minister. When did he ever become Prime Minister? He would like it and it would be more appropriate to call him the first servant of the nation. If everyone became the first servant he would have to think of others all the twenty-four hours of the day. If the officers under Jawaharlal were to think so, our country would become a land of gold. We would have Ramarajya, the kingdom of God upon earth. Then our freedom would be complete. If after attaining freedom we continue to conduct ourselves in the manner we are doing now then that freedom will irk me. Is this the kind of freedom we are going to have? No, it cannot be.

[From Hindi]

Courtesy: All India Radio. Also *Prarthana Pravachan*—II, pp. 154-9

#### 402. LETTER TO CHAMPA MEHTA

*December 3, 1947*

CHI. CHAMPA,

I have your letter. It will not help me in any way to call you here. I still do not feel confident about you. The final decision lies with Chimanlal and others. You can stay on only if you win their confidence. But how can you stay on if you yourself have no faith in them? They have no axe to grind. They assumed the responsibility of letting you stay there for my sake. Be calm now and do what seems proper to you. Don't hurt their feelings.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

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

#### 403. LETTER TO SHAMALDAS GANDHI

NEW DELHI,

*December 3, 1947*

CHI. SHAMALDAS,

Herewith a copy of a wire from Junagadh. If the contents of the wire are true, I would say you are out of your senses. If they are absolute lies you have nothing to lose. I get a fairly large number of letters against you from Hindus. They say that you cannot talk of anything but the sword. The problem of Kathiawar is not as simple as you all might be thinking. Even after you have eliminated the Princes, so long as you do not have a humble and selfless leadership no good will come to Kathiawar. We might have found it easy to win swaraj but preserving and making it worth while has become difficult.

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

#### 404. LETTER TO LILAVATI ASAR

December 3, 1947

CHI. LILI,

I have your two letters. In one you say that Dwarkadas has completely recovered, and Damayanti also is all right. In the other letter you say that another operation may be necessary. I do hope you will get a room somewhere.

Herewith a note for Rs. 100.<sup>1</sup> Can you not manage to borrow Rs. 100 from some source? I hesitate to send even a draft. If there is no facility at the hospital for encashing it, how far will you have to go for it?

You should put in regular hard work and clear your final examination. That will be the end of a struggle. Really speaking once we have made up our minds to do a thing, then there is no more struggle, it is all play.

I got the liquorice tablets. You wasted your time over it. But now I shall use the same mostly and cloves very rarely.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From the Gujarati original: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

#### 405. LETTER TO BACHCHHARAJ & CO.

NEW DELHI,

December 3, 1947

TO

Bachchharaj & Co.

Pay Rs. 100 (Rupees one hundred only) to Lilavati Udeshi who is studying medicine and debit it to my public account.

M. K. GANDHI

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

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* the following item.

406. TALK WITH LT.-GEN. K. M. CARIAPPA<sup>1</sup>

NEW DELHI,  
December 3, 1947

Gandhiji turned to him and said smilingly:

I see you have again removed your shoes outside. You had done it when you came two days ago also.<sup>2</sup>

The General replied: "It is but proper that I should do so when coming to see a godly man like you."

I have been receiving numerous complaints concerning the police and the army personnel. They take bribes and are biased in favour of their own community. If the seed itself is rotten what will become of the plants and the foliage? Not even thorns will then grow. The army and the police are potent limbs of the country. It is a pity that following the partitioning of the country the army also had to be partitioned on communal lines. But it is the duty of policemen not to show caste and communal bias. They must bravely serve the country. It is the duty of every armed force to protect the minority community. Pakistan will not heed my word, but if you the Generals of the army of the Indian Union listen to me and help me, I shall believe we have truly gained freedom in a non-violent way. Let us make ourselves worthy of such freedom. In the swaraj gained in such a wonderful way, the personnel of the army and the police must always remain pure and above board.

What a wonderful example of this unity is set by Netaji, the founder of the Indian National Army; "Let every Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Parsi and others think that India is their country and work unitedly for it." He has proved this unity before us all.

Q. Pakistan has no use for non-violence. How then can we win their hearts and prove the efficacy of ahimsa?

Violence can only be overcome through non-violence. This is as clear to me as the proposition that two and two make four. But for this one must have faith. Even a weapon like atom bomb when used against non-violence will prove ineffective. This applies to true

<sup>1</sup> The version in *Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase* has been collated with the Gujarati in *Dilhiman Gandhiji*.

<sup>2</sup> Vide "Note to Lt.-Gen. K. M. Cariappa", 1-12-1947.

non-violence. But very few people have grasped this eternal truth. Faith by itself also will not do. It must be supplemented by knowledge. Training in ahimsa is not to be had like training in the use of weapons in military training colleges and institutions. It requires purity of heart and soul-force. The difficulty we find in pitting non-violence against violence only shows our inner weakness. A short time ago, even Mr. Jinnah had clearly stated that in political disputes violence must be eschewed.<sup>1</sup> If Mr. Jinnah meant what he said then the violence that today engulfs us can be brought to an end in no time. And if Pakistan does not stop violence, the violent killings can still be stopped if Hindus in the Union have faith in non-violence. A votary of non-violence will not allow the slightest hint of violence to enter his heart. How then can his conduct be violent?

The General said: “. . . If we have to have an army at all . . . it must be a good one. . . . I would . . . like to remind them in my own way of the need for and the value of non-violence. Tell me, please, how I can put this over, i.e., the spirit of non-violence to the troops . . . without endangering their sense of duty to train themselves well professionally as soldiers. I am a child in this matter. I want your guidance.”

Gandhiji laughed. He was still at his charkha. He paused, looked at the General and said:

Yes. . . . you are all children, I am a child too, but I happen to be a bigger child than you because I have given more thought to this question than you all have. You have asked me to tell you in a tangible and concrete form how you can put over to the troops you command the need for non-violence.

I am still groping in the dark for the answer. I will find it and I will give it to you some day.

He then went on to recount how even Lord Wavell and Lord Mountbatten, both veteran professional soldiers, had expressed their implicit faith in the value of non-violence.

Lord Wavell was very impressed with the non-violent way in which the communal troubles between Hindus and Muslims had been tackled by us. They both hoped that our ideologies of non-violence and pacifism would be understood by the peoples of the world and practised by all in solving international disputes.

Of course, they had at the same time said that one should always be prepared for self-defence. At parting Gandhiji repeated:

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* “A Joint Appeal”, 12-4-1947.

I will think about this seriously in the next few days and will let you know about it soon. However, I would like to see you more often so that we may further discuss this important subject. . . . I have always had the greatest admiration for the discipline in the army and also for the importance you army people pay to sanitation and hygiene. I tell my people in my talks to them to copy the army in these respects.

*Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase*, Vol. II, pp. 524-5, and *Dilhiman Gandhiji—II*, pp. 13-5

#### 407. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,  
December 3, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

I receive many visitors. I do not relate to you everything they say. I do let you know if something is important enough. Today I had some visitors. It appeared they had had some business with the Prime Minister. They said the Prime Minister had earlier made a certain promise to them and that he was now going back on the promise. How was that, I asked. They said they had his letter. I asked them to show me the letter. After all I had no more power than they. I was not the Government. Yes, I was a servant, a friend of the Prime Minister, a co-worker, and so I would speak to him. But how was I to mention it to him? Then I reflected on the matter and I asked myself why this sort of thing happened,—people saying one thing and doing another. I have to bear the brunt of all this. I am sure that I have never deliberately deceived anyone. It is possible that, without understanding the implications, one may say something in all good faith without any dishonest motives. And yet a person may feel aggrieved thinking that he has been deceived. Often things are not fully understood and the result is breach of faith. But if a person deliberately breaks a promise it is a bad thing. This should not happen. The best thing is to keep quiet. Once we have put into words what we feel, we must act accordingly. Only then can we be said to be keeping our word. And now especially when we are free and run the Government in the name of the millions we must be very careful. We must show restraint, discretion and humility. We must not be arrogant. Only then can we take our work to a successful conclusion. No one

then will be able to charge us with breach of faith. If we say that we shall distribute a certain thing free of cost and later say that we shall charge something even a little for it, then it is breach of faith. Today we have come to such a state that we do not value our word. We make a promise today and wriggle out of it the very next day. If I make an appointment with you for 4 o'clock tomorrow but at the appointed time go off to a dance, it is breach of faith. So I say that we have to be very careful. We must stick to our word, we must weigh our words before we utter them. We must not say anything on impulse. For instance we may say that there was rioting and later colour it and say that there was murder. This sort of thing cannot be hidden for long. The truth comes out in the end. So we must be careful.

A doctor from Sind has written to say that the Harijans left behind there are in a pitiable condition.<sup>1</sup> If only Harijans were left behind in Sind and caste Hindus went away, nothing but annihilation awaited them. The only condition for life there would be complete slavery and ultimate acceptance of Islam. This is a bad situation. Today the situation is such that if the Pakistan Government says something, the officials at its behest do not implement it. Of course the same thing is true of India. Jawaharlal and the Sardar say that they shall protect Muslims, they shall not allow even a single Muslim to be driven away to Pakistan, but it does not happen. They do not have people to enforce what they say. Their subordinates do not carry out their wishes and the people too do not pay any heed. Yesterday I told you that I had been to Panipat. All the Hindus and Sikhs who have arrived there are in a miserable plight. They were ill-treated in Pakistan and they had to flee. They came because they were oppressed. Otherwise what was the need for them to run away? Having themselves run away from oppression, does it behove them to force others into a similar situation? But this happens. How then can I complain to Pakistan? But I have to do so. The correspondent has written in detail. He says no Harijan wants to continue living in Sind. If they want to stay together at one place they are not left in peace. Forced labour is extracted from them. They are told to clean lavatories, do the sweeping and so on. A Bhangi should not be forced to clean lavatories today. If he can become a barrister, why should he

<sup>1</sup> According to a telegram sent by Choithram Gidwani to B. R. Ambedkar, Harijans in Sind and Baluchistan were being prevented from migrating to India under the Essential Services Ordinance.

be stopped? Why should we insist that his only work is to clean lavatories? They must be free to act according to their inclination. If they are told that they can stay only if they embrace Islam, what can they do and where can they go? You will have seen the long statement Jagjivan Ram<sup>1</sup> has issued. He says that Harijans must come away from Sind. If they want to come they should be given facilities to do so. So long as they are in Pakistan they must be allowed to go about their business unhampered; otherwise they should be allowed to leave. If this is not done it is going to leave a permanent sore spot on the Hindu and the Sikh minds. Although India and Pakistan are two countries, we cannot forget one another. We have to conduct ourselves as gentlemen. We must not hurt anyone. We must not force anyone to become a Muslim. We must not molest and abduct anyone's wife or daughter. Dr. Gopichand Bhargava and Sardar Swaran Singh also said yesterday that India could not tolerate such things. Today the atmosphere has become so polluted that if a Muslim says that he has embraced Hinduism this should not be accepted as genuine. Harijans are non-Muslim. If they say that they have embraced Islam it is not to be accepted. It is only fear that makes them say so. All such conversions should be considered null and void.

Contradictory reports are coming from Kathiawar. Some reports say that the situation in Kathiawar is as bad as described. A telegram to that effect has come only today. Other reports are from the Congress sources and these say that such is not the case, that the Congress workers can never indulge in such things. The Hindu Mahasabha and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh say that they have never burnt anybody's house. Which reports am I to accept as true? Shall I believe the Congress, or the Muslims, or the Hindu Mahasabha and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh? It has become very difficult to get at the truth. If mistakes have been committed we must acknowledge them. If the Hindus have been in the wrong, if they have committed excesses, it must be admitted. But if this is not the case and if the Muslims exaggerate when they say that their properties were burnt, they were forced to become Hindus, that their daughters were abducted, we must proclaim it to the world that that was not the case. Similarly if the Hindu Mahasabha and the R.S.S. have not

<sup>1</sup> (b. 1908); President, All India Depressed Classes' League, 1936-46; Labour Minister in the Interim Government; later held important portfolios like Railways, Food and Agriculture and Defence in the Government of India

done anything wrong I must congratulate them. What the truth is I do not know, though I am trying to find out. I have written to people<sup>1</sup> I know there. I have also written to Muslims. I have asked them to give me all the details so that I may be able to see what shapes things are taking there and what the upshot is going to be.

Now about South Africa. You will have seen what Vijayalakshmi Pandit has said. She says we have been defeated because we have not been able to secure the required two-thirds of votes.<sup>2</sup> However, a number of people have been helpful and supported her stand. Besides, truth is on our side and in a way we have secured a victory.<sup>3</sup> The Indians in South Africa should therefore not be disheartened. But there is something I have to say. Vijayalakshmi could not have said it because she represented the Government of India. You do not have a remedy but I have one which I had applied in South Africa. What is defeat or victory? The whites of South Africa and Smuts<sup>4</sup> may say that they do not want us there, that we must leave. They may deny us food and water as is happening to non-Muslims in Pakistan and to Muslims in India. They have driven away Hindus and Sikhs from Pakistan under threats. There are still a large number of Hindus and Sikhs in Bannu. What will happen to them I do not know. Meharchand Khanna<sup>5</sup> has been to see me today. He says that in other places too there are people whose lives may or may not be saved. If they survive they will have to embrace Islam. But at Bannu the number is very large. What should they do? They are like prisoners. They cannot get out and if they stay on what are they to eat? They are in a sad plight.

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Letter to Jayashankar Pandya", 2-12-1947 and "Letter to Shamaldas Gandhi", 3-12-1947.

<sup>2</sup> The Indian Resolution calling for a Round Table Conference on the treatment of Indians in South Africa failed to obtain the requisite two-third majority in the United Nations General Assembly, 31 having voted in favour, 19 against, with 6 abstentions and one country absent.

<sup>3</sup> Vijayalakshmi Pandit had said: "ours has been a moral victory of no small importance."

<sup>4</sup> Field Marshal Jan Christiaan Smuts, Prime Minister of South Africa

<sup>5</sup> Ex-Minister for Finance in N.W.F.P.; Secretary of the Khudai Khidmatgar Parliamentary Party. He was sentenced to six months' rigorous imprisonment on November 27 and on being released on bail came to Delhi. He expressed grave concern about the safety of the 40,000 Hindus and Sikhs who were still in Peshawar, Mardan, Bannu, Dera Ismail Khan and Parachinar, awaiting evacuation as no refugee train was allowed to leave the N. W. F. P. since October 28. He was also concerned about the non-Muslim prisoners and under-trials in the Frontier jails.

What can the Government do? It has its own problems. What I have to say here applies also to the Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs in South Africa. I must tell them that victory and defeat are of no consequence. 'You must say that you will live in South Africa with honour, that you will not leave. You did not go there because you wanted to. You were invited. You went as indentured labourers and afterwards you had children there. If it is a question of rights no one except the Negroes have a right to be there. The Boers do not have even as much right as you have'. There were delegations from all over the world at the U.N.O. Our country also had to send a delegation. We acted rightly. People assemble there to bring about justice, that they cannot or will not is another matter. We must continue our fight in South Africa, not with a sword but with soul-force. Even the little girl sitting beside me has soul-force, others too have it. The soldiers, too, have soul-force. The sword can be snatched away from us. We can be disarmed. Our arm can be cut off but no one can take away our soul. It is eternal. It is there today and it will remain tomorrow and the day after. The body is worthless without the soul. The body one day has to be disposed of. My wife died and I could not keep her with me. Mahadev<sup>1</sup> died who was of so much help to me. But I could not keep him and his body had to be cremated. So I shall say that if the Indians in South Africa have self-respect which I think they have, if they have courage, they must say that even if they did not secure two-thirds of the votes at the U. N. they did secure a very large number. They must tell the whites of South Africa to let them stay in the country with honour. They must tell them that they intend to conduct themselves with dignity. They do not want government service. They do not expect help from the whites but they must be allowed to breathe the air, drink the water and live on the land. After all they pay their way, earn their keep, wherever they want to stay. They do not claim the right to vote. If they want the vote they must have it in the same way as the whites have it; otherwise they will do without it. They will not carry on satyagraha for franchise but they must safeguard their dignity. They must have bread and they must have water and they must have land. Also their children must have education. They will understand if no grants are forthcoming for the purpose but the education for the children is their right and they have the right to fight for this. It is not a question of victory or defeat but of laying

<sup>1</sup> Mahadev Desai

down one's life. They must do or die. There is no other recourse. If they want to live in this world in dignity they must do or die. Their duty is clear and admits of no argument. This is what I have to say to the Indians of South Africa and to you. I have nothing else to offer.

[From Hindi]

Courtesy: All India Radio. Also *Prarthana Pravachan*—II, pp. 160-5

#### 408. LETTER TO KANU GANDHI

NEW DELHI,

5 a. m., December 4, 1947

CHI. KANAIYO,

Winter has now begun in right earnest here. We have an electric heater for the night.

I got your letter and the enclosed copy of your suggestions. I read them as carefully as I should. I like your suggestions. The entire department should become self-supporting. That will be the true test of its genuineness. True, we are faced with the question of the real meaning of 'self-supporting', and then there is always such a thing as self-deception.

Four or five of you may come over if you can. I should like it. But even then it would still be doubtful if I can give an impartial verdict. I need to see things for myself and it can be only if I were personally present in Noakhali. It remains to be seen whether such an occasion will come in my present life. Hence I leave it to each one of you to choose to come here or not to come. Whoever wants to, may come.

You keep on worrying on Abha's account. Rid yourself of this anxiety if you can. You can always ask her to go to you. Jamna wants to see both of you merely because of her attachment. But that does not affect me. Give the enclosed<sup>1</sup> to Amtussalaam to read. I have written in Gujarati so that I may do it quickly.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

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

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* the following item.

## 409. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

NEW DELHI,

*After the morning prayer, December 4, 1947*

DAUGHTER A. S.,

You wrote to me and asked Abha not to give the note to me. Abha told me this; I told her it was her duty to give it to me. She therefore handed it over to me at night. I read it just now. You wrote a letter, and sent it and [yet] left instructions that it should not be delivered to me—all this gives a complete picture of your unsteady mind.

You seek my guidance and your mind works in the opposite direction. This is no sign of a desire for guidance. I have already written to you about this matter, and helped you to understand it.<sup>1</sup> I see your good as well as mine only in that. That alone is real service. You can go to Borkamta on your own. You may not ask for money from me. You can stay there at your own free will and at your own will go to the Punjab. If I could take a definite decision I would certainly take one. But I am not perfect, I am not omniscient, am I? Hence, whenever I am doubtful about my own view I might perhaps offer an opinion. I cannot do so in your case. You can come if you want to, either with the others or even alone, provided you can be spared from there. I have no such desire. Calm down! Calm down !! Calm down!!!

*Blessings from*

BAPU

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

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* “Letter to Amtussalaam”, 1-11-1947.

#### 410. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

NEW DELHI,  
*Afternoon, December 4, 1947*

DAUGHTER A. S.,

Yesterday I did not understand that it was an afterthought on your part not to let me have your letter.<sup>1</sup> Abha strongly takes your side and says that my letter is sharp and would pain you. You would surely be pained if I did not at all write to you. This is true, isn't it?

There is a letter from Charu Babu today. Am I forbidding you from going to the Punjab? Only you cannot go with my consent.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

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

#### 411. TALK WITH BURMESE DELEGATION<sup>2</sup>

NEW DELHI,  
*December 4, 1947*

I am very happy that you could come. But there is nothing you can learn from our country today. It is our misfortune that today brother is cutting the throat of brother. You will not take away this example with you. Our country is very ancient; it has a unique culture. We must admit with shame that today we have brought this culture into disrepute. You must not remember our disgrace. You must be generous. You must ignore our lapses and see our virtues and make them your own. That we have secured freedom for our four hundred million people without a drop of blood having been shed is something

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* the preceding item.

<sup>2</sup> Thakin Nu, Prime Minister of Burma, accompanied by U Tin Tut, Foreign Minister and U Pe Kin, High Commissioner for Burma in Pakistan, called on Gandhiji in the afternoon.

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

unprecedented. Of course it is possible that the British had got tired or that we were too weak to take up arms. But non-violence is not a weapon of the weak. It is a weapon of the brave. Its immense value can be measured only when the brave take it up and use it. I therefore advise you to copy from us not our brutalities but the noble virtues you see in this country. We have to sustain without the sword the freedom that we have gained without the sword. Today, one must admit India has an army. But it is my dream that this army will wield not guns and rifles but pickaxes and shovels, and they will be suitably trained in this art as they are today trained in martial arts.<sup>1</sup>

Gandhiji told them that he hoped Burma would prove equal to any situation that might arise in the wake of its attaining independence. He was happy that the Burmese people were united and that there was no trouble so far.

Thakin Nu invited Gandhiji to visit Burma. Gandhiji said he would be glad to do so but could not until peaceful conditions returned to India.

*The Hindustan Times*, 5-12-1947, and *Dilhiman Gandhiji*—II, pp. 19-20

#### 412. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,  
December 4, 1947

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

I talked to you yesterday about Kathiawar. Today I have a telegram from Shamaldas. Yesterday I had a telegram from Dhebarbhai too. Both say that the news I have been receiving had been highly exaggerated. So far as they know no women had been abducted and there was not a single case of murder. In fact after Sardar Patel went there nothing untoward happened. Before that there had been some little rioting and looting. Shamaldas was upset by my statements, and that was but natural. He has gone to Kathiawar from Bombay. He will make an investigation and let me know. I have been receiving telegrams also from the U. S. A., Iran and London repeating the charge that the Muslims in Kathiawar have been subjected to terrible atrocities. Truthful people should not indulge in this kind of propaganda. And what has Iran got to do with what happens in India?

<sup>1</sup> A Burmese peasant-hat was then presented to Gandhiji.

Shamaldas Gandhi says that he makes no distinction between Hindus and Muslims. I would like to help the Muslims who write to me provided they are on the path of truth. But if they give up truth and make a mountain out of a molehill and if they spread stories all over the world, that will be too much. I can understand wires coming from inside India but when wires come from abroad it pains me.

I have received a letter from a Muslim in Hoshangabad. It is a very good letter. Guru Nanak's birthday is an important day. Sikhs wherever they are celebrate it. At Hoshangabad also they celebrated it and invited the Muslims. They assured them that they were brothers and the Sikhs had no quarrel with them. Perhaps I told you once how at the Hoshangabad station a Muslim was on the point of being killed and the Sikhs had come to his rescue. So if on Guru Nanak's birthday the Sikhs really did what the correspondent describes, it is a great thing. If this example is followed everywhere the blot on us will be removed. I thought that the newspapers should give publicity to such happenings.

Another thing I want to talk to you about is the Chamber of Commerce. I have already hinted to you about the Marwari and European Chamber of Commerce.<sup>1</sup> If we can have a Marwari Vyapari Mandal why can we not have a Muslim Vyapari Mandal too? But the Marwari Vyapari Mandal people say that it is for all and that others besides Marwaris are represented on it. I enquired as to how many Marwaris it had and how many Hindus, how many Sikhs, how many Europeans. The letters I have received from them are in English. They have sent a statement of their policy and their rules and their report—all in English as if I did not know Hindustani or Hindi. I confess that I do not know English as well as I know my own language. How can I disregard the language that I imbibed with my mother's milk and give more importance to English which I first started learning at the age of twelve? I asked if there were many Englishmen on that body. They must tell me what it is all about. If the name is Marwari Vyapari Mandal, then how can everyone join it? The Muslim Chamber of Commerce can similarly say that it represents everybody. It can have on it a Hindu or two. This sort of thing does not convince one.

The Prime Minister of Burma had been to see me.<sup>2</sup> He is full of

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Speech at Prayer Meeting", 28-11-1947.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* the preceding item.

humility. I told him that it was a very good thing that he had paid a visit to India. Our country was geographically large and its culture was no doubt ancient. But what was happening today—the mutual mistrust of Hindus and Muslims—was not something from which anyone could learn anything. Guru Nanak preached that the Sikhs should be friendly with both Muslims and Hindus. In fact there is no such distinction between Hindus and Sikhs. Tara Singh has said that one cannot separate Hindus and Sikhs. I should be very happy if we could conduct ourselves thus. The two religions are fundamentally one. Even Guru Nanak never said that he was not a Hindu nor did any other Guru. If we read the *Granthsaheb* we shall find that it is full of the teachings of the Vedas and Upanishads. The teachings of Koran are similar. The same is true of the teachings of Guru Govind Singh. What he taught is also to be found in the Hindu scriptures. There is nothing wholly new. He has only emphasized certain things. I claim that they originate from the Vedas. It cannot be said that Sikhism, Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism are separate religions. All these four faiths and their offshoots are one. Hinduism is an ocean into which all the rivers run. It can absorb Islam and Christianity and all the other religions and only then can it become an ocean. Otherwise it remains merely a stream along which large ships cannot ply.

What Burma can take from India is its culture which today has fallen into disrepute. Never before in history has there been a single instance of so large a country with such immense population securing its freedom not by violent conflict but through non-violence. You may say that the English had got fed up and they left. That is not so. If there is anything to be learnt from India, it is non-violence. Not that we have learnt the lesson of non-violence fully. We are weak. We took to non-violence because we had not the weapons for a violent fight. Non-violence is the best weapon. Only the pure of heart can use it. I therefore told the Burmese Prime Minister that if he wished to take anything from India it should be this non-violence. He must not think that if India lapsed into barbarity, how could Burma which took its religion from India advance? I told him that if he wanted to copy India he must copy the good qualities that India once had and still retained. He must not take anything barbarous. We must export only what is good so that the world may learn from us. Had India not attained its freedom, Burma and Ceylon also would not have attained theirs. And India did not become free by resorting to the sword. And if we did not need the sword for securing freedom, we will not need it

for sustaining it. If we cannot keep our freedom without the sword, then I shall think that India has done nothing for the world. Today we have an army. Attempts are being made to strengthen it. Attempts are also being made to further enlarge the Navy and the Air Force. I declare that in this way we are not really strengthening ourselves. We shall be doing no good to the world in this way. And if the world learns this kind of thing from us it is not going to gain anything, rather it will be doomed.

[From Hindi]

Courtesy: All India Radio. Also *Prarthana Pravachan*—II, pp. 166-8

### 413. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

*December 5, 1947*

CHI. NARANDAS,

Jehangir Patel and Dr. Dinshaw Mehta are going there to observe for themselves the condition of Muslims in Kathiawar. They are going in their individual capacities and not on my behalf or with my authority. They feel that this is the best contribution they can make towards the service of the country. Introduce them to whomsoever you think it necessary for them to meet in this connection. They will not stay in Kathiawar for long. It will not be more than eight to ten days. They know the Jamsaheb. If necessary, they will meet the other Princes too. We have to consider what truth there is in the allegations made by the Muslims.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

[From Gujarati]

*Bapuna Patro-9: Shri Narandas Gandhine*, Part II, p. 320. Also C. W. 8648.  
Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

#### 414. LETTER TO SHARDA H. KOTAK

December 5, 1947

CHI. SHARDA,

I am not sorry that Harjivan<sup>1</sup> has passed away. He suffered a lot. We tried so many remedies but the disease was fatal. One would always prefer to pass away in one's bed. I am not surprised that everyone there helped. I would have been surprised, pained, if they had not.

It remains to be seen what you will do now. Remain calm and do as Lakshmidas and other elders advise.

Could Harjivan see my last letter<sup>2</sup>? Was he conscious till the end? I shall await your letter.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

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

#### 415. TALK WITH GHANSHYAMSINGH GUPTA

NEW DELHI,

December 5, 1947

Now that the English have left the country the national language for inter-provincial communication can only be Hindustani. I have great respect for the English language. But it can never be the national language of India. We do not persevere in learning our two ancient scripts, which only means that we do not have enough patriotism. I will go so far as to say that every Indian should, if possible, learn all the languages of India. One should have a zest for it. There is no harm in this. It will only develop our minds and increase our knowledge.

[From Gujarati]

*Dilhiman Gandhiji*—II, p. 26

<sup>1</sup> Addressee's husband

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "Letter to Harjivan Kotak", 9-11-1947.

## 416. SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING

NEW DELHI,

*December 5, 1947*

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

The letters given to me here are sometimes too long. You cannot expect me to go through them and answer them, because it takes time even to read them. I cannot read them here for it would be wasting my time and yours. I have a note which mentions my meeting Liaquat Ali Khan. The writer asks if I am still not satisfied that nothing untoward has happened in Kathiawar. If the writer of the note is present I may tell him that nothing has happened in Kathiawar. Shamaldas Gandhi says that nothing has happened to justify the reports that I have received. There had been incidents but minor ones. They were given publicity by the Pakistan newspapers and telegrams were dispatched. The reports were terrible but such terrible things did not happen. Today I have another wire from Shamaldas. He says he has made investigations and found that such things had not taken place. Certainly after the Sardar's visit to Kathiawar nothing untoward has happened. The reports I had earlier received appeared to suggest it was the Sardar who incited the people to rowdyism. But after he went to Kathiawar no incidents took place. This changes the complexion of things. Shamaldas Gandhi says that he will tell Muslims not to send such telegrams. I have received further telegrams from the very Muslims who had earlier made the allegations, admitting that they were exaggerated and that they had made a mistake. They have also written to say that the reports carried by the Pakistan newspapers were incorrect, that the extent of the damage reported was also wrong and it could not be said that the Muslims were scared and nervous. I am happy to hear it. I have said that I shall do whatever I can for our Muslim brethren. We must never kick one who is already down. We must raise him up. This is the demand of humanity, of love, this is civilized behaviour. I shall never throw anyone down even if he be my enemy—though of course I have no enemy. It was a mere dream that the Muslims would get everything once Pakistan came into being. After all it is not as if only those who are in Pakistan would be left alive and those outside Pakistan would be killed. Pakistan is a veritable

sea of Hindus and Muslims. Will they drive out all the Hindus and Sikhs from there? Those that have come out did not really want to leave their homes. But it has happened. I have received letters from Sikhs saying that they will know no rest till they are able to go back. For instance a person may have a thousand-acre farm near Lyallpur where he had been growing wheat, bananas, cotton and fruits. How can he leave it for good? He will not rest till he can go back. And what happened in India? The displaced Sikhs were furious and wanted revenge. I said it was not humanity. It was barbarism. They should not indulge in it, that good should be returned for evil. We must not copy the wrong-doer, we must emulate the man who does good. It, therefore, gave me satisfaction when I received that wire from Kathiawar. I shall tell my Muslim brethren: if something had happened they should have toned it down to a half or even a quarter; they should not have exaggerated it and given it publicity in foreign countries. After all if Hindus and Sikhs—though there are no Sikhs there—go wild, can the world save the Muslims? Yes, they can say that we have not made the right use of our freedom. They can threaten to take it away. All that is possible. But the dead will not return to life thereby. We should therefore never exaggerate. Our agony is our own and no outsider can take it on himself. We should try to make light of it. We impress the world only when we exaggerate the good work done by another, not his folly.

There is another thing I must tell you. It does not concern you but I can convey it through you. I have told Brijkrishna not to give anyone any appointment to see me from the 6th to the 13th. That I do not want to see people does not mean that I am ill or that I want to enjoy myself. For many months now this matter has been under consideration. I cannot go to Sevagram. So people from Sevagram are coming here. The Kasturba Trust will be sitting from tomorrow. Then there will be meetings of the Spinners' Association, Nayee Talim, and Village Industries Association. The four associations are going to meet during this time. If they are properly conducted they will certainly consume some time. How am I to give my time to these meetings and to visitors? I have therefore requested people not to try to see me during this time. Not that I shall not be doing my own work. But people coming from outside want to see me out of curiosity.

As I have already said there have been talks going on about lifting the control on cloth, also on food. Not that it is going to

happen tomorrow, but a process has started and everybody says I have done a good thing by suggesting it. I have received letters from all quarters saying that it would be good if the controls were lifted. Of course if the controls are lifted it will not mean that we shall be relieved of our obligations. Once decontrol comes into effect certain obligations devolve on the traders. I must tell Ghanshyamdas also to produce more cloth. He may say that he only carries out orders. He produces what cloth he is asked to produce and he takes the price. But once the cloth is decontrolled, what will Ghanshyamdas and other friends do? Does it mean they will be free to loot the people? In that case I shall be having a very bad time. People will hold me responsible for it. I am a servant of India irrespective of my status. If what I say does not appeal to the Government, that is, to those running the Government, it will have no effect however much I may shout. I am not God so that whatever I may say will prevail. I discuss and decide and then say that the control on cloth and other articles should be lifted. It means that if five maunds of foodgrain is available today, we shall have ten maunds tomorrow because I feel that some of it has been hoarded. But if the peasants do not have any foodgrain and I say that the control should be lifted, will the people not then starve? I am not a fool who will let the people starve. I myself do not starve because Ghanshyamdas makes available to me goat's milk and fruit and vegetables. I believe that the farmers have enough foodgrain but that the price offered is so low that they cannot even feed themselves on it. They part with whatever the Government forces out of them. For the rest they say they will declare their stocks after the control is lifted. I feel that if the farmers can clear their stocks at a good price they will not starve. Admitting that we do not have as much foodgrain as we need, does it mean that a person should eat all that he can lay his hands on, while his neighbours starve? If we have sunk so low, then there is no cure. Control certainly is not the cure. If that happens the Government which is run by our Ministers must abdicate. People indulge in deceit. They are not truthful. The traders who should carry on trade for the benefit of the people are interested in filling their own coffers and in amassing wealth for their sons and daughters. What should the Government do? Should it use force or should it shoot people down? We do not have such power nor do we want such power.

We may have a police force but not for shooting down people. If we start shooting down people who will be left alive? Where is our thirty-year old training? Where is our humanity? This cannot go on. In this way we shall only lose our newly gained freedom. I, therefore, say that controls must go. If the Government says that decontrol will lead to starvation, then I shall say that Panchayat Raj has not been established, democracy has not come to us, that Ramarajya has not been established and it is for Ramarajya that I want to keep myself alive. I shall say that those who are made free from controls should have self-imposed controls on themselves and make others happy. The civil servants in the Government may call me names. They may say I have no right to interfere, that I have no experience of running a government, that afterwards it would be difficult to reimpose the controls and feed the people. I shall say they are right. I have never been in the civil service, I have never run a government, but I have moved among the millions. I know their hearts. I understand them.

Now about cloth. About food you may say that we have not enough stock of it. But nobody has yet said that we do not have enough cotton. We have so much of it that we export it. You will say we do not have enough mills. I shall say the mills are in our homes. They are in the homes of all the women sitting here. Every one of you has been blessed with two hands. If you want clothes on your back you should spin. If you cannot, you may go naked. We have a number of mills but if the production does not come up to the requirement we must resort to hand-spinning and hand-weaving. Weaving is not difficult. We have so many weavers in our country that we can have any amount of cloth woven, but some people have a delicate taste. They will weave only mill-yarn. They cannot weave hand-spun yarn. If they start weaving hand-spun yarn there is no need to go naked. Then our beautiful country—the home of so many hundreds of millions who know their trade, who know how to produce cloth—cannot go naked. Therefore control on cloth is the limit of ignorance and the sooner it is lifted the better. So far as foodgrain is concerned the farmers and traders must declare that they produce and sell to meet the people's needs, and they will not indulge in dishonest practices. The farmers should understand that they have to grow crops not merely to feed themselves but to feed all. We must produce one seer where we produced only a half. But let us guide the people; let us

provide them incentive. There is no need for anyone to go hungry or naked in India. We have been denuded of our cloth because of our ignorance. We do not produce as much food or as much milk as we need even though we have a large number of cattle. What is this if not folly?

[From Hindi]

Courtesy: All India Radio. Also *Prarthana Pravachan*—II, pp. 169-74

#### 417. A TALK<sup>1</sup>

NEW DELHI,  
December 5, 1947

When someone has fever the doctor first seeks to rid him of the fever by giving a mixture. The fever goes down. But it will come back, for the disease has not been diagnosed and the cause of the fever has not been traced. Similarly most people in the world today want an end to war, but wars continue. If the causes of wars were discovered and justice done where justice was demanded, there would be no wars. Today various groups of people have been pleading with the Government to ban cow-slaughter. I know that even beef-eaters have asked for such a ban, but as soon as a cow goes dry people stop looking after her. They do not ask that cows should be cared for. They simply ask that cow-slaughter should be stopped. But if everyone looked after cows well and insisted that no one should eat beef, cow-slaughter would stop by itself. But beef-eating goes on, the cows are neglected and yet the Government is asked to stop cow-slaughter. That would be making fun of the Government. In the same way one must first look deeply into the causes of wars and seek ways to remove those causes. Wars in a large measure are fought over economic issues. If we give up selfishness and resolve to take the barest minimum for the satisfaction of our wants, there will be no occasion for wars. Unless there is a complete transformation in our economy and our style of life, peace will elude us, however hard we may strive for it. Europe and America want peace and yet they use their intellectual, technical and scientific resources for production of

<sup>1</sup> A friend accompanying Jawaharlal Nehru had asked Gandhiji how peace in the world was to be established.

nuclear weapons. Therefore, while they express the wish that peace should reign in the world, they are busy inventing ways to disturb the peace and to destroy the world. It does not occur to them to seek ways to restore peace and stop the possibility of wars.

[From Gujarati]

*Dilhiman Gandhiji*—II, pp. 28-30

#### 418. LETTER TO RUSSELL EGNER

[After *December 5, 1947*]<sup>1</sup>

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter of December 5, 1947. You may publish the quotations<sup>2</sup> mentioned therein.

Please note that I am not Dr. Gandhi.

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

<sup>1</sup> From the date of the addressee's letter

<sup>2</sup> The addressee had sought Gandhiji's permission for the use of the following two quotations from his works.

"The tug of war will never end war and that will only end when at the crucial moment a body of pacifists have at any cost testified their living faith by suffering, if need be, the extreme penalty" (*Vide* "What to Do?", 9-4-1939) and

"A clean spirit must build a clean body. I am convinced that the main rules of religious conduct conserve both the spirit and the body. Let me hope and pray that this college will witness a definite attempt on the part of the physicians to bring about a reunion between the body and the soul" (*vide* "Speech at Opening of Tibbi College, Delhi", 13-2-1921)

## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX I

#### NOTE ON GANDHIJI'S 78TH BIRTHDAY<sup>1</sup>

The second of October 1947, was Gandhiji's birthday—the last to be celebrated in his lifetime. Members of his party came in the early morning to offer him their obeisances. “Bapuji”, one of them remarked, “on our birthdays, it is we who touch the feet of other people and take their blessings but in your case it is other way about. Is this fair?”

Gandhiji laughed : “The ways of Mahatmas are different! It is not my fault. You made me Mahatma, maybe a bogus one; so you must pay the penalty!”

He observed this birthday, as usual, by fasting, prayer and extra spinning. The fast, he explained was for self-purification, and the spinning a token of the renewal of his covenant to dedicate his being to the service of the lowliest and the least in God's creation. He had turned his birthday celebration into celebration of the rebirth of the spinning-wheel. It stood for non-violence. The symbol appeared to have been lost. But he had not stopped the observance hoping that there might be at least a few scattered individuals true to the message of the wheel. It was for their sake that he allowed the celebration to continue.

A small party of intimate friends was waiting for him when he entered his room after his bath at half past eight. They included Pandit Nehru and the Sardar, G. D. Birla — his host — and all the members of the Birla family in Delhi. Mirabehn had gaily decorated his seat by improvising in front of it an artistic cross, *He Rama* and the sacred syllable *Om* from flowers of variegated colours. A short prayer was held in which all joined. It was followed by the singing of his favourite hymn “When I survey the wondrous Cross” and another devotional hymn of his choice in Hindi—*He Govinda rakho sharan*.

Visitors and friends continued to come all day to offer homage to the Father of the Nation. So also came the members of the Diplomatic Corps, some of them with greetings from their respective Governments. Lastly Lady Mountbatten arrived with a sheaf of letters and telegrams addressed to him.

His request to all was to pray that “either the present conflagration should end

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* “Speech at Prayer Meeting”, 2-10-1947.

or He should take me away. I do not wish another birthday to overtake me in an India still in flames.”

“What sin must I have committed,” he remarked to the Sardar, “that He should have kept me alive to witness all these horrors?”

He seemed to be consumed by the feeling of helplessness in the face of the surrounding conflagration. Recorded the Sardar’s daughter, Manibehn, mournfully that day in her journal : “His anguish was unbearable. We had gone to him in elation; we returned home with a heavy heart.”

After the visitors had left, he had another spasm of coughing. “I would prefer to quit this frame unless the all-healing efficacy of His name fills me,” he murmured. “The desire to live for 125 years has completely vanished as a result of this continued fratricide. I do not want to be a helpless witness of it.”

“So from 125 years you have come down to zero,” someone put in.

“Yes, unless the conflagration ceases.” . . .

The All-India Radio had arranged a special broadcast programme in observance of his birthday. Would he not, for that once, listen to the special programme? —he was asked. “No,” he replied; he preferred *rentio* (spinningwheel) to radio. The hum of the spinning-wheel was sweeter. He heard in it the “still sad music of humanity”.

Gandhiji refused to release for publication any of the birthday messages — telegrams or letters—which had come from all parts of the world. He had many beautiful messages from Muslim friends, too, but he felt that it was no time for their publication when the general public seemed to have ceased, for the time being at least, to believe in non-violence and truth.

*Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase*, Vol. II, pp. 456-8

## APPENDIX II

### A. I. C. C. RESOLUTION<sup>1</sup>

#### (1) RIGHTS OF MINORITIES<sup>2</sup>

15-11-1947

The All India Congress Committee welcomes the elimination of foreign rule in India and the establishment of a free and independent State and a Government responsible to the people of the country. The achievement of freedom is the culmination of the long struggle of the Indian National Congress and outcome of the sufferings and tribulations of the Indian people. Freedom brings responsibility and new burdens and problems.

The freedom achieved was not the kind that the Congress had envisaged during its long history. It has been accompanied by secession of parts of the country and disasters of unparalleled magnitude. Hardly was free India born when grave crisis overtook it and events happened which have besmirched her fair name and brought death and desolation to vast numbers of innocent people in circumstances too tragic for words. There have been arson and loot and murder on a mass scale in West Punjab, N. W. F. Province, Baluchistan, East Punjab and adjoining areas. The Committee cannot find words strong enough to condemn these inhuman acts by whatever community perpetrated. It extends its sympathy to all those who have been the innocent victims of this colossal tragedy.

At this moment of crisis, it is necessary that the Congress should declare its faith and policy in clear terms and that the people as well as the Government should follow that policy unswervingly. Even though the Congress agreed to a division of the country in the hope, which has thus far proved vain, that thereby internal conflicts might cease, it has never accepted the theory that there are two or more nations in India. It has firmly believed in the whole of India as a nation bound together by indissoluble cultural and historical links which had been further strengthened in the course of the national struggle for freedom. It was on the basis of this faith that the Congress grew up as a national institution open to all Indians without difference of creed or religion. India is a land of many religions and many races, and must remain so. Nevertheless India has been and is a country with a fundamental unity and the aim of the Congress has been to develop this great country as a whole as a democratic secular State where all citizens enjoy full rights and are equally entitled to the protection of the State, irrespective of the religion to

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Speech at Prayer Meeting", 18-11-1947.

<sup>2</sup> According to *Dilhiman Gandhiji*, the draft of this was corrected by Gandhiji.

which they belong. The Constituent Assembly has accepted this as the basic principle of the Constitution. This lays on every Indian the obligation to honour it.

The Congress wants to assure the minorities in India that it will continue to protect, to the best of its ability, their citizen rights against aggression. The Central Government, as well as the Provincial Governments must accordingly make every effort to create conditions wherein all minorities and all citizens have security and opportunity for progress. All citizens have also on their part not only to share in the benefits of freedom but also shoulder the burdens and responsibility which accompany it, and must above all be loyal to India.

The All India Congress Committee calls upon all Congressmen and the people of India to adhere strictly to those well-established principles of the Congress and not to allow themselves to be diverted into wrong channels by passion or prejudice or by the tragic events that have happened. Real good and progress of India have yet to be achieved and this can only be done by adhering to the ideals and policy of the Congress and discarding and opposing all false doctrines which have done so much mischief to India and her people.

#### (2) REPATRIATION OF REFUGEES

*15-11-1947*

The tragic events that have taken place in recent months in the Punjab and elsewhere have resulted in vast migrations of populations, and consequently in tremendous suffering to millions of people. New problems of relief and rehabilitation have arisen of a magnitude which is unparalleled in history. The Government of India have faced these problems with courage and determination. Nevertheless it is necessary to state clearly what the national policy should be in dealing with these problems.

The A. I. C. C. has looked with disfavour on this large-scale migration which brings suffering to millions, upsets the nation's economy and does violence to the ideal which the Congress has held since its inception. It is of opinion that these migrations should be discouraged and conditions should be created both in the Indian Dominion and in Pakistan for minorities to live in peace and security. If such conditions are created the desire to migrate to another part of the country will disappear. In the opinion of the Committee, it is wrong to coerce Hindu and Sikh inhabitants of Pakistan into leaving their homes and migrating to the Indian Union, and Muslims of the Indian Union into migrating to Pakistan.

While it is impossible to undo all that has been done, every effort should be made to enable the evacuees and refugees from either Dominion ultimately to return to their homes and to their original occupations under conditions of safety and security. Those who have not left their homes already should be encouraged to stay there unless

they themselves desire to migrate, in which case facilities for migrating should be made available. It is the duty of the Central Government of the Indian Union and the Government of Pakistan to negotiate on this basis and to create conditions which would enable the evacuees and refugees to return with safety.

In any event the policy to be followed in the Indian Union is to protect the minorities still residing there and to prevent their removal by force or by creating circumstances which compel evacuation.

During these disorders large numbers of women have been abducted on either side and there have been forcible conversions on a large scale. No civilized people can recognize such conversions, and there is nothing more heinous than abduction of women. Every effort, therefore, must be made to restore women to their original homes with the co-operation of the Governments concerned.

The A. I. C. C. has noted with satisfaction the declarations made on behalf of the Governments of the two Dominions and East and West Punjab that forcible conversions will not be recognized and that they would co-operate in the recovery of abducted women.

Such being the policy of the Congress, the refugees in the Indian Union are entitled to every care and attention from the authorities and the people within the Union as long as they have to remain there. They are not to be regarded as interlopers grudgingly placed upon charity. They will have the same rights and be under the same obligations as any other citizen. Where they are living in camps they will be expected to render some social service in co-operation with fellow-refugees, subject to the rules framed for the good government of the camp. Sanitary and other services should be performed by the inmates of the camps under instructions from those fitted for the work and who will themselves take part in these services. Refugees should be engaged in productive work as far as possible on a co-operative basis.

Refugees from West Punjab shall as a rule be accommodated in East Punjab. Those from the other parts of Pakistan shall be accommodated in places that the Central Government, in co-operation with the Provincial Governments, may consider more suitable. Those from a particular locality should, as far as possible, be kept together.

In this task the Provincial Governments should offer their full co-operation and should take in and make suitable arrangements for as many refugees as they can.

No house, not vacated willingly by a Muslim, shall be used for the accommodation of refugees, except by proper legal authority.

The movement of refugees, which is already taking place by train, convoy or otherwise, should be regulated in accordance with the policy laid down above and no one should be sent away unless he expresses his desire to migrate.

This principle should apply also to the States which have acceded to the Indian

Union and from which large numbers of Muslims have been evacuated or driven out.

The A. I. C. C. trusts that the Central Government of the Indian Union, the East Punjab and West Bengal Governments, and the Governments of the States affected by these migrations, will give effect to the policy indicated above and will issue directions to all their officers to act strictly in accordance with it.

### (3) STATES

*15-11-1947*

In view of the fact that in a number of States, people's organizations, instead of rising in power and influence as a result of freedom, are being suppressed and prevented from functioning; and further in view of the fact that Rulers in Punjab and some parts of Rajputana and Central India and in the South Indian States have shown an unpatriotic attitude and have betrayed a woeful lack of imagination and have been party to the liquidation of the Muslim and Hindu population by inhuman means, it becomes necessary to reiterate in unequivocal language the policy of the Congress in regard to the States.

Whatever may be the legal implications of accession and lapse of British Paramountcy, the moral result of the independence of India was undoubtedly the establishment and recognition of the power of the people as distinguished from that of Princes and feudal or other interests hostile to natural popular aspirations. This power, the Congress is determined to uphold at any cost. Therefore, all such interests and specially the Princes should know that the Congress cannot uphold them unless they are demonstrably in favour of regarding the voice of the people as the supreme law. In such a democratic State the individual who wants to assert himself against the popular will cannot count, no matter how powerful he may be.

This meeting of the A. I. C. C. therefore hopes that the Princes will read the signs of the times and co-operate with the people, and those who have acted in a contrary spirit will retrace their steps and revise their undemocratic conduct and function through democratic organizations expressing the people's will. This they can best do by seeking the association and advice of the A. I. S. P. C. which has been endeavouring to act on behalf of the people of States.

### (4) COMMUNAL ORGANIZATIONS

*16-11-1947*

The A. I. C. C. has noted with regret that communal organizations like the Hindu Mahasabha, the Muslim League and the Akali Party have sought to promote their respective interests based on so-called religious considerations in conflict with the national interest. The national interest must mean and include a healthy synthesis of all interests based not on religious but political, social, material and moral grounds. Political activities must accordingly be conducted by political organizations which are based on political and economic policies and which are open to members of all communities.

#### (5) PRIVATE ARMIES

*16-11-1947*

The All India Congress Committee has noted with regret that there is a growing desire on the part of some organizations to build up private armies. Any such development is dangerous for the safety of the State and for the growth of corporate life in the nation. The State alone should have its defence forces or police or home guards or recognized armed volunteer force. The activities of the Muslim National Guards, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and the Akali Volunteers and such other organizations, in so far as they represent an endeavour to bring into being private armies, must be regarded as a menace to the hard-won freedom of the country. The A. I. C. C. therefore appeals to all these organizations to discontinue such activities and the Central and Provincial Governments to take necessary steps in this behalf.

#### (6) CONTROLS

*16-11-1947*

The A. I. C. C. has been alarmed at the disturbance of normal life by the various controls, specially in regard to foodstuffs and clothing. These have promoted black-marketing, hoarding, corruption and other evils. They have interfered with the process of self-reliance and arrested the incentive to production specially in the matter of growing more foodstuffs-and the manufacture of hand-spun and hand-woven khadi in the thousands of villages in India. The Committee is, therefore, of opinion that the Central and Provincial Governments should give urgent consideration to the problem of decontrol as early as possible without detriment to the public good.

#### (7) THE CONGRESS CONSTITUTION

*16-11-1947*

As the goal of complete independence from foreign domination has been achieved and in view of the new role the Congress organization will have to play under the changed circumstances, the A. I. C. C. appoints the following Committee to revise the present Congress Constitution, including the objective as contained in Article I and to submit the revised draft Constitution prepared by it to a special session of the All India Congress Committee, to be convened for the purpose, not later than the end of January, 1948 and pending the final approval of such a Constitution by the A. I. C. C. to postpone all Congress elections under the present Constitution.

Shri R. R. Diwakar, Shri P. D. Tandon, Acharya Narendra Deo, Shri S. K. Patil, Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, Shri Surendra Mohan Ghosh and Acharya Jugal Kshihore.

#### (8) CONGRESS OBJECTIVES

*16-11-1947*

Political independence having been achieved, the Congress must address itself to the next great task, namely, the establishment of real democracy in the country and

a society based on social justice and equality. Such a society must provide every man and woman with equality of opportunity and freedom to work for the unfettered development of his or her personality. This can only be realized when democracy extends from the political to the social and the economic spheres.

Democracy in the modern age necessitates planned central direction as well as decentralization of political and economic power, in so far as this is compatible with the safety of the State, with efficient production and the cultural progress of the community as a whole. The smallest territorial unit should be able to exercise effective control over its corporate life by means of a popularly elected Panchayat. In so far as it is possible, national and regional economic self-sufficiency in the essentials of life should be aimed at. In the case of industries, which in their nature must be run on a large scale and on centralized basis, they should belong to the community, and they should be so organized that workers become not only co-sharers in the profits but are also increasingly associated with the management and administration of the industry.

Land, with its mineral resources, and all other means of production as well as distribution and exchange must belong to and be regulated by the community in its own interest.

Our aim should be to evolve a political system which will combine efficiency of administration with individual liberty and an economic structure which will yield maximum production without the creation of private monopolies and the concentration of wealth and which will create a proper balance between urban and rural economies. Such a social structure can provide an alternative to the acquisitive economy of private capitalism and the regimentation of a totalitarian State.

With a view to drawing up the economic programme for the Congress in accordance with the above-mentioned principles, and the election manifesto of the Congress dated December 19th, 1945, the following Committee is appointed:

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Shri Jaiprakash Narain, Prof. N. G. Ranga, Shri Gulzari Lal Nanda, Shri J. C. Kumarappa, Shri Achyut Patwardhan, Shri Shankarrao Deo—with powers to co-opt.

(9)

*17-11-1947*

This Committee would have liked Acharya J. B. Kripalani to continue as President of the Indian National Congress till the next elections in the normal course but as he has expressed his inability to reconsider his resignation, it regretfully accepts it.

The Committee places on record its appreciation of the services rendered by him both before and during the time he has held the office as President.

*Harijan, 23-11-1947*

### APPENDIX III

#### *EXTRACT FROM LETTER FROM PYARELAL*<sup>1</sup>

This means that unless we can accept partition as unreservedly as once you accepted the British Empire, even to the length of teaching your children to sing ‘God save the King’ in the approved English tune, we cannot stay in Pakistan without being guilty of ‘disloyalty’ to the State. How can then those who cannot in all conscience accept partition as something good or irrevocable for all time have any place in Pakistan?

Feverish preparations are going on to re-enact Kashmir on a small scale in Tripura State. Pakistan officials are deeply involved in it. Some of them are even said to be carrying on a ‘palace intrigue’ in Tripura State to this end. Three or four days ago, speeches were delivered at a public meeting in Comilla by Muslims exhorting the people to launch an action against Tripura authorities. Hindu subjects of Pakistan were challenged to prove their ‘loyalty’ by joining in that meritorious action for the extension of Pakistan’s boundaries. What should be the attitude of the Hindus? What should the Hindu refugees from Noakhali, domiciled in Agartala (capital of Tripura) do? What advice should we give to those who seek our counsel?

In one sense, however, the situation in Noakhali may now be said to be normal. The policy of the Government is no more to harass or to persecute the Hindus. But the complexion of the administration is communal and their behaviour openly partisan. Discrimination and a steady squeeze in the name of the ‘Islamic State’ are going on and corruption, inefficiency and lack of discipline in all branches of administration are endemic. Before the partition the Central Government exercised, at least in name, some check. Now even that is gone. For the rest unless war actually breaks out between the two Dominions, there is no imminent danger of any large-scale disturbance taking place. In other words, peace in East Bengal henceforth will depend more on the overall situation *vis-a-vis* the two Dominions than on purely local conditions. . . .

*Mahatma Gandhi —The Last Phase, Vol. II, pp. 529-30*

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* “Letter to Pyarelal”, after 15-11-1947.