

## 1. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS

It is matter of great grief and disappointment to me not to be able to complete the whole of the Bihar tour as was previously arranged. I see that the continuous travelling for the past 12 months has put a severe strain upon my constitution. I must therefore take the tour in easy stages. The Reception Committee has kindly accommodated me. I hope that the committee and the people in the parts which are being omitted will forgive me. I shall endeavour early next year to finish the balance of the tour.

*The Searchlight, 25-9-1925*

## 2. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, BIKRAM

*September 25, 1925*

Mahatmaji . . . first apologized for not being able to go to them the previous day as arranged. Then he told them that he did not know what he was to say to them as the thing which he wanted to say they must have heard already. Their presence in such large numbers was a sufficient proof of it. The belief was growing in him every day that they had nothing except the charkha which would appease the hunger of crores of Indian villagers. They knew that for four months in the year they had no work and that time could be employed best in plying the charkha. The poorest of them had to spend on cloth at least five or ten rupees in a year. The small sum amounted to crores which could be saved and brought in the villages only by the charkha. He did not know why people did not understand such a simple thing. If they did not do such a simple work even, it was impossible to establish swaraj, or *Ramarajya* or whatever they might call it. Those who did not spin formerly, he hoped, would begin to spin now. Then he turned towards the organizers of the meeting and said he was grieved to see the children who sang the opening song were not clad in khaddar. He hoped that they would not repeat the mistake. He told the Hindus that Hinduism recognized nothing like untouchability. If anybody thought that touching another man was a sin, he was himself committing a sin.

As to Hindu-Muslim unity he did not know what was to be said. He had lost all influence over both communities. But he did not forget that unless both communities joined hands, swaraj was a dream, never to be realized.

In the end with an appeal for Deshbandhu Das Memorial Fund he concluded.

*The Searchlight, 27-9-1925*

<sup>1</sup> Among those who accompanied Gandhiji during his visit to Bikram and later, in the afternoon, to the meeting, were Rajendra Prasad, Jamnalal Bajaj, Satis Chandra Das Gupta, and Jagat Narayan Lal.

### 3. LETTER TO CHHAGANLAL GANDHI

[About September 25, 1925]<sup>1</sup>

CHI. CHHAGANLAL,

I have your letter. The coconut for Nimu should be sent to Amreli for religious reasons. It seems better if it is not sent to the Ashram. This is just my feeling. If the same feeling persists, it can be made use of in future. Ramdas is independent. He has set up a house in Amreli. He finds peace there. Therefore, I would feel happy if the coconut is sent there. I would like that the marriage, whenever it is to take place, should take place at Dr. Mehta's bungalow. However, I will abide by the wishes of Nimu's grandfather. I feel that its performance at Dr. Mehta's bungalow will add to the solemnity of the occasion.

It is good that Nimu has started menstruating. We will be happy to get her married the moment she reaches the age when she can bear the burden of children. If her grandfather is indifferent, I would like to influence Nimu from today itself to postpone her marriage. We seem to believe that Radha, Moti and others have reached the age of marriage. However if their minds are pure, age is of no consequence. Take the case of Miss Schlesin. I find such women here too. Only we believe that the girls should be married off the moment their bodies are filled out. But the experience of the whole world shows that it is not true. Sixteen is the minimum age. Average age should be 20 years. At that age, one is mentally mature. I wish I am able to talk to Nimu as freely as I am able to talk with Ramdas today. Now I would not write anything more. I am happy that we all think of Nimu's good. If we find that she is getting impatient, we will solemnize her marriage soon as we did in Rami's case. I decided to do that after ascertaining Rami's desire myself. I hope you know my programme.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From the Gujarati original : S.N. 32852

<sup>1</sup> Ramdas and Nimu got married on January 27, 1928. The letter, however, appears to have been written about the same time as the one to the addressee dated 'before September 23, 1925, *Vide?*Letter to Chhaganlal Gandhi', before 23-9-1925.

#### 4. LETTER TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL

*Saturday, September 26, 1925*

BHAI VALLABHBHAI,

I shall reach Bombay on the 20th [October]. Will you come with me to Kutch on the 21st? If so, you should be in Bombay on the 20th. There is a telegram from Devdhar about Manibehn. I have sent it to her. He is willing to take her in December. We may not put Dahyabhai to work in a mill. If we place him with Birla, it is very likely that he would be put to work only in a mill. We shall talk it over when we meet. I am discussing this with Jamnalalji.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

[PS.]

I have no time to write more.

[From Gujarati]

*Bapuna Patro—Sardar Vallabhbhaine*

#### 5. LETTER TO MANIBEHN PATEL

*Saturday [September 26, 1925]<sup>1</sup>*

CHI. MANI,

I enclose Devdhar's telegram. I think it is better to wait till then. But, meanwhile if you like, I will try to put you in the Sevasadan at Bombay or, if you knows about the schools at Calcutta, but he is not in favour of your joining it. He is, however, willing to make arrangements at the Girls' School at Wardha. There is Marathi in Wardha and you will feel at home there, so it is better to have your first experience there.

Let me know what you wish to do.

Send your reply to me at Patna.<sup>2</sup>

*Blessings from*

BAPU

[From Gujarati]

*Bapuna Patro—Manibehn Patelne*

<sup>1</sup> As in the source

<sup>2</sup> Gandhiji was in Patna from September 20 to September 29 and also from October 12 to October 15.

## 6. KHADI PROGRAMME

Although the following letter is full of criticism, I print it in the hope that all workers may learn from it whatever is worth learning:<sup>1</sup>

I hope that no worker will misunderstand the aim behind this criticism. It is the duty of khadi workers to accept whatever part of it is applicable. What has been described as "inducement" by the critic I would call protection or "bounty" as it is known in English. We have forsaken khadi for a long time. It is natural that help should be necessary in the initial stage in order to propagate khadi amongst people who have less or no patriotism in them. Everyone knows that such assistance cannot be given for ever. Even during the period when assistance is given, there must be a gradual but continuous improvement in the quality of khadi, the cost of production should come down and the quantum of help diminish. All this is happening. There has been an improvement in the quality, there has been a reduction in the cost and in the assistance given. I am not pained by the fact that the cloth produced in the Amreli Centre is being sent to Bombay, but it pains me that so little is sold in Amreli itself. This is a measure of the sad plight of our country. The thoughtful people of Amreli have not understood their natural duty of wearing khadi. They fail to take advantage of the Ganga which flows by their doorstep. Time alone will improve this state of affairs. The residents of Amreli should let the khadi centre know if it is to blame for sending out locally-manufactured cloth. As far as I know the centre does try to sell khadi locally but its efforts have not met with the success they deserve. In these circumstances, we cannot indeed deprive the poor in Amreli of the help they receive by way of wages for spinning. It is, of course, necessary to see that the women who spin start wearing khadi themselves. Experience suggests that even this cannot be brought about all at once. The women who spin for money do so only to earn something and cannot be asked to buy expensive khadi. They will wear khadi only if we reduce its price for them.

Hence, khadi workers who wish to make khadi wholly self-supporting should take account of the difficulties involved. If they do

<sup>1</sup> The letter is not translated here. The correspondent had argued that the cause of khadi could prosper only through the spontaneous endeavour of farmers and not through the efforts of outside workers.

not, it will be impossible to advance the cause of khadi. In such circumstances, one should use one's common sense as to when one should rest satisfied with a little and when one may rest satisfied with anything short of perfection.

But we also need the services of workers who are disinclined to work in such an imperfect field and aim at perfection. The following ways are open to them:

1. If they have the necessary strength—that is, the strength to work and maintain themselves with a little—they should spend all their time in carding, spinning and, if they feel inclined, weaving and thus become self-reliant.

2. Those who do not have such strength should spend in spinning all the time they can spare from their own work and gift that yarn for the sake of the country.

It should not be necessary to say that they themselves should exclusively wear khadi and persuade others to do so. Let us consider in this connection the principles on which the khadi movement is based:

1. Crores of people in India are so poor that a few pice have the same value to them as one rupee.

2. Crores of them remain unemployed for four months in a year.

3. For such persons, there is no other work which can be taken up by one and all and which will produce immediate results.

A khadi worker should objectively apply these principles to his own sphere of work. Only then can we say that the khadi movement is being carried on in a scientific manner. In other words:

1. Those who have other occupations from which they earn something should not be induced to spin for money.

2. Only in those parts where the people are very poor should they induce them to spin for money and even in such places they should pay no more in wages than the country can afford. Experience shows that not more than four annas can be paid for a seer (the weight of forty rupees) of number six yarn.

3. In other places those who spin can be helped only by way of instruction, etc. To spend money for them is to harm the interests of the poor who really need it. It would be a different matter if they themselves offered to pay for instruction. It would also be a different

matter if in a place like Bardoli some people gifted cotton and it was then distributed among others.

4. No money should be spent for those who spin by way of *yajna*. Yarn received in this manner should be treated as a pure gift. It is wrong to accept anything as gift if securing the gift costs as much as the thing itself.

5. Other expenses should be incurred only on training khadi workers, that is, on giving training in spinning, etc., on carrying on propaganda for khadi and on improvements in the spinning-wheel. To put it briefly, money should be spent only when it is likely to benefit the poor for whose sake the spinning movement has been conceived.

Wherever these principles are not followed, there is either ignorance or false attachment, or both, behind the work being done.

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 27-9-1925

## 7. SOME QUESTIONS

A teacher from Kutch has asked several questions, which I reproduce below and answer, as they deserve to be answered in public:

1. I am a school-teacher. I do not possess the required strength of character, truthfulness or capacity for *brahmacharya*, though of course I have been making every effort to develop these qualities. My father is in debt. In these circumstances, do you advise me to resign my post as teacher?

I think that the idea of resigning on the ground of not possessing the necessary strength of character is a very good one. Nevertheless, it is necessary to exercise discretion in this matter. It should not be considered necessary to resign if, as we go ahead with our work, our shortcomings gradually disappear. None of us is perfect. At present we do not come across much strength of character among teachers. We may be satisfied if we are conscientious in our own work and put in our best effort. In such matters, however, the same rule cannot be applied to all. Everyone should decide for himself.

The question about the father's debt is easy to answer. If it was properly incurred, it should be repaid. If he cannot repay it by working as a teacher, he should take up another job or another

profession and repay it.

2. Apart from the moral benefit, is there any advantage to health to be derived from a weekly day of silence?

In a general way, one may say, silence is beneficial to health. However, a person who finds no happiness in silence will derive no benefit to his health.

3. In your book entitled *General Knowledge about Health* you have said that both milk and salt should be given up, the former from the point of view of non-violence and the latter for the sake of health. Anyone who gives up milk would also have to give up ghee, buttermilk and other milk products. Has your opinion on this subject undergone any change, or does it remain what it was?

My views on this subject have not changed, but my practice has. It is my conviction that those who do without milk derive benefit spiritually. Giving up milk and milk products helps one in observing *brahmacharya*. Anyone who gives up milk should also give up buttermilk or ghee. Whether out of my strong desire to live or as a matter of necessity, I consented to take goat's milk. If I were not working in public life, I would again give up milk and continue my experiment. Unfortunately, I have not met any doctor,  *vaid*  or  *hakim*  who would guide me in my experiment of milk-free diet. I had hoped that  *vaid* s would be helpful. I had assumed that the health of the soul had a place in their system. But I have not met a  *vaid*  who would inspire confidence in me. I have, therefore, been obliged to use milk. I see that it is useful for preserving one's life and health and, therefore, no longer advise anyone to give it up. I do not, however, wish to alter the views expressed in my book. Some of my friends still experiment with a milk-free diet, and I neither discourage nor encourage them.

There are two opinions regarding salt. I do not think that going without salt does any harm. However, I no longer insist upon avoiding salt completely. I know that temporary or permanent abstinence from salt is beneficial from the spiritual point of view. We should remember that through water, etc., we take in a little quantity of salt every day. If anyone wants to try the experiment of milk-free or salt-free diet for the purpose of health, it is desirable that he should do so after consulting a good doctor or  *vaid* . Anyone who wants to try this for spiritual reasons should be strong in his desire for a life of abstinence.

4. Anyone who wants to practise ahimsa would have to abstain from almost all kinds of food. Even eating fruit involves violence, as there is life in fruits and flowers too. However, there can be no objection to eating ripe fruits which

have fallen from the tree without anyone having plucked them. But a poor person like me would find it very expensive to live on such fruits. One may, however, live only on wheat, availing oneself of the freedom permitted in certain times and circumstances. Even wheat may be taken only in the form of porridge made from the bran. Vegetables and fruits may be excluded altogether. Would you believe it possible, then, or say from experience, that a young man of nineteen, such as I am, who wishes to remain a *brahmachari* for life, can live his whole life eating only this porridge morning and evening and whether it can provide sufficient nourishment for him?

Even the ripe fruit that falls to the ground has life in it and, therefore, eating it should also be regarded as a sin. The fact of our having a body is itself an evil, and wherever there is evil there is suffering. Hence the imperative need for *moksha*. One cannot, however, be rid of the body by destroying it. Our association with the body can be totally ended only through complete freedom from desire, indifference to material happiness and renunciation. Desire or the ego is the root cause of the body. Once they have vanished, the body cannot but cease to exist. But while the body continues to exist, one must have the minimum quantity of food necessary to keep it functioning. Man's essential requirements of nutrition are met by fruits and foods obtained from plants. Anyone who subsists on the smallest quantity of these, obtaining them with the least violence to ethical principles may be said to be free from sin though living on impure food. Such a person eats not in order to satisfy his palate but to keep himself alive, to keep the body functioning. It will now be seen that a ripe fruit which has fallen off the tree, if eaten to gratify one's palate will be tainted food while a cooked meal of vegetables and cereals, prepared and served in the normal course, will be pure food if eaten to satisfy one's hunger and without any thought of gratifying the palate.

I believe that a person of self-control who is free from any disease, can subsist only on porridge of wheat bran. My advice to the correspondent is that it will be enough if he takes ordinary food, without chillies or other spices, paying no attention to its taste or savour. For observing *brahmacharya*, the essential thing is to learn to be indifferent to the pleasures which objects of sense give. A person who enjoys all manner of rich dishes cannot be said to have conquered the desire for material pleasure. The common people, however, who eat ordinary food may be regarded as having done so. In the last analysis, every individual should examine himself to find



out when he eats in order to gratify his palate and when to meet the needs of his body. Even in the matter of food, we have no straight path before us. The only straight path there is in life is one's heart. The external world is a deceitful illusion; it is like an enormous banyan tree with intertwining boughs, and one has to live in this and attain union with the *Brahman*.

5. If the mind is hankering after food and the body, too, is very hungry, does it do any good to repress the desire and fast?

Whether or not a fast will do any good depends on one's motive and one's capacity to undertake it. The poet has compared the mind to a drunken ape, and to be sure there is no end to its desires. These should be checked every moment.

6. I do not take tea, but the other members of my family do. As I am the earning member, would it be proper on my part to prevent them from doing so by not buying any tea at all? Irrespective of whether or not I am the earning member, would it be regarded as coercion on my relatives if I made them give up tea by resorting to fasting?

The head of the family or the earning member who stops other members from taking tea because he himself does not do so is employing coercion. The right thing for him is to reason with them patiently. As long as they are not converted to his views, I believe that he should buy tea for them. Resorting to fasting simply because others do not stop doing a particular thing is a form of blackmail, and that is coercion.

7. I believe that no one is reformed through physical punishment. If, nevertheless, I punished pupils in my class, would that not be violence on my part? If I did not punish the naughty or the dull pupils myself and sent them instead to the head master, knowing that he would punish them, would I not, in that case, be guilty of violence?

There is violence in punishing pupils and also in sending them to the head master in order that they may be punished. The correspondent has not asked whether a teacher is free to punish any pupil, but the question is implied in the one which he has asked. I myself can imagine a situation in which it becomes one's duty to punish a child who has done something wrong, knowing that it is wrong. Every teacher should think and decide for himself what his duty is. The general rule, however, is that a teacher should never inflict physical punishment on a pupil. If anyone should have this right at all, let it rest with the parents. A punishment is just only if the pupil

himself accepts it as such. Such occasions are not frequent. Even when an occasion has arisen, the pupil should not be punished if there is any doubt about the punishment being justified. In any case, no one should be punished in anger.

8. Supposing I am not really angry—for I know that anger has a harmful effect both on health and character—but even then pretend to be angry with a pupil or threaten to punish without intending to do so, would that be a dishonest act on my part?

We find many people guilty of this wrong. To pretend to punish is altogether reprehensible.

9. I accept the argument that observing *brahmacharya* is the only right method of birth-control. Though my heart accepts this, my reason revolts against it and doubts whether, in the same way that there can be no wrong in the use of any of the other sense-organs, that it might do harm on the contrary not to use them, it might not be harmful not to exercise this function of the body. It was to this effect that the president of the committee for birth-control had addressed a letter to you in *The Chronicle*. Would you, therefore, deal with this argument?

There is no such principle that the use of all organs of the body is essential. The man who deliberately gives up the use of speech lays the world under an obligation. Dharma requires not that we use the sense-organs but that we control them. Control of the senses practised intelligently and voluntarily is beneficial spiritually, and not harmful. The use of the sexual organs is permitted only for the sake of procreation. However, the Shastras honour those who renounce the desire for progeny. The glorification of passion is taken to such lengths in this age that irreligion has come to be known as religion. It is a grave error to believe that the world is benefited by the encouragement or gratification of lust. This is my conviction, this is the testimony of the Shastras and this is the undisputed experience of people who have realized the self. In India, we are forced into the prison of marriage right from childhood. In such circumstances, to devise means for the gratification of passion and establish associations for popularizing them is the very limit of ignorance and of blind imitation. To say that passion cannot be curbed or that curbing it is harmful is itself very harmful. I have no doubt that the Indian nation will lose vigour and finally perish if a movement for encouraging the gratification of lust ever comes to thrive in this country of weaklings. Methods of birth-control which permit the gratification of lust may

not be harmful in countries where the human body has the strength of a monster and is nourished on food and drink proper for a monster, but India's good lies only in the lesson of self-control.

10. One who practises ahimsa cannot use any conveyance and must give up eating almost all edible substances. The question then arises, why did God create these substances and these animals which draw the vehicles? God's will is inscrutable, but, I shall be obliged if all the same you could say something on this subject.

The answer to this is included in the answer given above. Nevertheless, it could be added that one who practises ahimsa does not necessarily refuse the use of vehicles for conveyance when absolutely necessary. There are many things which it is best to give up altogether. There are some which it would be enough to give up as far as possible. All God's creations are related to one another. Every creature is the living image of some human desire or other. Just as, therefore, it is good to renounce desire, it is good to stop exploiting other living beings. Everyone should set his own limits. For instance, those who can make do with earth may not use soap, but they should also not be guilty of greater violence by criticizing others who do use soap. While walking on thorny or hot ground, one may freely use shoes to protect one's feet, but one should walk barefoot when there is no need to wear shoes.

There are some other questions which need not be stated, as they can be inferred from the answers given.

1. It is absolutely necessary for anyone doing exercise to wear drawers. Even in the West they think it necessary to do this.

2. It is beneficial to drink hot water in the morning soon after rising and brushing one's teeth. Many people drink even cold water which is clean. In any case, the practice does no harm.

3. To grow one's hair while living as a householder means either accumulating dirt on one's person or spending much time in keeping it clean. The best thing for a man is to keep only a small tuft of hair in the centre and have the rest cut or shaved. If people would listen to me, I would certainly have even girl's hair cut. We believe that hair adds to one's beauty because we are used to growing hair long. Beauty lies in conduct and not in external appearance. That hair cannot be cut or shaved as it is something natural is a mere superstition. We cut our nails. If we failed to do so, they would accumulate dirt, or we would have to be cleaning them the whole day.

By taking a bath we constantly remove the outer layer on skin. We shall not consider here the rules which apply to those who live in forests and have stopped doing many things which people normally do.

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 27-9-1925

## 8. MY NOTES

### IS IT TRUE?

I was absolutely taken aback by the account which I read in *Navajivan* of the High School in Borsad. I feel all the time that it could not be true. I have a faint recollection that I have met the head master of that school. I know him as a brave person. Vallabhbai has lived in Borsad and has unfurled the flag of victory there. Could such disgraceful conduct be possible on the part of the principal, parents and students? If Vithalbai, who is the President of the Assembly, can attend it in only a khadi shirt, cannot the students of Barsad go to school clad in a similar way?

If Shri Kalidas Dave<sup>1</sup> has been misinformed, I request the head master to correct his error. If the information is correct and there is anything which he would like to say in defence, I am prepared to hear it and publish it. If there is no defence, I hope that teachers, trustees and parents would not descend so low in order to secure recognition for the school.

### THE "GOSHALA" AT CHAIBASA

Chaibasa is a small town in Chhotanagpur. The scenery there is beautiful and the climate is good. I was taken to see the *goshala* there. The secretary is an energetic man. His views are liberal but the donors do not let him have his way. The criticism I have made against other *goshalas* applies to this one too. This institution has been in existence for twenty-seven years. During this period, a sum of one and a half lakhs of rupees has been received by way of donations and ten thousand head of cattle have been provided shelter. Two to three hundred are given shelter every year. But we cannot rest satisfied with this. A *goshala*, if run systematically, would become self-supporting

<sup>1</sup> Editor, *Kelavani Ank*—the educational supplement of *Navajivan*

in twenty-seven years. Milk, curds, etc., are produced in this one. But how much can one person do? How is it possible to have the animals examined so long as there is no expert in animal husbandry available?

A special feature of this *goshala* which was brought to my knowledge was that dead cattle were given away free. Nothing was charged for their hides. The more I think about the matter the more I realize that by not utilizing hides, etc., of dead cows through the *goshala* we encourage cow-slaughter and reduce our capacity to protect cows. One of the principal tasks of those working in this field is to fight the superstitious prejudice against trading in hides of dead cattle. One dead cow, it may be said, saves the life of another cow. I am making a thorough study of the economics of this subject. But even my present partial study is enough to convince me that we lose at least ten rupees on each animal which dies by not directly utilizing its hide. In any case, it is ultimately we who use this hide.

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 27-9-1925

### 9. LETTER TO BISHAN NATH

*September 27, 1925*

DEAR FRIEND,

You have not told me why you are leaving the board nor why your interest or faith in khadi is on the wane. I see nothing wrong in accepting wages for national service faithfully rendered.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

LALA BISHAN NATH  
PUNJAB KHADDAR BOARD  
PURI  
LAHORE

From a photostat : G.N. 7942

## 10. LETTER TO V.G. DESAI

*Aso Sud 10 [September 27, 1925]<sup>1</sup>*

BHAISHRI VALJI,

I have both your letters. You may come and stay at Dr. Mehta's bungalow. Occupy only the portion that you need, so that the rest may be available for other visitors. Decide this matter with Chi. Chhaganlal and Maganlal. Start collecting literature on cow-protection. Think over it and find out how the cow-protection movement started. Take help, if you need, from someone. Collect literature on dairies and tanneries. I hope you will become a spinning member of the cow-protection association. Much against my wish, I am publishing that pamphlet<sup>2</sup> as a supplement of *Y.I.* Read my explanation in *Y.I.*

*Vandemataram from*

MOHANDAS

From a photostat of the Gujarati : C.W. 7741. Courtesy : V.G. Desai

## 11. LETTER TO VASUMATI PANDIT

*Ashvina Sud 10 [September 27, 1925]<sup>3</sup>*

CHI. VASUMATI,

Your letter. You must now be steady, that is, steady in mind. You must definitely tell me what worries you even now. I am both father and mother. If a daughter does not confide everything to her mother, to whom else will she? As the train is moving, I cannot write more.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

[PS.]

TILL THE 15TH : BIHAR

20TH: BOMBAY

21ST TO 3RD NOV.: KUTCH

THEN ASHRAM

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9219; also C.W. 468. Courtesy: Vasumati Pandit

<sup>1</sup> From the postmark

<sup>2</sup> The reference is to the "Cow-protection Supplement" issued by the Ghatkopar Humanitarian Association without the permission of Gandhiji, who was then the President of the All-India Cow-protection Association, but in anticipation of it. For Gandhiji's comments on this supplement, *vide "Notes"*, 1-10-1925.

<sup>3</sup> The letter bears the postmark, Bhagalpur: 1-10-1925. *Ashvina Sud 10* fell on September 27.

## 12. LETTER TO G. D. BIRLA

PATNA,

*Aso Sud 10 [September 27, 1925]*<sup>1</sup>

BHAISHRI GHANSHYAMDASJI,

I have your letter. I shall not trouble you much about Lohani just now.

Jamnalaaji told me that the amount of Rs. 25,000 you gave to the Muslim University was to be considered as part of the Rs. 60,000 promised by you at Juhu. Such was [not] my understanding; and I was planning to spend Rs. 60,000 on other things. But if what you meant was in fact not what I thought you meant, I have nothing to say.

There is another thing. You know my views on cow-protection. Shri Madhusudan Das owns a tannery at Cuttack which he has developed into a limited company. I feel like acquiring a majority of its shares with a view to controlling it for public benefit in the interest of cow-protection. The tannery's liabilities amount to Rs. 1,20,000. It is necessary to rescue it from this dead weight. The tannery uses only the hides of dead animals, but the hides of specially-killed *patlaghos*<sup>2</sup> are also used. In case it is decided to take over the tannery, three conditions should be insisted on :

1. Only hides of dead animals will be taken;
2. The practice of killing *patlaghos* for the sake of their hides must be discontinued;
3. The idea of charging interest<sup>3</sup> must be given up; if there is any profit, it should be used for the expansion of the tannery.

I would like you to take over the tannery provided it is available on these terms; I would also like you to undertake its management. If that is not practicable, I shall find someone else who can manage it. The tannery has a few acres of land which I have seen myself. Shri Madhusudan Das has spent a considerable amount on it out of his own pocket.

Thirdly, there is the All-India Spinners' Association. Can you

<sup>1</sup> Reference in the letter to the tour in Bihar which Gandhiji left on October 15, 1925, suggests that the letter was written in that year.

<sup>2</sup> Kind of iguana

<sup>3</sup> In the source the word 'ईँ' (yarn) has been used. It appears to be a slip for the word 'ईँ' (interest).

give your co-operation in this work? I would like you to contribute a handsome amount to the All-India Deshbandhu Memorial Fund.

Jamnalalji will have a detailed talk with you on all these three matters, if he happens to meet you in Delhi.

Is your wife feeling better?

I shall be in Bihar till the 15th.

*Yours sincerely,*

MOHANDAS GANDHI

From a copy of the Hindi: C.W. 6113; also *Gandhijiki Chhatrachhayamen*  
Courtesy: G. D. Birla

### 13. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS

The A.I.C.C. has come to a wise decision. It enables the Cawnpore Congress to devote its full time to the problem of the hour and to devise a method to make it possible for others to join it. But, before it could do so, it had to set right the relations between the two Congress Parties. The All-India Congress Committee has done that. The All-India Spinners' Association has been installed to further the Congress cause and not in opposition to it. All Congressmen and others who believe in the value of spinning should join it and make it a success.

*The Hindu, 28-9-1925*

### 14. LETTER TO VASUMATI PANDIT

*Aso Sud 11 [September 28, 1925]<sup>1</sup>*

CHI. VASUMATI,

I have your letters. Owing to the meeting of the All-India Congress Committee,<sup>2</sup> a lot of papers are in arrears. I shall be in Bihar till the 15th. Then I shall go direct from Bombay to Kutch. I shall reach the Ashram by 6th November. Take care of your health. How did you keep in the Ashram? Did you like your stay there? How was Laxmi doing?

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From the Gujarati original : C.W. 467. Courtesy: Vasumati Pandit

<sup>1</sup> From the postmark

<sup>2</sup> Held at Patna on September 22, 23 and 24



## 15. LETTER TO DEVCHAND PAREKH

*Aso Sud 11 [September 28, 1925]<sup>1</sup>*

BHAI DEVCHANDBHAI

I have your letter. We must take care of both the parties. In some parts of India where there is acute poverty, a lot of khadi is made. We must make others wear it. Are the millionaires going to spin all the yarn they need for themselves?

*Vandemataram from*

MOHANDAS

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 5698

## 16. LETTER TO FULCHAND SHAH

*Aso Sud 11 [September 28, 1925]<sup>2</sup>*

BHAISHRI FULCHAND,<sup>3</sup>

I have both your letters. If the untouchables are denied the right to enter the Municipality, try to educate public opinion. Go to Thakore Saheb<sup>4</sup> but do not start a satyagraha. The *Antyajjas* can go to the Municipality and fight. What is needed is patience. You may read what I have said in a general way about [caste] dinners in my article<sup>5</sup> sent for *Navajivan*. If we work patiently, calmly and gently, the *mahajan* will come round.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 2830. Courtesy: Shardabehn Shah

<sup>1</sup> From the postmark; the date of delivery is 2-10-1925.

<sup>2</sup> From the postmark

<sup>3</sup> Fulchand Kasturchand Shah, a Congress worker of Wadhwan in Saura-shtra

<sup>4</sup> The ruler of the then princely State of Wadhwan

<sup>5</sup> Gandhiji refers here, presumably, to his article, "If Expelled from One's Community", 11-10-1925.

## 17. LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

*Ashwin Sud 11 [September 28, 1925]<sup>1</sup>*

CHI. MATHURADAS,

Meet the lady<sup>2</sup> on the date she mentions, help her disembark and send her to Sabarmati. She must get off at Ahmedabad. Send a wire about her arrival to the Ashram. The lady has written many letters.

Keep this letter safe. You may send it to Mahadev if you like after taking down the name and the address. Or, you may send it to him later.

Enrol members for the Charkha Sangh. Also collect money. Collect money for cow-protection work too.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

[PS.]

I shall leave Patna on the 30th. I shall leave Bihar on the 15 and reach Bombay on the 20th. On the 20th I shall board the steamer for Mandvi.

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

## 18. LETTER TO GOPABANDHU DAS

PATNA,

*September 29, 1925*

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter. After all I am glad you did not come to Patna. For I was able to understand the case against Mahavir Singh<sup>3</sup> without any difficulty. Both Niranjana Babu and he were present. It has

<sup>1</sup> The year has been inferred from Gandhiji's itinerary mentioned in the letter. In 1925, *Aashwin Sud 11* corresponded to September 28.

<sup>2</sup> Madeleine Slade, later known as Mirabehn, was scheduled to arrive at Bombay on November 6, 1925.

<sup>3</sup> President, Utkal Provincial Congress Committee. He had been charged by the Sambalpur District Congress Committee with "embezzlement of national money."

now been arranged that Niranjana Babu should send Mahavir Singh the papers he wants. There would be no difficulty about getting his admission of the debt. But there is likely to be great difficulty about recovery. I have undertaken to settle the dispute about the jurisdiction in Singhbhum, C.P., Andhra and elsewhere, so far as the Congress is concerned. I should very much like you to have a written case prepared together with the evidence you will produce in support of your case. Each case should be short and precise. I would then ask for the replies of the other parties. I am glad of your determination to stick to the flood area and organize charkha relief there. I would like you so much to succeed in this effort of yours. I hope you liked the A.I.C.C. resolutions and the All-India Spinners' Association constitution. I hope you are keeping well. I send you herewith a resolution<sup>1</sup> received from Sambalpur.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

From the original: C.W. 7747 . Courtesy: Radhanath Rath

### *19. LETTER TO N. C. KELKAR*

PATNA,

*September 29, 1925*

DEAR MR. KELKAR,

I have received a copy of the Government's order regarding Mr. Nanjappa's case. How do you think we should proceed?

*Yours sincerely,*

From a photostat: C.W. 3116. Courtesy: K. N. Kelkar

<sup>1</sup> Not reproduced here. The resolution *inter alia* invited Gandhiji to settle the dispute between the Utkal Provincial Congress Committee and the Sambalpur District Congress Committee.

## 20. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, PATNA<sup>1</sup>

September 29, 1925

Mahatma Gandhi replying expressed his gratitude for the presentation of the address. It was not the first time that he had come into their midst. It was now four years since he had met them last and, though he recollected the details of that visit vividly and the fact that though both he and they were the same, the difference between then and now was tremendous. He scarcely needed to dilate on it, the difference in the atmosphere about them and in their outlook. He was glad to be able to meet them and he would like to address them briefly on their civic duties and problems connected with municipal life which was dear to him and of which he could claim some knowledge. If the municipal commissioners and citizens of a town were to attend seriously to municipal improvement, they would be doing a great service to the country. It was supremely necessary to do so, for the reflection of town life on their villages was unmistakable. If town life was dirty, the dirt and the squalor were reflected in the villages as well. If they had cinemas in the towns, village life was also to some extent influenced. He had seen this interconnection between towns and villages for himself in Bengal and he remembered vividly the charges made against town-dwellers by village folk. On the residents in a town the responsibility lay not only of keeping their towns pure, their lanes clean, but they had a duty towards their village brethren. Little though that duty might be, it made them in some sense the trustees of the villages. In the manner they in the towns conducted themselves, the people in the villages would.

The worst was their inner life was becoming as dirty as the dirt accumulated about them. There were not many roads in Patna and yet, when he saw their condition, he felt pained beyond measure just as he was on seeing the degeneration in their inner life. There were some very pertinent questions in respect of their civic duties which he would put before them. Did they properly look after the cleanliness of the town or did they leave it solely to the *Bhangis*? What arrangements, if any, had they made for supply of pure and cheap milk to the children? Were their men and women as dirty as were likely to impart their own dirt to others? What did they do for their untouchables? And, lastly, did they have drink shops in the town and, if so, how many? He knew they could not altogether control the number and the existence of these shops and much depended on the Government. But it was not altogether the fault of the government either, for if they bestirred themselves, satisfied those who drank about

<sup>1</sup> The meeting organized by the Patna Municipality, was held in Mangal's Tank Grounds and was largely attended. An address was presented to Gandhiji on behalf of the Municipality.

the evils the habit generated and provided them with suitable substitutes, why should people insist on infesting the grog shops? These were all questions which the ratepayers should attend to. If they did that, they could once more make their towns as clean and as beautiful as they were in the past.

He had often used strong language about Western civilization; he stood by all that he had said and he had to withdraw nothing. But he could distinguish good from bad and see and accept good even in things evil. And in this matter of civic life, the West had gone very much ahead. In the Western countries, particularly in England and America, people lived mostly in towns because they were not agriculturists, but engaged in industrial labour. How to keep their towns clean, how to provide those necessities and amenities which were unavoidable for decent living—in these the Westerners were truly their exemplars. Drink, of course, was rampant in the West. But let them take a look at how they dealt with epidemics in the West. The manner in which they grappled with it, stemmed its onward progress and finally killed it contrasted disagreeably with the apathy they in India displayed over the matter. He would appeal to them never to overlook the solemn duties that devolved on them as citizens of a town, to think over them earnestly and to discharge them to the best of their powers.

Adverting to the question of untouchables, Mahatmaji was glad they had frankly admitted their fault in the address they had presented him.<sup>1</sup> But admissions were valuable only if they were followed by efforts to remove the things admitted. Till they were able to serve their untouchable brethren to enter into their lives and to remove the hardships which beset them, they would fail in the discharge of their solemn duty. To say that they were Hindus and believed in the religion of *daya* and *dharma* and yet to shun untouchables was to emphasize an incompatibility. If they said that their religion taught them to believe in *himsa*, he had nothing to say to them. But if, on the other hand, they believed in *ahimsa* as a cardinal principle of their faith, they could not possibly face the world with that crime of untouchability on their head.

Proceeding Mahatmaji said that, if they were earnest in atoning for the stink they had been introducing into the villages, they could not help remembering the grim poverty in the land and thus they were brought face to face with the only feasible

<sup>1</sup> The address had stated: ". . . No special arrangements have been made for the uplift of the untouchables and the depressed—a cause most dear to your heart—although there have been in existence two schools for the untouchables and there is no restriction to their admission in the other schools as well."

remedy of that poverty—spinning and the charkha. He prayed that the townsmen should have this much of sense in them as to realize that, if they could not purify the villages, they could at least do their bit to remove poverty. God would not forgive them for shunning cloth made of yarn produced by their sisters in the villages, regarding that cloth as coarse, and to take to mill produce, thereby plunging their sisters into poverty. He was grieved to find that the khaddar depot in the town sold only Rs. 2,000 worth of cloth every month and that there was Rs. 2,00,000 worth of stock in the depot. It was a complete misunderstanding of the real scope and purpose of khaddar for people to urge that imported and Indian mill-made stuffs were comparatively cheaper. They must remember that all that they paid for khaddar went directly into the pockets of their poorer countrymen, whereas but a small fraction of it did so in the case of the cloth manufactured in the Indian mills. Their duty towards the poorer brothers was supreme and must transcend all other considerations, so much so that he for one would not appreciate that, while they starved the poor, they might present him with gilded addresses.

Proceeding, Mahatmaji said that he had deliberately refrained from speaking of Hindu-Muslim unity, for holding as he did that both Hindus and Mohammedans had gone mad it was no use speaking to lunatics. But if they dwelt awhile on all that he had told them, he felt he would feel he had not come to them in vain.

Concluding, the speaker appealed to the people present to contribute to the Deshbandhu Memorial Fund which was being raised for the purpose of village reconstruction that was so dear to the late lamented leader.

*The Searchlight, 7-10-1925*

## 21. LETTER TO JAWAHARILAL NEHRU

September 30, 1925

MY DEAR JAWAHAR,

We are living in strange times. Sitla Sahai may defend himself. Please keep me informed of further developments. What is he? Is he a lawyer? Had he ever any connection with revolutionary activity?

As for the Congress, it would be better to make it as simple as possible so as to enable the present remaining workers to cope with it. I know that your burden will be now increased. But you must not endanger your health in any way whatsoever. I am anxious about your health. I do not at all like these frequent attacks of fever you are having. I wish you could give yourself and Kamala a holiday.

Father has written to me. Of course, I never wanted to go as far as he supposes. I would not think of asking anyone to support father. But I would not hesitate to ask a friend or friends who would consider it a privilege to pay you for your public services. I would press you to take it from public funds, if you want owing to the situation in which you are and must be were not extraordinary. I am myself convinced that you should contribute to the common purse either by doing some business or by letting your personal friends find funds for retaining your services. There is no immediate hurry but without fretting about it, come to a final decision. I will not mind even if you decided to do some business. I want your mental peace. I know that you will serve the country even as manager of a business. I am sure that father will not mind any decision you may arrive at so long as it gives you complete peace.

*Yours,*

BAPU

[PS.]

I see that I must reserve the right hand for *Y.I.*

*A Bunch of Old Letters*, p. 44

## 22. LETTER TO DEVCHAND PAREKH

*Aso Sud 13, 1981 [September 30, 1925]*

BHAISHRI DEVCHANDBHAI,

I have your letter. It is good that you have discussed the matter in detail. Let me first take up what you have written about the franchise of the new khadi organization.<sup>1</sup> You must have come to know from the newspapers that there are two categories of franchise. [A member of] the first category has to spin and send one thousand yards every month, while [a member of] the second has to spin and send two thousand yards every year. We can include the professional spinners in the second category, but we shall not do so just now. We should so work that we do not give rise to the fear that we may capture the Congress with the help of these voters. In this way we can free the Swaraj Party from fear and suspicion. It does not mean that we want to restrict the number of new spinners. We should enrol as many of them as possible, and herein lies the success of this Association. By putting a contribution of two thousand yards for the second category, we have made it easy for the new spinners. Even half a pound of cotton is not consumed in spinning two thousand yards of yarn of five or six counts. This much cotton would cost less than 4 annas and, if the yarn is finer, it would hardly cost 2 as. Whatever the member contributes to the Association over and above the cost of cotton is like his respectful offering to the spinning-wheel. And at present the Association would welcome even this. So you see this suits your wishes. Now let us consider the next problem raised by you, that of the production and sale of khadi.

In regard to the sale of khadi the procedure of the old Association is quite clear. It gives interest-free advances against good surety to traders in khadi. The margin of profit has been kept at  $6\frac{1}{4}$  per cent so that they should not be tempted to charge higher prices and exploit the people's love for khadi; in case of loss, the association undertakes to compensate it by a bounty of 2 per cent. In this manner, the traders will gradually stand on their own, and the Association will have little to do in this regard. Thus, you will find that there is nothing to object to in this procedure, seeing that it involves little

<sup>1</sup> The All-India Spinners' Association, whose constitution was finalized on September 24, 1925.



botheration and has the additional advantage of getting the use of the traders' capital.

Now let us come to the question of production. This involves training people through the spread of education in schools to spin and wear clothes made out of their own yarn. This work must continue. The result of this effort, however, will be visible only in the long run. Therefore, it would not be right to depend entirely on this. The more I observe the more I notice that we have not yet been able to reach those areas where the spinning-wheel is natural and cheap. In some of these areas, the work is going on in such a way that they can afford to maintain skilled workers and pay them adequate wages. We can easily put the khadi work on a sound footing by deputing to such areas adequately paid experts in the craft and the economics of khaddar to remedy the few defects found there. If we cut down on this, it would be short-sighted economy. Therefore I think it necessary to employ paid experts in the trade and technique of khadi. I see the need of many such men. But we do not have trained men. Therefore, we must find men who claim to love this work and undertake to train them. I have also seen from experience that it won't do to have men who have had mere superficial training. It is essential to give them thorough training. For this purpose, we should have one or more centres to impart all-round training in khadi.

Thus, we will try to infuse life in those areas which show signs of hope, but which are dormant and backward. At the same time, we shall have to put in great effort in some areas which seem to be recalcitrant. We shall have to patronize the weavers also for some time. Otherwise, there will always be danger of every kind of deceit and frequent depression, and it is quite likely that our work may be washed out. In order to cope with all these problems, I think we need an army of efficient, staunch and honest workers. We must not be impatient in this matter. We should be careful in the choice of men. We should also practise strict economy. I am sure all this work will not be difficult if we are alert. I have no doubt that as and when these areas get stabilized, they will earn the hire of the workers. I am already noticing several such instances.

Besides this, there are many other matters which I wish to explain to you. But I leave them for another occasion. Remember that khadi has to be produced also to prevent famine. We may not turn back a single woman who wants to spin for her livelihood. Hence we will need houses, etc.

*Vandemataram from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 5727

## 23 . LETTER TO C. F. ANDREWS

[September/October, 1925]<sup>1</sup>

MY DEAREST CHARLIE,

Though you do not want me to write to you, I cannot help.

What can be the cause of Gurudev wanting you? God who has kept you from harm so long, will keep you as long as he needs your service. But you sometimes will not help Him even where you can and must. And for you to have nervousness about anything or anybody is bad. When I see you anxious about anything, I ask myself, what is the meaning of 'Be careful for nothing'.

Your Jamshedpur report is wonderful. Only you could have written it. No beating about the bush.

I am all with you in keeping up the *langoti* for the Bhil children.

With deepest love,

Yours,  
MOHAN

[PS.]

Never again eating rich foods even to please the host. I should like that definite promise.

[PPS.]

Kristodas has just showed me your reference to a cobra creeping on me. I wish what you say was a true account. The gentleman did creep up, but that was after prayer whilst I was lying and we were talking. There was even a little stir. I kept still while a friend removed the cloth covering me on which it had crept. You should send a correction I think.

6, DWARKANATH LANE

From a photostat: G.N. 2640; also *Charles Freer Andrew*, p. 208

<sup>1</sup> The date is as given in *Charles Freer Andrews* by Benarsidas Chaturvedi and Marjorie Sykes. Cf., however, "Comments of C. F. Andrews's Letter", 5-6-1924, the subject of *langoti* for Bhil children referred to in the letter is first discussed.

## 24. THE ALL - INDIA CONGRESS COMMITTEE

The transfer of power into the Swarajists' hands was completed by the All-India Congress Committee at Patna. The resolutions<sup>1</sup> were keenly debated and on the whole with the greatest self-restraint. The majorities for the different parts of the resolution were not always as large as I had expected or desired, so as to warrant a change in the constitution of a parent body by its subordinate. But I feel that I consulted the best interests of the country in allowing the resolutions. I have admitted before now that the making of the change in the constitution was outside the ordinary jurisdiction of the All-India Congress Committee and that it was of the nature of a rebellion. But I hold that it is the duty of every institution jealous of its reputation courageously to face such a crisis if it is convinced that the rebellion is needed for the existence or welfare of the institution itself. It was for that reason that I invited the Committee in the first instance to decide whether a crisis had arisen justifying a change in the constitution without waiting for the Congress session. The majority in favour of an immediate change was overwhelming. I was not, therefore, insistent upon similar majorities in connection with votes for the resolution itself. It now remains for the Congress either to endorse the action of the All-India Congress Committee or to censure it by rejecting it or even to censure the action even while accepting its decision, it being an accomplished fact. It was suggested by one or two members that censure was an impossible thing because the resolution of the All-India Congress Committee was to be enforced immediately and that therefore those who would come to the Congress would come naturally under the new franchise and those who benefited by it could hardly be expected to censure the action of their benefactor. Such, however, need not be the case. If the change made by the Committee is resented on pure constitutional grounds, even men who may take advantage of the benefit conferred may still very properly condemn the unconstitutional action of the Committee. They may admit the advisability of the change but repudiate the right of All-India Congress Committee to make it under any circumstance whatsoever.

As to the substance of the change made, there is really nothing

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "A. I. C. C. Resolutions", 1-10-1925.

drastic in it. No interest is injured. No single person is disfranchised. No single party is in a worse position than it was before the change. Non-co-operators need not complain, because non-co-operation as a national policy has been suspended. The constructive programme remains unaffected. Hand-spinning and khaddar still remain part of the national programme. The Council programme which was being worked by the Swaraj Party in the name of the Congress will now be worked by the Congress through the Swaraj Party . This may be called a distinction without a difference. Those who put spinning before the political programme and those who believe in spinning to the exclusion of any political programme strictly so called are not injured because they have a separate organization for its development and because hand-spinning still remains as an alternative part of the franchise and the use of khaddar on Congress and other public occasions still remains obligatory. Nor are the other parties who are outside the Congress adversely affected by it. Whereas under the Belgaum resolution they had to convert or negotiate with both No-changers and Swarajists, now they have only to convert or confer with the Swarajists. The change therefore in every respect extends the right of representation and makes the union of all the parties less difficult than it was. No Congress can possibly resent a change in extension of popular liberty. What is more, the change in my opinion, is in accordance with the requirements of those who have hitherto been identified with the Congress. For them, perhaps, it does not go far enough. I should be sorry if such is the fact.

The discussion at the meeting betrayed on the part of some members a fear that the delivery of the yarn suscription directly to the All-India Spinners' Association might result in an unscrupulous exploitation of professional spinners or, worse still, in dishonest practices to flood the Congress, thus bringing about an undesirable state of things and defeating the very end sought to be accomplished by the resolution. This fear was felt not if the yarn was to be delivered at the centre, but if it was to be delivered to the provincial agencies. There was no difficulty in meeting this objection. The clause in the constitution of the Association requiring Congress members who wanted to spin rather than pay a four-anna subscription to send their yarn to the central offices was inserted to meet this difficulty. My own view is certainly not to flood the Congress with spinners and thus to convert it once more into a purely or predominantly spinners' organization to the exclusion of Council policies. I would like it to be so undoubtedly, but that can only happen when those to whom the

transfer has been made become converted to spinning out and out. And that can only happen by the spinners' action not within the Congress but without it. If hand-spinning has any intrinsic vitality and becomes so universal as to bring us within a measurable distance of excluding foreign cloth—and that can happen only by incessant and exclusive effort on the part of those who believe in spinning out and out, working out their belief in practice—the Swarajists will become complete converts. My strong advice, therefore, is that those who are at present spinning members of the Congress may, if they wish, continue to be so by sending their yarn to the central office. No canvassing need be made by them for increasing the strength of membership through hand-spinning. They may work to the utmost of their ability to enrol as many members of the Association as possible. And if we can get a large number of voluntary spinners drawn not from the professional class, but from those who spin purely for sacrifice and not for livelihood, it would be an achievement that cannot but tell. But, at the present moment, and up to the time that all suspicion is set at rest, they should refrain from becoming members of the Congress. I have always held that the National Congress should have no wrangling within its ranks and that there should be no unseemly attempt to capture the Congress. Those who cannot see eye to eye with the policy of the majority should either refrain from fighting to the division point in vital matters, or if their conscience would not allow it they should for the time being retire altogether from the Congress. I will, therefore, urge the fierce Non-co-operators, who if they remain in the Congress would consider it their duty to fight the Swarajists at every step and stage, to retire from the Congress, and build up public opinion if they so will, from without. They must leave the Swarajists an open field and give them the best opportunity of working out their policy. In my opinion, if they are to create an impression upon the government they must have the Congress organization undisturbed by Non-co-operators.

Hence, in my opinion, wherever the two parties are evenly balanced, Non-co-operators or No-changers should surrender full control to the Swarajists and voluntarily give up offices if they hold any. Where the No-changers are in an overwhelming majority, they should not hamper the Swarajists, and should help them wherever they conscientiously can. In no case may any Congress Committee put up for the legislatures candidates that are not selected by the Swarajists or are in opposition to them.

One pleasing thing I must not omit to note. There was a decided inclination on the part of the majority to make khaddar wear the

National dress for all Congressmen. The motion to that end was not pressed only when it became clear that it would embarrass the Swaraj Party. But an improvement upon the Belgaum resolution was heartily accepted to the effect that whilst khaddar was obligatory on Congress and other public occasions it was expected of all Congressmen to wear khaddar on all the occasions, but in no case shall they wear or use foreign cloth.

*Young India*, 1-10-1925

## 25. TO VOLUNTARY SPINNERS

The Secretaries ask me to draw the attention of voluntary spinners to the following.:

Every person wishing to join the Association shall apply in the following form:

To

THE SECRETARY,  
ALL-INDIA SPINNERS' ASSOCIATION,  
SABARMATI

DEAR SIR,

I have read the rules of the A.I.S.A. I desire to become a member of lass/ an associate member and I forward herewith my subscription for . . .

Please enrol me as a member.

*Yours faithfully,*

2. The yarn must be sent direct to Sabarmati.
3. A slip containing the following particulars of information should be attached to the yarn:
  - I. Name and address of the member, denoting Congress province and taluqa.
  - ii. Month of subscription.
  - iii. (a) Length of yarn.  
(b) Weight of yarn.  
(c) Count of yarn.  
(d) Size of hank.  
(e) Kind of cotton used.

Those two hundred who gave their names at the inauguration meeting of the Association please note,

*Young India*, 1-10-1925

## 26. SIKHISM

During his visit to Patna for the A.I.C.C., Sardar Mangal Singh drew my attention to an article in *Young India* entitled "My friend, the revolutionary" in the issue dated 9th April last.<sup>1</sup> He told me that many Sikh friends were offended because they thought I have described Guru Govind Singh as a misguided patriot whereas I had glorified Krishna. The Sardarji asked me to take an early opportunity of explaining what I meant by the passages he drew my attention to. The careful reader will note that my language is most guarded. I have made no positive assertion. All that I have said is that believing every statement made about the heroes mentioned including Guru Govind Singh to be true, had I lived as their contemporary I would have called every one of them a misguided patriot. But, in the very next sentence, I have hastened to add that I must not judge them and that I disbelieve history as far as the details of the acts of the heroes are concerned. My belief about the Sikh Gurus is that they were all deeply religious teachers and reformers, that they were all Hindus and that Guru Govind Singh was one of the greatest defenders of Hinduism. I believe, too, that he drew the sword in its defence. But I cannot judge his actions, nor can I use him as my model so far as his resort to the sword is concerned. What I would have done had I lived in his times and held the same views that I hold now I do not know. Such speculation I regard as perfect waste of time. I do not regard Sikhism as a religion distinct from Hinduism. I regard it as part of Hinduism and the reformation in the same sense that *vaishnavism* is. I read in the Yeravda Prison all the writings that I could lay my hands upon regarding the Sikhs. I read portions of Granth Saheb. Its deeply spiritual and moral tone I found to be uplifting. In the collection of hymns we have at the *Ashram*, we have some of Guru Nanak's also. At the same time, I do not quarrel with the Sikhs for considering, if they wish, Sikhism as totally distinct from Hinduism. And when during my first visit to the Punjab, a few Sikh friends told me that my reference to Sikhism as part of Hinduism displeased them, I ceased to refer to it as such. But the Sikh friends will pardon me for avowing my belief when I am asked to express my opinion about Sikhism.

Now about Krishna. Whilst I have dealt with the Gurus as

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "My Friend, the Revolutionary", 9-4-1925.

historical personages about whose existence we have trustworthy records, I have no knowledge that the Krishna of the *Mahabharata* ever lived. My Krishna has nothing to do with any historical person. I would refuse to bow my head to the Krishna who would kill because his pride is hurt, or the Krishna whom non-Hindus portray as a dissolute youth. I believe in Krishna of my imagination as a perfect incarnation, spotless in every sense of the word, the inspirer of the *Gita* and the inspirer of the lives of millions of human beings. But if it was proved to me that the *Mahabharata* is history in the same sense that modern historical books are, that every word of the *Mahabharata* is authentic and that the Krishna of the *Mahabharata* actually did some of the acts attributed to him, even at the risk of being banished from the Hindu fold, I should not hesitate to reject that Krishna as God incarnate. But to me the *Mahabharata* is a profoundly religious book, largely allegorical, in no way meant to be a historical record. It is the description of the eternal duel going on within ourselves, given so vividly as to make us think, for the time being that the deeds described therein were actually done by the human beings. Nor do I regard the *Mahabharata* as we have it now as a faultless copy of the original. On the contrary I consider that it has undergone many emendations.

*Young India*, 1-10-1925

## 27. ALL -INDIA SPINNERS' ASSOCIATION

The reader will see printed elsewhere the constitution of the All-India Spinners' Association. A careful study of it will show that it is, at the present moment, not only not a democratic institution but that, in effect, it is a one man's show. It may represent either the arrogance of the person who calls into being such an institution or his absolute faith in the cause and in himself. So far as man can be aware of himself, I know that there is no arrogance in giving an autocratic character to the Association. Commercial bodies can never be democratic. And if hand-spinning is to become universal and successful in the country, its non-political and purely economical side must be now fully developed. That development is sought to be attained by the All-India Spinners' Association.

In choosing my colleagues in the Association, I have been guided by the sole consideration of utility. Each one has been selected



for his special qualification. In making the selection there was no question of representation of different provinces. And some of the best workers have been left out of the Council because of the possibility of misunderstandings. What special qualification from the spinners' standpoint has Maulana Shaukat Ali, it may be asked. The special qualification that he has is that he is a Mussalman, a pukka believer in khadi, wants to spin one thousand yards every month and to do all he can for the charkha and khaddar. I have purposely omitted active Swarajists because, for obvious reasons, they cannot give their time predominantly to khaddar.

At the time of the formation of the Association at which I was assisted by over one hundred khaddar lovers, including Swarajists, I was asked whether I had ceased to believe in the political importance of khadi or of its ability to produce an atmosphere for civil resistance. My answer was an emphatic 'no'. The political importance of khaddar consists in its economic capacity. A people that are starving for want of occupation can have no political consciousness. Khaddar will have no political importance in a country where no cloth is needed and where people live on hunting, or in a country where people live on exploitation of peoples belonging to other countries. The political importance of khaddar in India is derived from her peculiar condition in that it needs cloth, it exploits no other country, and its millions have nothing to do for four months in the year, though they are starving. The ability of khaddar to give an atmosphere of civil resistance consists in its ability, if successful, of making us conscious of some power within us and its ability to produce an atmosphere of calmness, and yet fixed determination behind that calmness. Many people who have civil resistance on their lips have still little notion of what it means. They mix it up with an atmosphere of intense excitement, ready at any moment to develop into actual violence, whereas civil resistance is the very opposite of it. And neither the political result nor the calm atmosphere are possible without khadi becoming an economic success. Hence it is necessary to emphasize its paramount and economic aspect which is also its direct result. The preamble, therefore, is deliberate and vital. The fiercest politician and the fiercest civil resister may join the Association, but he does so as an economic worker. No maharaja need shun the Association if he admits the great economic value of khadi and the paramount necessity of finding a proper supplementary employment for the starving millions of India. I, therefore, venture to invite all

those who believe in khadi and the spinning-wheel to join the Association irrespective of their politics and irrespective of race or creed. I would invite Englishmen and other Europeans who are mindful of the welfare of the starving millions of India to join the Association. I know that there are many who believe in khadi, who believe in hand-spinning, but will not spin themselves. Let them become Associates, if they will not even wear khadi and yet want khadi to make all the progress it can. Let them support want khadi to make all the progress it can. Let them support the Association with their donations.

Let there be, however, no mistake that so long as it pleases the Congress to allow it, the Association will remain an integral part of the Congress organization. As such it will be its duty to render all the assistance it can to the Congress in its programme of hand-spinning and khadi. The connecting link between the Congress and the Association is thus a common faith in the spinning-wheel and khadi. The Association as such will not concern itself or be in any way affected by the varying politics of the Congress. Its existence will be independent, its object merely confined to the propagation of the spinning-wheel and khadi, and it will be governed by its own separate constitution, so much so that it has adopted a different franchise and it can take in, as I have already said, non-congressmen as members and no congressman, not even a spinning member, is bound to become a member of the Association.

The constitution is not as rigid as I had at first intended. The drafts circulated by me required two thousand yards of yarn per month for membership of A class; and a declaration to the following effect was intended to be required from such members: "It is my firm belief that the economic salvation of the masses of India is impossible without the universal adoption by the country of the spinning-wheel and its product khaddar. I shall, therefore, except when disabled by illness or some unforeseen event, spin daily, for at least half an hour and habitually wear hand-spun and hand-woven khaddar, and in the event of my belief undergoing a change, or my ceasing to spin or wear khaddar, I shall resign the membership of this Association."

The two thousand yards were reduced to one thousand because a strenuous fight was put up on behalf of those who wanted to become A class members and yet found it difficult to give 2,000 yards per month. The declaration itself was dropped because the very idea of a

solemn undertaking seemed to be repugnant, I still think quite wrongly, to others. My own opinion and that of many others is that promises or vows are necessary for the strongest of us. A promise is like a right angle not nearly but exactly of 90°. The slightest deflection makes it useless for the grand purpose that the right angle serves. A voluntary promise is like a plumb line keeping a man straight and warning him when he is going wrong. Rules of general application do not serve the same purpose as an individual vow. We find therefore the system of declarations followed in all large and well conducted institutions. The Viceroy has to take the oath of office. Members of Legislatures have to do likewise all the world over, and in my opinion rightly so. A soldier joining an army has to do likewise. Moreover, a written undertaking reminds one of what one has promised to do. Memory is a very frail thing. The written word stands for ever. But as there was fairly strong opposition to the retention of declarations, I felt that I should waive them as it was common ground among all that, whilst the declaration might not be taken as a matter of fact, the belief affirmed in the declaration was and should be the belief of every member and that every member was expected to spin at least for half an hour daily except when unavoidably prevented from doing so. There was an additional clause to the declaration to be made by members of the Council, and it was this:

“I promise faithfully to discharge the obligations of my office as member of the Council of the Association and give preference to the furtherance of its objects over all other work, public or private, that I might undertake.”

It was suggested that whilst the declaration should not be taken, the promise of faithful discharge of obligations of office must be an understood thing in an association whose Council was necessarily to consist of whole-timers. Indeed, the holding of office in the Council is all duty and no right. And where it is all service and no certificate save that of one's own conscience, all can take part in it whether they hold office or not. I hope therefore that no omission will be resented or misunderstood. On the contrary I am hoping that all the khadi workers, who had any new or important idea, or special talent for serving, will not fail to give the association the benefit of his or her idea or talent. If its activity is to succeed, it will need all the assistance that the lowliest among us can give.

*Young India*, 1-10-1925

## 28. NOTES

### MY APOLOGIES

It is a matter of deep regret that I had to be party to the postponement of the rest of my tour in Bihar. But I was helpless. I saw that my health was becoming gradually undermined by the incessant travelling which I have been doing since the fast<sup>1</sup> of last year. There seems to be nothing organically wrong with me. Only tired limbs need some rest. Babu Rajendra Prasad observed my dilapidated condition and observed also that I was ill able to stand the shouts of thousands of men, however lovingly meant they were. He has, therefore, absolved me from the tour beyond 15th October, and the revised programme even up to that date has been made so light as to give me ample rest every day and leave me two clear days per week for my editing. The U.P. friends have been equally indulgent and obliging and will be satisfied with only two days in the U.P. The Maharashtrian khaddar lovers have absolved me from my promise to visit some parts of Maharashtra during November. And I am to finish this year's travelling with an easy fortnight in Cutch. The Cutch friends are insistent that I should visit them during October. But they promise to make my tour in Cutch noiseless and thoroughly restful and they have dangled before me a fat purse for the advancement of hand-spinning, spinning-wheel and khaddar. I thank all those who have been so kind and considerate to me. I expect the Cutch friends to be true to their promise. To those provinces who have been indulgent to me I promise that I will visit them if they still wish me to do so next year. The programme can be fixed by mutual consultation at Cawnpore.

### REMEMBER 11TH OCTOBER

I draw the attention of Congress organization and other public bodies to the following resolution of the A.I.C.C.

The All-India Congress Committee expresses its deep sympathy with the Indian settlers in South Africa in their troubles and assures them of all the support that it is within the power of the Congress to give them to maintain their position and self-respect in South Africa. In the opinion of the All-India Congress Committee, India should not become a party to any scheme of repatriation whether described as voluntary or compulsory. The Congress is

<sup>1</sup> The twenty-one days' fast from September 18 to October 8, 1924, undertaken as a penance for communal riots; *vide* "Statement Announcing 21-Day Fast", 18-9-1924.

further of opinion that the Bill proposed to be passed by the Union Parliament is manifestly in breach of the settlement of 1914.<sup>1</sup> The A.I.C.C. suggests to the Congress organizations to call public meetings of all parties on the eleventh day of October 1925 to protest against the treatment meted out to the Indian settlers in South Africa.

If these meetings to be held all over India are to become a success, all parties including Chambers of Commerce, European and Anglo-Indian Associations, missionary bodies, etc., should cooperate whole-heartedly, as I hope they will. There is no division of opinion of this one point. And I believe that the Government of India will welcome an emphatic and unanimous expression of public opinion.

#### POOR ON 14 LACS

A friend writes:

You are reported to claim to be a sannyasi and yet to have taken scrupulous care to have provided yourself with handsome living for yourself and your dependents and that you have made to that end a trust of your estate which is worth fourteen lacs and that you are leading a very easy and comfortable life. Some of us were staggered to hear this. Will you kindly enlighten the public on the point? I myself refuse to believe the report.

If this query had not come from an honest friend whom I know, I would have taken no notice of it, especially as some months ago, in answer to a question about my personal expenses, I have dealt with my private affairs. I never had 14 lacs of rupees which I could call my own. What I did have I had certainly reduced to a trust when I renounced all property. But it was a trust for public purposes. I retained for myself nothing out of that trust. But I have never described myself as a sannyasi. Sannyas is made of sterner stuff, I regard myself as a householder, leading a humble life of service and, in common with my fellow-workers, living upon the charity of friends who defray the expenses of Satyagraha Ashram at Sabarmati of which I am one of the founders. The life I am living is certainly very easy and very comfortable, if ease and comfort are a mental state. I have all I need without the slightest care of having to keep any personal treasures. Mine is a life full of joy in the midst of incessant work. In not wanting to think of what tomorrow will bring for me I feel as free as a bird. Indeed at the present moment I may even be described to be living a life of luxury. An English lady, the other day, came to me whilst the train was standing at Gaya station and said, "How is it I see you

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Cable to G. K. Gokhale", 22-1-1914.

travelling so comfortably in a second-class compartment surrounded by so many people when I expected to find you in a crowded third-class compartment? Have you not said that you want to live like the poor? Do you suppose poor people can afford the luxury of second-class travelling? Is not your practice inconsistent with your profession?" I straightway pleaded guilty and did not care to inform this fair inquirer that my body had become too dilapidated to bear the fatigue of incessant third-class travelling. I feel that the weakness of the body could not be pleaded as an excuse. I am painfully aware of the fact that there are tens of thousands of men and women much weaker in body that travel third class because they have no friends to provide them with second-class travelling expenses. There was, undoubtedly, an inconsistency between my practice and profession of identification with the poor. Such is the tragedy of life and yet, in the midst of it, I refuse to part with my joy. The thought that I am ceaselessly and honestly struggling against the requirements of the flesh sustains me in spite of the contradiction that the good lady could not fail to see.

#### EFFECT OF THE WHEEL

A correspondent who, being a State servant, is not a Congress member but who is a believer in the mission of the charkha and who therefore spins regularly, writes:

From what little experience I have had with the charkha (some thing like 150 hours during the last seven months), I feel that any revival of the charkha is impossible unless men have taken to it and set an example to their womenfolk in the matter of producing fine, well twisted, weavable yarn. I also feel that highly undisciplined as we are, the charkha is sure to impart a wholesome discipline and infuse a sense of responsibility in our irresponsibilities dispositions.

He is not the only one who has found the wheel to impart to the spinner a spirit of discipline. And who that is engaged in a spinning propaganda will fail to endorse the statement that if women are to spin, men must not only set the example but teach the women the technique of the art. All the small but important improvements that have been made in the charkha are due solely to the efforts of the devoted educated men who are working at it selflessly and regularly.

#### COW-PROTECTION SUPPLEMENT

The reader will find circulated with this number a supplement of *Young India* printed not by me but by the Ghatkopar Humanitarian

Association and printed too without my permission but in anticipation of it. The Association has undergone considerable expense in having the pamphlet printed. Had they asked for my permission before printing, I would have declined to circulate the pamphlet which contains the accounts and reports of the Association. I cannot afford to circulate to the readers of *Young India* such things however admirable they may be in themselves unless I would change the character of this journal. But it contains some valuable reading matter for lovers of the cow. The mistake of putting in such readable matter in the midst of the accounts and appeals for funds is due to excessive zeal. I know that my permission has been anticipated for the purpose of disseminating among the readers a plea for the protection of our fellow-creatures, the lower animals, written by a friend whose learning and love of humanity I prize. He is, like me, an idealist. But if I had been given the choice of revising his article I would have toned it down, though I believe his argument to be convincing. I regard myself as a practical reformer confining my attention to things that are, humanly speaking, possible. I would therefore have boiled down the paper to the reproduction of the valuable statistics given in it, the informative report of the Municipal Commissioner of Bombay on the criminal waste of cattle life in that city miscalled "the beautiful" and the terrible extract from the report of Dr. Mann describing the condition of the stables of Bombay. I commend to the attention of the reader all these things in the so-called supplement to *Young India*. Let him read pages 2 and 6 to 10 at least and excuse the overzeal of the energetic Secretary of the Ghatkopar Humanitarian Association. If he reads the whole of the supplement, he will find that the Association is doing good work in the face of difficulties due to apathy and ignorance. For the indifferent or the very busy reader I collect a few startling facts. During the twelve months ending 31st March 1924, 90,314 cattle were slaughtered in Calcutta, 58,154 in Bandra (Bombay), 14,128 in Ahmedabad, 29,565 in Delhi. This is all a terrific economic waste. The slaughter is preventable not by any sentimental appeal to the Mussalmans or Christians or any others. It is preventable by an intelligent application of the funds that are being today wasted throughout the length and breadth of India in the name of cow-protection by men who have hearts full of love for all life but who do not know how to save it. I am convinced that the establishment of dairies and tanneries not for profit but for saving cattle life is the only solution for preventing the wanton destruction of precious life.

Religious sentiment that takes no note of hard economic facts or that is built up on prejudice is worse than useless. Religious sentiment allied to reason and practical knowledge becomes irresistible. Cattle life, if it is to be saved, must be too expensive to take. No religious sentiment will save it so long as it remains profitable to kill it, as it is in India at the present moment.

*Young India*, 1-10-1925

## 29. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, BHAGALPUR

*October 1, 1925*

MR. PRESIDENT AND MY HINDU AND MUSLIM BRETHREN,

I am grateful to you for the addresses you have given me. I want to tell you that the fact that I have got the opportunity to come over to you has greatly increased my pleasure.

I perfectly remember the last time I came over here, some 4 or 5 years ago. What difference do I mark in the situation of then and now? You have referred to the Hindu-Muslim question in one of the addresses. I would like to say something about this question to my Hindu and Muslim brethren. But I regard myself to be a sensible man. I know my limitations well. I have fully realized that I have no longer that influence which I commanded over the Hindu and Mohammedans in 1921. Today I can persuade neither the Hindus nor the Mohammedans. I know it full well that any good result can come out only when both rid themselves of their madness. Call it God or Khuda, there is a force before which our heads always bow. We ought to fear Him and determine our duty through that fear. There is no reason whatsoever to justify the Hindus and the Mussalmans to fight one another. I see neither religious grievance nor any other justification for the fight. It is our madness alone which is responsible for it. If we want to get right of this ignorance and become men, we must give up our pride and in fear of God purify our hearts and again try to unite and become one.

Man wants one thing and God may want another. What do we know of the purpose which He wants to fulfil by making our hearts so bad? God's work only He knows. On being asked about it by a few Mussalman friends who are genuinely and really anxious to settle this

<sup>1</sup>Gandhiji was replying in Hindi to addresses of welcome presented by the Municipality and the District Board of Bhagalpur.



quarrel, I have advised them to do exactly as some Mussalmans of the time of the first four Caliphs did? What is to be done when two brothers fight among themselves? Misunderstanding is created, God is forgotten and they are at daggers drawn to cut one another's throat. We should treat this case as the one just described, and do what the noble Mussalmans of those days did. I have this advice for both the Hindus and the Mussalmans—that those Hindus who do not hate the Muslims and have regard for the Koran and those Mussalmans who have no enmity with the Hindus and respect the *Gita* as well should bring themselves into the depth of their own hearts. Now the days are no more when one used to seek refuge in the caves of Egypt or the jungles of the Himalayas. Even there one can get no peace now. He will be followed by the electric light, and even if that does not happen, the airships will be there to disturb him. In these days we have access to only one cave. We are to sit in that cave of our hearts and pray to God; "Keep at least my heart pure." When the quarrelling brothers are cured of their madness, the cave-dwellers will be requisitioned for service. May God bless the whole nation and all those who have kept aloof from these quarrels! Not only these two communities but all classes living in India, men of all provinces, may live together as brothers and sisters. They may regard others' women as their own mothers and sisters. I would like every Mussalman to know that it is only they who are mad who think of saving Islam by the help of the sword only. And to those Hindus also who want to save Hinduism by the help of the sword my message is that, if you want to draw your swords, draw them by all means, but for the sake of God do not call in a third party to arbitrate. You want to escape from one another and it is because of this that you recognize the necessity of the existence of a third party. So I have thought it fit to bring myself into my own heart. I am no more going to fast for Hindu-Muslim quarrels. All that was possible for a man to do I have tried. Now I pray to God for more knowledge. I believe that in due time the Hindus and the Mussalmans will come round, but let those fight who want to. Let all Hindus and Mussalmans who like to draw their swords against one another, draw them, but it would have been much better if they had taken to the practice of non violence as a religious duty. I have understood non-violence only after having fully known what violence is. I have said this many a time and I do it now again—better commit violence than sit help-lessly in the name of non-violence. To the coward I shall not be able to deliver my message of non-violence. Him I shall not be

able to teach the lesson of peacefulness; I will be able to give the lesson of peace, the lesson of non-violence, only to those who do not fear to die, who are not afraid of their opponents. Maulana Shaukat Ali once told me that he and his brother had not lost their senses when they accepted non-violence as a policy. They did so because they knew that the non-violence that I suggested required the use of all the bravery that they possessed. They knew that in non-violence also it was necessary to know and practise the art of dying and they were prepared to die happily if occasion arose for it. But they felt that, if they died with their swords drawn, they would be committing suicide, but as they wanted to die in the service of the country and Islam, they would have to die without drawing blood.

Whenever I see cowardice and fear, I ask people to draw the sword. The inhabitants of a neighbouring village told me, when I went to Bettiah in 1921, that the policemen molested their women and looted their houses and whilst the police were doing this, they had run away. When I asked them the reason for it, they at once told me that their running away was due to my teaching of non-violence. I felt then that if the earth could have given me place, it would have been better for me to have buried myself therein. Had I ever given the lesson never to draw the sword in any case? If one could not die without drawing blood, one must retaliate and die in the protection of one's property and honour. I had told them to die long before anybody could touch their wives and if they could not die without retaliation, they were to take their swords in their hands and die before anybody could reach their women. They were to teach their women also to protect their own honour, to die before anybody could lay his hands upon their body. One who knows how to die becomes free for ever. The sword becomes a worthless weapon for him. The swordsman loses all his strength with the destruction of his sword, but one who knows the science of dying without injuring the wrongdoer dies while doing his work. His weapon knows no destruction. But what am I to say to them who leave their women to their fate and fly away? Such a man is worse than a mere animal? It would be much better if he at least fought with sword in hand, but a coward would not use even the sword. For his protection he will go to the Government, he will engage the *gundas* and what not. What am I to say to such men? I know only one lesson and I am trying to teach it to India and want the world also to learn it. If you do not learn it, I do not know what is going to happen. Today the crores of India cannot

use the sword and I do not see the time coming in the near future when they will be able to do so. I do not know if such a day is going to come even in a hundred years, but this much I know full well that if India wanted, it could be free even now. The sum and substance of all that I have said is this that I have lost all influence over both the Hindus and the Mussalmans and therefore my remedy may be taken to be a useless one and those who want to fight may fight to their satisfaction. But I have no remedy for one who flies away in fear.

Now comes the question of khadi. This business is one in which everybody can take part. But even if the whole country were to give up khadi, I at least am not going to throw away my charkha. You say that you have not been able to do much khadi work. One of the reasons you put forward for this is the legal powers. This is true. There are legal difficulties no doubt, but I am going to ask this whole assembly and the members of the Municipality and the District Board if there is any law prohibiting them personally to wear khadi. But if the absence of fine khadi is one of the obstacles in your way of using it, then you should spin fine yarn yourself and get that woven into fine khadi and that khadi you are to use. In the name of God, for the sake of your poor countrymen, please spin and use coarse cloth as well. That will not do you any harm.

You say that khadi is sold at a high price and you want to practice economy. I will then ask you to shorten your dhoti of 6 yards in length and 44 to 50 inches in breadth, if you have the best love for India. Better use dhotis only three yards long. If anybody ever wants to know the reason for it, tell him what I am used to say to such men. You are to tell him that you are using short clothes for the sake of India. We are poor people, we cannot afford to buy long khadi dhotis and so we use only half dhotis. A shirt cannot be halved, but this also can be easily shortened. The same money which you spend on foreign cloth may be very usefully employed in covering the naked bodies of a few of the poor sisters. Today in Bihar, you have got unsold khadi worth one lakh, the whole of which if sold could go to the poor sisters of Bihar. When our sisters spin khadi is woven out of their yarn and we give them some break by purchasing that khadi. If you want to serve India in the least, if you all want to ameliorate the suffering of your brothers and sisters, if you want to make khaddar cheap, then you must wear it.

Maulana Shaukat Ali has asked me to say everywhere, where I

meet Mussalmans, that he had joined the Spinners' Association. He has got unlimited faith in the charkha because he knows that, so long as both the Hindus and Mussalmans are not wholly clad in khaddar, India cannot be free. Therefore, he has promised to give me three thousand 'A' Class Mussalman members of the A.I.S.A. within this very year. Only they can be 'A' Class members of the A.I.S.A. who contribute to it one thousand yards of self-spun yarn per month—in all, twelve thousand yards in the year—and are habitual wearers of khadi. The Maulana hopes that he will be able to bring round three thousand members from among the Mussalmans before the year closes. It has been complained that, whereas there are many Hindus in the khadi service, there are but few Mussalmans. Therefore, the Maulana wants me to declare this also that all such Mussalmans whose hearts are pure and who are industrious had got their place in it. But they who want to come into it must obey its laws. Hindus, Mussalmans, Christians, Parsis, jews and all have their place in this A.I.S.A., if they believe in khadi.

To the Hindus I want to say something about untouchability. If you want to do some real service, and want to save your Hindu dharma, you must remove this. If you fail to get rid of this, be sure that Hinduism itself will be rid of you. That religion cannot be a holy religion in which hatred is taught against even one man. Let a man be a very great criminal; the least you can do is to reform him and not to hate him. Where is the justification for hating the untouchables who are servants of the country? Let us think it to be no sin to touch them. Let us not fly from them. To those who claim to be *sanatani* Hindus, I say that the religion of untouchability, as it is understood today, is not to be found in any of the Vedas or the shastras. Ramachandra had no scruples in touching Guharaj. He embraced Guharaj, drank water from his hands. Bharatji went so far as to bow to Guharaj.

You have referred to liquor also, Truly, we had reduced it to a very great extent in 1921, rather we had almost given it up, but our boat has now drifted away from the shore. I know the then picketers used sometimes even violence. Had violence not been used, perhaps, this picketing also would not have been discontinued. But even today you had better do what little you can do in this direction and induce others to give up this habit. In the same way, you are to give up smoking, taking *ganja*, bhang and other intoxicants.

*The Searchlight*, 16-10-1925

30. *SPEECH AT MARWARI AGARWAL SABHA,  
BHAGALPUR*

*October 1, 1925*

In reply to an address presented to him on behalf of the Marwari community at the first session of the Marwari Agarwal Sabha that held its sittings at Bhagalpur the other day, Mahatmaji said that when it was found that it was physically impossible for him to complete the Bihar tour, the question arose as to where he should go and where not and when that was being considered, he had told Rajendra Babu not to exclude Bhagalpur from his shortened tour, because he had already received their telegram at Ranchi inviting him to the place and also because his self-interest also lay in visiting that place. He thought that the moment he went to them he would be able to get something from them. He had still some value left, although he had ceased to be a practising lawyer long ago. That was why wherever he went he made the people of the place do some work. Of the people of Bhagalpur, he expected both: he wanted to make them work as well as to get as much money from them as possible, if they were prepared to give him. Proceeding, he said:

What should I say of the address that you have presented to me? It would be a mere commonplace to say that I am grateful to you for it. What I expect of those who present any address to me is that they should act and mould their conduct in accordance with the sentiments and the ideals expressed in the address. That will give me real pleasure indeed. A time comes when one becomes sick of hearing one's praise and I stand before you as the living illustration of it. I can well fancy that one's own praise might be agreeable to a certain extent, but whether it is always so I cannot say. My own experience for the last 40 years is that my own praise has never been pleasing to me. But even to those who do like to hear their praise, a time comes when they feel sick of it. I for one am not prepared to lose my sleep simply for the sake of hearing myself praised and you will, therefore, have to do some work in accordance with what you have said in the address.

The President has asked me to speak on social and religious subjects. It may mean that I should not, at the present moment, make any reference to politics. They say that I have given up politics altogether; that I have gone off my head. But none has dared to say so far that I have become obsessed by any kind of fear. It is not, however, necessary for me to say anything here of politics or of civil disobedience. The social aspect of civil disobedience is indeed, very important. At some places it has assumed serious proportions. I shall

here relate to you an incident from Gujarat. At a certain place in Gujarat there lives a very saintly person who has sacrificed his all and who wants to serve the Hindu community from the religious point of view. He calls himself a true Hindu and does not believe in Western civilization and reform. You will never find, however carefully you may look at him, even a trace of Westernism in him. But he serves the depressed classes. He regards untouchability as a great sin calculated to do immense harm to the Hindu community. He, therefore, wants to atone for it and believes that he would be able to do so to a certain extent by serving those untouchable brethren of his. But, at the same time, he would not like to have marriage or interdining relations with them. He would suck the poison out of the body of an untouchable if bitten by a snake, even at the risk of his life and he does not regard his religion (dharma) as suffering a whit by the touch of an untouchable. In so acting he simply follows the religion of love and kindness (*daya*) taught by Tulsidas, in the pursuit of which, if one were to die, one would go straight to heaven. Thus, this saint regards untouchability as a great sin. He takes untouchables away from the place where they live to a better surrounding and offers them food enough to satisfy their hunger—not in the manner in which you and I throw the refuse of our dishes to them. I myself have seen my mother and my wife doing so—but he feeds them lovingly and affectionately. In our houses separate arrangements exist for cooking food for our dogs, cows, oxen, etc. But these untouchables receive but the very refuse of our dishes. I do not regard it as *daya* dharma. We must be loving and affectionate in feeding even the untouchables and our religion would not suffer in any way for that. Some people act in that spirit with the result that they have been boycotted by society. I have told these people that they should not harbour any ill will or hatred against their community or society on that account. If society wants to boycott them, let it do so. Let them tell society that they regard it as their duty (dharma) to be boycotted by it under the circumstances, that what they are doing today is right and that it shall be followed in future as well. When influential men in society go wrong, when out of ignorance or malice they want to boycott a certain man, then it is his duty, he who does not agree with them, to allow himself to be boycotted by them. We have been obsessed by self-interest, for which I do not find any justification. I see before my own eyes the debauchee and the rake with whose sins we are fully familiar, yet they are never boycotted by society. But as soon as you touch an

untouchable, regarding it as your dharma, you are immediately boycotted. This is nothing but sheer high-handedness and is sure to lead society to ruin. Boycott has a science and method of its own. I do not propose to take your time in discussing the details of it.

But I would ask men of status and influence not to take recourse to it all on a sudden, without any thought. You must be sympathetic to him who attempts to reform the community in any particular direction. Do not destroy the Hindu dharma which we want to protect. In future, there is to be an intermixture of various communities. I would beg of you to give up this weapon of boycott for it is of no value so long as there reign supreme all sorts of corruption and sins among us and so long as we have not developed self-restraint and self-discipline among ourselves.

Proceeding, Mahatmaji said that *varnashrama* was one thing and the existence of several smaller castes was quite a different thing.

Members of one caste living in different provinces, far away from one another, and following different vocations in life have become strangers to each other. This is narrow-mindedness. Your *Sammelan* is dear to me so long as it continues to minister to the good of the community. There can only be one community of Brahmins. Why cannot a Gujarati Brahmin give away his daughter in marriage to a Bengali or a Marwari Brahmin? Why should one contracting such a relation be boycotted by society? Your *Shastras* do not lay down any injunction that a *Vaisya* of Gujarat should not contract any relationship with a *Vaisya* of any other province. The Marwari community would soon be swept out of existence if the interrelations between the different classes of Marwaris be regarded as *adhharma*. The sham and the unreal hold the field today. If you want to recognize the *varnashrama* dharma, you will have to give the go by to all these. If bigger folks are obsessed with the pride of self-importance, it is for the workers to go on with their business undaunted by anything. It matters not if they are boycotted, if they are deprived of the services of a barber or a dhobi or a domestic servant and suffer consequently. Things have, indeed, come to such a pass in Gujarat. The gentleman I have referred to above writes to me to say that he gets neither the services of a barber nor a dhobi nor does he get anyone to fetch water for him. And in reply I have told him that he should better die of thirst and hunger than swerve even an inch from the path which he thinks it his duty to follow. If the bigger folks

would forsake their path of righteousness and boycott you, your duty is simply to act with such wisdom and undergo humiliation with such calmness and courage as may ultimately make them yield to you. When Prahlad's father boycotted his son, he could never silence him or make him inactive. Prahlad taught his classmates to utter the name of Rama and he thus civilly disobeyed his father. The same may be done by a member of a particular community towards his own community.

Mahatmaji proceeding dwelt upon the problem of child-widow remarriage and said that at first he thought that a society could tolerate a child-widow to the extent of even 10 to 20 thousand in number. But under the present state of affairs something would have to be done to bring about reforms in this direction as well. He said:

At first I thought that the problem could be solved if the widower also did not remarry. But nobody agrees to it. In fact, some people begin settling their remarriage even at the burning ghat. The fathers of some of the brides betrothed their daughters by telegram and it matters not if the age of the bridegroom be even 45 and that of the bride only 12.

There under the present state of affairs I have come to the conclusion that child-widows will have to be remarried. If it is not done, the result will be that cases of suicide, as have happened in Bengal and Delhi, would go on increasing. We have no right perforce to keep these child-widows always in that state. Our duty, our dharma, tells us to remarry such widows. A certain sister of mine asked me if I would help her in raising the marriageable age of girls to 14 years. I would tell her that not to speak of 14, I would not marry a girl even at the age of 16.

I have also some girls under my control and I also know fathers of some girls who do hear me and I have been able to persuade them not to entertain any proposal or ever have any talk about early marriage of their wards. It is for us to teach our wards to have pure thoughts and not to corrupt their minds by talking about their marriages. I want to make the mothers of these girls Sitas of yore. How is that to be done? Sita could withstand the fire-test so well. She entered the fire but came out absolutely unscathed. How we wish there were reborn ladies of such great eminence amongst us! But how can we expect it to be so, if from their very childhood we make our girls imbibe bad ideas. One who has been able to realize the importance of this reform will be prepared to undergo any sacrifice



for its sake. Even in Western countries, where indulgence predominates and which are not noted for renunciation, there are to be found women even today whose hearts are pure and uncontaminated. I had such a girl<sup>1</sup> with me in South Africa who served thousands of men, who carried on the entire work of satyagraha in the Transvaal when I, along with my other fellow-workers, was sent to jail. She came in contact, then, with thousands of people, but none could cast an evil eye on her.

There was also an Indian lady with me there, but she could not do that work. She went to jail but, she would not have been able to do even that, had I not deprived her of all her ornaments. One must have a right to go to jail and she alone has that right who has given up her ornaments.

Now, I shall tell you of my own pet subject. You have referred to khadi in your address. I have thought very deeply on the subject and it is only after considerable meditation that I have come to this conclusion and taken to the work of khadi. I know I shall not be able to achieve all I want in this life.

The next point dwelt upon by Mahatmaji was the subject of cow-protection. He said:

If we want to protect the cows we can do so only by looking at the problem as I do, not by fighting the Mussalmans or the Englishmen or by begging favours of them. Begging without resolve would be absolutely useless. I am compiling today a statement showing the number of cattle for the loss of which we ourselves are responsible. The *gwalas* (milkmen) are our own men—they are Hindus. But it is they who sell their cattle to the butchers. Marwaris are also our men and they also export their cows and oxen to other places. Some of these exported cattle are butchered in the slaughter-houses of Bombay and Calcutta and some are sent out to Australia from where their meat is exported to this country as tinned beef. The way to prevent this is by taking upon ourselves the responsibility of supplying milk and leather. And the responsibility for all this rests on our shoulders. I know well how chamars in some native States poison their cattle. In a certain native state, I understand, they are given contracts at the rate of per thousand of dead animals. This is not right. It would be better if the rate be not per thousand but per one

<sup>1</sup> Sonja Schlesin, *vide* "Letter to L. W. Ritch", 7-4-1911.

single dead animal. I do not like that the chamars should take the meat of dead animals. When I ask them to give up this habit, they tell me that so long as they deal in dead animals, it is difficult for them to give up that habit because the meat is so tasty. They contend that it is not right to place the sweets before a boy and ask him not to take them. They say that, if they are to give up that business, they should be engaged in some other business, e.g., weaving. Likewise, the Marwaris express their willingness to give up their dealing in foreign cloth. They even give me money for that purpose. But they say that so long as people do not give up using foreign cloth, it is difficult for them to give up dealing in the same. They contend that they have no enmity with khaddar, but unless there is created a market for the same they would not give up their business in foreign cloth. Thus, if we want to protect the cows, we will have to take to the business of a chamar, we will have to take into our own hands all the tanneries in the country. There is only one tannery in the country which does not accept hides of slaughtered animals. Today lakhs of cattle are slaughtered in the country. The hides of such animals cost dearer than the hides of those who die a natural death because the dead ones have to be dragged and so their hides get stained. They, therefore, find it difficult to dispose of such hides in the market. The tanneries, therefore, in order to have brisk business, purchase the hides of slaughtered animals only. And the shoes that you use are made of such hides. Thus they will have to see to it that only the hides of the dead animals are made use of. And for this the chamars will have so be impressed with what their duties are. They should make use of the hides of dead animals only. And secondly, they will have to give up taking meat of dead animals. If this is not done, cow-protection will be an impossible proposition. We should fully understand the economic condition of the country and if we can make arrangements for sufficient supply of milk to those living in towns, it is just possible the slaughter of cows may decrease considerably. The large number of tanneries also subsist on the number of animals slaughtered in the country. On the fall in the number of the latter, the number of the former will also go down.

Proceeding, he said that in that way they would have more money for the *goshalas*. Those that exist were languishing for want of sufficient funds. They would have to improve them if they were keen on cow-protection.

Mahatmaji next dwelt upon the subject of propagation of Hindi and Devanagari characters and said that some five or six years back he had spoken to them

on the subject and they were pleased to subscribe 50 thousand rupees which had been utilized for teaching Hindi to thousands of Dravidians in South India and an account of which had already been published. Considerable work in that direction had been done in that part of the country. Hindi presses had been started, Hindi magazines were being published, Hindi-Telugu and Hindu-Tamil and other primary Hindi books in Tamil had been published. But much still remained to be done. He appealed to them to accept and propagate at least the Devanagari characters and publish important works of different languages in Hindi. If Rabindra Babu's works were published in Devanagari characters, those who knew Sanskrit might be able to follow them.

Thus Mahatmaji spoke to them on the four important subjects of the day, and appealed to them to help any or all of the four causes whichever they liked most. He also appealed to them to contribute handsomely to the Deshbandhu Memorial Fund. He again reminded them of the four things about which he had spoken to them and appealed to them to help any one of the four they liked or all. But he would tell them that all the four were equally important and righteous causes. Referring again to the untouchables, he said that he was trying to open schools to make arrangements for water for them where none existed. He wanted also to make separate temples for them. But the latter work must await till really capable and righteous men came out from among the untouchables to manage the temples.

Concluding, Mahatmaji expressed his sincere gratitude to the audience for calmly listening to his long address and said:

I am now a poor man, but I am seeking the co-operation of the rich for providing clothes to my naked sisters. I want to establish *Ramarajya*. I do not talk to the men about *Ramarajya* because I know that they are sure to help that cause when the womenfolk come forward to do so. Therefore, whenever I talk to the women-folk I always talk not about swaraj but of *Ramarajya*. This *Ramarajya* does not concern merely the administration of the country. But certain other reforms as well are absolutely necessary and these are comprehended in the four things I have mentioned above. Therefore, I do not want to offer to you any temptation except that of dharma. Both you as well as your sisters in villages will reap the fruits thereof.

We will be able to protect our dharma mainly by the strength of our own character. By character alone we will be able to offer protection even to the world. You are rendering all possible help to me as you should in this direction. May I always prove worthy of the same is my earnest prayer to God.

*The Searchlight*, 9-10-1925

### 31. LETTER TO J. KUSARY

ON TOUR,  
October 3, 1925

DEAR FRIEND,

You asked me questions now over a month ago about the advisability of getting enough recognition from the Calcutta University so as to enable you to take boys who might desire to appear for its examinations. Personally I am averse to it. I do not like this mania for examinations. It has undermined the mental and physical health of our youth. For this reason alone, if for no other, I would like national institutions to remain unbending and depend for their progress upon their own inherent merit. I would like a proper revolt against the soul-destroying examinations. But you know best what you should do in the circumstances that face you and if you have not the same repugnance that I have for the mania for university certificates, you would unhesitatingly secure the restricted recognition you mention. What with my temperament would be bad for me need not be necessarily bad for you or anyone else with a different temperament. I would therefore like you not to follow my opinion unless it appeals to you so forcibly as to give you satisfaction, even though without recognition your school may contain only twenty boys or even less. I would love to train even one boy with robust independence. I thoroughly understand and appreciate all that you say in favour of securing 'recognition' of the limited type referred to by you and it is a view that deserves respectful consideration. I would not therefore misunderstand you if, after weighing all the pros and cons, you come to the conclusion that it is best for you and the people in whose midst you are working to apply for recognition .

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: G.N. 7189

### 32. TO MY BROTHERS AND SISTERS OF KUTCH

On the 21st of October, I shall, God willing, set foot in Kutch for the first time in my life.<sup>1</sup> In agreeing to go there at this time I have yielded to the power of love. Other provinces, out of compassion for me, have left me free for this year. You want me to go there while the Maharao<sup>2</sup> is present and the thought was painful to me that, if I did not go in October, a trip that had been talked about for nine months could not be undertaken until April. You have assured me that you will let me have rest in Kutch and that you will hand me large sums of money for the cause of the spinning-wheel and khadi. This is great temptation for me.

I too am eager to meet the Maharao Saheb. I am a good friend and servant of the Princes. My father, grand-father and other relations were in the service of Indian States. Even today, I see a few of my relations earning their living in the States of kathiawar.

But my connections with Indian States cannot blind my eyes to facts. I am not unaware of the state of misrule in certain States. I have received a pile of letters from the people regarding the Maharao Saheb's administration. I shall express my genuine regards for the Maharao Saheb by putting the substance of these letters before him with an open mind.

I do not hanker after respect from either the Princes or their subjects. I have had too much of respect. If I was not afraid of appearing guilty of discourtesy, I would agree to visit a place only on condition that I was not given an address of welcome there. The cries of "Victory to the Mahatma" jar on my ears. All shouting has become unbearable to me. I wish to remain an untouchable so far as touching of my feet in reverence is concerned. If people feel any respect for me, I should certainly like to see them emulate whatever is good in me. My brothers and sisters in Kutch have showered love on me. They have also given me large sums of money for my work.

My hunger, however, can never be satisfied.

In my old age now I have only two or three means of worshipping God. I should like to devote the rest of my life to these.

<sup>1</sup> Gandhiji reached Kutch on October 22, 1925.

<sup>2</sup> The ruler of the then princely State of Kutch

The name of Rama is dear to my lips; if, however, this is not engraved in my heart, its mechanical repetition would only bring me degradation. What is in one's heart is certain to be expressed in one's actions. I have, therefore, always regarded the service of others as the only true dharma.

Thus it is that I found the spinning-wheel and the work of eradication of untouchability. Through the spinning-wheel I serve the poorest of the poor in the country. I invite the Maharao Saheb and his subjects to join me in this *yajna*.

Howsoever, the people of Kutch are of a venturesome spirit. They cross the oceans for the sake of trade. It is not enough for them to spin and wear khadi. I expect them to give me money and help the walking skeletons in the country to put on some flesh. It should not be forgotten that this is what we have resolved to do to perpetuate Deshbandhu's memory. I have heard it said that I take money from Kutch and send it elsewhere. This is a fact, but it should not be a complaint. Why should I collect money for Kutch? If there is poverty in Kutch, the fact is a slur on the Maharao Saheb and on the multi-millionaires of Kutch. I have never lived there. Through whom can I use the money there? It would be proper for the people of Kutch to collect the money which they need and use it there. It is my job to collect money from wherever possible and use it where I see the need and for work which seems essential to me or for specified, worthy causes. There are rich *Vaishnavas* in Kutch. Being myself a *Vaishnava*, I believe I know what the term means. My conscience can never accept the idea that a *Vaishnava* can regard himself polluted by the touch of an *Antyaj* and still be a *Vaishnava*. Just as, through the spinning-wheel, I wish to serve the Divine Mother, whose children are the poor, so I wish to purify Hinduism by working for the eradication of untouchability and serving the *Antyaj*s thereby. We cannot persist in the practice of untouchability, and at the same time hope to preserve Hinduism. I cannot bear *Antyaj*s being treated with contempt. I would not have even the sovereignty of this world or the next if I had to forsake the *Antyaj*s for that. I wish that the *Vaishnavas* of Kutch will understand their dharma.

Do not forget that king Yudhishtira refused to leave behind even the dog who had accompanied him and enter heaven by himself. He

accepted the same dharma as you and I do. Who was king Nishad<sup>1</sup> from whom Rama accepted fruit with love? Bharat felt sanctified as he embraced the other with love. Who is a *Chandal* in this *Kaliyuga*, or rather, who is not? Let us not distort the meaning of the Shastras. Let us not drown ourselves in a well just because it belongs to our forefathers. Let us swim in it instead. A custom or Shastra which is contrary to universally accepted moral principles is not fit to be followed. If anyone can show that the Vedas enjoin cow-slaughter or killing of animals, shall we be prepared to follow them?

You have no Hindu-Muslim problem in your part of the country, and even if you have one, I have accepted defeat and abandoned the attempt to solve it. As, however, the elephant king learnt to pray truly only when he had failed in all his attempts, so I believe that I, too, having failed in my efforts, am now truly praying to God for the welfare of both the communities. Dharma enjoins *tapascharya* in times of difficulty. *Tapascharya* means self-purification, knowledge of the *atman* and its realization. If there are amongst us some who are pure in heart, despite our conflicts everything will turn out well in the end.

I have always told women that my swaraj means *Ramarajya* or the rule of dharma. We cannot succeed in establishing it unless we carry out the programmes mentioned above.

For the Hindus, however, rule of dharma is impossible as long as they do not attend also to the dharma of protecting cows. This cannot be done by merely establishing *goshalas* of some sort. I have started effective work in this field only lately, but I think we can succeed in it with the help of people like you. I see that it is quite possible to prevent the slaughter of innumerable cows, bullocks, buffaloes, etc. All that is required is expert knowledge, systematic work and money. Money is donated in plenty but, in my opinion, it is misused for want of knowledge.

I have written all this for you to reflect upon. Give much thought to it. As you will let me have plenty of rest, we shall be able to discuss these matters if you can set apart some time for the purpose. Point out to me any error you may see in my line of reasoning. If there is none, give me all possible help.

*Your friend and servant,*

MOHANDAS KARAMCHAND GANDHI

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 4-10-1925

<sup>1</sup> King of a tribe dwelling in the Vindhyas, in the *Ramayana*

### 33. SPINNERS' ASSOCIATION

The establishment of the spinners' Association is no ordinary event. It is the fruit of the pledge taken by its founders. It proclaims their faith in the spinning-wheel and their determination to sacrifice everything for its sake.

To me, it stands for swaraj. I believe it to be impossible to serve the millions except through it. No one can serve all individually. Every person, however, can engage himself in work which involves the service of all and whose fruit will be shared by everyone. Only the spinning-wheel can reach crores of people, can satisfy their hunger and function as *Annapoorna*<sup>1</sup> to them. If I start a factory which makes baskets, I would thereby be able to help thousands of persons, if a soap factory, I can provide employment to about four thousand persons, and to the same number through a textile mill,—all the mills taken together provide employment to fifteen lakhs of persons and offer dividends to about four thousand persons. If, however, I engage myself in promoting spinning, I join an industry providing employment to crores.

On reflection, the reader will see that there is no other work which can benefit crores. Agriculture is indeed one such profession. But, for one thing, it has not disappeared and, for another it is not a kind of work which anyone can do at any hour and for any length of time. But spinning? One can do it at any place, and if one carries a *takli* in one's pocket, one can spin a few yards by way of *yajna* even while walking. Spinning done even for a minute is useful, but one cannot do farming in that way. That work must be done for a certain minimum, and considerable length of time at one place. Spinning, therefore, is a great sacrifice in which all can easily join.

Is there anyone who would not like to join an Association devoted to such work? How can we argue with people who object to spinning? Why should anyone fail to welcome the addition of a few yards of yarn to the country's wealth, and that too through work done in spare time?

I wish that all men and women will join this Association. I did not like and many others also did not like, the change permitting the contribution of 1,000 instead of 2,000 yards of yarn. This however

<sup>1</sup> Goddess of plenty



is no reason for keeping out of the Association. Anyone who wishes may certainly contribute 2,000 yards. It is a very desirable thing to take a pledge, but the omission of the clause requiring a pledge does not mean that those who were in favour of taking a pledge should not join the Association. They may, as individuals, certainly take the pledge. Moreover, even though a pledge is not necessary the understanding is that, except for circumstances beyond one's control, every member will spin daily for half an hour. The idea of prescribing a pledge was dropped, but every member of the Executive Committee will regard the spinning movement as his principal sphere of work.

But what about persons under eighteen and those who cannot spin regularly? As in the past, they should spin and send as gift as much yarn as they can.

No cotton will be given this time, and no attempt will be made to flatter and persuade people to spin. Let only those send yarn who accept spinning as a sacred duty. Cotton costs very little and, besides, we should not spend on anything more than it is worth. The very purpose of begging for voluntary gifts of cotton is that:

1. khadi may be made cheaper;
2. people, instead of idling away their time, may spend it in the service of the country;
3. the rich may establish a direct link with the poor and think of them every day;
4. Everyone may help in bringing about boycott of foreign cloth;
5. everyone may serve the country in one way or another to the best of his or her ability;
6. the middle class, which at present lives on the toil of the poor and willingly gives nothing in return, may now give something;
7. the middle class may, by its example of spinning, show to the poor who have lost faith in life itself the means of recovering that faith.

These results will follow only if people spin with love. Much monetary help will be required in this great task. I hope that those who have faith in the spinning-wheel will not only contribute yarn but also, if they can afford it, help with money.

This body will provide employment to many in the middle class. The figures which I have published show that even today a large number are earning their livelihood through this work. If the Association works in a big way it can become a means of providing

employment to thousands. It is not at all surprising that a work which involves trade worth crores of rupees can help thousands to earn an honest living.

And now about the question of confidence. Are the members of the Committee men of ability and do they inspire confidence? In my humble view, they are and they do. It is true that there are other workers of equal worth who have been left out. It has been suggested that a sort of Brains Trust should be formed by including in it all those who ought to have been on the Committee but are not. I have thought over this suggestion, and feel that there is no need for such a body. There is less to think about and more to do. It would, therefore, be better to have as small a body as possible consisting of men who would give all their time to the task of setting up a machinery for implementing the decisions.

This is an Association for service, and not for satisfying one's desire for power and authority. In a body in which there is no scope at all for anyone to assume leadership and the only duty is that of service, there can be no rivalry for positions of authority. I wish that those whose one aim is to serve will send whatever suggestions they feel like making any time. If we form a Brains Trust, it should meet and deliberate. This may be necessary when we have to consider a new policy or method of work. In the present instance, what is required is supervision of work. I, therefore, feel that a committee of twelve is sufficient for our purpose. I have given up the idea of filling the three vacancies which remain even in this small number, for it is not necessary that every place should be filled. Experience alone will teach us what more we need.

Our aim in undertaking trade in khadi is service. The service motive has no place in other forms of trade. It is believed that business and service do not go together. We cannot do trade in khadi at all without State patronage or unless we undertake it with service motive. If those who undertake it should do so with such a motive, those who buy khadi should be actuated by the same motive. There is no doubt that anyone who gives up the use of Paris lace or Manchester muslin, despite all his love for them, and takes to khadi, will be serving others by his action.

May God increase the number of dedicated khadi workers.

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 4-10-1925

### 34. ABOUT SOUTH AFRICA

The All-India Congress Committee has passed a resolution to the effect that meetings should be held at all places on the 11th of October to extend our moral support to the Indians in South Africa in the impending calamity that threatens them. People belonging to all parties should be invited to these meetings. As there is no difference of opinion on this matter, we can hope that persons belonging to all parties will attend. Even an expression of our feelings will strengthen the spirit of the Indians of South Africa. These meetings will help the Indian Government if it wishes to do something, and, in any case, we shall have done our best. I, therefore, hope that meetings will be held at all places and that people will attend in large numbers. No one with any political consciousness can be altogether ignorant of the problem in South Africa.

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 4-10-1925

### 35. LETTER TO ESTHER MENON

*October 5, 1925*

MY DEAR ESTHER,

I am writing this at Deoghar which is a beautiful place in the Bihar tour. Today is my Monday<sup>1</sup>. I have your long letter before me. I have always thought of you all. I was much relieved to know that you had completely recovered and that the recovery was due to an Indian medicine. I hope that, having regained your health you will keep it.

It is good that Miss Petersen is to go to Denmark early next year. She deserves the rest. It is nice too that she will leave the school in a progressive state. I had no doubt about its success. Patience was all that was needed. In these days of many bogus or selfish things, people look askance at anything new or out of the ordinary.

Are you also at Porto Novo? Or has Menon got something after his heart?

Of course, you are all coming into the Spinners' Association.

<sup>1</sup> Day of silence

Have you read the constitution?

I had a very sweet letter a month or two ago from a Danish lady. I would certainly love to go to Denmark. But [I] have no desire to leave India until non-violence is more firmly rooted than it is in the soil. I know that it is truth, but I may be a poor representative of it. This I know that I cannot live without truth and non-violence.

If you take up the task of writing my biography, you have to pass many months at the Ashram and, may be, even travel to South Africa and visit Champaran and Kheda, probably the Punjab, too. It is a big job if it is done thoroughly. It was in these places I tried to work out non-violence as I understand and know it.

With love to you all and kisses to baby,

*Yours,*  
BAPU

[PS.]

I reach the Ashram in the beginning of November.

From a photostat: Courtesy: National Archives of India

### 36. *LETTER TO HARIBHAU UPADHYAYA*

*Ashwin Krishna 4 [October 5, 1925]<sup>1</sup>*

BHAI HARIBHAU,

I told Jammalalji that I had replied to your letter. Now I have a feeling that I have not done so. If suitable arrangement can be made about *Navajivan* I would like you to do khadi work in Rajasthan. More when we meet.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

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

### 37. *STATEMENT TO THE PRESS*

*October 7, 1925*

Happily the question of British Indians in South Africa is not a party question. India must be able to avert the calamity that threatens

<sup>1</sup> From the postmark

to over take our countrymen in that sub-continent. The proposed legislation<sup>1</sup> is a manifest breach of the Settlement of 1914. My experience of the Indian question in South Africa is one of a series of breaches of promises and declarations which have been proved from official records. The proposed legislation is in effect a confiscation of almost every right that the British Indians possess. Their sole crime consists in being good traders and not being Europeans. There can be no compromise in this matter, no repatriation even when euphemistically described as voluntary. Let me, however, say that retaliation will be no remedy if only because there can be no effective retaliation. The only remedy is diplomatic pressure. Lord Hardinge applied it successfully<sup>2</sup>. Will the present government repeat the performance?

*The Bombay Chronicle, 12-10-1925*

### 38. LETTER TO DAHYABHAI M. PATEL

*Aso Vad 5 [October 7, 1925]<sup>3</sup>*

BHAI DAHYABHAI,

I have not been able yet to read your long letter. I had your second one yesterday. It is certain that I will not be able to go there on the 31st October but I shall fix the date when I reach the Ashram in the beginning of November.

*Vandemataram from*

MOHANDAS

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 2692. Courtesy: Dahyabhai M. Patel

<sup>1</sup> Areas Reservation and Immigration and Registration (Further Provision) Bill, introduced in the Union Parliament in July 1925. The Bill sought to prevent acquisition of land by Asiatics except in certain specified areas. *Vide* "South Africa", 12-3-1925.

<sup>2</sup> The reference presumably is to a speech Lord Hardinge delivered at Madras on November 24, 1913 concerning the condition of Indians in South Africa; *vide* "Lord Hardinge's Speech", 3-12-1913.

<sup>3</sup> From the postmark.

### 39. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, GIRIDIH

October 7, 1925

Gandhiji received addresses from the Local Board, the public, the Municipality and the *goshala* in a public meeting attended by not less than ten thousand men.

Mahatmaji said that he was given to understand that Giridih being a mica field labourers could not be induced to take to the charkha when they got more money by working in the pits. To them he said that he could understand labourers not spinning, but he could not understand where was the difficulty in their not using khadi. The middle-class people had ample time to spare and they could easily afford to give half an hour to spinning, not for themselves but for the sake of their country, and give over the yarn produced as charity to the Congress. One yard of khaddar was certainly comparatively dearer than the cheaper foreign cloth, but all the same it was cheaper as it enabled some money to go direct into the pockets of their poor sisters and the weavers. He next referred to untouchability and said that it was a standing disgrace for Hinduism, and although he thanked them for running a school for the untouchables, he could not be satisfied if they themselves did not go to them to mix with them and enquire about their poverty and their grievances, and try to remove them.

In the Local Board address it was hinted that the obstinacy of the laws and their differences with the District Board stood in the way of their doing even their own work.

In these conditions it was practically impossible for them to claim any solid work to their credit. But they could promise to do any work whatever in future when conditions improved. To them Mahatmaji said that no obstacle was too great if they only had the will to surmount it. On this somebody whispered that it was difficult to keep the roads in a good condition when they had no money. Mahatmaji retorting said that they should work on the roads themselves and see that they were well kept if they had not sufficient money to repair them.

A municipal commissioner said that he had not sufficient money to engage scavengers. In that case, Mahatmaji said they must do the work of scavengers themselves and clean even the night-soil themselves. He had done these things in Durban and he knew the dignity of it.

The *goshala* address referred to cow-protection. To them he would only say this—that the Hindus themselves were responsible for the large number of cows slaughtered. If they wanted, they could stop cow-slaughter today for which they would have to raise its price and not appeal to or fight with the Muslims or Englishmen to spare the cows. They had to establish dairies where cheapest and purest milk could be had. They must not look upon the business of tannery as a peculiarly low one, but should organize the *mochis*<sup>1</sup> and have tanneries of their own where hides of only dead, and not slaughtered, animals could be used. Their *goshalas* were not working well.

<sup>1</sup> Cobblers or shoe-makers

They must be run on commercial lines. With an appeal for the Deshbandhu fund he concluded his address. A decent collection was made on the spot and a purse of Rs. 2,075 was presented to him on behalf of the Giridih public.

*The Searchlight*, 9-10-1925

#### 40. SPEECH AT WOMEN'S MEETING, GIRIDIH

*October 7, 1925*

Gandhiji in reply<sup>1</sup> . . . thanked the the ladies for the kind words expressed in the address. He said that, in order to attain swaraj which was not only the political Home Rule but also dharma raj of the kind which was generally understood as *Ramarajya*, which was something higher than ordinary political emancipation, they must try to become like Sita of yore who was the soul of *Ramarajya*. In the days of Sita every household had its charkha just as they find a hearth in every home. Sita also spun on her own charkha which might have been bedecked with jewels and probably ornamented with gold, but all the same it was still a charkha. Moreover they must try to idealize her in her piety as well. Concluding, he appealed for the A.I. Deshbandhu Memorial Fund in response to which a good collection was made on the spot.

*The Searchlight*, 11-10-1925

#### 41. BIHAR NOTES

WITH ABORIGINALS

From Chakradharpur to Chaibasa is a pleasant motor ride over a very good road. It was at Chaibasa that I made the acquaintance of the *Ho* tribe—a most interesting body of men and women, simple as children, with a faith that it is not easy to shake. Many of them have taken to the charkha and khaddar. Congress workers began the work of reformation among them in 1921. Many have given up eating carrion and some have even taken to vegetarianism. The *mundas* are another tribe whom I met at Khunti on my way to Ranchi. The scope for work in their midst is inexhaustible. Christian missionaries have been doing valuable service for generations, but, in my humble opinion, their work suffers because at the end of it they expect conversion of these simple people to Christianity. I had the pleasure of seeing some of their schools in these places. It was all pleasing, but

<sup>1</sup> An address was presented to Gandhiji by the Head Mistress of the local girls' school. He also received a purse for the Deshbandhu Memorial Fund.

I could see the coming conflict between the missionaries and the Hindu workers. The latter have no difficulty in making their service commendable to the *Hos*, the *Mundas* and the others. How very nice it would be if the missionaries rendered humanitarian service without the ulterior aim of conversion! But I must not reiterate the remarks I made before the Missionary Conference and other Christian bodies in Calcutta.<sup>1</sup> I know that such a revolutionary change in Christian endeavour as I am advocating cannot come through any advice, especially from an outsider, however well-meant it may be; it can only come either out of a definite individual conviction or out of some great mass movement among Christians themselves. Among these tribes there is quite a colony of them called *bhaktas*, literally meaning devotees. They are believers in khaddar. Men as well as women ply the charkha regularly. They wear khaddar woven by themselves. Many of them had walked miles with their charkhas on their shoulders. I saw nearly four hundred of them all plying their charkhas most assiduously at the meeting I had the privilege of addressing. They have their own *bhajans* which they sing in chorus.

#### IN CHHOTA NAGPUR

Almost the whole of my travelling in Chhota Nagpur was in motor-cars, but the roads are all good and the scenery around magnificent. From Chaibasa we had to retrace our steps to chakradharpur and from there we motored to Ranchi, halting at Khunti and one or two other places. Just before reaching Ranchi at 7 o'clock in the evening a meeting of ladies had been arranged. I do not think that either the organizers or the ladies had bargained for my appeal for the Deshbandhu Memorial Fund. But as I hardly ever fail to make that appeal when I address public meetings, I made it at this meeting also. The vast majority were Bengalis. Many being unprepared had no money with them. These, therefore, parted with their ornaments, some of which were heavy things. It did one's soul good to see these sisters gladly parting with their ornaments in order to honour the memory of one they loved. Needless to say, I make it perfectly clear at these meetings that the whole of the gifts would be utilized for spreading the charkha and khaddar.

In Ranchi I was taken to Golkunda,<sup>2</sup> a little village where an

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Speech at Meeting of Missionaries", 28-7-1925.

<sup>2</sup> It transpired that Gandhiji had made a slip in regard to the name *Vide* "Notes". 22-10-1925, sub-title, "A correction".



experiment in hand-spinning is being made under the aegis of a co-operative society by Babu Girishchandr Majumdera, who is a khaddar enthusiast. He expects spinning to become a thorough success. The experiment has just begun. If organizing is properly done and the spinning-wheels fulfil the standard requirements, there should be no difficulty about the charkha becoming the success it has been elsewhere.

There were two theatrical performances given at Ranchi by amateur companies for the purpose of Deshbandhu Memorial Fund. One was given by Bengalis and the other by Biharis. As they were given by amateurs I had no difficulty in accepting their invitations but I was severely disappointed over the Bengali performance. I could see little difference between the performances of professionals and this amateur company. There was complete aping of professionals. The dresses were all made of foreign material. The colouring of faces was also resorted to whereas I had expected that these performances would be subdued and that there would be at least khaddar used for dress material. So when I undertook to go to the Bihari amateurs' play I made the condition that if they wanted me to see their play they should have their dresses made of khaddar and that not merely for the occasion but for all their performances. To my agreeable surprise, the condition was readily accepted. There were only a few hours left for making all that change, but they did it and the manager made the announcement of the promise given to me and prayed for God's help that they might be able to fulfil the promise. What the Biharis' play lost in tinsel effect it gained, in my opinion, in dignity by the change adopted. I commend this very desirable change to all amateur theatrical companies. Indeed, even the professionals who have any patriotic instinct can easily make this change and thus contribute, though ever so little, to the economic uplift of the teeming millions of India.

I must omit several interesting items including a very pleasing discussion on khaddar with Messrs N. K. Roy and S. K. Rao of the Department of Industries and a visit to the Brahmacharya Ashram which owes its existence to the munificence the Maharajah of Kasimbazar. From Ranchi we motored to Hazaribagh where, in addition to the usual appointments, I was called upon to address the students of St. Columba's Missionary College, a very old institution. I spoke to the students on social service and endeavoured to show that it was impossible without character and that such service on a large scale

in India was only possible through penetration into the villages and that it had to be its own reward for it brought no excitement, no advertisement and had often to be done under most trying circumstances and in the teeth of superstition and ignorance. I endeavoured to show that the best form that social service could take in India was through the spinning-wheel and khaddar, because it brought young men in touch with the villagers, it enabled them to put a few coppers every day into the pockets of the villagers and created an indissoluble bond between the latter and themselves, and it helped them to know their maker because the selfless service of the poor was the service of God.

#### KHUDA BUX LIBRARY

From Hazaribagh, with a few stoppages on the motor road to Gaya we went to Patna where the main work was the activity of the All-India Congress Committee and the inauguration of the All-India Spinners' Association. It was at Patna that I discovered my health would break down under the incessant fatigue of travelling. The shouts of the crowds had almost proved unbearable as we were nearing Gaya where I was obliged even to stuff my ears to prevent the shouts making me almost swoon. Rajendra Babu had therefore taken elaborate precautions to prevent noisy demonstrations of blind but well-meant affection and he very kindly revised and cut down my programme. I had therefore comparative rest at Patna. I was able to fulfil the long cherished desire of visiting the Khuda Bux Oriental Library. I had heard much about it. But I had never realized that it had the rich treasures I was privileged to see. Its devoted founder Khan Bahadur Khuda Bux who was a *vakil*, made it a labour of love to collect even from abroad many ancient and rare Arabic and Persian books. The decorations in some of the hand-written copies of koran that I saw were of great beauty. The unknown artists must have given years of patient labour to the creation. Every page of the decorated edition of the *Shahanamah* is a work of art—a veritable feast for the eye. I understand that the literary value of some of the manuscripts treasured in this library is no less great. All honour to the founder for his great gift to the nation.

#### A GOVERNMENT EXPERIMENT

The other interesting thing I was able to see in Patna was the workshop conducted by the Department of industries. Mr. Rao is the

Superintendent. The workshop itself is a modern building, well lighted, well ventilated, well planned and scrupulously clean. Handloom weaving and toy-making, which is the speciality of Patna are the features of this workshop. Improved looms for weaving tapes and bedstead-straps are commendable. I could, however, not help feeling that in this admirable workshop, the central thing, the spinning-wheel, was wanting. Improved toy-making will certainly give better wages to the makers of toys and it has therefore properly a place in a workshop in a city like Patna. An Indian workshop is also incomplete without handloom weaving. But no national department of industries can be considered to be at all complete that takes no note of hand-spinning and there-through of millions of villagers who are at present without a supplementary industry. The difficulties that were suggested to me in making hand- spinning a succes were mainly two:

(1) Hand-spun yarn can never compete with mill-spun yarn because it has never yet been found to be as strong as mill-spun yarn.

(2) The output of the spinning-wheels is too small to be profitable.

The experience of those who have worn khaddar for years is that where it is made of good hand-spun yarn it is any day more durable than the best mill-spun cloth of the same count. For instance, some of my Andhra friends have shown me their dhotis which have lasted four years and upwards against mill-spun dhotis which wear out inside of a year. But my point is not that hand-spun is more durable, but that hand-spinning being the only possible supplementary industry for the peasantry of India, which means 85 per cent of its population, all our arrangements regarding clothing should be fashioned on the understanding that it must be supplied from hand-spun yarn. Thus, our energy should be concentrated not on finding out the best and the cheapest yarn, no matter where and how spun, but on finding out the cheapest and the best hand-spun yarn. If my proposition is sound all the industrial departments of the nation should revolve round the charkha as the centre. The Department of Industries, therefore, would make improvements in the spinning-wheels so as to increase the output. They would buy nothing but hand-spun yarn, so that hand-spinning is automatically stimulated. They would devise means of utilizing every quality of hand-spun yarn obtainable. They would issue prizes for the finest hand-spun yarn. They would explore all possible fields for getting good hand-spun

yarn. This does not mean less encouragement to hand-weaving. It simply means adding to the encouragement of hand-weaving and hand-spinning and thereby serving those most in need of help.

But it has been objected that hand-spinning is not profitable. But surely it is profitable for those who have many an idle hour at their disposal and to whose scanty income even a pice is a welcome addition. The whole of the charkha programme falls to pieces if millions of peasants are not living in enforced idleness for at least four months in the year. Wherever khaddar workers are doing their labour of love, it has become not only profitable but a blessing to villagers to have men who would buy their yarn. Those whose income does not exceed five to six rupees per month and have time at their disposal would gladly take in work that brings them an addition of two rupees per month.

#### MALKHACHAK AND OTHER CENTRES

I have before me a report of work done by a band of volunteers in several parts of Bihar. I visited their centre at Malkhachak after my visit to the industrial workshop. The place is about twelve miles from Patna. In Malkhachak alone, with a population of about a thousand there are four hundred wheels going and there are thirty weavers weaving hand-spun yarn. I saw some of the sisters plying their wheels. They were indifferently constructed. Yet the spinners seemed to be happy with them. They get two rupees per month on an average. An addition of eight hundred rupees per month in a village containing one thousand souls is surely a big income any day. I do not count the wages earned by the weavers at the rate of fifteen rupees per month. That may not be a new addition. These workers, in addition to organizing spinning, are also giving the village folk such medical relief as is possible with their limited resources and still more limited medical knowledge. The report of their work which was started in 1921 mentions that they are serving six centres, viz., Madhubani, Kapasia, Shakri, Madhepur and Pupri, besides Malkhachak. They wove in 1922, Rs. 62,000 worth of khaddar, in 1923, Rs. 84,000, in 1924, Rs. 63,000. And they have already woven one lac worth during the nine months of 1925. They wove less in 1924 because of want of cotton. Their capacity for extension, the report says, is almost unlimited, given a regular supply of cotton and a market insured for the disposal of their wares. They believe that almost every village

in the neighbourhood would welcome the presence of these workers. The quality of khaddar produced by them is excellent and is by no means all of the coarsest variety. Some of it is even exceedingly fine. They pay four annas per seer of 40 *tolas* for spinning ten counts and  $2\frac{1}{2}$  annas per yard of 45 inches width for weaving. They have 28 workers. The upkeep of these depots including food and travelling amounts to Rs. 25 per month per worker on an average. These depots are not at a loss. They organize their own sales. The quality of yarn they receive shows a steady improvement from month to month. I invite the Department of Industries and the public in general to study the condition of these villages and verify the facts given above for themselves. These workers are responsible for 7,000 wheels and 250 looms weaving hand-spun yarn in the villages.

The condition of Bihar is in no way extraordinary. It is more or less the same in many parts of Bengal, Andhra, Tamilnad and the United Provinces. I have mentioned these provinces because the condition of those who have taken up spinning can be studied there. At the present moment, most of the other provinces would show the same state of things. Orissa for instance where the people are living from hand to mouth only awaits skilled workers and efficient organization. Rajputana, in spite of its millionaires, is again a tract where the art of spinning is still alive and where the people are extremely poor. If only the Rajahs and the Maharajahs will lend their hearty support to the movement, encourage khaddar wear in their States and remove the handicap on khadi wherever it exists, this land of chronic droughts will, without any great outlet of capital and without any fuss, have lacs of rupees per year for its poor people.

*Young India*, 8-10-1925

#### 42. FATE OF NON-CO-OPERATORS

A friend asks :

With your complete surrender to the Swaraj Party what will be the fate of those who have made non-co-operation their political religion?

The questioner forgets that I remain just as confirmed a non-co-operator as ever. And it is not only my political but it is also my domestic and social religion. As I has repeatedly said in these pages, voluntary and health-giving co-operation is impossible without the

possibility of non-co-operation at a certain stage and under certain conditions. The Congress does not prescribe to anybody his religion. It is a sensitive barometer from time to time registering the variation in the temperament of politically-minded India. No Congressman is bound to act contrary to his political religion. But he may not now use the name of the Congress for furthering non-co-operation. Under the resolution, the prestige and financial resources of the Congress where they are not earmarked are pledged for the support of furthering the Swarajist Council policy and, therefore, not only are Congress organizations entitled to vote supplies for the furtherance of the Swarajist policy, but they are bound, where they would spend money for Council propaganda at all, to use them for the Swarajist policy. Conversely, no Congress organization where there is a clear majority against spending or raising money for any pure political work is bound by the resolution to do so contrary to their own belief. All Congress resolutions are for guidance and direction; they cannot be for coercion.

The correspondent further asks:

What will be the position of the Spinners' Association with reference to non-co-operation?

The association has nothing to do with political non-co-operation. The preamble precludes politics. I am the President of that association, not in my capacity as a confirmed non-co-operator, but in that of an out-and-out khadi lover. It is a commercial or economic association with philanthropic motives. It will conduct commerce in khaddar not for the benefit of its members but of the nation. The members instead of receiving dividends will give yearly subscriptions. It invites the politically-minded co-operators and non-co-operators, Rajahs, Maharajahs and persons belonging to all castes and creeds who have faith in the economic capacity of the spinning-wheel and khaddar.

The correspondent adds:

The programme of the Spinners' Association cannot be complete without the fivefold boycott.

I do not see it at all. Why may not the busiest lawyer at least wear khaddar as some are now doing? Why may not the scholars and teachers of Government schools do likewise? The Council-goers are certainly doing it, so far as the Swarajists are concerned. They have taken khaddar to the Assembly and the Councils. Several titled men

habitually wear khaddar.

The last difficulty of my correspondent is:

If the irreconcilable non-co-operators are driven out of the Congress and also find no place in the Spinners' Association, will it be possible for them to form an all-India association of their own?

The question is extremely badly put. No one is ever driven out of the Congress. People may and do retire from it when they find the action of the majority to be in conflict with their conscience. The majority cannot be blamed for not suiting itself to the conscience of a minority. And if there are non-co-operators who consider it to be repugnant to their conscience to remain in the Congress while it countenances Council-entry, they may certainly retire. I would even go further and suggest that they should retire, if by remaining in the Congress they wish to hamper Council work. In my opinion the Congress machinery needs to be worked without any friction from within. I have already shown that there is room for non-co-operators in the Spinners' Association as there is also for co-operators. If in spite of it there are non-co-operators who consider it their duty to form an all-India association of their own, it is certainly possible for them to do so, but I would consider it to be thoroughly inadvisable. It is enough if the non-co-operators will, for the time being, carry on their non-co-operation in their own persons.

*Young India*, 8-10-1925

### 43. FROM EUROPE

When I think of my littleness and my limitations on the one hand and of the expectations raised about me on the other, I become dazed for the moment, but I come to myself as soon as I realize that these expectations are a tribute not to me, a curious mixture of Jekyll and Hyde, but to the incarnation however imperfect but comparatively great in me, of the two priceless qualities of truth and non-violence. I must therefore not shirk the responsibility of giving what aid I can to fellow-seekers after truth from the West.

I have already dealt with a letter from America. I have before me one from Germany. It is a closely reasoned letter. It has remained with me for nearly a month. At first I thought I would send a private reply and let it be published in Germany, if the correspondent desired it. But, having reread the letter, I have come to the conclusion that I

should deal with it in these columns. I give the letter below in full:<sup>1</sup>

In my travels I have not the file of *Young India* before me, but there is no difficulty about my endorsing the statement that "Satyagraha demands absolute non-violence and that even a woman who is in danger of being violated must not defend herself with violence." Both these statements relate to an ideal state and, therefore, are made with reference to those men and women who have so far purified themselves as to have no malice, no anger, no violence in them. That does not mean that the woman in the imagined case would quietly allow herself to be violated. In the first instance, such a woman would stand in no danger of violence and, in the second, if she did, without doing violence to the ruffian she would be able completely to defend her honour.

But I must not enter into details. Even women who can defend themselves with violence are not many. Happily, however, cases of indecent assaults are not also very many. Be that as it may, I believe implicitly in the proposition that perfect purity is its own defence. The veriest ruffian becomes, for the time being, tame in the presence of resplendent purity.

The writer is not correctly informed about my attitude in regard to General Dyer. He would be pleased to know that not only did I not recommend any punishment of General Dyer but even my colleagues, largely out of their generous regard for me, waived the demand for punishment. What, however, I did ask for, and I do press for even now, is the stopping of the pension to General Dyer. It is no part of the plan of non-violence to pay the wrong-doer for the wrong he does which practically would be the case if I became a willing party to the continuation of the pension to General Dyer. But let me not be misunderstood. I am quite capable of recommending even punishment to wrong-doers under conceivable circumstances; for instance I would not hesitate under the present state of society to confine thieves and robbers, which is in itself a kind of punishment. But I would also admit that it is not satyagraha and that it is a fall from the pure doctrine. That would be not an admission of weakness of the doctrine but weakness of myself. I have no other remedy to suggest in such cases in the present state of society. I am therefore satisfied with advocating the use of prisons more as reformatories than as places of punishment.

<sup>1</sup> For the text of this letter, *vide* "From Europe", 8-10-1925.



But I would draw the distinction between killing and detention or even corporal punishment. I think that there is a difference not merely in quantity but also in quality. I can recall the punishment of detention. I can make reparation to the man upon whom I inflict corporal punishment. But once a man is killed, the punishment is beyond recall or reparation. God alone can take life, because He alone gives it.

I hope there is no confusion in the writer's mind when he couples the self-immolation of a satyagrahi with the punishment imposed from without. But, in order to avoid even a possibility of it, let me make it clear that the doctrine of violence has reference only to the doing of injury by one to another. Suffering injury in one's own person, is on the contrary, of the essence of non-violence and is the chosen substitute for violence to others. It is not because I value life low that I can countenance with joy thousands voluntarily losing their lives for satyagraha, but because I know that it results in the long run in the least loss of life and what is more, it ennobles those who lose their lives and morally enriches the world for their sacrifice. I think that the writer is correct in saying that non-co-operation is not merely an ideal but also "a safe and quick way to freedom for India". I do suggest that the doctrine holds good also as between States and States. I know that I am treading on delicate ground if I refer to the late War. But I fear that I must in order to make the position clear. It was a war of aggrandizement, as I have understood, on either part. It was a war for dividing the spoils of the exploitation of weaker races, otherwise euphemistically called the world commerce. If Germany today changed her policy and made a determination to use her freedom not for dividing the commerce of the world but for protecting through her moral superiority the weaker races of the earth, she could certainly do that without armament. It would be found that, before general disarmament in Europe commences, as it must some day unless Europe is to commit suicide, some nation will have to dare to disarm herself and take large risks. The level of non-violence in that nation, if that event happily comes to pass, will naturally have risen so high as to command universal respect. Her judgments will be unerring, her decisions will be firm, her capacity for heroic self-sacrifice will be great, and she will want to live as much for other nations as for herself. I may not push this delicate subject any further. I know that I am writing in a theoretical way upon a practical question without knowing all its bearings. My only excuse is, if I understand it correctly, that that

is what the writer has wanted me to do.

I do justify entire non-violence and consider it possible in relations between man and man and nations and nations, but it is not "a resignation from all real fighting against wickedness". On the contrary, the non-violence of my conception is a more active and more real fighting against wickedness than retaliation whose very nature is to increase wickedness. I contemplate a mental and, therefore, a moral opposition to immoralities. I seek entirely to blunt the edge of the tyrant's sword, not by putting up against it a sharper-edged weapon, but by disappointing his expectation that I would be offering physical resistance. The resistance of the soul that I should offer instead would elude him. It would at first dazzle him and at last compel recognition from him which recognition would not humiliate him but would uplift him. It may be urged that this again is an ideal state. And so it is. The propositions from which I have drawn my arguments are as true as Euclid's definitions which are none the less true because in practice we are unable even to draw Euclid's line on a blackboard. But even a geometrician finds it impossible to get on without bearing in mind Euclid's definitions. Nor may we, the German friend, his colleagues and myself, dispense with the fundamental propositions on which the doctrine of satyagraha is based.

There remains for me now only one ticklish question to answer. In a most ingenious manner the writer has compared the English arrogation of the right of becoming tutors to the whole world to my views on relations between married people. But the comparison does not hold good. The marriage bond involves seeing each other only by mutual agreement. But surely abstention requires no consent. Married life would be intolerable, as it does become, when one partner breaks through all bonds of restraint. Marriage confirms the right of union between two partners to the exclusion of all the others when, in their joint opinion, they consider such union to be desirable, but it confers no right upon one partner to demand obedience of the other to one's wish for union. What should be done when one partner on moral or other grounds cannot conform to the wishes of the other is a separate question. Personally, if divorce was the only alternative I should not hesitate to accept it, rather than interrupt my moral progress,—assuming that I want to restrain myself on purely moral grounds.

*Young India*, 8-10-1925

#### 44. "TAKLI" UNIVERSAL

It is wonderful what hold upon mankind the simple instrument *takli* has retained in spite of the inroads of spinning mills. Not only am I finding its use spread all over India but Dr. Ansari sent me a postcard in which a woman is portrayed comfortably seated with a *takli* plying in a little earthen pot which she has held in her right hand with the left holding the sliver from which she is drawing the thread. It is a picture of a scene in Beirut. The capacity of *takli* for giving use anywhere and at all odd times is really remarkable. A busy man who may find it difficult to sit down for half an hour at a stretch at the wheel cannot do better than carry a *takli* about him and spin his quota on the *takli*.

*Young India*, 8-10-1925

#### 45. NOTES

##### PRESIDENT-ELECT

So Sarojini Devi has been elected President of the Congress for the ensuing year. It was an honour that was to have been done to her last year. It is thoroughly well-earned by her. It is due to her for her tireless energy, for her great services as the national ambassador in East and South Africa; and in these days of a steady awakening among women, it is a graceful tribute to India's womanhood for the Reception Committee to have elected as President one of India's most gifted daughters. Her election will give great satisfaction to our countrymen across the seas and give them courage to fight the battle that is in front of them. May her occupancy of the highest office in the gift of the nation result in freedom coming nearer to us.

##### BIG BROTHER'S UNDERTAKING

Maulana Shaukat Ali is bent upon earning his position on the Council of the All-India Spinners' Association. He wants to justify his faith in khaddar by his work. Though he has done spinning more or less regularly before now, he will now insist upon doing it with the utmost possible regularity and supply me with his monthly quota. He has undertaken to enrol before the end of the year at least 3,000 A class Muslim members. I have told the Maulana Saheb that enrolment

of real 3,000 A class members before the end of the year will give me complete satisfaction. But I have told him also that it will tax his resources to the utmost to get 3,000 Mussalmans who not being professional spinners will spin regularly and deliver their yarn from month to month. There are not today in all India, 3,000 members, men and women, on the Congress register who have paid their full quota of 2,000 yards to date. It is tragic, but it is true. No doubt, the reduction to one half will make a change. Experience, however, shows that men will come willingly to do certain things at a pinch and in a fit of exaltation, but many will not do things with sustained regularity from day to day and month to month. And yet I am convinced that, before we can make substantial headway we shall have to get men who will regard it as a point of honour to fulfil long engagements undertaken by them for the sake of the nation. I therefore wish every success to the Maulana Saheb.

#### A HINDU PRESERVE?

The Maulana told me that a Mussalman friend warned him that the khaddar service under the Spinners' Association would be a Hindu preserve as it has been under the Khadi Board. He had already challenged the Mussalman friend because he himself knew that Mr. Banker had tried his best to get some Mussalman workers. I add my own experience. Wherever I have gone I have asked managers of khaddar organizations whether they have Mussalman workers with them and they have invariably complained of the difficulty of getting Mussalman workers for khaddar. Khadi Pratishthan has some but they belong to the humbler walks of life. The Abhoy Ashram has one or two. I cannot multiply these instances. The thing is that khadi service has not yet become a popular service. There is not much money to be had for service. In the figures I analysed some time ago the highest pay given was Rs. 150/- per month. That was paid to a very able organizer. The best khaddar workers are all volunteers everywhere. The terms of service must necessarily be stiff. You cannot have whole-time khaddar workers who do not themselves spin or habitually wear khaddar. I would love to have many Mussalmans of the right stamp offering their services. Let them all apply to the Maulana Saheb. He has undertaken to examine every case personally and make his recommendation to the Council. But I give due warning to all concerned whether Mussalmans, Christians, Parsis or Jews, that they must not blame the Council if the khaddar service becomes a Hindu

preserve for want of efforts, ability or love for khaddar on the part of the others.

#### DEBTS OF HONOUR

I had some time ago in the pages of *Navajivan* to refer to the default on the part of Congress debtors in Gujarat. Now that I have taken up the burden of the All-India Spinners' Association, the first present I received was a list from Mr. Banker of 70 debtors to the Bihar Provincial Khadi Board. These are all debts of long standing incurred by Congressmen,—many of them are for khaddar sold. They amount to over Rs. 20,000. It is a matter of shame and sorrow that there should be so many debts outstanding. The Khadi Board has, in my opinion, been over-lenient. All public institutions are public trust and those who are in charge of them have oftentimes to harden their hearts and rigorously collect all debts owing to the trust under their charge. Leniency in the management of a public trust is a misplaced virtue and may often amount to an unpardonable breach. I know that a false notion of non-co-operation has often come in the way of proceedings being taken against defaulters. But as I have so often pointed out, laws are made by institutions for self-preservation, not for suicide. When, therefore, they hamper their growth they are worse than useless, and must be set aside. Boycott of law-courts was undertaken in order to invigorate the nation, to wean people from running on the slightest pretext to law-courts, to popularize private arbitration, never to bolster up fraud or cover defaulters. It proceeded upon the assumption that Congressmen would at least carry out their obligations to one another and to the Congress without the necessity of resort even to arbitration, much less to law-courts. I hope, therefore, that those gentlemen who owe anything to the Khadi Board will hasten to discharge their debts and will not put the Board to the painful necessity of taking proceedings against them.

#### HINTS FOR SPINNING EXAMINERS

A correspondent who has evidently given some thought to the spinning-wheel makes the following suggestions:

The training and the tests may be conducted on the following lines and the same method may be adopted in the spinning competition during the Congress Week also:

The art of spinning may be classified into 'carding', 'spinning proper' and 'mechanism'.

### *Carding Tests*

1. Fineness of carding and outturn in a fixed time from the given ginned cotton.
2. Difference between hard and soft rolled slivers.
3. Uses of the different parts of carding-bow and the accessories.

### *Spinning Proper*

1. Fineness and uniformity of yarn outturn in a fixed time from self-carded slivers and from any given carded slivers.
2. Ability to spin yarn of a given count (sample of which may be given).
3. Manipulation of the parts of the wheel,—uses of the different parts.

### *Mechanism (Practical)*

1. A spinning-wheel out of use for some time (of course not requiring any carpentry work) may be asked to be set right.
2. A wheel with its parts slackened may be asked to be set right. Different patterns of wheels may be tried for the above purpose. (This is what is done in practical examinations of typewriting, levelling and other scientific instruments.)

As years pass on, the different tests may be gradually introduced in the competitions.

In the selection of persons to manage and conduct the affairs of the Spinners' Association, men of tried character and tried sincerity have to be selected, so that this method at last may work to a success, unlike the previous attempts whose seeming failures are all due to want of workers of sincerity and selflessness. There are many undesirables who have already got into the existing national organizations and there are yet many just rising and scheming to get into this new organization also.

The suggestions for examiners are good. About undesirables one knows that democratic institutions, all the world over, run the risk of bad people getting into them. This fate will pursue such institutions till the millenium arrives and we have to reckon with the fact and provide accordingly. Since the Spinners' Association is designed to be not a democratic body with a fluctuating policy but a philanthropic commercial body, the democratic element has been kept under well-regulated checks. Even so there can be no absolute guarantee against bad men getting into even a self-appointed and selective, philanthropic corporation. One can only hope that the Spinners' Association will offer no attraction to the evil-minded people.

### LACK OF MORAL COURAGE

A friend sends me the following cutting for reproduction in *Young India*:

This lack of moral courage is a great evil in the church. Many, rather

than contend against their superiors, will contend against God Himself. And they rid themselves of all responsibility by substituting their superiors' conscience for their own wherein God speaks. They do not understand that by striving against what is good, or by refraining from striving against what is evil, in obedience to their superiors, they give scandal to the world, they stain the christian character in the eyes of the world. They do not understand that both their duty toward God and their duty toward their superiors may be fulfilled, by never striving against what is good, by never refraining from striving against what is evil, by never judging their superiors, by obeying them with perfect obedience in every thing that is neither opposed to what is good nor in favour of what is evil, by laying even life itself at their feet, but not their conscience; their conscience, never! Thus the inferior, stripped of everything save conscience and just obedience, becomes a pure grain of the salt of the earth; and where many such grains are united, the substance to which they adhere will be saved from corruption, and that to which they do not adhere, will rot and fall to pieces.

This passage contains an echo of what many of us do every day, subordinating the clear voice of God to the voice of man, who for the time being exercises authority over us. We should be free in a moment if we could strike the happy medium and know when to yield to the voice of authority and when to resist it even at the risk of losing one's life.

*Young India*, 8-10-1925

#### 46. MESSAGE TO "FORWARD"

KISHANGANJ,

*October 10, 1925*

I wish *Forward* many happy returns. The longer young men like Subhas Bose are denied the right of a fair trial and yet kept under lock and key, the quicker is our pace towards our goal. Fight for freedom is no mock affair. It is so real and so terrible that it will require the best of thousands of us. Let us not grudge the price.

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: G.N. 8050

#### 47. LETTER TO MOTILAL ROY

October 10, 1925

DEAR FRIEND,

I thank you for your good wishes. I would like you to correspond with Satis Babu about khaddar.

*Yours sincerely,*  
M. K. GANDHI

SJT. MOTILAL ROY  
PRABARTAK SANGH  
CHANDRANAGAR

From a photostat: G.N. 11021

#### 48. LETTER TO RAMNIKLAL

Saturday, October 10, 1925

BHAISHRI RAMNIKLAL,

Today on the train to Katihar, I read with interest your report<sup>1</sup> on the school. The train has stopped, people are staring but, taking no notice of them, I am writing to you.

The report brings out prominently to our notice the changes that have taken place among the teachers. But who can say which change could have been prevented? If we can even now undo them, we should.

Kaka's<sup>2</sup> grief causes grief to me also. How nice it would be if Kaka improves his health and while doing so forgets his grief! To a student of the *Gita* how could there be any sorrow or joy? But who can impart this wisdom? It seems one attains it only out of experience.

I am sending back the report. I quite approve of Kishorelal's<sup>3</sup> decision.

I hope both of you are at peace and in good health.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: S.N. 10683

<sup>1</sup> Report on the Ashram school for *Samvat* 1980-81, of the Vikram era

<sup>2</sup> Kaka Kalelkar

<sup>3</sup> Kishorelal Mashruwala



#### 49. IF EXPELLED FROM ONE'S COMMUNITY

When the leaders of a community thoughtlessly expel persons from it, guided by nothing but their unthinking attachment to ideas and customs, superstitions, ignorance and envy, it is better for one to be boycotted by it than to continue as a member of it, for no one who loves truth can remain in a society from which another such person has been expelled.

This is the principle. Although it cannot always be followed in practice, it needs to be borne in mind. We observe nowadays that heads of communities are becoming increasingly high-handed. There are heads who regard it as a sin even to serve a meal to an *Antyaja*. A Hindu who invites an *Antyaja* to sit with other Hindus at a dinner or consents to another doing this is regarded as having committed a sin. Let all lovers of goodness join the company of such sinners.

To be sure, boycott is not easy to bear. One is not served meals, and is denied the services of the dhobi, the barber and, it is not impossible, even of the doctor. They inflict every hardship, short of putting one to death. A reformer who is boycotted must have the strength to remain steadfast unto death. The best service to *Antyajans* can be rendered only by Hindus who have made their lives pure, dedicated their lives. What does it matter whether one is served meals or not? Why cannot we stay at home, cook our own food and eat in peace? If the dhobi refuses to wash our clothes, we may wash them ourselves and save money. Shaving oneself has now become a common practice. Yes, but how to find a match for one's daughter, and a bride for one's son, it will be asked. If we are particular that the partner for either should be from our own community and cannot find one, the daughter or the son should cultivate self-control. If they do not have the strength for this, we should look for a partner in some other community. If we are disappointed even in this, we should resign ourselves to what cannot be helped.

There are only four castes, whether communities number four or forty thousand. The merger of sub-divisions in communities is something to be actually welcomed. Small social circles with rigid barriers have done great harm to Hinduism. Why should not a Vaisya try to enter into marriage alliance with another Vaisya in any part of the country? Why should a Brahmin of Gujarat not look for a son-in-law or daughter-in-law in any Brahmin family of the same level of

culture as his? If we lack the courage even for this reform, Hinduism will be in danger of becoming a religion of extremely narrow outlook. A Gujarati girl marrying in Bengal or a Bengali girl marrying in Gujarat is not altogether a calamity. If those who wish to preserve the division of society into four castes also try to preserve the present sub-divisions into communities, the former will disappear along with the latter, which are already disappearing.

Today, even the division into four castes has lost its sanction. Thinking men and women ought to consider this problem. As a first step, if the various castes in Gujarat meet and decide to enlarge the boundaries of social intercourse within them, will not that be great progress? Can they not decide to merge the communities which form their sub-divisions?

If the heads of these communities have no desire even to think over this problem, it is very necessary that individuals should take the lead.

But I wished to discuss in this article the question of social boycott. If I have written about the sub-divisions of castes, it is for the comfort of the victims of boycott. There is only one way to fight tyranny, whether it is by our own people or by others. The victim of boycott has at present a very simple way open to him. Let us, however, suppose that in the exiting atmosphere in the country a person boycotted by his sub-division of the caste will be boycotted by the entire caste. Even if it is so, what does it matter? We need today all over the country reformers who will cultivate the strength to stand alone.

Anyone, however, who shows the courage to do this will be, if his motive is pure, free from anger and ill-will, will bear hardships in patience, will not hate the oppressor, wish well even to him and minister to him when an opportunity offers. No one should, in any circumstances, forsake his duty of service. No one, indeed, has a right to exact service from others. Dharma says: "I am nothing but service. The Creator has given me no rights at all." How can one lose what one does not possess? The victim of boycott should give up all desire to be served by others. There is, most certainly, a peculiar law that some will come forward to offer their services to such a person, but the worker himself will remain unconcerned whether or not anybody does so. Anyone who claims that he wants no service, hoping all the time that some people will offer to serve him, is a thief and is bound to be disappointed in his hope.

Workers who would serve *Antyajias*, be as humble as the dust under your feet and let people harass you if they choose. The earth, though we ever trample her under our feet, is all forgiveness, and that is why we call her mother and sing to her every morning as we wake up.

Divine one, you who are Vishnu's spouse, I bow unto you with the seas of the world a garment round your body and the mountains your breasts. Forgive us that we tread on you with our feet.

Workers who have learnt perfect humility from such a mother will suffer no harm by being boycotted.

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 11-10-1925

## 50. MEANING OF THE "GITA"

A friend puts the following question:<sup>1</sup>

Such doubts will continue to arise. Those who have made some study [of the *Gita*] should try to resolve them to the best of their ability. I will try to do so, but I must say at the same time that in the last resort man acts according to the dictates of his heart. The heart takes precedence over the intellect. The principle is accepted first, and proof follows afterwards. Inspiration precedes the arguments with which we justify it. That is why it is said that the intellect is led by one's actions. Man discovers arguments in favour of what he wants to do or has done.

I can, therefore, understand that my interpretation of the *Gita* may not be acceptable to everyone. In these circumstances, I think it should suffice if I describe how I arrived at my interpretation of the *Gita* and explain the principles which I have followed in determining the meaning of *Shastras*. "My duty is to fight, and be unconcerned with the result. The enemies who deserve to die are dead already, my part is simply to be an instrument in killing them."

I became acquainted with the *Gita* in 1889. I was twenty years of age at that time. I had not yet fully understood the significance of non-violence as a principle of *dharma*. It was from Shamal Bhatt's

<sup>1</sup> The letter is not translated here. The correspondent had argued that chapters I and XI of the *Gita* did not seem to support Gandhiji's view that it taught non-violence.

couplet, "Let him offer water, and a good meal to eat", that I had first learnt the principle of winning over even an enemy with love. Its truth had made deep appeal to my heart, but the couplet had not suggested to me the principle of compassion for all creatures. I had even eaten meat before that time while I was still in India. I believed that it was one's duty to kill snakes and other such creatures. I remember having killed bed-bugs and other insects. I remember killing a scorpion once. Today I think that we should not kill even such poisonous creatures. In those days I believed that we would have to fit ourselves to fight the British. I used to murmur to myself the lines of the poem beginning, "Is it any wonder that the British rule over us?" My eating meat was for the purpose of fitting myself for this fighting in future. These were the views I held before I left for England. It was my desire to keep, even at the cost of my life, the promises which I had given to my mother that saved me from eating meat and other sins. My love of truth has saved me in many difficult situations.

It was at his time that, coming into contact with two Englishmen, I was induced to read the *Gita*. I say "induced" because I had no particular desire to read it when these two friends asked me to read the *Gita* with them, I felt rather ashamed. The consciousness that I knew nothing about our holy books made me feel miserable. The reason, I think, was my vanity. I did not know Sanskrit well enough to be able to read the *Gita* without help. The two English friends, on their part, did not know Sanskrit at all. They gave me Sir Edwin Arnold's excellent translation of the poem. I went through the whole of it immediately and was fascinated by it. From that time till now, the last nineteen stanzas of Chapter II have ever remained engraved in my heart. For me, they contain the essence of dharma. They embody the highest knowledge. The principles enunciated in them are immutable. The intellect, too, is active in them in the highest degree, but it is intellect disciplined to high purpose. The knowledge which they contain is the fruit of experience.

This was my first introduction to the *Gita*. Since then, I have read many other translations and commentaries and listened to many discourses but the impression made by that first reading persists. These stanzas are the key to the understanding of the *Gita*. I would even go so far as to advise people to reject statements in the poem which bear a meaning contrary to that of these nineteen stanzas. For a person who is humble there can be no question of rejecting anything.

He will merely reason: 'It is the imperfection of my own intellect that today other stanzas seem to me inconsistent with these. In the course of time, I shall be able to see their consistency.' So he will tell himself and others, and leave the matter there.

For understanding the meaning of the Shastras, one must have a well-cultivated moral sensibility and experience in the practice of their truths. The injunction against Sudras studying the Vedas is not altogether unjustified. A Sudra, in other words a person without moral education, without sense and without knowledge, would completely misread the Shastras. No person, even if grown up in age, is qualified to understand difficult problems in Algebra without preparation. Before anyone can understand such problems, he must have studied the elements of the subject. How would "Aham Brahmasmi"<sup>1</sup> sound in the mouth of a lustful man? What meaning, or distorted meaning, would he not attach to it?

Hence anyone who offers to interpret the Shastras must have observed the prescribed disciplines in his life. A mechanical observance of these disciplines is as futile as it is difficult. The Shastras regard it essential that one should have a guru. But gurus are rare in this age and, therefore, wise men of learning advise regular study of books in regional languages which are steeped in the spirit of devotion. Those, however who are devoid of this spirit and lack even faith, are not qualified to explain the meaning of the Shastras. Learned men may please themselves and draw seemingly profound meanings from the Shastras, but what they offer is not the real sense of these. Only those who have experience in practice of their truths can explain the real meaning of the Shastras.

There are, however, principles for the guidance of the common man too. Any interpretation of a Shastra which is opposed to truth cannot be right. The Shastras are not meant for those who question the validity of the principle of truth itself, or rather, the Shastras are no better than ordinary books for such a person. No one can meet him in argument. Anyone, on the other hand, who does not find the principle of non-violence in the Shastras is indeed in danger, but his case is not hopeless. Truth is a positive value, while non-violence is a negative value. Truth affirms. Non-violence forbids something which is real enough. Truth exists, untruth does not exist. Violence exists, non-violence does not. Even so, the highest dharma for us is that nothing

<sup>1</sup>"I am the *Brahman*, the Absolute", the central teaching of Advaita Vedanta.

but non-violence can be. Truth is its own proof, and non-violence is its supreme fruit. The latter is necessarily contained in the former. Since, however, it is not evident as truth is, one may try to discover the meaning of the Shastras without believing in it. But the spirit of non-violence alone will reveal to one the true meaning of the Shastras.

*Tapascharya* is certainly necessary for the realization of truth. Some sage who had realized truth revealed to the world the goddess of non-violence from amidst the prevailing violence, and said: "Violence comes of illusion; it avails not. Non-violence alone is true." Without non-violence, it is not possible to realize truth. The vows of *brahmacharya*, non-stealing and non-possession are of importance for the sake of non-violence, they help one to realize it in oneself. It is the life-breath of truth. Without it, man is a beast. The seeker after truth will discover all this very early in his quest, and then he will have no difficulty at any time in understanding the meaning of Shastras.

The second rule to be followed in determining the meaning of text in a Shashtra is that one should not stick to its letter, but try to understand its spirit, its meaning in the total context. Tulsidas's *Ramayana* is one of the greatest works because its spirit is that of purity, compassion and devotion to God. An evil fate awaits one who beats his wife because Tulsidas has said in his work that a Sudra, a dull-witted person, a beast and a woman merit chastisement. Rama not only never raised his hand against Sita, he did not even displease her at any time. Tulsidas merely stated a common belief. He could never have thought that there would be brutes who might beat their wives and justify their action by reference to his verse. May be Tulsidas himself, following the practice of his time, used to beat his wife; what even then? The practice does not cease to be reprehensible. In any case, his *Ramayana* was not composed to justify men beating their wives. It was composed to display the character of a perfect man, to tell us about Sita, the noblest among chaste and devoted wives, and to delineate the ideal devotion of Bharat. The support which the work seems to lend to evil customs should be ignored. Tulsidas did not compose his priceless work to teach geography. We should, therefore, reject any erroneous statements of a geographical character which we may find in it.

Let us now examine the *Gita*. Its subject-matter is simply the realization of *Brahman* and the means thereto; the battle is only the occasion for its teaching. One can say, if one likes, that the poet used it as an occasion because he did not look upon war as morally wrong.

On reading the *Mahabharata*, I formed quite different impression. Vyasa wrote his supremely beautiful epic to depict the futility of war. What did the Kauravas' defeat and the Pandavas' victory avail? How many among the victors survived? What was their fate? What was the end of Kunti, mother of the Pandavas? What trace is left today of the Yadava race?

Since the *Gita's* subject is not description of the battle and justification of violence, it is perfectly wrong to give much importance to these. If, moreover it is difficult to reconcile a few of the verses with the idea that the *Gita* advocates non-violence, it is still more difficult to reconcile the teaching of the work as a whole with the advocacy of violence.

When a poet composes his work, he does not have a clear conception of all its possible implications. It is the very beauty of good poem that it is greater than its author. The truth which a poet utters in his moment of inspiration, we do not often see him following in his own life. Hence the lives of many poets are at variance with the teaching of their poems. That the overall teaching of the *Gita* is not violence but non-violence is evident from the argument which begins in Chapter II and ends in chapter XVIII. The intervening chapters propound the same theme. Violence is simply not possible unless one is driven by anger, by ignorant love and by hatred. The *Gita*, on the other hand, wants us to be incapable of anger and attain to a state unaffected by the three *gunas*<sup>1</sup>. Such a person can never feel anger. I see even now the red eyes of Arjuna every time he aimed an arrow from his bow, drawing the string as far as his ear.

But, then, had Arjuna's obstinate refusal to fight anything to do with non-violence? In fact, he had fought often enough in the past. On the present occasion, his reason was suddenly clouded by ignorant attachment. He did not wish to kill his kinsmen. He did not say that he would not kill anyone even if he believed that person to be wicked. Shri Krishna is the Lord dwelling in everyone's heart. He understands the momentary darkening of Arjuna's reason. He, therefore, tells him: "You have already committed violence. By talking now like a wise man, you will not learn non-violence. Having started on this course, you must finish the job." If a passenger travelling in a train which is running at a speed of forty miles an hour suddenly feels aversion to travelling and jumps out of the train, he will have but

<sup>1</sup> *Sattva* (purity or clarity), *rajas* (restlessness) and *tamas* (torpidity)

committed suicide. He has not in truth realized the futility of travelling as such or of travelling by train. Arjuna was in a similar condition. Krishna, who believed in non-violence, could not have given Arjuna any advice other than what he did. But to conclude from this that the *Gita* teaches violence or justifies war is as unwarranted as to argue that, since violence in some form or other is inescapable for maintaining the body in existence, dharma lies only in violence. The man of discriminating intellect, on the other hand, teaches the duty of striving for deliverance from this body which exists through violence, the duty, that is, of striving for *moksha*.

But whom does Dhritarashtra represent, and likewise Duryodhana, Yudhishtira, or Arjuna? Whom does Krishna represent? Were they historical personages? Does the *Gita* relate their actual doings? Is it likely that Arjuna should suddenly, without warning, ask a question when the battle was about to commence, and that Krishna should recite the whole *Gita* in reply? And then, Arjuna, who had said that his ignorance had been dispelled, forgets what he was taught in the *Gita*, and Krishna is made to repeat his teaching in the *Anugita*.<sup>1</sup>

Personally, I believe that Duryodhana and his supporters stand for the Satanic impulses in us, and Arjuna and others stand for Godward impulses. The battle-field is our body. The poet-seer, who knows from experience the problems of life, has given a faithful account of the conflict which is eternally going on within us. Shri Krishna is the Lord dwelling in everyone's heart who is ever murmuring His promptings in a pure *chitta*<sup>2</sup> like a clock ticking in a room. If the clock of the *chitta* is not wound up with the key of self-purification, the in-dwelling Lord no doubt remains where he is, but the ticking is heard no more.

I do not wish to suggest that violence has no place at all in the teaching of the *Gita*. The dharma which it teaches does not mean that a person who has not yet awakened to the truth of non-violence may act like a coward. Anyone who fears others, accumulates possessions and indulges in sense-pleasures will certainly fight with violent means, but violence does not, for that reason, become justified as his dharma. There is only one dharma. Non-violence means *moksha*, and *moksha* means realizing Satyanarayana<sup>3</sup>. But this dharma does not under any

<sup>1</sup> Epilogue to the *Gita*

<sup>2</sup> Mind-stuff

<sup>3</sup> Truth as God; God in the form of Truth



circumstances countenance running away in fear. In this world which baffles our reason, violence there will then always be. The Gita shows the way which will lead us out of it, but it also says that we cannot escape it simply by running away from it like cowards. Anyone who prepares to run away would do better, instead, to kill and be killed.

If the verses cited by the correspondent cannot be understood even after this explanation, I cannot explain them. I am sure no one doubts that God, who is omnipotent, is, and must be, the Creator, the Preserver and the Destroyer of the Universe. He who creates has certainly the right to destroy. Even so, He does not kill, for He does nothing. God is so merciful He does not violate the law that every creature that is born will die one day. If He were to follow His fancies and whims, where should we be?

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 11-10-1925

### 51. LETTER TO DAHYABHAI M. PATEL

*Sunday [October 11, 1925]<sup>1</sup>*

BHAI DAHYABHAI,

I was able to read your letter<sup>2</sup> today. Its purport is: that the khadi activity has not been carried on properly in Gujarat, that we cannot reach villages through the spinning-wheel, that workers are so in name only and that for the sake of mere polemics I put aside Dr. Sumant's<sup>3</sup> proposal.

I think we could have improved the khadi activity in Gujarat, but when everyone was inexperienced, whom could we blame? No one has done wrong intentionally.

I am unable to give up the faith that we can really reach the villages through the spinning-wheel alone. Where the people starve, this is the only means of relief. Where the people are well-off but lazy, it is the only thing which will rid them of their laziness. Its partial failure is only because very few with faith in it have stayed in the villages.

<sup>1</sup> The postmark bears the date 12-10-1925.

<sup>2</sup> The long letter mentioned in the previous letter to the addressee, dated 7-10-1925

<sup>3</sup> Dr. Sumant Mehta, who had proposed that volunteers should be given systematic training in social service

Those who have been working in Gujarat are not workers in name only. If your allegation is against Laxmidas<sup>1</sup>, you do not know him. With his wife and daughter he has dedicated himself to the work. In which Ashram except Satyagraha Ashram have lakhs been wasted? But all its accounts are clear. In Bardoli<sup>2</sup> there was certainly waste of money on the building but it was due to lack of experience. In Sarbhon<sup>3</sup> there was no extra expense. In Godhra<sup>4</sup> extra money was spent but it will bear fruit, because how else can the untouchables have such a building? If you would present the matter more clearly I could explain it better.

I did not brush aside Dr. Sumant's suggestion for the sake of polemics. How could I do so when I am proud of Dr. Sumant and when I would not disregard even a child's suggestion? But what to do when I don't understand something? I acted according to my knowledge. If the Satyagraha Ashram is not a Sevak Samaj<sup>5</sup> what else is it? How could I shape it better than I knew. I wish we had other societies, too, but who should do this work—they who know better or I?

The fact is that you have not realized my limitations. I am not omnipotent. I do not reserve my strength, but use it fully; what more can I do?

I shall definitely go to Dholka, unless God wills it otherwise. When I reach the Ashram, you may join me so that we may reduce our worries. Do not reply to this, but argue it out with me when we meet.

*Vandemataram from*

BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 2693. Courtesy: Dahyabhai M. Patel

<sup>1</sup> Laxmidas Asar

<sup>2</sup> Village in the Surat district of Gujarat where buildings of Swaraj Ashrams had lately been built

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> A town in Gujarat where, too, an ashram building for Harijans had just been constructed

<sup>5</sup> Servants' society

## 52. LETTER TO A WORKER IN LUCKNOW

[PATNA,]

October 12, 1925

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter. I have a wire complaining that I am disturbing the Sitapur programme. I had your wire also. I, therefore, wired to you to the effect that your programme should be framed subject to confirmation by the committee at Sitapur. I must, however, confess that even if there is an interval of five hours at Lucknow, I should be allowed that time for rest. But if such is not possible, you should send me to Sitapur by motor and not keep me engaged for five hours at Lucknow. A train journey is preferable to a motor ride but a motor ride is preferable to work till a late hour. I have grown so weak that I am washed out at 7 p.m. When I attend meetings at night I yawn. Now you know all about me and my wish and you may do what you think is best in the public interest. For I have no stomach left for addresses. Better ask me to give a spinning demonstration.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: C.W. 7750

## 53. LETTER TO FULCHAND SHAH

October 12, 1925

BHAISHRI FULCHAND,

I have your letter. I am writing to Chi. Chhaganlal about the Rs. 1,000. Tell Devchandbhai to ask me when I am in Kutch<sup>1</sup> about the meeting of the Parishad Committee<sup>2</sup>.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

[PS.]

Is your mother all right?

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 2871. Courtesy: Fulchand Shah

<sup>1</sup> Gandhiji was in Kutch from October 22 to November 3.

<sup>2</sup> Executive Committee of the Kathiawar Political Conference.

## 54. SPEECH AT VISHANPUR<sup>1</sup>

*October 13, 1925*

In his reply Mahatmaji said, with other things, that it was not quite happy on the part of the reception committee to have made allegations against Darbhanga Raj without sufficient proofs and specially in an address, but if they had really any grievances, they ought to try to get them removed.

*The Searchlight, 16-10-1925*

## 55. BIHAR NOTES

### HINDU-MUSLIM QUESTION

From Patna we went to Bhagalpur. At Bhagalpur there was a very great public meeting at which I was obliged to make a somewhat lengthy reference to the Hindu-Muslim question. Though my influence over those who are agitating the question is gone, they continue to discuss with me the various problems arising from it. I felt, therefore, that I should redeclare my views for what they might be worth. Apart from merits I must confess that I have not liked this constant reference to the Government by both the parties on matters which they by mutual settlement or appeal to the sword can adjust. I, therefore, told the audience that since neither party was prepared to compromise and each was afraid of the other, the best way would be without seeking the intervention of the Government to settle the matters in dispute by the method of the lathi. Retreat out of fear was cowardice and Cowardice would not hasten a settlement or the advent of non-violence. Cowardice was a species of violence which it was most difficult to overcome. One could hope to persuade a violently inclined person to shed his violence and take up the superior force of non-violence, but since cowardice was negation of all force, it was impossible to teach a mouse non-violence in respect of a cat. He

<sup>1</sup> According to the report, the reception by a disciplined, fifty-thousand strong gathering at this important interior village in the Purnia district of Bihar was attended with pageantry in which scores of elephants and horses featured long a two-mile, specially-constructed road. Gandhiji was presented an address of welcome and contributions were made to the Deshbandhu Memorial Fund.

would simply not understand what non-violence could be, because he had not the capacity for violence against the cat. Would it not be a mockery to ask a blind man not to look at ugly things? Maulana Shaukat Ali and I were at Bettiah in 1921. The people of a village near Bettiah told me that they had run away whilst the police were looting their houses and molesting their womenfolk.<sup>1</sup> When they said that they had run away because I had told them to be non-violent, I hung my head in shame. I assured them that such was not the meaning of my non-violence. I expected them to intercept the mightiest power that might be in the act of harming those who were under their protection, and draw without retaliation all harm upon their own heads even to the point of death, but never to run away from the storm centre. It was manly enough to defend one's property, honour or religion at the point of sword. It was manlier and nobler to defend them without seeking to injure the wrongdoer. But it was unmanly, unnatural and dishonourable to forsake the post of duty and in order to save one's skin to leave property, honour or religion to the mercy of the wrongdoer. I could see my way of successfully delivering the message of ahimsa to those who knew how to die, not to those who were afraid of death. I told the audience further, that those like me who deliberately did not want to fight and were powerless to effect a settlement might follow the example of those Mussalmans who, during the time of the first four Caliphs, sought the refuge of the cave when brothers began to fight one against the other. The mountain cave in these days was a practical impossibility but they could retire to the cave which each of us carried within himself. But such could be only those who had mutual regard for one another's religion and customs.

#### FOLLY OF EXCOMMUNICATION

Then there was a Provincial Marwari Sammelan where I spoke on the question of social boycott and on the crying need of social reform. I told the Marwari friends that ex-communication was a lawful weapon in the hands only of those who deserved to be classed as *mahajan*, which meant pure men who were real representatives of their respective groups or castes and who declared ex-communication not from personal spite but from the selfless motive of conserving the interest of fellow-beings. It was an immoral abuse of power to put

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Speech at Bettiah", 8-12-1920.

under the ban of ex-communication a person who for the sake of learning or legitimate gain crossed the waters or who for the sake of obtaining a suitable match for his son or daughter went outside his sub-caste or who dared to remarry his widowed daughter of tender age. If *varnashrama* which had a useful and proper place in the Hindu social system was to be rescued from destruction it was high time that the innumerable sub-divisions were fused into one. There was, for instance, no reason why a Marwari Brahmin or Vaisya should not seek marriage relations with a Bengali Brahmin or Vaisya. The *mahajan* to be truly great will have to encourage rather than suppress tendencies towards fusion.

If ex-communication was ever deserved nowadays, it was deserved by those who gave away their daughters in marriage before they were full-grown, at least before they were sixteen, and if secret immorality was to be discountenanced, it was the duty of parents of child widows to encourage their remarriage.

#### THE "PANDAS"

From Bhagalpur we motored to Banka where there was a district conference presided over by Maulana Shaffi Sahib. There was nothing noteworthy here except for the huge and embarrassing crowds through which I passed with difficulty with my bruised toe. We went thence to Devgarh otherwise known as Vaidyanath Dham. This is not only a famous place of pilgrimage, but also a health resort beautifully situated and surrounded by hills. This is a favourite place with the Bengalis. Unlike as in other places of pilgrimage, I found here the *pandas*, i.e., the priests in charge of the shrines, to be a fairly cultured body of men. The majority of volunteers were smart *panda* youths who rendered great assistance, I was told, to the pilgrims. There are several educated men amongst them, one being even a High Court pleader. I had the pleasure too of a visit from the elderly *pandas*. They wanted me to tell them what they should do to serve the people and, when I told them that they should serve the pilgrims instead of seeking to profiteer at their expense, and endeavour to make the places of pilgrimage really holy places by themselves leading pure and restrained lives, they readily agreed and there seemed to me to be a ring of sincerity about their assent to my proposals and a humble recognition of the existence of the evils I had ventured to point out. I was agreeably surprised to discover that the great temple was open to the so-called untouchables. The usual women's meeting was arranged

in the spacious temple compound just opposite the shrine. The order kept by the *panda* volunteers wherever I went in Devgarh was certainly much better than I have observed elsewhere.

#### VIRTUE OF SUFFERING

The public meeting was so well-organized as to ensure perfect quiet. The public address made pointed reference to terrible sufferings that the people of this district underwent in 1921-22. It should be noted here that this is the district called Santhal Parganas. It is a Non-Regulation part of Bihar. The Commissioner's will is therefore the law of the land. The address also referred to the fact that whereas during 1921 and 1922 the drink habit had all but disappeared, it was again making headway amongst the *Santhals*. The possibilities of khaddar were stated to be very great. In my reply I pointed out that no nation had ever come to its own without much suffering. I, therefore, did not mind the sufferings that the people underwent in 1921-22. Only suffering to be beneficial must be voluntary and must be enjoyed. When it came, such suffering left the sufferer stronger and happier at the end of it. I was, therefore, grieved to discover that the suffering in the district had caused demoralization amongst the people. It meant that all the suffering was not voluntary. It was up to the workers to set an example in pure and voluntary suffering. There should be persistent agitation amongst *Santhals* against the drink habit and the charkha work should be systematically organized.

#### TWO PICTURES

There was, too, a separate presentation of an address by the Municipality. I take note of this event especially for the exceedingly tasteful but simple arrangements made for the presentation in the open air. The attendance was evidently regulated by tickets and was confined to so few that the audience could have been easily accommodated in any commodious building. But the Commissioners chose to erect a little *pandal* decorated with foliage tastefully arranged in the midst of beautiful natural scenery. I could not, therefore, help recalling in my reply to the address of the Municipality the dirty state of the road leading to the temple and the dilapidation surrounding it. I have visited almost all the places of pilgrimage in India, and everywhere the condition in and about the temples is deplorable—disorder, dirt, din and stench. All these are probably less marked in

Devgarh than elsewhere. But all the same the contrast between the temple surroundings and the place where the address was presented was painful. If the Municipality, the *pandas* and the pilgrims combined together, they could make the temple and its precincts beautiful, sweet-smelling and uplifting as they ought to be. If honest and proper management could be assured, I had no doubt, I told them, that the rich pilgrims would gladly pay for the comfort that they would get at such holy places.

#### USELESS AND UGLY

From Devgarh we proceeded to Kharagdeha which is reached through Giridih from where it is a motor ride of 26 miles. At this place the programme began with a meeting of ladies. Hitherto I have restrained myself from criticizing the heavily ornamental decoration of some of my fair audiences, oppressive though it has often appeared to me. But the bangled arms from wrist practically to elbow, the huge thick nose-rings with about a three-inch diameter which could with difficulty be suspended from two holes, proved beyond endurance, and I gently remarked that this heavy ornamentation added nothing to the beauty of person, caused much discomfort, must often lead to disease and was, I could plainly see, a repository of dirt. I had never seen so much ornamentation anywhere else. Heavier articles I have seen, as for instance the unbearable heavy ankle-hoops—I cannot call them rings—of Kathiawar ladies, but never so much body space covered over with so many bangles and what-nots. I was told that these huge nose-rings often resulted in cutting the delicate nasal membranes. I was nervous about the effect my very straight remarks would produce upon my gentle audience. I was, therefore, considerably relieved when at the end of my speech and in response to my appeal for Deshbandhu Memorial Fund, they crowded round me and gave liberally from their purses. I took care to drive my point home to every donor individually and asked her to give up a large part of her superfluous ornaments. The ladies received my remarks with a gracious smile and some of them even gave me a part of these ornaments. I do not know whether the quality and the quantity of adornment has anything to do with the development of character. That it has something to do with the intellect can be proved from innumerable instances. That it has connection with culture as distinguished from character is also obvious. But as I put character before even culture, I wonder whether I would be always right in



making use, for advocating reform in the art of decoration, of the privilege I enjoy of addressing thousands of women in all the different parts of India. Be that as it may, I would urge upon the parents and husbands of these simple folk, on grounds of economy and health, the necessity of inducing among them a considerable reduction in these articles of personal furniture.

#### MAHURIS

It was at this place that I made the acquaintance of Mahuris, otherwise known as Mathuris, a body of Vaisyas who, generations ago, are supposed to have migrated from Mathura and the surrounding country and settled in Bihar. They are fairly well-to-do and enterprising. Their chief occupation is commerce. Some of them are staunch reformers. They have taken to khaddar and appreciate its advantages for the poor people. Many of them have given up meat and drink which they used to take before. In their address they stated that they understood the movement of non-co-operation as purely one of self-purification, and that it had revolutionized their inner life. They take little or no part in politics but they are intent upon making all kinds of reforms in their own little community. This moral effect of non-co-operation upon so many people all over India is perhaps its most enduring result. It is fraught with consequences of which we can have as yet but little notion. Similar reforms were reported to me as having taken place also amongst the *Santhals*, many of whom have become, from having been habitual drunkards, complete teetotallers. That movement among them received a check when picketing was withdrawn, but it is again reviving without the element of violence which had crept into the movement in 1921. It will be the saving of the simple but ignorant races like the *Santhals* if they can be weaned from the drink habit.

*Young India*, 15-10-1925

#### 56. NATIONAL EDUCATION

During my travels, those who are interested in national education tell me that, whereas I constantly harp upon khaddar, untouchability, Hindu-Muslim unity, nowadays one rarely finds mention even of national education in *Young India*. As a matter of fact the statement is true, but it must not be cited as a ground of complaint against me, if only because I am directly interested in the

largest national university in India. But national education is not a thing which can now be advanced by any writing on my part. Its advance depends totally upon a proper working of the institutions now in existence. We cannot, we must not, any longer appeal to the youth of the country who are now receiving education in the Government institutions to leave them for they now know the pros and cons of the subject. They are in Government institutions either out of weakness or out of their fondness for them or for their want of faith in national institutions. Whatever the reason, the only way to deal with their weakness, fondness or want of faith is to make the national institutions strong and popular by sheer force of the character and ability of the teachers.

There is before me an appeal by the South Calcutta National School. In a covering letter, I am reminded that I paid during my prolonged stay in Calcutta a hurried visit to the institution. The appeal is signed by influential men. Hand-spinning, I am reminded, is compulsory. There are one hundred boys on the rolls and eighteen teachers, so the appeal runs. The school receives an annual grant of Rs. 200. There are many such institutions throughout the length and breadth of India from whose teachers I receive requests either for advertising them in these columns or, better still, becoming signatory to a direct appeal for funds. I must not yield to the temptation, even at the risk of overlooking some very deserving institutions. A hurried visit and an impression created by such a visit must not be allowed to harm an institution if the impression is bad. Nor must a false but favourable impression be allowed to bolster up an institution that is in reality undeserving. It is my settled conviction that no deserving institution ever dies for want of support. Institutions that have died have done so either because there was nothing in them to commend them to the public or because those in control have themselves lost faith or, which is perhaps the same thing, lost stamina. I would, therefore, urge the conductors of this and other such institutions not to give in because of the general depression. It is a time of test for worthy institutions. There are several at the present moment in India which are struggling against the heaviest odds, where, though the teachers are living in want, they have faith in themselves and their cause. I know that they will prosper in the end and be the stronger for the ordeal they are passing through. I would advise the public to study such institutions and support them if they find them desirable and deserving.

I have observed in many institutions I have visited a tendency to patronize spinning because it has become somewhat of a fashion nowadays. It is far from doing justice to a great cause or to pupils. If spinning is to be revived as an indispensable industry, it must be treated seriously and must be taught in proper and scientific manner like the other subjects taught in well managed schools. The wheels will then be in perfectly good order and condition, will conform to all the tests laid down in these columns from time to time, the pupils' work would be regularly tested from day to day just as all their exercises would be or should be. And this is impossible unless all the teachers will learn the art with its technique. It is a waste of money to have a spinning expert. Every teacher has to become one if spinning has to be effectively taught, and if the teacher believes in the necessity of spinning, he can learn it without any difficulty in a month's time if he would give two hours to it daily. But I have said that whilst charkha spinning may be taught so as to enable boys and girls if they wish to use the spinning-wheel in their own homes, for class-spinning the *takli* is the most economical and the most profitable instrument. It is any day better that five hundred boys spin twenty-five yards each for half an hour at a stated time daily than fifty boys at intervals spinning one hundred yards each in the same half hour. Five hundred boys will spin 12,500 yards daily on the *takli* against 5,000 of fifty boys on the charkha.

*Young India*, 15-10-1925

### 57. ABOUT EDUCATED CLASSES

A friend has handed me during my tour in Bihar the following questions for answers through these columns:

You complain that the educated classes in India do not follow your lead and have gone out of your hands. Is it not due to the fact that you threw them overboard at the very beginning of the movement and demanded impossible sacrifices from them?

I do not know that I have complained about the educated class not following my lead. If anything, I have complained of my own failure to convince that class as a body of the truth of my essential position. To say that I threw the educated class overboard at any time is to misunderstand me. Does a reformer ever throw anybody overboard? He simply invites people to join him in a particular reform. He begins with his own conversion. In other words, he isolates

himself from society and remains in that condition till society sees the virtue of reform, and it is not the fault of the society if its heart or head cannot understand or appreciate a particular reform. There is obviously something wanting in the reform or the reformer if he does not get the members of the society to which he belongs to take up his reform. I suppose it must be admitted that the sacrifices that the new movement demanded were impossible for the educated class as a whole, and yet are not the exceptional cases brilliant?

If we remember aright, in the beginning of the movement you gave out that you did not care for the intelligentsia if the masses were with you. If this is correct, have you now modified your views? If so, what are you doing or intend doing now to bring the intelligentsia to your views?

I hope I never "gave out" that I "did not care for the intelligentsia". A reformer cannot afford to say or do so. But I did say and do hold even now that if the masses take up the spirit of non-co-operation, swaraj is attainable even without the educated classes. For the masses the chief thing they have to do in that line is to non-co-operate with foreign and mill-spun cloth and establish closest co-operation with cloth of their own spinning and weaving. Unfortunately even this very simple-looking thing cannot be done without the aid of the educated class. I gratefully and fully confess that if hundreds of educated men and women were not helping me in spreading the message of the spinning-wheel and khaddar, it would not have made the progress it has, and if the progress is not as fast as it might be, it is because the educated class as a whole stands aside from the khaddar movement.

Are you seriously of opinion that the masses are with you or they simply applaud you as a Mahatma, little caring for your advice?

I do believe that the masses are wholly with me mentally. But they lack the heart to do what their mind approves. I have examined thousands upon this point and every one of them without exception practically has said, "What can we do? We understand what you say. But we lack the strength for it. Give us the strength to do it." If the strength was in my gift, the masses would have been transformed by now. But I know my helplessness in that direction. God alone can give the strength which they vainly seek from me.

Do you think the masses can be so organized as to be thoroughly fitted for mass civil disobedience and are they not always liable to run amok and kill any political movement by their over-enthusiasm and indiscipline?

I do believe, in spite of appearances to the contrary, that the masses can be thoroughly organized for mass civil disobedience, that is to say, more quickly than for violence. I draw the distinction between spasmodic, sporadic and senseless violence and organized mass violence. To turn India into a military camp like, say, Germany, is in my opinion a work of ages, whereas to teach the people in an organized manner to remain passive, that is, pacific under suffering, is comparatively an easier task. This was demonstrated in a most marvellous manner in 1921 in spite of the aberrations at Bombay, Chauri Chaura, and elsewhere. But I freely confess that I have myself despaired of being able to organize the country for mass civil disobedience in the near future. The reasons for it I need not enter into. But this I know that, if India is to attain swaraj in terms of the masses, it will only attain it through developing capacity for mass civil disobedience. The last part of the question betrays the questioner's want of faith in the masses or impatience with them. How long have we been in touch with the masses to enable us to accuse them of indiscipline and over-enthusiasm? It is a crime of which we are perhaps more guilty than the masses. I see it verified even during the progress of my tour in Bihar. The workers have realized that my health will not stand the strain of noise and bustle; they have been previously preparing the huge crowds that gather at every place to remain perfectly noiseless and undemonstrative save by their presence, and to my agreeable astonishment the people are responding nobly here as they did in Bengal. Such is the universal experience of workers who have established any touch with the masses.

What steps are you taking to organize and discipline the masses?

The only step that I or anybody can take to organize and discipline the masses is to serve them selflessly, and this service is possible only through khaddar.

Are you not fully aware of the introduction of many undesirable elements in the Congress organization? If so, what steps are you taking to purge the movement of such undesirable elements?

I am aware of the unfortunate fact. It is the fate of every democratic organization. It is useless, therefore, to address the question to me or to any single individual as to what steps he or she is taking. All who consider themselves to be "desirable elements" must

make a combined effort to keep the Congress organization pure.

Are you not aware that most of those who gave up their only source of livelihood in order to follow your lead have been thrown over their family and society as so many drones to be maintained and supported by their better circumstanced relatives; if so, how are you going to remedy this defect?

I am unable to endorse the view the writer takes. There are a few cases in which there is great suffering no doubt. But that is due to the parties being unable to revise their standard of life and curtail their expenditure. In their case they have preferred to suffer and be maintained by relatives and friends to returning to legal practice or to service. In my opinion their choice carries no humiliation with it.

Is it not necessary to have a public fund vested in a Board of Trustees for the maintenance of all genuine public workers and their families?

I am averse to the raising of a public fund for the maintenance of the type of workers mentioned. That would indeed establish a colony of drones. Every genuine public worker should consider it an honour to belong to some branch of Congress service and to accept payment for it.

In giving a *carte blanche* to the Swaraj Party to represent the Congress in the Provincial Councils and Assembly, have you satisfied yourself that they are amenable? Or are not the recent utterances of their leaders tantamount to saying that they will rather leave the Congress than modify their creed or programme according to any resolution of the Congress?

No *carte blanche* as conceived by the writer has been given to the Swaraj Party. I am entirely satisfied that the Party will be amenable to any well-expressed opinion of the Congress, if only because being a democratic body it must, as it has to, depend upon popular support in every respect.

Your starting a spinning association leads me to think that since you have handed over the Congress to the Swaraj Party, you will carry on your constructive programme as a subsidiary activity instead of being a chief plank of the Congress platform. If so, are you not practically withdrawing from the Congress and throwing overboard all those who followed you when the Swaraj Party practically rebelled after the Gaya Congress?

I have not handed over nor have I any right to hand over the Congress to the Swaraj Party or to any other party. The Swaraj Party cannot retain control of the Congress for a single day if the Congressmen are not with it. I hope that the constructive programme

will not become a subsidiary activity in the Congress. All that the A.I.C.C. resolution has done is to put the Council programme on a par with the constructive programme and bring into existence an independent organization of experts for the conduct of the charkha and khaddar programme. So long as the Congress extends its patronage to the All-India Spinners' Association, I cannot be said to have withdrawn from the Congress. As I have already said, I am throwing overboard nobody. Those who believe in the charkha only and not in the Councils at all can still belong to the A.I.S.A.

If the Swaraj Party fail to carry out their promises, what is your opinion as to the future programme for the political emancipation of the country beyond the charkha and khaddar?

I do not know what promises are referred to in this question. The political emancipation of the country is possible only if and when it is prepared for armed or civil resistance. Capacity for armed resistance can only come after prolonged and tortuous preparation. Capacity for civil resistance can come only by evolving constructive ability on the part of a daily growing number of people, and as I have no faith whatever in the capacity of India for armed resistance for generations to come, I pin my faith to the silent, sure and effective revolution of the charkha.

*Young India*, 15-10-1925

## 58. EUROPEAN CIVILIZATION

A Danish friend sends me translation of extracts from an article printed in *Gads Danske Magasin*. The heading he has given to the extracts is "European Civilization and Gandhi". In adopting his heading for *Young India* I have omitted my name as I have omitted references to my views in the extracts. My views are nothing new to the readers of *Young India*. Here is the translation received:<sup>1</sup>

These extracts present a very lurid picture but probably they are true in substance. That the sum total of the activities of European nations is a denial of the teachings of the Sermon on the Mount will not, I think, be gainsaid. I have reproduced the extracts merely to emphasize the necessary caution against our being lifted off our feet by the dazzle and the glitter of European arms. If the foregoing

<sup>1</sup> For the text, *vide* Appendix "From Europe", 8-10-1925.

picture were the whole of Europe it would be sad for Europe as for the world. Fortunately there is a considerable body of men and women of Europe who are devoting the whole of their energy to combat the war-fever and the breathless pursuit after material wealth and enjoyment. There are reasons for hoping that this body is daily gaining in numbers and in influence. May it be the privilege of India to take part in the new awakening and to advance it, instead of retarding it by succumbing to the European excesses which the best mind of Europe condemns in unmeasured terms and is manfully struggling to bring under effective control.

*Young India*, 15-10-1925

### 59. A GOOD RESOLUTION

During August last, whilst I was passing through Manmad on my way back from Calcutta, some friends met me at the station. I asked as usual how many were regularly spinning in Manmad and there was no answer. Some of them thereafter thought that they would make the commencement, and a letter before me which I have kept on my file for some weeks tells me that, at the time of writing, that is 3rd September, twenty had already commenced to spin with religious regularity. I congratulate these friends on their resolution. I do hope that it will not share the fate of a similar resolution that many made last year and which but few have successfully carried out. Let the word of each one of us be as good as a written bond whose breach carries with it a swift and sharp penalty. I regard resolutions such as the one made by the Manmad friends as promises made to the nation. Those who make them are as a rule grown-up people with a full sense of their responsibility. I hope that the Manmad friends will send in their names to the All-India Spinners' Association.

*Young India*, 15-10-1925

### 60. NOTES

#### SEND YOUR YARN

The year of the All-India Spinners' Association begins from this month, and intending members should, therefore, begin sending their monthly subscription of yarn immediately. Those who were regular members of the Congress under the spinning franchise should



find no difficulty to be members of the A.I.S.A. But even the irregular members, that is, those who could not give in the full subscription, should also be able to do so, as it has been reduced to one half of the original Congress subscription. In any case, none of these last should find any difficulty in joining the A.I.S.A. as B class members.

#### SUBSIDIARY INDUSTRY"PAR EXCELLENCE"

A friend sends me the following from Keatinge's *Agricultural Progress in Western India*:

Attempts have been made to get cultivators to take up unskilled work such as cotton spinning by hand, but in view of the efficiency of spinning mills such operations can be justified economically on the assumption that the cultivator now wastes so much of his time that any work which he does, however badly paid, will be better than nothing. Unfortunately, the existing facts in many cases justify such an assumption, but to condemn the cultivators to this uphill and uneven competition is a counsel of despair. The subsidiary industry *par excellence* of the cultivators should be breeding and rearing of livestock which provides an occupation and income at all seasons, and returns to the soil the manure which is necessary to maintain it in high fertility.

This question is valuable for its two simple admissions, namely, that in many cases the cultivator in India has much time to waste and that any occupation during that time, however badly paid, is better than nothing. The writer, however, discourages hand-spinning because of the efficiency of spinning mills. Upon a close examination the argument will be found to be fallacious. The cultivator has not to compete with efficient mills at his own door. The only thing he has to compete with is his new-fangled taste for starchy and flimsy mill-made cloth. If he would only revive his old taste and return to the simple but soft and beautiful khaddar, he is never in the danger of having an idle moment thrown upon him. The efficient hotels and bakeries offer no inducement or competition to the millions of people who prefer their crudely made chapatties to the geometrically rounded and well-baked and well-spiced biscuits. The subsidiary industry of cattle-breeding that has been suggested is no doubt good and any day more paying than spinning. But it requires capital and a knowledge of breeding which the ordinary cultivator does not possess and cannot and will not possess without much previous preparation. Turn it how you will therefore, for Indian conditions there is no other subsidiary industry that can compete with hand-spinning. Its

inestimable value consists not in its capacity for paying a few individuals highly but in immediately providing a remunerative occupation for millions. It is the only subsidiary occupation, therefore, that is capable of being successfully organized. Hence, not cattle-breeding, however good it is in itself, but hand-spinning is the subsidiary industry *par excellence*.

#### NECESSITY OF BODILY LABOUR

A vigilant friend writes:

In your address to the Jamshedpur gathering published in *Young India* of the 20th August,<sup>1</sup> in the first paragraph, after stressing the importance of bodily labour above intellectual, you are reported to have said: "The same thought runs throughout Hindu religion. 'He who eats without labour eats sin, is verily a thief.' This is the literal meaning of a verse in the *Bhagavad Gita*." Now, the question apart whether the *Gita* makes any such distinction between (so-called) manual and (so-called) intellectual labour, I can say that the only passage in the *Gita* which could conceivably be taken to mean what (according to the report) you have said a verse in the *Gita* literally means is the passage, Ch. III, verses 12 & 13; so that in the first place it is not a verse but two, which have been requisitioned in support of your view of "labour", and secondly there is no mention of "labour", manual or other, in either of those verses; but in the first verse there is mentioned, by way of explanation of the duty of *yajna*, man's partaking with or dedicating to the higher powers what they have bestowed upon him—failing in which "he is verily a thief", —and in the second verse we are told that "they eat sin who cook for themselves alone". So that is pretty far removed from "the literal sense of a verse" in the *Gita* as you are reported to have given it in your own paper by M.D. I hope you will make a note of it at your convenience.

Technically speaking the writer is correct in saying that the translation given by M. D. is not of one verse but a combination of parts of two verses, and I am thankful to the writer for the accuracy of his correction. But the substance of his argument seems to me to be that there is no warrant for the translation given in the report of my speech of the famous word *yajna* in the *Gita*. But I propose to stand by that translation and venture to suggest that in the verses 12 & 13 of Chapter III quoted by the writer, the word is capable of only one meaning. The fourteenth verse makes it absolutely clear which means:

By food the living live; food comes of rain,  
And rain comes by the pious sacrifice,  
And sacrifice is paid with tithes of toil

—ARNOLD

<sup>1</sup>*Vide* "Speech at Indian Association, Jamshedpur", 8-8-1925.

Here therefore there is not only the theory, in my opinion, of bodily labour propounded, but there is also the theory established of labour not only for oneself but for others, when and when only it becomes *yajna* or sacrifice. The rains come not through intellectual feats, but through sheer bodily labour. It is a well-established scientific fact that where forests are denuded of trees, rains cease, where trees are planted, rains are attracted and the volume of water received increases with the increase of vegetation. Laws of nature are still unexplored. We have but scratched the surface. Who knows all the ill-effects, moral and physical, of the cessation of bodily labour? Let me not be misunderstood. I do not discount the value of intellectual labour, but no amount of it is any compensation for bodily labour which every one of us is born to give for the common good of all. It may be, often is infinitely superior to bodily labour, but it never is or can be a substitute for it, even as intellectual food, though far superior to the grains we eat, never can be a substitute for them. Indeed without the products of the earth those of the intellect would be an impossibility.

#### HUMILIATION OR HONOUR?

A worker writes:

I assure you that the majority of our workers feel humiliated when they get their allowances from the Congress funds, but they cannot help it. I request you to kindly encourage them through the pages of *Young India*.

How is it that young men undertake arduous labours and spend money like water in order to belong to the Indian Civil Service? They not only feel no humiliation, but they are themselves proud of the fact and are entertained by their friends when they pass the examination and receive congratulatory addresses when they get some employment in the Civil Service. Is it more honourable to be able to exercise authority over lacs of people and to collect revenue at the point of the bayonet, often from people who can ill-afford it, than to belong to the Congress service where there is no authority to be wielded save that of love and service and where the only remuneration possible is a bare livelihood? If it be urged that in the Congress service there is an unwholesome juxtaposition of honorary workers and paid workers, there is the same juxtaposition in the Government service. The Government has, and every government must have, against one paid servant tens of honorary servants. There is very often even jealousy

between the two classes. The only reason, therefore, for the disinclination for Congress service so far as I have been able to gather is its newness and instability. All the other reasons are more or less imaginary. Indeed, when the Congress acquires real prestige, which it has not at present—its popularity is merely comparative and not absolute—even a peon will consider it to be an honour to belong to this national service and to take less than the market wage. Meanwhile, I would urge all honest paid workers in the Congress organization, whether at the centre or in the educational, khaddar or the Swarajist branches, to make the service and the institution popular and attractive by strictest integrity, devotion, and ceaseless application. Those who are conscious that they are giving all the time and attention that they bargained for to the paid national service need feel no compunction about belonging to it. The more progress we make in the work of construction, the more paid workers we shall need. We are too poor as a nation to afford a large number of whole-time honorary workers. We will have to fall back more and more upon paid workers. The sooner, therefore, the idea of humiliation about accepting payment, when it is a necessity, is given up the better it will be for the nation.

*Young India*, 15-10-1925

### 61. SPEECH AT DISTRICT CONFERENCE, BALLIA<sup>1</sup>

*October 16, 1925*

After making an appeal for silence and thanking the associations that had presented him addresses, Mr. Gandhi said that, in 1921, he had a mind to visit Ballia, but he was sorry he could not. He then had asked Mr. Motilal Nehru to go instead and give peace unto them. Four years after, he was happy to be amidst them. He would have stayed longer with them but for exigency of time. There was one thing that pained him and which he did not like to conceal. He believed in the power of the people of Ballia. But he also believed that that power could be kept under control by the managing capacity of the workers. Now that he was weak and infirm, unable to withstand the din and bustle of crowds, he had hoped he would be spared the trouble incidental to such gatherings.

Continuing, he observed that the constructive work done by the workers of

<sup>1</sup> Among those that attended the conference were Rajendra Prasad, Jawaharlal Nehru and Dr. Syed Mahmud. Various local bodies presented addresses.

Ballia pleased him, on which he congratulated them. He was also glad to learn that the two communities lived amicably in Ballia. He prayed that their vow of friendship might be successful and they might set an example to others in this direction. Dwelling on the poverty of India, he confidently remarked that there was no more potent remedy for it than the charkha. Many women were compelled to break stones for their livelihood and he knew how some of the overseers treated them. He spoke from personal experience. He exhorted the audience to help Indian women to be as pure as Sita by abandoning foreign-cloth and plying the charkha.”Wear khaddar and increase the power of the charkha.” He warned the people against intoxicants, gambling and prostitution. The Yadavakula<sup>1</sup> was exterminated from India because they abandoned dharma and indulged in gambling. They had reminded him that theirs was part of the land of Valmiki, the Ganges and the Sarju and they were determined to serve India. Surely they did what could possibly be done in 1921. But they should do penance for the mistakes they committed in those days.

In the end he appealed for contributions to the Deshbandhu fund which is to be devoted to the popularization of the charkha. He laid stress on the necessity for real, solid work for the regeneration of India.

*The Leader, 21-10-1925*

## 62. LETTER TO VASUMATI PANDIT

*Diwali [October 17, 1925]<sup>2</sup>*

CHI. VASUMATI,

I expected a letter from you today also but got none. Keep writing to me. Try to remember and understand the prayer of Draupadi which we recite daily at the women’s meeting. I very much feel like writing but just now I must not. I shall think over it after I receive the reply to my letter. Take care of your health.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9309. Also C.W. 549. Courtesy: Vasumati Pandit

<sup>1</sup> The clan to which Shri Krishna belonged

<sup>2</sup> The reference to prayer at the women’s meeting would indicate that the addressee at the time was staying at the Sabarmati Ashram. This was in 1925, when Diwali fell on October 17.

### 63. *SPEECH AT KASHI VIDYAPITH, BANARAS*

*October 17, 1925*

BABU BHAGWANDAS, TEACHERS, STUDENTS, BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

It is true that this Vidyapith was started by me. But that it still exists is due, first, to the generosity and love, or attachment if you like, of Shri Shivprasad and, secondly, to the love of Shri Bhagwandas. It cannot be called attachment in his case for he uses discretion in doing what he considers his duty. It is owing to the enthusiasm, the intellectual effort and the money of these two that the Vidyapith is there even today.

I have been asked if I still believe in these Vidyapiths. Was I right or in error when, in 1921, I asked the students to leave Government schools and colleges? I have often asked myself. As you know I am not ashamed to admit my mistakes and am always ready to repent. I confess my errors publicly. I ask my inmost self whether I am right or wrong and it is my experience that the voice that comes from there expresses the truth. I have not known it to prove false. Now, after all this bitter experience the voice still says that I was on the right path. What was done in 1921 was just the thing to do. It was good to set up Vidyapiths. It is essential to have Vidyapiths for our boys and girls. Of all the Vidyapiths that were established in the country those in Banaras, Patna, Poona and Gujarat are still functioning. I do not say that they are functioning very satisfactorily, but I do wish that they should exist and make progress. I do not mean by progress that they should each have a thousand scholars in them. A Vidyalaya teacher complained to me at Madhupur that boys were not too eager to join. I told him not to despair and to look into his own heart. If he stood firmly on the principles which had moved him to join the Vidyalaya, he was bound to keep the Vidyalaya going even if there was only one scholar left in it. He felt grieved because he cared more for numbers. Our tradition lays down that even if there should be only one scholar and one teacher in a school, but both with faith in each other and the teacher believing in the goodness of gifting learning and the scholar believing that it is for his emancipation and for shaping his life here and in the world beyond, then the school should go on. This applies to this Vidyapith. I want to tell Shri Bhagwandas and Shri Shivprasad also not to worry about numbers.

The restriction concerning the Congress is no longer there. If you feel that the Vidyapith should be kept going you should dedicate your lives for it. There is a Sanskrit verse saying that one should dedicate oneself to the task that one undertakes. But this expresses a half-truth. For does it mean that if one takes to drink one should keep drinking all one's life? The Shastras ask us to be firm in our faith. If you stand firm on your principles and wish to continue your experiment you should not mind even if public opinion is against it. If the Vidyapith turns out fine students who would dedicate themselves wholly to the cause of the country, or even one such, we should consider that the Vidyapith has been a success, for the aim of the Vidyapith is to teach boys to dedicate their lives for the country. So long as our aim is clear before us we should not worry whether we have five students or one. In the thirty five years of my public life it has been my experience, not once but several times, that if we are firm in our faith and go on working accordingly, the numbers also increase. The good of India, therefore, lies in our firmly holding on to principles in our work.

I appeal to the students not to think about numbers or worry about their livelihood. No assurance can be given them with regard to livelihood, but if they do bodily labour they will manage to get enough to eat though not enough to deck themselves in finery or live in luxury. But if there are students here who think that they have to go out and take up employment, like others, to earn more money, it is better that they leave the Vidyapith. Only those who have thoroughly understood the aims of this institution should remain here.

I am not ashamed that I have given the first position to the charkha. If the whole of India gives up plying the charkha I shall be able to devote 10 hours to the charkha, for then there will be no need for me to indulge in fruitless speech-making before the people. There is nothing for me like the charkha . . .<sup>1</sup> Life is changing where there are charkhas plying. I saw it during my tour of Bihar. Ply the charkha for only half an hour or fifteen minutes and think of India when you do it. You should do it, Hindus and Muslims, with the name of God on your lips and you will see what power it generates. How many there are who see God in a stone idol. But it is the feeling that matters. It is feeling that made Shri Ramdas Gaur take me to his place and show me the image of Shri Rama.

<sup>1</sup> Here some words are missing in the source.

I know the economics of villagers. That is why I have become a *Bhangi* or a chamar. I know their suffering. I am charkha-mad. I am madder even than Laila or Majnu. Even if a student does not have faith in the charkha he can come to the Vidyapith for his education. Please run the Vidyapith for the sake of your principles. May God make this institution prosper.

At the end of the speech Shri Bhagwandas, on behalf of the students, asked Gandhiji: "It is your wish that the country should advance through the charkha, is it not? You wish to make it the god that we should worship?"

GANGHIJI: That is right.

SHRI BHAGWANDAS: . . . I accept the importance of the charkha but I do not share the view that we can worship Lakshmi, Saraswati and other deities only through the charkha. We have to bring about political and social changes. This can be done only if we accept the doctrine of *varna* by karma.

GANDHIJI: I believe in the view of *varna* not only by karma but also by birth. I give the charkha the pride of place but I do not consider it the be-all and end-all. The charkha has the first place because there is no other method of doing away with the poverty of hundreds of millions of our countrymen. Lakshmi acquires through this not only individual power but social power. For Sarawati we have the Vidyapith. Our old civilization has become soiled. It will become cleansed by our removing untouchability. Out of the 24 hours we must spin on the charkha for half an hour. As to what the genius of this Vidyapith can be, I am not fit to say. Only Shri Bhagwandas can tell us that.

[From Hindi]

*Aaj*, 19-10-1925



## 64. SPEECH AT MUNICIPAL MEETING, LUCKNOW<sup>1</sup>

[October 17, 1925]<sup>2</sup>

MR. PRESIDENT, BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

I thank you for the address you have presented. It is couched in the best Lucknowi diction. I spent a good deal of time reading Urdu while I was in Yeravda Jail. Even so I find the Urdu of your address a little difficult to understand. I must ask you to keep this kind of language to yourselves. Let me have Urdu which even those not belonging to U.P. can understand. It should be Hindustani. I call that language Hindustani which contains such Sanskrit and Persian words as a peasant like me can understand.

In replying to the Calcutta Corporation's address, I said one or two things, which I shall repeat here. In Bihar the municipalities which gave me addresses also confessed their shortcomings in their addresses. In your address you have not mentioned any shortcomings. When I was motoring here with Motilalji, the latter remarked: "What kind of roads they have here!" I shall therefore say to you: Please make your roads as good as your language so that they will be a comfort to those who travel on *ekkas* and those who, like me, go in motor-cars. In their addresses several municipalities complained of paucity of funds. If your municipality also has insufficient funds, I would ask your Chairman to take a pickaxe in hand and with the help of Congress volunteers put the roads right so that *ekkas* can ply comfortably on them.

A dairy farm has been mentioned in the address. I do not know whether these dairies can supply good milk to the people of the town. You can assure enough milk to people only when you have sufficient cows and buffaloes.

It is good that those who oppose you politically do not oppose your administration. You have certainly done better work than the preceding Board and I congratulate you upon it. New elections to the Board are about to be held. I advise voters to elect

<sup>1</sup> Held on Municipal grounds at 5 p.m. Gandhiji, who was accompanied by Motilal Nehru, Jawaharlal Nehru and Dr. Syed Mahmud, was replying to an address of welcome presented to him by the Municipality.

<sup>2</sup> From reports in *The Hindustan Times*, 20-10-1925 and *The Pioneer*, 19-10-1925

only those candidates who will undertake to improve the roads of Lucknow, will arrange for good milk being made available and will speak a language that all can understand. If the Lucknow Board can show the work I have suggested, I shall recommend to the Congress President, Sarojini Devi, to have a resolution passed by the Congress congratulating you.

Nothing has been said in the address on the subject of Hindu-Muslim unity. It is sad. It is shameful that there is so much bad blood between the Hindus and Mussalmans here. The atmosphere in the whole country has been poisoned. I say if the two communities must fight, let them do so but what will be the upshot? They have both got to live here together. Neither Hindus nor Mussalmans can leave India. They have to live here and therefore they must unite. And if they cannot unite here in Lucknow, where else can they unite? If the two communities live together in amity, what can prevent us from having what we want? The whole world is laughing at us. Dr. Ansari says people in foreign countries are asking if cow-killing and music are things over which Hindus and Mussalmans must continue to fight and smash each other's heads.

I do not need addresses. I am tired of praise. But I wish you to take up the responsibility for being able to say, when I come here next, that there has been no rioting here during the interval and unity has prevailed between Hindus and Mussalmans. May God grant good sense to the people of Lucknow. I thank you again for your address.

[From Hindi]

*Aaj, 24-10-1925*

## 65. *SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, LUCKNOW*<sup>1</sup>

*October 17, 1925*

. . . Mahatmaji began by saying that he was taken unawares. He never knew he would have to address a public meeting at Lucknow. He regretted that Lucknow of which he held a very good opinion should have turned into a battle-ground of communal animosities. When he was keeping twenty-one days' fast at Delhi, he had received a letter from the Hindu and Muslim leaders of Lucknow asking him to intervene in the matter. He had agreed to it, but no one had turned up. He thought they had better compose their differences among themselves without his aid. They

<sup>1</sup> Held at Aminuddaula Park, with Harkaran Nath Mishra in the chair

thought that the sword was the only solution. Let them try it rather than seek the assistance of a helpless and non-violent man like himself. He then said that on his return from Europe Dr. Ansari ran up to him to give an account of his experiences in Europe. The Doctor had occasion to meet all sorts of people in Europe, particularly Turks, and all of them were unanimously of the opinion that it was sheer madness on the part of Hindus and Muslims to spend their energies in quarrelling on trifles and thus sacrifice their greater ends. He consequently exhorted the audience to compose their differences and achieve unity as soon as possible. But that unity must be a real unity and not a fake .

Mahatmaji said his appeal for khaddar might fall flat if made to the fashionable citizens of Lucknow. But on behalf of the poor people of India, he would make that appeal in spite of his fear. He exhorted the audience to wear khaddar and explained some of its advantages. He said:

Khaddar means five annas out of every seven annas to the poor. Mill cloth means one pice in every five annas to the poor. But foreign cloth does not help even the poor of England. Almost all of it goes to the capitalist.

He then said, that the use of the charkha must be made by Indians of higher social status to inspire the poor with honesty of conviction and purpose.

He then deprecated the existence of the institution of untouchability which, he said, was no part of Hindu religion. It was irreligious and ungodly. India should purge itself of the ugly blot.

*The Hindustan Times, 20-10-1925*

## 66. SPEECH AT SITAPUR

*October 17, 1925*

The Municipal Board of Sitapur presented an address to Mahatma Gandhi at Lalbag. The address was read by Babu Sambhu Nath, Chairman of the Municipality, in which Mahatmaji was requested to help them with some suggestions from his wide experience of municipal affairs both at home and abroad which would guide the Municipal Commissioners of Sitapur as an ideal in their efforts for improving the city. He said that only one rupee had been sanctioned for expenditure in connection with the address.

Mahatma Gandhi in reply said that he would not have voted even one pice for the purpose if he had been a member of the Sitapur Municipal board. He said that he was not against Congressmen entering the Municipal Boards and District Boards with the object of serving their fellow-countrymen. But no one should try to be a member in these local bodies for the sake of self-aggrandizement, and with selfish

motives. It was futile to enter a Municipal Board without a genuine spirit of service and self-sacrifice. He knew no other ideal for a Municipal Board than that of keeping the city clean and free from disease, helping the poor and keeping their quarters free from filth and squalor, and making slums an impossibility.

Financial stringency should not be advanced as an excuse. The Municipal Commissioners must be prepared to work with their own hands if money was wanting. Thus they would set an example that would be followed by each and every citizen, and was sure to remove all obstacles in the path of progress in municipal affairs.

*Amrita Bazar Patrika, 24-10-1925*

## 67. SPEECH AT SITAPUR

*October 17, 1925*

. . . Mahatma Gandhi said that he was not entitled to the addresses presented on behalf of the two Sabhas<sup>1</sup>, for he had been a critic of both, and excepting such comment and criticism he had done nothing for them. But he had said nothing that he did not believe to be true, and his criticism was that of a friend and well-wisher, offered in a spirit of sympathy and with a desire to help them. To render real service to the Hindu Sabha, one must be a true Hindu. The Hindu dharma was the *sanatan* dharma. He believed the Vedas and the Hindu religion to be eternal, and Truth was also eternal. Hence he saw no difference between Hinduism and truth. Whatever was untrue could not belong to the Hindu religion. He could never persuade himself to forsake truth, and he would tell the truth in the teeth of all opposition and even if thousands of swords were drawn against him. There was little difference between truth and ahimsa. As a Hindu he could not cherish feelings of enmity in his heart against anybody. Even if he had an enemy, he could win him through love. The Hindus could advance and serve the cause of their religion best on the path of ahimsa. Let the Hindus work for the regeneration of their religion, but in their hearts there must be no ill-will against their Mussalman brethren.

Some thought that he was preaching cowardice in the name of ahimsa. That was entirely false. He hated nothing more than cowardice. The Hindus of Bettiah had also misunderstood him. He would like to see them die fighting for the honour of their mothers and daughters, but flying in fear on such occasions was sheer cowardice, and nothing could be more disgraceful. Ahimsa and not cowardice was preferable to violence. True ahimsa required real bravery. The most essential thing for Hindu *sangathan*<sup>2</sup> was the formation of character. Without this and unless every Hindu

<sup>1</sup> The Hindu Sabha and the Vaidya Sabha

<sup>2</sup> Bringing together

stood on truth and character, real *sangathan* was impossible and Hinduism would be nowhere.

Replying to the address of the Vaidya Sabha, he said that he had been mercilessly criticized in the Press and on platforms and even abused in many quarters for what he had said about the *vaidyas*. But he stuck to his guns. He neither retraced nor withdrew anything. He was afraid he had been misunderstood. His comments and criticism were in the main meant for the *vaidyas* of the present time, and not for the Ayurvedic system which they served. He was not against the great system itself, but he did not like their attitude of self-satisfaction and the methods they were following .

He had criticized them for their failure to understand and do justice to Ayurveda. He had tried his level best to promote the cause of Ayurveda, and help the *vaidyas* in all possible ways. But their performance had been disappointing. The *vaidyas* must go ahead. It was wrong to think that they had nothing to learn from the West. Although he had condemned the West for its neglect of the soul, he was not blind to its achievements in many fields of action. The *vaidyas* must be prepared to supplement their knowledge by taking lessons from the West. They must not sleep with the idea that the system they upheld was the last word on the subject. They must be up and doing and their motto must be "Progress".

*Amrita Bazar Patrika, 24-10-1925*

## 68. ABOUT UNTOUCHABILITY

A friend has asked some questions about untouchability which I believe I ought to answer as best as I may and which, therefore, I give below:<sup>1</sup>

In my opinion, untouchability in the form in which we practise it today is not, and ought not to be, an essential part of Hinduism. There is sheer ignorance and cruelty behind it. I look upon it as an excrescence on Hinduism. It does not protect religion, but suffocates it. Its practice on certain occasions, as during the days following the death of a near relation, is in a different class. One may follow it to the extent one wants to. It is not followed with equal rigidity by all communities. The practice of untouchability in this form should be treated as a matter of hygiene. To a greater or less extent,

<sup>1</sup> The questions are not translated here. The correspondent had compared restrictions about marrying and eating and the practice of untouchability to three concentric walls erected to protect Hindu society and asked (1) whether the last was not a fundamental principle for the Hindus like the other two and (2) whether the pulling down of the outer wall would not weaken the inner two walls.

some such regulations are found all over the world. But treating *Antyajias* as untouchables is a cruel form of boycott. Whatever justification there may have been for the practice when it started, there is none now. Like tuberculosis, therefore, it is eating into the vitals of Hinduism.

Just as the many dilapidated and useless parts of a building, if not pulled down, weaken the rest of the building, so the outer wall of untouchability weakens, instead of protecting, the inner wall of restrictions in regard to eating in company and marrying outside one's circle. It is true that, in the same way as we look upon untouchability as an evil, there are some who regard these restrictions also as an evil and attack them as such. There is, however, some reasonable principle behind them. It would ordinarily be improper for a conscientious vegetarian to eat at a non-vegetarian's place. But I see no dharma in treating as untouchables those who do not follow the rules that we do. No one practises such a dharma. Anyone who wants to practise it would have to treat everyone else in the world as an untouchable.<sup>1</sup>

The movement for the eradication of untouchability has no connection with the problem of caste. However, according to the rule that one important reform leads to another, reformers have turned their eyes to the problem of caste-division too. I desire the disappearance of sub-castes, and in fact they are disappearing. I do not, however, see the same evil in them as I see in the practice of untouchability. These sub-divisions are a source of inconvenience. They obstruct social intercourse in some ways. But their abolition is a reform which can wait. The eradication of untouchability cannot wait and it is, therefore, very necessary to keep the two apart and understand the distinction between them.

I see no harm in accepting clean water from a pot filled in a clean manner by a clean *Antyajia*. Ordinarily, members of other communities accept water served by *Kanabis*<sup>2</sup> or *Ghatis*;<sup>3</sup> that rule should also apply to *Antyajias*. That is, in dealing with them the same

<sup>1</sup> The third question was where the movement for the eradication of untouchability would stop, since most of those who advocated it also wanted reformation of the caste system and even Gandhiji saw no harm in accepting water from an *Antyajia*.

<sup>2</sup> A peasant community in Gujarat

<sup>3</sup> *ibid*

rule should be followed which the so-called upper castes generally follow in their intercourse with the other castes. In the South, where every non-Brahmin is an untouchable in the eyes of a Brahmin, the practice is an excrescence even on an excrescence. I have come across no one who would defend it, and the practice is gradually disappearing.<sup>1</sup>

It is not true that *Antyaja* children must necessarily be dirty. I have seen many *Antyaja* children who were cleaner than other children. The only rule can be this: a child which does not pass a certain test of cleanliness ought not to be admitted to the school, or, all children who are dirty should be put in a separate division meant for them and should be given special instruction in cleanliness. To assume that *Antyaja* children must necessarily be dirty and refuse admission to a child even if he is clean, is to treat *Antyajias* in the same way in which Indians are treated in the Colonies. There, the very fact of having been born an Indian is a crime. Generally speaking, the practical thing to do in the present circumstances is to start a large number of schools specially for *Antyaja* children. However much we try, all *Antyaja* children will not be brought for enrolment in the general primary schools. Admission to general schools, therefore, should be open to such of them as observe the rules of cleanliness, but there should also be separate primary schools for them for their special encouragement.

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 18-10-1925

## 69. ABOUT MARWARIS

The national awakening in 1921 did not show its effect in regard to one issue only. It was so comprehensive that its effect was felt by all communities and in connection with all problems. If anyone is hasty enough to believe that that movement was a short-lived affair he is welcome to do so, but as time passes everyone will see that there was no truth in such a belief. The form of the movement may seem to have changed, but its substance will be seen to have

<sup>1</sup> The fourth question was whether, it was not risky to admit *Antyaja* children to schools attended by other children so long as the former had not learnt to observe the ordinary rules of personal cleanliness.

remained unaltered. These thoughts occur to me as I reflect on my speech to the Marwari Conference<sup>1</sup> in Bhagalpur. A many-sided movement for reform is going on among Marwaris. This particular conference was of Agarwal Marwaris. As we see heads of communities in some places in Gujarat employing the weapon of boycott in connection with the movement on the issue of *Antyajas*, so also among Marwaris, we see the heads using that weapon in other circumstances too.

The issues of widow-remarriage, child-marriage, etc., affect all sections of Hindu society in some degree. And, therefore, though I have already reproduced in *Young India* a part of what I told the Marwari friends, I wish to elaborate on the subject a little here. Boycott is a dangerous weapon and, if not used carefully, it can easily degenerate into a species of violence. If this happens, the community using it will perish. I, therefore, advised the Marwari friends never to use the weapon of boycott. So long as the heads of communities are not wise and selfless men, filled with the spirit of love, they should never think of using the weapon of boycott. Anyone who wishes to introduce a reform should be allowed to do so. In what way does he harm the community? One can understand action being taken to prevent or discourage what the whole world believes to be immoral. But is there any ground for expelling from the community a person who mixes with *Antyajas*, another who has decided to get his daughter married only after she has attained puberty, a third who comes forward to marry a girl who became a widow while she was still a child and a fourth who is ready to accept a partner for his son from another sub-division of his own community, all because they think that it is dharma to act as they do? Boycotting such persons will have the effect of preventing reform of any kind and rule out the possibility of progress of one's religion and community and of the country. I have no doubt in my mind that the weapon of boycott ought not to be misused in this manner. As I keep touring in other provinces, the tales which I hear of the sufferings of widows, of the immorality which prevails because of child-widows and of the marriages of children of very tender age make me shudder. Is it any wonder that the progeny of such social life as the Hindus' should lack virility? If the heads of communities understand where their duty lies and what would become

<sup>1</sup> Bihar Provincial Marwari Conference, which was held from October 1 to October 4, 1925.



them best, they would encourage reformers who tried to rid society of such evils.

I discussed at the conference the problem of cow-protection and of social reform. As I see more of *goshalas*, I realize that the people do not get all the benefit they can from them. How very painful it is that hides of dead animals, worth nine crores of rupees, are exported every year to countries like Germany while we use foot-wear made from the hides of slaughtered animals and still believe that we are preserving our dharma! Marwaris run the largest number of *goshalas* in the country. They seem to be contributing most to the cause of cow-protection. But the money they give is not used wisely, with the result that the number of cows and bullocks slaughtered is increasing, instead of decreasing. Their quality is degenerating, milk is becoming costlier and its adulteration is becoming more widespread. What a chaotic state of affairs! Marwari friends do not mismanage their business in this manner. Why do they, after contributing money for *goshalas*, take no further interest in them? Does not a philanthropic cause call for efficiency and practical ability? It is in the power of Marwaris to stop the use of the hides of slaughtered cattle. It is their dharma to take in their hand, with a purely philanthropic motive, the trade in the hides of dead cattle. At present, we refuse, in the name of religion and through sheer superstition, to utilize the hides of cattle which die in *goshalas*. We thereby encourage the slaughter of other cattle, for it would be a different matter if we refused to use the hides of cattle altogether, dead or slaughtered. But no Hindu looks at the matter in this way; on the contrary, Hinduism permits free use of hides, in the same way that, though we venerate the cow, we regard her milk as holy and encourage its consumption. I can look at this matter objectively, since I never consume cow's or buffalo's milk and use leather as little as possible. I have, from experience, come to the conclusion that, if we wish to protect the cow and the buffalo, we shall have to use their milk and hides and the manure which they yield to the fullest extent. If a time comes when we will not use even milk, we should welcome it; but, when it comes, we shall no longer be running *goshalas* and Nature will protect cows and buffaloes according to her own laws as she now does with other animals which we have not domesticated. Till that time comes, the principle behind cow-protection seems to me to be the protection of all useful cattle which have been or may be domesticated; and their protection, too, means refusing to kill them for food or pleasure and looking after

their physical well-being, as long as the animals are alive, with as much care as we exercise in looking after our own bodies. If with that end in view we do not use their hide after they are dead, the number of cattle slaughtered is bound to increase from day to day. This is why I wish to plead with Marwari friends who want to serve the cause of cow-protection that they use their intelligence and their business acumen in one year, and, in the course of time, will succeed in stopping their slaughter altogether without having to entreat anyone for the purpose. Those who see no wrong in eating beef will not desist from eating it just out of respect for the Hindu sentiment, so long as it is cheap. Giving up something even though it costs little requires a sensibility of a very high order. Such sensibility is a religious feeling, and it can be awakened neither through force nor through entreaties. I wish, therefore, to make the same suggestion to other Hindus which I have made to Marwari friends. They should not only overcome their aversion to taking advantage of tanneries, but should also realize that, within limits, it is one of the essential functions of *goshalas* to run them.

Just as Marwari friends have made the cause of cow-protection their own, so also have they made the propagation of Hindi a special object of their charities. This cause, too, requires exercise of intelligence as much as it requires money. I realize that this subject will not be of as much interest to Gujarati readers [of *Navajivan*] as it is to Marwari friends. Nevertheless, I discuss it here in the hope that Gujaratis, too, may come to take the fullest interest in this cause. Propagation of Hindi can be discussed under three heads:

First, the development of Hindi in areas where it is the mother-tongue. This is the work of Hindi-speaking writers, and, since they have today no Rabindranath among them, apart from expressing my discontent I wish to say no more.

Second, propagating Hindi in non-Hindi areas. My belief is that this work is going on systematically in the South. Practically nothing, however, is being done in a large field such as Bengal offers. Able teachers of Hindi should be engaged there, free classes for teaching Hindi should be started and, as has been done in the South, simple books easy to read should be brought out which would help people to learn Hindi through Bengali.

Third, spreading the use of the Devanagari script. If everyone learnt this script in addition to his own, Hindi would come to be

understood with the greatest ease in all parts, and people in the different provinces speaking languages descended from Sanskrit would understand one another's language with equal ease. The best way of thus propagating Hindi in Bengal, for example, is to bring out editions of the best books in that language in Devanagari script, with a glossary in each book giving the meaning of Bengali words in Hindi. If the rich classes among Marwaris, Gujaratis and others and men of letters take up this work, in a very short time excellent progress can be made.

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 18-10-1925

70. *SPEECH AT U.P. HINDI SAHITYA SAMMELAN,*  
*SITAPUR*<sup>1</sup>

*October 18, 1925*

Replying to an address of welcome, Mr. Gandhi supported the claim of Hindi to be the national language of India. He was glad that work was being done in Madras to popularize Hindi, but nothing was being done in Bengal and elsewhere. Referring to the language of the welcome address, Mr. Gandhi said it contained too many Sanskrit words just as the address presented by the Lucknow Municipal Board on the previous day contained too many Persian words. It was difficult for him to follow such language. For a language to be the national language it was necessary that it was easily intelligible to the ordinary people.

*The Leader*, 21-10-1925

71. *SPEECH AT U.P. POLITICAL CONFERENCE,*  
*SITAPUR*<sup>2</sup>

*October 18, 1925*

Mr. Gandhi, who had so far been busy in spinning, was . . . requested to address the Conference. He said he would not say anything on the Hindu-Muslim question, for he had no influence on either community, at least on the section that was fighting. He would speak at length on the subject of the charkha which the president had only

<sup>1</sup> Held at Rajah School under the presidentship of Ramjilal Sharma

<sup>2</sup> The Conference was held at Lalbagh under the presidentship of Shaukat Ali. Mahomed Ali, Motilal Nehru, Jawaharlal Nehru and Dr. Syed Mahmud were among those present.

touched upon, and untouchability which the Maulana had not touched upon, being a non-Hindu. Charkha and khaddar were his creed and he could not refrain from dwelling on it. He thought no man would die of starvation in India if everyone took to the charkha. He had travelled in rural areas and seen the poor condition of the peasantry. For four months at least in a year peasants were idle, and if they took to spinning in their leisure time, the earnings would make substantial increase in their poor incomes. No machine could utilize the labour of those agriculturists in the country. He pointed out that wherever the people were plying the charkha their incomes had increased. In Bengal he found that the income of every worker's family had increased by Rs. 2 per month and according to Lord Curzon it was Rs. 30 per head per year. Charkha can give you Rs. 24 per head per year as additional income. Out of Rs. 7 as price of cloth Rs. 2 will go to agriculturists and Rs. 5 or 4 to the spinner and weaver.

He had just been at Atrai and seen the difference that spinning, as a supplementary occupation, had made in the condition of thousands of families. But if villagers were to be given this supplementary occupation, people must take to wearing khaddar. He further said that swaraj was not possible without the support of masses, which could not be had without village organization and the charkha was the only means of organizing villages. If those who thought he had gone mad could point out anything that could achieve the same object in an equally good or better manner, he would have no hesitation in giving up the charkha. But no such alternative had been pointed out.

He had founded the Spinning Association with a view to organize the people. It was non-political. Even Lord Reading and Indian soldiers could join the Association.

During the course of his speech Mahatmaji said, the Conference would be soon called upon to lend its support to the resolution passed by the A.I.C.C. at Patna. This resolution makes one fundamental change in the franchise with a view to give more facility to the people to become members of the Congress. It converted the Congress into an essentially political organization which would carry on its work through the Swaraj Party whose policy would be controlled by the Congress. The Swaraj Party would draw its own programme and rules in all local and central legislatures. The Swaraj Party has its own programmes and rules. These programmes and rules the Congress had adopted. The Congress would give every support to the Swaraj Party's political work. The Congress pledged itself at Belgaum, Delhi and Patna to give full scope and support to the Swaraj Party to carry on the political work on behalf of the Congress. The Swarajists had carried khaddar into legislatures even and on the presidential chair of the Assembly. Swarajists can do much in the interest of temperance and the peoples' poverty through the legislatures.

If any other party would go a step further, or even so far in working their constructive programme inside the legislatures and local boards, he would not have

hesitated in extending his support to them. He concluded by appealing to the Hindus to remove the canker of untouchability from the body of Hinduism.<sup>1</sup>

*The Leader* 21-10-1925 and *The Hindustan Times* 21-10-1925

## 72. SPEECH AT ANTI-UNTOUCHABILITY CONFERENCE, SITAPUR<sup>2</sup>

October 18, 1925

Mr. Gandhi endorsed the remark of the late Mr. Gakhale that by treating some of their countrymen as untouchables Indians had become untouchables themselves in the whole world outside India. He also endorsed Swami Shraddhanand's suggestion that as a practical measure to remove untouchability each high-caste Hindu family should keep a person belonging to some so-called untouchable class. Mr. Gandhi was sure, there was no place in Hinduism for untouchability. It was a sin to treat any human being as untouchable and, therefore, the so-called high-caste Hindus should purify not the untouchables but themselves. He also appealed to the untouchables to be clean physically as well as morally and to adopt the charkha and patronize khaddar.

*The Leader*, 21-10-1925

## 73. MESSAGE TO CONGRESS WORKERS OF KANPUR

October 19, 1925

I am confident that all the workers there, women as well as men, will help in every way to make the session of the Congress a success.<sup>3</sup>

From the Hindi original: C.W. 9270. Courtesy: Parasram Mehrotra

<sup>1</sup> At the end, a resolution of condolence on the death of C. R. Das and Sir Surendranath Banerjea was moved from the Chair and adopted. A second resolution welcoming the Patna Congress decisions and moved by Motilal Nehru was also adopted.

<sup>2</sup> Presided over by the Raja Saheb of Maheva, this was held in the evening.

<sup>3</sup> This message was sent in connection with the Congress session to be held in December 1925 at Kanpur where there was a split among the workers.

## 74. LETTER TO VASUMATI PANDIT

*Kartik Sud 3 [October 20, 1925]<sup>1</sup>*

CHI. VASUMATI,

I write this on a moving train. I have your letter. It will be a relief when the problem in Bombay is solved. You cannot afford to spoil your health. Those who have faith in God will never worry because God is there in all His greatness to do all the worrying. Why should we carry His burden?

Ask Ramdas to give you whatever you want. Hasn't a sister a right to ask anything of her brother? You can most certainly receive anything from me. Participate as much as possible in every activity of Ramdas and learn everything you can. Mix with other women and try to understand their difficulties. This letter will be posted from Bombay.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9340. Also C.W. 585. Courtesy: Vasumati Pandit

## 75. LETTER TO MAHADEV DESAI

*[Before October 21, 1925]<sup>2</sup>*

CHI. MAHADEV,

I have your letter. I am saving an anna by enclosing this with the letter to Chhaganlal. Durga should try to write with the left hand. I too believe what you say about Harilal<sup>3</sup>. The Pathan's bogey is always there, but he will not come. Mona wrote in her letter that Bhombal has paid up all the debts of Harilal.

About Dahyabhai, I can decide nothing here. Let Dahyabhai go with me to Kutch. If you are prepared to come, bring him along. Vallabhbai too will come.

<sup>1</sup> The year has been inferred from the contents. In 1925 *Kartik Sud 3* corresponded to October 20.

<sup>2</sup> Reference in the letter to the Kutch tour suggests that it was written before Gandhiji left Bombay for Kutch on October 21, 1925.

<sup>3</sup> Gandhiji's eldest son

You are right. Whenever you have been ill, you have been away from me. The inference is terrible. You can't stay without me? What about Durga then? Polak at times was in the same condition and I used to tell him that he had wedded two wives and that, too, when the English law allowed him to have only one.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

[PS.]

I send you today some more material for *Y.I.*

From a photostat of the Gujarati original: S.N. 11435

## 76. *SPEECH AT BOMBAY*<sup>1</sup>

*October 21, 1925*

Mahatmaji . . . thanked the Cutchi residents of Bombay and the people of Cutch for extending him an invitation to visit their province. He did not know why he was going to Cutch, except that, perhaps, it was the love of the Cutchi people that was dragging him there. They all knew the things that were dear to his heart and he did not propose to say anything anew about them. He was nearing death, but all the same his ideals and ambitions remained unlimited. In fact, the nearer he approached his end, the higher and wider grew his ambition. He only requested them that they should all shower their blessings on him and Pray god to give him strength and courage to stick to his ideals and work. He would in passing remind them that in everything he did, he was prompted by his love for truth and dharma. He assured them that he would do nothing in Cutch that would make them repent for the hospitality that they were extending him.

Continuing, Mahatmaji said that he was in urgent need of rest and he looked forward to getting that in Cutch. He was too much over-burdened with anxiety. He had received many letters stating the grievances and the urgent needs of the Cutchi people. He did not want to say anything about them beyond saying that, if he were unsuccessful in mitigating them, they should not take it as a sign of apathy, but as a sign of his weakness.

Mahatmaji was then taken to the s.s. *Rupavati* of the Bombay Steam Navigation Company which was specially chartered for the trip by Sheth Kanji Jadhavji and conveyed to his cabin. Mahatmaji's party includes Messrs Mahadev Desai, Vallabhbhai Patel, Manilal Kothari and Jivraj Nensey.

*The Bombay Chronicle, 22-10-1925*

<sup>1</sup> Gandhiji was leaving for Kutch by steamer. He addressed a large number of people who had gathered at Ferry Wharf, Carnac Bunder, to see him off.

## 77. *BOYCOTTS v. CONSTRUCTION*

An Andhra friend, in his urgent invitation asking me to be present at the forthcoming Ganjam District Conference, writes as follows:

The best part of our Congress work in connection with the constructive programme was done in places round Hiramandalam. Majority of the people wear khaddar. You are probably aware that Andhra Desha is not in love with Council work. It belongs to the No-change party. It never excuses you for dropping the boycotts. Our hope lies in constructive work. People are getting disheartened. Their enthusiasm is at a low ebb. Hiramandalam is a great khaddar producing centre. The Fiska Congress Committee manufactures several varieties of khaddar and has one of the best shops in the district. It has also a national school. It is a Vaisya (Bania) centre. They are almost all khaddarwalahs. But what good? Their enthusiasm for swaraj is well-nigh extinguished. Without the boycotts people have no faith in constructive work. Our efforts to rekindle enthusiasm are unavailing. I have surrendered all my worldly prospects, been rendered utterly destitute and am still at the work, hoping against hope to achieve swaraj.

I have informed him that it is impossible for me to be present at the Ganjam District Conference however much I should like to be able to do so. I am, with great difficulty, and for me, in slow stages, finishing the remaining and indispensable part of the tour programme for the year, after which I hope to have rest from incessant travelling. I am, therefore, sorry to have to disappoint the Andhra friends. But I have reproduced the foregoing extract not for the purpose of advertising the necessity for rest for my tired limbs, but in order to remove the confusion of thought that has enabled the writer to attribute want of interest in constructive work to the suspension of boycotts by the Congress. In the first place, if Andhra Desh has no love for Council work, the Congress does not compel it to manufacture love for Councils. It merely authorizes those who believe in Council work to take it up on behalf of and in the name of the Congress. It withdraws the prohibition from those who gave up such work not out of faith but merely out of loyalty to the Congress. It prohibits people from using the name of the Congress to condemn entry into the legislative bodies and, lastly, it encourages those who believe in such political work to prosecute it with zeal. But it does not in any way fetter a single Congressman's conscience. Those must have a poor



faith in themselves whose zeal is damped for want of extraneous support. Moreover, the writer forgets that the Congress has not only not dropped boycott of foreign-cloth, but it will bless and issue a certificate of merit to those who will achieve that boycott. I am striving my best to deserve that certificate and I invite everybody to join me in the endeavour. That boycott can be achieved only when khaddar becomes popular enough to be universal. Hence the inauguration of the All-India Spinners' Association. Every boycott has its constructive side. The Association will devote its best energy to the constructive effort. What have the other boycotts—for instance that of titles or schools or law-courts—to do with the manufacture and wearing of khaddar? The beauty of these boycotts lies in their individuality and capacity to stand alone. The individual taking part in any or all of them always benefits, and when a sufficiently large number take part in them the nation becomes fit for swaraj. Blind enthusiasm and blind faith can lead to no lasting good. It is, therefore, necessary to realize that the constructive programme by itself has an inestimable value even apart from its undoubted capacity to fit us for swaraj.

The writer has done well in surrendering all his worldly prospects and in rendering himself utterly destitute. But let him consider that sacrifice to be its own reward. Thousands upon thousands will have to do likewise before swaraj is attained by the nation. He who has sacrificed his all for swaraj has certainly attained it for himself. There is no need, therefore, for such a one to 'hope against hope', for if his sacrifice is voluntary and intelligent, it is all hope without any disappointment. One's faith has got to be bright and intelligent before it can enkindle faith in others. Those, therefore, who believe in khaddar and other parts of the programme of 1921 must be able to stand unmoved in spite of variations in the policy, politics and programme of the Congress.

*Young India*, 22-10-1925

## 78. NOTES

### A CORRECTION

In the issue of 8th October, in my Bihar Notes, I have said: "In Ranchi I was taken to Golcunda." This was a stupid slip on my part. The Bihari friends are now laughing at my geographical ignorance and tell me that Golcunda is not near Ranchi but near Purulia. I owe

an apology to Purulia for the blunder. When, however, several villages and several places in the same village or town have to be visited on the same day and these performances follow in quick succession it is difficult for one to remember all the places accurately. I am, therefore, obliged to omit the mention of the names of many places and persons and simply confine myself to narration of events because at the moment I do not remember either the names of places or persons concerned. When, therefore, people find that the names of persons or places, that in their opinion I should have mentioned, have been omitted, let them understand that often the omission is unintentional and that it is due purely to my weak memory.

#### SPINNING ESSAY

The reader will remember that early this year<sup>1</sup> Sjt. Rewashanker Jagjivan announced a prize of one thousand rupees to be given to the writer of the best essay on hand-spinning, its history and its use. These were the terms:

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

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

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

Later Sjt. Ambalal Sarabhai was invited also to act as judge and

<sup>1</sup> On January 1. For details, *Vide* "Notes", 1-1-925.

he kindly consented. The time fixed for the delivery of the essay was 15th March. It was subsequently extended to 30th April and over sixty essays were received within the stipulated time. Each one of the judges carried on an independent examination. Two of us awarded the first prize to one, the third awarded the first prize to another and the fourth to a third. After mutual consultation we decided upon splitting the prize and distributing it between Sjt. S.V. Puntambekar and Sjt. N.S.Varadachari and the judges have proposed that either both of them or, if it is not possible for them to do so, whoever has the leisure and the inclination should combine the essays and give for publication the result of the combination. I am sorry that means a little more delay. All the delay that has up to now taken place has been unavoidable. The examination had to be and was thorough. That by itself took a great deal of time. The delay that has now taken place is equally inevitable, the idea being to give to the public a thoroughly good compendium on hand-spinning. I congratulate the prize-winners and I tender my congratulations also to those who have not been able to win the prize, for the effort made by them. For, some of the essays show a great deal of diligence.

#### SPINNERS, PLEASE NOTE

Those who were in charge of the yarn that was received under the All-India Congress Committee resolution last year ask me to warn the spinners who become members of the A.I.S.A. against sending yarn that is not evenly spun and uniform. A quantity of bad yarn still lies unused. Just as bread that is stodgy and ill-baked is no bread, similarly yarn that is not easily woven is no yarn, and the condition of membership is not a thousand yards of self-spun yarn merely but a thousand yards per month of self-spun yarn *well-twisted and uniform* for A class and two thousand yards yearly of the same quality of self-spun yarn for B class members. Therefore, if the secretaries are to do their duty well, it will be necessary for them not to take yarn that is considered to be below standard, and the standard while it need not be stiff will certainly be stiff enough to meet the elementary requirements of good weavable yarn. In cash subscriptions a bad coin cannot be accepted as a proper tender nor can bad yarn be accepted as proper tender when subscription is payable in yarn.

#### WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?

If you are a believer in spinning and if you have faith in the

A.I.S.A., have you joined the Association? If you have not, will you write why you have not? If you have already joined, beyond sending your quota of well-spun and uniform yarn of your own spinning, what more do you propose to do to make khaddar universal? Have you invited the members of your own family and friends to join? Are you asking even the youngsters of your family to labour for the sake of the country? It is no mean training for the youngsters to learn during their childhood the lesson of intelligent self-sacrifice and understand the power of organization. Unorganized half hour's labour may mean nothing but labour given to an organization even from the remotest part of india has a potency that can revolutionize national life. It is no mean thing, again, for little children regularly every day to remember their country in a tangible manner. It will give them priceless discipline. In the act of demonstrating to the children the virtue of the simple little act of labour you will discover for yourself the implications of the charkha which you have little thought of. Please do not raise in front of you a mountain of difficulties by asking what use your labour can be when all India is lying supine. It is enough for you to do your little best, the rest will take care of itself. We have not the governance of the universe in our hands but we have our own in our hands and you will find that that is about all it is possible for us to do. But it is at that same time all in all. There is much truth in the homely English proverb: Take care of the pennies and the pounds will take care of themselves.

#### LOHANI AT LAST

After I had given up all hope of finding Lohani, I received help from an unexpected quarter and I have now before me full details in the shape of newspaper cuttings. I observe that these cuttings are based upon my first reference to Lohani in the pages of *Young India*. The writers of these newspaper reports evidently thought that I would see their references. They are obviously unaware of the fact that I do not get the time to read the numerous newspapers which the kind editors and proprietors send me in exchange for *Young India* or *Navajivan*. I have often requested and I repeat the request that those who seek to give me information or correct me or advise me through their writings in newspapers will kindly send me the cuttings in question. The writer in one of the cuttings expresses his surprise and astonishment that I should not know where Lohani is. I share the regret. But why astonishment? I have before now admitted my ignorance of the geography of my own country. In the vernacular

school I had the barest outlines of the geography of India and, in the English school, from the very first standard I was called upon, on pain of being caned, to learn by heart the names of all the counties of England and many other foreign names which it gave me headache to pronounce and remember. Nobody taught me, and I am sure my teacher did not know, where Lohani was. Even Bhiwani, near which, I now see, Lohani is situated, was unknown to me before I went to the Punjab. Lohani then according to the cutting in my possession, is a little Hindu village, six miles from Bhiwani. The Hindu zamindars, the cutting proceeds, introduced in Lohani some Mussalmans. The Hindus and the Mussalmans are now fighting over a piece of land which, the Mussalmans claim, is consecrated and the Hindus claim has never ceased to be their property. The matter is before the courts. And there I must leave it. The writer of the newspaper article invites me to investigate the matter and pronounce my own opinion upon it. If I had the authority which I thought at one time I possessed, I would certainly investigate and prevent the quarrel from being decided in a court of law. But I must now plead my incapacity. I would, however, advise both the parties to approach those in whom they have confidence and seek their intervention.

#### A TOTAL DENIAL

With regard to the charges of bribery, corruption and intimidation brought against the Swarajists of Madras in connection with the late Municipal elections and recently referred to in these columns, I have a long letter from Sjt. P. S. Doraiswamy Mudaliar totally and specifically denying every one of those charges and on the contrary holding that the defeated party was guilty of the very charges brought against the Swarajists. The correspondent contends that not only the illiterate masses threw in their lot with the Swarajists but so did also "many lawyers, medical practitioners and many eminent men". And he says that they did so because they were disgusted with the tactics of the other party. I am not reproducing the whole of the letter because I have no desire to interest the readers of *Young India* in a local controversy and to open its columns for an interminable correspondence on it.

#### THE GOANESE UNDER SWARAJ

A Goan friend asks:

What would be your attitude and that of all Indians towards the Goanese who reside and earn their living in this country when swaraj is attained?

In briefest terms the answer is, that the attitude towards the Goanese will be exactly the same as towards any other Indian, for, the Goanese are as much inhabitants of India as the inhabitants of any other part. That they are under another foreign Government can make no difference in their treatment. If the fear underlying this question is due to difference of religion, then, it has been repeatedly stated in these columns that swaraj is not intended for any one religion only but for all, and that those who are not born or domiciled in India would be fully protected, as fully as under the present Government, where they are not unduly favoured. That is the swaraj of my conception. What it is ultimately going to be depends upon what thinking humanity in India does in the long run. The Goanese population has the making of the India of the future as much in their hands as any other group. No one need therefore ask what will become of him under swaraj because no one but idiots and the imbecile will live on sufferance. Each one will guard his own individual liberty, if the State encroaches upon it. Not until many people acquire that power of resistance will India obtain real freedom.

#### WHEN CRIME NOT IMMORAL

A fair friend sends me 'crisp sayings' by Dan Griffiths on crime and wants me to find room for them in these pages. Here are some extracts which a satyagrahi can readily subscribe to:

State law is not necessarily moral. Crime is not necessarily immoral.

There is a world of difference between illegality and immorality. Not all illegalities are immoral and not all immoralities are illegal.

Who can say that, whilst not to crawl on one's belly at the dictation of an officer might be an illegality, it is also an immorality? Rather is it not true that refusal to crawl on one's belly may be illegal, but it would be in the highest degree moral? An other illuminating passage is the following:

Modern society is in itself a crime factory. The militarist is a relative of the murderer and the burglar is the compliment of the stock jobber.

The third excerpt runs as follows:

The thief in law is merely a person who satisfies his acquisitive instincts in ways not sanctioned by the community. The real thief is the person who takes more out of society than he puts into it. But society punishes those who *annoy* it, not those who *injure* it, the *retail* and not the *wholesale* offenders.

## SEVEN SOCIAL SINS

The same fair friend wants readers of *Young India* to know, if they do not already, the following seven social sins:

Politics without principles  
Wealth without work  
Pleasure without conscience  
Knowledge without character  
Commerce without morality  
Science without humanity  
Worship without sacrifice

Naturally, the friend does not want the readers to know these things merely through the intellect but to know them through the heart so as to avoid them.

*Young India*, 22-10-1925

## 79. THAT ETERNAL QUESTION

However much I may wish to avoid it, the Hindu-Muslim question will not avoid me. Muslim friends insist upon my intervention to solve it. The Hindu friends would have me discuss it with them and some of them say I have sown the wind and must reap the whirlwind. Whilst I was in Calcutta, a Bihar friend had written to me in grief and anger telling me of the alleged kidnapping of Hindu boys and specially girls. I had written to him telling him point blank that I did not believe those allegations, but that, if he had proof and gave it to me I would gladly examine it, and if I was satisfied, I would denounce it although I might not be able to do any tangible good. Since then I have had cuttings from newspapers describing in harrowing detail cases of kidnapping. I had told the friend that newspaper extracts could not be accepted as any evidence of the crime, that in many cases newspaper paragraphs were inflammatory, misleading and often absolutely false. There are Hindu and Muslim sheets that delight in blackguarding Mussalmans and Hindus respectively and if both of them could be accepted as true, both the parties were loathsome creatures. But I have proved to my own satisfaction that many of these reported cases are highly exaggerated if they are not false. I have, therefore, asked for such incontestable proofs as would be accepted in any court of law. The Titagarh case is certainly such a one. A Hindu girl had been kidnapped. She is

supposed to have embraced Islam and in spite of the court's order she has not yet been produced so far as I am aware. What is more, respectable people are concerned in the non-production of the girl. When I was in Titagarh, nobody seemed prepared to shoulder the responsibility about the girl. At Patna, too, some startling information was given to me with corroborative evidence. I refrain at the present moment from going into it because it is not before me in its completed form. Such cases set one athinking and need the attention of all well-wishers of the country. There is then the question of music in front of mosques. I have heard of a peremptory demand for total cessation of music, soft or loud, at any time whatsoever in front of mosques. There is too a demand for the stopping of *arati* during prayer hours in temples in the neighbourhood of mosques. I heard in Calcutta that even boys passing by a mosque early in the morning and reciting *Ramanama* were stopped.

What is to be done? Recourse to law-courts in such matters is a broken reed. If I allow my daughter to be kidnapped and then go to court for protection, the latter would be powerless or, if the judge got angry over my cowardice, he would dismiss me from his presence with deserved contempt. Courts deal with ordinary crimes. General kidnapping of girls or boys is not an ordinary crime. People in such cases are expected to look after themselves. Courts help those who are largely able to help themselves. Theirs is supplementary protection. So long as there are weak people so long will there be someone to prey upon their weakness. The remedy therefore lies in organizing for self-defence. I could find it in me to justify the most violent defence in such cases unless the people concerned are capable of a non-violent defence. No doubt where girls or boys of poor and helpless parents are kidnapped, the case becomes much more complicated. There the remedy has to be found not by the individual but by a whole clan or caste. A presentation, however, of authentic cases of kidnapping is a prime necessity before public opinion can be well-organized.

The question of music is much simpler than that of kidnapping. Either continuous music, *arati* or the repeating of *Ramanama* is a religious necessity or it is not. If it is a religious necessity, no prohibition order by a court of law can be held obligatory. Music must be played, *arati* must be made and *Ramanama* repeated, cost what it may. If my formula were accepted a procession of the meekest



men and women, unarmed even with lathis, would march with *Ramanama* on their lips, supposing that that was the bone of contention and draw down on their heads the whole of the Mussalman wrath. But, if they would not accept that formula, they would still proceed with the sacred name of their lips and fight every inch of the ground. But to stop music for fear of a row or because of an order of court is to deny one's religion.

But, then, there is the other side to the question. Is continuous playing of music even while passing mosques at prayer time always a religious necessity? Is repeating of *Ramanama* a similar necessity? What about the charge that the fashion nowadays is to organize processions purely for the sake of irritating Mussalmans and to make *arati* just at the time of prayer and to utter *Ramanama* not because it is held religiously necessary but in order to create an occasion for a fight? If such be the case it will defeat its own end and naturally, the zest being wanting, a court's order, a military display or a shower of brickbats would end the irreligious show.

A religious necessity must, therefore, be clearly established. Every semblance of irritation must be avoided. A mutual understanding should be sincerely sought. And where it is not possible, an irreducible minimum should be fixed making due allowance for the opposite sentiment and then without seeking the intervention of courts or in spite of a prohibition order, a fight must be put up for that minimum. Let no one charge me with ever having advised or encouraged weakness or surrender on matters of principle. But I have said, as I say again, that every trifle must not be dignified into a principle.

*Young India*, 22-10-1925

## 80. BIHAR NOTES

### FUNCTION OF LOCAL BOARD MEMBERS

At Giridih the addresses presented to me contained interesting references and there was also, as in Chaibasa, an address from the Goshala Committee. The Local Board address referred to the bad condition of the roads under its charge. The justification given was shortage of funds. I had no hesitation in replying that shortage of funds was no excuse for keeping the roads in bad repair when

Congressmen manned local boards. After all, roads were national property, Congressmen were national servants and when by entering local boards, they obtained charge of roads they were expected to keep them in good repair whether there were funds or not. They might put up on every good point a valiant fight with the Government, but their constructive work should in no way be allowed to be neglected. If they found that they could not properly discharge their trust, they must resign. Want of funds was no cause for resignation because that could be made up for by voluntary effort. Let the members of such boards take up the pickaxe and the shovel, gird up their loins and themselves work at the roads and call a party of volunteers to assist them. They will earn the blessings of the public as also of the dumb cattle and command the respect of the superior authority. Indeed, in all municipal work everywhere, a large part of it is done by the councillors unofficially and with the voluntary support of the public. The late Mr. Joseph Chamberlain<sup>1</sup> turned Birmingham into a clean city studded with statues and other decorations, not merely through the paid service of the Corporation but by the voluntary support, pecuniary and other, of its citizens. The Municipality of Glasgow dealt with its plague epidemic in summary and exemplary fashion only because the members of the Corporation received the willing and unstinted support of its citizens. The Municipality of Johannesburg, within my own experience, dealt with similar trouble in the same summary manner. It counted no cost too great for the eradication of plague, burnt down its market buildings and its location and had behind it the resources of its determined citizens. I told my audience that therefore I was asking for nothing heroic of the Local Board members by asking them to do the road repair themselves with the assistance of Congress volunteers if they had not enough funds. If we captured municipalities and local boards, we must be able to give a good account of ourselves in all the constructive work that was entrusted to our charge under statutory authority.

#### COW - PROTECTION

The Committee of the Giridih *goshala* said in its address that it had an annual income of nine thousand rupees in donations and an

<sup>1</sup>1836-1914; British statesman. He was mayor of Birmingham from 1873 to 1876.

income of only two thousand rupees from milk, etc. The reader will recall that it is the same tale as that of Chaibasa. Much cry but little wool. An ideal *goshala* would supply the city of its domicile with cheap and wholesome milk from cattle of its own keeping and cheap and lasting foot-wear not out of slaughtered hide but out of the hide of dead cattle. Such a *goshala* will not be on one or two acres of ground in the heart of a city or in its immediate neighbourhood, but it would have, at some distance but within easy reach, fifty to a hundred acres of ground where a modern dairy and a modern tannery would be conducted on strictly business but national lines. Thus there would be no profits and no dividends to be paid and there would be also no loss incurred. In the long run such institutions dotted all over India would be a triumph of Hinduism and would be proof of Hindu earnestness about cow, that is, cattle protection and it would provide decent employment for thousands of men including educated men; for both dairy and tannery work require expert scientific knowledge. Not Denmark but India should be a model State for the finest dairy experiments and India should not to her shame have to export nine crore rupees worth of dead cattle hide annually and for her own consumption use slaughtered cattle hide. If such a state of things is a shame for India it is a greater shame for Hindus. I wish that all the *goshala* committees will take to heart the remarks I made in reply to the Giridih address<sup>1</sup> and make their *goshalas* into ideal dairies and tanneries and a refuge for all worn out and maimed cattle.

#### WHO SHOULD SPIN?

A third interesting reference in the Giridih address was to non-spinning by its labourers. Giridih has several mica mines. It has, therefore, many labourers working in those mines. These labourers get naturally a higher wage than they can possibly get from spinning and they are, therefore, not spinning at all. As a matter of fact, there need have been no such apologetic reference as was made in the address. The readers of *Young India* know that I have never suggested that those who are more lucratively employed should give up their lucrative employment and prefer hand-spinning. I have said repeatedly that those only are expected and should be induced to spin who have no other paying employment and that too only during the hours of unemployment. The whole theory of hand-spinning is based

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Speech at Public Meeting, Giridih", 7-10-1925.

upon the assumption that there are millions of men and women in this land who are idle for at least four months in the year for want of some employment. There are only, therefore, two classes of people who are expected to spin, those who would spin for hire, whom I have already mentioned, and the thinking part of India who should spin for sacrifice by way of example and in order to cheapen khaddar. But whilst I could understand labourers not spinning, I could not understand their not wearing khaddar. There was no excuse for a single person in that vast audience not to wear khaddar. Giridih can produce and manufacture its own yarn and weave its own khaddar without any difficulty and, in any case can get all its supply of khaddar ready-made and comparatively cheap from the other parts of Bihar. But I notice that, whilst these addresses admit shortcomings about khaddar and the charkha, they are mentioned, I fear, not as an earnest of reform in the immediate future, but by way of consolation for continuing the same state of things. A confession is good only when it is intended to be followed up by a retracing; it is worse than that the confessions made in the many addresses presented to me will be precursors of a definite change.

#### NATIONAL SCHOOLS

From Giridih we came to Madhupur. There I was called upon to perform the opening ceremony of its new elegant-looking little Town Hall. In performing the opening ceremony and in congratulating the Municipality on possessing its own abode, I expressed the hope that the Municipality would make Madhupur a beauty-spot worthy of the climate and natural surroundings it possessed. The difficulties in the way of improving big cities like Calcutta and Bombay were very great. But in little places like Madhupur, if municipalities had a very small income, they had also no difficulty to face in keeping their areas spotlessly clean and free from diseases. I visited, too, the national school which Madhupur boasts. The head master in the address which he read drew a gloomy picture of the prospects before him—decreasing attendance and decreasing pecuniary support from the people. He mentioned also that some parents withdrew their boys because hand-spinning was compulsory. The address asked me to point the way out of the difficulties mentioned. I replied that if the teachers believed in their mission, they need not be disappointed. Ups and downs in all new institutions were their natural lot. Their difficulties, therefore, were the teachers' testing time. Those

convictions only could be described as stable which would stand the stress of storms. The teachers should, therefore, count no sacrifice too great if they believed that they had a message to deliver to their surroundings through their schools. They would then remain unconcerned whether there was only one boy or there were one hundred in the school, provided it was perfectly clear to them that they had done their best for the school and that it was not their shortcomings that estranged the parents and the boys but that the very principle for which they stood was repugnant to them. If they had faith in hand-spinning, they would not mind the parents withdrawing their children from the school. If they had retained spinning only because it was a fashion, or because the Congress resolution required it, and not because they had faith in it, they need not hesitate then to do away with spinning and retain the goodwill of the people. Time has arrived when national teachers have to make a definite choice for themselves, because, when new changes are made there are always some people who resent one or all of them. It is only the teacher with faith in himself and his cause who could resist opposition to the changes which he considers to be necessary and which alone, perhaps, justify the existence of his new enterprise.

#### MISCELLANEOUS

From Madhupur we proceeded to the Purnea District, which meant a new surrounding and a new country. For, Purnea District is on the northern bank of the Ganges, and it lies to the north-east. All that district is really the Himalayan *terai*. The climate and the people are almost like those of Champaran. We crossed from Sakrigali Ghat to Maniari Ghat, a voyage of about two hours duration. We reached Maniari early in the morning. The people of this place presented a purse for the Deshbandhu Memorial. We went from Maniari by train to Katihar Junction where there were the usual public meetings. The next day we went to Kishangunj where also there were the usual meetings and a purse. Kishangunj contains a large Marwari population. They had made a good collection. A deputation came to me complaining that although they were ready and willing to wear khaddar they could not get any in Kishangunj. They said that the whole of the cloth trade was in the hands of the Marwari merchants who sold only foreign cloth, because, the deputation said, the Marwari merchants told them it paid them best. I told the deputation, however, that whilst I would gladly speak to the Marwari friends, their excuse

was really inadmissible because, if there was a large demand for khaddar in Kishangunj, they could open a co-operative store themselves. If was no use blaming the Marwari merchants who were after all in Kishangunj for their business. It was for those like the deputation who believed in khaddar to set the fashion, go to some trouble in stocking it, and then induce Marwari friends to take it up also. This, however, I saw, they were not prepared to do. I told them, too, that if they guaranteed a minimum sale I would undertake to persuade Rajendra Babu to open a khaddar depot in Kishangunj. This they were not prepared to risk. I spoke to the leading Marwari merchants who told me that, as a matter of fact, for some time some Marwaris did have some khaddar in their stores, but there was no great demand for it. And they admitted that there was no special effort made by the Marwari merchants to push khaddar before the public.

#### CONFUSION

From Kishangunj we went to Araria, and from Araria to Forbesgunj, the north-eastern extreme point of Bihar near which commences the Nepal border, and from where, I was told, on a clear day one could see the magnificent snowy range of the Himalayas. Before we reached Forbesgunj, I was inclined to congratulate Rajendra Babu and his band of workers upon the excellent control they had obtained upon the people in that, unlike as on previous occasions, the vast crowds of people were orderly, noiseless and exercised exemplary self-restraint by refraining from besieging me to touch my feet. I was, however, disillusioned at Forbesgunj, because the order broke down there. The crowd was immense. The meeting had to take place under the fierce sun. The people had been waiting since morning without any shade over-head. The noise and the din were terrible. It was impossible for me to get any quiet; and volunteers were unable to restrain the vast crowd from coming to touch me. The fact is that not much work had been done there before. The volunteers were new to the task. The poor fellows tried their best. Nobody was to blame. It was a new situation and a new experience for them. And the people were not to be deprived of what they must have considered to be the only opportunity of coming near me and touching me. It is an affectionate superstition; but it is also most embarrassing for me. I spoke to them about khaddar, about the spinning-wheel, about temperance, gambling and the like; but I am afraid that it was all like foreign speech to them. Mysterious are the ways of God. Tens of

thousands of people irresistibly drawn to someone or to something of whom or which they had but the vaguest idea. I do not know whether they profited by coming to see me. a perfectly strange being to them. I do not know whether it was worth while my going to Forbesgunj. Perhaps it is as well that we do not know the results of all we do, if only we do things for the service of God and humanity and do nothing which we know to be wrong.

#### CONCLUSION

From Forbesgunj we proceeded to Vishanpur which is about 25 miles from Purnea. It is a rough motor ride because there is no proper metalled road. There was a tremendous gathering in this village and I was surprised to see so much public spirit in a place so remote from the railway line. The people presented a good purse for the Memorial. A novel feature of this meeting was that a permanent platform was built for the meeting. It was nearly fifteen feet high. It is brick-built. Underneath is a khaddar store. The whole conception combines beauty with use. The most pleasing function in this village was a nicely built library and reading-room which I had the privilege of opening. There is a large open enclosure surrounding the library building, provided with marble benches, and the library itself is a memorial to the deceased wife of Chaudhry Lalchand. That in a place like Vishanpur such an up-to-date memorial should have been thought of shows a great advance in political education of the right sort. From Vishanpur we came back to Purnea which is the headquarters of the district, where practically the Bihar tour was concluded with the usual functions. The tour really concluded at Hajipur to which I was attracted four years ago by the youthful zeal of a band of workers through whose energy a national school was established. Purnea District has supplied over seventeen thousand rupees, a part of which is earmarked for the Bihar (National) Vidyapith. The rest about fifteen thousand is for the Deshbandhu Memorial Fund. Throughout the Bihar tour, including this sum, the total collection for the Memorial amounted to about 50,000 rupees.

It is not without sorrow that I am leaving the simple and good people of Bihar. I hope, if all goes well, to finish the balance of the Bihar tour early next year, but I expect that the Biharis will show much further progress in khaddar and charkha during the intervening months. The whole of the stock of beautiful khaddar now lying in its khaddar stores should be cleared. There must be many members of

the A.I.S.A. enrolled and centres where poor people are awaiting, volunteers should be organized for spinning. The drink evil should be brought under control.

*Young India*, 22-10-1925

### 81. A DILEMMA

A friend finds himself in a dilemma. He is serving in an Indian concern that requires his services from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m., I suppose with a break for dinner. But the employers do not prescribe the kind or the quality of the material of which his dress should be made. And by choice therefore he wears khaddar. A foreign firm, however, offers him double the salary with fewer hours of service but will not have his dress made of khaddar. Now the difficulty which faces him is this: If he accepts the foreign service, he can not only improve his material position but get enough time for spinning daily in which he believes but has to deny himself khaddar dress which he loves. If he remains where he is he has to slave for 12 hours, pinch himself and get no time for spinning. What is he to do? I have little hesitation in giving my opinion. Apart from the question of khaddar, for a self-respecting man, the foreigner's tempting offer is totally unacceptable for the simple reason that it is coupled with an undue restraint upon one's liberty, especially when that restraint is against national interest and, from the fact stated is due to prejudice against khaddar. On merits, too, I would any day prefer liberty to wear khaddar although for want of time spinning may have to be sacrificed for the time being. If all were obliged to discard khaddar spinning will have no value. The virtue of spinning is not absolute but relative. If the product of spinning is not marketable, it would be a cruel mockery to call upon millions of semi-starved men and women to spin. The need of the time is, therefore, popularization of khaddar wear. Spinning is undoubtedly necessary. But when there is a choice between spinning and wearing khaddar, naturally the latter has the undisputed preference. Spinning is required from those who want to add to their slender resources and that, too, during spare hours and without payments from those who have time to spare for giving even a few moments' labour in that particular form to the nation. In the case in point the will to spin being there, the time will certainly be found in due course. Probably, the correspondent has to go by tram or train to



his office. Let him take the *takli* with him and give the odd moments to it. There are many within my knowledge who are thus utilizing their odd moments. I therefore hope that the correspondent will never, for any temptation, give up his khaddar wear. I had hoped that the prejudice against khaddar had died down in the foreign mercantile firms. The European merchants in Calcutta to whom I had the privilege of talking showed no prejudice against khaddar wear. I wish that influential European merchants who may see this paragraph will exert their influence to remove the prejudice reported by my correspondent. And it is high time for Indian firms to remodel their businesses so as to curtail the inordinately long hours for which their employees are detained. The world's experience shows that long hours do not mean more but actually less work. It simply requires a little courage and a little initiative to make the much-needed reform voluntarily and generously—a reform that is otherwise bound to come in any case. But, then, when it comes under pressure it will have lost all its grace. Shorter hours for employees is a world movement which nobody can stop. Will not the Indian Chamber of Commerce or some such mercantile association lead the way?

*Young India*, 22-10-1925

## 82. LETTER TO MAGANLAL GANDHI

[October 22, 1925]<sup>1</sup>

CH. MAGANLAL,

I have your letter. Make whatever arrangements you think fit with Parsottambhai. I intend to take the amount from Revashankerbhai. Or we shall do whatever is needful. I am thinking of sending away the children. There is no end to illness here.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From the Gujarati original : C.W. 7745. Courtesy: Radhabehn Choudhri

<sup>1</sup> From the postmark

### 83. LETTER TO RANCHHODDAS PATWARI

*Kartika Sud 5 [October 22, 1925]<sup>1</sup>*

REVERED RANCHHODHBHAI,

It has become a problem to decide what route I should take on my way back from Kutch. Do you wish me to go *via* Morvi? And if so, do you think I should have the committee meeting of the Political Conference<sup>2</sup> there? If you permit me to go there I would certainly ask for your help in the khadi and cow-protection work. Your help does not mean the help of your State. If I do get it, well and good. But your own help I do want. It would be nice if I could have a reply by wire. If you send it to Bhuj I shall get it wherever I may be.

*Regards from*

MOHANDAS

[PS.]

My right hand is aching; hence as far as possible I write with the left hand.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4113

### 84. SPEECH ON BOARD STEAMER, DWARKA

*October 22, 1925*

S.S. *Rupavati* touched Dwarka on the way to Mandvi at the special request of the people of Dwarka who sent a deputation on board to accord Gandhiji their respectful greetings with a request that he might visit Dwarka on his return journey. In their address, the deputation pointed out with becoming humility that they were poor representatives of the high ideals of Hindu religion of which Dwarka is recognized a sacred place and that they wanted to profit by Gandhiji's advice and teachings.

Gandhiji gave suitable reply. He said that it might not be possible to visit Dwarka this time, but he urged that, if they wanted seriously to set about the task of reform, they might make a good beginning by discarding all foreign cloth and adopting the wear of pure khaddar for all purposes. He said that the sacred places of India should be the first and foremost in discarding foreign cloth. He also pointed out that, although Hindus were idol-worshippers, it was not the idol that they worshipped

<sup>1</sup> Reference in the letter to the Kutch tour indicates that it was written in 1925.

<sup>2</sup> Kathiawar Political Conference

but the spirit of God inculcated in the idol, and he appealed the deputation to try in their humble way to realize in life whatever appertained to the spirit of the idol they worshipped.

*The Bombay Chronicle, 24-10-1925*

### 85. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, BHUJ<sup>1</sup>

*October 22, 1925*

I had expected from your welcome address that you would not be drawing a line between the *Antyajias* and others in this meeting, but when I saw that you had done so, I felt that my place was with the former. For, wherever I have gone I have described myself as a *Bhangi*. I do not make that claim out of vanity nor is it an instance of my ignorance or of Western influence on me. I make the claim wholly in a spirit of service, and that too after a life-long study of Hinduism and effort to live it by carefully following the example of my pious parents, and not, I repeat, under the influence of Western ideas I have endeavoured to understand the relationship between the body and the Dweller within. I have studied the Shastras with as much care as is possible for a layman, and have also tried to put their teachings into practice. From my study of them and my experience of living in accordance with their teachings, I have come to the firm conclusion that if Hinduism clings to the practice of untouchability, it will perish, Hindus will perish and India will perish. As I discuss the subject with innumerable shastris and pundits in the course of my tours in the various parts of the country, I become daily more confirmed in my view. I frankly tell you, therefore, that if, holding the views that I do, I am an untouchable in your eyes, with whom it is proper that all contact should be avoided, you should be firm and keep away from me, and ask me to end my visit in a day. Far from causing me pain, you will make me happy by acting in this way. I will think that Kutch has self-respect, that it has courage and its people are not afraid of expressing their difference from even a reputedly big man. If, therefore, you ask me to leave, you will be doing good not only to yourself but also to the *Antyajias* and to me. You may rest assured that your forsaking me will make no difference to our relations. You will show no disrespect to me by forsaking me, but you show extreme

<sup>1</sup> Bhuj was the capital of the then princely State of Kutch; The speech is extracted from Mahadev Desai's account of Gandhiji's tour.

disrespect to me by inviting me here and then slighting the *Antyajās*. I have identified myself with Hinduism. I live for it and wish to die for it. If I felt today that my death would benefit Hinduism, I would embrace death with the same love and eagerness with which I embrace you here. I, who serve this Hinduism, believe that the practice of untouchability is a great blot on it. *Antyajās* are dear to me as my very life. Therefore just as a lover of *Ramayana* would run miles away from a place where the holy name of Rama was being slighted, I too cannot stay where *Antyajās* are despised. I am bound to run away from such a spot, for I would feel deeply hurt there. You have said flattering things about my satyagraha. Well then, I take this opportunity to give an object-lesson in it. Let the *Antyajās* come in, or permit me to go and sit in their midst. But remember that it will not be proper for you to do anything out of false regard for me and with the thought in your mind that you will take a bath after returning home. I had, through the letter which I addressed to you, warned you before coming on this visit. If, therefore, you permit the *Antyajās* to come and sit in your midst, let it be with the conviction that you are doing a virtuous act and not committing a sin, that you are purifying Hinduism and not defiling it. If, however, you believe that you will be committing a sin by letting them come in, do please permit me to go and sit in their midst. No matter which course you adopt, if you act with decision and without fear of or false regard for anyone, I will think that you have presented me something of greater worth than this silver spinning-wheel and this silver casket containing your address. But consider: if, as they did at Mangrol,<sup>1</sup> you let the *Antyajās* in today but ill-treat them afterwards, you will be doing them disservice, not service. I should also like to add that the reform which you may adopt today should be adopted after due thought, should be adopted after weighing your strength and with the idea of following it permanently.

We have now to take the next step. We shall have to carry out a silent movement as they do in an army manoeuvre. The majority of the audience desires that the *Antyajās* should not cross the fencing in front of them. Please, therefore, permit the volunteers to lift the table there and put it silently on the side reserved for *Antyajās*. You will now hear me complete the rest of my speech from that side. It would hurt me to go on with my speech sitting here, yielding to your love or persuasion. I shall feel happy if you let me sit there. Untouchability

<sup>1</sup> In Saurashtra; Gandhiji met the *Antyajās* at Mangrol on April 7, 1925.

cannot be abolished through force; it can be abolished only by satyagraha, by the strength of love. Reforms in matters of religion can be effected only by the reformer suffering voluntarily by his undergoing *tapascharya*, and in no other way. They cannot be affected by anyone acting with anger or resentment or hatred in his heart. It is the duty of a satyagrahi not to bear ill-will even mentally towards a person opposing the cause of truth. The fact of a majority being on your side has not hurt me, and has certainly not made me angry. Now, let everyone remain where he is; I alone will go over to that side and take my seat there, for I have a special duty in this place and on this occasion. As I had once found it my special duty to keep and *Antyaja* girl with me and bring her up in the Ashram, so it is my special duty today to go to that side and address you from there. You should remain seated where you are; you will then be able to hear me in complete silence.

If either Shastras or history taught us that a kingdom could be ruled only by a person like Rama, I would have been an implacable enemy of monarchy. But the very same history which tells us of Ravana also tells us of Rama, and proclaims to the world that Ravana's rule did not last for all time, that victory was Rama's. A king's rule can endure only if he introduces dharma into his rule. I would offer my worship to the government of a king—I long for such a government—under whose rule no one would ever die of hunger, a girl might safely move about where she willed and no wicked person would dare to cast evil glances at her, a king who looked upon his subjects as his children and all women, other than his wife, as his mothers or daughters, who never drank and had no addictions, who would see to the safety of his subjects as they slept before himself retiring for the day and ensured that they had enough to eat before he ate himself. I wish to see a bond of love between the Princes and their subjects in order that we might have rulers of this type. When we have them, there will be no famine and starvation in the country, no immorality and no people addicted to drinking. At present, however, we have all these things in the Indian States. What does this fact signify? That the Princes have forgotten their dharma—their dharma of protecting the lives, the properties and the dharma of their subjects, that they have not been able to preserve purity of character. The Shastras, on the other hand, proclaim with all the emphasis at their command that even the race in which Krishna was born perished while

he lived as soon as the three evils of immorality, drinking and gambling entered it. Krishna had the misfortune to be a witness to the complete destruction of the Yadava race. That is why I say that the Princes of Kutch should so rule their State that the subjects would have no cause for complaint against them. As long as the Prince has a good character and is a good ruler, the subjects will certainly help him, assist him in the administration of justice and pay the taxes. What should they do, however, if he becomes oppressive in his rule? The Shastras say that in such circumstances it becomes the duty of the subjects to put their grievances frankly before the ruler, for it should be borne in mind that if the saying "As the ruler, so the subjects" is true, it is equally true to say "As the subjects, so the king." This very thing is expressed differently in an English saying: "A people get the government that they deserve." In other words, a ruler and his subjects always act and react on each other. The truthfulness, vigour and strength of purpose displayed by the subjects cannot but produce an effect on the ruler. Likewise, the ruler's misconduct and disregard for truth cannot but have their effect on the subjects. What, then is the duty of the people of Kutch, a people who have the spirit of adventure in them, who cross the oceans and journey to distant lands, who go round the whole earth and return with riches? If the grievances which you have hinted at are real, why do you fear to place them all before the ruler with due courtesy and with full regard for him? How can I express any views about them without first discussing them with the Maharao? If they are real, I tell you the remedy lies with you, not the remedy of uncivil and thoughtless resistance but that of truth and love. Where truth, courage and love are found together, nothing is impossible. I advise you, on the strength of the experience I have gathered during thirty years of vigilant political life, that you should once acquaint the Maharao with all your grievances, with firmness, with the fullest regard for truth and with due civility. Let my words sink in your heart and follow the advice I have given; you will then realize that I have placed in your hands a remedy of unfailing effect.<sup>1</sup>

If people do not like this arrangement, I am even ready to address a meeting attended only by classes other than *Antyajas*, but I

<sup>1</sup> Gandhiji then suggested to the workers, in regard to the arrangements for the next day's meeting, that the people should be informed in advance that *Antyajas* would be permitted to sit with others, but that a special space would be reserved for those who did not like such an arrangement.

would not go to a meeting where space is reserved for *Antyajias* at some distance. Frame your programme, therefore, with due regard for my views and temperament. I state, not merely as a formality, but deliberately and as a truth, that the meeting exercised proper judgment in acting as it did today, and expressed nothing but its love for me. I am grateful to you for respecting my wishes and carrying out the suggestion I made. You have proved by this behaviour of yours that you are better people than the residents of Mangrol and Bhadaran.<sup>1</sup>

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 1-11-1925

### 86. TELEGRAM TO TULSI MAHER <sup>2</sup>

[On or before *October 23, 1925*]<sup>3</sup>

SHOCKED HEAR YOUR GROWING WEAKNESS. YOU MUST TAKE MILK OTHERS THINGS AND EVEN CHANGE COLDER CLIMATE IF REBUILDING IMPOSSIBLE THERE..

BAPU

From a photostat: G. N. 6522

### 87. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, BHUJ <sup>4</sup>

*October 23, 1925*

I have had a meeting with the Maharaoshri. He heard me patiently. I put before him everything, all your grievances, excepting one unimportant matter. I cannot say what the outcome will be. I can tell you, however, that if you follow the advice I gave yesterday the remedy for your grievances is quite simple. Why is it that even our Princes feel that they should listen to me? It is because they all know that I speak out what I have in my mind. I observe due courtesy in all that I say, and there is sweetness behind my strong words; there is no

<sup>1</sup> In the Kheda district of Gujarat; on February 11, 1925, Gandhiji addressed a public meeting there in which the *Antyajias* were made to sit in a separate enclosure.

<sup>2</sup> A Nepalese constructive worker

<sup>3</sup> The telegram is quoted in a letter, dated 23-10-1925, from Mahadev Desai to Kishorelal Mashruwala.

<sup>4</sup> Extracted from Mahadev Desai's account of Gandhiji's tour

bitterness in my heart, no unworthy thought or hatred or any other ignoble feeling. There is such power in truth itself that one need not resort to exaggeration to add to it. When I say that "one should speak the truth, and say what is agreeable", I mean that our truth should be inspired by love and not by hatred or violence. Today, though we recognize the value of truth, we have shown ourselves bankrupt of it. You should, therefore, tell the ruler whatever you feel to be true without any fear in your heart—this is not only your right but your duty.

The cause of cow-protection has suffered through the folly of the so-called "servants of the cow". A hundred times more cows are slaughtered for commercial purposes than are killed by Muslims as sacrificial offering. The slaughter-houses in the country exist to serve the needs not only of Muslims but of the army too and to supply hides. Slaughter-houses pay because of the ignorance of the rich in the country about what Hinduism means, and because of a lack of genuine religious consciousness among our *Vaishnavas* and our priests and because of their laxity. Cows are owned by Hindus and, therefore, it is none other than the Hindus who sell cows for slaughter. All those who wear shoes use the hide of slaughtered animals, for the hide of dead cattle is not easily tanned. If we wish to save the cattle that would otherwise be slaughtered there is no other way but for the well-to-do to interest themselves in the trade in milk and hides. I appeal to you for funds so that it may be possible to take up all this work.

You want me to collect funds to be used exclusively in Kutch. Why should I come to you to collect funds for that purpose? You yourselves can do that. The money collected by me is for the poor in the country. When in 1921 we collected 38 lakhs from Bombay, did any resident of Kutch stipulate that his contribution should be spent in Kutch? I would not accept a pie from my friends in Kutch if they offer money on any such condition. I ask for money to serve the much-suffering cows in the country, to help poor women protect their honour and the starving millions to get some food. If, then, you adopt the short-sighted policy of "money from Kutch to be spent in Kutch", there will be no hope for the country. If you have no faith in my capacity and my judgment to spend your money properly, you had better give me nothing. Please remember that Kutch is a tiny drop in the sea that is India; this drop must make a sacrifice for the vast



country. You should on your own collect money to meet the needs of Kutch. It does not befit you or me that you should use my name to collect it. Have the Marwaris given me money on condition that I should spend it in Marwar? They gave me money—one lakh rupees—for the propagation of Hindi in Madras and are giving generously now for the cause of cow-protection. For Bihar, they gave me a big pile. Only yesterday, I collected a very large sum from Marwaris living in Bihar, none of whom asked me to spend a part of it in Marwar. I heard such a condition being made only by residents of Kutch, and I was extremely pained by it. It is your duty to give money for the whole of the country, for you get it from the whole country, from your trade in and with all parts of it. You must make a return for what you receive.

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 1-11-1925

### 88. *HOW TO WORSHIP GOD*

A Parsi gentleman has written to me from Persia. He has addressed to me some profound questions<sup>1</sup> which I quote below in his own words. At two or three places where he has used English words I have given their Gujarati equivalents instead.

If even a single leaf does not stir without the will of God, what is there left for man to do? This is a question dating back to times immemorial and it will always continue to be asked in the future; however, the answer is included in the question itself as it is God Himself who has given us the capacity to ask it. All our actions are governed by laws, and the same is true of god. As our laws and our knowledge are imperfect, we can violate these laws in a civil or uncivil manner. Being all-knowing and omnipotent God never violates His own laws. These admit of no improvements or additions. They are immutable. Our freedom lies in the capacity bestowed on us to think, distinguish and choose between good and evil in various ways. This freedom is strictly limited. It is so limited that a learned person has said that it is even less than that enjoyed by a sailor on board a ship, to walk on the deck. However little it may be, there is this freedom and even though it is not much, it is sufficient, at any rate, to enable a

<sup>1</sup> Not translated here

human being to attain *mukti*<sup>1</sup> through it. Destiny and man's effort to attain the aims of life go hand in hand. However, destiny does not thwart the purpose of anyone who treads the road of *mukti*.

Hence, all that now remains to consider is how to serve or worship God. He can be served in one way alone. To serve the poor is to serve God. By serving even an ant, one serves Him. It is He who gives the tiny particle [of food] to the ant and the six maunds to the elephant. Anyone who refrains from trampling an ant also serves it; one who does not intentionally harm it will not harm other animals or his fellowmen. At each place and at each point of time service assumes a different form, although the sentiment involved in it is the same. In serving those who suffer, one serves God. Discretion should be exercised in this service. There is no reason to believe that one is doing nothing but service by giving grains to the hungry. It is a sin to provide food for an idle person who makes no effort and depends on others for food. It is a meritorious act to provide him with an occupation and, if he refuses to work, to let him starve is to render service to him. God's name should be chanted and it is necessary to worship Him with rituals as this leads to self-purification, which in its turn enables man to find his own way. However, ceremonial worship by itself does not constitute the service of God. It is a means of doing that service. It is for this reason that Narasinh Mehta has sung: "Nothing is achieved by bathing and worshipping, or counting one's beads and chanting His name."

And from this reply we get the answer to the third question which is as follows. What is the aim of life? It is to know the Self. In the words of Narasinh Mehta, "So long as the essence of the Self is not realized, all our efforts are in vain." This realization of the Self, or Self-knowledge, is not possible until one has achieved unity with all living beings—has become one with God. To accomplish such a unity implies deliberate sharing of the suffering of others and the eradication of such suffering.

[Form Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 25-10-1925

<sup>1</sup> Deliverance from phenomenal existence, as the end of life

## 89. MY NOTES

### GET ENROLLED IN THE SPINNERS' ASSOCIATION

Those who are contributing yarn spun by themselves to the Congress should now send in their names to the Spinners' Association. All those belonging to this group can send in yarn every month if they choose to do so or 12,000 yards in a single instalment. A large sum is being spent on postage and of this as much as possible should be saved. It is, therefore, desirable that all the yarn be sent together. Moreover, it is also hoped that many persons can send their yarn in the same parcel. With some such motive Shri Dastane handed over to me, on my way, at Bhusawal Station, yarn spun by fifty-seven members along with their names and addresses. Yarn from all places should start coming in now.

### THE MEANING OF KHADI

Just as some people wear coarse material thinking it is khadi although it has been spun and woven in a textile mill, others persist in the belief that khadi necessarily means thick and coarse cloth made of hand-spun yarn. This latter belief is not borne out by facts. Hand-woven cloth made of hand-spun yarn is of course khadi, however fine it may be. It may be made of cotton, silk or even of wool. One should wear whichever of these one happens to find convenient. The khadi from Andhra is very fine. In Assam, one can get some khadi made of silk. Woollen khadi is made in Kathiawar. In other words, the only criterion of khadi is its being hand-spun and hand-woven. Ordinarily, hand-spun khadi is found to be coarse and thick, hence, some people erroneously believe that khadi can only be of this type, though in fact fine khadi of sixty to eighty count yarn is also made. Nevertheless, those who have used thick khadi know that the touch of coarse rough khadi is soft to the body and, being rough, it affords better protection to the skin.

### THE KANPUR CONGRESS

There is not much time left before the Kanpur Congress.<sup>1</sup> The reception committee was faced with unexpected difficulties. The

<sup>1</sup> The Kanpur Congress was held in the last week of December, 1925.

obstacle that the committee met in getting land has now been removed. However, in order to complete the preparations within the time left, a large number of volunteers and large sums of money are required. My expectations are that the reception committee will receive that help and the work will be speeded up.

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 25-10-1925

### 90. LETTER TO TULSI MAHER

*Kartika Sud 8 [October 25, 1925]*<sup>1</sup>

CHI. TULSI MAHER,

When I heard that you had fever, I was not worried. Now Bhai Kishorelal writes that your frame has become very weak and the weakness persists and yet you adhere to your milkless diet. I have already, on receiving that letter, sent you a wire.<sup>2</sup> I hope you have resumed taking milk. I hope you have taken no vow. I approve of experiments in giving up milk, but until I succeed in my experiment, I would not agree to my colleagues trying it at the cost of their health. So I cannot tolerate your abstaining from milk even after you have become weak. If you have not started taking it, please do so. Take only milk and fruit for the present. As you get stronger, have wheat, rice, etc. In case you are suffering from constipation, go to a cooler place, if necessary.

Write to me a detailed letter. May God give you good health soon!

Give the enclosed letter to Shanti and Menali. If you send the reply to Mandvi, I shall get it there.

Today I intend to leave Bhuj.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 6521

<sup>1</sup> From the postmark

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "Telegram to Tulsi Maher", on or before 23-10-1925.

## 91. LETTER TO FULCHAND SHAH

KUTCH KOTADA,  
Sunday [October 25, 1925]<sup>1</sup>

BHAISHRI FULCHAND,

I have your letter. You must have received the Rs. 1,000. As for Gondal, as long as the people there do nothing you and I cannot do much.

What can others do with an immoral family? The reason why something can be done in regard to Shivajibhai<sup>2</sup> is that we have a hand in the management of his affairs. But we do not have the right to interfere in the affairs of others who run such institutions. We have comparatively less right to interfere in Charitravijayji's case.

We cannot go about judging the world. So I wish you not to worry about Gondal or other such States. The best way to reform the world is to reform oneself. Therefore, it is only right that one should take up duties which come naturally to one. If this is true, I think it proper to have patience with Gondal. We shall talk over it further when we meet.

Moreover, I gather from your letter that you think that I have received plenty of evidence about the evils in Gondal. But I have not. I have no evidence at all. I had told the Committee<sup>3</sup> that I tried my best to meet the Ruler of Gondal but I did not succeed. Just now I know only one immediate remedy, that those who are volunteers should increase their strength. Even this will improve things in the future.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati original: C.W. 2828. Courtesy: Fulchand shah

<sup>1</sup> Gandhiji was in Kotada on this date.

<sup>2</sup> He had established three Ashrams at Madhda in Kathiawar.

<sup>3</sup> Presumably, Executive Committee of the Kathiawar Political Conference

## 92. LETTER TO DEVCHAND PAREKH

Monday [October 26, 1925]<sup>1</sup>

BHAI DEVCHANDBHAI,

I have your letter about the sub-castes. We shall soon be meeting somewhere and then we shall discuss your draft. Then we shall do what is necessary.

I have written a personal letter to Patwari, saying that if he is agreeable I shall go to the Ashram *via* Morvi where we can hold the Committee meeting. I have not yet received a reply to it. I should have. If I get no reply, I shall go *via* Jamnagar, but will not hold the meeting there. It seems now there will be no time left for it. So we shall have to hold the meeting at the Ashram. I must reach the Ashram on the 7th .

If you have any suggestion to offer, write to me at Mandvi. I shall be in Mandvi on the 29th and 30th; in Anjar on Sunday and Monday.

*Vandemataram from*

MOHANDAS

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 5723

## 93. LETTER TO MANIBEHN PATEL

Monday [October 26, 1925]<sup>2</sup>

CHI. MANI,

I have your letter. I hear also that you have sustained burns. I shall be reaching there shortly, so more when we meet. Hope your hand is completely all right. I have had a long talk with Dahyabhai and shall have another in a day or two. We will come to some decision before we reach Ahmedabad. As for you, I have already made up my mind.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

[From Gujarati]

*Bapuna Patro— Manibehn Patelne, p. 32*

<sup>1</sup> In the letter, Gandhiji asks the addressee to send a reply to him at Mandvi, Kutch. He was there on October 30 and 31. The preceding Monday fell on October 26.

<sup>2</sup> From the source

## 94. NOTES

### WOOL OR COTTON

A friend enquires whether the hill tribes who never use cotton, who have plenty of wool and who always wear woollen clothing can become members of the Congress by spinning and sending woollen yarn instead of cotton yarn. The hillsmen can certainly send wool yarn and become Congress members. The emphasis is not on cotton, but on hand-spinning. And I do hope that Congressmen who are working in the hills will enrol as many wool spinners as they can for both the Congress and the All-India Spinners' Association.

### A SPINNER'S DIFFICULTY

A correspondent writes: "The postage required for sending yarn subscription to the A.I.S.A. is greater than the value of yarn to be sent. Is there no way of saving this cost? Must all packets be registered? Or if not, may they be sent 'not-paid'?" This objection was considered when in terms of the Ahmedabad resolution yarn had to be sent to the All-India Khadi Board. It is impossible to save the postage in its entirety at the present moment or at any moment altogether. But much may be saved even now. Registration of packets containing yarn is totally unnecessary. It would not, however, do to send 'not-paid' packets. The postage must be borne by the senders; but there is no reason why everyone should send his or her yarn separately. In every village or street wherever members may be living within easy reach of one another, one party should collect all the yarn at one place and send the whole of it in one parcel. This can be easily arranged by someone taking the initiative and making himself responsible. Then, again, it is not obligatory to send the yearly subscription in twelve instalments. Those who have got ample leisure may spin their twelve thousand in one month and send the whole in one parcel or, it may be sent in as many instalments as is convenient. The question then arises what will become of the idea of spinning regularly every day. Regular spinning should be done although the subscription may be paid and yarn thus spun may be utilized for one's own personal use. The obligation of regular spinning is distinct from the obligation of sending twelve thousand yards of self-spun yarn. And it is necessary in the interest of national economy to spin

twelve thousand yards in the quickest possible time so as to save postage. I hope after some time arrangements will be made for establishing receiving depots in suitable centres so as to avoid postage.

#### ONE THOUSAND RUPEES PRIZE

A text-book on cow-protection has been found to be a necessity. An American friend who is interesting himself in the question of cow-protection wanted me to supply him with a book upon it. I failed to find for him a volume that would give him all the information that he needed. I therefore approached Sjt. Revashanker Jagjivan and asked him whether he would issue a prize for a cow-protection essay. He has kindly consented to pay one thousand rupees for the best essay on the subject. The terms are that the essay should be delivered at Satyagraha Ashram, Sabarmati, to the Secretary, All-India Cow-Protection Association, on or before March 31, 1926. It may be in English, Sanskrit or Hindi. It should deal with the origin, meaning and implications of cow-protection quoting texts in support. It should contain an examination of the Shastras and find whether there is any prohibition in the Shastras for conducting dairies and tanneries by Associations interested in cow-protection. It should trace the history of cow-protection in India and methods adopted to achieve it from time to time. It should contain statistics giving the number of cattle in India and examine the question of pasture land and the effect of the Government policy about pasture land in India and suggest remedy to be adopted for securing cow-protection. I am inviting Acharya Anandshanker Dhruva and Sjt. C. V. Vaidya to allow themselves to be appointed judges of the essays to be received. The terms of competition are subject to change within a fortnight from the date of publication so as to allow me to receive the opinions of friends interested in cow-protection from the standpoint of the All-India Cow-Protection Association. And if no change is announced within that fortnight, the foregoing terms may be regarded as final.

#### FORTHCOMING CONGRESS

Cawnpore has been experiencing, but also fortunately overcoming, exceptional difficulties in its preparations for the forthcoming Congress. The difficulty about finally securing the plot of land required has been only just settled. It has domestic quarrels also. Dr. Murarilal and his Committee will, I hope, get all the assistance they may need, whether in men or money. Success of a



Congress session largely depends upon the application, intelligence, tact and resourcefulness of those who compose the Reception Committee, and the Committee's success depends upon the active co-operation and goodwill of local people. I hope that the women of Cawnpore will remember that it is a daughter of India who is to preside over the deliberations of the Congress for the first time in its long and chequered history. I hope that there will be an able corps of women volunteers ministering to the needs and the comforts of the female delegates and visitors who may be expected to attend the Congress in larger numbers than before.

FOR MEMBERS A.I.S.A.

I propose to publish from week to week, or at longer intervals if the A. I.S.A. is unable to supply weekly, names of members who may send their quota. This will be the only receipt issued by the Association. The plan will not only ensure accuracy but save postage and some portion of routine work at the Central Office. Those who do not find their names acknowledged in these columns should complain directly to the Central Office. In sending their yarn members should take care to give their full name, full address including the taluk and the Congress province, the class of membership and whether the member desires to become a member of the Congress or not. It should be noted that no extra subscription is necessary for the Congress. Thus sending of 2,000 yards of self-spun yarn entitles the sender if so desired to become enrolled as member of the Congress as also of the Association. There should also be a card attached to every hank of yarn containing the number of yards, the measurement of the winder, the weight, the count, the variety of cotton used and whether the yarn is spun on a wheel or on a *takli*. If members will take care to send in these particulars accurately, they will save a large amount of national time.

SPURIOUS KHADI

A friend sends me a pictorial card taken from spurious khadi woven in some of the Indian mills. It has printed upon it a charkha with a basket full of slivers and a few bobbins with yarn wound upon them lying in front. My correspondent tells me that such imitation khaddar is manufactured in almost all the Indian mills and such stuff is sent here by Japan also. He adds that poor people, who know that they should wear khaddar when they see a charkha stamp upon it and

upon applying at the shops have stuff looking like khaddar given to them, unquestioningly buy it and flatter themselves with the belief that they have done something towards the alleviation of the economic distress of India. It is a thousand pities that mill-owners should lack all patriotic fervour and, in order to swell dividends, or, maybe, now, to be able to keep the mills going, pay no regard to the national will. And yet people are not wanting who expect with the assistance of Indian mills to achieve the boycott of foreign cloth. The tremendous mistake underlying such belief consists in supposing that the mill industry can ever be utilized for the national purpose before khaddar has attained a proper commercial footing. I doubt not that one day all the mills will fall in line with the great national purpose; but that time will not come before khaddar can hold its own against the whole world, in other words, before the national taste has undergone such a revolution that the general body of people would refuse to wear anything but khaddar and they will have been so far educated as to be able without difficulty to distinguish between real khaddar and the base imitation.

#### CHANGE OF ADDRESS

All communications intended for the All-India Cow-Protection Association should be addressed to the Secretary of the Association at Satyagraha Ashram, Sabarmati, and not at Bombay.

*Young India*, 29-10-1925

#### 95. INTERROGATORIES

Whilst I was at Lucknow the sub-editor of the *Indian Daily Telegraph* handed me some interrogatories for my answer. They are rather interesting. I therefore reproduce the most important of them with my answers.

1. Do you propose to launch mass civil disobedience within one year, or within any specified time?

I entertain no present hope of being able to launch mass civil disobedience within any measurable distance of time.

2. Do you believe in the dictum 'the end justifies the means'?

I have never believed in the dictum.

3. A year ago it was reported that you intended to launch civil disobedience, and once launched you would go on with it, even if sporadic violence occurred. Absolute non-violence being impossible on the part of the

masses, will you now take the risk of a modicum of violence (minimum, so far as it lies in your power) and launch civil disobedience?

What I said a year ago and what I wish to repeat now is that whatever step I may take now will be, I hope, not conditional, but absolute and irrevocable. Whenever I have suspended civil disobedience I have done so not by reason of any outbreak of violence, but upon the discovery of such violence as had been initiated or encouraged by Congressmen who should have known better. Any outbreak of violence would not have brought about suspension, as, for instance, the Moplah outbreak. But Chauri Chaura did for the simple reason that persons connected with the Congress were involved in it.

4. In the Calcutta riot case, you laid the blame at the door of the Hindus. The Marwari Association or some Hindu organization challenged your verdict and produced evidence to prove the guilt of the Muslims in giving sufficient cause for provocation to the Hindus. You promised to publicly modify your verdict if you found your previous opinion mistaken. Will you now publicly modify your previous verdict?

I have seen nothing to modify my previous verdict.

5. You have consented to accept address from the Municipal Board (which is now in the hands of the Swarajist Party), but you have avoided address from the Hindu Sabha. Why do you make this invidious distinction against a body which represents the Hindu community, to which you belong?

I have never avoided address from the Lucknow Hindu Sabha. On the contrary, I told them that I would gladly accept their address when I paid a visit to Lucknow. The Swarajist Municipality approached me later and pressed me to accept its address even whilst I was passing through Lucknow. The Hindu Sabha might have done likewise. There was no question of avoidance. I simply thought that the Sabha would not want to present me with an address whilst I was merely passing through Lucknow specially as the Sabha had desired to discuss with me the Hindu-Muslim tension in Lucknow. It will be remembered that I gladly accepted the Hindu Sabha address in Sitapur.

6. The Aminabad Park *arati-namaz* question is hanging fire for more than a year. Will you kindly give your decision, if both parties promise to abide by it?

I have dealt with this matter in my U.P. Notes.

7. As a Hindu what is your candid opinion about the question?

I have no opinion, as I do not know the facts. If I had made up

my mind beforehand, I could not consent to arbitrate even if both the parties were willing to abide by my award.

8. Hindus never object to Muslim music during Moharrum, or at any time. Why should Muslims object to Hindu music? Are the Hindus not entitled to safeguard their religious rights by every means?

This question deals with two questions of fact about which I know nothing. As to the third part of the question, Hindus are entitled to defend their religious rights not by every means but by every truthful and, in my opinion, non-violent means.

9. At Patna two kidnapped Hindu girls were produced before you. As a Hindu, what steps do you advise the Hindus to take against the growing evil of kidnapping throughout India?

I dealt with this delicate question last week.<sup>1</sup>

10. Are not the Hindus justified in organizing themselves, not for any aggressive action against Muslims or others, but for safeguarding their religious rights and stamping out such evils as kidnapping, etc., as also for the physical, social, moral and material advancement of the Hindu community?

I do not suppose anybody can possibly object to the organization such as the question mentions. I certainly do not object.

11. Maulana Shaukat Ali sent a message through you to the Bihar Khilafat Conference. If Lala Lajpat Rai or Pandit Malaviya send a message through you to a Hindu Conference, will you have any objection to it?

Maulana Shaukat Ali never sent through me any message to the Bihar Khilafat Conference; but if he had, I would certainly have carried any message from him, provided it was unobjectionable. And I should certainly carry out a similar commission entrusted to me by Pandit Malaviyaji or Lala Lajpat Rai.

*Young India*, 29-10-1925

## 96. U.P. NOTES

### A RICKETY PLATFORM

At Hajipur my Bihar tour ended. It was all orderliness and noiselessness at Hajipur. Though I was lodged in the national school huts in front of which the huge public meeting took place, the

<sup>1</sup>*Vide* "That Eternal Question", 22-10-1925.

volunteers were disciplined and the crowds were previously informed through notice and otherwise that I was ill able to bear the strain of noise, rush and the touching of feet. In spite, therefore, of there being hundreds of men crowding round the school premises, I had perfect quiet. Of all the national schools in Bihar, this is perhaps the best managed and the best manned, Janakdhari Babu, a non-co-operating *vakil* with a character of great beauty, being the principal. There was a purse, too, of nearly Rs. 5,000 at Hajipur. With this pleasant ending and the ceremony at Sonepur of opening a Sevashram, chiefly for the purpose of attending to the comfort and requirements of thousands of visitors who annually flock to Sonepur in connection with a unique fair that takes place there every full moon day of the first month of the Hindu year and which draws the finest horses, elephants and cattle to the Sonepur fair, the Bihar tour ended and I entered U.P., Ballia being the first place.

The travel to Ballia, although requiring only four hours, was most trying. The meeting there was a terrible ordeal and a contrast to all I had seen and experienced in Bihar. It was a slow train that carried me to Ballia from Chhapra. There were stations every few minutes. Vast crowds gathered at every station and made a most noisy demonstration which the volunteers were unable to control. I know that it was all blind and excessive affection. I was to have gone to Ballia in 1921. I was unable to do so then. The people, therefore, were almost incredulous, but when I actually did go there, they became delirious with joy. The volunteers could keep no control. As soon, however, as I could get them to listen to me, and understand my appeal for the Deshbandhu Memorial Fund, they paid freely. At Ballia itself, the crowd at the station was most unmanageable. Rev. Mr. Perill of the American Mission had kindly brought his car to the platform which I could reach with the greatest difficulty but which alone made it possible to pass unhurt through the pressing crowd. From the station, we went directly to the public meeting. There was a huge and lofty platform which, I saw at a glance, had been erected by an amateur and was wholly unsafe for the number of persons which the floor space could accommodate and for which it was intended. There were nearly seven addresses. All the members connected with these should naturally have been on the platform. The stairs leading to the platform were shaky, slippery and unsafe. The platform swung to and fro when anybody walked on it. It could hardly bear the weight of ten people and it was dangerous even for one person at a time to walk on

some parts of it. The chairman at once recognized that, if a tragedy was to be avoided, all but myself should remove themselves from the platform. So they gently hurried down, leaving Rajendra Babu in charge of me. Those who were to read the addresses came one at a time and in spite of these precautions, it was not at all certain that the whole structure might not come down at any moment. This was by no means my first experience of a dangerously weak platform. I recall at least two accidents. This was the weakest I had seen. The very appearance was enough for an ordinary, trained eye to detect the weakness, but those in charge had no experience and evidently the man who was entrusted with the erection had none. Let this Ballia instance be a warning to Congress workers all over that they should not attempt ambitious platforms or, when they do, they should leave the erection to trained men who know what they are doing.

The meeting too was almost uncontrollable by the volunteers. The noise continued whilst the addresses were being read, but, in spite of it all, they observed perfect silence when I appealed to them to give me a hearing. I deduced from this fact the conclusion that a little previous preparation as in Bihar would have produced the same results and I would have done much more substantial work at Ballia than I was able to do. What is wanted is quiet and sustained work. Ballia possesses some very good workers, and it is possible to make it a greater centre of activity. I know that the people of Ballia are patient and long-suffering. Theirs was no mean sacrifice in 1921-22.

#### KASHI VIDYAPITH

From Ballia we went to Banaras where we had to change for Lucknow on our way to Sitapur. There was a halt of five hours in Banaras. Babu Bhagwan Das took the opportunity of arranging a meeting of students of the Kashi Vidyapith. He took me also to see the good work in spinning and weaving done by the middle schools conducted by the Municipality. Their work, it will be remembered, was started by Prof. Ramdas Gour, and it has been since continued. Both *takli* and the spinning-wheel are at work in the school. The experiment may fairly be claimed to be a success. At the Vidyapith I was shown the workshop. Its growing feature is its carpentry department. The spinning-wheel cannot be claimed to have prospered in the Vidyapith. I had occasion in my speech<sup>1</sup> to say to the students

<sup>1</sup>*Vide* "Speech at Kashi Vidyapith, Banaras", 17-10-1925.

and the professors that, if they had no faith in the spinning-wheel, they should remove it from their curriculum entirely. It was no use giving it a place because it was the fashion to consider it part of national activity. Time had arrived when every national institution worth the name had to evolve its educational policy and to prosecute it even in spite of opposition and indifference.

#### AT LUCKNOW

From Banaras we went to Lucknow, where there was a halt of over there hours. There the Lucknow Municipality did me the honour of presenting me with an address which was written in choice high-flown Urdu. Special care was taken to make the language as difficult as possible for a simple man like me, not belonging to U.P., to understand. Most difficult Persian and Arabic words were used and it seemed as if every word of Sanskrit origin or word spoken by the crowd was deliberately excluded. Naturally, therefore, I was supplied with an English translation. I, therefore, told the Municipality that it was not possible for me to congratulate it on its high-flown Urdu. I believe in a national language for interprovincial commerce but that language could neither be Lucknavi Urdu nor Sanskritized Hindi. It must be Hindustani, a combination of words generally spoken by the Urdu-knowing and the Hindi-knowing public, a language easily understood by Hindus and Mussalmans alike. The Municipality of Lucknow is essentially a Swarajist municipality. It has a record of work in no way inferior to that of its predecessors. But I told my audience that it would be improper to be satisfied with merely coming to the standard of its predecessors. Congressmen wherever they capture an institution should be able to show a better record, and it was therefore a matter for thought that the Lucknow roads were so bad as they were. If want of funds was the cause, the excuse was inadmissible as Congressmen were expected to take up the spade and the shovel and repair the roads by their voluntary labour. I congratulated the Municipality on its experiments in dairying, but I warned them against being satisfied until they could supply cheap and pure milk to the population within their jurisdiction.

The address of the Municipality was discreetly silent about the Hindu-Muslim question. Speaking, however, amongst friends (most of the councillors, whether Hindus or Mussalmans, were friends whom I knew) I could not ignore the question and therefore spoke upon the growing tension between the two parties. I suggested that whatever

happened in other parts of India, Lucknow at least should be able to compose the differences and to achieve a unity unbreakable under any strain and irrespective of what happened in other parts of India.

I had time, too, to pay a flying visit to its Women's College. This is a college conducted by the American Mission, said to be the oldest institution of its kind in all Asia. I saw there girls drawn from almost every part of India. They flocked round me to get my autograph in their autograph books. I have scared away many autograph-mongers by mentioning the condition under which I generally give my autograph, and that is that the applicants should promise to wear khaddar and spin regularly. I mentioned the conditions to the girls. Nothing daunted, they readily made the promise which the lady superintendent has assured me she would see was religiously kept.

#### IN SITAPUR

From Lucknow we motored to Sitapur, reaching there about 10 p.m. Before reaching my quarters I had to attend a meeting of the Hindu Sabha to receive its address. In reply to the address, I said that I hardly deserved it because I had done nothing for the Sabha as such; on the contrary, I had even criticized, though in a perfectly friendly spirit, some of its activities; but I accepted the address as I yielded to no one in my devotion to Hinduism. I said further that all religious activity was of true service only in so far as it adhered to truth and non-violence in their fulness. From the Hindu Sabha meeting, I was taken to a public meeting where there was to be an address of the Municipality. The next day I visited, in company with the Ali Brothers the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan Conference. The Presidential address, admirable in many respects, had scrupulously avoided the use of words of Persian or Arabic origin. In my speech, therefore, I was obliged to reiterate the views I expressed in the reply to the Lucknow Municipality address. Highly artificial and Sanskritized Hindi is as avoidable as highly Persianized Urdu. Both the speeches are unintelligible to the masses. I have accepted Hindustani as a common medium because it is understood by over 20 crores of the people of India. This is not the artificial Lucknavi Urdu or the Sammelani Hindi. And one would expect at least a Sammelan address to be such as would be understood by both Hindus and Mussalmans of the common type. The animal who, if he pronounces the name *Ishwar* dreads to pronounce the name *Khuda*, or the one who would pronounce the name *Khuda* at every turn, but would regard it as sinful to utter the name *Ishwar*, is not an attractive being. I reminded the audience, too, that Hindi propaganda in U.P. could only consist in



improving the literature and creating an atmosphere for the advent of a Hindi Rabindranath and that the Sarmelan should devote its attention outside U.P. to popularizing Hindustani speech and by publishing standard works of other languages in Devnagari character. Maulana Mahomed Ali emphasized my first point by remarking that if Hindustani speech required an artificial stimulus in the home of its birth the attempt to make it the common medium had better be given up. In the afternoon, there was the conference presided over by Maulana Shaikat Ali. His address, which was a thesis on Hindu-Muslim unity, wound up with an exhortation on charkha and khaddar. I was called upon to follow him and, therefore, took up the theme the Maulana had just introduced. I showed the necessity of the charkha and khaddar and ended with my reasons for helping the Patna decision which, I contended, was not a forced growth, but an exact indication of Congress public opinion. Pandit Motilalji, who followed me, took up the Patna resolution and explained it in detail and, whilst reiterating his own belief in the charkha and khaddar, said that the Congress could not be thoroughly representative of the people unless it became predominantly political. After passing Panditiji's resolution confirming the Patna decision and approving the formation of the Spinners' Association, the delegates went to the Gujarati *pandal* to partake of light refreshments that were provided by the Gujarati merchants who were domiciled in Sitapur.

My tour in U.P., if it may be so called, was wound up with a long and hearty discussion with a Hindu Sabha deputation that had come from Lucknow specially to confer with me on the Hindu-Muslim tension in Lucknow. I told them that I had not gone back on my undertaking to arbitrate upon their disputes. I told them that I had offered to hear the evidence last year in Delhi, but I told them that now under the changed conditions, neither party might care to submit the matters in dispute to me. But that, if they did, I would gladly make time even to go to Lucknow and arbitrate. On the deputation telling me that the Hindus would like me to arbitrate, I advised them to approach the Mussalmans and let me know if the responsible men of both the parties were prepared to abide by my award.

Thus ended my tour in Bihar and U.P. At the time of writing these notes I find myself in Cutch where I have Mahadev Desai with me to take up the burden of writing down the notes of the interesting experiences of this weird, secluded land.

*Young India*, 29-10-1925

## 97. MUNICIPAL LIFE

The fashion, that seems now to have become permanent, of presenting prominent Congressmen with addresses by municipalities and local boards has resulted in my coming in touch with the working of municipalites almost all over India. I have come to the conclusion from my observation of so many municipalities that the greatest problem they have to tackle is sanitation. I am aware that it is a stupendous problem. Some of the national habits are bad beyond description, and yet so ingrained as to defy all human effort. Wherever I go this insanitation obtrudes itself upon my gaze in some shape or another. In the Punjab and Sind, in total disregard of the elementary laws of health we dirty our terraces and roofs breeding billions of disease-producing microbes and founding colonies of flies. Down south, we do not hesitate to dirty our streets, and early in the morning, it is impossible for anyone in whom the sense of decency is developed to walk through the streets which are lined with peopleperforming functions of nature which are meant to be performed in seclusion and in spots which human beings need not ordinarily tread. In Bengal, the same tale in a varying form has to be told; the same pool in which people have washed their dirt, their pots, and in which cattle have drunk, supplies drinking water. And here in Cutch men and women think nothing of repeating the performance I have seen in Madras. These are not ignorant people; they are not illiterate; many have travelled even beyond the borders of India. They ought to know better; but they do not. And nobody worries about giving them an education in the elements of sanitation. It is, or should be, one of the privileges of municipalities and local boards to make it their chief concern to eradicate insanitation within their limits. If we are to live in cities, if we are to live an organized life, if we are to grow in health and wisdom—we shall have to get rid of insanitation some day or other. The sooner we do so the better. Let us not postpone everything till swaraj is attained. Some things no doubt will only be done when that much-wished-for event has happened. But it will never happen if we do not do the many things which can be done today as easily as under swaraj, and which are signs of corporate and civilized national life. No institution can handle this problem better and more speedily than our municipalities. They have, so far as I am aware, all the powers they need in this direction and they can get more, if

necessary. Only the will is often wanting. It is not recognized that a municipality does not deserve to exist which does not possess model closets and where streets and lanes are not scrupulously clean all the hours of the day and the night. But the reform cannot be brought about without infinite application on the part of members of municipalities and local boards. To think of all the municipalities in the aggregate and to wait till everyone has begun the work is indefinitely to postpone the reform. Let those who have got the will and the ability commence the reform in right earnest now, and the rest will follow.

It is with this end in view that I reproduce<sup>1</sup> elsewhere a translation of a humorously written letter by Dr. Hariprasad Desai of Ahmedabad and published recently in *Navajivan*. The Municipality of Ahmedabad had taken up the problem seriously. Ahmedabad is an exceptionally difficult town to deal with from the sanitary standpoint. It is unclean. I have not seen a more unclean city. Its *pols* are seething with stench and dirt. The superstitions and prejudices to be overcome are immense. Insanitation has acquired an almost religious sanction. Even the doctrine of ahimsa is invoked in favour of dirty habits! I invite the reader to carefully peruse the translation. He will then appreciate the difficulties that face the reformer in Ahmedabad. Not many volunteers are to be had for this thankless and difficult work. The reader will note too that it is being done by the commissioners who are interested in making Ahmedabad a model city in point of sanitation. They are doing their work outside office hours and partly as a labour of love. No municipality need expect any brilliant result if it is to be satisfied with mere routine work, issuing instructions to its executive officer. Every municipal commissioner will have to become a self-constituted scavenger in the city under his care if the cities of India are to become fit to live in for the poorest people in a decent sanitary condition.

*Young India*, 29-10-1925

<sup>1</sup> Not reproduced here. For purport of the letter; *vide* "Sanitation in Ahmedabad", 5-11-1925.

## 98. TELEGRAM TO RANCHHODDAS PATWARI

KUTCH MANDVI  
October 30, 1925

TO  
DIWAN SAHEB MORVI

SURPRISED OFFICIAL REPLY PURELY PERSONAL LETTER<sup>1</sup> NO DESIRE PASS THROUGH MORVI IF I MAY NOT HOLD MEETING OF SMALL WORKING COMMITTEE WHICH HAS FROM ITS INCEPTION SCRUPULOUSLY AVOIDED REFERENCE PURE POLITICS OR ...<sup>2</sup> KATHIAWAR STATES.

GANDHI

From a photostat of the original: G.N. 4121

## 99. SPEECH AT MANDVI<sup>3</sup>

October 31, 1925

Who acts courageously and for what purpose? One could be courageous in order to be licentious, one could be courageous for the sake of a woman and, even for the sake of wealth. However, all this is like being courageous in order to jump into a well. Courage should be shown for the purpose of swimming across to the other shore. The supreme effort should be made for the sake of self-realization. We should take up a profession in which we offend no one and in which not a single pie has to be borrowed from anyone. Gentlemen with whom I was very familiar and who were like the multi-millionaires with whom I conversed the other day have been reduced to the sort of penury described in the couplet.<sup>4</sup> "I saw the relations of Shah Alam<sup>5</sup> begging in the streets." Hence, why should there be all this rush, pretence and fuss about something that is of a fleeting nature? Courage should be shown in having a vision of the glory of God and in singing His praises. True courage consists in losing one's mind in looking around at God's creations. These countless stars which shine in the sky, whose is the lustre they shed? One may spend many lives in

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Letter to Ranchhoddas Patwari", 22-10-1925.

<sup>2</sup> One word is illegible.

<sup>3</sup> Extracted from Mahadev Desai's account of Gandhiji's tour

<sup>4</sup> By Behramji Malbari, a Parsi poet of Gujarat

<sup>5</sup> One of the last Mogul emperors

trying to solve this riddle. Shrimad Rajchandra<sup>1</sup> lay in insufferable agony before his death; however, he was not aware of it, he only eagerly awaited the vision of God. Today, I have to say harsh things gently; hence I feel I am lucky in being able to recall to memory of a man like Shrimad Rajchandra and to praise his non-violence. Let us today derive from the memory of this man the strength to speak out without fear the plain, milk-white truth as seen by the soul. Let us stand in awe of the self alone; let us be concerned that the Self, which is ever watchful, does not suffer pain. Let us learn endless penance from Rajchandra's life and realize that at the end of such penance, he came to worship *Chaitanya*<sup>2</sup>. Let us make our lives meaningful by realizing our insignificance and thus become meek as a lamb and strong as a lion by contemplating the *Chaitanya* that is within us.

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 8-11-1925

### 100 . SCHEME FOR COW-PROTECTION

The work of cow-protection has been going on at a snail's pace. I can assure the *gosevaks*<sup>3</sup> that the movement does not come to a standstill even for a single moment. I keep all the time thinking of it and also discuss it. And, as there are many people in Kutch who wish to serve this cause and also because it does not seem likely that I shall be able to come to Kutch again, I have explained my scheme and collected some funds. As I write this, Rs. 3,000 has been collected and I hope to collect some more too.

Some friends have asked for the facts and figures of the cow-protection scheme. Here they are:

1. We are responsible for the sin involved in the export of the hides of dead cattle, while we use the hides of animals that are slaughtered. In order to prevent this, we should start tanneries and look upon it as our dharma to do so. I have no doubt whatsoever that this should become a part of our movement for cow-protection. This

<sup>1</sup> Business man and jeweller; had profound influence on Gandhiji's religious development.

<sup>2</sup> Universal Consciousness

<sup>3</sup> Workers who serve the cow

work can begin with the establishment of a tannery. Rs. 1,25,000 may be required today for this work. No loss can be incurred in this in the long run. As there is no question of making a profit, there is no fear of competition .

2. People should be trained for this work as it calls for considerable study. Scholarships should be offered to deserving trainees. I would put Rs. 5,000 as the expense under this head.

3. The Association<sup>1</sup> needs a library. This must contain books on cattle-breeding, on plants for purifying milk and on leather. A sum of about Rs. 3,000 may be required for this.

4. I consider a sum of Rs. 10,000 as necessary for a preliminary investigation of the dairy scheme, that is, for engaging a dairy scientist, to make out a report, getting a survey made of particular city in the light of this idea and for covering such other preliminary expenses.

According to this plan it is intended to spend Rs. 1,43,000 a year in this way. Under it the expenses on the tannery are by way of capital investment. That would amount to Rs. 1,30,000. The other preliminary expenses cover training and investigation.

The recurring expenses of the Association are not included here, as I would regard the Association as a failure if the expenses are not met by ordinary subscriptions. A secretary has already been appointed. I have chosen Shri Valji Govindji Desai for this post. He was a professor, first in the Gujarat College and later on in the Hindu University. It has been decided that he should be paid a salary of Rs. 200. Besides this, he has to be provided housing. At present he pays no rent as he lives in the Ashram, but he may hereafter have to be paid a sum of Rs. 25 towards rent. No other expenses have been incurred for the office so far. Other persons will also have to be engaged. However, we shall have an idea of what to do in this respect as the membership increases. It is my confirmed belief that a sum of Rs. 1,48,000 should be spent under any circumstances, as I regard cow-protection as an impossible task unless we run a tannery and a dairy as part of our dharma.

<sup>1</sup> The All-India Cow-Protection Association established in April 1925.

I hope that those who wish to serve this noble cause will contribute towards it.

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 1-11-1925

### *101. SOME COMPLAINTS AND SUGGESTIONS*

I have before me a very long letter containing complaints and suggestions. I feel it is necessary to publish it as it is from a volunteer. Omitting nothing important, I give below a summary of it.<sup>1</sup>

I do not believe that spinning-wheels cannot function in Gujarat. The farmers of Gujarat do have some spare time, although they may not have as much as farmers elsewhere. It is our duty to cure them of their idleness and make them work at some virtuous industry; but we have not yet firmly established ourselves in the villages. And yet I know that the present trend, at any rate, is in this direction. No doubt, this programme will take some time. The spinning-wheel will not disappear so long as even one individual like myself is steadfast in his belief and keeps on working according to his own capacity. Whatever be the number of the activities circling round the spinning-wheel, the wheel is the cornerstone, the hub, the center.

I am prepared to believe that some unnecessary expenses were incurred in Gujarat; this, however, could not be avoided. All of us were beginners, novices in this new field. We did not have the benefit of anyone's previous experience in this matter. The other provinces had the experience of Gujarat before them; is it not sufficient that the organizers were honest and prepared to make sacrifices? If all the Gujaratis with whom we had to deal had been capable and honest, we would not have suffered the loss of a single pie or would have suffered only that loss which we incurred with open eyes.

Had the allegations against the ashrams been specific and detailed, we would have investigated them. Why is it that the correspondent makes no mention of the Satyagraha Ashram? More than a lakh of rupees have been spent in it alone. Its accounts have been maintained down to the minutest detail, I do not know of any unnecessary expenses being incurred by the ashrams with which either the provincial committee or I am associated. I knew of some expenses having been incurred without full deliberation; however, so long as we

<sup>1</sup> Not translated here

are unable to get fully competent workers, we shall find that such expenses continue to be incurred. If I was to lay the foundation of the Satyagraha Ashram today, I would organize it differently in the light of my experience to date. However, I have no regret whatsoever, as regards what has already been done. What can a man give, over and above his all? The same rule should be applied while judging all institutions. Have the organizers guarded these, regarding them as their own? Have they, at the same time, regarded them as belonging to someone else and maintained accounts down to the very last pie, knowing that others are there to examine these? And, do the organizers have the ordinary capacity to carry out their duties? And institutions with regard to which these questions can be satisfactorily answered are above criticism.

The correspondent has alleged that I have not taken Dr. Sumant's suggestion seriously. He does not know that I have esteemed Dr. Sumant ever since I came to know him in 1915. His spirit of sacrifice has always drawn me towards him. And by nature I am inclined to regard even a child's suggestion seriously; how could I then laugh at Dr. Sumant's suggestion? And why should one whose whole being is moved only by the desire to serve dismiss lightly any suggestion whatsoever?

May I expose here the subtle praise implied in this allegation against me? The correspondent suggests that I perceive everything instantaneously. I must admit that I have no such power. On the contrary, I know that I understand certain things only after a great deal of effort. It may be that I have failed to understand Dr. Sumant's suggestion. I know this that I have never in my life shut my mind to a single suggestion.

Then again, the correspondent advises me to establish a society of servants like the one founded by Gokhale. What I have already said covers this too. the Satyagraha Ashram is a society of servants. Such as it is, it is a measure of my capacity. In it I have made and am still making full use of my intelligence. I have been well aware of its defects. I realize and admit that its shortcomings are a reflection of my shortcomings. If, on weighing the merits of this Ashram against its drawbacks, it is found wanting, the world has a right and duty to say that I have lived my life in vain as I have attempted to put my whole soul into it. No one stands in my way there; the men and women there live their lives in accordance with my wishes. They live there because I



have called or chosen them. I confess in all humility that it is not within my power to build anything better.

Now where and how should I set up another society of servants? And anything I set up would be an image or a branch of this Ashram.

Vallabhbhai and I had thought of founding another institution, call it big or small. Funds would be available, if we established it. However, we could come to no decision and have allowed things to go on.

I am also firmly convinced that the Satyagraha Ashram is not all-comprehensive. It does not claim to do everything or to satisfy everyone. There is room for many institutions to suit temperaments which differ from mine; but then I cannot be their founder. This task has to be done by others. Even in these I would serve if I could, but I cannot assume responsibility for them. To do so would be false attachment. There are limits to my capacity and I would simply die if I crossed these.

In my opinion, the triple programme<sup>1</sup> suggested by the correspondent is already being implemented. It has not yet yielded much result because enough workers have not been trained so far. All will be well if all workers—men and women—steadfastly engage themselves, each in the task assigned to him or her.

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 1-11-1925

## 102. SPEECH AT MUNDRA <sup>2</sup>

*November 1, 1925*

The problem of Kutch has, it is true, shaken the whole of India; however, at no place have I had the occasion to use this form of address as at no other place has the problem assumed such proportions as it has here. The storm broke at Bhuj. As soon as the report reached the people of Mundra, they sent a telegram to the secretary of the reception committee enquiring whether the latter was indulging in any undesirable mixing of persons? Such allegations can

<sup>1</sup> Mass contact with villagers, training for social service and propagation of khadi

<sup>2</sup> Extracted from Mahadev Desai's account of the Kutch tour; Gandhiji commenced the speech by addressing the audience as "Antyaja brothers and sisters, their sympathizers, and other Hindu brothers and sisters".

only be made at places where the people are steeped in superstition and make a mountain out of a mole hill. When the dispute first arose in Bhuj, I had congratulated the people on having solved it in a simple way. However, after this episode my heart has not readily agreed to congratulate people at other places. What took place at Bhuj was not deliberately done. However, no congratulations can be offered on a situation which, once created unconsciously, is made a permanent feature in course of time; for this only sorrow can be expressed. I have to speak exactly as I feel, before the ruler and the people. This is because I am responsible to Him who keeps a strict account of every moment of mine. Hence, I have to tell you too what your conduct was and is like. The telegram that you had sent broke the bounds of propriety. I dictated the reply that no one committed the fault of any undesirable mingling of people and only those who regarded untouchability as a sin would be seated along with the *Antyajas*. However, it is wrong to invite me to a place where the entire public believes in untouchability. It is an insult to invite me to a place where the untouchables are treated with nothing but contempt. After having come here, I heard of the school for the untouchables. I felt that at such a place the *Antyajas* would receive service. I would congratulate Ibrahim Pradhan Saheb on the school but the Hindu public deserves no such congratulations. Its existence puts the Hindus to shame. It is a matter of shame for me if a Muslim builds a Siva temple for my benefit. I was pleased to see the school's activity of spinning and weaving; however, I immediately felt that neither I nor the Hindus could take credit for this meritorious deed. I can have no sense of satisfaction if a Muslim recites the *Gayatri mantra* instead of me. I can only feel satisfied when a Brahmin comes along and offers to recite the *Gayatri* for me. However, in this case, the Khojas are doing the work that should be done by Hindus. Here, no one is bothered in the least about the *Antyajas*. I do not see any non-*Antyajas* except the guests sitting among the *Antyajas* here before me. Even those who go around with me during the day have abandoned them and are seated in the enclosure for high-caste gentlemen. If you could rip open my heart today, you would find it crying—O Lord! Could this be the Hindu dharma, where no one cares for the *Antyajas*? Is there not a single person in the town who will come to their rescue?

#### VARIOUS DIFFERENCES OF OPINION

Everywhere there are differences of opinion. But there should

be some limit to these. I should not be invited to a place where these differences are so wide that there is no common meeting ground at all. The Ali Brothers and I, who are such close associates, do not enter into discussions about religion. How can I explain my dharma of non-violence to them? Only through my conduct can I show them what my religion consists in. I would be transgressing the limits if I went beyond this; and then they too might do likewise. At heart they may feel that I should become a Muslim, but they have never actually asked me to become a Muslim and to read the *Kalama*. How could I entrust my daughter to them if they said so? I cannot insult anyone's religion by asking him to give it up. Maulana Shaukat Ali is a hefty person. It is difficult for him even to bend down to say his *namaz*. Nevertheless, while travelling, he somehow manages to sit on the wooden seat and say his *namaz* and thereby shows me what his dharma is. I too would show my dharma through conduct alone. Let us learn to do so and let our relationship remain cordial. However, you cannot show your dharma by inviting me in this manner. Your dharma is distinct from mine. Even though we do not agree, let us bear love towards one another. What separates us is not a gulf but an ocean. Hence it is better that you should come over to Sabarmati to hear my views rather than call me here to receive such a welcome. I should be invited only by those persons who love to serve the *Antyajās* and who wish to know more about them. But those, who cannot sit beside the untouchables even for a moment, why should they invite me? When I think of the dharma that you practise today I feel in my heart of hearts that it had better perish. Just as during the Boer War one Englishman prayed for his country's defeat, just as Bhishma, while helping the Kauravas, gave his blessings to the Pandavas, just as Lord Krishna's blessings went to the latter alone, similarly my prayer to God is that if this is Hinduism, may it perish. I told my wife that if my dharma were distinct from hers, it was only proper that we should live in separate huts; but she should not insist on my sending away Lakshmi and I, on my part, should not insist on her having Lakshmi with her. If all of you felt polluted at the touch of *Antyajās*, it was your dharma to read my writings, to get acquainted with my views and thus have a look at me from a distance. I am a slave of India and can stand all alone in following my dharma and practising it. Though the whole world should side with me, I could not bear to live if I had to give it up. Hence, it was your dharma to tell me, without any reservations: "You need not come here; let them regard

you as a Mahatma in America.” What good is it your describing me as one whose praises are sung by the whole world? It is the satyagraha in me that alone deserves praise. This term does not mean revolt against the British, but it means an increasing awareness of dharma, an awareness which first came to me in 1887 and which continues to this very day. In that year my caste had threatened to ex-communicate me in case I went to England. I replied that it was welcome to do so, but I would certainly go to England. My satyagraha was born on that day. The satyagraha with the Government is only a part of my satyagraha; my first satyagraha was directed against the *mahajan* which I regarded as my father. It could be that you called me here so that I can explain this satyagraha. You can have me in your midst only if satyagraha and my love of the *Antyajas* and of khadi that go with it, things which make up my being, are dear to you.

If they [the *Antyajas*] steal needles, we steal anvils and give nothing in return. From where have you earned your lakhs? Kutchis in Kharagpur, Calcutta, Zanzibar, South Africa and other places have given me large sums of money, but they made no conditions! Yet, having come to Kutch today, I have to hear such harsh words and that too from millionaires! If an *Antyajaja* gives me the money earned by him he can ask me to use it in Kutch alone. Poor people, however, have uttered not a word of any such condition. You mention the Rs. 500 that you had sent to poor Gokuldas and then add the other five hundred to it. Why do you not say, instead, that you would give me nothing? I do not like a Bania-like attitude. Having been born in that caste, I knew its ways and gave them up. Having been brought up in Kathiawar I was familiar with intrigues and gave up these too. Today, I fearlessly ask everyone, whether he be a millionaire or an emperor or a poor man, not to play the Bania with me, not to try to outwit me, not to be clever, but to be straightforward in their dealings with me.

For my part, I wish to learn the tanner’s trade in order to afford protection to cows<sup>1</sup>. If a teacher wishes you to give up your trade in order to study, ask him to teach me that trade first and then talk of studying. We are now entering an era in which not the *Antyajas* only but every Hindu will have to learn the tanner’s trade for the sake of cow-protection. There is nothing demeaning or shameful about a profession. Have I not cleaned lavatories? I have done so for many

<sup>1</sup> Gandhiji said this with reference to the statement made by one of the pupils of the *Antyajaja* school, “I shall not handle leather any more; I wish to study now.”

persons like you and it is because I have done so that I allow a Nagar Brahmin like Daulatram to clean mine. Otherwise, who am I as compared to him, a Brahmin? I should be doing for him what I allow him to do for me and I am not ashamed, as I have not been ashamed, to do the same dirty work for many like you, and would not be ashamed to do so even today. There is no disgrace in doing so; on the contrary, it amounts to great service. A mother becomes worthy of being remembered every morning only because she cleans our filth. Why should we not regard a *Bhangi* in the same way?

Having come here today I have an idea of the parsimony and callousness of the people of Kutch. Although you recite the verses of the *Bhagavad Gita*, the *Gayatri mantra* and the *Navakar mantra*<sup>1</sup>—there is no place in your hearts for the *Antyajas*. The dharma that you practise is neither Hindu dharma nor Jain dharma. He who is prepared to protect the bed-bug, should he not protect the *Antyajas* who are as meek as cows? You must learn something at least. What you ought to learn from me is not strength to fight but love. The former is only a small part of my life and, even that is born of my love for truth, my compassion, my love. Without this last, my whole struggle and my persistence in it would be futile. Only he who puts this love into practice in his own life can get the blessings of the *Antyajas* and the cows. Open your eyes and the curtains that cover your hearts! Take some warning at any rate! May God bless you!

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 8-11-1925

### 103. REMINISCENCES OF KUTCH [-1]

November 2, 1925

#### MOUNTAIN OF HOPE

Before boarding the steamer for Kutch, I had uttered unawares the words that I did not know why I was going there. Now that only a day remains of this seemingly long tour<sup>2</sup>, I again wonder why I came here. Whenever I went to any place, I know what I had to do there and what to expect of it. Regarding Kutch, I had no idea at all. I set out, yielding simply to the persistent request of some Kutch gentlemen

<sup>1</sup> A Jain prayer

<sup>2</sup> Gandhiji's Kutch tour began on October 22 and ended on November 3.

and their love for me. I have deliberately said "some", as I found after coming here that there were people who went so far as to say that they had not been consulted before I was invited to Kutch and that they were finally forced to agree. I had built a mountain of hope without any foundations; hence it seems to me that I find here nothing but despair everywhere. However, there is no despair for a sailor who has the *Gita* for his beacon, without which he would always be despondent. Because I had raised such a castle of hopes this time, the singer of the *Gita* tells me with a smile on his lips and tears in his eyes: "Why did you make this mistake? Pay for it now. Because you had hopes, you now taste the bitterness of disappointment. You have known that if you start out with despair, the end is always sweet. Never again make this mistake. Despair too is a figment of the mind; one who is vigilant need not suffer it as expectation finds no harbour in his mind."

This was the philosophical way of looking at the matter. It is good for the soul. Now, let us look at the historical aspect.

#### ROADS IN KUTCH

The trip was undertaken in the following order: Mandvi, Bhuj, Kotda, Kothara, Veenjhan, Naranpur, Dumrao, Goghra, Khakhar, Bhujpar, Mundra, Kero, Kokva, Anjar and Tuni. I am writing this at Mundra. I shall complete it in Bhuj and, it will be posted before I reach Anjar.

The twenty-four hours of the calm voyage<sup>1</sup> passed off like a moment. At the Mandvi port at first there was the launch, then the *machhva*<sup>2</sup>, then the *tari*<sup>3</sup>, after that the chariot, then the horse-drawn carriage—such was the chaotic arrangement. The chariot had to wade through water. I call it chaotic as the arrangement was governed by no rules. The crowd caused confusion and it was with difficulty that we could change from one mode of transportation to another. I saw a dilapidated dock here, but it is not in use. We shall consider later why the traveller has to put up with so many inconveniences.

We reached Mandvi on 22nd October. Today is November 2. During this length of time, I could visit many more places and travel

<sup>1</sup> Gandhiji left Bombay for Kutch by a steamer on October 21, 1925, and reached Mandvi port in Kutch at 11 a.m. the next day.

<sup>2</sup> A small boat propelled by oars

<sup>3</sup> A raft

much greater distances, in other parts of India. None of the above mentioned towns is more than 60 miles from Bhuj. There are only a few motorable roads in Kutch—three or four. Railway lines are even fewer. A line goes from Bhuj to the port of Tuni or that of Khari. Hence, one can go only by car from Mandvi to Bhuj, from Bhuj to Kotda and from Mundra to Bhuj. The rest of the journey was covered by bullock-carts and that at great risk. At every place there were unlimited quantities of sand and dust. I have used the word bullock-cart for *chadiko*. The latter means a small *ekka* drawn by a bullock, in which only one person can sit comfortably and no one can sleep. Even the journey by car on the first day almost killed me. I developed a little temperature too. The reception committee, therefore, made arrangements to enable me to lie down in the car or the bullock-cart. They obtained a large *chadiko* or chariot for me. As it had four wheels, a mattress could be spread in it and it also gave one fewer jolts. Despite this, because the road from Kotda to Kothara was terribly bad, I was taken part of the way in a palanquin. The idea of being carried in a palanquin has never appealed to me but here the alternatives before me were either to leave Kothara or to run the risk of falling ill or to ride in a palanquin; and of these alternatives even the reception committee would not permit the risk of my falling ill. I, therefore, chose the alternative of riding in a palanquin. I may here confess that I had been offered a great temptation by Kothara. There were many good workers there, I had been told, that I could collect large sums of money, that I would get there an idea of the famine conditions in Kutch, etc., etc. Hence I fell for the palanquin. The palanquin-bearers seemed to be favoured by the State. They kept bullying the poor volunteers all the way and, if these latter put in a word, they got enraged and talked back sharply. Throughout the journey, they kept grumbling and complaining. I found it very painful to be carried by such persons. I wanted to walk, but how could I do so? That would create a false impression; hence just as a corpse being carried makes no comments, I too lay quiet without opening my mouth. I shall think many times before riding in a palanquin again.

Among the many wrong notions current about me is one that I totally disapprove of railways, motor-cars, etc. One gentleman asked me in all seriousness whether I preferred tarred roads or cutcha ones like those in Kutch? I shall take this opportunity to remove this false notion. I believe that railways or motor-cars are not essential for human civilization. This is an ideal. However, the railways have come

to stay in India today. Hence, I would not foolishly try to prevent one particular city from being served by railways when these and motor-cars are there all over the country. If there are ships going up to Mandvi, far from opposing I would welcome a railway line running from Mandvi to Bhuj. The same is true of motor-cars. I am for all roads being tarred. Both these means of transport help speed. There is no question of dharma here. In fact, tarred roads enable us to practise our dharma. How much suffering do uneven roads cause to animals? I also look forward to improvements in bullock-carts as well as the roads meant for these. Good roads are the mark of a well-organized government. It is the duty of both the ruler and the subjects to build good roads. Good roads are recognized as absolutely necessary for motor-cars, so why not for animals too? Is it because they are dumb? If the ruler does not go in for good roads, why cannot the wealthy class do so? Building good roads should be easy in Kutch, as the distances are short. This is a difficult venture for the people to undertake; but it is not impossible. In the first instance, the people should place this request before the ruler.

#### THE PROBLEM OF UNTOUCHABILITY

Nowhere else have I experienced such difficulties raised by the problem of untouchability as in Kutch. One reason may be that I found a great deal of awakening among the *Antyajias* of Kutch. At every place, large crowds of them attended the public meetings. The volunteers also encouraged them to do so. The reception committee, on the other hand, adopted the policy of keeping everyone pleased. At every place, therefore, a section of the public was found opposing the idea of seating the *Antyajias* along with others at public meetings. I came across the difficulty first in Bhuj, but I satisfied myself that it was very well there. I found, however, that what was accomplished there was misinterpreted elsewhere. What seemed proper in Bhuj took such a form at other places that it appeared to be thoroughly discourteous and cruel. At every place, factions arose and in the end it looked as if the entire reception committee considered untouchability a dharma, with the result that my companions and I were regarded as untouchables. Wherever we went we had strange, tragic and ludicrous experiences. They were ludicrous because no one was deliberately impolite. At some places my speeches were misinterpreted, while at other places people were discourteous without meaning it.

I do not wish to describe at length my experiences at every



place. This has been done in the vivid narrative of Mahadev Desai. I only wish to give an idea of the over-all impression they left on my mind. And that too in order to show that whoever believes that untouchability is widely prevalent in Kutch is mistaken. If the leaders of the reception committee had shown no weakness and if what I had brought about in Bhuj had not been misunderstood elsewhere, the people of Kutch would not have exposed themselves to ridicule. In Kutch, there are separate localities for untouchables even in cities. This I saw in fact in Mundra and also in Anjar. In Mandvi, there is a children's home founded by a *Bhatia*<sup>1</sup> gentleman and beside it is the locality for the *Antyajias*. I found the *Antyajias* even there to be more fearless than their counterparts in Kathiawar. Perhaps they are also more intelligent. Many of them are weavers by trade. An *Antyaja* family in Bhujpar is doing business in cotton yarn. Nowhere else have I found as many untouchables attending public meetings as in Kutch. I used to ask them questions at the meetings. And the answers they gave were thoughtful and fearless. They told—with explanation—the tales of their sufferings as well. In Mandvi, twenty-five of the *Antyaja* families—that is a hundred persons—took a pledge that they would give up eating meat and drinking liquor and would wear khadi. In Anjar, at a large meeting, many *Antyajias* took the pledge not to eat carrion and not to drink liquor. It also seemed to me that in Kutch there is less of drinking among this section of the people. Moreover, it seems that among the ordinary people here there is a total absence of the belief that one is polluted by the touch of the *Antyajias*. Only the so-called higher castes—the Brahmins, Banias, *Bhatias*, *Luhanas* and so on—make a show of this belief. I say "show" because many who took their seats in the enclosure meant for those who believed in this did so out of fear. Many of them told me themselves that they did not believe in untouchability, but could not say so publicly for fear of being ex-communicated from their castes. No one was "polluted" because of the *Antyajias* joining in the processions and, wherever I visited the *Antyaja* localities, many of the high-caste Hindus accompanied me. If the reception committee had courageously declared that the meetings were open to all, I am sure that almost as many persons would have attended them as did in fact attend. Certain wealthy people might not have come. At many places I found many youths belonging to the higher castes serving the *Antyajias* without

<sup>1</sup> A Hindu community in Gujarat

fear. Hence, despite my painful experiences with regard to *Antyajias* in Kutch, I have come to the conclusion that untouchability has lost its hold there. Some bigoted people are still clinging to it, but I think they are wasting effort.

I had my bitterest experience in Mundra. I found only hypocrisy, insincerity and play-acting there. Even Muslims were made to sit in the enclosure for those who supported untouchability as if they too believed in it. Hence, only my companions and the Muslim volunteers remained in the section reserved for *Antyajias*. Many among the Hindu volunteers, though they claimed that they did not believe in untouchability at all, were nevertheless kept in the enclosure meant for those who did believe in it.

There is a school for the *Antyajias* in Mundra but it is a philanthropic Muslim gentleman, Sheth Ibrahim Pradhan, who runs it at his own expense.

The school may be regarded as good up to a point. The children are kept very clean. The building is in the centre of the city. The children had even been taught Sanskrit verses, [which they recited] in a broken accent. Spinning, carding, ginning and weaving were taught in the school itself. Only children's clothes were not made of khadi; however, the organizers had gone in for the cloth believing it to be pure khadi. The reader might perhaps conclude that this school would give me some satisfaction. It gave me no satisfaction but caused me grief, rather, as the credit for it would not go to a Hindu. I have already mentioned the name of the gentleman who finances it. The gentleman in charge of this school is the heir of the Aga Khan in Mundra. Sheth Ibrahim Pradhan deserves all praise for his charity, as I was informed that this school is not being run for the purpose of converting the untouchables or schoolchildren to Islam, but in order to enable them to make progress as Hindus. The people of Mundra also informed me that the gentleman in charge, Mauledina Meghji was a *vedantin* and a learned person. All this must be regarded as satisfactory. However, what is the contribution of the Hindus? Untouchability is an ugly blot on the Hindu religion, it is a sin. The Hindus alone can do *prayaschitta*<sup>1</sup> for it. The dirt on my body will go

<sup>1</sup> Atonement for sins

only when I myself remove it. This institution adds to the prestige of Sheth Ibrahim Pradhan and to that extent to the shame of the Hindus.

However, just as I was destined to come across such unfortunate incidents, I also came across happy ones. The readers of *Navajivan* are familiar with Shri Jivram Kalyanji's name. He has made the service of the *Antyajias* his dharma. His greatest virtue is not so much his philanthropy as his insistence on doing service himself. He gives his wealth and his time to the cause of khadi and the untouchables. In Mandvi, Shri Gokuldas Khimji too is fearlessly serving the *Antyajias*. He is running a school for them at his own expense, and because in several places I came across such workers, I see on the whole no reason for despair in Kutch in regard to this problem of untouchability. The show which brought disgrace to meetings I regard as a temporary phenomenon. Work of a permanent nature is already being done and I have no doubt that it will go on.

The *Antyajias*, however, have not a little suffering inflicted upon them by the State. There is a law regarding the *Antyajias* which has been described by some as a monopoly for [punishing] licentious conduct. On the basis of this law, the *Antyajias* are punished for such conduct. A monopoly is given with regard to this crime, that is, to the person who pays the largest sum the State gives in return the sole authority to catch such offenders, and to collect from them the fines imposed for such crimes. The one who has this monopoly sees to it therefore that the maximum number of such crimes are committed. In other words, the former makes a living by encouraging such conduct or by making false allegations to this effect. This leads to harassment of the *Antyajias*.

Another hardship is inflicted on the weavers. So long as they have not repaid the debts they owe to the money-lender they cannot weave for others. Because of this, they have become the slaves of one or two individuals. They have to accept the payment that these latter give them and have to keep weaving for them. The creditor may charge any rate of interest that he likes, pay for the cloth any price that he chooses. The *Antyajias*, therefore, cannot escape from their clutches. Because of this difficulty, some persons have been even forced to give up their profession. There are thousands of *Antyajia*

weavers in Kutch and, but for this cruel practice, they would have had no difficulty in earning their living. The Ruler of Kutch will, I hope, relieve these miserable people from both these hardships of which I have spoken to him. (*To be continued*)<sup>1</sup>

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 15-11-1925

#### 104. SPEECH AT ANJAR

*November 2, 1925*

This is the last meeting in my Kutch tour. Two or three items in the programme are still left over; nevertheless, so far as meetings are concerned this is the last one. I now do not wish to repeat the things which I have said in many different ways at various meetings. You have come to know my views from many sources and by various channels, and there is no need to reiterate them.

<sup>1</sup> Mahadev Desai has provided in his "Notes" the background to this meeting of orthodox Hindus. It reveals the sort of difficulties Gandhiji was beginning to encounter in his anti-untouchability work. The extract reproduced here also throws light on his own approach to the problem:

He [Gandhiji] suggested to the orthodox President who was also our host to drop the meeting and the address, and to have instead a general meeting in the untouchables' quarter, and then, if necessary, a conference with the orthodox next day."But we have already made these arrangements. Is it not natural that we may not accept some of your views? We must do honour to you and you should not deprive us of the privilege of listening to your advice," he argued."But" said Gandhiji,"what is the meaning of honouring me when you do not accept the thing nearest my heart, when you insult those that I hold dearer to me than life itself? And there should be some propriety, some decorum observed. I have addressed meetings of Europeans who share none of my views. But they know their business better. They make no secret of the fact that I would not be spared at the meeting, and yet they know how to receive and honour their guest. At Calcutta they had a strictly vegetarian lunch entirely out of regard for me. But here? You seize a temporary arrangement suggested by me at Bhuj, and turn and twist it to your advantage, and do not hesitate to reduce it to an absurdity as at Mundra. How would it look if I tell my boy that he is at liberty to abuse me if he likes, and he makes it a point to abuse me to his heart's content every morning? That is what you have done. The President, I suggested at the first day's meeting at Mandvi, could have dropped the address into my hands from a distance, and the next day's President lost no time in benefiting by the suggestion? Is that the way you want to honour me?"

"No," persisted the President,"but, sir, you must go on repeating your views so that they may catch root some day."

"I am not going to emulate the preachers who go on delivering their sermons

I would say only this that in Kutch, as in the rest of India, I have experienced everywhere a feeling of love, and nothing but love, towards myself. In Kutch, I have received more service than I need for myself. At every place, men and women have taken great pains to make me feel happy and have done all they could to fulfil my personal needs. However, you should realize that I did not come to Kutch in order to be personally served. I do not tour around India for this purpose. On the contrary, the more attentively I am served and the more comforts I am provided with, the greater is the actual burden that I have to bear and the debt that I come to owe. Hence the way to spare me is to fulfil only those needs of mine which I specify. I feel irritated if provided with a larger number of volunteers and carriages than I actually require. Kutch has left nothing undone so far as serving me is concerned; Kutch is second to none in this respect.

However, this has no meaning for me. I hunger and thirst after something quite different. God provides a tiny particle of food to the ant and heaps of it to the elephant and He will continue to do so.

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day in and day out before unwilling audiences. If you want to know and understand my views, you had better come to Sabarmati. At the little place Bhujpar whence we are coming, the organizers saw that no reception could be given me on my terms, and they accordingly dropped the reception and the address, and held the meeting in the untouchables' quarter. It was honest and courageous of them. I beseech you not to indulge in these unreal demonstrations. I want you not even to entertain me and my party. I shall be content to be the guest of the untouchables and find my soul's delight in their frugal but genuine hospitality," said Gandhiji arguing at length.

"But", urged the redoubtable President, "we have made all arrangements. The Reception Committee is very anxious to present the address. I appreciate what you say, but we did all this, not knowing you."

"How can you? I shall be known only after I am dead.,"

If the orthodox meeting could be had first, and the untouchables' thereafter, the President would probably have been satisfied. But what Gandhiji had suggested was humiliating! Gandhiji then asked him to call a meeting of the Reception Committee, place his proposal before them, and take their decision."But mind you," said he, "no middle course. Either accept my proposal *in toto* or go through the programme as you have arranged."

The Committee met for about two hours and decided upon an elaborate plan of enclosures and the platform, the President to speak from a distance, eight members of the Committee to sit amongst the untouchables, and the Seth of the town to hand over the address to Gandhiji—and not to drop it as at Mandvi, but of course to have a purificatory bath on going home! There was no room for argument now."So you do not want to conform to my wishes. You want me to conform to yours," Gandhiji asked."Yes sir. That is the desire of the Committee," said the President. Gandhiji cheerfully accepted the defeat, went to the meeting and received the address.

Hence, there is nothing special in satisfying one's hunger or fulfilling one's daily needs; this is something common to beast as well as man. Perhaps, we do not experience the same feeling of pleasure after eating dainty dishes that an ant has after obtaining a small particle of food.

Hence, after accepting your boundless love, I will only ask you not to crush me under its weight. I do not wish to speak today of the kind of love that would please me. If I do speak about it, you would be pained even though you would listen to my speech. I will not, however, do so.

All the scriptures of the world say that one remembers God when one encounters misery. Draupadi cried out to Krishna and got his help when her husbands were unable to help her. Sitaji derived consolation by merely repeating the name of Rama when she was alone in the Ashoka grove. My friends who were in prison with me also tried to forget their own troubles and derived consolation by repeating the name of God.

There was a well-educated, simple-hearted young man with me—Shankerlal Badker; the hardships of prison did not cause him any grief, his agony was that of the mind. His mind was seething with ideas and he was in constant mental turmoil. What did he do? After waking up at four in the morning and, disregarding the bitterly cold weather, his first task was to switch on the light and spin. However, I do not even wish to speak of the spinning-wheel today.

But, I do wish to speak of that which he did along with spinning. He chanted the name of Rama and he smiled as he did so. The change that came over him was such that his jailor would repeatedly approach him and run away in dismay, and then come and tell me: "He is always absorbed in himself. He is always spinning; what can I talk to him about?"

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 8-11-1925

## 105. TELEGRAM TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

BHUI,  
November 3, 1925

MATHURADAS  
93 BAZAR GATE STREET  
BOMBAY

TAKE PERINBEN<sup>1</sup> OR NARGISBEHN<sup>2</sup> WITH YOU MEET  
SLADE<sup>3</sup>. UNLESS THEY CAN HOUSE HER FOR DAY  
TAKE HER HOTEL. SEND SAME DAY AHMEDABAD.

BAPU

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

## 106. FAREWELL MESSAGE TO KUTCH PEOPLE<sup>4</sup>

[November 3, 1925]<sup>5</sup>

It is difficult to sum up the results of the extraordinary experiences of my Kutch tour. So far as I am personally concerned, I had nothing but kindness and attention from the State and the people. The thing that taxed me most was the 'untouchable' question. Curious devices were resorted to by the orthodox to satisfy their consciences, but there is a great awakening among the untouchables themselves. They are alive to their rights. They understand their responsibilities. Many have undertaken to give up carrion and drink. The common people have no prejudice against them. It is only the so-called higher castes, a microscopic minority, who make a parade of their belief in untouchability which, in private, they would confess is unreasonable and contrary to real religion. But even amongst them, there are a few noble spirits who, in defiance of the caste tyranny, are

<sup>1</sup> Perin Captain and Nargis Captain, grand-daughters of Dadabhai Naoroji

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*

<sup>3</sup> Mirabehn arrived in Ahmedabad on November 7, 1925. The silence-day, i.e., Monday, following this date was November 9.

<sup>4</sup> This was also published in *Gujarati*, 8-11-1925.

<sup>5</sup> The message was delivered at Tuna port when Gandhiji left Kutch for Jamnagar on his way to Ahmedabad.

serving the untouchables with their money, as well as personal labour. These poor people are disqualified from entering into contracts with any person they like so long as they have not discharged their obligations to the creditors with whom they have first dealt. This makes them eternal slaves of their original creditors who dictate what terms they choose.

I have brought these things to the notice of His Highness who, I feel sure, will remove these very serious hardships. Khadi has the greatest possibilities and awaits development at the hands of khadi lovers. Insanitary habits of the townsmen breed plague and cholera, which should be impossible in a dry climate, like that of Cutch, and among people who are well-fed and strong in body. There is also immediate need for a society to protect trees. By proper attention to tree culture, Cutch, which is in danger of being denuded of its population for want of water, can increase its rainfall.

These are the things on which patriotic Cutchis can well concentrate their attention. Of Cutch politics, for the present, I prefer to say nothing. Everything I was told I have brought to the notice of His Highness, who gave me a patient and long hearing.

*The Hindu*, 6-11-1925

## 107. NOTES

### LEST WE FORGET

Sjt. J. M. Sengupta<sup>1</sup> writes to me to say that Bengal has decided to hold on Sunday, the 8th November, an all-parties' all-Bengal demonstration against internments and imprisonments without trial, and suggests that such meetings should be held all over India. For my part, I heartily endorse the suggestion. I have passed it on to Pandit Motilal Nehru and, subject to his consent and approval, notices will have been issued before this is in print. I am writing this in Cutch, a part of India which is isolated from all chief centres of activity. It is, therefore, difficult for me to follow or overtake events that are

<sup>1</sup> Leader of the Swaraj Party in the Bengal Legislative Council, Mayor of Calcutta and President of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee



happening outside from day to day. I can, therefore, merely express my opinion on the suggestion. It is this. We may make no impression upon a Government that is irresponsive to public opinion. But a demonstration like the one suggested by Sjt. Sengupta will be a reminder to us that there are countrymen whom we believe to be innocent, but who are either interned or imprisoned without any trial whatever. Every day that passes without bringing these men to an open trial or, in default, without discharging them, makes heavier the indictment against the Government. I hope, therefore, that meetings will be held all over India composed of men belonging to all parties to demonstrate the national feeling in the matter.

#### A SCHEME OF COW-PROTECTION

In private talks with friends I have often asked them to interest themselves in and help the movement on its constructive side. In response to their desire, I publish the scheme I have discussed with some:

1. In order to test the efficacy of tanneries as part of a programme of cow-protection, it is necessary to own one and to utilize it not for profit, but purely for cow-protection. For this purpose a sum of Rs. 1,25,000 is required to be invested in one of the existing tanneries. The information in my possession shows that the majority of existing tanneries buy and cure the hide of slaughtered cattle, and that India exports the bulk of the hide of dead cattle. These conditions of things can only be remedied by lovers of the cow controlling tanneries and preventing by their philanthropy leather becoming an article of trade competition.

2. Preliminary research must be carried out for exploring the possibilities not of remunerative dairy farming, but of conducting dairies on a vast scale, if without profit, also without loss in the long run. For this preliminary work, a sum of ten thousand rupees at least must be spent inside of twelve months in engaging services of dairy experts and finding out suitable places for accommodating tens of thousands of cattle. Without acquiring such control the terrible toll we pay in the slaughter of cattle which are simply through ill use or ignorance rendered profitless and, therefore, sold for slaughter by the *goalas* in the several cities of India must continue. Nothing can save

the cattle from the butcher's knife if they become uneconomic.

3. Scholarships must be found for preparing students for tannery and dairy work. For this a sum of Rs. 5,000 for one year is necessary.

4. A sum of Rs. 3,000 is required for books on cattle-breeding, dairy farming, tannery, etc.

Thus, a sum of Rs. 1,28,000 is required for capital expenditure and Rs. 15,000 for research, exploration and preparation. I omit the current expenditure, which must be found from the normal income from membership of the All-India Cow-Protection Association. It must be dissolved if it cannot pay its way. In terms of the authority given to me, I have already engaged the services of a paid secretary. Sjt. V. G. Desai has been selected for the work to be done. Among those whose names were before me, he appeared to me to be the fittest. He is an English and Sanskrit scholar. He is a lover of animals and has been always a believer in cow-protection. He had choice of work before him and had made cow-protection, I hope, his final and life-long choice. I have known him intimately ever since my return to India in 1915. He is to receive a salary of Rs. 200 per month. At the present moment, he is lodged at the Satyagraha Ashram without having to pay any rent. But it may become necessary to pay twenty-five rupees in addition, in lieu of rent. If donations in respect of the scheme are received, it will be necessary to increase the paid staff. At the present moment not even an office boy has been engaged. Expansion of the work depends upon public response. During the Cutch tour, I have been expounding the scheme to the Cutch friends and they have given me already over Rs. 3,000, which includes the sum of Rs. 500 from a Khoja friend. There must be, however, a better response both in donations and membership.

*Young India*, 5-11-1925

## 108. SANITATION IN AHMEDABAD

The following is the letter referred to in the above article by Dr. Hariprasad Desai, one of the members of the Sanitary Committee, Ahmedabad Municipal Board:<sup>1</sup>

This letter was begun on the 2nd October and finished on the 4th, the postscript was appended thereafter, probably on the same date. This is not a letter. It is a little pamphlet. But it is brimming over with so much humour and urbane persiflage, and so much art that I am sure the reader will read it with the same interest as I have done. Dr. Hariprasad has succeeded in giving not only an intensely interesting, but a perfectly vivid picture of our filth and squalor. I wish him complete success in his endeavour.

But this is only paying compliments. My innermost desire would be to join him with a spade, a broom, a *chunam* bucket and a brush. But I know that I can have little to do in a city where Vallabhbai is the Master Sweeper. I am, therefore, watching what is going on in Ahmedabad as an interested spectator, and wishing that the Ahmedabad Municipality may win the first place in India in point of cleanliness, cohesion, primary education and in the supply of clean and cheap milk. I am sure that, if it succeeds in achieving this, Ahmedabad will have given a considerable share in the movement for swaraj.

But this is a Himalayan task. It is not the work of one or two men. Everyone must put his or her shoulder to the wheel—men and women, boys and girls, Swarajists and No-changers, titled men and commoners, rich and poor. Only then could Ahmedabad be made an ideal city. If everyone of us holds himself severally responsible for removing the dirt and filth in any part of the city and if we strive to keep all parts as clean as we keep our seats, only then would it be an

<sup>1</sup> The letter of Dr. Desai, a physician and Congress worker, which is not reproduced here, appeared in *Navajivan*, 28-10-1925. The translation was published in two instalments in *Young India* of 29-10-1925 and 5-11-1925. It provided a first-hand and picturesque description in detail of the appalling insanitary conditions in the Ahmedabad city and its several *pols* or parish like divisions. It also examined the relative responsibility of different religious communities for the unhygienic state, gave an idea of the work of sanitary reform in progress and sought Gandhiji's support.

ideal city.

The wealthy must help with money, sanitarians with their knowledge, you and everyone with voluntary service. Today the work is being done in the teeth of ignorance, indifference and opposition. Why should volunteers be not forthcoming to keep the city clean? Why should not the boys of schools and colleges have a training in sanitation and offer themselves as volunteers?

Dr. Hariprasad's letter suggests many another thought. But I shall not cap a pamphlet with another. Let us all understand and appreciate Dr. Hariprasad's sweet irony and help in this work of humanitarian service. If his letter bears that much fruit, it will not have been written by him and published by me in vain.

*Young India*, 29-10-1925 and 5-11-1925

### 109. THE POET AND THE CHARKHA

When Sir Rabindranath's criticism of charkha was published some time ago,<sup>1</sup> several friends asked me to reply to it. Being heavily engaged, I was unable then to study it in full. But I had read enough of it to know its trend. I was in no hurry to reply. Those who had read it were too much agitated or influenced to be able to appreciate what I might have then written even if I had the time. Now, therefore, is really the time for me to write on it and to ensure a dispassionate view being taken of the Poet's criticism or my reply, if such it may be called.

The criticism is a sharp rebuke to Acharya Ray<sup>2</sup> for his impatience of the Poet's and Acharya Seal's position regarding the charkha, and gentle rebuke to me for my exclusive and excessive love of it. Let the public understand that the Poet does not deny its great economic value. Let them know that he signed the appeal for the All-India Deshbandhu Memorial after he had written his criticism. He signed the appeal after studying its contents carefully and, even as he signed it, he sent me the message that he had written something on the charkha which might not quite please me. I knew, therefore, what was coming. But it has not displeased me. Why should mere disagreement with my views displease? If every disagreement were to displease, since no two men agree exactly on all points, life would be a bundle of

<sup>1</sup> *Vide Appendix "The Cult of the Charkha"*, September, 1925.

<sup>2</sup> Prafulla Chandra Ray

unpleasant sensations and, therefore, a perfect nuisance. On the contrary the frank criticism pleases me. For our friendship becomes all the richer for our disagreements. Friends to be friends are not called upon to agree even on most points, Only disagreements must have no sharpness, much less bitterness, about them. And I gratefully admit that there is none about the Poet's criticism.

I am obliged to make these prefatory remarks as dame rumour has whispered that jealousy is the root of all that criticism. Such baseless suspicion betrays an atmosphere of weakness and intolerance. A little reflection must remove all ground for such a cruel charge. Of what should the Poet be jealous in me? Jealousy presupposes the possibility of rivalry. Well, I have never succeeded in writing a single rhyme in my life. There is nothing of the Poet about me. I cannot aspire after his greatness. He is the undisputed master of it. The world today does not possess his equal as a poet. My 'mahatmaship' has no relation to the Poet's undisputed position. It is time to realize that our fields are absolutely different and at no point overlapping. The Poet lives in a magnificent world of his own creation—his world of ideas. I am a slave of somebody else's creation—the spinning-wheel. The Poet makes his *gopis* dance to the tune of his flute. I wander after my beloved Sita, the charkha, and seek to deliver her from the ten-headed monster from Japan, Manchester, Paris, etc. The Poet is an inventor—he creates, destroys and recreates. I am an explorer and having discovered a thing, I must cling to it. The Poet presents the world with new and attractive things from day to day. I can merely show the hidden possibilities of old and even worn-out things. The world easily finds an honourable place for the magician who produces new and dazzling things. I have to struggle laboriously to find a corner for my worn-out things. Thus there is no competition between us. But I may say in all humility that we complement each other's activity.

The fact is that the Poet's criticism is a poetic licence and he who takes it literally is in danger of finding himself in an awkward corner. An ancient poet has said that Solomon arrayed in all his glory was not like one of the lilies of the field. He clearly referred to the natural beauty and innocence of the lily contrasted with the artificiality of Solomon's glory and his sinfulness in spite of his many good deeds. Or take the poetical licence in: 'It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven.' We know that no camel has ever passed through the eye

of a needle and we know too that rich men like Janaka have entered the Kingdom of Heaven. Or take the beautiful simile of human teeth being likened to the pomegranate seed. Foolish women who have taken the poetical exaggeration literally have been found to disfigure, and even harm, their teeth. Painters and poets are obliged to exaggerate the proportions of their figures in order to give a true perspective. Those therefore who take the Poet's denunciation of the charkha literally will be doing an injustice to the Poet and an injury to themselves.

The Poet does not, he is not expected, he has no need, to read *Young India*. All he knows about the movement is what he has picked up from table talk. He has, therefore, denounced what he has imagined to be the excesses of the charkha cult.

He thinks, for instance, that I want everybody to spin the whole of his or her time to the exclusion of all other activity, that is to say, that I want the poet to forsake his muse, the farmer his plough, the lawyer his brief and the doctor his lancet. So far is this from truth that I have asked no one to abandon his calling but, on the contrary, to adorn it by giving every day only thirty minutes to spinning as sacrifice for the whole nation. I have, indeed, asked the famishing man or woman who is idle for want of any work whatsoever to spin for a living and the half-starved farmer to spin during his leisure hours to supplement his slender resources. If the Poet span half an hour daily his poetry would gain in richness. For it would then represent the poor man's wants and woes in a more forcible manner than now.

The Poet thinks that the charkha is calculated to bring about a death-like sameness in the nation and, thus imagining, he would shun it if he could. The truth is that the charkha is intended to realize the essential and living oneness of interest among India's myriads. Behind the magnificent and kaleidoscopic variety, one discovers in nature a unity of purpose, design and form which is equally unmistakable. No two men are absolutely alike, not even twins, and yet there is much that is indispensably common to all mankind. And behind the commonness of form there is the same life pervading all. The idea of sameness or oneness was carried by Shankara to its utmost logical and natural limit and he exclaimed that there was only one truth, one God—*Brahman*—and all form, *nam, rupa* was illusion or illusory, evanescent. We need not debate whether what we see is

unreal; and whether the real behind the unreality is what we do not see. Let both be equally real, if you will. All I say is that there is a sameness, identity or oneness behind the multiplicity and variety. And so do I hold that behind a variety of occupations there is an indispensable sameness also of occupation. Is not agriculture common to the vast majority of mankind? Even so, was spinning common not long ago to a vast majority of mankind? Just as both prince and peasant must eat and clothe themselves so must both labour for supplying their primary wants. The prince may do so if only by way of symbol and sacrifice, but that much is indispensable for him if he will be true to himself and his people. Europe may not realize this vital necessity at the present moment, because it has made of exploitation of non-European races a religion. But it is a false religion bound to perish in the near future. The non-European races will not for ever allow themselves to be exploited. I have endeavoured to show a way out that is peaceful, humane and, therefore, noble. It may be rejected if it is, the alternative is a tug of war, in which each will try to pull down the other. Then, when non-Europeans will seek to exploit the Europeans, the truth of the charkha will have to be realized. Just as, if we are to live, we must breathe not air imported from England nor eat food so imported, so may we not import cloth made in England. I do not hesitate to carry the doctrine to its logical limit and say that Bengal dare not import her cloth even from Bombay or from Banga Lakshmi. If Bengal will live her natural and free life without exploiting the rest of India or the world outside, she must manufacture her cloth in her own villages as she grows her corn there. Machinery has its place; it has come to stay. But it must not be allowed to displace the necessary human labour. An improved plough is a good thing. But if, by some chance, one man could plough up by some mechanical invention of his the whole of the land of India and control all the agricultural produce and if the millions had no other occupation, they would starve, and being idle, they would become dunces, as many have already become. There is hourly danger of many more being reduced to that unenviable state. I would welcome every improvement in the cottage machine, but I know that it is criminal to displace the hand labour by the introduction of power-driven spindles unless one is, at the same time, ready to give millions

of farmers some other occupation in their homes.

The Irish analogy does not take us very far. It is perfect in so far as it enables us to realize the necessity of economic co-operation. But Indian circumstances being different, the method of working out co-operation is necessarily different. For Indian distress every effort at co-operation has to centre round the charkha if it is to apply to the majority of the inhabitants of this vast peninsula 1,900 miles long and 1,500 broad. Sir Gangaram may give us a model farm which can be no model for the penniless Indian farmer, who has hardly two to three acres of land which every day runs the risk of being still further cut up.

Round the charkha, that is amidst the people who have shed their idleness and who have understood the value of co-operation, a national servant would build up a programme of anti-malaria campaign, improved sanitation, settlement of village disputes, conservation and breeding of cattle and hundreds of other beneficial activities. Wherever charkha work is fairly established, all such ameliorative activity is going on according to the capacity of the villagers and the workers concerned.

It is not my purpose to traverse all the Poet's arguments in detail. Where the differences between us are not fundamental—and these I have endeavoured to state—there is nothing in the Poet's argument which I cannot endorse and still maintain my position regarding the charkha. The many things about the charkha which he has ridiculed I have never said. The merits I have claimed for the charkha remain undamaged by the Poet's battery.

One thing, and one thing only, has hurt me, the Poet's belief, again picked up from table talk, that I look upon Ram Mohan Roy as a 'pigmy'. Well, I have never anywhere described that great reformer as a pigmy much less regarded him as such. He is to me as much a giant as he is to the Poet. I do not remember any occasion save one when I had to use Ram Mohan Roy's name. That was in connection with Western education. This was on the Cuttack sands now four years ago.<sup>1</sup> What I do remember having said was that it was possible to attain highest culture without Western education. And when someone mentioned Ram Mohan Roy, I remember having said that he was a

<sup>1</sup>*Vide* "Speech at Mass Meeting, Cuttack", 24-3-1921.



pigmy compared to the unknown authors, say, of the Upanishads. This is altogether different from looking upon Ram Mohan Roy as a pigmy. I do not think meanly of Tennyson if I say that he was a pigmy before Milton or Shakespeare. I claim that I enhance the greatness of both. If I adore the Poet, as he knows I do in spite of differences between us, I am not likely to disparage the greatness of the man who made the great reform movement of Bengal possible and of which the Poet is one of the finest of fruits.

*Young India*, 5-11-1925

### 110. DISTRESS IN ORISSA

I have a telegram from Mr. Andrews advising me that there is terrible distress among the cattle of Orissa and men also. He has asked me to find ten thousand rupees for keeping the cattle alive and he has written a letter in which he tells me that khaddar is required for women who are almost in a naked state. I am trying to find a reliable agent who would take charge of the work. I do not propose at the present moment to appeal for funds to the public as there is still a large amount remaining unspent out of the Malabar Relief Fund that the readers of *Young India* and *Navajivan* contributed. As I am writing this note in Cutch, I do not know the exact amount available. But I have no right to disburse anything from the Malabar Relief Fund for relief in Orissa without the consent of the donors. I, therefore, appeal to the donors of the Malabar Relief Fund to send me, if they approve of my suggestion, their consent to utilize the balance of their contributions for relief of distress in Orissa. Those who may send their consent are requested to mention the original amount paid so as to enable me to identify the amount.

*Young India*, 5-11-1925

### 111. A HOTCH-POT OF QUESTIONS

I have got some taxing readers of *Young India* who often ask inconvenient questions. But, as they please them, I must suffer the inconvenience and answer their questions, however vexing they may be. This is how a correspondent fires the first shot:

Who is responsible for the word 'Mahatma' before your name in the list of Executive Councillors, A.I.S.A., as given in *Young India* of 1st October?

The correspondent may depend upon it that the editor is not responsible for the appearance of the word 'Mahatma' in the list of members of the Council of A.I.S.A. Those who passed the constitution are certainly responsible for it. Had I offered satyagraha against it, the word might not have appeared. But I did not consider the offence to be serious enough to call for the use of that terrible weapon. Unless some catastrophe takes place the offensive word will always be associated with my name, and the patient critics must tolerate it even as I do.

You say you live, in common with other fellow-workers, on the charity of friends who defray the expenses of Sabarmati Satyagraha Ashram. Do you think it proper for an institution of able-bodied men to live on the charity of friends?

The correspondent has taken the word 'charity' too literally. Let him understand that every member of the institution gives both his or her body and mind to its work. But the institution can still be said to live on the charity of friends, because the latter get no return for their donations. The fruits of the labour of the inmates go to the nation.

What is your view on what Tolstoy calls 'bread labour'? Do you really earn your living by your bodily labour?

Strictly speaking, bread labour is not a word of Tolstoy's coining. He took it from another Russian writer Bondarif, and it means that everyone is expected to perform sufficient body labour in order to entitle him to it. It is not, therefore, necessary to earn one's living by bread labour, taking the word living in its broader sense. But everyone must perform some useful body labour. For me, at the present moment, spinning is the only body labour I give. It is a mere symbol. I do not give enough body labour. That is also one of the

reasons why I consider myself as living upon charity. But I also believe that such men will have to be found in every nation who will give themselves body, soul and mind to it and for their sustenance throw themselves on the mercy of their fellowmen, that is, on God.

I think that you have said somewhere that young men must simplify their wants and must ordinarily be able to live on Rs. 30 a month. Is it possible for educated youths to live without books, without travels, without even a wish to come into contact with great minds? All these things mean money. They must save something, too, to provide against circumstances of age, sickness, etc.

In a well-ordered society, such national servants as the correspondent refers to will have access to free libraries and the necessary travelling expenses will be paid by the nation, and the very nature of their work will bring them in contact with great minds. They will also be supported by the nation during sickness, old age, etc. This is no new conception, whether for India or elsewhere.

You seem to advocate the starting of temples for *Panchamas* as a step in the direction of their amelioration. Is it not a fact that the Hindu mind, confined for generations past within things like the temple, has generally lost the power of any larger vision of God? When you seek to remove untouchability, when you seek to raise the untouchables and accord them a place of freedom and dignity in society, need you do so by encouraging them to copy the present-day caste Hindus even in the matter of the latter's vices, sins and superstitions? In the course of ameliorating the untouchables, may we not also reform the Hindu community as a whole, so far at least as worship of temple gods is concerned? In the course of freeing the depressed classes from their present social disabilities, may we not seek also to free their mind and thought, and thus let social reforms bring into being a broader religious and intellectual outlook?

It may be pointed out as a parallel case that the khaddar propaganda to be really successful must not only aim at replacement of foreign cloth, but also seek to remove the non-national and anti-climatic fashions and tastes in dress, as indeed it has already done to some extent.

I do not regard the existence of temples as a sin or superstition. Some form of common worship, and a common place of worship appear to be a human necessity. Whether the temples should contain images or not is a matter of temperament and taste. I do not regard a Hindu or a Roman Catholic place of worship containing images as necessarily bad or superstitious and a mosque or a Protestant place of

worship being good or free of superstition merely because of their exclusion of images. A symbol such as a Cross or a book may easily become idolatrous, and, therefore, superstitious. And the worship of the image of child Krishna or Virgin Mary may become ennobling and free of all superstition. It depends upon the attitude of the heart of the worshipper.

I do not see the parallel between the khaddar propaganda and the building of temples for the so-called untouchables. But I grant the argument of the correspondent that the agitation against foreign cloth should include the giving up of unnecessary and harmful foreign fashions and tastes. But this does not need separate preaching. As a rule, those who have adopted khaddar have also eschewed such fashions and tastes in dress as are wholly unnecessary for our climate.

I am under the impression that you supported the Khilafat cause because your brothers, the Indian Muslims, felt strongly about it. But is it just or right to help any cause without oneself being satisfied as to its intrinsic worth, simply because one's brothers rightly or wrongly feel keenly about it? Or was it that you were satisfied yourself that the Khilafat, as such, was a worthy and right cause? If so, will you give your reasons, seeing that even modern Turkey has at one stroke done away with this institution which she presumably considers is calculated to perpetuate a most unreasonable and virulent type of fanaticism in the Islamic world?

The correspondent is quite correct in his contention that even a brother's cause has to be examined and proved to be just to one's satisfaction before one can help him. I was myself satisfied when I decided to throw in my lot with my Muslim brothers that their cause was just. I must refer to the contemporary files of *Young India* for my reasons for considering the Khilafat cause to be just. Everything that modern Turkey does is not necessarily defensible. Further, Musalmans may make whatever innovations they like in their practices. A non-Muslim cannot dictate innovations in Islam. All he can do is to examine the general morality of a system or practice before he defends it. I had satisfied myself that there was nothing intrinsically wrong in the institution of Khilafat. The correctness of the Islamic position was admitted by other non-Muslims including Mr. Llyod George himself and the institution was defended by me against non-Muslim attack.

Were you not helping the cause of war when you, both while in Africa and here, enlisted men for field service? How does it tally with your principle

of ahimsa?

By enlisting men for ambulance work in South Africa and in England, and recruits for field service in India, I helped not the cause of war, but I helped the institution called the British Empire in whose ultimate beneficial character I then believed. My repugnance to war was as strong then as it is today; and I could not then have and would not have shouldered a rifle. But one's life is not a single straight line; it is a bundle of duties very often conflicting. And one is called upon continually to make one's choice between one duty and another. As a citizen not then, and not even now, a reformer leading an agitation against the institution of war, I had to advise and lead men who believed in war but who, from cowardice or from base motives, or from anger against the British Government, refrained from enlisting. I did not hesitate to advise them that, so long as they believed in war and professed loyalty to the British constitution, they were in duty bound to support it by enlistment. Though I do not believe in the use of arms, and though it is contrary to the religion of ahimsa which I profess, I should not hesitate to join an agitation for a repeal of the debasing Arms Act which I have considered amongst the blackest crimes of the British Government against India. I do not believe in retaliation, but I did not hesitate to tell the villagers near Bettiah four years ago that they who knew nothing of ahimsa were guilty of cowardice in failing to defend the honour of their womenfolk and their property by force of arms. And I have not hesitated as the correspondent should know only recently to tell the Hindus that, if they do not believe in out-and-out ahimsa and cannot practise it, they would be guilty of a crime against their religion and humanity if they failed to defend by force of arms the honour of their women against any kidnapper who chooses to take away their women. And all this advice and my previous practice I hold to be not only consistent with my profession of the religion of ahimsa out and out, but a direct result of it. To state that noble doctrine is simple enough; to know it and to practise it in the midst of a world full of strife, turmoil and passions is a task whose difficulty I realize more and more day by day. And yet the conviction, too, that without it life is not worth living is growing daily deeper.

*Young India, 5-11-1925*

## 112. THE CANKER OF SUPERIORITY

The following remarkable paper handed to me at Mymensing by the District Vaisya Sabha Association cannot fail to be of general interest.<sup>1</sup>

It is likely that there is some exaggeration in the foregoing statement. But the reason why I have reproduced the paper is to show how deep the canker of superiority has eaten into the very vitals of Hinduism. The writers, themselves a despised group in the estimation of their so-called superiors, have not hesitated to claim for themselves a status superior to and distinct from those more despised. The same notion of superiority and inferiority runs through the despised untouchables. I notice throughout my tour in Cutch that, as in other parts of India, the untouchables have among themselves also superior and inferior castes, and the higher caste *Antyajias* will not touch the lower caste, will positively refuse to send their children to schools belonging to the lower caste. Inter-marriage and inter-dining between them is unthinkable. This is caste reduced to the grossest absurdity. And it is by way of protest against this arrogation of superiority by one class over another that I delight in calling myself a *Bhangi*, that is, a sweeper, beyond which so far as I am aware inferiority does not travel. He is the social leper shunned by all and yet he belongs to the one group more indispensable than any other for the sanitary well-being of society, and, therefore, its very physical existence. My sympathies are all with gentlemen on whose behalf the foregoing statement was given to me. But I warn them against claiming superiority over men more unfortunately placed than themselves. Let it be their privilege to take even these with them and refuse to take privileges which may be denied to others. It is necessary, if we will rid Hinduism of the curse of unnatural inequalities, for some of us to rise with our whole soul in revolt against it. In my opinion, he who claims superiority by the very nature of the claim forfeits it. Real, natural superiority comes without the claiming. It is recognized ungrudgingly, and ever refused, not pompously, not out of a false sense of modesty, but because the superiority is not even felt, and because the superior man knows that there is no distinction whatsoever between the soul within himself and the soul within one who regards himself as his inferior. Recognition of the essential identity and oneness of all that lives excludes the very idea of superiority and

<sup>1</sup> For the text of the paper, *vide* "The Canker of Superiority", 5-11-1925.

inferiority. Life is duty, not a bundle of rights and privileges. That religion is doomed to destruction which bases itself upon a system of gradations high and low. Such is not the meaning for me of *Varnashrama*. I believe in it because I imagine that it defines the duties of men belonging to the different vocations. And Brahmin is he who is the servant of all, even the Sudras and the untouchables. He dedicates his all to such service and lives upon the charity and sufferance of his fellow-beings. He is no Kshatriya who puts forth pretensions to rank, power and privileges. He alone is a Kshatriya who uses the whole of himself for the defence and honour of society. And a Vaisya who earns for himself only, and believes in merely amassing wealth is a thief. A Sudra because he labours for hire on behalf of society is in no way inferior to the three classes. According to my conception of Hinduism there is no such thing as a fifth or untouchable class. The so-called untouchables are as much privileged labourers of society as Sudras. *Varnashrama* seems to me to be an ideal system conceived for the highest good of society. What we see today is a travesty and a mockery of the original. And if *Varnashrama* is to abide, Hindus must sweep away the mockery and restore *Varnashrama* to its pristine dignity.

*Young India*, 5-11-1925

### 113. INTERVIEW TO PRESS, AHMEDABAD

Before November 6, 1925

Mr. Gandhi returned here after having finished his tour in Cutch. He looks very much pulled down.

Asked about his health, he said:

There is no cause for anxiety about my health. I have certainly grown weaker than I was after my Bengal tour, owing to the very bad roads and the continuous travelling which I had to undergo in Cutch. I am very much shaken, and have lost nearly eight pounds in weight, but the rest which I shall get at the Ashram will, I feel sure, restore the lost weight and lost strength. I must make it clear that nobody is to blame for the trials of the Cutch tour, which, we had all thought, would give me, comparatively speaking, rest from incessant toil. Everything possible was done by all around me to make me comfortable, but nobody had bargained for the nature of the toil that travelling in carts, on rough roads, would mean for my dilapidated limbs.

Asked as to what he will do in the Cawnpore Congress, Mahatmaji said:

My mind is a perfect blank as to what I shall do in the Congress except that, wherever possible, I shall assist the Swarajists in

accordance with my promise; but the Congress programme will have to be framed by Mrs. Sarojini Devi in consultation with Pandit Motilalji.

Asked if they would do nothing to bring the Liberals and the Independents within the Congress, Mr. Gandhi said:

There is no reason why the Liberals and the Independents should not join the Congress and convert the Swarajists to their view even as they entered the Councils and the Assembly to convert their opponents and the Government to their view.

Mr. Gandhi proposes to stay in his Ashram for full one month.

*The Hindu*, 6-11-1925

#### 114. LETTER TO DR. M. A. ANSARI

November 7, 1925

DEAR DR. ANSARI,

I have the letter signed by you and Hakim Saheb.<sup>1</sup> What is the use of the Congress President sending a cable to the League of Nations? I feel like a caged lion, only with this difference that the lion foams and frets and gnashes his teeth and lashes the iron bars furiously in the vain attempt to be free, whereas I recognize my limitations and refuse to foam and fret. If we had any power behind us, I would immediately send the cable suggested by you. Things I omit to mention in the pages of *Young India* are buried deep down in my bosom and they are far weightier than those I advertise. But I do not fail to advertise them daily before the Unseen Power. When I think of the horizon about us, my heart becomes sick and weary. And when I listen to the still small voice within, I derive hope and smile in spite of the conflagration raging round me. Do save me from having to advertise our impotence.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. G.

From a photostat: S.N. 10597

<sup>1</sup> The letter dealt with the hardships of the Druses, inhabiting Southern Syria, at the hands of the Mandatory Power, France, For the text, *vide* "Our Impotence", 12-11-1925.



*115. LETTER TO P. A. NARIELWALA*

SABARMATI,  
*November 7, 1925*

DEAR FRIEND,

I thank you for your letter and donation. If you will send it directly to the Secretary, A.I.S.A., Satyagraha Ashram, Sabarmati, it will be more convenient.

*Yours sincerely,*  
M. K. GANDHI

[P. A.] NARIELWALA, ESQ.  
"ROSE LEA"  
ALTAMONT ROAD  
CUMBALLA HILL  
BOMBAY

From the original:: C.W. 9275. Courtesy: P. A. Narielwala

*116. LETTER TO SHANTIKUMAR MORARJI*

*Kartika Vad 8 [November 8, 1925]<sup>1</sup>*

BHAI SHANTIKUMAR,

I had your two letters in Kutch. Give me the correct information, if indeed you have it, about Sholapur. Have you come to know the main cause of the quarrel?

*Blessings from*  
MOHANDAS

[PS.]

I have used my left hand as the right hand is out of action.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 4699. Courtesy: Shantikumar Morarji

*117. SILENCE-DAY NOTE TO MIRABEHN*

*[On or after November 9, 1925]<sup>4</sup>*

God is great and He will help you and protect you. It is nothing that we err if we know how to mend. And that, thank God, you have

<sup>1</sup> The reference in the letter to Kutch suggests that it was written in 1925.

done never to go back. You have come nevertheless to face storms but they are all bracing. May they make you powerful and a fit instrument of service.

From the original: C.W. 5448. Courtesy: Mirabeht. Also G.N. 9450

### 118. *OUR IMPOTENCE*

The following letter has been addressed to me by Hakimsaheb Ajmal Khan and Dr. Ansari who have just returned from a prolonged tour on the continent including Syria:

Recent events in Southern Syria, the country where the Druses live, and where an armed resistance is being carried on by these oppressed people against the French, the Mandatory Power, have brought to light the fringhtfulness of the French authorities there. A cable, received two days back from Palestine sent by Syed Jamaluddin-al-Husaini, Secretary of Lajnatut-Tanfiziyyah, the most popular and influential organization of the people of Palestine, says that the town of Damascus has terribly suffered from the French bombardment and the death-roll has been tremendous. Although from the various accounts published in the British Press one could gather that things were bad in Syria, yet this telegram from Palestine and Reuter's cable from Cairo, received subsequently, show the utter barbarity and inhumanity which is being practised by the French of the pupulation in the Druse country and Damascus.

Apart from the recent instances of fringhtfulness, our tour in Syria brought under our observation many facts which proved the callousness of the French and their utter disregard for the elementary rights of the people of the mandated territory in Syria.

We have already published our experiences in the Indian Press, but in order to save you the trouble of reading the Urdu reports, published in the *Hamdard*, we would briefly give you some of the most salient facts regarding the situation in Syria.

When the League of Nations gave the mandate of Syria to France, the French Government and the High Commissioner made a public declaration to the people of Syria of granting them complete autonomy regarding their internal affairs, Syria was to be divided in several autonomous provinces each with a governor, elected by the people and an advisory council representing the people and elected by them. Whilst this promise was partially and outwardly carried out in the provinces of Lebanon and Damascus, the province of Hauran, the country of the Druses, was neither given auto-nomy nor a council for a president elected by them, but a French officer Captain Carbiollet, was forced on the Druses against their wish and when they made demons-trations and representations against this, their deputation was

insulted, their notables were publicly thrashed and imprisoned, and their womenfolk were maltreated.

Captain Carbiollet, who had come from French Congo, practised all the atrocities to which the poor inhabitants of the French Congo had been subjected by the French, but the Druses being an ancient, proud, warlike race resisted these methods and were forced to take up arms. They inflicted considerable losses on the French forces and have so far resisted the French invasion of their country successfully, but the methods practised by the French in the adjoining parts of Syria, viz. Damascus and Aleppo, are causing the spread of revolt to these parts. The telegrams quoted above refer to the most recent atrocities committed on the people of Damascus.

The French Government are also practising unfair and dishonest methods and are depleting the country of its wealth by removing all the gold in the country and replacing it by paper money. They are gradually undermining all the economic resources of the country which is resulting in destitution and poverty. To add to this depletion, they have also been collecting gold from the people of town and villages in the shape of fines and punishments.

We are writing this to you in order to elicit your sympathy for these Asiatic brethren, and to request you, as the President of the Congress, to send a cable to the League of Nations which has granted this mandate to France, and to instruct other Congress organizations to do the same. We are conscious that the present situation in India is not very favourable to such an action, but it is our considered opinion as Indians, as Muslims, and as Asiatics that we should sympathize with all the oppressed Asiatic people and cultivate friendly relations with them which would be beneficial to us and to them.

I could not see my way to accept their advice to send a cable to the League of Nations in the name of the Congress, and therefore sent the following answer:<sup>1</sup>

But the next best thing I could do was to publish the valuable letter and my reply. I do not believe in making appeals when there is no force behind them whether moral or material. Moral force comes from the determination of the appellants to do something, to sacrifice something for the sake of making their appeal effective. Even children instinctively know this elementary principle. They starve, they cry, or, if they are naughty, they do not hesitate to strike their mothers who will not grant their peremptory demands. Unless we recognize and are prepared to reduce to practice this principle we can but expose the Congress and ourselves to ridicule, if not worse.

We cannot be naughty even if we will. We *can* suffer if *only* we

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Letter to Dr. M.A. Ansari", 7-11-1925.

will. I want us as Indians, Hindus or Mussalmans, Christians or Parsis, or Asiatics to realize our impotence in the face of this humiliation, barbarity, Dyerism, or call it what you will, inflicted on Syria. A definite realization of our impotence might teach us to imitate if it is only the animals who in the presence of stormy weather come close together and seek warmth and courage from one another. They do not make a vain appeal to the god of the weather to moderate his wrath. They simply provide against it.

And we? Hindus and Mussalmans fight against one another and the gulf seems to be daily widening. We have not yet understood the meaning of the charkha. Those that have find all kinds of pretexts not to wear khaddar and not to spin. The storm is raging round us. And instead of seeking warmth one from the other, we prefer to shiver or petition the god of storms to stay his hand. If I cannot bring about Hindu-Muslim union or persuade the people to take up the wheel, I have the wisdom at least not to sign any petition for mercy.

And what is the League of Nations? Is it not in reality merely England and France? Do the other powers count? Is it any use appealing to France which is denying her motto of Fraternity, Equality and Justice? She has denied justice to Germany, there is little fraternity between her and the Riffs, and the doctrine of equality she is trampling underfoot in Syria. If we would appeal to England, we need not go to the League of Nations. She is much nearer home. She is perched on the heights of Simla except when she descends to Delhi for a brief period. But to appeal to her is to appeal to Caesar against Augustus.

Let us then perceive the truth in its nakedness and learn to appeal to the nation to do her duty. Relief of Syria lies through India. And if we cannot appreciate our greatness, let us confess our littleness and say nothing. But we need not be little. Let us do at least one thing thoroughly—either fight to the bitter end, even as our brothers the four-footed animals often do, or, as men, let us learn and teach through co-operation on the largest scale known to the world the uselessness, nay, the sinfulness of exploitation of those weaker than ourselves. That co-operation among millions is possible only through the spinning-wheel.

*Young India*, 12-11-1925

## 119. NOTES

### MESSENGER OF PEACE

Mr. C. F. Andrews's self-chosen function is to do the service he can and think no more about it. His service takes the form of bringing about peace. He had hardly finished his work in Orissa among the men or cattle in distress or among the mill-hands of Bombay, when he felt the call to go to South Africa and help the Indian settlers who are in distress. But he will be helping not only the Indians there but also the Europeans. He has no malice or anger in him. He wants no favours for the Indians. He wants bare justice. Mr. Andrews is no stranger to South Africa<sup>1</sup>. South African statesmen know and admit that he is as much Europeans' friend as Indians. The Indian question has reached a most critical stage. For the Indians resident in South Africa it is a matter practically of life and death. Mr. Andrews's presence in their midst at this juncture must bring the greatest comfort to them. May this good friend's labours bear ample fruit as they have done before now. Let the settlers, however, not be lulled into a sense of false security by Mr. Andrews's presence which by itself can bring them little relief. He can but guide, advise and negotiate. But all the guidance, advice and negotiation will come to nothing if there is no cohesion or courage among the settlers themselves.

### AN OPIUM REPORT

The Congress Opium Enquiry Report for Assam has been just published and can be had at the Congress Office, Jorhat, Assam, or of Mr. C F. Andrews, Santiniketan, for Rs. 1/8 or two shillings. It is well printed and covers 166 pages including a map, appendices, a glossary of unusual terms and a subject index. The report itself covers 44 pages. It has nine chapters. There is, too, an introduction by Mr. C. F. Andrews who was a co-opted member and who is mainly responsible for the creation of the Committee and the conduct of the Enquiry. Sjt. Kuladhar Chatia was the chairman of the Committee. This is the tribute Mr. Andrews pays to the workers:

I wish to express my sincere admiration for the devoted courage and perseverance of the workers on the present committee who have sacrificed time and

<sup>1</sup> Andrews had visited the country in 1914, when Gandhiji was still there.

ease and leisure and business occupations in order to do this service to their country. This enquiry is one among a series. Assam was the first province chosen because it has the blackest record for opium in all India. Whereas the standard medical requirement of opium, according to the League of Nations, is 6 seers per each 10,000, the lowest figure for Assam is over 45 seers and the highest over 237 seers! The report shows that, during the Non-co-operation period, the figures for opium dropped from 1,614 maunds to 884. This was due to picketing which was rendered illegal. 1,100 workers were imprisoned including lawyers, graduates, college students, etc. But I must not anticipate the pleasure that a patriot or a reformer would gain by reading the whole of the instructive report. I must, therefore, close this review of the report by copying the recommendations.

(1) The sale of opium and its derivations should be ultimately limited to the medical and scientific needs of Assam.

(2) Provision should be made for confirmed addicts above the age of forty, enabling them to procure a rationed amount of opium, their names being registered for that purpose.

(3) All opium-addicts, who are under forty years of age, should be dealt with as medical patients. Wherever opium is needed by them, it should be given only under the order of a fully qualified doctor, the medical permission to obtain it being subject to quarterly renewal.

(4) These changes would be carried out within the next five years. At the end of five years, opium should be placed on the list of poisons under a Dangerous Drugs Act, and treated as such for all inhabitants of Assam.

While much depends of the Government action, we feel that no progress can be made without the education of public opinion. The Non-co-operation movement showed what a great advance could be made in opium restriction by voluntary effort and public propaganda. The decrease in consumption in a single year is a proof of what can be done by these methods. This work needs to be still further promoted and sustained.

We, therefore, appeal to all those who desire the welfare of Assam to organize themselves into anti-opium societies and to advocate opium prohibition amongst the people in general. This will lead to the education of public opinion against the opium evil and create a moral atmosphere, without which no great success can be achieved. Every avenue of approaching the illiterate masses, who are the greatest consumers, should be employed. Especially necessary is the careful training of the young children in all the elementary schools of the Assam valley and among the hill tribes. We would invite the co-operation of all sections of the community in this educational

work, and we would specially appeal to the missionaries to help us in organizing temperance societies among the hill tribes with whom they are closely connected.

Finally, we would venture to ask Mahatma Gandhi once more to come to Assam and put himself at the head of a great anti-opium campaign to be carried on by entirely peaceful means.

I note the appeal made to me. It was a matter of deep regret to me that I was unable to take in Assam during the Bengal tour when the cruel hand of death snatched away Deshbandhu from us. I am, however, under promise to Sjt. Phooken to visit that fair garden next year if all goes well. My terms are well-known. Deshbandhu's formula was men, munitions and money. It must abide even though he is not with us in body. Munitions are hand-spun yarn—bullets that hurt no one and whose saving power has no limits. I would undertake to wean the Assa-mese from the opium habit if Sjt. Phooken and his friends will induce them by their own glorious example to shed their idleness and take to charkha. He believes and I believe with him that Assam has great possibilities for khaddar. May they soon become realities. Then I shall exc-use every learned Assamese for having been lured into the Councils net.

#### COW-PROTECTION ESSAY

The readers will be glad to learn that Acharya Dhruva and Sjt. C. V. Vaidya have both kindly consented to be judges of the competition essays. I only hope that the essays will be worthy of the great scholars who have consented to judge them and the subject chosen. Acharya Dhruva suggests that I should make it clear that the scholars should examine the Shastras not from the dry and profitless dialectic standpoint but from the broad historical standpoint. So also does he hope the essayists will deal with the question of tanneries and dairies. They will, therefore, historically trace the growth of cow-protection and examine all possible ways of protecting and preserving the cow and hence cattle life, not inconsistent with the sanctions of religion.

A correspondent inquires what length the essay should be. No limit has been considered necessary because it depends upon the manner of treatment. But I would say generally that the shorter the essay the better it would be. I know the judges well enough to be able say for them that they will not in any way be influenced by the length of the essays. Each competitor will therefore use his own discretion.

Only I hope that they will carefully revise their compositions and prune them down wherever necessary. I give this caution in the light of my experience of the essays on spinning.

Another correspondent suggests extension of the time limit for the very cogent reason that Sanskrit professors who may wish to take part in the competition may not be able to finish their labours within the stipulated period. I, therefore, gladly extend the time to 31st May 1926 instead of 31st March next.

There remains one suggestion to consider. A correspondent questions the utility of choosing Sanskrit as one of the languages for the essay. The reason for selecting Sanskrit is to enable and induce the very large number of learned pundits throughout India to give the nation the benefit of their deep learning. During my peregrinations in the South I had the honour of meeting several pundits, who were deeply interested in modern movements, but of whose learning we receive little benefit because Sanskrit learning is at a discount. I hope that Sanskrit scholars who do not know English well enough or in spite of their knowledge of the latter will give the nation a standard treatise in Sanskrit. I need hardly say that if a Sanskrit essay wins the prize it will be translated not only in English and Hindi but in Urdu and all other important languages. It will all depend upon the merit of the prize essay. I shall hope that we shall have a treatise of such merit as to occupy a permanent place in religious literature no matter in what language the original is written.

SPIN, SPIN, SPIN

If you feel the force of Hakim Saheb's letter reproduced elsewhere, you will join the A.I.S.A. and help to achieve the one big thing it is possible for the nation to achieve even today. She will do so when many of us do it. The best method of doing it is to join the A.I.S.A. and induce others to do likewise. Do not find out excuses for not spinning and not wearing khaddar, but rather discover the many reasons why you should. You can join the Association without sacrificing any of your other activities. The only thing you are called upon to sacrifice is your taste for foreign or mill-made cloth. There is not much there to sacrifice, if you will but put against it the tremendous national gain. We have been talking about swadeshi for the past thirty years. We have been talking loosely about boycott of foreign goods, British goods at least, since 1906. We have been still more loosely practising it. We have succeeded in nothing. Experience



has shown that we can only achieve boycott of foreign cloth and that alone. Reason proclaims that we must achieve it, if we would at all live. It is our right as well as duty. I make bold to say that nothing has come nearer success than this one simple and necessary boycott. It can be made wholly successful if enough good people join the Spinners' Association.

#### A KHADI CATALOGUE

The manager of the Khadi Bhandar, Princess Street, run in Bombay by the All-India Khadi Board (now All-India Spinners' Association) has sent me a copy of his neatly printed price list. It shows the progress made by khaddar. The total sales during the four years of its existence amount to Rs. 8,30,329. The highest sales were in 1922-23, viz., Rs. 2,45,515, the lowest during the current year, viz., Rs. 1,68,280. It has been suggested that the sales went up in 1922-23 because I was in jail. People thought and rightly that the more khaddar they used, the nearer was swaraj. And swaraj meant my discharge. The flaw, however, consisted in the reasoning that khaddar was only a temporary necessity. Whereas the fact is that it is as necessary for all times as native food and native air are. The lower sales therefore are better in a way if they represent permanent custom. The existence of this and other khaddar stores shows that they supply a felt want, The political effect of khaddar however can be obtained only when the sales are not a little over one hundred thousand rupees per year but they amount to several crores, strictly speaking, sixty crores. Bombay, therefore, should support not one or two such stores but several hundred, even as it today supports several hundred foreign cloth stores. There is now no excuse for the public not to support this and such other stores. For they satisfy all reasonable tastes. I observe in the catalogue, shirtings, muslin khadi, saris, handkerchiefs, towels, dhotis, ready-made shirts, vests, caps, bags, bedsheets, shawls, curtains, counterpanes, tablecloths, pillow-slips, blouses, drawers for babies and adults, etc." But," says the critic," compare the prices." I compare them and satisfy myself that, where the price is apparently higher, it is in reality cheaper, for in addition to getting khaddar for your money, you contribute towards the attainment of swaraj. If you do not believe in the capacity of khaddar to secure swaraj, then know that by buying khaddar you are at least partly supporting some starving man or woman. If an average khaddar wearer pays Rs. 10 per year for his cloth then four such wearers

wholly support at least one starving person per year. Can khaddar with that potentiality be ever considered dear by one who loves his country and cares for the poor?

*Young India*, 12-11-1925

### 120. LETTER TO ROMAIN ROLLAND

SABARMATI,  
*November 13, 1925*

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your very kind letter.<sup>1</sup> Miss Slade quickly followed it. What a treasure you have sent me! I shall try to be worthy of the great trust. I shall leave no stone unturned to assist her to become a bridge between East and West. I am too imperfect to have disciples. She shall be fellow-seeker with me and as I am older in years and therefore presumably in spiritual experience, I propose to share the honour of fatherhood with you. Miss Slade is showing wonderful adaptability and has already put us at ease about herself.

I must leave the rest to be told you by Miss Slade whom I am asking to tell you all about a French sister who came to the Ashram just a few days before she came.

*Yours sincerely,*  
M. K. GANDHI

*Romain Rolland and Gandhi Correspondence*, pp. 50-1

### 121. LETTER TO PADMAJA NAIDU

*November 14, 1925*

MY DEAR PADMAJA,

Mother is here today to see how I look after the Cutch tour. She tells me this should reach you on your birthday. This, therefore, comes to you charged with all the love I am capable of bearing towards you. And you know what that love is. Are you going to behave yourself

<sup>1</sup> Referring to Mirabehn, the addressee in his letter dated October 1, 1925 had written: " . . . I am sure you will find in her one of your most staunch and faithful disciples. Her soul is full of admirable energy and ardent devotion; she is straightforward and upright. Europe cannot offer a nobler or more disinterested heart to your cause. May she bear with her the love of thousands of Europeans, and my veneration."

and be strong? You have to help mother in her labours next year.

With love,

Yours,

BAPU

[PS.]

My right hand refuses to work. Hence this is written with the left.

M.K.G.

From the original: Padmaja Naidu Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

### 122. "RAMANAMA" AND KHADI

"Juna Jogi"<sup>1</sup> writes as follows:<sup>2</sup>

This letter has been lying with me for two months. I had hoped, when I had leisure, to place it before the readers of *Navajivan*. I have found that leisure today or, rather, I have contrived to find it. The writer has advised me not to go fault-finding. And let it not be said that I am finding fault with his letter if I happen to criticize it, for the motive behind my criticism is somehow to fit it into these pages so as to expound the glory of God. Let the writer and others know that I am adopting whatever in it is worth adopting. I feel I have nothing new to learn about the glory of *Ramanama* as I have realized it through experience. And I hold that it cannot be propagated in the same manner as khadi or swaraj. In these very difficult times, even the utterance of the Name is done in a wrong way. In other words, I have heard it repeated often for mere show, sometimes for selfish ends and sometimes even in order to feed licentious conduct. There would be nothing to object to if one uttered *Mara* reversing the order of syllables, while chanting the Name. We read of the pure in heart having attained *mukti* even by chanting it in an erroneous manner and we can believe this too to be true. However, what are we to say of sinners who, although their pronunciation is perfect, chant the *mantra* of *Ramanama* in order to nourish their sins? That is why I am afraid of any propaganda for *Ramanama*. Those persons who believe that by sitting together in company and loudly repeating the Name they

<sup>1</sup> A pseudonym meaning "old worker"

<sup>2</sup> The letter is not translated here; the correspondent advised Gandhiji to attach greater importance to *Ramanama* than to swaraj.

can wash away all their past, present and future sins and that nothing besides this shouting is expected of them, deserve to be bowed to from a distance. No one should imitate them. I, for my part, regard those who support and spread khadi, etc., as being worthy of repeating *Ramanama*. But repeating the Name, I find, has nowhere brought about an atmosphere congenial for the spread of khadi.

How can a servant of Rama put it down in writing saying that no one in this world has been able to convert learned men?<sup>1</sup> It does not seem to me that I am under any delusion. Learned persons too belong to the world of Rama and many of them have attained *moksha* by repeating His Name. The truth of the matter is that no one but a devotee can convert learned persons. And I, who hope to become a devotee, am ever trying to make these persons understand. And as I have no delusion, I am not angry with those who do not understand but rather with myself because my devotion is imperfect. Hence in order that Rama may for ever dwell in my heart I welcome the advice that I should further purify my heart, and I constantly give myself such advice. It is the devotee who is to blame, not the listener, if he cannot make his devotion interesting. If the devotion has any attractive qualities, these will certainly be seized upon by the listener; however, is the listener to blame if he can find nothing interesting in it? If Krishna's flute had been a broken one and if the *gopis* had shrunk from the harsh tunes coming out of it, Krishna would have been disgraced and no one would blame the *gopis*. Poor Arjuna was hardly aware of the fact that he was a mere book-worm, or that he was making a false claim to learning. However, Krishna's clarity of vision enabled him to purify Arjuna's vision and cure him of his delusion. Hence, one who wishes to propagate *Ramanama* should do so after convincing himself, purifying himself and, establishing Rama's kingdom in his own heart. To this the world will respond and it will begin chanting His Name. However, to have it chanted anywhere and in any manner one likes is to bring disgrace to *Ramanama* by adding to the hypocrisy which is already there and accelerating the torrential current of atheism.

It is hardly possible for one today to stay in peace in one place.<sup>2</sup> How can even Rama have any effect on one whose body is chained

<sup>1</sup> The correspondent had said in the letter: "In this world none has been able to convert learned persons. Those who possess the spirit of devotion can be converted. Rama and Krishna did not hold discussions with learned persons".

<sup>2</sup> This is with reference to what the correspondent has said: "God is His own true devotee and teaches devotion to the world. You should now stay in peace, in one place."

but whose mind constantly traverses across millions of miles? However, what can be said of the person who, like Damayanti searching for Nala, wanders from one forest to another, questions even the trees and animals of the whereabouts of Rama—should it be said of him that he is a wanderer or, should it be said that he stays in peace in one place? Can we not say rather that the real seer is he alone who has seen the seated one wandering around and the wanderer staying in one place? How can the duty that one has to perform be determined? Is it not determined simply by doing it? And, if this is true, I have conquered the world as I never ask anyone to do what I do not do myself. I have no alternative before me but to tell the reader of the delusion of this” Juna Jogi”. Others may not know this, but the gentleman in question certainly knows that I have no such attendants who would hold back from me any letter, such as this one, which has been written in a friendly spirit. I received this letter promptly. Who is, however, to blame for my inability to reply to it for two months—those poor attendants, myself, fate, or the writer himself? Let us conclude that the writer himself is to blame. A person who writes to me a letter which puts me into an extremely difficult dilemma, should certainly have the patience to wait for a reply. The problem that he has posed is not so simple that I could solve it instantly as I could point out that cloth made of mill-spun yarn is not khadi. I was certainly afraid that, by replying to such a letter, I might impair the glory of *Ramanama*. Hence, I still feel that there was nothing wrong in not replying to it, and perhaps there is some delusion in this reply! However, even if there is, I place this reply at the feet of Rama in the same way as I would some meritorious deed.

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 15-11-1925

### 123. MY NOTES

#### RAILWAY TRAVEL

There was a time when I actually experienced the discomforts of a railway journey and then I also felt strongly about them; those days are over for me. I now get little first-hand experience of them, as I no longer travel third class. One does not take notice of what one does not constantly experience. Moreover, other matters, which appear to be more important to my mind, occupy all my time; hence it rarely occurs to me to write on the hardships of passengers or to investigate

this matter. During my tour of Kutch, however, Shri Jivraj Nensey reminded me that a day had been set apart every year for recalling passengers' grievances and he then asked me to write something on this subject. A day should thus be set apart and passengers should recall their grievances on that day. Ways should be found to remedy these, and new measures should be devised only after those taken during the previous year have been reviewed. Here, however, as on every question there are two aspects. It is not only the authorities who are to blame for the hardships that the passengers have to undergo. It has been my experience that much of the blame has to be shared by the latter also. What could the railway authorities do if the passengers make no complaints or do not know they have any rights? Or, how can we blame the railway authorities when the passengers themselves are responsible for committing offences? Hence, I expect some self-examination to take place when such gatherings are held. It is all very well to find fault with others. but along with that one should also look at one's own faults. If we do not get rid of some of our bad habits, many of the hardships suffered by passengers will continue, however good the railway regulations and however honest the authorities may be. Moreover, some grievances have their origin in the entire system of Government being evil; these cannot be done away with so long as the system is not changed. For instance, the basic objective of the railways is not to serve passengers but to drain the wealth of India and also to suppress any revolt that we may raise. In other words, the railway is meant for the military authorities. The hardships result from this which is the very root of the problem. Swaraj is the only remedy for it; and swaraj should be a government based on morality. In this manner, in calling to memory the hardships of passengers, we find that there are three aspects of the question which should be considered and I hope the organizers will consider them all.

#### TO SPINNERS

I have received the following letter<sup>1</sup> from the Spinners' Association:

The only comment to be made on this is that as members of the Association try to understand the suggestions and act accordingly, the Association will gain not only in strength but also in wealth. There should be one price for bad yarn and another for good yarn. The

<sup>1</sup> Not translated here

effort put in by the spinner for both the types is almost the same. Moreover, the quality of the yarn is a test of the spinner. Good yarn implies that the cost of weaving will be lower. Yarn packed well is well-protected. Following the suggestions will save the time of those in charge. In this way, a small amount of effort can automatically bring in financial gain to the Spinners' Association beyond one's guess. Regarding the last suggestion in the above letter, it is sufficient to say that although there may be no 'D' class for members, even if those who have not become total converts to khadi spin and send in their yarn there is some gain, at any rate. The Spinners' Association does not exist merely in name; it is there for concrete work. Hence there is merit in everyone trying to further its cause to the best of their ability and in any manner they can think of.

#### SOME REPLIES

Several lovers of khadi have asked questions to which I give below the answers. The questions can be inferred from the answers.

1. Receipts for yarn will either continue being sent to the members individually or through newspapers or otherwise.

2. 'A' class members can send in their yarn every month. They can even send in a year's quota at one and the same time. Such persons cannot be regarded as members when their contribution is in arrears for a month; however, when they make up their arrears and also send in advance their quota for the future, they would again be treated as members.

3. One certainly cannot use mill-made slivers for spinning.

4. The Association began its year in October. Those who have already contributed fourteen thousand yards to the Congress, will continue to be its members. With effect from October, however, new yarn should be sent in to the Spinners' Association.

#### INDIANS IN SOUTH AFRICA

The kind-hearted Mr. Andrews is always present wherever there is suffering. He reached Orissa, on hearing of the suffering of the animals there. He shared the sufferings of the labourers of Bombay. He is now on his way to South Africa to share the miseries of the Indians there. One to whom service alone is dharma finds happiness only in service. If the Indians in South Africa wish to take full advantage of the service of this kindhearted Englishman, they should bear two things in mind. When someone comes forward to help, we

sometimes become slack, assuming that he will do single-handed all that needs to be done; this should not happen in South Africa. His visit can be utilized only if his presence makes them more alert and makes them put in greater effort. Secondly, they must unite, forget all differences and work with courage and determination. And if this is done, the game is not yet lost. Before resorting to satyagraha, they must give full thought to it. Satyagraha can never be practised as a threat. Those who strive for truth must speak the truth alone and act only truthfully. Not to resort to satyagraha would bring no disgrace; but, not practising it after resolving to do so will not only bring disgrace but is also likely to harm the community.

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 15-11-1925

#### 124. LETTER TO C. F. ANDREWS

Monday [November 16, 1925]<sup>1</sup>

MY DEAR CHARLIE.

Your commandments are being carried out. The wire<sup>2</sup> went to Sarojini this morning. I am giving a leading article to your mission.<sup>3</sup>

I hope you are quite well. God keep you well on the voyage.

With deepest love,

*Yours,*  
MOHAN

From a photostat: G.N. 2632

<sup>1</sup> C. F. Andrews left for South Africa a few days before the official deputation, which left on November 25. This, as well as the reference to the leading article in *Young India*, would indicate that the letter was written on November 16, which was a Monday.

<sup>2</sup> Not available

<sup>3</sup> *Vide* "Indians in South Africa", 26-11-1925.



## 125. LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

[November 18, 1925]<sup>1</sup>

I am worried after reading the letter about your health. First I thought of sending Mahadev or Devdas. Then I remembered Nargisbehn. She is bringing this letter. Tell her everything. She will, of course, wire to me her own opinion. But do tell her everything in detail. Ask her to send me a wire if you need even the least help, so that I can send Mahadev or Devdas from here. You must take rest. Ba sends her blessings.

[From Gujarati]

*Bapuni Prasadi*, p. 81

## 126. NOTES

### THE NAKED TRUTH

We did not conquer India for the benefit of the Indians. I know it is said at missionary meetings that we conquered India to raise the level of the Indians. That is cant. We conquered India as the outlet for the goods of Great Britain. We conquered India by the sword and by the sword we should hold it. ("Shame!") Call shame if you like. I am stating facts. I am interested in missionary work in India and have done much work of that kind, but I am not such a hypocrite as to say we hold India for the Indians. We hold it as the finest outlet for British goods in general, and for Lancashire cotton goods in particular.

This is reported to have been said by Sir William Johnson-Hicks. But he is not the first minister to have reminded us of our serfdom. Why should truth be at all unpalatable? It must do us good to know ourselves as we are—destined to be hewers of wood and drawers of water for the benefit of whosoever will claim us by the prowess of his sword. It is good, too, that due emphasis is laid on Lancashire goods. The sword will be sheathed as soon as Manchester calico ceases to be saleable in India. It is much more economical expeditious and possible to give up the use of Manchester and, therefore, foreign calico than to blunt the edge of Sir William's

<sup>1</sup> As in the source

sword. The process will multiply the number of swords and, therefore, also miseries in the world. Like opium production, the world manufacture of swords needs to be restricted. The sword is probably responsible for more misery in the world than opium. Hence do I say that, if India takes to the spinning-wheel, she will contribute to the restriction of armament and peace of the world as no other country and nothing else can.

#### GOVERNMENT SERVANTS AND A.I.S.A.

A Government servant writes to say that he has been a habitual khaddar-wearer for the last four years, and his khaddar is made out of yarn of his own spinning. He is a regular spinner; but, being a Government servant, has not hitherto belonged to any association. He now enquires whether, the A.I.S.A. being, as its preamble shows, non-political in character, he may become its member. I am certainly of opinion that even the Viceroy can become a member of the Association with perfect impunity if he approves of its objects. Unless, therefore, there is anything in the rules of Government service debarring Government servants from becoming members of any association whatsoever although non-political, no Government servant who is in sympathy with A.I.S.A. should hesitate to become its member. The same correspondent asks whether it is obligatory to spin half an hour daily or whether a member may finish the whole quota as soon as he can. According to the constitution of the Association, it is open to anyone to send the whole of his annual subscription of twelve thousand yards at once. It is not obligatory to spin daily. But it is certainly advisable to do so even though one may have finished his quota.

#### PASSENGERS' DAY

It is a good idea to observe a Passengers' Day and review the progress of improvement in the condition of millions of passengers who use either the railways or the waterways connecting one part of India with another. In my palmy days when I enjoyed the privilege of travelling 3rd class I used to have much to say about the condition of 3rd-class passengers whether by rail or water.<sup>1</sup> But, on the principle of 'out of sight out of mind', not experiencing in my own person the

<sup>1</sup>*Vide* "Railway Passengers", before 26-7-1916," Letter to the Press on Third Class Travelling on Indian Railways", 25-9-1917;" Letter to Commerce and Industries Secretary", 31-10-1917.

difficulties of 3rd-class railway travelling, I have ceased to write upon it. But the forthcoming Passengers' Day reminds one of one's duty towards the dumb millions who are packed like sardines in ill-constructed, dirty compartments and whose wants nobody ever cares to look after. The difficulties due to the indifference of railway authorities are however one part of the distress. It would be well to lay stress upon that part; but the indifference and ignorance of the passengers themselves are almost equally responsible for their difficulties. The speakers, therefore, at the meetings that would be held in different parts of the country would do well to emphasize the duty of passengers towards themselves. Our insanitary habits, want of consideration for our neighbours, insistence upon getting into overcrowded compartments and a host of other bad habits must be removed before 3rd-class railway travelling can be made bearable. It requires great vigilance and there is risk of an association that deals with the internal aspect of the question even courting unpopularity in the initial stages. I wish every success to the effort of Mr. Jivraj Nensey and his fellow organizers.

#### 'LOW MORAL TONE'?

A correspondent writes:

I am myself a Hindu and belong to the highest brahmin class. But I belong to the advanced party. I believe in Reason, for Reason is God and God is Reason. The philosophy of the Hindus which emphasizes the *soham*—I am He—doctrine has today built up a barrier which is more impenetrable than the Mt. Everest. The religion that built up its shrine of Mind-Purity is so obscured by the weed growths of ritualism that the real light is hidden from view. The culture that emphasized 'universal brotherhood under the fatherhood of God' stands today for the trading of the millions by Brahma's offspring who have nothing in common but the archaic mythological derivation from the common stock. The ahimsa doctrine has made us sneaking, snivelling cowards. A Hindu never plays fair with a Hindu; a Mohammedan plays fair with a Mohammedan and so does a Christian with a Christian. A Hindu is more tolerant of other customs outside the Hindu fold—another instance of downright cowardice—a Mohammedan is never tolerant and a Christian seldom. Shall educated Hindus continue this game of humbuggism or by taking up arms end it?

I can throw little light on what the correspondent says but I can advise. Reform must begin with ourselves. 'Physician heal thyself' is a sound doctrine. Those who realize the lowness of the moral tone and

the presence of cowardice among Hindus may at least begin with themselves. The truth of the charge may be generally admitted though not without reservations. But will resort to arms end the evil? How is the low moral tone to be remedied by the brandishing of the sword? Can the innumerable sub-castes or untouchability or the often meaningless ritual be removed by force? Will it not be introducing religion by compulsion? If God is reason, then the appeal must be not to the sword but to reason.

Or does the writer refer to the Hindu-Muslim tension and want the Hindus to resort to force of arms? On a close examination, it will be discovered that in a vast majority of cases, resort to arms is not only not necessary but harmful. What is wanted is the art of suffering. I hold that it is not ahimsa that has made of us cowards but the loss of it. Surely it is not ahimsa that makes us wish ill to people that oppose us but our utter ignorance of it. Those who do not take up arms refrain not because they are deterred by any notion of ahimsa but because they are afraid to die. I have often wished that those who have no scruples about arms will dare to take them up. Then shall we be free of the burden of so-called ahimsaists who being afraid of injury seek to cover their cowardice under the name of ahimsa and corrupt the greatest truth of life. The same may be said of *Soham*. It is a scientific truth which we belie in our treatment of the untouchables. The charges recited in the last paragraph cannot be sustained. What is true of Hindus is also largely true of the other sects. Human nature works in the same manner in the same circumstances. Is a Mussalman never tolerant? I see hundreds in my peregrinations who are as tolerant as Hindus. I have seen Christians, too, not seldom but frequently tolerant. The writer will also find upon observation that those who are intolerant towards other sects are no less intolerant among themselves.

#### A BRAHMO PRAYER

Here is a letter from a Brahma friend:

I am glad to see that your attention was drawn by Dr. Rabindranath Tagore to the great offence that you had unknowingly given to the Brahma Samaj a few years ago by calling Raja Rammohan Roy a pigmy. Now that you have explained<sup>1</sup> under what circumstances you had used that expression and how high is your admiration for the great founder of the Brahma Samaj, I hope

<sup>1</sup>*Vide* "The Poet and the Charkha", 5-11-1925.

my Brahma friends in Bengal and elsewhere will with equal magnanimity of mind accept your explanation and join you in your spiritual and social work which, if rightly understood, is the mission of the Brahma Samaj. Your faith in prayer and simplicity of life, your insistence on using reason in interpreting Shastras, your love for Truth from all quarters, your reverence for great prophets like Christ, Buddha and Mohammed, your work for communal unity, the removal of untouchability and for temperance, —have already won for you the respect and admiration of many individual Brahmos. I hope and trust that now that you have removed the misunderstanding, the Brahma Samaj will welcome your efforts for the regeneration of our motherland in matters spiritual and social. May this understanding bear good fruit under Divine Providence is my humble prayer.

Whilst I join the prayer, let me point out that I never called the great Raja a pigmy in the absolute sense. I have looked up the old file of *Young India*. The issue of 13-4-21 sets forth the circumstances under which I used the expression and the speech reads better even than I had recollections of it.<sup>1</sup> Nor have I ever known that the Brahmos have held aloof from participation in my activities any more than the others or that they have kept aloof because of my reference to the great reformer in my Cuttack speech. In any event if any have, I hope and pray that they will now respond. I note in the Brahma friend's letter a conspicuous omission. The greatest of my activities is the charkha. I hold it to be the best part of my service—social, political and spiritual. For it includes these branches of service. My invitation to all to spin if only for half an hour daily for the sake of the starving millions of this land makes the movement at once both political and spiritual. Let the writer and the other Brahma friends, therefore, take note of the little wheel and its product khaddar.

#### TREE PROTECTION

All religion is presumably in response to the human aspiration or need. Religion is some irresistible binding force. The cow was a peremptory need and we had cow-protection in India. Digging of wells where water is scarce is a religion. It would be ludicrous to dig wells where the water supply is inexhaustible. Similarly whilst tree plantation would be superfluous in, say, Travancore, in some parts of India it is a religious necessity. Such a place is undoubtedly Cutch. It has a beautiful climate but some parts threaten to be a desolate waste

<sup>1</sup>*Vide* "Speech at Mass Meeting, Cuttack", 24-3-1921.

unless there is proper rainfall in them. Rainfall can be almost regulated by deforestation or afforestation. Cutch needs conservation of every tree and every shrub. The most pleasant function therefore that I was required to perform in Cutch was the planting of these trees and inauguration of a tree planting and protection society. The enterprise was due to the genius of one man. His name is Jaykrishna Indrajit. Gujarat has very few specialists. Of these Sjt. Jaykrishna is among the most distinguished. He is a lover of plant life. He is the author of an accurate work on the fauna and flora of the Barda hills in the Porbunder State. He is now forest officer in Cutch and is trying to interest the people of Cutch and the State in forestry. He believes that with judicious plantation Cutch can be turned into a land flowing with milk and honey. He is of opinion, and I venture to share his belief, that the parts which the wind ruins by turning them into sand heaps can be turned into gardens if its inhabitants will pledge themselves each to plant and rear so many trees per year as they buy and keep cows. Whether all the alluring promises which he makes can be realized or not, there is no doubt that Cutch needs tree plantations on a large scale. It is wicked waste to destroy a single tree in Cutch for firewood. The State should import all the firewood or coal that it may need. It should be criminal to cut down a single tree in a place like Cutch. I hope, therefore, that the society established in Mandvi will open branches all over Cutch and, by co-operation between the people and the State, it is possible to cover the land with thousands of trees within a short time. At little expense the inhabitants of Cutch can make an immense addition to its wealth and beauty. They have a capable enthusiast to guide them. Will they have the sense and the energy to follow his guidance?

What is true of Cutch is almost equally true of Kathiawar. This land of immense possibilities is cut up into small States, each possessing sovereign powers with more or less limitations. There is little or no co-ordination between them. The people, therefore, in this little compact peninsula, though having everything else in common, are governed by different heads under different laws. The conservation of forests, systematic plantation of trees, irrigation and many other things cannot be properly done without a common policy. I reproduced some time ago the opinion of Mr. Elmshurst that, if the chiefs and the people of Kathiawar did not evolve and follow a common policy of tree plantation, Kathiawar was likely to suffer from a water famine of such magnitude as to make

life impossible in that land of fine soldiers that once were. In Cutch, Kathiawar, Rajputana, Sind and such other places a study of practical botany should be compulsory in all schools. And the princes can do worse than encourage in every possible way the habit of planting and rearing trees.

ALL -INDIA DESHBANDHU MEMORIAL

Here is the twelfth press list of All-India Deshbandhu Memorial Fund:

	Rs.	As.	Ps.
Already acknowledged	66,443	6	6
Part of Cutch collections	8,250	0	0
	<u>74,693</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>6</u>

More has been collected in Cutch, but it has not yet reached the treasurer. But adding the balance of Cutch collections does not mean much. I would remind workers that they should not be remiss in their zeal for collections. It is not proper for those who are to pay to wait for me to tour in their province before they would pay. All-India Deshbandhu Memorial Fund must be worthy of that friend of the people and of the cause to which it is to be devoted. Khadi cannot be organized all over India, if we do not have enough funds. Let the reader remember that every rupee means honest work for at least eight needy toilers of India.

At the meeting of the Council of All-India Spinners' Association which met for five days, for want of funds the Council had to decide that no new applications for grants of loans should be entertained till sufficient funds had been collected. The pending applications had to be considered in anticipation of funds. If, therefore, khadi work must be thoroughly organized, khadi lovers must collect without delay.

ALL-INDIA COW-PROTECTION ASSOCIATION

The Secretary has handed me the following list of yarn subscriptions received to date from members:

No.	Name	Yds.
BOMBAY 4		
1.	Divalibai Jhaverdas	8,000
2.	Jamnadas Gandabhai	4,000

3. K. D. Lele		8,000
4. Shankarlal Gupta		20,000

C. P. (MARATHI)

5. Jamnalal Bajaj	Wardha	4,000
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GUJARAT 4

6. M. K. Gandhi	Sabarmati	6,375
7. Kalyanji Narottam	Kotda	24,000
8. Chhaganlal Shivlal	Dahod	8,000
9. Maganlal K. Gandhi	Sabarmati	3,000

MAHARASHTRA 20

10. Yamutai Parvate	Wai	4,000
11. Parvatibai Chitnis	”	4,000
12. Yashodabai Bapat	”	4,000
13. Sarasvatibai Bapat	”	4,000
14. Anandibai Thatte	”	2,000
15. Venubai Bapaye	”	4,000
16. Bhagirathibai Bapaye	”	4,000
17. Gangabai Godbole	”	4,000
18. Parvatibai Sathe	”	4,000
19. Avantikabai Sathe	”	2,000
20. Venubai Bhave	”	2,000
21. Indirabai Marathe	”	4,000
22. Vyankatacharya Vale	”	4,000
23. Narayan Sadashiv Son	”	6,000
24. Manekbai Gujarbai	”	2,000
25. Durgatai Deshpande	”	2,000
26. Ramabai Tambe	Poona	24,000
27. Radhabai Gokhale	”	2,000
28. S. B. Parulekar	”	4,000
29. S. S. Dole	Thana	2,000

YARN AS DONATIONS

Bharata Govardhana Mandala & Co.,

through Sr. M. K. Joshi, Belgaum 19,500

I publish the list by way of encouragement to others to become



spinning members of the Association. A list from Wai is due to the effort of Chaunde Maharaj of Goverdhan Sanstha. I hope at an early date to publish the list of cash subscriptions. Greater support to the Association is necessary if it is to do its work efficiently.

*Young India*, 19-11-1925

### 127. OUR INSANITATION

During my wanderings nothing has been so painful to me as to observe our insanitation throughout the length and breadth of the land. I do not believe in the use of force for carrying out reforms, but when I think of the time that must elapse before the ingrained habits of millions of people can be changed, I almost reconcile myself to compulsion in this the most important matter of insanitation. Several diseases can be directly traced to insanitation. Hookworm, for instance, is such a direct result. Not a single human being who observes the elementary principles of sanitation need suffer from hookworm. The disease is not even due to poverty. The only reason is gross ignorance of the first principles of sanitation.

These reflections arise from the abominations I saw in Mandvi. The people of Mandvi are not poor. They cannot be classed as ignorant. And yet their habits are dirty beyond description. Men and women dirty the streets that they walk on with bare feet. They do this every morning. There is practically no such thing as a closet in that port. It was with the greatest difficulty that I was able to pass through these streets.

Let me not be hard on the poor inhabitants of Mandvi. I know that I saw nothing better in many streets of Madras. The sight of grown-up people lining the river banks and, after the performance, proceeding with criminal thoughtlessness to the river and cleaning themselves in it and injecting into its sacred water typhoid, cholera and dysentery germs has not yet faded from memory. This is the water that is used also for drinking. In the Punjab we violate God's laws by dirtying our roofs and breeding millions of flies. In Bengal the same tank quenches the thirst of man and beast and cleanses him and his pots. But I must not continue this description of our shame. Seeing that it is there, it would be sinful to hide it. But I dare not carry it any further. I know I have underdrawn the picture.

I would urge the enterprising people of Mandvi to lead the way

in model sanitation. Let them, whether the State help them or not, call in a specialist and spend money in improving their sanitation so as to make it perfect. 'Cleanliness is next to godliness.' We can no more gain God's blessings with an unclean body than with an unclean mind. A clean body cannot reside in an unclean city.

Let us not put off everything till swaraj is attained and thus put off swaraj itself. Swaraj can be had only by brave and clean people. Whilst the Government has to answer for a lot, I know that the British officers are not responsible for our insanitation. Indeed if we gave them free scope in this matter, they would improve our habits at the point of the sword. They do not do so because it does not pay. But they would gladly welcome and encourage any effort towards improved sanitation. In this matter Europe has much to teach us. We quote with pride a few texts from *Manu* or, if we are Mussalmans, from the *Quran*. We do not carry even these into practice. Europeans have deduced an elaborate code of sanitation from the principles laid down in these books. Let us learn these from them and adapt them to our needs and habits. How I would love to see not ornamental but useful sanitary associations whose members will deem it a privilege to take up the broom, the shovel and the bucket. Here is great national work for schoolboys, schoolgirls and collegiates all over India.

*Young India*, 19-11-1925

### 128. A TRUE CONGRESSMAN

(i)

You do not know what we (Congressmen) are. I will tell you. One well-known Congressman went to a comfortable house. He was not invited there. He had not written either to the owner. On reaching there he was asked by the owner: "Where are you going to stay?" This Congressman said, "Here of course, where else do you think?" The owner was unprepared for this favour. But he had to make the best of the job though he never omitted to speak about the meanness of this guest who had imposed himself upon him. He even made opportunities for delicately insulting this Congressman who was too far gone to notice the insults. I must tell you that the unwilling host was not a Congressman.

(ii)

Another Congressman imposed himself on a Congress worker without notice. He had a large company with him and felt mightily offended

when he could not get all the convenience that he had expected. We Congressmen have come to think so much of ourselves that we presume we have a right to demand and receive the best service without the least cost.

These incidents were related to me by an earnest Congress worker with so much pain that I thought I should place them on record and draw a moral from them. Let no one, however, wear the cap unless it fits him. The incidents have been purposely defaced. I do not know the other side. No one, therefore, need waste his time in a vain effort to identify them.

The thing is to avoid copying examples quoted. A Congressman to be true must be above suspicion. Let him remember that he is out to gain swaraj by "legitimate and peaceful means". We have been a long time getting it. The obvious inference is that we have not at all adopted even in our mutual intercourse means that can bear scrutiny. Indeed, a correspondent once suggested that, whilst we must be truthful and peaceful towards opponents, we need not be that in our mutual dealings. But experience shows that we cannot be truthful and peaceful on some occasions and for some people only, if we are not so on all occasions. And if we will not be considerate towards one another, we shall not be considerate to the world outside. All the prestige acquired by the Congress will be gone if we are not scrupulously clean in our dealings within or without in every detail. Pounds will take care of themselves if we could but take care of the pennies.

A true Congressman is a true servant. He ever gives, never wants service. He is easily satisfied so long as his own comfort is concerned. He is always content to take a back seat. He is never communal or provincial. His country is his paramount consideration. He is brave to a fault because he has shed all earthly ambition, fear of Death himself. And he is generous because he is brave, forgiving because he is humble and conscious of his own failings and limitations.

If such Congressmen are rare, swaraj is far off and we must revise our creed. The fact that we have not got swaraj as yet is proof presumptive that we have not as many true Congressmen as we want. Be that however as it may, if I have placed on record the ugly incidents which can be multiplied, I must bear grateful testimony to the fact that there are nameless Congressmen, no doubt few today, but daily growing in number, who fulfil all the tests I have mentioned. They are unknown to fame. It is well that they are. Work would be

impossible if they wanted to shine in the limelight and expected honourable mention in Congress dispatches. Those who obtain even Victoria Crosses are by no means and necessarily always the bravest humanitarians. To the end of time the real heroes of the world will be never known. Their deeds remain imperishable. They are their own reward. Such men are the real scavengers without whom the earth will be a plague spot not worth living in. It has been my lot to meet such men and women in the Congress ranks. But for them the Congress will not be an institution to which it would be a pride to belong. There is no doubt at the present moment a hunt for offices and an unhealthy competition to capture the Congress. It is a disease which has come to the surface and it is bound to give place in the course of time to health. That will not happen if the Congress becomes anything but an institution for hard, honest and selfless toil.

Let the Congress be ever so democratic, but democracy must not be brag and bluster, a passport to receiving service from people. If *Vox populi* is to be *Vox dei*, it must be the voice of honesty, bravery, gentleness, humility and complete self-sacrifice. A woman<sup>1</sup> is to guide the Congress next year. Woman is nothing if she is not self-sacrificing and purity personified. Let us men and women of the Congress humble our-selves, purify our hearts and be worthy representatives of the dumb millions.

*Young India*, 19-11-1925

### 129. A CRY FROM GERMANY

Bora Dada<sup>2</sup> has received a letter from Germany from which I take the following:

Corruption cries to the sky. All bad men live in wealth but all good men have a hard struggle to fight out; the poorest of all are we, town clerks, for our salary is very small, 35 dollars a month, and so is our life a perpetual starvation.

I often desire fervently to come and see India, to sit at the feet of Mr. Gandhi. I am quite alone. I have neither wife nor children. A poor sick niece who has none but me keeps my house. I should become a priest, if there was not my poor niece. I cannot leave her in misery. However I am an academician. I have studied classical and modern foreign languages. I have also studied

<sup>1</sup> Sarojini Naidu

<sup>2</sup> Dwijendra Nath Tagore

Mysticism and Buddhism. I cannot find a better place nor a better salary. That is so in the Germany of today.

Before the terrible War 15 years ago I was an independent man, an investigator; now, after the terrible decline in value of our money-standard, I am a beggar like a thousand other learned men in Germany. Now I am 45 years old and you cannot think how desperate and hopeless I am, what a great disgust I feel in Europe. Here the men have no soul and are wild beasts who devour one another. Could I go to India? Could I become an Indian philosopher? I believe in India and I hope India will save us.

The opening lines of this letter might well have been written by any Indian clerk. His position is no better than the German clerk's. In India too "bad men live in wealth and good men have a hard struggle to fight out." It is therefore a case of distance lending enchantment to the view. Friends like this German writer must be warned against regarding India as better than Germany or any other country. Let him realize that riches are no test of goodness. Indeed poverty often is the only test. A good man voluntarily embraces poverty. If the writer was at one time in affluent circumstances, Germany was at that time exploiting other countries. The remedy lies with every individual in every country. Each one has to find his peace from within. And peace to be real must be unaffected by outside circumstances. The writer says that, but for his poor niece, he might have become a priest. This seems to me to be a distorted view. It would almost appear that the writer's present state is somewhat better than that of a priest of his imagination. For now he has at least one poor person to look after. Under the priestly licence, he would have none to look after! The fact, however, is that as a true priest he would have hundreds of nieces and even nephews to look after. As a priest the sphere of his responsibility would be as wide as that of the universe. Whereas now he slaves for himself and his niece, as a priest he would be expected to slave for the whole of distressed mankind. I would then venture to advise this friend and others like him without adopting the clerical robe to identify themselves with all in distress. They would then have all the advantages of the priestly calling without being exposed to its terrible temptations.

The German friend would like to become an Indian philosopher. I assure him that there are no territorial distinctions in philosophy. An Indian philosopher is as good or as bad as a European philosopher.

One thing the writer, in my opinion, has guessed somewhat correctly. Though India has her share of wild and soulless two-footed beasts, probably the tendency of the average Indian mind is to discard the wild beast in it. And it is my certain conviction that, if India retains the way she chose in 1921, Europe has reason to hope much from India. She chose then with the greatest deliberation the way of truth and peace and symbolized it in her acceptance of the charkha and non-co-operation with all that was evil. From all I know of her, she has not yet rejected it and is not likely to.

*Young India*, 19-11-1925

### 130. SPINNING IN AMERICA

A friend has sent me a cutting from an American newspaper published in New London whose name I cannot trace on the cutting. It contains a bright article by Cassie Hardwick on the spinning-wheel. It shows the hold it had upon the Americans during the War of Independence and how according to the writer, the spinning-wheel contributed to success. The chief interest however consists for the reader in the fact that even in America there is a revival of the old art. I give below some of the interesting extracts:<sup>1</sup>

*Young India*, 19-11-1925

### 131. SOCIAL CO-OPERATION

I offer no apology to the reader for publishing in this issue Dr. Hariprasad's second letter on Ahmedabad Municipality. By and large, I do not waste the time of readers of *Navajivan* by discussing matters relating to a particular city or village. I utilize it for dealing with matters that concern the whole of Gujarat or the whole of India. And the space that I am taking up now in *Navajivan* to describe the lanes of Ahmedabad is justified by the rule that what holds good of one place holds good of all places. For the insanitary conditions we see in Ahmedabad and the bad habits that cause these conditions are found all over India. If people are trained to adopt sanitary habits even in a single town and if we could make the place a model in this respect, it would be easier to bring about sanitary conditions at all other places

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Spinning in America", 19-11-1925.

through such training.

Our carelessness and lack of social co-operation are responsible for the terribly insanitary conditions that prevail amongst us. In those spheres where non-co-operation is called for, either consciously or unconsciously, we practise co-operation; for instance, we co-operate with many of our bad habits; we co-operate with the administrative machinery of the Government, knowing that it is destroying the nation's vitality; we co-operate with our insanitary conditions which sap our physical strength and make us victims of plague and such other diseases, However, we fail to co-operate with our neighbours in whose happiness lies our own happiness and whose convenience we should consult in everything we do. There is a legal maxim which is not meant to foster barren legal arguments but which suggests a religious principle: "Use your property in such a manner that it does no harm to others." The *Gita* says this very thing in another way. "He alone can be called a seer, he alone can be called learned, who sees himself in others and others in himself." At every step we violate this basic principle of non-violence which is universally applicable and is at the same time the noblest of all. This violation in the case of our carelessness with regard to performing our excretory functions has moreover dangerous consequences.

How much carelessness is involved in my throwing the rubbish collected from my compound into that of my neighbour's or in throwing bits of glass out of my window, in throwing rubbish, in pouring out water and in spitting out of my window with total disregard of those who walk down below? What a great deal of violence is involved in all this! What a barbarous non-co-operation with society! What thoughtlessness in being indifferent to the fact that water from my drain could do harm to others! If we only realize that the public is a part of us and that we in turn are a part of it, our insanitary conditions would become an impossibility and by freeing ourselves of diseases, etc., we would add to the nation's strength and even its wealth. A writer has said that dirt is matter misplaced. The sand which covers the river banks adds to the beauty of nature and the welfare of human beings; that very sand becomes dust if a particle of it gets into one's eyes; if it falls into food, the food becomes unfit for consumption. Human excreta, if thrown on the road on which one has to walk, becomes filth, gives out an offensive odour and becomes the root cause of many diseases; while the same substance, buried in the

field, serves as manure which is as good as gold. Farmers collect it and willingly pay a price for it. The same may be said of all other things. In these circumstances, if society is taught the ordinary rules to be observed with regard to one's excretory functions and, if it acts in accordance with these, it would result in social co-operation and the human excreta, now regarded as filth, could be carried over by us to fields and transformed into golden manure.

This task cannot be accomplished by Dr. Hariprasad alone. Nor can a handful of persons do it. The help of the entire society is required for this purpose and this could be obtained in two ways. One way is to frame strict rules and enforce them, while the other is to explain the facts to people, create interest in such work and persuade them voluntarily to make improvements.

The four instances quoted by Dr. Hariprasad are worthy of emulation. Some persons belonging to the wealthy class seem to hold the view that they can be happy and well-protected if only they build marble palaces worth lakhs of rupees and then raise hedges all round them. In fact, if there is dirt in the surrounding area, they will have built for themselves a prison of marble instead of mud, they will be surrounded by several foul odours and exposed to several diseases. If they spend on training people in removing dirt and maintaining the purity of the atmosphere, half of what they spend on palaces, they would get the full benefit of their own palaces and also benefit others. In this manner they would secure a happy blending of self-interest and benevolence.

In my opinion, the removal of insanitary conditions in a city like Ahmedabad is not possible through increase in taxation alone. Some increase may perhaps be necessary to meet the expenses on sanitation; however, this can be brought about in a large measure only through the philanthropy of rich persons. Could we not have small children's parks in every locality in Ahmedabad? Could not the roads be broadened? Could not the by-lanes be kept so clean that we may, without any hesitation, walk in them barefoot?

All these improvements are only possible if there is co-operation between the wealthy class and the poor, that is, if there is social co-operation between all citizens and if the rich regard the entire city as their own and spend their riches on beautifying it. They should also realize that wealth spent in this way begets wealth. If a good road is constructed in a city, the value of the buildings appreciates. Similarly,



if the roads in Ahmedabad are widened and kept clean the adjoining land will rise in value. In addition to this, there is an economic gain which follows from improved health of the people and the resulting increase in their vitality and their life-span. A beginning has to be made, just now, with keeping clean the roads that we already have. This beginning will finally result in the widening of narrow roads, in the making of small parks in various localities and in beautifying the city by bringing into view the temples and mosques now surrounded by ugly buildings.

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 22-11-1925

### *132. REMINISCENCES OF KUTCH [—II]*

#### TREE-PRESERVATION AND PLANTING

Among the questions I had to consider during my tour of Kutch, one was that of planting trees and protecting them. In some respects, Kutch may be regarded as a part of Sind. The latter however can subsist because it has the advantage of the Indus flowing through it. Had it not been for this river, Sind would have been ruined. Kutch enjoys the advantage of no such river. Hence few trees are found in Kutch, barring a few places like Anjar and Mundra. And the rainfall is low wherever there is no vegetation. Such is the plight of Kutch. The rainfall is so slight and irregular that almost every year there is a famine there. The shortage of water is perpetual. If trees are planted in Kutch regularly and diligently, the rainfall there can be increased and the land made more fertile. Shri Jaykrishna Indrajit is making great efforts in this direction. He made me plant a tree in a lovely open space at some distance from Mandvi. This was, I feel, the most pleasant function I performed in Kutch. On that very day, a society for the protection of trees was also founded there. The purpose for which this society was founded, the purpose with which I was made to plant trees, will, I hope, be crowned with success.

Shri Jaykrishna Indrajit is a gem of Gujarat. There are only a few in Gujarat who are engrossed in their own field of activity. Shri Jaykrishna Indrajit enjoys a pride of place among such leading persons. He knows each tree and each leaf in Barda. He has such great faith in planting trees that he accords it a place of prime importance.

And he believes that a great deal can be achieved by these means. His enthusiasm and his faith in this matter are infectious. I have long ago been infected by these. Both the ruler and the subjects can, if they wish, take full advantage of the presence in their midst of such a wise man and raise a beautiful forest.

Johannesburg was a similar region. Nothing but grass grew there at one time. There was not a single building. Within forty years this same place became a golden city. There was a time when people had to pay twelve annas for a single bucket of water and sometimes had to make do with soda-water. Sometimes they had to wash even their face and hands with the latter! Today, there is water there and there are trees also. From the very beginning, owners of gold mines converted the region into a relatively green belt and increased the amount of rainfall by enthusiastically bringing over saplings from far off places and planting them. There are other such instances also where the amount of rainfall has been reduced by deforestation and where it has been increased by afforestation,

A great deal of improvement can be brought about if the wealthy class in Kutch takes interest in this work which is a dharma for them. In such a region protection of trees is a dharma in the same way as cow-protection. The person who rears a cow is, we believe, rewarded for this meritorious deed. Similarly, in regions such as Kutch and Kathiawar, anyone who grows trees should be rewarded for this equally meritorious deed. Not a single tree should be cut down for use as fuel or for any other purpose. It is cheaper to import wood for fuel from other parts than to cut down trees in the vicinity for use as fuel. The person who cuts down a tree straightway gets fuel free of cost; but who can compensate Kutch for the harm caused to it by this action. It takes ten years or more for a tree to grow big enough to provide wood. How can one think of cutting down a tree on which ten years of labour has been spent and which affords protection to the soil and man in various ways?

In Kathiawar the situation is almost the same as in Kutch, and the problem of tree-preservation is becoming increasingly important. However, the problem here is more difficult, as Kathiawar, though a small and beautiful peninsula, is sub-divided into so many small States<sup>1</sup> which are independent of one another so that unless there is

<sup>1</sup> The number of the then Princely States in Kathiawar exceeded a hundred.

consensus of opinion among them on such matters, the task of planting trees or protecting them cannot be carried on in a systematic manner. Despite all this, Kutch and Kathiawar should, unless they wish to become barren tracts, immediately adopt drastic measures.

#### INSANITARY CONDITIONS IN MANDVI

I was taken inside the city of Mandvi in order to give *darshan* on the very day on which I planted a tree at a clean spot in pleasant surroundings swept by a gentle breeze. The business of giving *darshan* became very distasteful to me because while doing so I got a glimpse of the insanitary conditions in Mandvi. In the early hours of the morning, when people should purify themselves and pray to God in a sacred atmosphere, aged men and women of Mandvi, as well as children, adorn its streets with their own filth. Here is no inhibition arising out of a sense of shame, no considerations of hygiene, no feeling of compassion for society. The citizens of Mandvi are not ignorant, they are not fools. They have gone round the world, been abroad, seen clean cities. One cannot understand how despite all this they do not hesitate to soil the streets on which they have to walk barefoot, on which their children always have to play and where they have sometimes to hold feasts. I am ashamed even to describe fully the insanitary conditions that prevail in Mandvi. The reader should imagine it for himself from what I have said. True, the horrible sight that I saw in Mandvi is also to be seen elsewhere. I recall having seen a similar sight in Porbunder in my childhood. Everywhere in this sacred land I have come across such insanitary conditions, such profound ignorance and gross violation of the rules governing the performance of the excretory functions and I have been pained by this.

However, even if the entire world commits a sin, that does not give us a right to commit it. Even so, the insanitary conditions in Mandvi cannot be excused on the ground that such conditions also prevail elsewhere. And because I regard it as part of my dharma of service to write of my reminiscences of Kutch and describe conditions just as I found them, I cannot refrain from putting down these painful recollections of Mandvi. What is true of Mandvi is also true of other towns and villages of Kutch. However, Mandvi is a port, the people there have presumably more courage and wisdom and they have wealth; hence they should be regarded as being more culpable. Whether the State gives any assistance or not, the people should immediately adopt the necessary sanitary measures for the city. With

the help of experts in sanitation, citizens should construct private as well as public lavatories. The *mahajans* should take more interest in the removal of these insanitary conditions in Mandvi than they do in treating the untouchables with contempt. They should rather excommunicate those who violate the rules of sanitation and perform their natural functions outside the lavatories provided for the purpose or misuse the lavatories. By doing this, they can add to their own prestige. This is a work which can be done readily and it does not involve any great expense. A little enthusiasm is all that is required. Time and again, Mandvi is gripped by the plague. It should be surprising if the plague did not break out in a place where mother earth is insulted so badly. The air of Mandvi is naturally so pure that no outbreak of plague or cholera can occur in that city. But we, of our own accord, pollute the air. The wise reader will understand without my saying it that keeping ourselves healthy is closely bound up with the abolition of untouchability.

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 22-11-1925

### *133. SPEECH AT STUDENTS' MEETING, AHMEDABAD*

*November 22, 1925*

Mr. Gandhi opened this afternoon the Youth Week organized by the local students. Addressing the students, he said he was spared formal public functions whenever he came to Ahmedabad for taking rest, but when he was asked to open the Youth Week in place of Mr. Jayakar, who could not come owing to illness, he gladly consented. He was glad to hear that the students of the Government College and the National College had co-operated in organizing that function. He never expected them to hate one another. He was at present laying emphasis on the charkha but he would not do so before them. He would ask them during the Youth Week to clean the streets of Ahmedabad like the sweepers.<sup>1</sup>

He had been noticing a spirit of depression among them, and he wanted them to be optimistic. He expected of them sacrifice and self-control, without which their movement would be a failure. If their goal was dharmaraj, it would be impossible to attain it without sacrifice. Even if they got it without sacrifice they would not be able to retain it. If they really wanted to do work they should uplift themselves and the

<sup>1</sup> This is from *The Bombay Chronicle*. What follows has been taken from *The Hindu*.

nation. He continued:

You can picket liquor shops quietly and advise drunkards in their houses, in these seven days, to refrain from drink, just like the Salvation Army. You must subject yourselves to introspection and come out like Ramachandra. Take a vow to cleanse your hearts, keeping God, and not Satan, as your witness, and make your life simple and easy. If you do these, you will have truly observed the Youth Week. May God give you that intellect and strength.

*The Bombay Chronicle and The Hindu, 23-11-1925*

### *134. TELEGRAM TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI*

SABARMATI,  
*November 23, 1925*

MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI  
93 BAZARGATE  
BOMBAY

DEAR SON KEEP CHEERFUL. AVOID CROWD AROUND.  
MAHADEV LEAVING TONIGHT.

BAPU

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

### *135. TELEGRAM TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI*

AHMEDABAD,  
*November 23, 1925*

MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI  
93, BAZARGATE  
BOMBAY

SORRY MAHADEV CANNOT COME. HE HAS SUDDENLY  
DEVELOPED FEVER.

BAPU

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

### 136. LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

Monday [November 23, 1925]<sup>1</sup>

CHI. MATHURADAS,

I am under pressure, so I am writing with the right hand. You must have received my express telegram earlier.<sup>2</sup> But when do things happen as man would wish? It is now five o'clock. As I eat, Mahadev says he is shivering. He is getting fever. It is already 100° F., so how can I send him? It seems hardly any use sending Devdas. You do not need nursing; you need Mahadev's company. If you need Devdas, send me a telegram.

God will always do good. Do not worry. Do your best and concentrate on the *Gita*.

Going by Nargisbehn's letter and Chhagnalal's talk I had decided to send Mahadev. Do not try to write to me yourself. But somebody should always write to me.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

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

### 137. TELEGRAM TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

November 24, 1925

MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI  
93 BAZAR GATE  
BOMBAY

SWAMI<sup>3</sup> LEAVING TONIGHT STEAD MAHADEV. CHEER UP.  
BLESSINGS.

BAPU

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

<sup>1</sup> The addressee received this letter on November 24, 1925. The Monday preceding this date fell on November 23.

<sup>2</sup> Gandhiji was anxious about the health of the addressee who was suffering from tuberculosis; *vide* the preceding two items and "Letter to Mathuradas Trikumji", 18-11-1925.

<sup>3</sup> Swami Anand

### 138. A SILENCE-DAY NOTE

[On or before *November 24, 1925*]<sup>1</sup>

It is not usual for me to allow such things to appear in the pages of *Young India*. Though much as I value the opinion of so great and so good a writer as Romain Rolland, I cannot afford to print his certificates. But an accident is responsible for the publication of the foregoing as also premature introduction to the reader of Mirabai as we in the Ashram call Miss Madeleine Slade, more for the sake of the convenience of children and those many who do not know English than for anything else. As an Indian name had to be chosen the one that best describes Miss Slade's aspirations was chosen. The accident happened this way. As Mirabai was sitting by my bedside spinning her *takli* which she learnt the moment she took it in her hand, she pleadingly asked, "Can I not render some service to you during your fast?" "Oh yes, you can edit *Young India* for me this week," I replied smilingly. She said, "If you mean seriously I take up the challenge." And an old man of India was beaten by a mere English girl. She had to share the responsibility with Mahadev Desai for editing the current issue. Hence the foregoing advertisement. I had not the heart to reject it. Let the reader know that I had not the strength to give anything original in its place. I was loath to replace it with an admirable extract from Mr. Page's pamphlet<sup>2</sup>, which has been crowded out this week.

From the original: C.W. 5445. Courtesy: Mirabehn. Also G.N. 9147

<sup>1</sup> From the reference to Gandhiji's fast which began on November 24, 1925

<sup>2</sup> On the causes of World War I. For Gandhiji's remarks on the pamphlet published in *Young India* in 21 instalments, *vide* "Notes", 26-11-1925.

139. LETTER TO NARGIS D. CAPTAIN<sup>1</sup>

November 24 [1925]<sup>2</sup>

*Don't You Be Alarmed*

Irregularities on the part of many boys have necessitated my undertaking the lightest fast I can, that is, seven days. If I could be sure of [your] not knowing about it at all till it was finished, I would certainly have kept the news from you till it was finished, but as so many people know locally that it is almost impossible to keep it from you. I do not want you to run up to Sabarmati either. But you must go straightaway to Kutch and restore yourself completely. You may depend upon it that I have not taken this fast without much thought. I have given two nights to it. The first symptoms came upon me on Sunday<sup>3</sup> night. I made the final decision this morning at the school prayer meeting. I have become so much used to fasting that seven days is merely nothing, and I do not know that I shall not feel even physically the better for it in the end, as I certainly did after 21 days, fast<sup>4</sup>. This letter is not only for you sisters but it is also for Mithubehn and Jaibehn. I am not going to write to them separately, and I appoint you as my general agent to console all those who may out of false compassion unnecessarily disturb themselves.

From a photostat: S. N. 10662

140. LETTER TO M. R. JAYAKAR

AHMEDABAD ,  
November 24, 1925

DEAR MR. JAYAKAR,

I have your letter. Whatever your views are about the acceptance of office, I could see no harm in your consenting to serve on the proposed deputation to South Africa, and I know that you would be the tower of strength.<sup>5</sup> Whether you go or anybody else, the terms of appointment should be ascertained. I have dealt with the matter

<sup>1</sup> Grand-daughter of Dadabhai Naoroji

<sup>2</sup> From the reference to the seven days' fast

<sup>3</sup> November 22, 1925

<sup>4</sup> From September 18 to October 8, 1924.

<sup>5</sup> Jayakar, however, declined the Government's invitation.



slightly in the forthcoming issue of *Young India*. If the terms restrict the members in an undesirable manner or if they require them to accept the position, which we as nationalists would hold to be unacceptable, naturally no self-respecting Indian would serve on the deputation. You do not want me to say what the deputation should do in South Africa, though I have said something about it too in the article I have written in *Young India*. You have mentioned the differences between yourself and Panditji<sup>1</sup>. I have a letter from a friend asking me to compose these differences, but I did not then feel called upon [to write] either to you or to Panditji, but as you have incidentally mentioned them, may I suggest your seeking an interview with Panditji and settling the differences if it is at all possible? Though I have not been able to follow the newspaper reports, from all I hear there is not even a common understanding as to what it is on which you differ.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. R. JAYAKAR, ESQR.  
391, THAKURDWAR, BOMBAY

From a photostat: S.N. 10663

#### *141. LETTER TO MOTILAL NEHRU*

AHMEDABAD,  
*November 24, 1925*

DEAR MOTILALJI,

I have your letter. I hope I would have written you three days ago.

I would love the idea of Kamala going to Switzerland for treatment and taking Jawaharlal with her. The cure would be certainly more permanent than hoped to have here, but I suggest she should not be sent during winter, but only in April. At the present moment, therefore, I am quite clear in my mind that she should be sent to Lucknow and that Jawaharlal should give her as much time as it is possible for him. My whole heart goes out in your domestic troubles. I hope that Kamala would be soon restored to health.

Even though it is owing to the domestic trouble, I do not mind this brief interruption in your toil, you do need some rest

<sup>1</sup> Motilal Nehru

from incessant toil. Political troubles and differences will be always with us. A brief interruption, therefore, will not matter much. I have not been reading the reports of all the meetings, but I have been reading the head lines and a few sentences here and there, and I was able to gather from this cursory reading that you were having a very successful time; of this I have no doubt.

You refer me to an interview I am said to have given, but I have been guilty of no such atrocity. Our friend. Sadanand<sup>1</sup> approached me and I sent a message to him that I had nothing to say. The Associated Press correspondent had been to me more than once and I have given him the same reply. I have asked Devdas to let me know if anything has appeared in the Press. He too has seen nothing except an extract from some correspondent, which I think has been lifted from *Young India*.

Mrs. Naidu was in Ahmedabad for one day, but she told me she broke her journey merely to see how I was looking, after having dropped some pounds of flesh in Kutch. She told me she was coming here at the end of the month to discuss the contents of her address. She is at present in Bombay. I leave for Bombay Satyagraha Ashram on 7th December. I reach Bombay on 8th. I leave Bombay on 9th for Wardha reaching there on 10th. If you think it is not too late we can meet at Wardha, but Mrs. Naidu may herself find that to be too late. I am free whenever you can come here and certainly equally free in Wardha. If you hear that I have been fasting again, pray do not be alarmed, it is only a week's fast of purification undertaken in connection with misbehaviour on the part of youngsters who are undergoing training in the Ashram School attached to the Ashram. Such fasting has become part of my need. It does me good and at least temporarily keeps the surroundings clean. Fast breaks on Tuesday morning, and I shall have no difficulty in regaining my strength almost immediately after. I have written to Dastane already. I have spoken to Gangadharrao personally because he was here.

I hope you will keep good health in spite of extra worry and pressure that the crisis means for you.

*Yours sincerely,*

From a photostat: S.N. 10664

<sup>1</sup> Of the *Free Press Journal*

## 142. LETTER TO VASUMATI PANDIT

Tuesday [November 24, 1925]<sup>1</sup>

CHI. VASUMATI

I have your letters but I cannot be so easily satisfied. I want your handwriting to be as good as print; it is not going to improve unless you make a habit of delineating every letter you write. You should write as meticulously as you did the last sentence. I shall also want a picture of your mental state. You should not altogether omit to write, fearing someone might read your letters. You should not omit to write about any improvement that is worth mentioning. If there is no loose earth lying around for use at the lavatory, you should get some from near abouts. If this cannot be done, you should preserve the ash from the fuel; this can be regularly used after it is sifted. There ought to be some separate arrangement for the disposal of urine. I can make a number of other suggestions but you too should study the situation and find out many of the things for yourself.

Somebody have written to you about my fast. So I do not write anything about it nor about other happenings at the Ashram.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 551. Courtesy: Vasumati Pandit

## 143. LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

November 24, 1925

God will do nothing but good. You should not worry. You should take all care and meditate on the *Gita*.

[From Gujarati]

*Bapuni Prasadi*, p. 82

<sup>1</sup> From the reference to the fast

## 144. NOTES

### A SILENT WORKER

No country possesses a record of the names of its noblest sons. They are known only by their works like the authors of the most valuable ancient books. There are many young men who die in the service of their country and yet remain unknown to fame. I have received the news of the death of such a silent worker in the cause of khadi in Arambagh, Hooghly. He and his friends went to one of the most malarial districts of Bengal first to tend and nurse the sick when an epidemic broke out in that district. They remained there to develop khadi among and through its needy people. This is what his friend and fellow-worker writes about him:<sup>1</sup>

It is with deep sorrow that I send you the news of the death of my . . . friend . . . Hazra . . . the best worker of the centre. . . He was the "nurse" of the centre.... He could spin well and was a weaver withal. Now God takes him away for the higher grade service, and as you so beautifully wrote to me, for service to be rendered under "better auspices". He leaves behind him his parents and two younger brothers.

May this noble soul have peace and may his parents and brothers preserve the memory of the deceased by continuing the work left by him. For Hazra I do believe that he has left the corruptible body having outgrown its use and has gone to a better state.

### JUVENILE BRANCH

Little children have been writing to ask why they cannot become members even though they may be confirmed khadi weavers and be spinning most regularly. Among these is a girl nine years old. The proposition is being seriously considered to form a juvenile branch. I am now engaged in wooing a little girl to take the lead and trying to secure her parents' permission to form such a branch. It would be useless to form it, if only a few boys and girls come forward. It would be worth while only if many parents co-operate to make it a success. Every school, government or national, can help the movement which has been made purposely non-political. No one need fight shy of it who does not dread the political consequence of khadi, viz., the

<sup>1</sup> Only excerpts are reproduced here.

displacing through it of foreign cloth. The juvenile branch, if it comes into being, will be a true league of mercy to bind little children to an *act* of sacrifice for the sake of the famishing millions.

#### THE WHY OF IT

An American friend sent me sometime ago a pamphlet written by Mr. Page with an introduction by Mr. Harry Emerson Fosdick. It is an illuminating essay on the causes of the late world War. An examination of the causes of that great upheaval will never be considered stale and as these have been compressed in a closely reasoned pamphlet of 89 pages octavo, I make no apology for reproducing some of the most telling extracts from it. The author who appears to be an earnest Christian seeker divides the causes under five heads—economic imperialism, militarism, alliances secret diplomacies, fear. Under the first head he remarks:<sup>1</sup>

The extracts<sup>2</sup> regarding the other four causes will be reproduced later as space permits.

The following is the second instalment of the causes of the Great War from Mr. Page's pamphlet. I had not the heart to remove anything save the footnotes.<sup>3</sup>

I give below the next instalment from Mr. Page's illuminating pamphlet without removing a single word except the footnotes.<sup>4</sup>

Mr. Page thus concludes his chapter on the losses of the war.<sup>5</sup>

In the concluding chapter of his pamphlet Mr. Page discusses the methods of preventing war. The reader will find the writer weak in his statement of remedies, not because he is weak in his belief, but because it is new ground for everybody. Nobody wants war. But how can an age-long institution be easily destroyed? Is it at all possible to do away with it? Let us listen to what the author has to say. He suggests five measures. I present to the reader the first of them in this issue of *Young India*<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Extracts not reproduced here

<sup>2</sup> Not reproduced here; these were published in *Young India* in 21 instalments, the last one in the issue dated 6-5-1926. Gandhiji's introductory remarks are reproduced together here, and not under their respective dates. For dates of the instalments, *vide* Appendix "Swaraj or Death", 27-8-1925.

<sup>3</sup> In *Young India*, 10-12-1925

<sup>4</sup> In *Young India*, 17-12-1925

<sup>5</sup> In *Young India*, 18-2-1926

<sup>6</sup> Of 25-2-1926, under the title "Can It Be Prevented?"

His last chapter is called by Mr. Page "What Shall the Churches Do about War?" I have given it a name more suited to the readers of *Young India*.<sup>1</sup> They will note that much of Mr. Page's argument applies to all religions.

In the sections into which Chapter IV is divided Mr. Page has examined in his own able manner the different reasons summarized by him, the first being "War is inherently and essentially a supreme violation of Jesus' way of life". Though for the orthodox Christian there is much in the section that is worth reading, the average reader will not understand the reference summarized by the writer. But the writer shows that modern war is a calamity which no man with any moral sense can contemplate with equanimity and quotes the following from Winston S. Churchill's writings:

It differed from all ancient wars in the immense power of the combatants and their fearful agencies of destruction. . . . Torture and cannibalism were the only two expedients that the civilized, scientific, Christian States had been able to deny themselves. . . .

The second reason why men of religion should oppose war is that it is "ineffective as a means of furthering Christ's Kingdom and is self-defeating in its very nature" and he proceeds. . . .<sup>2</sup>

We are now nearing the end of Mr. Page's valuable pamphlet. I omit the last three sections as not being sufficiently interesting for the readers of *Young India*. The third section of the last chapter is an attempt to show that "the absolute repudiation of war by individuals, groups and corporate bodies is the most effective way of compelling Governments to abandon the war system and to discover more adequate means of securing safety and justice". The following paragraphs are useful for all religiously-minded men and for all reform.<sup>3</sup>

*Young India*, 26-11-1925

<sup>1</sup> In *Young India*, 22-4-1926, under the title "How Can Religion Help?"

<sup>2</sup> In *Young India*, 29-4-1926

<sup>3</sup> In *Young India*, 6-5-1926

### *145. INDIANS IN SOUTH AFRICA*

The departure of C. F. Andrews for South Africa, the impending departure of the Government of India deputation and the impending arrival of a deputation to India headed by Dr. Abdur Rahman make the South African question the question of the hour. For the Indian settlers it is a question of life and death. The Union Government seem to be determined to put an end to Indian existence in South Africa not by straightforward means or forcible expulsion but by the dishonest process of squeezing. The proposed legislation practically deprives them of all the honourable avenues of earning and by so doing it seeks to deprive them of every shred of self-respect. The Union Government will cease to be troubled about the Indian question when they have ceased to be troubled by the presence in their midst of self-respecting and independent Indians and have to deal only with labourers, waiters, cooks and the like. They want a few servants, they do not want equals, fellow farmers or fellow traders.

The answer therefore returned by the Union Government to the Indian deputation that waited on them is not surprising. They have avowed their determination to proceed with the proposed legislation. They will only consider "constructive suggestions" in details. They have not made up their minds about a round table conference.

I expect a great deal from Mr. Andrews' presence in South Africa if the settlers show firmness and cohesion among themselves. The Government of India deputation can do much if they have instructions not to yield on fundamentals. No repatriation and no curtailment, at the very least, of rights existing at the time of the Settlement of 1914. The proposed legislation is a deprivation of these rights.

Anyone who knows anything of the condition of South Africa knows that there is no real active opposition on the part of the mass of the European population to the presence of the Indian settlers. If there was, the overwhelmingly large European population would without legislative aid make it impossible for the Indian settler to remain in South Africa. Nor is the original population of South Africa hostile to the settlers. It is because the general European and Native population is not only not ill disposed towards the Indian settler but willingly and

freely deals with him that he can at all live there. The proposed legislation is an attempt to interfere with the free mercantile intercourse between Europeans and Natives on the one hand and Indians on the other. If therefore the Government of India take up a firm attitude the Union Government's case must fall to pieces. The legitimate fear of being swamped by India's millions having been removed in 1914 the Union Government were in honour bound to grant and guarantee to the resident Indian population full rights of inter-migration, trade and ownership of land. The present is an attempt to go back upon the understanding. I reproduce<sup>1</sup> elsewhere the correspondence embodying the Agreement of 1914, for the guidance of the reader.

*Young India*, 26-11-1925

#### 146. MAULANA AZAD'S APPEAL

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad has very considerately sent me a copy of his Press message on the Hindu-Muslim question. He is one of the very few men who may be claimed to be sincerely desirous to attain unity. He has asked me to call a meeting of the Working Committee in order to consider the question. I am not doing so before the Congress week at Cawnpore because the annual function is too near to warrant an earlier meeting of the Working Committee. I wish the Committee could discover a solution of the problem. But I must frankly confess that I despair. That is not to say that I despair of a solution altogether. I despair of the Congress discovering and enforcing a solution. Let us not conceal from ourselves the truth that the Congress does not represent the fighters in either camp. Not till those unseen ones who are behind the fighters are under the Congress influence and the newspaper editors who are fomenting dissensions are either converted to the unity doctrine or cease to have any influence, can the Congress do any useful work in the direction of unity. My bitter experience has taught me that they who take the name of unity mean disunion. The atmosphere around us is as false as was the atmosphere in Europe at the time of the last War. The newspapers never told the truth. The representatives of their respective nations had made of lying a fine art. All was fair in War. The old formula of

<sup>1</sup> Not reproduced here; *vide* "Letter from E. M. Gorges", 30-6-1914 and "Letter to E. M. Gorges", 30-6-1914.



Jehovah thirsting for the blood even of children was revived in all its nakedness. And so it is today in what may be called a miniature war between Hindus and Muslims. We may lie and cheat for saving our faiths. This has been said to me not by one mouth but many.

This, however, is no cause for the slightest despair. I know that the demon of disunion is at his last gasp. A lie has no bottom. Disunion is a lie. Even if it is sheer self-interest, it will bring about unity. I had hoped for disinterested unity. But I will welcome a unity based even on mutual interest. Only it will not come in the way suggested by the Maulana Saheb. It will come, when it does come, in a way perhaps least expected by us. God is the Master Trickster. He knows how to confound us, frustrate our 'knaveish tricks'. He sends death when one least expects it. He sends life when we see no sign of it. Let us admit our abject helplessness, let us own that we are utterly defeated. Out of the dust of our humility will, I feel sure, be built up an impregnable citadel of unity.

I am sorry I am unable to return a more encouraging answer to the Maulana's appeal. Let him take comfort from the fact that I share his desire for union with the same intensity that he will credit himself with. What does it matter if I feel unable to share his faith in his plan of achieving unity? I shall do nothing to hinder it. I shall pray for the success of every sincere effort in that direction. My ceasing to fret does not mean the unity is no longer an article of my creed. Let me re-declare my undying faith in it. For the sake of it I must renounce the privilege of being a maker of the unity that is coming. I have the wisdom to stand aside and wait when my interference can only disturb the wound without healing.

*Young India*, 26-11-1925

### 147. A NOTEWORTHY RESULT

A correspondent writes:<sup>1</sup>

This shows the silent march of khadi. Spinners such as are mentioned by the correspondent have been discovered by me everywhere. This is, however, a striking record. Results of such

<sup>1</sup> The letter, not reproduced here, gave an analysis of 152 spinners in Tirupati including M.L.A.s, lawyers, doctors, teachers, clerks, merchants, students, women, and children.

voluntary spinning without the assistance of and connection with any association are rarely known. In my opinion therefore it is merely a question of time—not very far off—when khadi will become universal. And if it becomes popular through voluntary effort no machinery worked by power can possibly compete with it.

#### ENCOURAGING FIGURES

The following figures for the year ending 30th September, 1925 for khadi in Tamil Nadu are worth noting:

	1924-25	1923-24
Production by the Khadi Board	Rs. 3,08,826	2,90,148
Production by other aided and unaided producers	Rs. 3,96,962	1,82,216
Total	Rs. 7,05,788	4,72,364

Retail sales alone during 1924-25 amounted to Rs. 4,45,324, nearly-as much as the total production of the previous year.

The total sales for the year including sales to other provinces amount to Rs. 8,32,846 as against Rs. 3,65,858, the figure for 1923-24.

Both production and sales have increased this year, the former by 50 per cent, the latter have more than doubled.

*Young India*, 26-11-1925

#### 148. TAKLI SPINNING IN AHMEDABAD<sup>1</sup>

Shrimati Anasuyabehn organized a competition in takli spinning among boys in the Labour Union schools in Ahmedabad . . . 202 boys . . . took part...

The stock of yarn spun by these boys on the takli is so great that Shrimati Anasuyabehn expects to clothe them next year with cloth woven out. of this yarn. . . .

No wonder Sjt. Rajagopalachari was much struck with the demonstration and hoped that the experiment would be imitated in all national and municipal schools... .

Municipal commissioners, please note.

*Young India*, 26-11-1925

<sup>1</sup> From this report by Mahadev Desai, only excerpts are reproduced here.

### 149. 'OUR TIME A TRUST!'<sup>1</sup>

Often in these columns have I reported Gandhiji having said to various audiences on various occasions that our time is a trust. But the lesson was burnt deep into me the other day only when I myself happened to be the offender. I have often laughed at these people's expense. Let them laugh today at mine.

Outwardly it is a story of how I began and ended the study of French.... I asked my teacher [Miss Madeleine Slade] whether Gandhiji knew that I had begun French. She said, he did and that" he was amused and surprised." Surprised" gave me a sort of alarm and I began to imagine in my mind what was coming. And scarcely had I finished the second lesson when the message came that I was wanted by Gandhiji.

I went, of course, in fear and trembling, though hardly prepared for all that followed. There was some casual inquiry and I thought only my conscience had made a coward of me. But no. The storm came almost as soon as I had begun to re-assure myself." So you have begun French?", he asked, smiling, disguising all his indignation. I smiled an affirmative answer.

I thought, when she was making the appointment with you yesterday, that you were going to her to give her a lesson in Hindi. But she told me this morning, as I asked her how she had spent her time, that she gave you a French lesson for an hour. Do you know what I told her?

"Yes," I said," she told me you were amused and surprised."

Well then, I tell you what I said. I said Caesar aimed at the crown and failed!

And then began a volley of questions.

What have you begun learning French for? Because Miss Slade, a French scholar, is here? Or you want to read Romain Rolland in French? Or to read our French correspondence?

No, I have been long wanting to learn French. French-knowing friends told me that it was easy to learn the language, and useful too.

Well, do you know that not all Englishmen know French, and the best of them are content to read the French authors in translations? And much of the best French literature is turned into English as soon as it is published.

There was a pause for a minute or two.

<sup>1</sup> From this report by Mahadev Desai, only excerpts are reproduced here,

How long do you think you will take to learn it?

About six months, I am told.

How many hours?

An hour each day.

Regularly?

Yes.

Do you think you can get an hour each day whilst we tour about?

Hardly, but I think I might snatch some time whilst actually travelling.

Indeed? Are you sure?

I hesitated.

And now that you want to learn French, I must keep you free each day for an hour, should I not?

This was more than I could bear." No," said I energetically, "you need not I shall find time somehow!

You will not find time, you will steal time.

I was silenced.

Don't you think so?

He asked, expecting a confession." I do," said I, "I could give to spinning all the time I give to French."

Yes; there are many another things. But when we are engaged in a life and death struggle, how could you think of learning French? You may read as much French as you like after swaraj. But until then—'

"I stop it from today," I said expecting to be forgiven and allowed to go.

But that is not all, the charge sheet is not yet over. Do you know that Miss Slade has come here, having burnt all her boats? Do you know that her sacrifice for our cause is greater than that of any one of us? Do you know that she is here to learn and study and serve and give all her time to the service of our people and thereby her own people, and that nothing that happens at her own home will swerve her from her appointed task here? Every minute of her time is therefore doubly precious and it is for us to give her as much as we can. She wants to know everything about us, she must master Hindustani. How else is she to do it unless we help her in making the best of her time? She may be quite willing to oblige us, but our duty is to give her as

much as we can. Our own time is sacred enough. Hers is a more sacred trust. Rather than indulge in the luxury of learning French, I would expect you to give her an hour in Hindi, Sanskrit or such other thing.

Clearly there was no answer for me. I hung my head in shame. My speechlessness was an eloquent confession of my blunder. Was there any penance I might make? It was unwise to ask him. It should suggest itself to me. But his unfailing kindness had already forgiven me and he himself suggested the penance.

So go again tomorrow at the same hour and tell her your mistake, and take up reading Hindi hymns with her instead of French.

(Censored and passed though not without considerable hesitation. M. K. G.

*Young India*, 26-11-1925

### 150. SLAUGHTER AND SHOES

We present to the reader below some illuminating extracts<sup>1</sup> from the Minutes of Evidence recorded by the Indian Industrial Commission in Bengal and the Central Provinces which throw a flood of light upon the subject and serve to establish beyond the shadow of a doubt that the quality shoes which we wear as well as the pretty attache-cases we proudly carry in our hands and the ponderous suit-cases in which we pack our precious clothing, be it khadi, mill-made or foreign, are tarnished with the blood of innocent cattle, although we will be so blind as not to see it; and if there is any such thing as a moral government of the universe, we must answer for it some day.

The foregoing extracts have been culled and copied *verbatim* by Sri. [V. G.] Desai from the voluminous evidence recorded by the Industrial Commission. If they move the reader he must become a member of the All-India Cow-Protection Association (Sabarmati), or if he can afford to pay more, he should send a donation so as to enable it to carry out the scheme adumbrated in these pages regarding tanneries where the hides of dead cattle only shall be manufactured into leather.

*Young India*, 26-11-1925

<sup>1</sup> Not reproduced here

*151. TELEGRAM TO LAJPAT RAI*

*November 26, 1925*

DO PLEASE COME ANY DAY. YOU SHALL STAY ASHRAM.

GANDHI

From a photostat: S.N. 10661

*152. LETTER TO M. A. ANSARI*

SATYAGRAHA ASHRAM, SABARMATI,  
*November 26, 1925*

DEAR DR. ANSARI,

I have your letter. Do you not see any difference between a cable to the President of the League of Nations and Council work? Personally I am as much opposed to Council-entry as I ever was. You may depend upon it that my part in the Patna Resolution was a matter of necessity and not of choice. Necessity in the sense that I recognize the democratic character of the Congress. And knowing that I could not convince the Swarajists of the error of Council-entry and knowing also that my best friends and co-workers had become Swarajists, I took it that I could not do less than throw my weight with them as against other political parties. Thus though I would personally dislike my appeal to the League of Nations while we were impotent, if there were two parties one wanting to approve of the French atrocity and another wanting to help the sufferers, I would throw in my weight with the latter.

You do not know how much people have strayed away from the true path. What is the use of making myself ludicrous when I know that I would get no more than Rs. 100/- in answer to my appeal. I am sick unto death over the unreality and untruth that surrounds us at the present moment. Please therefore forget me for any other work than the humble work of khadi and untouchability and the unpopular method of protecting the cow. I confess my utter inability to tackle successfully any other problem.

*Yours sincerely,*

From a photostat: S.N. 10668

### 153. LETTER TO SARDUL SINGH CAVEESHAR

SATYAGRAHA ASHRAM, SABARMATI,

*November 26, 1925*

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your printed letter. My own conviction is that the prisoners will lose nothing by giving the undertaking asked for. In my opinion, the Gurdwara Act is a tremendous step in advance and it is gained by the determined resistance of the Sikhs, and when the central point is gained, the undertaking, which I believe is in itself harmless, is a matter of little concern. But if the prisoners remain adamant and refuse to give any undertaking whatsoever, they have a perfect right to do so. But then, we must not grumble for the sufferings that they might have to undergo. It is also my opinion that if they endure persecution long enough in refusing compliance with the Government conditions, the prisoners would be released. But what I will not do myself, I must not commend to the public. If I write anything publicly, I should write advising waiving of the conditions. But if the prisoners decline to give the undertaking, they will have my passive praise for their sufferings.

*Yours sincerely,*

SARDAR SARDUL SINGH CAVEESHAR  
DIRECTOR, NATIONAL PUBLICITY BUREAU  
RAMGALI, LAHORE

From a photostat: S.N. 10669

### 154. LETTER TO RASIK

SATYAGRAHA ASHRAM, SABARMATI,

*Thursday, Ma[gsar] Sud 11 [November 26, 1925]<sup>1</sup>*

BHAISHRI RASIK,

Herewith answers to your questions:

1. There is nothing wrong in the *shraddha* ceremony performed after death, and it may be regarded as essential for those who believe in it. It is quite proper that you will not give a community-feast. I regard

<sup>1</sup> The source has the entry, "4-2-1925", but the day and the date do not tally.

it as neither necessary nor proper. Unlike the *shraddha* ceremony it is devoid of any religious sentiment. If your mother asks you to feast the community after her death, you should humbly suggest to her not to bind you with such a wish. If she still insists on it, you should feed some invalids with the amount which might have been thus spent or hand over the sum to the community for utilizing it as a scholarship for some needy student.

2. If you really do not want to get married and if your mother importunes you, you should humbly resist the pressure. I think parents have no right to marry their children against the latter's wishes.

3. And the simple diet you take will help you in your practice of *brahmacharya*. But for checking impure thoughts you should make ceaseless efforts with absolute devotion to God, in the form of recitation of *Ramanama* and should harness your mental as well as physical energies to some benevolent activity or to some honest profession.

4. You simply cannot serve in a place where you are required to utter falsehood or practise deceit, even if this means starvation or ruin of your family. It is on this account that I have often maintained that a person desirous of staying free should teach himself some independent craft as weaving and the like and subsist on that. In my opinion it is absolutely not binding to support an able-bodied member of the family.

5. To a certain extent physical strength and spiritual strength are necessarily related. We do come across some instances where an extremely dynamic soul dwells in an extremely feeble body. But if the body is worn out with disease the soul too usually loses its vigour.

6. There is no harm in taking milk and ghee to acquire a reasonable amount of physical strength.

*Vandemataram from*

MOHANDAS KARAMCHAND GANDHI

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 10623



*155. TELEGRAM TO MOTILAL NEHRU*

AHMEDABAD,  
*November 27, 1925*

PANDIT MOTILAL NEHRU  
ALLAHABAD

YOUR LETTER RECEIVED. GLAD KAMALA GONE LUCKNOW. DO NOT  
DISTURB PROGRAMME BECAUSE OF FAST WHICH BREAKS TUESDAY.

GANDHI

From the original: Motilal Nehru Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum  
and Library

*156. LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI*

SATYAGRAHA ASHRAM, SABARMATI,  
*Magshar Sud 12 [November 27, 1925]<sup>1</sup>*

CHI. MATHURADAS,

I am kept posted with news of you. I have letters from Swami  
and Nargisbehn. As soon as you are fit enough to leave the house you  
must have a long spell at Nasik or Deolali or any other place  
considered good and improve your health. You must exercise more.  
Mahadev did not get fever again. But I am not sending him because  
Swami is already there. I have received the telegram about Taramati.  
Let mother and son live in peace. Anand's soul must be pleased  
because she valued this a lot. You do not have to worry about me at  
all. Three [days] out of the seven have already passed. I am still  
carrying on with my work. Only moving about is stopped. Lying in  
bed, I am doing everything.

*Blessing from*

BAPU

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

<sup>1</sup> The year has been inferred from the contents. In 1925 *Magshar Sud 12*  
corresponded to November 27.

*157. LETTER TO TARAMATI M. TRIKUMJI*

*November 27, 1925.*

May you live in peace, mother and son. Anand's<sup>1</sup> spirit must be happy at the event<sup>2</sup>, as she prized it greatly.

[From Gujarati]

*Bapuni Prasadi*, p. 83

*158. THE VINAY MANDIR AT ODE*

Is there anyone who is not pained by reading this note?<sup>3</sup> I at any rate am very much pained, as I have very pleasant memories of ode. I cannot forget the enthusiasm displayed by its residents. What a contrast between that ode and the one described by Mahadev Desai. Its Vinay Mandir counts among the better national schools. It has many pupils and able teachers. The people of Ode have money; how sad that, despite all this, even the funds already collected for the school are not being used and those who established it, no longer wish to see it continue its existence! But, then, can anyone win over people whose only concern is self-interest? I know that wherever such schools are being closed down, the people will repent it some day. Whatever the standard of a national school, where else will the pupils get the education for freedom which it provides? Will the leaders of Ode wake up even now and save a school which can still be rescued without much effort?

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 29-11-1925

<sup>1</sup> Addressee's mother-in-law

<sup>2</sup> Birth of a son to addressee

<sup>3</sup> The note by Mahadev Desai is not reproduced here. It described the precarious plight of the national school at Ode.

### *159. INDIANS IN SOUTH AFRICA*

The problem of Indians in South Africa is attracting increasing public attention, for, while Mr. Andrews will be soon leaving for South Africa, the emissaries of the Government would have been able to leave for that country before this appears in print and, from the other side, the representatives of the Indians there will shortly be here. Public attention, therefore, is bound to be drawn to this problem.

A sword is hanging over the heads of the Indian settlers in South Africa. The Government there does not have the courage to forcibly expel the Indians in a direct and straightforward manner, but is planning indirectly to make them leave South Africa by harassing them. If any of the Indians remain behind, there would be a handful employed in various capacities, whose presence the whites desire, such as, for instance, the farm labourers, cooks and bearers. The rest, independent Indians, businessmen and others, who have a sense of self-respect and cherish it, would not continue to live there even for an hour under the conditions which Government wishes to create, for under the new Bill it seeks to deprive these Indians of all their present rights in regard to ownership of land, trade and interprovincial movement. Indians would have nothing to fear if a judicial settlement of the problem were sought. There will be no need, then, for any emissary from here to proceed to South Africa or any representative from there to come here. Any unbiased judge would rule in favour of the Indians, with costs.

However, they wish to follow the law of the sword, of brute force. They do not wish to respect the principle of equal rights for all, their principle is that might is right. The British Government will tolerate even injustice perpetrated by the Government of South Africa; at the most it will plead with the Union Government for a little mitigation of it, and, if the request is not heeded, it will remain quiet. If South Africa is in the British Empire, it is through the grace of the whites. While in the case of India even experienced Englishmen believe that she is held in the Empire by the sword of the latter, and that is on the whole true. If the whites of South Africa chose they could leave the British Empire right now. The slaves in India, however much they might like to, cannot leave the Empire without the consent of the British Government. This being the true position, the Indians, in

South Africa, too, can remain there only through the goodwill of the government there. India, who is herself a prisoner, can give only as much help to the Indian prisoners in South Africa as one prisoner can give to another. Under such unhappy conditions, every Indian must depend on his own determined effort to win his own freedom. Only if the Indians in South Africa can put forward such an effort, can act, though slaves, as if they were free, can they hope to be delivered. How long can one live on the goodwill of others? Goodwill cannot be assured through documents. Once it vanishes, even documents which may have been signed are trampled under foot. Nevertheless, India must do all she can. It is our duty to welcome the representatives from South Africa who are due to arrive here and help them to the best of our ability. To discharge this duty is the least we can do.

The guests who will be arriving include Dr. Abdur Rahman, who is a well-known Malay doctor from Cape Town. He has Indian blood too. The second member is James Godfrey, a barrister and son of an Indian Christian school-teacher. The third member is Sorabji, the brave son of the late Parsi Rustomji. He is a tried soldier and has been to prison. Those who have read the *History of Satyagraha in South Africa* will be familiar with his name. I pray that their visit and their efforts may meet with success.

[From Gujarati].

*Navajivan*, 29-11-1925

## 160. THE LATEST FAST

*November 30, 1925*

This the latest (seven days) fast of mine which is closing tomorrow morning could not be kept from the public in spite of my attempt to the contrary. It has brought many inquiries and some angry protests.

The public may rest perfectly at ease about my health. It is something for me to be able to write this myself on the seventh day of my fast. But by the time this is in the hands of the reader, I hope to be almost up and doing.

The alarm was felt on the fourth day when I was much exhausted with work. In my vanity I had thought that during the comparatively brief fast, I would be able to work all the full seven days. In fairness to myself I must say that much of the work I did

during the three and a half days was inevitable as it was connected with the object of the fast. But as soon as I realized that I had overworked myself, I stopped all work, and on the last day I am stronger than on the fourth.

But the public will have to neglect my fasts and cease to worry about them. They are a part of my being. I can as well do without my eyes, for instance, as I can without fasts. What the eyes are for the outer world, fasts are for the inner. And much as I should like the latest fast to be the very last in my life, something within me tells me that I might have to go through many such ordeals and, who knows, much more trying. I may be wholly wrong. Then the world will be able to write an epitaph over my ashes: 'Well deserved thou fool.' But for the time being my error, if it be one, must sustain me. Is it not better that I satisfy my conscience though misguided, because not perfectly pure, than that I should listen to every voice, be it ever so friendly but by no means infallible? If I had a guru,—and I am looking for one,—I should surrender myself body and soul to him. But in this age of unbelief a true guru is hard to find. A substitute will be worse than useless, often positively harmful. I must therefore warn all against accepting imperfect ones as gurus. It is better to grope in the dark and wade through a million errors to Truth than to entrust oneself to one who "knows not that he knows not". Has a man ever learnt swimming by tying a stone to his neck?

And who shall lose by erroneous fasting? of course only myself. But I am public property, it is said. So be it. But I must be taken with all my faults. I am a searcher after truth. My experiments I hold to be infinitely more important than the best-equipped Himalayan expeditions. And the results? If the search is scientific, surely there is no comparison between the two. Let me therefore go my way. I shall lose my usefulness the moment I stifle the still small voice within.

Well, this fast has nothing to do with the public. I am conducting a big institution called the Satyagraha Ashram. Trusting friends have given me already over two lacs of rupees for land and buildings alone. They are paying for its annual upkeep not less than eighteen thousand rupees per year. They do so in the hope that I am building up character. There are grown-up men and women in the Ashram. There are boys and girls. The latter are trained to remain unmarried as long as possible. At no place within my knowledge do women and girls enjoy so much freedom as at the Ashram. It is my best and only

creation. The world will judge me by its results. No man or woman, no boy or girl can live there, if I do not want them. I believe that it contains some of the purest characters we have in India. If I am to deserve the implicit trust of friends who support it, I must be doubly vigilant, since they will neither examine the accounts, nor the activity of the Ashram. I discovered errors among the boys and somewhat among the girls. I know that hardly a school or any other institution is free from the errors I am referring to. I am anxious to see the Ashram free from errors which are sapping the manhood of the nation and undermining the character of the youth. It was not permissible to punish the boys. Experience gained in two schools under my control. has taught me that punishment does not purify, if anything it hardens children. In such cases in South Africa I have resorted to fasts with, in my opinion, the best of results. I have resorted to the same process here and let me say of a milder type. The basis of the action is mutual love. I know that I possess the love of the boys and the girls. I know too that if the giving up of my life can make them spotless, it would be my supreme joy to give it. Therefore I could do no less to bring the youngsters to a sense of their error. So far the results seem to be promising.

What however if I cannot perceive the fruit? I can but do the will of God as I feel it The result is in His disposing. This suffering for things great and small is the keynote of satyagraha.

But why should not the teachers perform the penance? They cannot, so long as I remain the chief. If they had fasted with me all work would have come to a standstill. As with big institutions so with small ones. As the king must share the sins of his subjects even as he arrogates to himself all their virtues so must I, a tiny chosen king in the little Ashram, atone for the sins of the least among the children of the Ashram, if I may proudly claim the presence in it of many noble characters. If I am to identify myself with the grief of the least in India, aye, if I have the power, the least in the world, let me identify myself with the sins of the little ones who are under my care. And so doing in all humility I hope some day to see God—Truth—face to face.

*Young India*, 3-12-1925

## 161. THE CURSE OF UNTOUCHABILITY

Mahatma Gandhi writes to *The survey* (America) of December 1, 1925:

The movement for the removal of untouchability in India is one of purification of Hinduism—a religion that is professed by nearly two hundred and forty million human beings. It is estimated that over forty million human beings are regarded as untouchables. This untouchability takes in the Southern parts of India the extreme form even of unapproachability and invisibility. Untouchability is refraining on the part of the so-called higher classes from touching those who are branded with the stigma of untouchability. Unapproachable are those whose approach within a stipulated distance pollutes the higher classes. The invisibles are those whose very sight defiles.

These outcastes of Hindu society are confined to what may be fitly described as ghettos. They are denied the usual services that in a well-ordered society are regarded as the right of every human being, such for instance as medical aid, the offices of barbers, washermen, etc. This suppression of a large number of human beings has left an indelible mark on the suppressors themselves and the canker of untouchability, is eating into the vitals of Hinduism, so much so that it has degraded what was at one time a noble institution. I mean *varnashrama*, falsely or perhaps loosely rendered as caste. What was meant to be a scientific division of labour and occupation has become an elaborate system regulating inter-dining and intermarriage. one of the noblest religions on earth has been reduced to a farcical code of dining and marriage rules.

Why then do I cling to a religion which tolerates such a curse?. For the simple reason that I do not regard it as an integral part of Hinduism which is described as the religion *par excellence* of truth and non-violence or love. I have tried to understand the Hindu scriptures, some in the originals, the rest through translations. I have tried in my humble way to live up to the teachings of that religion. After having studied Christianity, Islam and other great faiths of the world, I have found in Hinduism my highest comfort. I have not found any to be perfect. I have discovered superstition and error in the practice of all these faiths. It is enough therefore for me that I do not believe in untouchability. I can certainly find no warrant in the Hindu scriptures for the belief that a simple person becomes

untouchable by reason of his birth in a particular family or clan. But if I must call myself a Hindu, as I do, I owe it to my faith as I owe it to my country to fight the evil of untouchability with my whole soul, counting no cost too much for achieving the reform.

Let not the reader imagine that I am the only reformer. There are hundreds of educated Indians, who take pride in calling themselves Hindus, fighting the evil with all their might. It is the accepted creed of the enlightened Hindus that swaraj is unattainable without the removal of the curse.

The way we are combating the sin is to demonstrate to the so-called higher classes the enormity of the wrong, and passing resolutions at mass meetings condemning the practice. The Congress has made the reform an integral part of its programme. The reformers seek also to improve the condition of the suppressed classes by opening schools for their children, digging wells for them, pointing out to them the bad habits they have contracted through the criminal neglect of the higher classes, and so forth. Whenever it is found necessary as at Vaikam (Vykom) even the direct method of satyagraha is being adopted. In no case is violence offered to blind orthodoxy but an attempt is being made to win them over by patient argument and loving service. The reformers suffer for their cause without imposing suffering on their opponents.

My conviction is that the effort is bearing fruit and that before long Hinduism will have purified itself of the sin of untouchability.

*The Hindu*, 19-1-1926

## 162. SPEECH TO STUDENTS

*December 1, 1925*

Before breaking his fast on the morning of the 1st December, he gathered the boys to his bed-side and delivered the following message in slow, moving accents:

Think of last Tuesday, when I began my fast. Why did I take that step? There were three ways open to me:

1. PUNISHMENT: I could have followed the easy road of corporal punishment. Usually a teacher on detecting errors on the part of pupils would flatter himself with having done a good thing if he punished them. I have been a teacher myself, thoughmy



preoccupations prevent me from teaching you during these days. As a teacher I had no option but to reject this accepted method for I know by experience it is futile and even harmful.

2. INDIFFERENCE: I could have left you to your fate. Not unoften does a teacher do so. 'It is enough', he argues, 'that the boys do their lessons tolerably well and reproduce what they are taught. Surely I am not concerned with their private behaviour. And even if I was, how am I to keep watch over them?' This indifference could not appeal to me.

3. The third was the method of Love. Your character is to me a sacred trust. I must therefore try to enter into your lives, your innermost thoughts, your desires and your impulses, and help you to detect and eradicate impurities, if any. For inward cleanliness is the first thing that should be taught, other things must follow after the first and most important lesson has gone home. I discovered irregularities amongst you. What was I to do? Punishing you was out of the question. Being the chief among the teachers, I had to take the punishment on myself in the form of the fast which breaks today.

I have learnt a lot during these days of quiet thinking. What have you? Could you assure me that you will never repeat your mistake? You may err again but this fast will be lost on you if you do not realize the way out if it. Truthfulness is the master-key. Do not lie under any circumstances whatsoever. Keep nothing secret, take your teachers and your elders into your confidence and make a clean breast of everything to them. Bear ill will to none, do not say an evil thing of anyone behind his back, above all "to thine own self be true", so that you are false to no one else. Truthful dealing even in the least little things of life is the only secret of a pure life.

You must have noticed that I receive my inspiration on such occasions from the hymn, *Vaishnava Jana to tene kahiye* (He is the true *Vaishnava*, etc.). That hymn is enough to sustain me, even if I were to forget the *Bhagavad Gita*. To tell you the truth, however, there is one thing which is even simpler, but which may possibly be difficult for you to understand. But that has been my pole star all along during life's journey—the conviction that Truth is God and untruth a denial of Him.

*Young India*, 10-12-1925

### 163. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS

December 1, 1925

Mahatmaji, though weak, gave the following statement regarding the reasons for the fast:

I have dealt with it fully in the pages of *Young India*.<sup>1</sup> I do not, therefore, propose to anticipate them, save to say that they were purely private and personal and for Ashram purification. I have kept perfectly healthy and reasonably strong throughout the week. There never was the slightest cause for any anxiety. After the breaking of the fast I am feeling perfectly well. There is no reaction yet noticeable that generally follows breaking of fast.

I hope soon to regain the lost weight and vitality. I hope also, if friends will be indulgent and not over-tax me, to go through the programme I had mapped out before this fast. Easy journey and mild conversation will not, I think, tax me out. Friends need have no anxiety about my health. I am sorry to have caused grief during the fast. Such is my life. If I could have saved them grief, I certainly would have done so; but I saw no way out.

After the statement was made, Mahatmaji was asked whether he would go to Dholka, as decided. He replied:

Certainly so. I cannot defer that.

*The Hindu*, 1-12-1925

### 164. TELEGRAM TO JAMNALAL BAJAJ

SABARMATI,  
December 1, 1925

JAMNALAL BAJAJ  
WARDHA

FAST BROKEN. CONDITION EXCELLENT. NO CAUSE  
SLIGHTEST ANXIETY.

BAPU

*Panchven Putrako Bapuke Ashirwad*, p. 40

<sup>1</sup>*Vide* "The Latest Fast", 30-11-1925.

*165. TELEGRAM TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU*

AHMEDABAD,  
*December 1, 1925*

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU  
ANAND BHAVAN  
ALLAHABAD

FAST      BROKEN.      CONDITION      PERFECT.      HOPE      KAMALA  
STEADILY PROGRESSING. SARUP HERE.

GANDHI

*A Bunch of old Letters, p. 45*

*166. TELEGRAM TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI*

SABARMATI,  
*December 1, 1925*

MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI  
93 BAZAR GATE  
BOMBAY

FAST      BROKEN      HAPPIEST      AUSPICES.      CONDITION      EXCELLENT.  
GET WELL SOON.

BAPU

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

*167. LETTER TO MOTILAL ROY*

*December 1, 1925*

DEAR MOTI BABU,

I have your letter of 27th ultimo. The previous letter I have not received.<sup>1</sup> If I had, I would have sent you my congratulations at once. But it is not too late even now. Pray accept them now. I hope that you

<sup>1</sup> The addressee had written to Gandhiji on October 20, 1925 informing him that the Prabartak Sangh at Chandranagar had been converted into a pure khadi centre; *vide* "Notes", 10-12-1925.

will have to face no extraordinary difficulties in the transition stage.

How are you getting on otherwise?

I am going to Wardha today and hope to rest there for ten days. Please write to me there if necessary care of Sjt. Jamnalalji Bajaj.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: G.N. 11022

## 168. NOTES

### SPINNERS' DIFFICULTIES

A spinner asks, "What is a member of A.I.S.A.<sup>1</sup> expected to do under the rules?" His duty shall be to carry on propaganda for hand-spinning and khadi. A greedy president like me would expect a member to go out among the people and invite them to wear khadi, spin regularly and become members of the A.I.S.A. He would also ask him to hawk khadi among them and to teach them spinning and to collect donations among friends. But to expect is one thing, to have one's expectation fulfilled is another. Therefore when one becomes a member and scrupulously and diligently spins and never uses anything but khadi, wherever cloth is required, he has done the minimum required of him. The majority would no doubt fluctuate between the two extremes.

Another asks, "Though khadi is habitual with me, I do wear foreign cloth on twenty-five occasions out of a hundred. I spin regularly. Can I become a member of the A.I.S.A.?" I fear that such men cannot become members of the A.I.S.A. Habitual wear of khadi excludes the use of other cloth save for extraordinary and unavoidable causes. Though on the part of the founders the desire to swell the list of members was no doubt strong, the desire to get 'whole-hoggers' was stronger still. For the Association to be useful must have as its members workers who are uncompromising believers in khadi. We have to convert millions. We cannot succeed if we begin with half-heartedness. Those who cannot wear khadi habitually may send yarn self-spun or money or cotton and help

<sup>1</sup> All-India Spinners' Association

the movement in a variety of other ways.

#### SPURIOUS KHADI

A correspondent sends me from Nagpur a pictorial label taken from cloth which is palmed off as genuine khadi on gullible people and he tells me that people buy it largely in the belief that it is good khadi. The belief is strengthened by their seeing the label which contains a hideous caricature of my likeness and a spinning-wheel. This kind of practice can hardly be called patriotic or pure and it gives rise to a feeling against mills which one would fain avoid. Cannot the Mill-owners' Association deal with such questionable practices of which I have been obliged to take notice from time to time?

*Young India*, 3-12-1925

#### 169. COW-PROTECTION ESSAY

Several competition essays have already been received. Most of them are indifferently written. Some are written on both sides of the paper. Some are illegible. The future competitors are requested to write their essays

1. on one side of the paper only;
2. in legible, clear, bold hand in ink;
3. on stout paper well bound, giving full name and address of the competitor.

The competitors are also warned that rejected essays will not be returned. Those therefore who desire copies should make and keep them before sending.

*Young India*, 3-12-1925

#### 170. TELEGRAM TO JAMNALAL BAJAJ

AHMEDABAD,  
*December 4, 1925*

JAMNALAL BAJAJ  
WARDHA

PERFECT REST POSSIBLE ONLY AT WARDHA.

BAPU

*Panchven Putrako Bapuke Ashirwad*, p. 42

*171. TELEGRAM TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI*

SHAHI BAGH,

*December 4, 1925*

MATHURADAS

93 BAZAR GATE STREET

BOMBAY

NO CAUSE SLIGHTEST ANXIETY. GAINING STRENGTH DAILY.

BAPU

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

*172. LETTER TO MIRABEHN*

*December 4, 1925*

MY DEAR MIRA,

I have your loving present. Shankerlal Banker had prepared me for it. He told me you had surprises in store for me. I understood. Both Urdu and Hindi hand is good, certainly better than mine. And that is as it should be. You will not squander the inheritance you have claimed as yours but you will add to it a thousandfold.

You have been constantly in my thoughts. This three days' separation is good discipline. You have made the best use of it.

Devdas tells me you have now completely regained your voice.

You will tell me all about your warm clothing tomorrow.

May God bless you and keep you from harm.

With love,

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 5183. Courtesy: Mirabehn

173. LETTER TO G. D. BIRLA

Friday [December 4, 1925]<sup>1</sup>

BHAISHRI GHANSHYAMDASJI,

I had sent a reply to your letter through Jamnalalji; I hope you had it. When I got your lengthy letter, I sent a detailed reply under a registered cover to your Solan address. I fail to understand why it has not reached you.

Let me repeat what I wrote in it.

I had appreciated your action in contributing Rs. 1,00,000/- to the All-India Deshbandhu Memorial Fund, and had made a request for early payment of the sum.

I had also given my reasons for not being able to co-operate with *Pujya*<sup>2</sup> Malaviyaji and *Pujya* Lalaji but had affirmed a deep sense of respect for both. I help Pandit Motilalji and the Swarajya Party because after all their ideals are somewhat close to mine. There is no question of my helping individuals.

I wrote many other things in that letter; but now I cannot recall all of them.

I hope both of you are in good health.

You must have heard of my fast. That I am gaining strength will be evident from the fact that I am writing this to you. I hope to undertake a little physical work in a few days.

I shall reach Wardha on the 10th and stay there for some ten days.

*Yours,*

MOHANDAS GANDHI

From the Hindi original: C.W. 6114. Courtesy: G. D. Birla .

<sup>1</sup> From the reference to the fast

<sup>2</sup> Revered

174. SPEECH AT GUJARAT VIDYAPITH CONVOCATION  
AHMEDABAD<sup>1</sup>

*December 5, 1925*

I congratulate the students who have taken their degrees and won their prizes today. I wish them long life, and may their degrees and their knowledge do credit to them and their country. Let us not lose our way in the surrounding darkness of despair. We shall have to look for rays of hope not in the outward firmament, but in the inward firmament of our hearts. The student who has faith, who has cast off all fear, who is absorbed in his work, who finds his rights in the performance of his duties, will not cower before the surrounding gloom. He will know that the gloom is transitory and that the light is near. Non-co-operation has not failed. Co-operation and non-co-operation have been there from the beginning of time. Truth and falsehood, peace and strife, life and death and all the dual throng is bound to be there. But if we have to co-operate with truth, we have to non-co-operate with falsehood; if loyalty to the motherland is laudable, disloyalty is despicable; if we have to co-operate with liberty we have to non-co-operate with slavery. Whether, therefore, there be one national school or many, whether there be one student there or many, the future historian will have to give the national school a prominent place among the means for the attainment of freedom. Ours are new-fangled enterprises. The critic will find therein much to cavil at. Some drawbacks we can see ourselves. We shall have to go on with our endeavours to remedy them. I know that our administration leaves much to be desired, that our organizers and professors are imperfect. We are quite watchful about these things and shall leave no stone unturned to remove the shortcomings.

Students, have patience. Believe that you are soldiers in the army of swaraj. Do nothing, speak nothing, think nothing unbecoming of such a soldier. May God bless you.

*Young India*, 10-12-1925

<sup>1</sup> From a report by Mahadev Desai; the speech was read out by the Registrar; Gandhiji, the Chancellor, was present at the function.



175. SPEECH TO VIDYALAYA SOCIAL, AHMEDABAD<sup>1</sup>

December 5, 1925

Social gatherings are part of student life. There are many benefits to be gained from such gatherings. I have also known their disadvantages. I would like to suggest one benefit. It is as much necessary to develop sympathy for the poor of India as it is desirable for the students to cultivate fellow-feeling among themselves. How can I bring home to the students that yarn is the bond of such sympathy? There must be some divine power in the yarn and that must be why God has been given the name of *Sutradhar*<sup>2</sup>. How nice it would be if we become little *sutradhars* in the army of that great *Sutradhar*?

[From Gujarati]

*Sabarmati*, Vol. IV, No. IV

<sup>1</sup> Read out by Mridulabehn on the occasion of the fifth social gathering of the Gujarat Mahavidyalaya; Gandhiji presided.

<sup>2</sup> Literally, one who holds the strings; Master of the Play

## 176. LETTER TO VASUMATI PANDIT

*Sunday [December 6, 1925]<sup>1</sup>*

CHI. VASUMATI,

I write this from Dholka, which should indicate to you the state of my health. Within the last five days I have regained five pounds of the lost weight. Now I also walk a little; so you should not at all worry on my account. Tomorrow morning I am going to Ahmedabad and shall leave for Bombay the same day. From Bombay I go on the 9th to Wardha. I shall stay there for two days and then go to Kanpur. I hope you and your brother are keeping well.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 617. Courtesy: Vasumati Pandit

## 177. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, DHOLKA<sup>2</sup>

*December 6, 1925*

I am thankful that in spite of my physical inability, God has enabled me to keep my promise to pay you a visit. I hear that there are many talukdars here. I hope they will cultivate and maintain sweet relations with their tenants. I am told there is no Hindu-Muslim tension here. Let the relations be more friendly than they are. How am I to convince you that spinning and exclusive use of khaddar is the swiftest way to swaraj? A yard of khaddar used by you means four or five annas in the pockets of your poor countrymen. I wish I could also carry home to you my conviction that to regard any human being as 'untouchable' is to insult oneself and one's religion. It is the evil passions in us that are untouchables; let us be rid of them. Purify yourselves and spin half an hour daily as a sacrifice, if you think spinning need not add to your income. Spin in the name of God and spin for the poor of your land. . . .

I have given my message. You cannot have a new or fresh message from me. Carry out that message and let me know the results. . .

*Young India, 17-12-1925*

<sup>1</sup> Gandhiji was in Dholka on this date.

<sup>2</sup> From a report by Mahadev Desai; the speech was read out; Gandhiji was present at the meeting.

178. LETTER TO MANIBEHN PATEL

Monday [December 7, 1925]<sup>1</sup>

CHI. MANI,

I get your letters all right. I have your entire programme. I know that you would find the atmosphere at Seva Sadan [Poona] quite different. But the discipline, the methods, the enthusiasmand the honesty there are admirable. Moreover there is hardly any other institution so full of life. We have to adopt such of its methods and other things as appeal to us. We must learn to appreciate the good points of everything, and follow those we like. And then should we not learn to live with tolerance among people who differ from us?

I hope you are keeping well. Do not worry about me. I am gaining strength. I am going to Bombay today. I shall stay there for a day and then go to Wardha. Write to me regularly at Wardha. Better keep a diary of your experiences at Poona.

On Vithalbhai's persistence Dahyabhai is going to live with him for the present. He will leave in a few days, and will attend the Congress with him.

You should stay there as long as you like and keep me informed of everyone of the thoughts that pass through your mind.

[From Gujarati]

*Bapuna Patro Manibehn Patelne*, p. 30

<sup>1</sup> As given by the addressee

179. LETTER TO VASUMATI PANDIT

[December 7, 1925]<sup>1</sup>

CHI. VASUMATI,

I had your letter after I returned from Dholka. The pendant may be sold through Dahyalal. But Revashankarbhair should directly contact Dahyalal and Dahyalal should sell it in consultation with him and deposit the money with him.

I am in a hurry and shall write nothing else.

Ramdas should wake up.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

[PS.]

Tell Shanti I was very glad to have her letter; she should write again.

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 601. Courtesy: Vasumati Pandit

180. SPEECH AT GUJARATI NATIONAL SCHOOL, BOMBAY

*December 8, 1925*

I thank God for giving me the strength to attend this function. This is one of the few surviving national schools and I congratulate its teachers on their selfless dedication to the work. Just now I

have learnt that the teachers have voluntarily reduced their salaries by fifteen per cent. It is also extremely gratifying that the principal works entirely gratis. I hope that the public will appreciate and encourage this school.

Children, you should realize that you came to this school to learn national service. Most of what you study here should therefore be dedicated to the country. This is the significance of the charkha. Those of you who spin, do so for the country and its poor. Thus you learn the lesson of service from your childhood. Never forsake the charkha.

I feel inclined to find one fault. Let there be dramatic activities in such schools but the costumes should be of khadi alone. There is

<sup>1</sup> Gandhiji arrived at Ahmedabad from Dholka on December 7, 1925.

absolutely no need of brocade. In the Tilak Rashtriya Kanya Vidyalaya all participants had khadi costumes. Teachers here could have done the same. We who have devoted ourselves to the National Movement and have faith in khadi, should not forsake it even on such occasions. Histrionic art consists not in costumes but in the competence of the actors to give life to a role. The audience should be so absorbed in the action that they would hardly notice the costumes. I hope that in future you will use khadi alone on such occasions. If we insist upon small things, we will learn to persevere with bigger things.

I wish the children long lives for true national service. May the school forge ahead!

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 13-12-1925

### *181. LETTER TO DEVDAS GANDHI*

ON WAY TO WARDHA,  
Wednesday [December 9, 1925]<sup>1</sup>

CHI. DEVDAS,

The state of your health causes me anxiety. I see that because of it Mahadev cannot come. Why should Mahadev have to be detained for *Navajivan* when you are there? I always feel you do not take proper care of your health and commit irregularities. Can you not relieve me of worries? It is good if you take some rest. Avantikabai will write to you. Stay with her or do what you think proper. Keep writing to me. I have also spoken to Swami.

I spent much time with Mathuradas; I saw him twice. Last night I was with him for three hours. Mirabehn is fine; she is with Jamnabehn. Lalaji saw me; there was nothing the matter. Sir Devaprasad Sarvadhikari also came to see me.

I am of course well. It was no great strain to climb the stairs. Sunderlal also saw me.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 2044

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Letter to Vasumati Pandit", 6-12-1925.

## 182. THE SOUTH AFRICAN DEPUTATION

Here is the full list of the deputation that is coming from South Africa and is due to reach here on the 12th instant.

1. Dr. Abdur Rahman
2. Mr. Sorabji Rustomji
3. Sjt. B. S. Pather
4. Seth G. Mirza
5. Seth Amod Bhayat
6. Mr. James Godfrey
7. Seth Haji Esmail
8. Sjt. Bhawani Dayal

This is a representative deputation of persons well known in South Africa. They can speak for the different groups and interests among our countrymen in South Africa. Dr. Abdur Rahman, the head of the deputation, is South African born, as for that matter are some others. The worthy doctor is popularly known as a Malay doctor. But he has Indian blood in him. The Malays are an integral part of the South African community. They are without exception Mussalmans. Malay women freely marry Indian Mussalmans; The unions are happy and the children born of such mixtures are some of them highly educated. Dr. Abdur Rahman belongs to that distinguished category. He received his medical training in Scotland and is a successful practitioner in Cape Town. He was a member of the old Cape Legislative Council and also a prominent Corporator. But even he has not been unexposed to the colour prejudice.

The deputation is assured of a warm welcome and a patient hearing. The question of Indians overseas is happily not a party question. It is a question on which Anglo-Indian opinion too has ranged itself on the side of Indians. The cause itself is supremely just. The question is, therefore, merely of India's ability to vindicate justice. If the Government of India remains firm and is backed by the Imperial Government, the Union Government cannot but yield to the decisive pressure from the Centre. But there is the fear of South Africa 'cutting the painter'. Imperialists alone know the value of keeping unwilling partners tied up in a knot which may snap under the slightest strain. This excessive anxiety to hold together forces that are

mutually disruptive has degraded imperial politics to the formula of exploitation of African and Asiatic races, to the exclusion, if possible, of other European powers from the spoils of exploitation. Great Britain's policy in the matter of the treatment of Indian settlers in the Dominions is an acid test of her intentions. Will she dare to do the right in spite of the pressure from the Union Government? The South African deputation is coming for an answer to that question.

*Young India*, 10-12-1925

### 183. NATIONAL EDUCATION

The Gujarat Vidyapith had its annual convocation<sup>1</sup> for the granting of degrees and prizes. There was the annual stock-taking; an unvarnished truthful tale of diminution in the number of boys and girls studying in the various institutions managed under it or affiliated to it. Gujarat has perhaps the best financed national institutions if not also the best managed. Of these institutions, at least, it can be said that it is not due to want of funds that they appear to be dwindling. There can be no doubt that national institutions are just now not popular. They cannot boast handsome and expensive buildings or furniture. They cannot boast highly-paid teachers and professors. Nor can they claim continuity of tradition or method. Nor can they promise alluring careers. What they claim offers no temptation to many. They claim many selfless, patriotic teachers who are living in penury and want, so that the youth of the country may benefit by their tuition. These institutions teach hand-spinning and all it means. They teach the art of service. They try to impart instruction through the medium of the vernaculars. They endeavour to revive national games and teach national music. They strive to prepare the boys for service in the villages and to that end cultivate in them fellow-feeling with the poor of India. But this is not sufficiently attractive. Hence the falling off in numbers. The so-called unattractiveness is, however, not the sole reason for the unpopularity of these institutions. Many things were done in 1921—that year of excitement, intoxication and hope. The intoxication having subsided, depression has followed as a matter of course. The boys have gone in for calculation and not knowing that patriotism is not a matter of mathematical calculation have arrived at

<sup>1</sup> For Gandhiji's speech, *vide* "Speech at Gujarat Vidyapith Convocation, Ahmedabad", 5-12-1925.

wrong conclusions and given preference to the Government schools and colleges. No fault of theirs. Everything around us has been reduced to terms of commerce and bargain. It is too much to expect boys and girls to rise above the surrounding atmosphere.

Nor is this all. National teachers are not perfect. They are not all selfless. They are not all above petty intrigues. They are not all patriotic. Again, no fault of theirs. We are all creatures of circumstances. Brought up only to work as servants under constant constraint and with all initiative killed in us, we cannot respond to the call for self-sacrifice, for love of the country above love of self or family, for service without distinction.

It is, therefore, perfectly possible to account for the present depression. But my faith in national schools as in every other item of our original programme is undying. I recognize the depression in the national barometer and therefore even promote Congress resolutions recognizing the situation. But I remain unaffected by it and invite others to do likewise. These national institutions in spite of their falls are to me so many oases in the desert of our hopes and aspirations. From them must rise the nation of the future, as they even today supply to us the largest number of unpaid or poorly-paid silent workers. Go wherever you will, you cannot but find non-co-operating young men and even young girls, who are devoting all their powers to the service of the motherland without the slightest expectation of reward.

I must, therefore, refuse to listen to the advice of a critic who writes to me to say that the Gujarat Mahavidyalaya should be closed because of the diminishing numbers. If the people support it or if the teachers have the stamina whether the people support it or not, the Mahavidyalaya must continue so long as there is one true boy or girl who will finish his or her training in that institution with all its ideals. Fair weather was no condition of the continuance of that institution. As with national servants so with national institutions. They must go through their programme through fair weather or foul.

*Young India*, 10-12-1925



## 184. NOTES

### THE BREAKING OF THE FAST

Friends who are interested in my health will be glad to learn that if I lost nine pounds during the seven days' fast, I have regained upto the seventh day after the breaking of the fast over six pounds in weight. I am even able to take moderate exercise and go through a fair amount of work every day. By the time this is out, I shall find myself in Wardha where I propose to take as much rest as possible up to the time of the meeting of the Congress. May I therefore ask C. P. and other friends not to regard me as being in Wardha on business? It will tax all my energy to attend to my weekly editing and daily correspondence. I hope to regain much of the lost strength by the time I reach Cawnpore.

### TO CORRESPONDENTS

I regret to inform my correspondents that owing to the fast I am considerably in arrears regarding my correspondence. Whilst my assistants have dealt with the bulk of it, I see before me quite a pile awaiting my attention. The correspondents will forgive me for the delay. I hope to overtake the correspondence as early as possible.

### THE HIDE TRADE

The hide industry of India ranks fifth in value of the products of India. The normal value of the annual export of hides is about Rs. 1,170 lacs. Of these over Rs. 844 lacs are exported from Calcutta. The bulk of this trade was before the War and is now in German hands. Nationalization of tanneries means therefore not only the saving of thousands of cattle that are slaughtered for hides but the retention of hides in India means utilization of skilled labour in the country itself and additional wealth.

### ALL-INDIA DESHBANDHU MEMORIAL

This Fund now stands as under:<sup>1</sup>

The progress though slow is steady. The list shows too that the habit of paying only to influence rather than the cause still persists[sic]. I would urge the would-be subscribers not to reverse the process.

<sup>1</sup> Not reproduced here

TO PURE KHADI

The Pravartak Sangh of Chandernagore is a big organization. It has hitherto manufactured and sold half khadi. During my visit to Chetaganj, Sjt. Motilal Roy the chief of the Sangh changed his depot there into a pure khadi depot. He now writes:

We have transferred our 'Mrinalini Bastralaya Kanyalay' at Chandernagore and the 'Pravartak Emporium' in Calcutta into pure khadi centres from 20th October last, and informed you on the very day of the great change. The whole organization now stands for pure khadi but you are surely aware what considerable risks we have taken on our shoulders for such a venture.

I am sorry I never saw the intimation of the change referred to by him. I tender my congratulations to Moti Babu on the change and hope that the change to pure khadi will persist in spite of initial difficulties which every khadi organization has to face.

*Young India*, 10-12-1925

*185. TELEGRAM TO SHANKERLAL BANKER*

WARDHAGANJ,

*December 10, 1925*

BANKER

ASHRAM SABARMATI

PERFECT    CONDITION    PERFECT    PEACE.    PLEASE    BREAK    YOUR  
FAST.

BAPU

From the original: S.N. 32745

186. LETTER TO V. L. PHADKE

SATYAGRAHA ASHRAM, WARDHA,  
[December 10, 1925]<sup>1</sup>

BHAI MAMA,

I could read your letter only today after reaching Wardha. At the Ashram whatever energy I had I spent for Ashram work and for *Young India* and *Navajivan*. I came here today and devoted my time entirely to correspondence. I am quite well. I am here till the 21st. On the 22nd morning I leave for Kanpur reaching there on the 23rd.

What you say about living in the Ashram is true. At Kanpur I shall make a final decision regarding this. I am also inclined to stay at the Ashram. But "with a frail thread has Hari tied me and I turn the way He pulls me."<sup>2</sup> This is my position and it will always be so.

We shall talk about Godhra when I come to the Ashram. When you ask for *Antyaja* children I presume you are offering them freshships. Are we to bear all the expenditure? Lakshmi's is a difficult case. Can you take up the challenge of looking after her? Are you ready to give me an *Anyaja* boy? You did not say how many students you have at present. I am certainly serving as your canvasser.

Never again think of exhibiting the children; that will surely ruin the Ashram. It is not proper to lure children into the Ashram and neglect their development. It cannot be your business to hunt for children. Your task is to educate a lone boy if he is the only inmate. It is another matter that you maintain contacts with the local *Antyajias* and serve them as far as you can. But this too you must not do at the cost of education. Nor should you be tempted to impart much learning. Improve the quality; the pattern will take care of itself. But if you concentrate on the pattern, nothing will be accomplished; the quality too will suffer.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3812

<sup>1</sup> From the reference to Gandhiji's arrival at Wardha; however, the source has the entry, "15-12-1925".

<sup>2</sup> From a song by Mira

*187. LETTER TO FULCHAND K. SHAH*

SATYAGRAHA ASHRAM, WARDHA,  
*Magsar Vad 10, 1981 [December 10, 1925]*

BHAISHRI FULCHAND,

I reached Wardha today. I shall stay here for 11 days.

I have asked Chi. Chhaganlal to deposit Rs. 11,000 belonging to the Parishad.

Enclosed herewith is a letter from Balvantrai. Devchandbhai and you should consider it and do whatever is necessary. I have sent a reply regarding the matter indicated by the cross.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 2829. Courtesy: Shardabehn Shah

*188. LETTER TO BHAGWANJI A. MEHTA*

*[December 10, 1925]<sup>1</sup>*

BHAISHRI BHAGWANJI,

It is all right that you wrote to me. But, as usual, your letters show your impatience and thoughtlessness. You do not know at the moment I have become a registrar of marriages. Do you know how many marriages were performed at the Ashram? I do advocate *brahmacharya* but it certainly cannot be forced. Whatever weaknesses were observed at the Ashram naturally pertained to the youngsters. Surely you do not want me to let children marry in their early teens. I do not write all this to stop your criticism; I do this with a friendly desire to sharpen your wits and to save you from the tendency to criticize without knowing facts.

*Vandemataram from*

MOHANDAS GANDHI

BHAI BHAGWANJI ANUPCHAND VAKIL

RAJKOT, KATHIAWAR

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 3032. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

<sup>1</sup> From the postmark

## 189. LETTER TO PUNJABHAI

SATYAGRAHA ASHRAM, WARDHA,  
*Magsar Vad 10 [December 10, 1925]*

BHAI PUNJABHAI<sup>1</sup>,

I had your letter in Bombay but read it at Wardha. Do not be miserable on account of the discharge. You should retire at night after reciting either *Ramanama* or the *navakara mantra*<sup>2</sup>. Slowly and gradually you will recover. Maybe it will suit you better to take only milk at night. Meditate on the *bhajans* that are recited. God Himself is the Lord of all *rasa*<sup>3</sup>. Derive all your *rasa* from this meditation.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

BHAI PUNJABHAI NANA

SATYAGRAHA ASHRAM, SABARMATI

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 185. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

## 190. LETTER TO NAJUKLAL N. CHOKSI

SATYAGRAHA ASHRAM, WARDHA,  
*Magsar Vad 10 [December 10, 1925]*

BHAI NAJUKLAL,

I have a letter from Mahadev which tells me that the 4th of January will not suit your mother; so now we shall fix up only the 19th of January.<sup>4</sup> We should not displease her needlessly. I shall somehow manage to remain in the Ashram on that day.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati : S.N. 12106

<sup>1</sup> Alias Vinubhai Shah

<sup>2</sup> *Navakara* or *naukara* meaning *namaskara*; a formula for the Jains to recite

<sup>3</sup> Pleasure or bliss

<sup>4</sup> For the addressee's marriage; the function actually took place on January 18, 1926.

191. LETTER TO ESTHER MENON

WARDHA,

December 11, 1925

MY DEAR ESTHER,

I was looking forward to hearing from you for a long time. I was therefore delighted to hear from you. I am glad you are better.

You have heard all about my fast? I am none the worse for it. I have almost regained the lost weight in ten days and am now resting with J. at Wardha.

Miss Slade whom we call Mira is with me and is coming to the Congress. She was glad to get your letter. She will write to you, I expect, if she has not done so already.

I hope to return to the Ashram about New Year's Day.

M. has lofty ideas of service. May they all be realized!

Is the school growing? How many children—boys and girls—have you? What is your syllabus?

With love to you all,

Yours,

BAPU

[PS.]

I am here till 21st instant.

*My Dear Child*, p. 77

192. LETTER TO W. H. PITT

AS AT SABARMATI,<sup>1</sup>

December 11, 1925

DEAR MR. PITT<sup>2</sup>,

I thank you for your letter of 30th November. The local committee has not yet corresponded with me but you may depend upon it that so far as I am concerned I shall strive my utmost to prevent satyagraha being adopted at this stage for temple-entry. I have

<sup>1</sup> Permanent address

<sup>2</sup> Police Commissioner in Trivandrum during Vykom Satyagraha.

always distinguished between the use of road and entry into temples. Public opinion has to be cultivated for the latter before satyagraha can be adopted. I hope to deal with it in the pages of *Young India*. I heard from Mr. Rajagopalachari about your marriage. I wish you and yours a happy and long life.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: S.N. 11108

*193. LETTER TO G. D. BIRLA*

WARDHA,

*Margashirsha Krishna 11 [December 11, 1925]*

BHAI GHANSHYAMDASJI,

I have your letter. You must have had my previous letter<sup>1</sup> written after my fast and sent to your Delhi address. You have well understood the significance of my fast.

Yesterday I came over to Wardha. I find plenty of peace here. Moreover, these days the weather too is very pleasant indeed.

I am glad to learn, your wife is quite at peace. When death approaches why should we not face it contentedly?

*Yours,*

MOHANDAS GANDHI

SJT. GHANSHYAMDAS BIRLA

MAHESH VILLA

SOLAN, SIMLA HILLS.

From the Hindi original: C.W. 6115. Courtesy: G.D. Birla

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Letter to G. D. Birla", 4-12-1925.

194. LETTER TO MANIBEHN PATEL

WARDHA,

Friday, December [11]<sup>1</sup> 1925

CHI. MANI,

I have your letter, When you leave Poona Seva Sadan you may stay in Bombay for some time or else come here direct. Probably they do not have a long vacation here; so you can begin work in the girls' school straightway. At the same time we have arranged for you to teach Kamala and Madalasa, Jamnalalji's daughters. You will put up with Janakidevi [Bajaj] for the present. You will get a salary of Rs. 50/- a month from the day you come over. So come when you like. If you wish to attend the Congress session, you can either accompany me from here or go to Kanpur direct. I have to reach there on the 23rd. In any case, manage to reach Wardha on January 1.

I have recovered nine pounds from the weight I had lost and have yet to make up six pounds.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

SHRIMATI MANIBEHN VALLABHBHAI PATEL

SEVA SADAN, SADASHIV PETH

POONA CITY

[From Gujarati]

*Bapuna Patro-Manibehn Patelne*, p. 31

<sup>1</sup> The source has "12" which, however, was a Saturday.



*195. TELEGRAM TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI*

WARDHA,

*December 12, 1925*

MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

93 BAZAR GATE

BOMBAY

WIRED DEVDAS COME WITH YOU AS NURSE.

BAPU

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

*196. LETTER TO A FRIEND*

*December 12, 1925*

DEAR FRIEND,

The use of 'Sir' for the Poet was deliberate. It was done for the sake of precision and correctness. The Poet never renounced the title, he asked to be relieved of it. The Government did not relieve him.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. G.

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

*197. THE PHYSICAL EFFECTS OF FASTING*

*[December 13, 1925]<sup>1</sup>*

A medical friend who believes in fasting cure under certain circumstances invites me to reduce to writing the physical effects of fasting as I might have observed them. As they are not inconsiderable and as I know many cases in which people who fasted have done themselves harm, I gladly comply with the medical friend's request. Though almost all my fasts have been undertaken for a moral purpose, being an inveterate diet reformer and a believer in fasting as a cure for many obstinate diseases, I have not failed to note their physical effects. I must, however, confess that I have not made any

<sup>1</sup> Written on the twelfth day after breaking the fast

accurate observations for the simple reason that it was not possible for me to combine the two. I was much too preoccupied with the moral values to note or mind the physical. I can therefore only give the general impressions. For accurate observations I can only refer the reader to Drs. Ansari and Abdur Rahman who were my medical guides throughout the long fast of last year. They were most painstaking. They were constantly by my bed-side and had thrown themselves heart and soul into the work of looking after me.

Let me at the outset note a disaster that befell me after the second long fast, that is, of fourteen days, in South Africa in 1914. Almost on the second day of the breaking of the fast I began strenuous walking, feeling that I should come to no harm. I walked nearly three miles, the second or the third day, and suffered excruciating pains in the muscleless calves. Not knowing the cause I persisted in walking as soon as the pain subsided. It was in this condition that I left South Africa for England and came under the observation of Dr. Jivraj Mehta, who warned me that if I persisted I might be a cripple for life and that I must lie in bed for at least a fortnight. But the warning was too late to keep my general health, which used to be excellent such that I was capable of taking a forty-mile march without being over-fatigued. Twenty miles in a day was nothing for me in those days. It was as a result of the strain I ignorantly put upon my body that I had to suffer from a violent attack of pluerisy which permanently injured a constitution that was fairly sound. It was the first serious attack of any disease in my life. From this very costly experiment I learned that perfect physical rest during fast and for a time proportionate to the length of the fast, after the breaking of it, is a necessity, and if this simple rule can be observed no evil effect of fasting need be feared. Indeed, it is my conviction that the body gains by a well-regulated fast. For during fasting the body gets rid of many of its impurities. During the last year's fast, as during this year, but unlike the previous fast, I took water with salt and bicarbonate of soda added to it. Somehow or other I develop during fasts a distaste for water. With the addition of salt and soda it becomes somewhat bearable. I found that drinking copious draughts of water kept the system clean and the mouth moist. To every six to eight ounces of water five grains of salt and an equal quantity of soda were added, and I drank during the day from forty to forty-eight ounces of water, in six to eight doses. I took also regularly every day an enema containing nearly three quarters of a pint of water

with nearly forty grains of salt and nearly an equal quantity of soda dissolved in it. The water was always warm. I had also a sponge bath every day given to me in bed. I had both during last year's and this year's fast refreshing sleep at night and at least an hour during the day time. For three days and a half during the last fast, I worked practically from 4 o'clock in the morning till 8 o'clock in the evening, holding discussions on the question that had entailed the fast, and attending to my correspondence and editing. On the fourth day I developed a violent headache and the strain was proving unbearable. In the afternoon of the fourth day I stopped all work. The following day I felt recuperated, the feeling of exhaustion was gone, headache had almost subsided. On the sixth day I felt fresher still and on the seventh day which was also my silent day I felt so fresh and strong that I was able to write with a steady hand my article<sup>1</sup> on the fast.

I am not aware during the whole of the fast of having suffered any pangs of hunger. Indeed on the day of breaking the fast I was in no hurry, I broke it half an hour later than I need have. There was no difficulty during the fast about spinning. I was able to sit up every day for over half an hour, with a pillow to support the back, and spin almost with my usual speed. Nor did I have to miss any of the three daily prayer-meetings. During the last four days I had to be carried on a cot to these meetings. With an effort I could even have sat up at the meetings, but I thought it better to conserve my energy. I am not conscious of having suffered much physical pain. The only pain which the memory has stored is a feeling of nausea, creeping over me now and then, which was as a rule overcome by sipping water.

I broke the fast on orange-juice and grape-juice, about six ounces altogether, and I sucked the pulp of an orange. I repeated the performance two hours after, adding ten grapes, which too were slowly sucked, leaving out all the skin. Later in the day and after the enema, I had six ounces of goat's milk with two ounces of water, followed by an orange and ten grapes. The next day the quantity of milk was raised to eighteen ounces, water always added, and thus I continued to increase the quantity of milk by six ounces every day, till I reached forty-eight ounces. Milk is still diluted with water, though now one ounce of water is added to each portion. For one day and a half I tried undiluted milk, but I noticed a certain heaviness, which I attribute to undiluted milk and have therefore gone back to diluting it.

<sup>1</sup>*Vide* "The Latest Fast", 30-11-1925.

At the time of writing these notes it is the twelfth day after the breaking of the fast.<sup>1</sup> I have not yet taken any solid food. Part of the fruit is still turned into juice and during the past three days I have added to grapes and oranges either papaw or pomegranate and *chiku*. The largest quantity of milk I have taken is sixty-four ounces. The average is forty-eight. I add at times baker's bread or home-made light *chapati*. But for months together I have been living simply on milk and fruit and keeping myself in a fit condition.

My highest weight since my discharge from prison has been 112 lbs. The weight lost during the seven days of fast was 9 lbs. I have now regained the whole of that weight and am now weighing a little over 103 lbs. For the last three days, I have taken regular exercise, both in the morning and evening, without the slightest fatigue. There is no difficulty in walking on level ground. There is still some strain felt in ascending or descending steps. The bowels move fairly regularly, and I sleep almost to order.

My own opinion is that I have lost physically nothing as a result either of the twenty-one days' fast or this the latest seven days' fast. The loss of weight during the seven days was no doubt somewhat alarming, but it was clearly due to the severe strain that was put upon the constitution during the first three and a half days. A little more rest, and I should regain my original vitality with which I started the fast and probably regain without difficulty the weight and strength lost in Cutch.

From a layman's and from a purely physical standpoint I should lay down the following rules for all those who may wish to fast on any account whatsoever:

1. Conserve your energy both physical and mental from the very beginning.
2. You must cease to think of food whilst you are fasting.
3. Drink as much cold water as you can, with or without soda and salt, but in small quantities at a time (water should be boiled, strained and cooled). Do not be afraid of salt and soda, because most waters contain both these salts in a free state.
4. Have a warm sponge daily.
5. Take an enema regularly during fast. You will be surprised at the impurities you will expel daily.
6. Sleep as much as possible in the open air.

<sup>1</sup> Gandhiji broke his fast on December 1.

7. Bathe in the morning sun. A sun and air bath is at least as great a purifier as a water bath.

8. Think of anything else but the fast.

9. No matter from what motive you are fasting, during this precious time, think of your Maker, and of your relation to Him and His other creation, and you will make discoveries you may not have even dreamed of.

With apologies to medical friends, but out of the fulness of my own experience and that of fellow-crankers I say without hesitation, fast (1) if you are constipated, (2) if you are anaemic, (3) if you are feverish, (4) if you have indigestion, (5) if you have a headache, (6) if you are rheumatic, (7) if you are gouty, (8) if you are fretting and fuming, (9) if you are depressed, (10) if you are overjoyed; and you will avoid medical prescriptions and patent medicines.

Eat *only* when you are *hungry* and when you have laboured for your food.

*Young India*, 17-12-1925

## 198. MY NOTES

### GUJARATI NATIONAL SCHOOL IN BOMBAY

Among the national schools which continue to run despite the sword that is hanging over their heads, the Gujarati School in Bombay is one. It could be said of it that it owes its survival to this day solely to the efforts of the teachers. I hope that the Bombay Provincial [Congress] Committee will maintain this school or make a substantial contribution towards its maintenance.

The annual function of this school was celebrated on the 8th of this month. On that occasion the students enacted some dramatic pieces, revealed their musical talent and rendered set dialogues in Hindi, Sanskrit, English and Gujarati. Some of the students acquitted themselves very well. The music, too, was of a higher standard than what I had heard on a previous occasion. The enunciation of Sanskrit was clear. On the whole, the students made a good impression on me, at any rate, with their artistic talents.

We see from the report of this school that all the subjects are taught in it through the mother tongue. The teachers claim to teach history and geography according to new methods. It is no small

advantage to the pupils to be taught subjects like geometry through Gujarati. Stress is laid on Sanskrit and Hindi too. Accountancy finds a place in the curriculum. The handicrafts taught of course include spinning on the takli and the spinning-wheel, but in addition to this pottery, carpentry, painting and such other crafts are also being taught.

The teachers are inspired by a spirit of self-sacrifice. They have voluntarily agreed to a cut of fifteen per cent in their salaries. The head master himself serves in an honorary capacity. There is an Educational Association too, with Shri Revashankar Jagjivan Jhaveri as its President. The accounts of the Association seem to be well maintained. It is but proper that people should help a school such as this—in which the education is liberal, the teachers are patriotic and the accounts in proper order—by giving it financial assistance and by enrolling pupils in it.

There is only one point which calls for criticism. In the dramatic performances the costumes used were made of foreign cloth, and this was out of keeping with the national character of the school and therefore painful. Was it quite necessary to use such costumes? The people did not go there to see a play acted, they went there to see the attainments of the pupils. It is usual in plays to use rich, gorgeous clothes which, in spite of their dazzle, are not pleasing to a fastidious eye. This practice should certainly not be followed in an educational institution which aspires to cultivate idealism in the pupils. We should place before the boys nothing less than the highest ideal. There should be no need to dress Hamlet in foreign clothes. We may dress him in the costume of his time, or in one imagined by us as proper to him. We can dress him according to our Indian image of him, since what he thinks and feels is a universal experience. The costume of characters belonging to Moghul times can be in the genuine Moghul style or in some other style imagined by us. We are lovers of khadi and, therefore, should use khadi in all such performances. I did not like even the curtains which were procured from a theatre. If I could have my way, I would not use such curtains but would design, instead, some artistic arrangement with khadi. This, however, will be done only if the workers have great love for khadi and give careful thought to such matters. Where else shall we look for either if not in those who run a national school? Let us pray that the national schools should demonstrate in their practice the ideals of future

India, that they should be the sources, as holy as Gangotri and Jamnotri, from which will flow noble thoughts and noble ideals of conduct.

SPINNING-WHEEL FOR FAMINE RELIEF

It must be for the very first time in history that the spinning-wheel was used in India for famine relief. Atrai and some other parts of Bengal were the first to do this. In Orissa a successful experiment is being carried on to introduce spinning in areas which have suffered heavy losses through floods, though the work being done there can be on a larger scale still. A similar experiment is being carried on in the Utukuli taluka of Coimbatore district in the South, of which a worker has sent the following beautiful account:<sup>1</sup>

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 13-12-1925

*199. LETTER TO A.. HANUMANTHA RAO*

*December 13, 1925*

DEAR FRIEND,

I thank you for your letter. We often understand things through the head but we have not the heart to reduce them to practice.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: G.N. 157

<sup>1</sup> Not translated here

200. LETTER TO R. D. BIRLA.

WARDHA,  
*Margashirsha Krishna 13 [December 13, 1925]*<sup>1</sup>

BHAI RAMESEHWARDASJI,

Bhai Jagjivandas Mehta tells me that if I approve of his . venture to build a temple for the *Antyajas*, you are prepared to finance it. I know Bhai Jagjivandas; he is a good man and an active social worker. I have looked over his plan for a temple for the *Antyajas*. He has also consulted other *Antyaja* workers as suggested by me. He estimates the cost of the proposed temple at Rs. 2,500; and I too agree that with such a building and the subsequent expenditure [the figure would amount to that]. In case you intend to spend such an amount on charity, this, I believe, is a noble cause.

*Yours*

MOHANDAS KARAMCHAND GANDHI

From the Hindi original: C.W. 6116. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

201. LETTER TO PUNJABHAI

*Magsar Vad 13 [December 13, 1925]*<sup>2</sup>

BHAI PUNJABHAI,

I regularly get your nice letters. I hope you had the letter<sup>3</sup> I wrote after reaching here. With persistent efforts you will be able to clear your eye [of evil]. Always be on the alert. The way to escape violence in speech is to talk as little as possible and not to speak at all without weighing your words.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

BHAI PUNJABHAI (NANA)  
SATYAGRAHA ASHRAM  
SABARMATI

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 186. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

<sup>1</sup> During his tour in Kathiawar in 1925 some people had approached Gandhiji with a request for a temple for the untouchables which later came to be known as the Lathi Antyaja Mandir.

<sup>2</sup> From the postmark

<sup>3</sup> Dated December 10, 1925



## 202. LETTER TO VASUMATI PANDIT

WARDHA,

*Monday Night [December 14, 1925]*

CHI. VASUMATI,

I have your letter. It puts me at ease to know that you are there, because Ramdas can derive some comfort from it.

What is wrong if Nimu learns Sanskrit and Ramdas does not know the language? Is it again the woman's fault that she may not learn more than her husband? Ramdas will not be such an inconsiderate husband. Ramdas himself wants Nimu to learn Sanskrit as well as the *sitar*. Among the English there are quite a few women who are more learned than their husbands but neither do they make much of it nor are the husbands ashamed of it. Who can judge whether Sita was wiser or Rama? As for Mandodari she was certainly wiser than Ravana. Did not Kausalya ultimately far surpass Dasharatha? Draupadi lorded it over all her five husbands and all five of them had a feeling of awe before her and they were none the worse for it. Let Ramdas gain in dignity on account of Nimu. But I do not think Nimu can surpass Ramdas. Ramdas has not yet gained confidence but he has many qualities and all will be well with him. Nimu certainly seems to be a good girl She will make Ramadas happy, and Ramadas happy, and Ramadas will make her happy.

I have written simultaneously to Jamnabehn. I very much liked her firm yet polite language.

You and your brother should both take care of your health.

I am fine.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 555. Courtesy: Vasumati Pandit

### 203. LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

Monday [December 14, 1925]<sup>1</sup>

CHI. MATHURADAS,

I have your telegram. On Friday itself I had sent a telegram to Chi. Devdas asking him to go to you. As yet I have not received his reply. I shall make some other arrangement if he cannot go.

I must have news about your health every day. Even here the weather is very lovely and at present there is a good deal of company too. Jamnalalji even suggested that you should be asked to come here. But right now you have to see to things there.

I am writing to Taramati. I shall send the letter to your address, even though she is not staying there.

Do not put yourself to any inconvenience there. Let me know what facilities you are having. If there is need to send a telegram do not hesitate. If Devdas has not gone there and if you need somebody urgently, send me a telegram. In that case, Mahadev will go.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

[PS.]

Telegrams may reach early if they are sent to Wardhaganj. I received your letter only today at 10 o'clock.

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

### 204. LETTER TO TARAMATI MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

SATYAGRAHA ASHRAM, WARDHA,

Monday [December 14, 1925]<sup>2</sup>

CHI. TARAMATI,

There is a telegram from Mathuradas saying that your health is not good and you look pale and sad. You certainly do not have to worry about Mathuradas. I am there to worry about him. In truth it is God who worries about us. You must look after your health and that

<sup>1</sup> The addressee received the letter on December 16, 1925. The Monday preceding this date fell on December, 14.

<sup>2</sup> The addressee has noted the date "December 1, 1925"; *vide* however the preceding item.

of the child. Therein lies your service. Write to me. I have wired to Devdas to go to Mathuradas.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

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

*205. TELEGRAM TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI*

WARDHA,

*December 14, 1925*

MATHURADAS

WINDY HALL

NASIK

P.O. DEOLALI

GLAD YOU HAVE RESUMED WRITING TARAMATI.

BAPU

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

*206. TELEGRAM TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI*

WARDHA,

*December 15, 1925*

MATHURADAS

WINDY HALL

NASIK ROAD

DEOLALI

OBSERVE      DEVDAS      CANT      COME.      GIRDHARI      LEAVING  
NAGPUR MAIL. GOD BLESS YOU.

BAPU

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

## 207. LETTER TO N. C. KELKAR

WARDHA,  
*December 15, 1925*

DEAR MR. KELKAR,

In going through my correspondence I see your letter about Nanjappa v. Godrej. I look to you to wake me up when you are ready.

*Yours sincerely,*

From a photostat: C.W. 3117. Courtesy: Kashinath N. Kelkar

## 208. LETTER TO MANIBEHN PATEL

WARDHA,  
*Magsar Vad Amas, December [15]<sup>1</sup> 1925*

I hope you have my letters. You may go to Ahmedabad if absolutely necessary. But remember that you must start work here on January 1 at the latest. You must now be mature enough not to hanker after meeting people.

I am fine.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

[From Gujarati]

*Bapuna Patro—Manibehn Patelne, p. 32*

## 209. LETTER TO DWIJENDRANATH TAGORE<sup>2</sup>

[On or after *December 15, 1925*]

You have sent me joyful news indeed. May that which you have got remain an everlasting treasure with you.

*Yours,*

M. K. G.

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

<sup>1</sup> The source, however, has "16".

<sup>2</sup> In reply to his letter received on December 15, stating that he had got "that beyond which there is nothing to desire"

210. LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

[December 15, 1925]<sup>1</sup>

CHI. MATHURADAS,

Your letter and that of Devdas arrived today by the same post. I am enclosing the letter from Devdas. What he writes seems only proper to me, and so I do not wish to suppress him. So he persuaded Mahadev to go to you. In the mean time Jamnalalji suggested that Girdhari should be sent. Mahadev said that you had asked for either Surendra or Girdhari. Therefore, instead of Mahadev, I am sending Girdhari. Even so, if you really want Mahadev, I am also willing to send him. It seems to me that Mahadev should be with me at Kanpur. So for the present Mahadev could have stayed with you only a day or two. Were I to send Mahadev today, he would have to return from there on the 22nd and I would have to send somebody else to take his place. Girdhari recites the *Gita*, etc., very well and also sings bhajans. He is of course very light-hearted. But I want to do only what will bring you peace of mind. Hence, just as a son would ask for anything from his father without any hesitation, or a friend from a friend or a patient from his doctor, you should feel free to ask for anything from me. To you I am like father and friend. And I am of course your doctor.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

[PS.]

You will be able to tell from my handwriting how my pen moves.

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

<sup>1</sup> From the contents; *vide* the preceding item.

211. LETTER TO G. D. BIRLA

WARDHA,

*Paush Shukla 1 [December 16, 1925]*

BHAI GHANSHYAMDASJI,

I have your letter. I shall talk to you about the Swaraj Party when we meet. I do not want you to change your view because by justifying your views I seek to justify my position as well. In my position I can do nothing else in the interest solely of dharma, i.e., for the good of the country.

Whatever you want to send you should send to Jamnalalji or deposit it at the Ahmedabad branch of the Bank of Baroda. It will be rather inconvenient for me to have it in Calcutta or Delhi. But if you prefer to deposit it with some bank in Calcutta or Delhi you may do so in my name and send over the bank's credit note to me. Do whatever you find convenient.

Swami Anand writes that he has not yet received any payment for the free copies of *Navjivan*, *Young India* and other periodicals that are dispatched on your advice. The amount is Rs. 299-15-0. Can you send this? He would like to have it before the end of the year.

*Yours,*

MOHANDAS GANDHI

From the Hindi original: C.W. 6117. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

## 212. LETTER TO VALJI G. DESAI

WARDHA,  
*Paush Sud 1*, [On or after *December 16, 1925*]<sup>1</sup>

BHAISHREE VALJI,

I will talk to the editor<sup>2</sup> of *Maharashtra-Dharma*. You will get shoes made from the hides of dead animals only in Utkal tannery in Cuttack. I do not know of another place.

*Vandemataram from*  
MOHANDAS

From a photostat of the Gujarati : C. W. 11278. Courtesy : Valji G. Desai

## 213. A STUDENT'S QUESTIONS

A student who is carrying on post-graduate studies in America writes:

I am one of those who are extremely interested in the utilization of Indian resources as one of the means for remedying the poverty of India. This is my sixth year in this country My special field is wood-chemistry. I would have entered executive services or taken up medical studies if I were not so profoundly convinced of the importance of the industrial development of India. . . . Would you approve of my going into industrial enterprise, say pulp and paper manufacture? What is your attitude in general on the question of adopting a sane, humanitarian industrial policy for India? Do you stand for the progress of science? I mean such progress which brings blessings to mankind, e.g., the work of Pasteur of France and that of Dr. Bunting of Toronto.

I answer this question publicly as so many inquiries are received by me from students all over, and as so much misconception exists regarding my views on science. I should have no objection whatsoever to industrial enterprise such as the student has in view. Only I would not call it necessarily humanitarian. A humanitarian industrial policy for India means to me a glorified revival of hand-spinning, for through it alone can pauperism, which is blighting the lives of millions of human beings in their own cottages in this land, be immediately

<sup>1</sup> The letter evidently was written after Gandhiji had visited the Utkal tannery at Cuttack on August 19, 1925. In 1925 *Paush Sud* I corresponded to the 16th of December when Gandhiji was at Wardha.

<sup>2</sup> Vinoba Bhave

removed. Everything else may thereafter be added, so as to increase the productive capacity of this country. I would therefore have all young men with a scientific training to utilize their skill in making the spinning-wheel, if it is possible, a more efficient instrument of production in India's cottages. I am not opposed to the progress of science as such. On the contrary the scientific spirit of the West commands my admiration and if that admiration is qualified, it is because the scientist of the West takes no note of God's lower creation. I abhor vivisection with my whole soul. I detest the unpardonable slaughter of innocent life in the name of science and humanity so-called, and all the scientist discoveries stained with innocent blood I count as of no consequence. If the circulation of blood theory could not have been discovered without vivisection the human kind could well have done without it. And I see the day clearly dawning when the honest scientist of the West will put limitations upon the present methods of pursuing knowledge. Future measurements will take note not only of the human family but of all that lives and even as we are slowly but surely discovering that it is an error to suppose that Hindus can thrive upon the degradation of a fifth of themselves or that peoples of the West can rise or live upon the exploitation and degradation of the Eastern and African nations, so shall we realize in the fulness of time, that our dominion over the lower order of creation is not for their slaughter, but for their benefit equally with ours. For I am as certain that they are endowed with a soul as that I am.

The same student asks:

I would like to know your very frank evaluation of the work of Christian missionaries in India. Do you believe that Christianity has some contribution to make to the life of our country? Can we do without Christianity?

In my opinion Christian missionaries have done good to us indirectly. Their direct contribution is probably more harmful than otherwise. I am against the modern method of proselytizing. Years' experience of proselytizing both in South Africa and India has convinced me that it has not raised the general moral tone of the converts who have imbibed the superficialities of European civilization, and have missed the teaching of Jesus. I must be understood to refer to the general tendency and not to brilliant exceptions. The indirect contribution, on the other hand, of Christian missionary effort is great. It has stimulated Hindu and Mussalman



religious research. It has forced us to put our own houses in order. The great educational and curative institutions of Christian missions I also count, amongst indirect results, because they have been established, not for their own sakes, but as an aid to proselytizing.

The world, and therefore we, can no more do without the teaching of Jesus than we can without that of Mahomed or the Unpanishads. I hold all these to be complementary to one another, in no case exclusive. Their true meaning, their interdependence and interrelation, have still to be revealed to us. We are but indifferent representatives of our respective faiths which we believe more often than not.

The third question put by the student is as follows:

In our united states of India, are we going to leave the present native States intact, or have a democracy there? In order to have political unity, what should be our common language? Why can't we make it English? The Indian States are even now changing their character, be it ever so imperceptibly. They cannot be autocratic when the bulk of India becomes democratic. What, however, Indian democracy will be no one can tell. It is easy enough to foresee the future, if English were our common language. For it would be then the democracy of a mere handful. But if we desire to realize, as we must, the political unity of the vast mass of Indian humanity, he must be a prophet who would foretell the future. And the common language of the vast mass can never be English. It is as a matter of course a resultant of Hindi and Urdu or Hindustani as I would call it. Our English speech has isolated us from the millions of our countrymen. We have become foreigners in our own land. The manner in which English speech has permeated the political-minded men of India constitutes in my humble opinion a crime against the country, indeed humanity; because we are a stumbling-block in the progress of our own country, and the progress of what is after all a continent must mean the progress of humanity and *vice versa*. Every English-educated Indian who has penetrated the villages has realized this burning truth, even as I have. I have profound admiration for the English language and many noble qualities of the English people, but I have no manner of doubt in my mind that the English language and the English people occupy a place in our life which retards our progress and theirs as well.

*Young India*, 17-12-1925

## 214. LAST YEAR'S KHADI WORK

The report of the All-India Khadi Board, now converted into the All-India Spinners' Association, on khadi work done by the late Board during the last year is an instructive document which I commend to the attention not merely of every lover of khadi but also of every critic and sceptic. The report can be had from the Secretaries, All-India Spinners' Association, Sabarmati. It omits mention of no weak point, it sufficiently deals with the delays and the neglect of provincial bodies, it takes note of the tremendous difficulties in the progress of the spinning-wheel. But when all is said and done, what remains of substantial work shows the headway khadi has made, not yet enough to be striking, not yet enough to affect the villagers' life, nor yet enough to bring about the coveted boycott of foreign cloth, but by itself the record is striking. Superficial observers tell me that khadi is on the wane, because in big cities they see fewer white caps than before. I call them 'white' because all white caps are not khadi caps. Experience has taught me that these caps were a gross deception. Many of these wearers were no more khadi lovers than the honest man who because he does not otherwise discard foreign cloth refuses to wear the khadi cap for a mere show or worse. The figures tell a different tale altogether. More khadi is being manufactured today than in 1921, more charkhas are plying than before, their output is larger, and the quality of khadi manufacture is far superior to what it was four years ago. The work has become more systematized and better organized for more rapid progress. There are more spinners spinning for hire. The number of steady voluntary spinners is also growing though slowly. More young men and women are earning their livelihood as khadi organizers than in any other national department. Khadi service is an ever-growing service. Its capacity for paying a decent salary to honest, intelligent, and industrious workers is almost limitless. Khadi claims also the largest number of unpaid national workers. Above all it has now become an established fact that khadi work cannot be done without an efficient organization exclusively devoted to it and commanding the services paid and unpaid, of an army of able workers. Its technical department is responsible for several important inventions, as for instance, an improved yarn press for pressing and baling small quantities of yarn. It examines samples of khadi, samples of yarn and detects spurious

khadi. It trains also students as organized or workers in their own homes. It has been carrying on experiments in dyeing and introducing waterproof khadi. And both of these experiments have met with considerable success. Let the sceptic verify the facts for himself by securing a copy of the report, and if he is satisfied, let him join the Association, or if he cannot yet fulfil the conditions, help it with such work as he can do, or with such funds as he can spare.

*Young India*, 17-12-1925

## 215. NOTES

### COUNCILS-ENTRY

An American publicist writes:

I am sorry to see you support, in any way, going into the Councils. If you were right before you came to this position, you are wrong now, I have always likened Councils to a tin plate given to a baby with the statement: "This is the moon; play, dear, with it, all you wish."

The writer reading scrappy bits from my writing, has evidently misunderstood my position. I hold to the same position that I occupied in 1920-21 regarding Councils-entry. I do not support going into the Councils. But I claim to be a practical man. I do not blind my eyes and refuse to see facts that stare me in the face. I recognize that some of my best friends and coworkers who sailed in the same vessel with me in 1920-21 have gone off the vessel and altered their course. They are as much representatives of the nation as I claim to be. I have therefore to determine the extent to which I can accommodate my course to theirs, and Councils-entry being a fact which I cannot alter, I have had no hesitation in tendering to my colleagues, the Swarajists, such help as it is possible for me to give, just as, though pacifist myself, I cannot help sympathizing with the brave Riffs as against the European usurpers.

### MALAVIYAJI AND LALAJI

An active member of the Hindu Mahasabha has sent me fifteen questions to answer in the pages of *Young India* and *Navajivan*. Another has discussed several matters after the style of these questions. I do not propose to answer all of them. But some of them I dare not avoid. They draw my attention to the attacks being made in the Press on Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviyaji and Lalaji. The

questions put to me are:

Do you question their good faith? Do you regard them as being opposed to Hindu-Muslim unity either directly or indirectly? Do you consider them to be capable wilfully of doing harm to the country?

I do occasionally see the attacks made against these patriots. I know also that many of my Mussalman friends thoroughly distrust both these distinguished public men. But however much I may differ from them in many respects, I have never been able to distrust either of them. Indeed I have noticed among Hindu circles similar attacks on several prominent Mussalman workers as I have in Mussalman circles against Malaviyaji and Lalaji. I have not been able to believe either the one or the other charge. But I have not been able to carry home my belief to either party. Malaviyaji and Lalaji are both tried servants of the country, both have to their credit a long, unbroken and distinguished record of service. I have had the privilege of enjoying confidential relations with them, and I cannot recall a single occasion when I have found them to be anti-Muslim. Not that therefore they have not distrusted Mussalman leaders, or that their views and mine about the solution of the very difficult and delicate question have been identical. They have never questioned the necessity of unity, and they have ever, according to their own lights, striven for it. In my opinion to question the good faith of these leaders is to doubt the possibility of unity. The voices will count as effectively in Hindu society when we come to terms—as some day we must as say, precisely, the voices of Hakim Saheb and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad will count in Muslim circles. Indeed my prescription to every public worker is to take every worker at his own word till there is positive proof to the contrary. A believer loses nothing even where he has been misled and cheated. Public life in the midst of suspicion and distrust becomes intolerable when it does not become impossible.

#### KHADI EXHIBITION

A correspondent inquires whether at the forthcoming Khadi Exhibition at Cawnpore during the Congress week khadi with foreign or mill-made yarn added to it or carpets with a mixture of foreign or mill-made yarn can be exhibited. A question of that character arose in Belgaum also, and it was then decided that only pure khadi can be exhibited at a Khadi Exhibition and that nothing that has any foreign or mill-made yarn about it can be. The position is in no way altered today and I am quite sure that at a Khadi Exhibition to exhibit

anything but pure khadi would be a kind of deception.

#### POTENCY OF CHARKHA

Acharya Rama Deva of Kangri Gurukul who has just returned from his East African tour says among other things:

I am convinced more than ever that British domination will not cease, so long as its motive lasts, and the motive is economic exploitation. The only effective means of rendering economic exploitation an impossibility and of shutting out the drain upon our resources is khaddar. In the Gurukul all the boys of the Secondary Department and many boys in the colleges know spinning and most of the former and a sufficiently large number of the latter spin regularly. The principal of our Veda Mahavidyalaya, Pandit Deva Sharma Vidyalkar, is a regular spinner who spins religiously every day. Two or three of our professors are trying to follow in his footsteps. I am not sure that, when we meet next time, you will not find me a spinner. Principal Vidyawati is anxious to improve the teaching of spinning and to introduce weaving in the Kanya Gurukul at Delhi.

I hope that Acharya Rama Deva will prove as good as his word, and that when I meet him I shall find him as accomplished a spinner as he is a scholar. I tender my congratulations to the boys and to the professors who are spinning regularly by way of sacrifice.

#### KENYA INDIANS, BEWARE

Acharya Rama Deva was in East Africa for close on six months. He gives me a gloomy picture of Indian life there. He tells me that many Hindus and Mussalmans have taken to drink, they do not mind the use of *videshi* things even when they are avoidable. He considers the local Congress finances to be in a bad way, and he ends by saying that the leaders are not leading. He makes several other allegations and even authorizes me to publish them but I refrain for the moment. I wish I could act in accordance with his suggestion that I should depute someone to East Africa and inquire into the allegations he makes. I am sorry, however, that it is not possible for me to do so, at any rate for the time being. But I do appeal to the Kenya Indians to go through the process of introspection, filling the blank spaces left in this note and get their own house in order. Those who are given to drink must get rid of the drink habit, and those who are not, should help their less fortunate co-settlers to avoid the curse.

*Young India*, 17-12-1925

216. LETTER TO VALJI G. DESAI

WARDHA,  
*Thursday [December 17, 1925]*

BHAISHRI VALJI,

I hope you have written to Chaunde Baba. Let me also know when the day is fixed. When you come, bring along the account books, the members' names, addresses, etc. I have looked through the constitution. We should call the annual meeting.

We shall also think about appointing an efficient Working Committee.

*Vandemataram from*  
MOHANDAS

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 7742. Courtesy: Valjibhai Desai

217. LETTER TO MOOLCHAND AGARWAL

WARDHA,  
*Pausha Shukla 2 [December 17, 1925]*

BHAI MOOLCHANDJI,

I have your letter. Wearing khaddar is in no way opposing the Government. A dishonest person is one who does not do the job for which he is paid, as for instance a postman who does not promptly deliver the letters or who destroys them. But a postman who participates in national activities commits no *adharma*.

Bhishma and the others sided with the Kauravas on the plea that they were obliged to the latter for their bread. It was not a meritorious deed. Vidura committed no sin in not taking sides. Vibhishana did a meritorious act in forsaking his wicked brother.

*Yours*  
MOHANDAS GANDHI

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 766

## 218. LETTER TO MOTILAL ROY

WARDHA,  
December 18, 1925

DEAR MOTI BABU,

I have your letter. I shall certainly help you to the best of my ability in your khaddar work. But I need not say more as you will be sending a representative to Kanpur.

*Yours sincerely,*  
M. K. GANDHI

SJT. MOTILAL ROY  
PRABARTAK SANGH  
CHANDRANAGAR

From a photostat: G.N. 11023

## 219. LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

*Paush Sud 3, Friday [December 18, 1925]<sup>1</sup>*

CHI. MATHURADAS,

Your two letters arrived together today. If Dr. Dalal goes there again, you must see him. Tell his wife about it in advance. Who is the doctor there? It would be proper not to sit up even for writing so long as the pain persists. The pain will subside on its own. Be out in the sun morning and evening as much as possible. You must definitely take enema or a purgative if your bowels do not move. I think enema would be better. But consult the doctor and do as he says. Girdhari will of course stay with you till I send somebody else. I intend returning to the Ashram early. But I can know only after going to Kanpur.<sup>2</sup> You must always dictate to Girdhari your letters to me.

If Devdas is surprised by anything I do, so are you bound to be.

Let me know if I should write to Taramati at any particular address.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

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

<sup>1</sup> The addressee received the letter on December 19, 1925 in which year *Paush Sud 3* corresponded to December 18.

<sup>2</sup> Gandhiji left Wardha on December 22

## 220. LETTER TO ANASUYABEHN SARABHAI

Friday, Paush Sud 3 [December 18, 1925]<sup>1</sup>

CHI. ANASUYABEHN,

I have your letter. Jannabehn is totally engrossed in service. You are spreading your wings from there. I have got the blanket. You are surely reaching earlier than I. So what is the point in deliberating about Kanpur?<sup>2</sup>

Tell Mridula I think of her and the children constantly, She must be getting ready for her work. Tell Bhabhi<sup>3</sup> that I shall forever remember the three days I spent in Shahi Bagh.<sup>4</sup> I can only pay for such love by doing more service and by achieving greater purity. I shall certainly try to do that.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From the Gujarati original: S.N. 32822

## 221. LETTER TO KESHAVDEV NEVATIA

WARDHA,

Pausha Shukla 3 [December 18, 1925]

BHAI KESHAVDEVJI,

It seems better to me to solemnize Chi. Kamala's and Chi. Rameshwar's marriage at Sabarmati. Four months ago I gave my consent to have it in Bombay hoping that it would make an impact on other people. But, after further consideration, I feel that such matters should be decided only with the couple's wellbeing in view. Marriage is a sacrament. It means a new life for the couple. The quieter the ceremony and the more religious the atmosphere, the better for them. Such an atmosphere can be created when we drop all superfluous ceremony and maintain quiet. It is possible the womenfolk might be disappointed. But I think it is our duty to do what is right, regarding their disappointment as momentary. So I wish you too to give your

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

<sup>2</sup> Gandhiji reached Kanpur on December 23.

<sup>3</sup> Saraladevi Sarabhi

<sup>4</sup> Gandhiji Had stayed at Ambala Sarabhai's place in Ahmedabad on the 2nd, 3rd and 4th of December 1925.



consent to have the wedding performed at Sabarmati. It is no botheration, no trouble for me to have the wedding there.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

[From Hindi]

*Panchaven Putrako Bapuke Ashirvad*, p. 263

## 222. LETTER TO PUNJABHAI

WARDHA,

*Posh [Sud] 3 [December 18, 1925]*<sup>1</sup>

BHAI PUNJABHAI,

You are writing pretty regularly. This will do you good. I expect to read your well-kept notes of Balkrishna's discourse. If the others disturb your work you should politely tell them about this. If the disturbance persists learn a lesson in tolerance, looking upon it as inevitable. But never lose your temper. Meditate on the *bhajans* as much as you can.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

[PS.]

It does not matter if you lose appetite only on account of indigestion.

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 187. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

## 223. MY DHARMA

There are many friends who point out "my dharma" to me, and I am happy that they do it. The fact that they write to me freely is evidence of their love for me and their confidence that what they say will not hurt me. I have just received one such letter. The correspondents are well-known Gujarati workers and leaders in their respective districts. The reader will easily see that the letter has been prompted by their regard for me. I, therefore, give it here with a few omissions:<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> From the postmark, "Sabarmati, December 21, 1925"; the source, however, has "Posh Vad 3" which corresponds to January 13, 1925.

<sup>2</sup> The letter is not translated here. The correspondents had suggested that Gandhiji should undertake a tour of America, Europe and Africa for about a year.

Though the letter has been written with a good motive and seems at first to be well-reasoned, I am unable to follow the advice of these friends.

Our holy books tell us in the plainest words that one's own dharma is to be preferred even though it may require no great virtue to follow it. Another's dharma may seem to have superior virtue in it but it is better even to lose one's life in following one's modest dharma. It is dangerous to follow another's dharma. Can I leave the field merely because today people do not accept my views? The idea of non-co-operation was conceived first by me. I did not know then how it would be received. I put into practice what I believed to be dharma and invited others to follow me. A good many were attracted by the idea. What difference does it make to me if it has now lost attraction for them? Should I give up my dharma because of that? If it do so, I would dishonour my ideal of service. My faith in the efficacy of non-co-operation remains what it was at the time of its inception.

The alternation of flood and ebb is a law of nature. Why should we be elated with pride at flood-tide and be filled with despair at ebb-tide? one who has no control over the helm may lose direction. My hands are firm on the helm and, therefore, I have no such fear.

People's love of khadi has increased rather than diminished. Blind worship has changed into intelligent love. On the whole, the quality of khadi being produced is daily improving and the demand for it is increasing. Among public activities which are going on independently of the Government, I think there is none which is as much alive as the Khadi Movement. This statement can be proved with the help of figures. It is a fact that spinning and carding have stopped in a few places; nevertheless, they are better organized today than they were at any time during the past four years.

The Hindu-Muslim problem is, today, like the lump of clay on the potter's wheel. The Almighty alone knows what kind of pot will emerge. However, having regard to the unparalleled popular awakening, the present developments, though painful, should surprise no one. All the dirt has come up to the surface and, therefore, it is all that we see. What today the Hindus and Muslims cannot be persuaded to do, they will be forced to do sooner or later by the pressure of circumstances. They have no choice but to become united, and so I am not worried on that score. If Fate has decreed that we should fight

a few battles among ourselves, let us. This will not be the first instance of such fighting in the annals of the world. Brothers sometimes fight with one another, but unite again. When the era of peace dawns upon us, wars will seem barbaric. Today, however, fighting is looked upon as civilized.

Untouchability is on its last legs. Its soul is dead, what we see is only its skeleton.

We need not be filled with despair because our struggle for swaraj has resulted in creating disunity among us. Such things have taken place among all nations which have become free. Our duty is only to take note of them and seek remedies for them; to lose heart in the face of them would be evidence of our cowardice.

A person who has accepted defeat in India, what can he give to America or bring thence for our country? People's admiration for me in America or Europe cannot blind me. We shall profit nothing by begging for help from the West. My returning with a certificate from the West would be a matter of shame for the country and me. I see no good reason at present which could induce me to go to Europe or America. Let no one believe that the leaders of those continents are simply pining to meet me or hear me. Whatever reputation I enjoy in those countries is among people whose voice would carry no weight at all with the general public. They, too, like me, seem to have nothing else to do and so build castles in the air and formulate plans for the betterment of the world. I shall retain their love so long as I remain devoted to truth and non-violence. The reader, however, should know that these persons do not hold the reins of power in the West. Whatever strength I have can best be demonstrated in our country. Hills seem beautiful from a distance. Immediately I leave India, I shall have stepped out of my true sphere, and such persons have no place anywhere in the world.

Even in Africa, I can do nothing now. I am, in this matter, in the same plight as Arjuna, who was robbed by a Kaba<sup>1</sup> though he held the same bow and arrow which he had wielded all his life. My Krishna would not be there by my side now. A soldier distinguishes himself in a fight which comes to him unsought. One who goes out in search of a fight would be a gambler. I may say that I have never once gambled in my life, and, fortunately for me, I lost even on the one occasion

<sup>1</sup> A highway man who waylaid and robbed Arjuna, while escorting womenfolk to Indraprastha. This happened after Krishna's life-time.

when I played for stakes.

If the leaders and the country have wearied of me, I should retire to the Himalayas. By the Himalayas I do not mean the Dhavalagiri Hills, I mean the Himalaya in my heart. It would be easy for me to find a cave in that Himalaya and live there. Even this I will not myself seek, it will come seeking me. The devotee does not himself go to God. If he did, he would not be able to bear His dazzling light. Hence God Himself comes down to His devotees and appears to them in the form in which they have adored Him. My God knows that I am impatiently awaiting His coming; a mere sign from Him will suffice for me."With a frail thread has Hari tied me, and I turn the way He pulls me." So sang Mirabai. I am Mirabai's disciple, and so I may also sing this song after making the necessary change in the gender of the pronoun. I should always hold myself ready to be pulled by such a thread. That is why I am always drawing out thread and reminding my "roving mind" that it should always be ready to set out for its homeland. It matters little whether that homeland be a cave in my heart or some unknown country. Whatever the place to which I retire, He will be present there and, therefore, I shall have nothing to fear.

I would immediately open shops for selling khadi in every taluk, if only the workers in each taluk would assure me that they would be able to sell a fixed quantity of khadi. people should write to the Khadi Association for detailed information.

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 20-12-1925

## 224. MY NOTES

### KALIPARAJ CONFERENCE

Two conferences, one of the Kaliparaj communities and another of Bhils, have been held recently. I have seen no report of the latter. I have seen the report<sup>1</sup> of the Kaliparaj Conference, for it was sent to me by Shri Jugatram and I publish it below. Excellent work is being done among both these communities. There is much in common between them and there are good workers among both. We but serve ourselves in serving either. We should pray that there should be an awakening among both the communities and that they should join in serving the

<sup>1</sup> Not translated here

country. It is not a small service to humanity to become human ourselves. Let us hope that these communities will give up drinking and such other evils understand their proper place in society and engage themselves in useful work, and that workers will help them in their efforts in that direction.

COMMUNITY DINNER AMONG BHANGIS

Shri Mohanlal Pandya writes to say:<sup>1</sup>

I hope that Bhangi friends will remain loyal to the pledge they have taken.

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan* 20-12-1925

225. *LETTER TO SAROJINI NAIDU*

*December 20, 1925*

This is my last letter to you before we meet at Cawnpore where a mere woman displaces a mere man. May your words come out of purity, may you adorn Indian womanhood and Hinduism. May your words be as balm to the Hindu-Muslim wound. You are too great to notice the childish display of unchivalrous incivility.

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

226. *LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI*

*Sunday [December 20, 1925]<sup>2</sup>*

CHI. MATHURADAS,

I have your letter. Jamnalalji will not be inconvenienced by Girdhari's staying with you for the present. Right now, I can send you no one better than Girdhari. But I will send someone as soon as I reach Sabarmati; so Girdhari may stay on there without hesitation.

You are bound to regain your health there. Why must you think now about how long you may have to rest? You certainly have to do it at least till you recover. There is no reason to be impatient when we

<sup>1</sup> The letter is not translated here. It narrated, among other things, how the Bhangis had resolved to give up some vicious habits.

<sup>2</sup> Inferred from the mention of Gandhiji's departure for Kanpur on Tuesday i.e., December 22, 1925. The Sunday preceding this date fell on December 20.

are taking all possible measures.

If it does not involve the slightest strain there is no harm in writing letters. But I am informed that bed-rest brings the quickest recovery in chest diseases. Avoid walking for the present.

Send for anything you may need.

I will write separately to Taramati.<sup>1</sup>

Now that the special train has been discontinued, Sarojinibai cannot come at all. She cannot expect you to be at the station. If she did, it would be useless. You cannot leave the bungalow right now.

I feel hesitant to write to Dr. Dalal. Now that your health is improving, I should not write to him. If you feel the need, send me a telegram. You would be receiving this letter in the morning. Send a telegram here if you think that you have got to consult the doctor. I shall be leaving here on Tuesday evening. After that I shall be at Kanpur.

There was no letter from you yesterday. I must have news of you every day. I do receive letters on Tuesdays. If you post the letter on Monday before 12 o'clock, I shall surely get it.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

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

## 227. SPEECH AT WARDHA<sup>2</sup>

*December 21, 1925*

Ten years have passed since I left South Africa. I have received hundreds of letters, and have replied to them. I have explained this matter a hundred times over in *Young India* and in *Navajivan*, and yet, when I come to the Wardha Ashram I am being asked the very same questions. This has revived old memories for me and distressed me very much. I do not say that such questions should not occur to anyone, but, if they do, people may approach Vinoba and have their doubts answered. However, the reason for my being distressed was that it has become a widespread disease to ask such questions. We should

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

<sup>2</sup> At the morning prayer in the Ashram

resist the temptation to ask them. Please understand my words properly. What I wish to say is that such questions may certainly occur to us, but, they should be kept back in one's mind. When, thousands of years ago, the battle of Kurukshetra was fought, the doubts which occurred to Arjuna were answered by Shri Krishna in the *Gita*; but that battle of Kurukshetra is going on, will go on, for ever within us, the Prince of Yogis, Lord Krishna, the universal *atman* dwelling in the hearts of us all, will always be there to guide Arjuna, the human soul, and our Godward impulses represented by the Pandavas will always triumph over the demoniac impulses represented by the Kauravas. Till, however, that victory is won, we should have faith and let the battle go on, and be patient meanwhile. This does not mean that we should suppress our inner urge for fear of anyone; it means that if such an urge takes the form of the question "Who created God?", we should curb it, tell ourselves that it is impious to ask such a question and have faith that the question will answer itself by and by.

This physical frame which God has given us is a prison, but it is also the door leading to deliverance and, if we wish that it should serve only that purpose, we should understand its limitations. We may well desire to clutch the stars in the heavens, but we should note that it is beyond our power to do so; for our soul is imprisoned in a cage, its wings, therefore, have been clipped and it cannot fly as high as it would. It can secure a great many occult powers, but it will fail in its aim of winning deliverance if it goes after such powers. Hence, the kind of abstract questions which were put to me the other day should be avoided—in the conviction that in the course of time the soul will become strong enough and know the answers to them. Instead of discussing such abstract questions, we should follow the advice of the poet: "Let us spend today to some purpose, for who knows what tomorrow will bring?" This line may seem to come from the pen of Charvak, who also says: "Live in ease while you live, drink ghee even if you have to borrow money for it, for the body will never return to life after it is cremated." But the line is not by Charvak. Its author was a devotee and, when he advised us to spend today profitably, he meant that we should discharge the duty which lies before us today. We do not know if we shall be alive tomorrow, though a little later he says that we shall be born again. This duty is what was explained by Vinoba the other day, "ending the misery of all creatures that suffer", destroying the chain of ever-recurring birth and death. The only

means for this is *bhakti*<sup>1</sup>. An Englishman named Newman, a grate devotee, wrote in a poem of his "One step enough for me." This half line is the quintessence of all philosophy. That one step means patient, unswerving *bhakti*. If a sick person gets up and tries to walk down a staircase, he would feel giddy and fall. If we do not understand our limitations and try to get knowledge which is beyond us, we would not only not be able to digest it but would be sick with surfeit.

We should, therefore, cure ourselves of the disease of asking abstract questions, should attend to the immediate duty before us today and leave these questions for some other day. The couplet from a *bhajan* which was sung here today teaches us the very same thing, that instead of talking about *mukti*<sup>2</sup> all the time we should spend our time in *bhakti*. Without *bhakti* there can be no deliverance. Only he, therefore, wins deliverance who is devoted to duty and fills his heart with love of God—he alone wins deliverance who never thinks about it.

*Bhakti*, moreover, does not imply ineptitude in practical affairs. That which produces such ineptitude cannot be called *bhakti*. It may, of course, be that, looking at the way we conduct our affairs, people will think of us as simpletons. A true devotee, though fully attentive to practical affairs, brings the spirit of *bhakti* into them. His conduct will always be in harmony with dharma. It is because Krishna acted in this manner that he is looked upon as the *Purnavatara*<sup>3</sup>. A devotee finds no difficulty in attending to the practical affairs of life.

Ashrams like this one are established so that such a way of life in complete harmony with dharma may prevail everywhere. I have, therefore, always cherished the hope that these Ashrams will serve as instruments for raising the country and teaching and spreading true dharma. I do not worry whether that hope will be fulfilled in the present or after many generations—it is sufficient for us that we go on doing our duty along the path we have chalked out for ourselves. For this, we should strive to cultivate the qualities of both a Brahmin—truth and faith—and a Kshatriya and non-violence. It is my faith that this Ashram will help its inmates to cultivate both these types of qualities. I do not suggest, of course, that other Ashrams cannot do that. I believe that this Ashram, at any rate, will do some good. If we realize that truth and non-violence have a particular value for us and

<sup>1</sup> Loving devotion to God

<sup>2</sup> Deliverance

<sup>3</sup> Prefect avatar



practise them in our lives, if we have the faith that there is no principle in this world which admits of an exception, we shall in the course of time understand the meaning of perfect truth and perfect non-violence. The peace which I have enjoyed here during the past ten days on observing that the inmates of the Ashram perform their duty in the spirit I have explained, I have enjoyed nowhere else, and you can very well imagine what my feelings must be now that I shall have to leave this peaceful atmosphere and go back to a world full of turmoil. But, as I told a friend, our study of the *Gita* would have been to no purpose if we get frightened of the turmoil in the world; we should get our peace not from the external environment; but from within us, and so I do not worry.

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 27-12-1925

## 228. LETTER TO SHASTRI MAHASHAY

*December 21, 1925*

DEAR SHASTRI MAHASHAY,

I had to make my choice—to write to Gurudev directly or to Ramanand Babu or to you. At the last I have made my choice and I leave it to you to show this letter to Gurudev and Ramanand Babu.

I had R. Babu's article in *The Modern Review* on the charkha read out to me. I must own that it has deeply pained me. I know that he is too good wilfully to misunderstand anybody. It is my misfortune that what I thought I had written with the purest motives should be understood as being otherwise written even by men like him. I should not pardon myself if even Gurudev so understood my article.<sup>1</sup>

I can but explain my position and ask every friend in Shantiniketan to accept my explanation. Gurudev's title was not used in ignorance. I knew that he had not renounced the title but had asked to be relieved of it. He was not so relieved. And Andrews and I had a discussion over it and we both came to the conclusion that the title not having been taken away, we, Gurudev's friends, should make no fuss about it. We also felt that it would be courtesy even to make use of the title now and then. I know what poison has been emitted over these boycotts. I have therefore gone out of my way to describe titled personages by their titles in order to show that the use of titles was no

<sup>1</sup>*Vide* "The Poet and the Charkha", 5-11-1925.

crime. It was thus out of regard for Gurudev that I used the title. It was used so automatically that I knew that I had used it, only when Mahadev drew my attention to it, on receipt of Ramachandran's letter.

As to jealousy. Let R. Babu and the other friends know that not one but several Bengali friends and some Gujarati friends and even others mentioned the matter in that light. Let me also add that I tried to disabuse them of the prejudice. When I discovered that the belief was fairly general in certain circles, I thought I must refer to it in the columns of *Young India*.

It surprised me to find R. Babu mention the Poet's other qualifications. I take leave to say that they are not to be compared with his matchless poetry. As a reformer I should cross swords with him. But who can equal him as a poet? There are many reformers in the world today, but he is the only Poet outdistancing every other in the race. He is a great schoolmaster, but himself has told me his pedagogy is his plaything. To mention his other qualifications, however great they may be, side by side with his poetry is to ignore the unquestioned supremacy of his poetry. At least that is what I think.

Lastly pray believe me when I assure you that I wrote that article in no unloving, unfriendly or critical spirit. I wrote it to disarm criticism and to testify that his differences with me could not possibly diminish my regard and affection for him. So please all of you regard me as one of you, incapable of misunderstanding the Poet, or his mission. I must not be deserted or misunderstood by you. Do please ask R. Babu to let me have a line to say that he accepts my explanation. And will you get an assurance from the Poet that he at least did not misunderstand me?

You may share this with anyone you like.

With love,

*Yours,*

M.K.G.

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

## 229. LETTER TO TARAMATI MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

*Paush Sud 6 [December 21, 1925]<sup>1</sup>*

CHI. TARAMATI,

You will have received the letter I wrote you at your home address. Since there has been no reply I am writing this. You must recoup your health. You and the child should stay in the open air as long as possible. How nice it would be if you could go to Deolali after you recovered. It will do you both good and you will be able to nurse Mathuradas too. Of course, you should not worry about Mathuradas at all. His health is gradually improving. Girdhari is with him. He is a good nurse. Now you must write to me at Kanpur or at the Ashram. I shall be at Kanpur for five days. After that I hope to go straight to the Ashram. If you write to Kanpur, it should be at the Congress address.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

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

## 230. LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

*Paush Sud 7 [December 22, 1925]<sup>2</sup>*

CHI. MATHURADAS,

I wrote to you yesterday. Today Girdhari's letter and yours dated the 18th arrived together. The letter written after the 18th arrived yesterday. It contained information that you were better. Girdhari's letter also says that you are better but that the pain continues and the temperature is 98° F. If the temperature remains at that level throughout the day, nothing needs to be said. I should have news of you regularly even at Kanpur. Arrange with Girdhari that he should read to you something. Did I write to you that he sang bhajans very well and read the *Gita* also beautifully? Girdhari is a *rasika*. Do not be in a hurry to get up early. If there is anything interesting you would want him to read to you, have him do it.

I have suggested to Taramati that it will be nice if she stays with

<sup>1</sup> Mathuradas Trikumji has noted the date "December 23, 1925". but in 1925 *Paush Sud 6* corresponded to December 21.

<sup>2</sup> The addressee received the letter on December 23, 1925.

you when she has regained strength.<sup>1</sup> It will be good for her and the child. You will enjoy being with her and she will also nurse you. Think over this matter yourself. You will have to stay there for a considerable time. Then why should Taramati and the child not have the benefit of the air and the sun and the opportunity to be with you? Since Girdhari is there you do not have to worry about Jamnalalji.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

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

### 231. LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

*Paush Sud 8 [December 23, 1925]<sup>2</sup>*

CHI. MATHURADAS,

Yesterday on the train I asked Mahadev to write to you. Today also I am on the train. It will take two days if I go to Ahmedabad *via* Deolali. And I must spend at least a day with you. That means it will take me three days to reach the Ashram. I am afraid therefore that I shall have to give up the temptation to see you. None the less, any definite decision can be made only at Kanpur. I feel that after I reach the Ashram either Mahadev or Devdas has to be sent to you. If Devdas is ready to go, I intend to send him. I should receive your letters regularly at Kanpur.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

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

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

<sup>2</sup> From the postmark and contents

## 232. NOTES

### TOTAL PROHIBITION

Sjt. C. Rajagopalachari has issued a very brief but telling manifesto recommending total prohibition as a constructive single item in the Congress as it will be constituted, when and if it endorses the Patna Resolution. In a private letter he says that total prohibition can be, should be and is "the only unifying political force". It can bring together Brahmins and non-Brahmins. It can weld all political parties and it can also appeal to the masses who are directly concerned in and are to be affected by total prohibition. There is not a shadow of a doubt that total prohibition is a crying need and that without it the ruin that the drink curse has brought to thousands of happy homes must continue its deadly course at an ever-increasing pace. It is therefore to be hoped that the suggestion made in the manifesto will be taken up by all concerned.

### AMERICAN SATISFACTION

Whilst several Indian friends have of late been rebuking me for not having accepted the invitation to visit America, an esteemed American friend who knows India fairly well says:

May I express my gratification at your answer to the request of some American friends to visit this country? I hope you will maintain this attitude because you can do us very much more good from India. There is an element of curiosity-hunting in even the best of our people to which I should exceedingly dislike to see you subjected.

I may assure the writer that there is no fear of my visiting America to satisfy idle curiosity. I am quite clear in my mind that whether for better or for worse, not till I have made good my position in India can a visit to America or Europe by me be of any service either to the West or to the East.

### TO WHAT STATE FALLEN

It is wonderful how when a person or an institution begins to recede from a position, the return takes him or it sometimes even below the original state. A correspondent says in effect:

From non-co-operation, we are hurrying down to cooperation. Presently we shall perform an operation in amputation so that we have nothing but the useless trunk left! Here are some of the conditions imposed upon what was at one

time a well-managed national school, if it is to receive Government recognition: The present head master should not only resign, but should not be a member of the School Committee and should have nothing to do with the management in any shape or form. He must not live on the school premises. The boys and teachers must not take part in political meetings or in any anti-Government demonstrations. The rules governing the management should be so changed as to render non-co-operation in future impossible. For another school which is awaiting recognition summary orders are said to have been issued that recognition cannot be granted unless certain books by well-known Indian writers have been removed from the school library, and other similar humiliating conditions are satisfied.

This reminds one of the conditions that were imposed during the Punjab martial law days upon the dismissed scholars if they were to be re-admitted. It seems that the lesson of the Punjab has been lost upon the schoolmasters and scholars. I can understand reaction against non-co-operation because it appeared to be a new idea which could not be demonstrated to have succeeded, but servile co-operation such as the conditions imply is inexplicable. One would think that a national school, ill-conducted it may be, housed in an ill-constructed dilapidated building, is any day superior to a well-conducted Government school housed in a glittering place where neither the schoolmaster nor the scholars can retain their self-respect.

#### “HIDE YOUR VIRTUE”

A correspondent writes:

About your fasts and other penances as well as prayers it strikes me that there is something lacking, and that is why they do not produce proper effects. These sacrifices in order to be effective should not be trumpeted, but should be observed in strict silence and secrecy. The Shastras say that virtue should be veiled while sin should be exposed.

There is a great deal of truth in what the correspondent says. For my own fasts and penances and prayers some of them had necessarily to be public when they were meant for some public effect. But I labour under a grave disability. Nothing even that I desire to keep from the public is allowed to be so kept. I must therefore go my hum-

ble way and secure such solace as may be possible in the circumstances from penances. Enough, if I can certify for myself that I desire no publication of private penances. Of public penances I have no manner of doubt as to their intrinsic value and it means nothing to me that immediate results are not always to be seen. Faith will be a poor thing if every act, good or bad, was to produce its own instantaneous and visible effect. It is the uncertainty of effect which puts a man on his mettle, humbles him, and tests his faith and sincerity.

#### AN EXAMPLE TO COPY

Mr. Shuaib Qureshi, who the reader is aware is at present in Arabia with the Hedjaz Deputation, has sent his quota of yarn for the Spinners' Association from Arabia for the current month. If every member of the Association will follow this example and continue to send his quota no matter where he is, and how circumstanced, the Association will become an effective body for the purpose for which it has been brought into being. It is enough for a person to pay his monetary subscription in a lump or through an agent. But it requires a disciplined mind and anxious care to furnish from time to time products of his own labour. Let every member of the Association realize his or her responsibility even as Mr. Shuaib Qureshi has.

*Young India*, 24-12-1925

### 233. *THE SOUTH AFRICAN PUZZLE*

The more one reads the papers brought with them by the Indian deputation from South Africa, the more insoluble the puzzle appears to be. Dr. Malan thinks that his proposed Bill<sup>1</sup> does not constitute any violation of the Smuts-Gandhi Agreement of 1914. Mr. James Godfrey who led the deputation that waited on him, and who is now in India as one of the members of the deputation successfully combated the view. Now that Agreement finally closed all the questions that were the subject matter of satyagraha or passive resistance as it was known at the time. That struggle was intended to close once for all the door against legislation based upon racial or colour distinctions. That

<sup>1</sup> Areas Reservation and Immigration and Registration (Further Provison) Bill

central fact was brought out not once but again and again during the six years that the struggle lasted. A time was reached when both the late General Botha and General Smuts were ready to concede almost every material point, provided what they called the sentimental objection against race distinction was waived by the Indian community. From that time, i.e., from 1908 the struggle chiefly centred round that one "sentimental" objection and General Botha had declared that on that point no South African Government could yield an inch; and he said that in further prosecuting the struggle the Indian community would be "kicking against pricks". Surely then it was the essence of the Agreement that no race distinction should be made in any legislation affecting the Indian community. Dr. Malan's Bill on the other hand breathes through every line of it the racial spirit.

In my humble opinion, therefore, the Bill is a clear breach of that Agreement in this respect. Moreover, the struggle was one against the imposition of further disabilities upon Indians. The Settlement was to be an augury of a better future for the Indian community. It is so stated in the correspondence. What could be the meaning of the Settlement? Where was any security for the Indian residents against further encroachments upon their status, if new restrictions could be imposed at the sweet will of the Government of the day? Let there be no mistake that the Settlement was wrung from an unwilling Government after eight years' hard and prolonged struggle involving sufferings of thousands of Indians and death of a good few. What could be the value of a settlement which closes matters in dispute only to re-open them the very next day? Were the existing laws to be administered with punctilious regard for existing rights, only to attack the latter with new laws? Yet such is the meaning of Dr. Malan's contention and interpretation of the Agreement. There is, however, some consolation even in the Minister's tragic contention in that he does not repudiate the Settlement, but says that his Bill is not in breach of it. One would therefore suppose that if it could be proved that the Bill was in breach of the Agreement it would have to go.

What then is to be done when parties to an agreement differ as to its interpretation? Everybody knows the usual remedy, but let me quote two South African precedents. There were about the year of



1893 certain matters in dispute between the Government of the South African (Transvaal) Republic and the British Government regarding the status of British Indian settlers in the Transvaal. Among these was the question of interpretation of Law 3 of 1885. All these matters were referred to arbitration by mutual consent, and Chief Justice Melins de Villiers of the then Orange Free State was appointed sole arbitrator. The second precedent is a question of interpretation of the Treaty of Vereeniging between the Transvaal Government represented by General Botha and the British Government. I think it was the late Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman who laid down that the interpretation that the weaker party, i.e., the Transvaal Government, put upon the Treaty should be accepted, and without arbitration and without further ado General Botha's interpretation was accepted as against Lord Kitchener's by the British Government. Will Dr. Malan follow either precedent, or will he say after the style of the giant in the story of the giant and the dwarf that his contention must be always right? Anyway the Indian deputation has a strong case for arbitration, seeing that Dr. Malan accepts the Settlement of 1914.

In their able statements for the Viceroy they have made out an overwhelming case. Perhaps naturally they have not discussed the disabilities enumerated there in terms of the Settlement of 1914, having been summarily told by Dr. Malan that his proposed legislation is not in breach of the Agreement. But it is a case not to be easily abandoned. Theirs is undoubtedly a difficult task. Here is a stubborn Government determined upon going on with its highly racial legislation. All European parties seem to be in agreement on this one question. General Smuts, Mr. Andrews tells us, has thrown his weight on the Government side. It does not surprise me because he has always chosen to sail with the wind. No statesman has perhaps shown so much contempt for past promises and declarations as General Smuts,—a trait in him which has earned for him the title of "Slim Janny". But right is clearly on the Indian side and if they have also a fixed determination not to yield an inch of ground on matters of principle, they must win.

Dr. Malan wanted James Godfrey to accept the principle of the measure, and to discuss matters of detail, to make, what he was pleased

to call, constructive proposals. I am glad to note that he resolutely declined to fall into the trap. The Deputation will have all the aid that India, weak as she is, can give them. They will have the support of all the parties. Let them take heart and fight on.

*Young India*, 24-12-1925

### 234. ON THE EYE

The forth coming session of the Congress will be a landmark in its history. An Indian woman will for the first time enjoy the highest honour in the gift of the nation. Despised we may be. Slaves we may be. Helpless we may be. The world may, if it chooses, therefore think nothing of the national assembly. But for us a President of our assembly must be all in all. That unique honour will be hers this year as a matter of right. Shrimati Sarojini Naidu has a world reputation as a poetess. From the time she entered public life she has never forsaken it. She has made herself accessible to all. She has ever been found ready for any service that the nation has demanded of her. Unity is her creed. Bravery is written in her face. Unperturbed she wandered about the streets of Bombay during the riots of 1921, reproving the mad crowds for their blind fury. If readiness to respond to every call at a moment's notice even at the risk of one's health be deemed sacrifice, she has shown herself to be capable of great sacrifice. Those who were with her during her African tour<sup>1</sup> have told me of her unwearied toil under difficult circumstances, a toil that would put many a young man to shame. Her mission to South Africa showed her to be an ambassador of high merit. In the midst of strange surroundings and able statesmanship, she proved herself equal to the task. If her tour did not bring tangible relief to our afflicted countrymen, it shows not her incapacity but the difficult nature of the problem. No one could have done better. I have no manner of doubt that we could not have superseded Sarojini Devi without being guilty of a gross breach of duty. It was enough to have done so last year.

It is therefore our duty to give her all the support in our power to make her task easy and her burden bearable. She is faced with

<sup>1</sup> In 1924.

delicate and difficult problems. I need not enumerate them. They are both internal and external. Our internal difficulties are perhaps greater than the external. The battle is three-fourths won if we can remove them root and branch. Woman is the supreme mistress in domestic matters. Can Sarojini Devi then succeed in removing our domestic difficulties where men have failed? But woman though she is, unsupported by us she cannot succeed. Every Congress-man should regard it his duty to take his due share in the solution. External difficulties may be dealt with by experts. But we are or should be all experts in dealing with internal problems. We can all work to bring peace and cease to quarrel and fight with one another. We can all become patriotic and cease to be parochial. We can all honestly fulfil the obligations that we may impose on ourselves by our own resolutions. Without our co-operation she can do little. With our unstinted support, she can do things which she as woman and poetess is specially fit for. May God bless her with all the strength and wisdom she will need in the discharge of her arduous office.

*Young India*, 24-12-1925

### 235. TELL-TALE FIGURES

The following table can hardly fail to interest and instruct a worker in the cause of India's freedom:

Year	Popula- tion inclu- ding States (in millions)	Area un- der culti- vation Br. India (mil- lion acres)	Area un- der food- grains (mil- lion acres)	Food-grain area per head (acre)	Area under cotton (mil- lion acres)
1921	318	271	204	0.64	15
1911	315	257	195	0.62	14
1901	294	231	177	0.60	9.6

In twenty years the population has gone up from 294 millions to 318; the area under cultivation of food-grains from 177 to 204 millions. Therefore the food-grain area per head has apparently gone up from .60 to .64, but the increase is deceptive. The nation was

underfed in 1901. It was still more underfed in 1921, for food-grain area has to show a much larger increase than the increase in population, if the standard of nutriment is to keep pace with the increasing population. The foregoing figures were prepared for me to show the comparative rise in cotton area. From 9.6 to 15 million acres is a phenomenal rise. No doubt it has brought more money to cultivators but it has also increased the price of food-grains, thus adding to the starvation of the people making it more and more difficult for the lowest strata of society to buy enough grain. Because it must be remembered that whilst those who grow cotton increase the price of food-grains the balance of the population representing a vast majority not growing cotton havenot been able to increase their capacity for buying. If these figures were further explored it would be found that the increase in cultivation area means so much displacement of grazing area with the result that either our cattle become co-sharers with us in our food or are like ourselves becoming increasingly underfed and therefore giving us less milk, which is what has happened as a matter of fact. And thus it is that those who have studied the cattle question tell us that our cattle have become a burden on the land. This does not mean that they should necessarily become a burden. The figures present a case for overhauling the land revenue system. They demand a scientific study of the relative value of cotton-growing and the growing of grains, and the scientific method of breeding, rearing and feeding cattle. The figures also demonstrate the absolute necessity of cottage industry auxiliary to cultivation. No agricultural country in the world can possibly support a population on less than one acre per head, if the population is to subsist merely or principally on agriculture.

*Young India*, 24-12-1925

## 236. *SPEECH AT SWADESHI EXHIBITION, KANPUR*

*December 24, 1925*

Mr. Gandhi in declaring the exhibition open said that it was a holy task for him to perform this ceremony. He heard from Mrs. Sarojini Naidu that there were 30 conferences to be held this week. He had received more than one invitation to preside over conferences but had declined all of them. He considered himself fit only for this function. Though he was for Hindu-Muslim unity, he could not accept it if there was no room for khaddar in it.

I dream of nothing but khaddar. I undertook to open the exhibition only after getting an assurance from Pandit Jawaharlal that there would be nothing foreign here. From my five years' experience of khaddar I can assure you we have made tremendous progress. In 1920 I myself sold khaddar at 17 as. a yard. Even at that price people were willing to buy and wear it. Now you can get good khaddar at 9 as. per yard. That is progress, steady and remarkable. In the beginning all who wore khaddar caps were considered to be khaddar-wearers. Now it is not so. But the number of full and complete khadi-wearers has considerably increased. But they did not act fully—what could I do? I had no reason to disbelieve them—they did not carry out their promises and therefore we failed to achieve swaraj within the expected year. Even today I tell you with all the confidence that I can command that if only you all completely boycott all foreign and Indian mill-made cloth, you will achieve swaraj within less than a year. But remember the condition that you must implicitly do what I request you to do.

Proceeding, Mr. Gandhi said that the quality of charkhas and the number of charkhas had increased. He had even put a price on his autograph. Anyone who wanted his autograph was asked to take a vow that he would wear khaddar. (Applause.)

*The Leader, 26-12-1925*

## 237. *SPEECH AT A.I.C.C. MEETING, KANPUR*

*December 24, 1925*

Mahatma Gandhi, the retiring President of the All-India Congress Committee, in formally handing over "the reins of the Congress Government", as he called it, to Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, acknowledged the support he had invariably received

from every member of the Committee who had never questioned his rulings and instantly obeyed every call he made, but he wished he could say the same regarding the call made upon them by the resolutions that they were themselves instrumental in passing. If they had responded to that call they would have been in a better and stronger position, and now that the burden of guiding Congress politics was passing on to the shoulders of Mrs. Naidu, he wished her every success and prayed that under her regime the situation would be brighter and so many dark clouds might at least disappear. She had rendered the most wonderful service in South Africa. By her poetry she bewitched the Europeans there, by her sweet reasonableness she disarmed all opposition and by her diplomacy she was able to beard the lion in his own den. For the moment the anti-Asiatic legislation was dropped. For the moment the Europeans there felt that if people like Mrs. Sarojini Naidu could go to South Africa there would not be trouble. He had even received letters from his English friends in South Africa: "Send Sarojini Naidu again to South Africa or people like her." These facts showed that she could achieve several things and was capable of guiding them. But he warned her against being over-generous, as women generally were, regarding Congress funds which at the present moment were probably not more than a lakh and a half.<sup>1</sup>

*The Hindustan Times, 27-12-1925*

**238. SPEECH ON FRANCHISE RESOLUTION, SUBJECTS  
COMMITTEE MEETING, KANPUR**

*December 24, 1925*

Shri Babasaheb Paranjape and Shri Sambamurti have asked me to withdraw this resolution. What right have I to do so? It is only an accident that I have been asked to introduce it. The author of the resolution is the Working Committee. Why do you, moreover, *appeal* to me? That does no credit to me, nor to you. Who am I, after all? Forget me altogether; if you want democracy, do not think of the position of the person sponsoring a resolution. Consider the merits of the Resolution itself. Besides, what is it you ask me to withdraw? Do you want me to withdraw the most deeply cherished principles of my life?

<sup>1</sup> Replying, Sarojini Naidu said that she would leave financial matters to "such distinguished misers as Mahatmaj".

<sup>2</sup> The resolution recommended changes made in the Congress Constitution at Patna in September last by way of a compromise between No-changers and Swarajists, that the franchise be alternative, that payment of four annas per annum or 2,000 yards of self-spun yarn be supplied by each member, and that no one was entitled to vote unless he wore khaddar.

Shri Jayakar and Shri Kelkar have also raised objections. You forget that the qualification for the franchise depends on the aim we have in view. Shall we run away from something just because it is difficult to put into practice? Why not give up talking of swaraj, since it is so difficult to secure it? . . .<sup>1</sup> If I were convinced that swaraj could be won merely by enrolling one crore members, I would do away with the fee of four annas and remove the restriction in regard to age, would in fact have no condition at all. If you wish to undo all that has been achieved, why don't you have a resolution permitting everyone to become a member of the Congress? But, my good friends, would not anyone who is not ready to put his body to the slightest trouble for the sake of the Congress feel ashamed of calling himself a Congressman? If you really wish to be rid of foreign cloth, dismiss mill cloth from your mind. I belong to a province which has a large number of textile mills, and I have happy relations with mill-owners. But I know that they have never stood by the country in the hour of its need. They plainly tell us that they are not patriots, that their sole aim is to make money. If the Government wants, it can force all cotton mills to close down, can stop the import of machinery, but it would never dare to throw our spinning-wheels and spindles into fire. It prevented a German engineer from coming here. I have faith in the English character as I have faith in human nature but it is also a trait of the English that the interests of their country come first to them, and these interests can be served only by keeping Lancashire alive and by dumping their poor manufactures into countries like India against their wishes. To fight these British, we shall have to make our blood as cheap as water. Winning swaraj is no play, it is not so cheap. One must be ready to pay for it with one's head, it cannot be had for nothing. Today you may oppose me, but the time is near when all of you will say that Gandhi was right. So long, therefore, as the majority is with me, I appeal to the others not to obstruct this resolution because of a little sacrifice they may have to make.

Why should we assume that the members of the Congress will not act honestly? Can we not expect that people will follow at any rate the resolutions which they themselves have passed? Yes, of course, if you object on principle to wearing khadi, if it offends your conscience, you should certainly leave the Congress. But you cannot ignore a Congress resolution while remaining in the Congress. So long as I remain in the Congress, I must abide by a resolution passed

<sup>1</sup> Some words are missing here.

by it even if very few people had voted with me.

And you talk, moreover, of the tyranny of the majority! A handful of men are ruling over you according to their arbitrary will, and we do not even seem to be conscious of their tyranny. But we know how to raise fanciful objections to truth. I warn you, if you bid good-bye to khadi, the people, too, will bid good-bye to you—there will be nothing to distinguish you from the Liberals if you give up khadi. We are a strange people, we expect leaders to wear nothing but khadi even when we ourselves do not do so. I may not have served the people as well as Babasaheb; but, in the ten years during which I have served them I have come to know them fully and that is why I warn you that you will gain nothing by giving up khadi.

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan* 3-1-1926

### 239. A RESOLUTION<sup>1</sup>

[December 25, 1925]<sup>2</sup>

The Congress places on record its sense of deep sorrow over the deaths of Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das, Sir Surendranath Bannerjee<sup>3</sup>, Dr. Ram Krishna Bhandarkar<sup>4</sup>, Krishna Sammi Sharma, V. V. S. Aiyer<sup>5</sup> and the other patriots who worked for the country's progress in their respective spheres and tenders its respectful condolences to the bereaved families.

From the original: A.I.C.C. File No. 69-1, 1926. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

<sup>1</sup> This was moved at the Kanpur session of the Indian National Congress on December 25, 1925. For another resolution moved by Gandhiji along with this, *vide* "Speech on Resolution on South African Indians, Subjects Committee Meeting", 25-12-1925.

<sup>2</sup> The postmark bears the date "December 28, 1925." The Friday prior to this date was December 25.

<sup>3</sup> *ibid*

<sup>4</sup> On August 7, 1925; *vide* "Speech at Public Meeting, Calcutta", 15-8-1925.

<sup>5</sup> For Gandhiji's tribute to him, *ibid*.

<sup>6</sup> For Gandhiji's tribute to him, *vide* "Notes", 18-6-1925.



240. *LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI*

*Friday [December 25, 1925]<sup>1</sup>*

CHI. MATHURADAS,

I get your letters regularly. Do not be in a hurry to start walking. Read whatever you feel like reading. And eat as much as you can easily digest. I think it would be good to try fruit after consulting the doctor at Deolali. Sweet-lime and grapes are entirely sweet.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

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

241. *SPEECH ON RESOLUTION ON SOUTH AFRICAN INDIANS, SUBJECTS COMMITTEE MEETING*

*December 25, 1925*

Mr. Gandhi moved:

The Congress extends its cordial welcome to the South African Indian Congress deputation and assures the Indian settlers of South Africa of its full support in their struggle against the consolidated forces which threaten their very existence in that sub-continent.

This Congress is emphatically of opinion that the proposed legislation known as the Areas Reservation and Immigration Registration (Further Provision) Bill is a breach of the Smuts-Gandhi Agreement of 1914 in that it is racial in character and is calculated not only to make the position of settlers much worse than it was in 1914, but is designed to make the residence in that country of any self-respecting Indian impossible. In the opinion of the Congress, if the interpretation of the said Agreement, as put upon it on behalf of the settlers, is not accepted by the Union Government, it should be decided by reference to arbitration as was done in 1893 in connection with matters affecting the Indian settlers of the Transvaal and in matters arising from the administration of Law 3 of 1885.

The Congress heartily endorses the suggestion that a round table

<sup>1</sup> The postmark bears the date "December 28, 1925." The Friday prior to this date was December 25.

conference containing among others proper Indian representatives should be called to settle the question and trusts that the Dominion Government will accept that reasonable suggestion. In the event of the proposal of a round table conference and the proposal regarding arbitration failing, the Congress is of opinion that the Imperial Government should withhold Royal assent to the Bill, should it pass through the Union Parliament.

Pandit Benarsidas Chaturvedi held that culpable negligence was shown by the Congress regarding the plight of Indians overseas. He wanted the various leaders to organize a big agitation for support and help, otherwise the promise of "full support" made in the resolution was meaningless. He also deplored the mentality created among the masses that the cause of Indians abroad could not be helped till they got swaraj.

Mr. Gandhi, replying, acknowledged that Pandit Benarsidas was one of the few workers in the cause of Indians overseas, but he had been led away by overzeal. The Congress had done all it possibly could in the past. They were not capable of doing much. His resolution had been drafted after a three hours' discussion with the South African deputation. It told the world the utmost limit to which the Congress could go. As regards financial help, the Imperial Citizenship Association had ample public funds for the purpose. He himself had supplied funds to Pandit Benarsidas. As regards the objection taken by another speaker who had urged the deletion of the sentence asking the British Government to withhold assent, Mr. Gandhi asked, if they deleted it, what consolation would it be to South African Indians? Then, again, had they not gone to work the Councils? He wished, he could do without it, but they could not. He asked them to believe that he knew every iota of the feeling in South Africa and if he had felt that his visit to South Africa would be of help he would have gone there.

The resolution was finally passed amidst acclamation.

*The Leader*, 28-12-1925

#### 242. MESSAGE TO "KAMNA"<sup>1</sup>

[December 26, 1925]<sup>2</sup>

Whether you are Liberal, Moderate, or Nationalist, Hindu or Mussalman, from east or west, if you desire to own fellowship with the people of India, with whom you have thrown in your lot, among whom you are born, use nothing but hand-spun and hand-woven khadi for your dress material.

*Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 29-12-1925

<sup>1</sup> An Urdu magazine of Kanpur

<sup>2</sup> Released on this date by the Associated Press of India from Kanpur

### 243. LETTER TO A SISTER

[December 26, 1925]<sup>1</sup>

CHI. . . .

I am not satisfied with the letters from either of you. It is not for the children to seek shelter under the proverb about a mother's solicitude surviving her child's wrong-doing. Children who thus excuse themselves never come up. It is the children's duty to excel their parents. So I can say, such are my failings which please condone; but never commit them yourself, else I should perish. When a couple pray for offspring they expect it to bring them credit, i.e., excel them and thus immortalize them. So said Ramachandra: 'The tradition of the Raghu race remains unbroken; they will keep their word at the cost of their life'. He did not say it was his own principle. Ramachandra saved the race of Raghus. In the same way, you also should save . . . 's family and save the Ashram too. At the Ashram there are quite a few things to be desired; we elders are to blame for this. But are you supposed to take advantage of that? Your duty is to take in whatever is good in the Ashram. I therefore did not like your request to be excused from the promise to write letters. Man can work hard in his youth. For an understanding person youth is not for self-indulgence but for cultivating restraint.

Perhaps you may not understand what I have written. Get Chi. . . . to explain it to you. Do not destroy this letter. I have remembered you both in the midst of great burden of work. I wished to say only a few words, but I have written at length and in a serious vein. That is why I ask you to preserve the letter.

[From Gujarati]

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

<sup>1</sup> As in the source

## 244. LETTER TO A BROTHER

[December 26, 1925]<sup>1</sup>

CHL . . .

I have your letter and now I am reassured. I no more have the fear that Bhai . . . might beguile you. Our dharma has always asked us to love both the good and the wicked though we may know them. We often think loving others means not seeing the wickedness in them. It was certainly not proper for Chi. . . . to have kept back a certain part. But I was not sorry on that account. I had only a feeling of pity that she was shaken to confess that much. We do not shrink from committing the vilest of sins, but quake to confess it. But how many such persons can be found on earth who see their own sins and let the world look at them? What could . . . do? Now may God take care of him. It is good that you narrated this last episode too to Bhai. . . .

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

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

## 245. SPEECH ON RESOLUTION ON SOUTH AFRICAN INDIANS, KANPUR CONGRESS

*December 26, 1925*

In his Hindi speech on the Congress resolution about the situation in South Africa, Mr. Gandhi said that the Class Areas Bill if passed into law would compel every Indian with any sense of self-respect to leave South Africa. It was worse than repatriation inasmuch as it was legalized expulsion without any compensation to be given to those expelled. It symbolized the determination of the white race to root out the Asiatics from South Africa. Not even the tallest amongst the Indians—doctors, barristers like Mr. James Godfrey, one of the members of the deputation who was born and bred up there and who is visiting India for the first time—were to be suffered to stay there. The resolution suggested three solutions of the question—arbitration, round table conference and, failing both, the Government of India asking the Imperial Government to exercise the right of veto. It asked Indians to stand by their countrymen in the hour of their trial, and to render them full help. If they decided on satyagraha, the Indians should render them all material help in their power. Fair

<sup>1</sup> As in the source

would he start a satyagraha campaign in India on this tremendous issue, but the atmosphere was against him. If the Hindu and Mussal-mans could convince him that they were united for a peaceful campaign of satyagraha, if they could convince him that they had forgotten their differences in the dark hour of the Hindus and Mussalmans in South Africa, He would readily gird up his loins and get ready for the fight. Until then, the fight had to be carried on by the Indians over there, and India had to rest content with rendering them all help in her power. In order that Dr. Rahman may understand his feelings in the matter, and in order also that his word of warning may reach the ears of the South African statesmen, Mr. Gandhi expressed himself at length in English thus:

SHRIMATI SAROJINI DEVI AND FRIENDS,

I do not know if you have, received copies of the resolution that is in my hand; in that case, I want to spare you the trouble of listening to the resolution and save some portion of the nation's time. This is how the resolution reads:<sup>1</sup>

This is the resolution which I have not only the greatest pleasure in submitting to you for approval but I consider it a rareprivilege that I am authorized by Sarojini Devi to place it before you. She has introduced me to you as a South African. She might have added, 'by adoption'. Though born in India, I was adopted by South Africa, and you will discover that when Dr. Rahman, the leader of the deputation to which you will extend your cordial welcome—comes on this platform, he will tell you that Indians of South Africa claim that they have given me to you. I accept that claim. It is perfectly true that whatever service I have been able to render—it may be disservice—to India, comes from South Africa. If it is disservice it is not their fault, it is through my limitations. I propose to place before you facts in support of the statement made here that the Bill, which is hanging like the sword of Damocles over the heads of our countrymen in South Africa, is designed not merely to heap greater wrongs upon their heads, but virtually to expel them from South Africa.

#### LORD READING'S REPLY

Such is admittedly the meaning of the Bill. It is admitted by the Europeans of South Africa and it is not denied by the Union

<sup>1</sup> This paragraph beginning with the salutation has been taken from *The Report of the Indian National Congress, Fortieth Session, Cawnpore, 1925*. For the text of the resolution, *vide* "Speech on Resolution on South African Indians, Subjects Committee Meeting", 25-12-1925.

Government itself. If such is the result, you can imagine how keenly the Indians in South Africa must feel. Imagine for one moment that an Expulsion Bill is to be passed in the next session of the Assembly, expelling one hundred thousand Indians from India. What should we do or how should we behave under such a crisis? It is under such circumstances that you have the deputation in your midst. It comes here for support from the people of India, from the Congress, from the Viceroy, the Government of India and through it the Imperial Government itself.

Lord Reading has given them a long reply, and I wish I could have said also a satisfactory reply. The reply His Excellency has given is as unsatisfactory as it is long, and if that was all the comfort that Lord Reading proposed to give to the members of the deputation he could have said that in a few words and spared them, and spared this land, the humiliating spectacle of a great Government confessing its inability to render proper redress to those, who for no fault of their own and who, as many South African Europeans would admit, for their very virtues, are now in danger of being expelled from South Africa. To some of them South Africa is a land of their birth. It was no comfort to those friends of ours, it is no comfort to us, to be told that the Indian Government has always reserved to itself the right of making representations to the South African Government—the right of petitioning. That is to say, a mighty Government, a Government which is supposed to hold the destiny of 300 millions of people in the hollow of its hand that Government confesses its powerlessness ! And why? Because South Africa enjoys Dominion Status, because South Africa threatens to “cut the painter” if the Indian and the Imperial Governments intervene in any of the steps that the Government of South Africa may take.

#### “DOMESTIC POLICY”

Lord Reading has told the deputation that the Indian Government or Imperial Government may not interfere with the domestic policy of a colony enjoying Dominion Status. What is the meaning of “domestic policy” when that policy is calculated to bring ruin upon the homes of thousands of Indian settlers domiciled there, and whom they deny the common rights of humanity? Is that domestic policy? Well, what would be the case if instead of Indians they happened to be Europeans or Englishmen?

Let me quote a precedent. Do you know why the great Boer War

took place? It took place in order to protect the Europeans of South Africa who were domiciled there, "Uitlanders" as they were described by the Transvaal Republican Government. The late Mr. Joseph Chamberlain claimed for the British Government that even though the Transvaal was an independent Government he declined to admit that this was purely a domestic question. He claimed to protect the rights of the "Uitlanders" of the Transvaal, and that was why the great Boer War took place.

#### CONFLICT OF CIVILIZATIONS

Lord Lansdowne, in justification of the war, said that it made his blood boil when he thought of the disabilities of Indians in the Transvaal. He held that one of the potent causes of the Boer War was the disabilities of Indians in South Africa, or more accurately Indians of the Transvaal. Where are those declarations today? Why does not the British Government go to war against the Union Government when the life, honour and livelihood of one hundred and fifty thousand Indians are at stake?

Nobody questions the description I have given to you of the effects of this legislation. Nobody questions the ever-growing grievances of the British Indians in South Africa. If you have seen a beautiful little pamphlet published by Bishop Fisher who went only a few mouths ago to South Africa, you will find that there he gives a summary of the wrongs that are being heaped upon the South African Indians. The Bishop has come to the impartial conclusion that for these wrongs the Indians are not to blame. It is the jealousy and the insolence of the European trader that is responsible for these wrongs. He gives his testimony that Indians have deserved better at the hands of Europeans of South Africa. If justice counts, if Right rules this world, it should be impossible to bring this Bill and unnecessary for me to waste your precious time and for the deputation to waste their money.

But evidently Right does not count. Might is Right. The Europeans of South Africa have chosen to heap this wrong upon . Our countrymen, and for what purpose?"Conflict of the two civilizations." It is not my expression. It is that of General Smuts. He cannot put up with it. Europeans of South Africa consider that they will be overwhelmed by the East if they allow hordes to pour down into South Africa from India. But how could we corrupt their civilization? Is it because we live as thrifty men and women? Because

we are not ashamed to hawk vegetables and fruits and bring them to the very doors of the South African farmers? The South African farms are not two or three *bighas*, but hundreds of acres belonging to one man who is the sole undisputed owner of them. You understand what great service the Indian hawkers are rendering to these South African, European or Boer farmers. That is the conflict.

#### PERIL OF ISLAM

Someone has said (I do not know where, but only recently) that Europeans in South Africa dread the advent of Islam,— Islam that civilized Spain, Islam that took the torchlight to Morocco and preached to the world the Gospel of Brotherhood. The Europeans of South Africa dread the advent of Islam, for they are afraid of the fact that if the Native races embrace Islam they may claim equality with the white races. They may well dread it. If brotherhood is a sin, if it is equality of Coloured races that they dread, then that dread is well founded. For I have seen that any Zulu embracing Christianity does not *ipso facto* come on a level with all Christians, whilst immediately he embraces Islam, he drinks from the same cup and eats from the same dish as a Mussalman. That is what they dread. The thing is they want to become lords of the universe. They want to appropriate the land for themselves. The Kaiser, though duntrodden, fears an Asiatic federation and speaks even from his exile that it is a danger which Europeans should guard themselves against. That is the conflict of civilizations and that is why Lord Reading is powerless to intervene in their domestic policy.

Such are the tremendous consequences of the struggle which this resolution describes as unequal and, it is in that unequal struggle that this Congress is called upon to take its due share. I want to make an appeal, if my voice can go as far as South Africa, to the statesmen that are ruling the destiny of South African Indians.

#### THE BRIGHT SIDE

I have so far given you only the dark side of South African Europeans. Let me also say that I claim among them some of my most precious friends and I have enjoyed from individual South African Europeans the greatest kindness and the greatest hospitality. I claim the privilege of having been a close friend of that great poetess and philanthropist and that most self-effacing woman— Olive Schreiner. She was a friend of the Indians equally with the Natives of



South Africa. She knew no distinction between white and black races. She loved the Indian, the Zulu and the Bantu as her own children. She would prefer to accept the hospitality of a South African Native in his humble hut. What she gave away with her right hand her left hand never knew. Such precious men and women have also been born and bred in South Africa.

#### A WARNING

I can give you many more such names. I claim also to know General Smuts, though I may not claim to be his friend. He was party to the Agreement on behalf of his Government with me on behalf of the Indians. He it was who said that the British Indians in South Africa had deserved that settlement. It was he who said that that was a final settlement and that Indians should not threaten passive resistance and that the European settlers in South Africa should allow rest to the Indian community.

But hardly had I turned my back from South Africa than a series of wrongs began to be heaped upon them. Where is the plighted word of General Smuts? General Smuts will go one of these days the same way that every human being has to go, but his words and deeds shall remain after him. He is not a mere individual. He spoke the right thing in his representative capacity. He claims to be a Christian and every one of the members of the South African Government makes the same claim. Before they open their Parliament they read the common prayer from the Bible and a South African divine opens the proceedings with a prayer that goes up to God, not the God of white men, not the God of the Negro, not of the Mussalman, not of the Hindu, but the God of all, the God of the Universe.

I say this from my place of position, and knowing my responsibility to its fullest extent, that they will deny their Bible, they will deny their God, if they hesitate for one moment, if they fail to render the elementary justice that is due to the Indians of South Africa.

*Young India, 7-1-1926*

## 246. PATRIOT'S WAIL<sup>1</sup>

December 27, 1925

A friend has thus unbosomed himself:

In your weeklies you write nothing about the agriculturists, who form the bulk of the population of India. In most parts of India the agriculturist is a mere tenant, at the mercy of the zemindar, and dragging on a miserable existence. Don't you think these zemindars and talukdars are a pest in the country? Can't we solve the problem by dispossessing these zemindars and distributing their land among the poor?

The headman and the *sowkar* are another pest. They exploit the poor agriculturist on all occasions.

The agriculturist himself does not know his own interests. Everywhere in Gujarat he has taken to growing cotton, and has thus made foodstuffs dear. Could not the Swarajists get some legislation passed requiring them not to exceed 5 *bighas* of cotton cultivation? India needs only two million bales of cotton. Why should we grow six instead? Can't we carry on village propaganda for concentrating more on the cultivation of food-crops?

The *Patidars* in Gujarat are mad after tobacco cultivation. And for whose benefit? Possibly we are more responsible for the vice of smoking than any other part of India. Can't we persuade them to grow fruit-trees instead?

And why don't you say something strong about our miserable widows? Their orthodox parents or guardians are never going to listen to reason. Why not encourage the widows to take the initiative?

And then there are our numerous evil customs and usages, our wretched dowry system, our post-nuptial and post-mortem dinners and so on.

And what a woeful number of sub-castes!

Why not resume bonfires and picketing of foreign cloth?

I have boiled down a very long letter which, though rambling, is the cry of an agonized soul.

I have not been writing much about the agriculturists advisedly. For I know that it is impossible for us to do anything for them today. There are a thousand and one things that need to be done for the amelioration of the lot of the agriculturists. But so long as the reins of

<sup>1</sup> The Gujarati original of this appeared in *Navajivan*, 27-12-1925. This is a translation by Mahadev Desai.

Government are not in the hands of the agriculturists' representatives, i.e., so long as we have no swaraj— dharmaraj— that amelioration is very difficult if not impossible. I know that the peasant is dragging a miserable existence and hardly gets even a scanty meal a day. That is why I have suggested the revival of the spinning-wheel.

And the need for internal reform is as great as that for legislative reform. And internal reform can be only partly achieved when numerous volunteers are found to take up village-work as the mission of their lives. The evil habits of ages cannot go in a year or two.

We may not forcibly dispossess the zemindars and talukdars, of their thousands of *bighas*. And among whom shall we distribute them? We need not dispossess them. They only need a change of the heart. When that is done, and when they learn to melt at their tenants' woe, they will hold their lands in trust for them, will give them a major part of the produce, keeping only sufficient for themselves. 'We had better wait for that day until the Greek Calends,' someone will say. I do not think so. I think that the world is moving towards peace, i.e., ahimsa. The way of violence has been tried for ages and has been found wanting. Let no one believe that the people in Russia, Italy and other countries are happy or are independent. The sword of Damocles is always hanging over their heads. Those who have the good of the Indian agriculturists at heart must pin their faith on non-violence and plod on. Those who think of other methods are vainly flattering themselves with hope of success. The agriculturist never figures in their calculations, or at any rate they do not know his condition.

What I have said above applies equally to the *sowkar* and other exploiters. Nothing but their own profit appeals to them. But there too the remedy is the moral education of both. The oppressed need no other education, except in satyagraha and non-co-operation. A slave is a slave because he consents to slavery. If training in physical resistance is possible, why should that in spiritual resistance be impossible? If we know the use of the body, why can we not know the use and power of the soul?

Till he is educated who can persuade the agriculturist to limit or stop his cultivation of cotton and tobacco?

And reform of immoral customs and usages? How can it be brought about? By lectures? Here too an education of popular conscience is necessary. Those whose consciences are awake should act according to their convictions and accept the consequences. We

may before long look forward to a measure of fusion of sub-castes.

Smoking is in a way a greater curse than drink, inasmuch as the victim does not realize its evil in time. It is not regarded as a sign of barbarism, it is even acclaimed by civilized people. I can only say, let those who can give it up and set the example.

Remarriage of widows is necessary to a certain extent. The reform can be brought about only when our youths have purified themselves. Are they pure? Do they profit by their education? or why blame their education? From childhood up a slave-mentality is sedulously cultivated in us. And if we cannot think freely how can we act freely? We are alike slaves of the caste, of a foreign education, and of an alien Government. Every one of the facilities provided us have become our fetters. There are so many educated youths amongst us. How few of them have thought of the lot of the widows in their own homes? How few have resisted the temptation of lucre? How few regard them as their own sisters and mothers and protect their honour? How few have had the courage of their convictions and defied their castes to do their worst? Whom is the poor widow to approach? What comfort can I bring her? How few of them are readers of *Navajivan*? How few even of those who read it can act up to their convictions? And yet I have occasionally devoted the columns of *Navajivan* to the widows' wail and hope to do more as opportunity offers itself. In the meantime I would appeal to everyone who has a child-widow under his care to consider it his duty to marry her off.

The correspondent has cast a lurid light on our social customs. But' when the whole body is rotten, how can we be satisfied with a few patches here and there? Post-mortem dinners are barbarous. But post-nuptial dinners are no less so. We might consider the latter to be less barbarous, because the religious ceremony of marriage is, all the world over, an expensive affair, more or less. But the Hindus alone have the monopoly of having post-mortem dinners! These and other matters badly need attention. But a reform all over will come with the awakening of the moral consciousness of our people and with the liberation of their thought. So long as our thought and action are not free, patchwork will be worse than useless.

The last item in the correspondent's wail is about the resumption of burning and picketing of foreign cloth. If someone could assure me that the people will burn only their own foreign clothing, and will not touch others', I would again appeal to the nation

to make bonfires of foreign cloth. I have never doubted the propriety of these bonfires. But I have genuine dread of people resorting to violence. When even a thing springing from love and non-violence is abused, we must take it that time is not ripe for placing it before the public. And when I saw in Bombay with my own eyes people wearing foreign cloth wresting it from others and consigning it to flames I recalled the weapon. Today when the ugliest of our passions have come to the surface, all peaceful experiments also must be reduced to a minimum. That is why I have hitched my waggon to only one star— spinning and weaving and propagating khaddar where abuse is unthinkable, and where there is no possibility of any harm being done. Those who want swaraj or dharmaraj for India by peaceful methods must pursue this unfailing remedy as a principal duty.

*Young India*, 4-2-1926

#### 247. EXCESS OF LOYALTY

A gentleman writes to say:<sup>1</sup>

Such an argument can be advanced only in our country. India has cultivated the virtue of loyalty to a high degree, and has benefited, too, by doing so. But today we see merely an excess or perversion even of the best.

To start with, let us leave aside the instance from the *Mahabharata*. When Yudhishtira approached Bhishma, the latter did not plead loyalty in his defence, but pointed at his stomach and said that he had done what he did for the sake of the sinful belly. Vidura did not help either side. If we turn our attention to the *Ramayana*, we find that Vibhishana, disregarded both loyalty and love for a brother when he considered what dharma required of him. He gave all help to Ramachandra, told him the secrets of Lanka and so came to be reckoned among such devotees as Prahlad.

But even if we get instances of an opposite kind, we should certainly disregard them if they conflict with moral principles. Just because we find mention of beef in the *Ramayana* or of animal-sacrifice in the Vedas, we will not start eating beef or slaughter-ing animals. Principles remain the same in all ages, but the practices based

<sup>1</sup> The letter is not translated here. It referred to criticisms of Government servants for sympathizing with national activities.

on them vary with times and circumstances.

Let us now examine the question of loyalty. There is no published or implied rule of Government service forbidding Government servants to wear khadi, except that some of them are required to wear special uniforms. Even these can publicly wear khadi when they are not on duty. Khadi is not, and is not regarded, anti-Government. Nor is there any rule forbidding a Government servant expressing sympathy for any popular movement. It is true, of course, that a loyal Government servant, so long as he is in service, cannot take part in a movement which the Government regards as seditious. If, however, he believes the order of the Government in regard to such a movement unjustified, and if he has courage, he may resign his post and oppose that order. There is no moral or any other law that anyone who has been a servant always remains a servant, or that a servant must not judge the morality or otherwise of his master's actions. There is a limit even to loyalty. Loyalty only requires that we should be loyal in the sphere of our service and while we remain in service. That is, an employee of the Post and Telegraph Department, for instance, should work for the required number of hours, should not misappropriate money or steal letters and should not divulge any Government secrets which he may have come to know in the course of his duties. However, he is not a peon for all the twenty-four hours. He has not sold his soul. Anyone who understands the nature of the national movement is always free to entertain sympathy for it in his mind, and can even express it in action if that is not against published rules.

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 27-12-1926

#### 248. LETTER TO VASUMATI PANDIT

KANPUR,

*Silence Day [December 28, 1925]*

CHI. VASUMATI,

Again it is four days and no letter from you. It will do if I get one a week.

I am keeping well. It may be said that curds and fruit agreed with me. My weight has certainly gone up. It is 98 lbs. On the spring

balance, i.e., 94 in our scales or at least 93. This addition is appreciable. Of course, I can work well.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C. W. 598. Courtesy: Vasumati Pandit

*249. LETTER TO VALJI G. DESAI*

*Monday [December 28, 1925]<sup>1</sup>*

BHAISHRI VALJI,

I can see Sir Harold Mann only at Ahmedabad. I shall go to Ahmedabad *via* Delhi. I start tomorrow and reach the Ashram on the 31st.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 7743. Courtesy: Valjibhai Desai

*250. LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI*

KANPUR,

*Monday [December 28, 1925]*

CHI. MATHURADAS,

Today is my silence day. So in spite of the hullabaloo of the Congress session, I am at peace. I have received both your letters. You will certainly improve your health there.

I have received Taramati's letter. I am sending it on to you. If you regularly teach her Gujarati she will learn faster. I get away by telling others to do what I myself cannot do.

I shall be leaving here tomorrow. I shall be going *via* Delhi. Address your letters to the Ashram. I will try to free Girdhari as soon as I reach there. Write to me if you need anything.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

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

<sup>1</sup> From the postmark

## 251. CERTIFICATE TO TULSI MAHER

KANPUR,  
December 29, 1925

Shri Tusli Maher has lived in the Satyagraha Ashram at least for four years. His self-control has made a deep impression on my mind. He lived a very simple life at the Ashram. He was also commendably industrious. He has learnt carding, spinning and weaving. He has always been foremost among the carders. Even today I regard him as one of the inmates of the Ashram.

MOHANDAS GANDHI

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 6523

## 252. INTERVIEW TO ASSOCIATED PRESS OF INDIA, KANPUR

December 29, 1925

Interviewed by the Associated Press representative regarding his attitude towards Pandit Motilal's resolution which was passed last evening in the Congress. .  
. Gandhiji said:

I did not attend yesterday's Congress because it was my silence day and I avoid, as far as possible, going out of my place during my time of silence. So far as the resolution itself is concerned, my position is this. At Patna I personally surrendered all control to the Swaraj Party and I promised to give them all such support as an anti-Council man could give. I still remain opposed to Council-entry on principle, but I had to make my choice either to abandon my old colleagues entirely or to render them such support as I could give. I had no difficulty about making my choice. If I could not help them actively I felt that I should at least refrain from instructing them in any shape or form. I, therefore, felt that I should advise the No-changers, like myself, to abstain from striving for controlling the Congress but to surrender it voluntarily to the Swarajists which I am glad to say they have done.

Q. Will you tell me if you are satisfied with the resolution passed by the Congress?

A: As a matter of fact Pandit Motilal showed the resolution to



me and when he showed it to me I told him that it was for him and the Swarajists to decide what the text should be and as he showed the resolution to me I endeavoured to suggest some alterations. He accepted what he thought he could conscientiously do but there were certain suggestions which he could not accept but it was not for me to press for their acceptance. I had to deliver the goods and I could only deliver the goods if I accepted what resolution commended itself to a majority of Swarajist representatives.

Asked what his future programme would be as the result of the Congress decision, Gandhiji replied:

My position is to remain passive and do the constructive work of which I am capable and to leave the rest, that is, the working out of the resolution of the Congress entirely into the hands of the Swarajists unhampered by me and even aided by me wherever it is possible.

*The Hindustan Times, 31-12-1925*

### 253. LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

*Thursday [December 31, 1925]<sup>1</sup>*

CHI. MATHURADAS,

I have returned to the Ashram this afternoon. Devdas will leave here tomorrow and reach there on Saturday, the 2nd. I have received your letter. I wish you would not worry. There is no reason at all to be concerned about Taramati. I have a letter from her. She writes that she will be reaching there after *Sankranti*.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

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

<sup>1</sup> From the postmark

*254. DRAFT RESOLUTION ON ATROCITIES  
AT NIMUCHANA*

[December, 1925]<sup>1</sup>

This session of the States People's Conference expresses its distress over the inhuman atrocities at Nimuchana in the state of Alwar and the intransigence of the State Government in refusing to hold an open and impartial inquiry into the causes and consequences of the barbaric atrocities and irregularities committed by the police and officers of the State.

This Conference conveys its heart-felt sympathy to the many bereaved families, injured individuals and displaced persons whose houses and properties have been destroyed in the name of law and order. The Conference also wishes to be in a position to render some effective help to the people at Nimuchana in this misfortune.

[From Hindi]

*Gandhiji aur Rajasthan*, pp. 55-6

*255. MESSAGE TO STATES PEOPLE'S CONFERENCE*

[December, 1925]<sup>2</sup>

Every individual can get rid of his bonds. If we understand this general rule and act on it, we can root out all misery. No tyrant can oppress a victim without his co-operation. How nice it would be if we could understand this.

[From Hindi]

*Gandhiji aur Rajasthan*, p. 56

<sup>1</sup> According to the source this resolution was drafted by Gandhiji for the States People's Conference held at Kanpur in December, 1925.

<sup>2</sup> As supplied in the source

256. *LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI*

*December 1925*

I wish to do something that will bring you peace. So write to me unreservedly, as unhesitatingly as a son to his father, a friend to his friend and a patient to his doctor. Ask me for anything. After all I am *bapu*, I am a friend and I certainly am a physician.

[From Gujarati]

*Bapuni Prasadi*, p. 83

257. *LETTER TO VASUMATI PANDIT*

[About *December 1925*]<sup>1</sup>

CHI. VASUMATI,

I am writing this much today just for the sake of writing. Look after your health. Give consolation to Ramdas. You two, brother and sister, should sing aloud *bhajans*. Recite Ramanama.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a copy of the Gujarati : S. N. 9299

258. *LETTER TO G. D. BIRLA*

[1925]<sup>2</sup>

BHAI GHANSHYAMDASJI,

Your letter. The newspapers alone are to blame for causing you distress. They do not follow my language and yet send some report or the other. What I intended as praise, they have reported as censure. I praised the members for cow-protection work and said that I would be powerless to do anything if I were not fullybacked up by the Marwaris. I do not need their treasures only; I also want their brains. In this strain I said that I had invited a Marwari brother to become the treasurer, not for his money, but for deriving maximum benefit from his service. In any case, I have never taken your refusal amiss nor did I speak at the meeting in that vein. I do not expect my friends to

<sup>1</sup> From the contents; *vide* "Letter to Vasumati Pandit", 14-12-1925.

<sup>2</sup> From the reference to the Deshbandhu Memorial

accede to every one of my requests. I could well appreciate your dissent.

I have taken in the same light your decision in respect of the Deshbandhu Memorial. It has not grieved me.

I shall discern when we meet the significance of what you have written to Pandit Jawaharlal about an All-India Memorial.

Jugal Kishoreji said you had not yet recovered completely. Perhaps you need some change in diet. He also said that your wife was still unwell. May God keep her calm.

*Yours,*

MOHANDAS GANDHI

[PS.]

I write with the left hand since the right pains.

From a copy of the Hindi original: C.W. 6119. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

### 259. LETTER TO ANASUYABEHN SARABHAI

[1925]<sup>1</sup>

CHI. ANASUYABEHN,

I respect women who are simple, frank, humble, virtuous, firm, fearless and truthful. From the very beginning I have attributed to you all these virtues and that is why I have respected you. My love for you is that of a father for a daughter. But because of your age and your belonging to a rich family, I do not have the courage to use a salutation which I should like to and of which you are worthy. Since you ask me not to write *pujya*, then you are certainly all that is implied by *chi*. From now on I shall use one of the two salutations and ultimately the one that fits better will last. And what comes from the heart would fit better. I have intentionally used the salutation *pujya* for widowed workers and I shall keep up the practice. I have always embraced Vasumati as one does a child whenever I have met her and therefore she has always been *chi*. to me.

I am glad that you went to Nainital. I hope you will stay there for some time. I should like to go there myself but can one always get

<sup>1</sup> From the contents it appears that the letter was written in 1925 when Gandhiji was touring Bengal and since he says here that he may have to be in Bengal the entire month of June, the letter may have been written in early June.

what one wants?

Do not be anxious about my health. Satisbabu carries a truck-load of baggage which is loaded onto to a special bogey arranged for the purpose. A doctor also travels with us. I normally get a few hours' rest also.

My remembrance to the children. All of June we shall be in Bengal.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 32836

## 260. LETTER TO SATIS CHANDRA DAS GUPTA

*January 1, 1926*

DEAR SATIS BABU,

It is now morning of New Year's day. I reached here yesterday noon.

Bharucha told me that you were sad and moody. [He] could not make out the reason nor could I. I asked Jamnalalji. He told me the moodiness was probably due to something in connection with the examination of the spinning competition. Whatever the cause, you dare not be moody or morose. You must learn to rough it and get on under all circumstances. You and I and several others have embarked upon a work of service the equal of which I do not know in the whole world. The greater the service the greater the restraint, the greater the toleration the greater the suffering required. Nothing therefore can be allowed to ruffle our spirits. We must be able to get on with all temperaments: Please then let me have a line that you are yourself again. Do you know the song 'Cheer, boys, cheer, no more of idle sorrow'? You must read again and again the *Song Celestial* by Edwin Arnold.

I had a good mind to talk to you. Then I thought of taking you with me. To talk I had no time. I did not wish to take you with me from your work. I intended too to bring Dr. Suresh in touch with you again. His work appeals to me. His method has a place. But I wanted to discuss the whole thing with you. It could not be. Now you must come here whenever you can.

You should write what you like without the slightest hesitation. I am now fixed up here for one year.

Now about Hemprabha Devi. I had fairly long chats with her.

But I could see she did not open out her mind to me. She should come at the earliest possible time. If she needs separate cooking accommodation, I shall find it for her. A Bengali teacher is available. But if you can give her a good scholar for the boys, you may do so. Let her come whilst the weather is fairly cold. It has been, an exceptionally mild winter here—nothing compared to Cawnpore.

*Yours,*

BAPU

[PS.]

Your advertisement pamphlet I have read from cover to cover. It is very good. What is your sale of the travelling charkha?

From a photostat: G.N. 1557

### 261. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

*Friday [January 1, 1926]<sup>1</sup>*

CHI. NARANDAS,

I have both your letters. I did not know that you had relinquished charge<sup>2</sup> so I wired you. Your letter regarding the office matters has been forwarded to Chi. Jaisukhlal<sup>3</sup>, so as to let him know what others have to say about this. Now that I have decided to stay in this place for one year, I shall be in a position to cope with these matters.

What you have decided for yourself is not quite correct. We can find some way out of your domestic problems, for, you shall have to come over here. Your presence is essential for the affairs of the Charkha Sangh<sup>4</sup>. Maganlal's seven-day fast is now in progress. This is the third day. The reason, the . . . girls have told a lie. He is quite well, so there is nothing to worry about. You may come after his fast is over or now. I want you to do many things for me; so please do revise your plans.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 7705. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

<sup>1</sup> From the reference to Maganlal's fast

<sup>2</sup> As Secretary, Kathiawar Political conference

<sup>3</sup> Jaisukhlal Gandhi, Gandhiji's nephew

<sup>4</sup> All-India Spinners' Association

262. LETTER TO SHANTIKUMAR MORARJI

ASHRAM,  
Friday [January 1, 1926]<sup>1</sup>

CHI. SHANTIKUMAR,

Devdas is just now at Deolali nursing Mathuradas, but he has left with me a letter of yours to him containing a question to be answered. If a person who wears khadi exclusively and on all occasions is once in a way compelled, by force of circumstances, to use some other cloth, would he still be regarded a "habitual wearer of khadi"<sup>2</sup>? My answer is that he should undoubtedly be regarded a "habitual wearer"<sup>3</sup>. I have an impression, however, that I had already answered this question for you.

Was a settlement reached in the Sholapur dispute, or is it still hanging fire?

I am keeping well, and have almost regained the weight lost during the fast.

Someone on your behalf gave me a basket of fruit on my way to Kanpur.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 4698. Courtesy: Shantikumar Morarji

263. LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

Friday [January 1, 1926]<sup>4</sup>

CHI. MATHURADAS,

Your two letters to Mahadev have arrived only today. I see your despondency in them. But where is the cause for despondency? Pain may go quickly or it may take its time. You did well in having gone

<sup>1</sup> Friday following Gandhiji's return to the Ashram from Kanpur fell on this date.

<sup>2</sup> The source has these expressions in English.

<sup>3</sup> *ibid*

<sup>4</sup> The date has been inferred from the contents. Devdas Gandhi was to go to the addressee on Saturday, the 2nd January, 1926; *vide* "Speech at Wardha", 21-12-1925; also "Letter to Mathuradas Trikumji", 2-1-1926. The Friday prior to this date was January 1.

there. Give up worrying about things around you. Do not worry even about yourself. All your knowledge will be in vain if you cannot do even this much.

You must not write letters yourself, but you can dictate. Devdas will be reaching there on the very day you receive this letter. I must have one post-card from Devdas every day.

Devdas will give you the rest of the news. Hence I am not writing more. He will be arriving by the Nagpur Mail.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

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

## 264. MESSAGE TO GRADUATES' ASSOCIATION

*Posh Vad 3, January 2, 1926*

I could deal with your letter only today. I wish the Association a success. My only advice is that the rules framed by the Association should be strictly observed. Many associations are formed but very few succeed. I wish yours would be one of the latter.

*Vandemataram from*

MOHANDAS

[From Gujarati]

*Sabarmati*, Vol. IV, Nos. 5 & 6

## 265. LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

*Saturday [January 2, 1926]<sup>1</sup>*

CHI. MATHURADAS,

I have your letter and the Municipality papers. But by the time this reaches you Devdas will have become an old resident of the place. Give up the idea of engaging a nurse. Make full use of the services of Devdas. He is a very good nurse. You must take it that anyone I send to you goes there to nurse you.

I understand about Ramdas. His ways are odd. I would not suggest anything to him. Try to satisfy him as much as possible. I

<sup>1</sup>The addressee received the letter on January 4, 1926.



know that he will not find the atmosphere at Amreli congenial at the moment. Even the least little conflict unsettles him.

Devdas will have come only after meeting Taramati. I had told him to see her. Do you need anybody else besides Devdas? Write to me if you do. I will send Ba herself if you wish. Ba will nurse you well. And she will feel quite at home with you.

I have written to you that you should ask for anything or any special help you may need.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

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

## 266. THE CONGRESS

The prophets of doom had been active about the Kanpur Congress. If Sarojini Devi became the President, they prophesied, she would have a tough time with the audience; there would be hardly any visitors at this session; few delegates would attend, etc., etc. But as things turned out, it cannot be said that the last Congress session was inferior to any. In some respects, it was even better than usual.

The general arrangements were better. Usually the delegates' chief complaint is about food. I heard, however, nothing but praise in this regard. Seldom in the past was the food better than it was this time. The delegates got as much milk, curds, *papad*<sup>1</sup>, vegetables, and so on and as often as they wanted. The provisions, too, were of the best quality and service was very prompt. In fact, there were so many volunteers that no one had to ask for a helping. The cleanliness left nothing to be desired. I inspected the arrangements myself and found no ground for complaint. The credit for these excellent arrangements goes to Lala Fulchand.

The lodging arrangements were as good as the boarding. All the people were put up in tents. There was little danger of anyone catching cold. The sanitary arrangements were also excellent. Neat trenches had been dug and every seat curtained off. Volunteers always stood ready to spread earth after a latrine had been used. Bhangis had been engaged, but the volunteers did not feel the slightest aversion to

<sup>1</sup> A round, thin, dry cake made of the flour of pulses

do the work themselves. This branch of service was fittingly called "Sanitation and Bhangi Department". The badge supplied to every volunteer carried the pictures of a basket and a broom. It was only on the 29th that I could go out to inspect the arrangements, so that five days had already passed, but I found no unclean spot near the lavatories—there was no stench nor stagnant water anywhere. The Congress session was already over on the 29th, and the fact that there was no unclean spot even then shows how good the arrangements must have been.

There were about 800 men volunteers and 80 women volunteers. The latter were dressed in ochre-coloured saris and looked very smart in them.

A guide to the Congressnagar was also brought out. Round the Congress *pandal*, arrangements had been made for other conferences. Thirty such conferences were held.

The excellence of the arrangements was matched by the enthusiasm of the people. Tilaknagar overflowed with crowds. There was no space even to move. Every face was bright with joy and enthusiasm. The condition inside the *pandal* was the same as outside. On the first day it was crowded to overflowing. A fairly good number of English-speaking men and women had attended this session of the Congress, the largest section in this contingent of foreigners being from America.

Sarojini Devi discharged her duties ably and with a sweet temper and won the hearts of all. She worked with boundless energy and gave the most careful thought to everything. She kept the time-schedule, gave latitude where it was proper and displayed firmness where it was called for.

The President's speech was poetic. This was the shortest speech by a President. What need to praise the beauty of its English? Even in this short speech, no topic was left out. Original suggestions could not be expected in the speech. It was not Sarojini Devi's part to outline a new strategy. That was for Pandit Motilal to do.

And he did outline one. It is not for me to comment on it. I have never understood the Council-entry programme. I see in it no benefit to the people. But that is an old story. The majority of the English-educated class think that it would be to our advantage to enter the Councils and so the problem before a person in my position has been to lend what support I could to someone or the other. I did this

in Belgaum, then in Patna and last in Kanpur. The split in the Swaraj Party has pained me very much but whenever differences of opinion arise, such splits are inevitable. Through such trial-and-error methods, we shall some day reach our goal. So far as I can judge, we shall arrive at the stage we had reached in 1920, or something similar to that. Whether or not this happens, the expression of honest differences of opinion, whenever they exist, can do no harm to the country. The resolution adopted represents an important decision. It contains the seeds of the Councils being abandoned in future. The final result, of course, is in God's hands.

But the most important and urgent problem is that of Indians in South Africa. If even one of the courses suggested in the resolution on this subject is adopted, the problem facing our countrymen there will have been solved.

The resolution on the use of Hindi and Urdu, as far as possible, in the work of the Congress is of great significance. If it is respected by all Congressmen, the masses will come to take greater interest in Congress work.

The exhibition arrangements were as good as those for the Congress session. It seemed to me that in Kanpur these outdid those of previous years. The various sections were arranged with that of pure khadi in the centre. The exhibits in this section were so displayed as to enable every visitor to see the progress made by khadi during the past four years. What a contrast between the khadi produced in 1921 and that produced in 1925! After seeing this exhibition, nobody would say that the progress of khadi had not been really good. Every visitor would say that khadi did deserve the first place in the constructive programme.

The other sections in the exhibition were also interesting. Thousands of men and women went to see them. On several days the total number of visitors reached the figure of 12,000.

On the whole, the Reception Committee and Doctor Murarilal deserve compliments on the Congress session and other arrangements connected with it. The improvements from year to year in the arrangements for the Congress session is a further measure of the increasing capacity of the people for managing their affairs under swaraj.

The popular character of the Congress is to be judged not from the size of its membership but from the people's enthusiasm at its

annual sessions. There was not the slightest waning in that enthusiasm at this year's session. Even those who watched the procession in honour of Sarojini Devi could see this. The thick crowds and the spontaneous decorations on the roads told their own tale, and this enthusiasm was evident right up to the last day.

Assam has bid for the honour of the next session. The province is in the extreme north-east of the country but its people are not the less enthusiastic. Besides, the word Congress has a magic of its own. No one need have misgivings about the growth of an organization which has lasted forty years. In its growth lies swaraj. May it, therefore, prosper! Victory to India!

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 3-1-1926

### 267. LETTER TO RABINDRANATH TAGORE

SABARMATI,  
*January 3, 1926*

DEAR GURUDEV,

I am thankful for your sweet letter. It has given me much relief.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: G.N. 2285 & 4630

### 268. LETTER TO HARIBHAU UPADHYAYA

*Sunday [January 3, 1926]<sup>1</sup>*

BHAI HARIBHAU,

I had your letter. You need not be sorry about Martand's<sup>2</sup> failing. Very few boys have escaped it. We should remain watchful, and cleanse our own self, for our own sins are reflected in our children. I hope you are quite well.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

BHAI HARIBHAU UPADHYAYA  
70, SARAFI, INDORE

From the Hindi original: C. W. 6056. Courtesy: Haribhau Upadhyaya

<sup>1</sup> From the postmark

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

*269. SILENCE-DAY NOTE TO MIRABEHN*

*January 4, 1926*

You must not do that. You must take all the correction calmly and in a proper spirit. There was no question of conscience either. It was merely want of knowledge of due proportion. Nothing very strange in the strangest of surroundings you have put yourself in. Cheer up. No crying allowed.

From the original: C.W. 5450. Courtesy: Mirabehn. Also G.N. 9452

*270. SILENCE-DAY NOTE TO MIRABEHN*

*January 4, 1926*

But who turned you out? Why did you feel like having been turned out? Correction is not turning out, is it?

From the original: C.W. 5451. Courtesy: Mirabehn. Also G.N. 9453

*271. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI*

*Monday [January 4, 1926]<sup>1</sup>*

CHI. NARANDAS,

Chi. Maganlal is getting along well with his fast. There are no complications except general weakness. Ramdas is here in connection with [khadi work at] Amreli. If you will come over here you can guide me in this matter.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

CHI. NARANDAS KHUSHALCHAND GANDHI

OPPOSITE MIDDLE SCHOOL

NAVU PARU, RAJKOT

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 7706. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

<sup>1</sup> From the postmark

272. LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

Monday [January 4, 1926]<sup>1</sup>

CHI. MATHURADAS,

I have your two letters. It is only proper that you should be a member of the Bombay Municipal Corporation. It would be a good sign if you were elected *in absentia*.

I have no doubt at all that you must take complete rest. There is no need for any other medicine. Right now, it would be well to avoid talk tending to cause excitement. What you need now is pure, quiet joy. I see from Devdas's letter that Taramati is in absolutely good health.

There was some little rain even here. Winter has been very mild this year.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

[PS.]

Ramdas suddenly arrived here yesterday.

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

<sup>1</sup>The addressee received this letter on January 5, 1926.

273. LETTER TO VASUMATI PANDIT

Tuesday [January 5, 1926]<sup>1</sup>

CHI. VASUMATI,

Your letter. Ramdas has arrived just in time; he was so scared.

It is good that you have taken up the study of Sanskrit. Now you should not discontinue it. I had fever but it went as soon as it came. What was there to write about? I am keeping very well. I had fever for three alternate days. And you see I am going to stay here for one year.

Manibehn (Vallabhbai's [daughter]) has gone to Wardha where she will work as a teacher.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 603. Courtesy: Vasumati Pandit

274. LETTER TO MANIBEHN PATEL

[Before January 6, 1926]<sup>2</sup>

CHI. MANI,

Jamnalaji writes that you have reached there (Wardha). Write to me regularly. Take good care of<sup>3</sup> Kamala and Madalasa<sup>4</sup>. Do I have to tell you anything regarding the rest of the class? Did you write to Devadhar a letter of thanks? If not, write one in Marathi.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

[PS.]

I called on Nandubehn<sup>5</sup> the day I came. She is bearing it very well.

SMT. MANIBEHN

C/O SHETH JAMNALALJI

WARDHA (C. P.)

[From Gujarati]

*Bapuna Patro-Manibehn Patelne*, p. 33

<sup>1</sup> From the reference to arrival of Ramdas; *vide* "Letter to Narandas Gandhi", 4-1-1926.

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

<sup>3</sup> Jamnalal Bajaj's daughters

<sup>4</sup> *ibid*

275. LETTER TO MANIBEHN PATEL

Wednesday, January 6, 1926

CHI. MANI,

I enclosed a letter for you in the envelope to Vinoba; you could not have got it as Vinoba is here. I got your letter yesterday. Teach Kamala whatever she likes. Get her to read one or two Hindi books. Teach her arithmetic in which she is very weak. She understands Gujarati. Let her take up any other subjects she likes. Read with her a little *Ramayana*. The main aim is to create in her a liking for study. Improve your Marathi reading and writing. Take a walk every day and be methodical in all your work.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

[From Gujarati]

*Bapuna Patro-Manibehn Patelne*, p. 34

276. CABLE TO C. F. ANDREWS<sup>1</sup>

[on or after January 6, 1926]

ANDREWS

CARE GOOL

CAPE TOWN

CERTAINLY GO ENGLAND IF YOU CONSIDER ADVISABLE. ANY  
CASE BETTER STAY TILL FATE KNOWN UNION PARLIAMENT.

GANDHI

From a microfilm: S.N. 11925

277. INDULGENCE OR SELF-DENIAL<sup>2</sup>

It is not without sorrow that I have to announce to the numerous co-workers the suspension of my touring programme for about one year. At least upto 20th December next, I am not to stir out of the

<sup>1</sup> In reply to his cable of January 4, received on January 6, which read: "Cabinet decides fate Bill January fourteenth. Pressure needed now. Arriving Cape Town seventh possibly. Journey England soon advisable. Cable your opinion."

<sup>2</sup> A shorter article on this subject appeared in *Navajivan*, 3-1-1926.



Ashram, certainly not out of Ahmedabad, except for imperative reasons of health or some unforeseen event. This decision has been arrived at after consultation at Cawnpore with the principal co-workers who were there during the Congress Week. The reasons for the decision are chiefly three:

1. To give my tired limbs as much rest as is possible to give them. Dr. Ansari has sent me elaborate instructions forbidding even all avoidable mental toil.

2. To enable me to give personal attention to the Ashram. I was expected to do this when it was opened, but I have not been able to do so except for the first year of its existence.

3. To enable me to put the affairs of the A.I.S.A., satisfactory as they are, on a sound businesslike basis. This requires constant supervision and attention to details. This is possible only if I am available at all times to the organizing secretary.

Any one of these reasons is by itself sufficient to warrant the step I have taken. But the three combined make an overwhelming case for tying me down to the Ashram.

Probably the collections for the All-India Deshbandhu Memorial, i.e., for the A.I.S.A. will suffer. But it was thought advisable to take that risk. Co-workers will be expected to put forth much greater effort than hitherto. But my hope lies in friends sending their subscriptions without personal canvassing. Apart from the fact that the fund bears a great name, it is being raised for immediate use in carrying on khaddar work. Nearly ten lacs of rupees need to be spent now if the output is to be considerably increased and khaddar cheapened, or in other words if more idle hands are to be employed and more hungry mouths are to be fed. Though I never announced it, I do not mind confessing that my own desire was to collect no less than one crore of rupees for the Memorial. If ten lacs was to be the amount for the All-Bengal Memorial, surely ten times the amount was not too large for an All India Memorial. Again if ten lacs was not too much for a hospital, ten times as much is none too much for khaddar work which is designed to drive away the wolf from several million doors. Whether that is to remain a dream or to become a reality ten lacs should not be difficult to collect immediately. One lac has been promised by a friend of which Rs. 12,000 have already been paid. Sjt. Manilal Kothari is responsible for the announcement of another lac of which Rs. 25,000 have already been collected. Sjt. S. Srinivasa

Aiyangar has authorized me to announce his contribution as Rs. 10,000. I call upon the workers who are lovers of khadi to collect from their friends and send their collections to Sjt. Jamnalalji Bajaj, the Treasurer of the Memorial Fund.

But whether the Fund is collected or not the decision has been made. Man proposes and God disposes. When I left Bihar I had given the Bihari friends every hope that they might expect me, all being well, to finish the remainder of the Bihar tour during the early part of the year and if possible during this very month. When the decision to visit Cutch was arrived at, Mr. Dastane had taken from me the promise that I would tour in parts of Maharashtra soon after finishing the balance of the Bihar tour. Assam was to follow. And then was to follow the whole of the Southern peninsula. But my unexpected fast of seven days<sup>1</sup> upset the man-made apple-cart. The Ancient of Days has asserted Himself once more and without warning set aside the whole plan. The friends in Bihar, Maharashtra, Assam and the other provinces will appreciate my difficulty.

For me this year of grace is both an indulgence and a self-denial. It is an indulgence because I hope to fulfil the long-cherished desire of being in the midst of the boys and girls and the fellow-workers of the Ashram. It is a self-denial because it was a pleasure to me to be with so many friends in the different provinces and be the recipient of the affection of the masses between whom and myself there is a bond which defies description but is nevertheless felt alike by them and me. I see in the fellowship with them the God I adore. I derive from that fellowship all my consolation, all my hope and all the sustaining power I possess. If I had not realized that bond in South Africa, now fully thirty years ago, life would not be worth living for me. But I know that whether I live in the Ashram or whether in their midst, I work for them, think of them and pray for them. I want to live only for them and so for myself.

*Young India*, 7-1-1926

### 278. *THE ANNUAL DEMONSTRATION*

Only those who are devoid of all imagination could after witnessing the demonstration at Cawnpore during the Congress Week

<sup>1</sup> From November 22, 1925; *vide* "The Latest Fast", 30-11-1925.

say that the influence of the Congress was on the wane. The belittling process commenced with its birth. It has however survived forty summers and promises to survive many more.

The demonstration began with the dazzling splendour that greeted the President on her arrival at Cawnpore. The feeble voice of protest was hushed in the midst of the grateful shouts of thousands who had gathered to do honour to the first Indian woman who was to preside over the deliberations of the great national assembly. The roads were one vast mass of beaming human faces. Every balcony was occupied by the women of Cawnpore who were eager to see the face of Shrimati Sarojini Devi. The merchants vied with one another in making the decorations effective and striking. The Congress ground was packed to overflowing. The *pandal* was filled on the opening day. No session had so many European visitors as this. The delegates were attentive and yielded implicit obedience to the chair. The President by her tact, perseverance, punctuality and sweetness combined with firmness came up to all the expectations that were raised of her by friends and severely disappointed her critics who had prophesied a complete failure. Her address—the shortest yet written by any President of the Congress—was a prose-poem. In the brief space of twelve octavo pages she had summarized the struggles and the aspirations of the people in whose name she spoke. True, there was nothing new in the address. She had bargained to give nothing new. She had sketched no policy. That was left by design to the leader of the Swaraj Party, Pandit Motilal Nehru. Her virtue lay in her unobtrusiveness, in her impartiality, in her allowing herself to be led even while she was leading. The secret of her success lay in her womanliness which she let her people see in every act of hers.

Of the important resolutions nothing much need be said in these columns. They cover all the important matters that have agitated the country during the past twelve months. The South African resolution was the first in point of time and immediate importance. Whatever may be said to the contrary I hold that the proposed Bill is in breach of the Smuts-Gandhi Agreement of 1914. For the royal veto there are many precedents. If it may not be used under any circumstance whatsoever, it should be part of the royal instructions. If it may be used under certain circumstances, that circumstance will undoubtedly arise when and if the preposterous Bill passes the Union Legislature.

The resolution about the Congress franchise and the debate in

the Subjects Committee<sup>1</sup> demonstrate the growing popularity of khaddar. It is clear that the Swarajists may not leave khaddar and still retain their hold on the electorate. Indeed the tendency in the Subjects Committee was towards stiffening the khaddar condition. If it has the supreme economic and national value that is claimed for it, it is properly part of the franchise qualifications. One has a right to hope that the Congress having passed the resolution by an overwhelming majority, the members will loyally and conscientiously fulfil the condition imposed by themselves. No inquisition is necessary where members are willing to observe common honesty.

The Councils resolution is an elaborate affair. It is a clear notice to the Government and an equally clear indication to the electors as to what they are to expect from the Swaraj Party. The emphasis laid on civil disobedience is, in my opinion, quite appropriate. No nation can possibly march forward without a sanction to enforce its will. The reiteration of faith in civil disobedience means that the representatives of the nation have no faith in an armed rebellion. Civil disobedience may be a far cry. It may be nearer than many imagine. Time is irrelevant. Cultivation of the spirit of non-violent resistance is everything. So long therefore as the Congress believes in civil disobedience and its will remains unenforced, it must keep the former before the people and teach them that it is a complete and effective substitute for armed rebellion and that the latter is out of the question for Indian conditions and the former, perfectly possible if people or rather the volunteers could be persuaded to observe and enforce self-restraint under the gravest provocations.

So far as the remaining in or the going out of the Councils is concerned, Swarajists must be regarded best judges of their own position and the condition of the Councils. They are the experts and the others must not obstruct them if they will carry out the Patna Resolution now confirmed by the Congress.

Superficial observers may regard the split in the Swarajist camp as unfortunate. Unfortunate in a way it undoubtedly is. We would all like perfect agreement among us if such was possible. But surely it is not unfortunate that we should bravely and honestly confess our fundamental differences and work them out. It is the surest sign of growth. We will not attain swaraj by mechanical agreements which we

<sup>1</sup>*Vide* "Speech on Franchise Resolution, Subjects Committee Meeting, Kanpur", 24-12-1925.

do not mean. In a vast country like ours, there is room enough for many schools of thought. And so long as they respect one another and honestly push forward their views the people can only gain by their presentation. Forced suppression of one's views is a sign of decay and violence. I would warn the public therefore against being pessimistic over the so-called split in the Swarajists camp.

Then there are the resolutions about the Bengal Ordinance prisoners, the Gurdwara prisoners and the Burma measures aimed at the Indian settlers. They are all an indication of our present impotence and an additional count in the indictment against the Government.

The resolution about the use of Hindustani is a great advance in public opinion. It is undoubtedly cruel to the majority of members of the A.I.C.C. Or the delegates that our proceedings should be still largely conducted in English. We must arrive at a final decision some day. When we do, it must cause some inconvenience, some heart-burning for a time. But the sooner we begin to conduct our proceedings in Hindustani the better it will be for national growth.

*Young India*, 7-1-1926

## 279. NOTES

### EXCELLENT ARRANGEMENTS

The Reception Committee deserves hearty congratulations on the excellent arrangements made for the accommodation and feeding of delegates. They have never been surpassed. Sanitation was also almost perfect. Dinners were served on a lavish scale. There was no waiting and no want. Lala Fulchand with his countless volunteers made an ideal host. Indeed the scale according to which delicacies were supplied was extravagant and difficult for poorer cities to copy. The exhibition too surpassed expectations. Pure khaddar was the centre among all the beautiful exhibits. The evolution of khaddar and the wheel was strikingly shown by a skilful arrangement of the exhibits. But a detailed description must be deferred to a future issue.

### ANDREWS' ACTIVITIES

Mr. C. F. Andrews has been incessantly active ever since his arrival in South Africa. Besides sending cables to the Press, he sent regular cablegrams at Cawnpore during the Congress Week. In one of them he says:

General Smuts declared at the Imperial Cabinet in 1917 following concerning domiciled Indians: "If any question proves difficult of treatment, we can discuss it in a friendly way, at this Council Chamber of Empire and try to find in consultation a solution and I am sure we shall ever find it."

The cable then proceeds,

Seeing General Smuts made this offer, might it justify demanding suspension Bill pending Imperial consultation?

Many other things will justify suspension and many other remedies too would be justified to kill the Bill. But who will do it? Is the Imperial Government willing and anxious to try all the remedies possible to secure redress of the grave injustice which is impending? Will the Government of India force the hands of the Imperial Government? Can we force the hands of the Government of India?

Of the Congress resolution as cabled by Reuter Mr. Andrews says:

Everyone here delighted Congress attitude.

In yet another he says Bishop Palmer let him preach before his congregation on the Indian question and that the impression created was satisfactory. The same cable also intimates that the Auxiliary European Committee that was formed at the time of the passive resistance movement is being resuscitated. Thus everything that a single human being can do to prevent the perpetration of the wrong is being done by Mr. Andrews in far-off South Africa.

#### BISHOP FISHER'S PAMPHLET

It will be remembered that Bishop Fisher of the American Mission recently visited South Africa. He contributed his impressions to the *National Christian Council Review*. The Associated Press, Calcutta has published it in pamphlet form at two annas. The statement is a marvellous condensation of the history of the Indian question in South Africa. In his preface the Bishop says:

Its accuracy is vouched for, whilst the unjust humiliations to which Indians are subjected are understated rather than exaggerated.

I commend this pamphlet to everyone interested in this difficult problem.

*Young India*, 7-1-1926

280. MESSAGE TO "THE BOMBAY CHRONICLE"

SABARMATI,  
January 9, 1926

My hearty greetings to Mr. Horniman. The Government deserves congratulations on redressing the grave wrong<sup>1</sup> done to this brave Englishman and us. May his work prosper! India needs at the present moment all the assistance that her friends can give.

M. K. GANDHI

*The Bombay Chronicle*, 12-1-1926

281. MESSAGE TO "KUMAR"<sup>2</sup>

*Posh Vad 10*, 1892 [January 9, 1926]

What else can I talk about to the boys and girls except the charkha? The readers of *Kumar*, should sympathize with the children who cannot get or read *Kumar* by prayerfully plying the charkha and doing sacrificial spinning for their sake. They would thus gain a glimpse of divine grace.

[From Gujarati]

*Kumar*, *Posh*, 1892

282. LETTER TO B. G. HORNIMAN

SABARMATI,  
January 9, 1926

DEAR FRIEND,

Most welcome. What an agreeable surprise! I hope you are well and fit enough to fight as of yore.

*Yours sincerely*,  
M. K. GANDHI

*The Bombay Chronicle*, 13-1-1926

<sup>1</sup> B. G. Horniman, editor of *The Bombay Chronicle*, had been deported on April 26, 1919; *vide* "Satyagraha Leaflet No. 7", 26-4-1919.

<sup>2</sup> A Gujarati monthly

### 283. LETTER TO DEVCHAND PAREKH

Saturday [January 9, 1926]<sup>1</sup>

BHAI DEVCHANDBHAI,

Your letter. I have now withdrawn from active politics. Then how can you have me for President? If you like you can have Jawaharlal Nehru.

Bhai Fulchand, Jaisukhlal, Ramdas are here. Narandas has been asked to come here. When he comes we can decide something about Amreli.

Vandemataram from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 5708

### 284. LETTER TO D. B. KALELKAR

January 9, 1926

BHAISHRI KAKA,

I have your letter. Somewhere in our system of education, we should, I am sure, find a place for English. If our contact with the West and with Western literature is worth having, just now we can best use the English language. This is why I give it a place in the high school curriculum. I have the same opinion of the *Pilgrim's Progress* that you have. But at the moment that was the easiest thing for me to offer. So I started it. Members of the Ashram had it more or less from me. If I had started something else, it would have been artificial. I thought of the *Gita* and the *Ramayana*. I am, however, not as well qualified to handle these. I can understand the words of the *Ramayana* with difficulty. Similarly I cannot also understand the words of the *Gita* as clearly as I wish to. My duty is to let all share whatever wealth [of knowledge] I have. I have only to see that it does not have any undesirable consequence. I accept your decision in principle; it seems, however, that it does not apply to our circumstances. And have I not said very clearly that my fair knowledge of the English language and my extensive dealings through that medium prove a sort of an obstacle for our simple Indian

<sup>1</sup> From the postmark



masses? But this is inevitable and it seems we must put up with it. I expect another letter from you. I have not yet been able to read your letter to the children. You should not at all hesitate to write such letters. I quite like the letter.

Vinoba, Appa are here.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 12178

## 285. LETTER TO KAMALASHANKAR

*January 9, 1926*

BHAI KAMALASHANKAR,

Please excuse me for the delay in answering your questions.

1. It is my firm conviction that the spirit of untouchability is no more; only the practice persists. This conviction was further confirmed in Kutch.

2. I am not as much opposed to Panditji's<sup>1</sup> statements as you seem to be. I can understand the difference between being a member of the Skeen Committee<sup>2</sup> and being its secretary. But then I see no sense in getting into the legislatures and so taking over the administration is out of question.

3. I should be a sage if I could tell whether or not I have fulfilled my mission. I am also not in a position to judge whether my activities have helped or hindered the cause of morality.

4. Culture is the subjective essence of civilization as accepted by an individual or a society; morality is uniform at all places and at all times. I would keep at a respectable distance from one who makes no distinction between good and evil.

5. I think very little out of this was paid up.

6. The nation's morality will rise high if everyone kept as clean accounts as Vallabhbai's. The purse will surely not add up to a million. I am certain to get it, I know.

7. I would run the Vidyapith even for a single deserving student and hope that ultimately its strength will increase. I would certainly call it a disgrace to close down the Vidyapith.

<sup>1</sup> Motilal Nehru's

<sup>2</sup> Also known as the Indian Sandhurst Committee, appointed in 1925, to consider the starting of a Military College in India. Sir Andrew Skeen was its Chairman.

8. I do not know about the administration of the Bombay Congress Committee.

9. I have great regard for Mashruwala's ideas. He is a saintly person. I read his observation on art.<sup>1</sup>

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 12177

### 286. *LETTER TO HARIBHAU UPADHYAYA*

ASHRAM,  
*Paush Krishna 10 [January 9, 1926]*<sup>2</sup>

BHAI HARIBHAU,

I have the letter sent with Chi. Martand. Everything possible will be done for Martand. A proper diet alone will restore your health. You should not mind a little delay in starting your work.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a copy of the Hindi: C.W. 6057. Courtesy: Haribhau Upadhyaya

### 287. *SPARE ME*

When I decided on voluntary retirement from active work, I excluded, whether out of ignorant attachment or fear, from the scope of my decision, though I personally wished it, a visit to Ahmedabad. If I make an exception in favour of it, I fear I might be prevented from doing the kind of service I wish to do by staying in the Ashram for one year. I encountered this danger only last week. The Ramakrishna Mission was celebrating its foundation day. I was invited to preside over the function. Since I had decided now to live in the Ashram all the time, how could I decline the invitation? If, on the other hand, I attended this function, why should I not attend many other functions on similar auspicious occasions which might be arranged in Ahmedabad? If I attended them, my purpose in retiring from active work in order to be at peace with myself would be defeated. Should Dr. Hariprasad ask me to give one day to every street in Ahmedabad and sweep it, I would certainly count that as fit work for me. If I undertook to do it, every day in the year would be occupied and then

<sup>1</sup> The source has here the entry, "Incomplete".

<sup>2</sup> As given by the addressee; *vide* also "Letter to Haribhau Upadhyaya", 3-1-1926

I would be where I was.

The friends who had come to invite me were convinced by this argument and gave me freedom. I expect similar consideration from every worker in the city. As the rest of the country is to forget me up to December 20, Ahmedabad should do so too. If permitted by Vallabhbhai, I want to be bold and include Ahmedabad too in the scope of my vow, so that I might have no temptation and no need to argue with anyone. Even if, however, Vallabhbhai cannot give me such freedom, I should like the citizens of Ahmedabad to spare me and not invite me to any function.

As I study the various activities of the Ashram and the work of the Spinning Association, I realize that, if I want to do complete justice to the Ashram, the Spinning Association, *Young India* and *Navajivan*, I shall have no time to spare for any other activity. If I can attend to this quiet work for a year, I am confident that my capacity for service will increase. I appeal to workers in Ahmedabad to understand my position and spare me during this year the necessity of having even to go to the city even on public work.

[PS.]

After I had written the note above, I had a discussion with Vallabhbhai and he gave his consent to my including Ahmedabad, too, in my vow. He also believes that if I really wished to have peace, my retirement from public life should mean retirement to the Ashram. I cannot, therefore, leave the Ashram to attend any function or participate in any activity outside it, even in Ahmedabad. If some unforeseen contingency arises and if it becomes necessary for me to leave Ahmedabad and go somewhere else, for the sake of my health, these would certainly be treated as exceptional circumstances.

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 10-1-1926

### 288. KHADI IN MAHA-GUJARAT

I was often asked during my tour: "What work is Gujarat doing about khadi? How many people patronize it? How many have become members of the Spinning Association? Do they regularly give yarn? How much khadi do you produce in Gujarat? Do you produce fine khadi in your province?" These and many similar questions, people

ask me through varying motives. I cannot give satisfactory answers, since I do not see in Gujarat more people wearing khadi than in other provinces. As regards the manufacture of khadi, we are far behind others. The Spinning Association, too, has fewer members from Gujarat than one would expect. But Gujarat can, if it chooses, change all this. Gujarat can undertake to do enough spinning for the whole of the country, for it grows plenty of cotton. It has more money, in comparison with other provinces. It has commercial enterprise which is essential for khadi work. Gujarat has a fairly large number of experts in spinning. It can, therefore, take up spinning as a form of sacrifice and produce thousands of maunds of khadi which, for that very reason, would be cheap.

Boys and girls in Gujarat can contribute a great deal to this work.

In fact, Gujarat had come forward to win swaraj by its own efforts. There used to be competition between Bardoli and Anand, between Surat and Kheda districts. But today "Thou art in ruins, Surat, thy face all soiled with tears"—so may we lament again. And the Kheda of satyagraha days, Abbas Saheb's pride, where is it now? Those who have withdrawn themselves from active political work, how can they forget Borsad? We can thus call to mind, and write about a great many brave things from the past, but to what purpose?

What is the position today?

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 10-1-1926

## 289. *GHOSTS AND SPIRITS*

A gentleman has written to me a long letter, which he has summarized in the end. I give below a summary of his summary:

If you believe in ghosts and spirits, kindly tell me how they may be warded off.

If you believe that they do not exist, please account for the incidents I have described and resolve my doubts.

I am an educated person with a modern outlook and do not believe in ghosts and spirits. But in my own house we have had experience of mischiefs of this kind for the past several years and so, not knowing what to do, I have written to you to

know the truth about these matters.

The correspondent has described some incidents of harassment to him and members of his family, but I do not think it necessary to reproduce them.

I cannot say whether ghosts and spirits exist or do not exist. I can only say that I have been living for many years as if they did not exist. I do not know of any instance in which persons who did not believe in their existence came to harm in any way. I have also observed that those who believe in their existence are sometimes harassed. It is best, therefore, to go by the saying, "One's own wish the ghost and one's own fear the witch."

Let us, however, assume for a moment that ghosts and spirits exist. Even then, they are a part of God's creation. The God who rules over us has also created these ghosts and spirits, and anyone who believes in God alone will worship no one else. He who serves God will serve no one else. For a believer in God, therefore, Rama is the only effective shield against ghosts and spirits, as He is his only sovereign support when he suffers at the hands of other human beings. The correspondent and members of his family should keep repeating *Ramanama* with full faith, and that will drive away all ghosts and spirits. Millions in this world do not believe in the existence of any such creatures and the latter seem powerless to harm them in any way. The correspondent actually writes that these spirits harass his father, but do not harass himself when he is away from the father. This fact itself suggests the remedy. The father seems to be afraid of ghosts and spirits and is, therefore, harassed by them much in the same way that a king can punish only those who fear the punishment. How can a king's power of punishing avail against one who is not deterred by it? Likewise, how can a ghost harass one who fears no ghost?

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 10-1-1926

## 290. A HAND-SPUN STORY

Can there be a hand-spun story? Rajaji<sup>1</sup> has shown that there can be. He has written for *Young India* a story about yarn and has called it "A Hand-spun Story"<sup>2</sup>. His point is that he has not borrowed the story from any source, that it is not a mere fabrication but has been written out of his own experience. It is, therefore sacred like hand-spun Yarn, appeals to all interests but is, like life itself, essentially tragic, and so it can be called a handspun story. Hand-spun means made all by oneself. Here is a translation of the narrative.

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 10-1-1926

## 291. LETTER TO RAMESHWARDAS PODDAR

SABARMATI,

*Paush Krishna 12 [January 11, 1926]*<sup>3</sup>

BHAI RAMESHWARJI,

I have both your letters. You should repeat *Ramanama* in a detached spirit. You should not brood over your past sins but regard it as God's grace that you are free from them now and implore Him to keep you away from them in future.

You should engage yourself in some altruistic activity.

I have no doubt that the work of skinning and tanning is religious. This work cannot be carried on at your place. If you desire you can give some monetary help for cow-protection.

Finally you should study the *Ramayana* and such other works.

*Yours,*

MOHANDAS GANDHI

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 162

<sup>1</sup> C Rajagopalachari

<sup>2</sup> Not reproduced here. The story which appeared in *Young India*, 7-1-1926, described the brave efforts of the poor spinners and weavers in Kaliyur, a village in Tamilnad, and their failure to satisfy the fastidious taste of the customers in Bombay.

<sup>3</sup> From the postmark

## 292. LETTER TO MANIBEHN PATEL

Monday, January 11, 1926

CHI. MANI,

Your letters to me are packed with information. The letter to Bhai Devadhar is well written. I am sure he will like it.

You may get nervous there, being new to the place, but you must not lose heart. See that Kamala makes such progress as is possible. She will improve gradually. Engage her in talks. See if she will accompany you on your walks. Win her over with affection.

You have no experience of writing and teaching in Marathi, but you will learn it by practice. We were aware that in Wardha they speak Marathi. As regards Hindi, learn it by reading Hindi books at home; if necessary, you may ask someone to help you with it.

You should speak to others in a very gentle manner about khadi and be satisfied with such results as you are able to achieve. That is to say, always act in a spirit of detachment. To make effort is in our hands, not to command success. We should rest content after we have made the effort and should never acknowledge defeat. Ultimately you are sure to come over here for work.

Never mind if you are absent from Sabarmati just when I am here. We shall keep in touch through letters.

Preserve your health; and for this, be cheerful.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

[From Gujarati]

*Bapuna Patro-Manibehn Patelne*, p. 35

## 293. LETTER TO VITHTHALDAS JERAJANI

ASHRAM, SABARMATI,  
Friday<sup>1</sup>, January 11, 1926

BHAI VITHTHALDAS,

I have received a complaint that the khadi from Tirupur is deteriorating day by day and malpractices there are on the increase.

<sup>1</sup> Evidently a slip for "Monday"

You know everything about this khadi. So please let me know what your experience is.

I read your letter to Narandas and had a good laugh. I do think there is no truth whatever in the matter you talk about. And if there is, it can be considered a very good thing from a certain point of view.

*Vandemataram from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9761

### 294. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

*Monday [January 11, 1926]<sup>1</sup>*

CHI. NARANDAS,

I have been eagerly waiting for you. I think you will certainly be here on the 16th. Bring your family along. For the present you will make suitable arrangements about your board. I am prepared even to put up a new structure for you. I would not inconvenience you in any way. I want to be here for one year, during which I desire your presence.

Of course, I have written to Jamnadas. But it seems he is out of his mind; he has lost the faculty of discretion. Well, he too has been asked to come here. Bring him along if you can persuade him.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 7707. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

### 295. LETTER TO JAMNALAL BAJAJ

*Monday [January 11, 1926]<sup>2</sup>*

CHI. JAMNALAL,

Vinoba said you were afraid that the fasts around here would cause me anxiety. Far from being anxious, I was glad about them. Bhai Bhansali's fast was self-chosen; he is at present practising severe austerities. Bhai Kishorelal's was for purely personal reasons, to clear

<sup>1</sup> This letter appears to be in continuation of those of January 1 and 4 wherein Gandhiji had asked the addressee to come over.

<sup>2</sup> From the reference to Maganlal's fast



his heart of evil. Maganlal's was in the form of atonement and it was quite correct. . . 's daughter had cheated him. For this he had no remedy but to suffer the pain himself. This brought about a good effect on that family. All three of them, Kishorelal, Bhansali and Maganlal are doing well. And I had no anxiety at all.

I am keeping quite well, and take four seers of milk, and also eight biscuits out of what I have received from Jamnabehn. I take regular walks. Hence you need not at all be concerned about me.

Herewith Chi. Mani's letter for you to go through; it need not be returned to me.

Have you not yet heard anything about Kamala's marriage?

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 2855

### 296. *LETTER TO MOTILAL ROY*

SABARMATI,  
*January 12, 1926*

DEAR FRIEND,

I was delighted to have your ink and yarn. The receipt you will get from the office. I wish every member of the Sangh will join the A.I.S.A.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

SJT. MOTILAL ROY  
PRABARTAK SANGH  
CHANDERNAGORE

From a photostat: G.N. 11024

### 297. *LETTER TO KHWAJA ABDUL MAJID*

*January 12, 1926*

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I have your pathetic letter.

I must not strive with you any longer. Much as it is against the grain, I must resign myself to your severing your official connection

with the Jamia and, what is worse, your rejoining the Bar. The idea of your having a debt of Rs. 6,000 is unbearable. And is it not tragic to think that you expect to wipe that huge debt in two or three years' work at the Bar? As if our poor countrymen were not sufficiently ground down under the heels of unscrupulous officials and lawyers, we their servants should also take part in the loot! But it cannot be otherwise. So I must shut my eyes and be party to one of the noblest of men doing the thing from which my whole soul recoils with horror.

Yes, you have my permission to leave the Jamia and rejoin the Bar. But some day I expect you to do what the Arabs of yore did or if it is the same thing to you, what your ancient countrymen did—leave all to serve humanity, i.e., God. I cannot conceive of the possibility of your always remaining in the life to which you would now return. But even if you did, you may believe me when I tell you that I shall love you all the same because you are honest and godfearing. I am sending your letter to Hakim Saheb<sup>1</sup> urging him to let you go.

Please remember me to Khurshed Begum who I hope is now quite well.

With love,

*Yours,*

M. K. GANDHI

KHWAJA SAHEB ABDUL MAJID  
THE NATIONAL MUSLIM UNIVERSITY  
DELHI

From the original: Khwaja Abdul Majid Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

### 298. A LETTER

SABARMATI,  
*January 12, 1926*

DEAR SIR,

I have preserved your letter all these long days so as to enable me to reply when I get a little leisure.

I would like to say generally that I do not see myself in your presentation of me. As you have put the ideas, they have considerable

<sup>1</sup> Hakim Ajmal Khan

force.

I would now put them in my own way.

1. Art including music has its proper place in the spiritual evolution of man but there comes a time when he supersedes art that depends for its appreciation on sense perception. Thus art as I understand it to mean can never be an end in itself.

2. Just as one who perceives the endless beauty of the sky would need no canvas for his enjoyment, so one who can read the beauty of the sky within would want little need from the sky overhead. As a matter of fact, the three processes go on to gather. Truest inward joy is possible for one who is physically blind and deaf and dumb.

3. I do believe that complete annihilation of one's self—individuality, sensuality, personality—whatever you call it, is an absolute condition of perfect joy and peace. But here again what is individuality, personality, etc.? I draw no distinction between Buddhistic *nirvana* and *Brahma nirvana* of Shankara. But no doubt Shankara was right from his standpoint because he understood. Buddhistic *nirvana* as a mere emptiness. It is therefore highly likely that your definition of individuality is totally different from mine. Has an ocean drop an individuality of its own as apart from the ocean? Then a liberated soul has an individuality of its own. Consciousness of disease. But I must not go into deeper waters.

4. I do not present the charkha to all for their spiritual emancipation. But for me it is that, for the association I have built up round it, even as *Ramanama* which may mean nothing to a European was heavenly music for Tulsidas and his like.

I know how imperfect my answers are to your very sincere questions. You are at liberty if you like, but if you want my opinion, I would strongly dissuade you from publishing them. For one thing the answers are too concise to be understood. You might because of our previous discussion which may enable you to fill in the gaps.

From a photostat: S.N. 14080

### 299. LETTER TO VASUMATI PANDIT

Tuesday [January 12, 1926]<sup>1</sup>

CHI. VASUMATI,

I have your letter. I shall send this through Ramdas and save postage, and if I forget I shall send it by post.

You should come here whenever you feel like it. But since you have started your study of Sanskrit, you should make some progress. Of course, if you feel uncomfortable you can come over. No doubt Shanta is studying better here.

Your handwriting is not yet to my satisfaction, though, the improvement is quite marked. Perhaps it cannot improve further and so I have stopped reminding you. Any further improvements can come only by practice.

Green chillies too, you should know, are prohibited. Try to do without them.

The rest of the news from here you can have from Ramdas.

Moti's marriage will be solemnized here next Monday.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 552. Courtesy: Vasumati Pandit

### 300. LETTER TO VASUMATI PANDIT

[About 1925/1926]<sup>2</sup>

CHI. VASUMATI,

Received your letter. It is natural that you should feel hurt. Do not worry. Try to convince Ramdas as best as you can. You remain there with a firm mind and take your treatment. Also carry on your studies.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a copy of the Gujarati : S. N. 9350

<sup>1</sup> From the reference to Moti's marriage which took place on January 18, 1926

<sup>2</sup> From the contents; *vide* "Letter to Vasumati Pandit", 14-12-1925 and "Letter to Vasumati Pandit", 12-1-1926.

### 301. LETTER TO NAJUKLAL. N. CHOKSI

Wednesday, January 13, 1926

BHAI NAJUKLAL,

Your letter. Lakshmidas and Moti have also read it. Moti talks of marrying you and none else, we all propose to encourage her. If she remains firm and does marry you, I should regard it an ideal marriage for this age. But we should let her think over it for a while, even if *vasantapanchami*<sup>1</sup> passes by. You should take care of your health. If you are all right do come over here; we shall look after you. I should like to have you here on Monday, but I do not insist if circumstances are not favourable. Let me share your thoughts. If you are unable to write, get someone to write to me from time to time.

God bless you.

Blessings from

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 12107

### 302. LETTER TO VALJI G. DESAI

[Before January 14, 1926]<sup>2</sup>

BHAISHREE VALJI<sup>3</sup>,

I heard you uttering discouraging words yesterday :”I have not completed any job so far.” I did not expect to hear those words from you. I had imagined you to be a brave man. You have got to keep your word to the readers. There should be no difficulty at all about writing the review. You should not think of doing things just at the last moment. If you get any benefit from me, you must be prepared to bring out *Young India* in a creditable way. The best thing

<sup>1</sup> The traditional beginning of the vernal season which fell on January 18, 1926

<sup>2</sup> From the reference to”Maganlal’s article on the *charkha*”, presumably the one on *charkha* by Maganlal Gandhi which appeared in *Young India*, 14.1.1926. For other references pertaining to *Young India*, vide”Exercise the Copyright”, 25-3-1926,”Letter to P. S. Varier”, on or after 1-4-1926,”Letter to Mirza Kazim Ali”, on or after 1-4-1926 and”Letter to K. Venkatesan”, 15-4-1926.

<sup>3</sup> Valji G. Desai; inmate of Satyagraha Ashram; worked on the editorial staff of *Young India*.

would be to set everything on Monday and Tuesday only. Doing it from Sunday causes much inconvenience to the editor, and some matter may become useless. The matter for two or three columns should be set in advance and if you do not get anything from me by Sunday, you should start your work from Monday morning. If you follow this procedure, there would be no difficulty at all. Think over all this and do what you think correct. Write polite letters to those to whom you discontinue sending *Young India*.

Write something to this effect : As we do not [carry] advertisements and just charge enough to cover our expenses, we are obliged to curtail our exchange list.<sup>1</sup>

Maganlal's article on the *charkha* would be coming. Give a beautiful translation of it. Lakshmidas<sup>2</sup> has given the figures for the *charkha*. You can publish those figures also. You can also give the experience about proportional representation.

Vandemataram from

MOHANDAS

From a photostat of the Gujarati : C. W. 11175. Courtesy : Valji G. Desai

### 303. THE CRIME OF CASTE

In South Africa it is the crime of colour and race for which we are being punished. In India we Hindus punish our co-religionists for the crime of caste. The fifth caste man the *Panchama*—is the greatest offender deserving the punishment of untouchability, unapproachability, invisibility and what not. An extraordinary case that was tried in a Madras Presidency court brings vividly to light the sad plight of our suppressed countrymen. A simple cleanly dressed *Panchama* entered a temple in a perfectly devotional spirit without the slightest intention of hurting anybody's feeling or insulting any religion. He had been in the habit of paying his respects at this temple every year though he did not enter it. But last year in his ecstatic mood he forgot himself and entered the temple. The priest in charge could not distinguish him from the others and therefore accepted his offering. But when he regained self-possession he was terrified to find himself in a prohibited place and ran away from the temple. But some who knew him caught him and handed him to the police. The temple

<sup>1</sup> This sentence is in English.

<sup>2</sup> Lakshmidas Asar

authorities when they discovered the crime had the temple duly purified. Then followed a trial. A Hindu magistrate convicted him and imposed a fine of Rs. 75 or one month's rigorous imprisonment for insulting his own religion! An appeal was filed. There was an elaborate argument over it. Judgment had to be reserved! And when conviction was set aside, it was not because the court held that the poor *Panchama* had a right to enter the temple but because the prosecution in the lower court had forgotten to prove the insult. This is no triumph of justice or truth or religion or morality.

The only consolation to be derived from the successful appeal is that the *Panchama* will not have to suffer imprisonment for having in his zeal for worship forgotten that he was a prohibited entrant. If however he or his fellow-*Panchamas* again dare to enter the temple, it is highly probable that they would be severely punished if they are not lynched by those who look down upon them with contempt.

It is a curious situation. We resent, and properly, the treatment meted out to our countrymen in South Africa. We are impatient to establish swaraj. But we Hindus refuse to see the incongruity in treating a fifth of our own co-religionists as worse than dogs. For dogs are not untouchables. Some of us nowadays even keep them as drawing-room pets.

What place shall the 'untouchables' occupy in our scheme of swaraj? If they are to be free from all special restraints and disabilities under swaraj, why can we not declare their freedom now? And if we are powerless today, shall we be less powerless under swaraj? We may shut our eyes and stuff our ears to these questions. But they are of the highest importance to the *Panchamas*. Surely, judgment will be pronounced against Hinduism, if we as a body do not rise as one man against this social and religious atrocity.

Much has no doubt been done to remove the evil. But it is all too little so long as criminal prosecutions for temple-entry are possible and so long as the suppressed classes continue to be denied the right of entering temples, using public wells, and sending their children freely to national schools. We must yield to them the same rights as we would have the Europeans concede to our countrymen in South Africa.

But this case is not without its relieving features. The quashing of the conviction is no doubt some consolation. But the best

consolation lies in the fact of so many *savarna* Hindus actively interesting themselves in the poor *Panchama's* behalf. The appeal would not have been noted, if someone had not gone to the accused's assistance. Not the least interesting feature of the case was the fact of C. Rajagopalachari arguing the appeal a fit application in my opinion of the principle of non-co-operation. Being in the court, when he got the opportunity, he would have been like a Pharisee if he had sat there stiff gloating over the sanctimonious satisfaction of non-co-operating whilst the accused could have been discharged by his intervention. The *Panchama* knew nothing of non-co-operation. He had appealed to avoid payment of fine or imprisonment. It is to be wished that every educated Hindu will constitute himself the untouchable's friend and regard it his duty to free him from the tyranny of custom masquerading under the name of religion. Not the entry of a *Panchama* into a temple but the brand of prohibition against him is an insult to religion and humanity.

*Young India*, 14-1-1926

### 304. NOTES

#### A WRONG REDRESSED

The Government of Bombay, and I suppose also the Government of India, may congratulate themselves on having though reluctantly redressed a grievous wrong done to a brave Englishman and to India. For they have summoned up sufficient courage not to prohibit Mr. Horniman's entry into India—the land of his love and labours. No one knows the real reason for Mr. Horniman's sudden and secret deportation. He had never been put on his trial, he was never given an opportunity of answering the charges brought against him. Such high-handed and arbitrary deportations bring vividly before the public eye the real nature of the despotic powers possessed and wielded by the Government of India. No one more eloquently pleaded for the abrogation of such powers as Mr. Horniman till he himself became a victim of such powers. I add my own humble quota to the expression of welcome extended to Mr. Horniman. His return brings to the forces fighting for the attainment of swaraj a strength and energy that must gladden the hearts of those who are engaged in that glorious struggle. May he have long life and health for the arduous labours that await him.



## SOUTH AFRICA

Mr. Andrews is fighting the Indian battle in South Africa against heavy odds. The Government of India is satisfied that the Government of South Africa condescend to receive their representatives and even return at times farthings out of the pounds sterling the South Africans take away from their Indian proteges. It is from that Government that Mr. Andrews expects pressure enough to bring about at least a long enough postponement of the consideration of the anti-Asiatic measure so that there may be time for passions to cool and reason to have play. It is a matter only of a few days to know the worst. The Bill will be soon before the Union Parliament. If the Union Government propose to show a measure of courtesy to the Indian Government they will at least defer consideration of the Bill till the Government of India deputation have completed its investigations, returned to India, submitted its report to the Government and the latter have had time to make their representations to the Union Government. But the way things are being managed in South Africa, it is debatable whether the Union Government will show even the courteous consideration that one Government may expect from another.

### BISHOP FISHER'S WARNING

Towards the close of his illuminating pamphlet Bishop Fisher administers a warning to the Union Government in these emphatic terms:<sup>1</sup>

The problem is difficult . . . The proposed anti-Asiatic Bill is not a solution, but an irritant.... I sincerely trust ... the Union Parliament will recognize the impracticability and unwisdom of the present proposal. If I were a white citizen of South Africa I would regard the Bill as a direct attack upon the best interests of the white community, . . . Measures of repression and programmes of extermination have been proven by history to mean the decay of virtues and powers of the perpetrators rather than of the persecuted. Greece, Rome, Russia and many other examples may be cited....

### A CAUSE OF PREJUDICE

Among the causes of anti-Indian prejudice in South Africa Bishop Fisher relates the following:<sup>2</sup>

Still another fact is that the Indians do not drink. The liquor bill of the

<sup>1</sup> Only excerpts are reproduced here.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*

white South African citizens is colossal. . . . The money which an Indian saves explains why he can sell his goods cheaper than the European. Gambling at the races and elsewhere, excessive sports, luxuries, inflated white wages, and other extravagances enter into the high cost of living among the whites, and the relatively lower cost of living among the browns.... the whites expect to have a standard of living which is far beyond that which prevails in their own home countries.

#### TRIBUTE TO SAROJINI DEVI

Writing from Phoenix Mr. Andrews says about the influence left behind her in South Africa by Shrimati Sarojini Devi:

Mrs. Sarojini Naidu's visit has done one thing for which I bless her every day. She has finally cemented the Native cause with that of the Indian as one cause. She made an immense impression both on the Native and on the Coloured people and everywhere I find that this unity has been strengthened by her visit. The very publicity which attended her immensely attracted them and added to her popularity; but it was her genuine feeling of love for them that made them look to her almost as to a queen. She has also left a healthy spirit behind among the Indian leaders themselves. They are not likely now to separate their cause from that of the Natives at all. That danger is practically over at least as far as South Africa is concerned. But I am by no means sure yet about East Africa.

#### VAIKAM SATYAGRAHA

Hindu reformers who are intent on removal of untouchability should understand the implications of Vaikam Satyagraha and its results. The immediate goal of the satyagrahis was the opening of the roads surrounding the temple, not their entry into the latter. Their contention was that the roads should be opened to the so-called untouchables as they were to all other Hindus and even non-Hindus. That point has been completely gained. But whilst satyagraha was directed to the opening of roads, the ultimate aim of reformers is undoubtedly removal of every disability that 'the untouchables' are labouring under and which the other Hindus are not. It therefore includes access to temples, wells, schools, etc., to which other non-Brahmins are freely admitted. But for achieving these reforms much remains to be done before the method of direct action can be adopted. Satyagraha is never adopted abruptly and never till all other and milder methods have been tried. The reformers of the South have to cultivate public opinion in the matter of temple-entry, etc. This is moreover a disability not peculiar to the South but unfortunately and, to our shame it must be admitted, common, to more or less extent, to

Hinduism throughout India. I therefore welcome the decision of Sjt. Kellappen Nayar who was in charge of the camp at Vaikam to concentrate his effort on working among the unhappiest and the most suppressed among 'the untouchables', i.e., Puliya's whose very shadow defiles. It is a golden rule to follow out every direct action with constructive work, i.e., work of conservation. Reform has to be undertaken at both ends to make *savarnas* do their duty by the untouchables whom they have so cruelly suppressed and to help the latter to become more presentable and to shed habits for which they can in no way be held accountable but which nevertheless have to be given up if they are to occupy their proper place in the social scale.

FOR CONGRESS MEMBERS

Those who want to become spinning members of the Congress should remember that they have to pay their yarn subscriptions during the month if they intend to become or remain members. It is not enough that they are members of the A.I.S.A. Every member of the A.I.S.A. is not necessarily a member of the Congress. He or she has to fill in the Congress membership form as follows:

TO  
THE SECRETARY,  
ALL-INDIA SPINNERS ASSOCIATION,  
(TECHNICAL DEPARTMENT) .

SIR,

I am/wish to become a member of the \* Congress Committee. I accept the objects and methods of the Indian National Congress as laid down in Article I of the Congress Constitution. I am sending herewith (or have already sent as Class A/B member) 2,000 yards of yarn tolas in weight, spun by me, being my subscription to the National Congress for the year . My age is . My occupation is . My address is

Date

Signature

\* Give Name of Committee.

The form should be sent to the A.I.S.A. to entitle the sender to membership of the Congress. Members of A.I.S.A. need not send extra yarn provided they have sent self-spun yarn (at least 2,000 yards) for A.I.S.A. membership for the current calendar year.

*Young India*, 14-1-1926

### 305. "DASTURI" AND BOMBAY SWEEPERS

Papers have been sent to me in which I am reported to have said in 1918 among other things that 'the evidence and statements made (as to bribery euphemistically known as *dasturi* said to have been paid by the sweepers in the employ of the Municipal Corporation, Bombay) were such that no impartial person could accept them.' The papers also show that the present Municipal Commissioner has quoted the above statement in support of his judgment that no such *dasturi* is being paid by the employees. I have no recollection of what I said in 1918, but in my opinion it is hardly relevant or fair to quote testimony given seven years ago to refute fresh allegations of a similar nature. Assuming the accuracy of the report of my conversation with the Health Officer in 1918, it does not follow because a few witnesses whom I examined then were found to be unreliable that there was no bribery and corruption at the time or that the witnesses who may have recently tendered evidence are equally unreliable. I do know, moreover, that Mr. Thakkar whose ability for impartial judgment has been questioned and who has been accused of bias against public officers is utterly unworthy of such charges. We have few public workers of Mr. Thakkar's honesty or impartiality. He would not wilfully misjudge any person. For one thing he has no axe to grind, no wrong to conceal. So far as the charge of bribery is concerned I wish to place on record my opinion arrived at after seven years' observation that bribery is rampant in the Municipal Corporation as elsewhere. I am free also to confess that it is a most difficult charge to prove especially regarding the helpless 'untouchables'. If the Municipal Commissioner wishes to find out the truth let him do what Vikramaditya did, go in disguise and see whether he does not succeed in extracting ten rupee notes from these poor people for the *favour* of getting employment or an increase in pay. That the Commissioner will have to learn the language of the people and dress like his underlings is surely a matter of detail when he is bent upon pursuit of truth in the cause of humanity said to be oppressed under his regime.

*Young India*, 14-1-1926

### 306. LETTER TO NAJUKLAL N. CHOKSI

Thursday, January 14, 1926

BHAISHRI NAJUKLAL,

I have your letter of today. I am greatly relieved. Enclosed is a letter from Moti. I want you to come over here. Moti insists on *vasantapanchami*; wants to be with you through life and death. She wants to have the privilege of serving you; therefore she intends to marry you not if or when you recover. She desires to be offered to you even if you were an invalid. Bhai Lakshmidas, Velanbehn and I agree with her, so do not regard the wedding as postponed. If you wish it, it can be solemnized there; just wire to me. We shall perform the ceremony very quietly. I shall not cause you the least excitement, and shall not have many people to attend it.

*Blessings from*

MOHANDAS

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 12108

### 307. LETTER TO SHANTIKUMAR MORARJI

Friday, January 15, 1926

CHI. SHANTIKUMAR,

I have your letter. The papers sent by you are interesting. I have gone through them.

I am glad to know that you will become a member of the Charkha Sangh.

There are two prize essays<sup>1</sup> and they are both at present in Banaras, where the two examiners<sup>2</sup> are assessing them. I will arrange to get them and pass them on to you.

Reports have already reached me of the Maharaja of Mysore's love for the spinning-wheel.

If you keep up the practice of writing in Gujarati, the handwriting and language will both improve.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From the Gujarati original. C.W. 4700. Courtesy: Shantikumar Morarji

<sup>1</sup> On khadi

<sup>2</sup> S. V. Puntambekar, a professor at the Hindu University, Varanasi and N. S. Varadachari, a Congress worker of Tamilnad

### 308. LETTER TO SHIVABHAI PATEL

*Maha Sud 1, 1982 January 15, 1926]*

BHAI SHIVABHAI,

I have your letter. You cannot altogether forsake your wife. But you can observe *brahmacharya* if you desire to. Man can suppress his passions, nay he ought to. We do come across life-long celibates. Even married persons can observe *brahmacharya*.

You should regard your wife as a disciple and instruct her. Her talents may develop with efforts. You should not have intimacy with her. You should have separate bedrooms. In these circumstances you are not to blame if she goes astray. In case she does you can leave her for good.

I see nothing wrong in your intention to join the Charotar Board of Education. He who regards non-co-operation as dharma may not associate with it. You cannot stay at the Ashram, even if you belong to a non-co-operating institution. I believe all your questions are now answered. If you have any further queries do write to me again.

*Vandemataram from*

MOHANDAS GANDHI

From the Gujarati original: C. W. 405. Courtesy: Shivabhai Patel

### 309. LETTER TO NAJUKLAL N. CHOKSI

*Friday, January 15, 1926*

BHAISHRI NAJUKLAL,

I have your letter. We are all glad to know the contents. Now only a few days remain. If you can make it, please come on Sunday or Monday to take Moti's hand. If this involves any risk and if you agree to it, I may send Moti to you at Baroda, along with Panditji for performing the ceremonies and, of course, some of us, most probably, Lakshmidas, Velanbehn and Mahadev will go. If you feel that the mere excitement of marriage is not advisable for you at the moment do not hesitate to say so. Now the only thing to be considered is what is good for you. And now we are looking after Moti on your behalf. We all wish that *vasantapanchami* may not pass by, but we are more interested in your health. If *vasantapanchami* is missed, we shall give

May God grant you both long life and happiness, and may you serve the country and dharma.

*Blessings from*  
MOHANDAS

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 12109

### 310. LETTER TO PHULSIMHA

*Maha Sud 2 [January 16, /926]<sup>1</sup>*

BHAI PHULSIMHAJI,

I have your letter. I can very well see your point of view, but I think no purpose will be served by discussing the subject personally.

*Vandemataram from*  
MOHANDAS

BHAI PHULSIMHAJI  
CHAROTAR KELAVANI MANDAL  
ANAND

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 1294

### 311. LETTER TO NAJUKLAL N. CHOKSI

*Saturday, January 16, 1926*

BHAISHRI NAJUKLAL,

I have your letter. I handed over to Chi. Moti the letter to her, and also read to her the one to me. Herewith her reply. It is now for you to improve her slovenly handwriting and her language. The contents of the letter seem quite satisfactory; it is her own.

The marriage ceremony will start precisely at 3 o'clock on Monday afternoon. I shall be ready by then.

You can bring along anyone you want to. Let me know who are keen on observing caste restrictions.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 12111

<sup>1</sup> From the postmark

### 312. LETTER TO NAJUKLAL N. CHOKSI

ASHRAM,  
Maha Sud 2 [January 16, 1926]

BHAISHRI NAJUKLAL,

I have your letter. We expect you on Monday. Someone will go to the Ahmedabad station to receive you, and bring you by car so as to spare you the jolts. If you do not resist we are certainly going to marry you off, and then you can go if you are fit and want to return the same day; otherwise we can nurse you here. May God take care of you and bring you here hale and hearty.

I am very pleased with all that is happening.

*Blessings from*  
MOHANDAS

[PS.]

By the time you reach I shall be ready to end my silence. I shall adjust my period of silence to the arrival of your train so that I can speak when you come.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 12112

### 313. THERE VITAL QUESTIONS<sup>1</sup>

A friend has asked me three questions in a most humble spirit:

1. You regard the four divisions of castes as based on birth. You also believe that a man's caste does not prevent him from doing the duties attaching to other castes and that any man, irrespective of his birth, may have the qualities of a Brahmin, or a Kshatriya or a Sudra. If this is the case, where is the use of maintaining this division, and consequently, an order of superiority and inferiority? Why should the accident of birth make a man a Brahmin or a Kshatriya or a Sudra? Why attach so much importance to birth?

2. You believe in *advaitism* (non-dualism), and you also say that the world has neither beginning nor end and is real. Neither are you a dualist, for you believe in the freedom of the individual *atman*. Would it be improper then to call you an *anekantavadi* or *syadvadi* (believer in the doctrine of the

<sup>1</sup> The Gujarati original of this appeared in *Navajivan*, 17-1-1926. This is a translation by Mahadev Desai.



manyness of reality).

3. You have often said that God is an impersonal, absolute Being, free from passions or attributes, which means that He is not the author of the universe nor does He sit in judgment over man's virtue and vice. And you talk of the will of God every now and then. How can a God without any attribute have a will, and how can you conform your will to His? Your *atman* is free to do whatever he likes. If he does not succeeds in doing it, it is the result of his past doings, God has nothing to do with it. And yet *you* cannot be talking of the will of God to beguile the common folk, for you are a satyagrahi. Why then this fatalism?

1. In accepting the fourfold division, I am simply accepting the laws of Nature, taking for granted what is inherent in human nature, and the law of heredity. We are born with some of the traits of our parents. The fact that a human being is born only in the human species shows that some characteristics, i.e., caste is determined by birth. There is scope enough for freedom of the will inasmuch as we can to a certain extent reform some of our inherited characteristics. It is not possible in one birth entirely to undo the results of our past doings, and in the light of it, it is in every way right and proper to regard him as a Brahmin who is born of Brahmin parents. A Brahmin may by doing the deeds of a Sudra become a Sudra in this very birth, but the world loses nothing in continuing to treat him as a Brahmin. Caste as it exists today is no doubt a travesty of the original fourfold division which only defined men's different callings. And this trifling with it has been its undoing. But how can I, for that reason, discard the law of Nature which I see being fulfilled at every step? I know that if I discard it, I would be rid of a lot of trouble. But that would be an idle short-cut. I have declared from the house-tops that a man's caste is no matter for pride, that no superiority attaches to any of the four divisions. A true Brahmin will feel it an honour to serve the lowliest of Sudras. In fact a Brahmin, to be a Brahmin, should have the qualities of a Kshatriya, a Vaisya and a Sudra plus his own. Only he should predominantly be a man of divine knowledge. But caste today is in the crucible, and only heaven knows, or perhaps the Brahmins know, the final result.

2. I am an *advaitist* and yet I can support *dvaitism* (dualism). The world is changing every moment, and is therefore unreal, it has no permanent existence. But though it is constantly changing, it has something about it which persists and it is therefore to that extent real.

I have therefore no objection to calling it real and unreal, and thus being called an *anekantavadi* or a *syadvadi*. But my *syadvada* is not the *syadvada* of the learned, it is peculiarly my own. I cannot engage in a debate with them. It has been my experience that I am always true from my point of view, and am often wrong from the point of view of my honest critics. I know that we are both right from our respective points of view. And this knowledge saves me from attributing motives to my opponents or critics. The seven blind men who gave seven different descriptions of the elephant were all right from their respective points of view, and wrong from the point of view of one another, and right and wrong from the point of view of the man who knew the elephant. I very much like this doctrine of the manyness of reality. It is this doctrine that has taught me to judge a Mussalman from his own standpoint and a Christian from his. Formerly I used to resent the ignorance of my opponents. Today I can love them because I am gifted with the eye to see myself as others see me and *vice versa*. I want to take the whole world in the embrace of my love. My *anekantavada* is the result of the twin doctrine of *Satya* and *Ahimsa*.

3. I talk of God exactly as I believe Him to be. Why should I beguile people into error and work my own perdition? I seek no reward from them. I believe God to be creative as well as non-creative. This too is the result of my acceptance of the doctrine of the manyness of reality. From the platform of the Jains I prove the non-creative aspect of God, and from that of Ramannuja the creative aspect. As a matter of fact, we are all thinking of the Unthinkable, describing the Indescribable, seeking to know the Unknown, and that is why our speech falters, is inadequate and even often contradictory. Then why do the Vedas describe *Brahman* as "not this", "not this"? But if He or It is not this, He or It is. If we exist if our parents and their parents have existed, then it is proper to believe in the Parent of the whole creation. If He is not, we are nowhere. And that is why all of us with one voice call *one* God differently as Paramatma, Ishwara, Siva, Vishnu, Rama, Allah, Khuda, Dada Hormuzda, Jehovah, God, and an infinite variety of names. He is *one* and yet many; He is smaller than an atom, and bigger than the Himalayas; He is contained even in a drop of the ocean, and yet not even the seven seas can compass Him. Reason is powerless to know Him. He is beyond the reach or grasp of reason. But I need not labour the point. Faith is essential in this matter. My logic can make and unmake innumerable hypotheses. An atheist might floor me in a debate. But my faith runs so very much faster

than Any reason that I can challenge the whole world and say, "God is; was and ever shall be."

But those who want to deny His existence are at liberty to do so. He is merciful, and compassionate. He is not an earthly king needing an army to make us accept His sway. He allows us freedom, and yet His compassion commands obedience to His will. But if anyone of us disdain to bow to His will, He says: 'So be it. My sun will shine no less for these, my clouds will rain no less for these. I need not force thee to accept my sway.' Of such a God let the ignorant dispute the existence. I am one of the millions of wise men who believe Him and am never tired of bowing to Him and singing His glory

*Young India*, 21-1-1926

### 314. GURUKULS

The word "gurukul" has come to have a technical meaning and denotes a particular type of educational institution run by Arya Samajists. Referring to these gurukuls, a friend writes:<sup>1</sup>

To my knowledge I have no contempt for anybody, how then, could I have it for Arya Samajists? I have had occasions of contact with Arya Samajists and my connections with them continue right to this day. After the publication of the article containing my criticism, our relationship or mutual love has not become less warm. It is, therefore, a painful surprise to me that my article should have created a feeling of contempt in anyone's mind. My differences with Arya Samajists about certain activities of their are no reason why I should be blind to their other virtues or forget their service to the nation. They have infused a new spirit into the people. They have drawn attention to certain evils which have found their way into Hinduism. They have infused a new spirit into the people. They have drawn attention to certain evils which have found their way into Hinduism. They have displayed courage and attempted big tasks, have made a great contribution towards the education of girls, have worked for the welfare of untouchable communities and spread the study of Sanskrit and Hindi. Swami Dayanand resisted his parents with satyagraha right

<sup>1</sup> The letter is not translated here. The correspondent had praised the Arya Samajists' work for untouchable communities and said that Gandhiji's criticism of them, though prompted by his sincere regard for them, had been misunderstood by his followers.

from his childhood and taught the people the great lesson of *brahmacharya*; these facts will always be remembered with reverence. I know Vidyadevi's love for khadi. I am trying to send to her a lady who will teach weaving. My connection with the Kangri Gurukul is a longstanding one. I cannot forget that its inmates, inspired by Swamiji, did manual work and sent me money in South Africa. I am not unaware that the teachers there are lovers of khadi. If there was no mention of the Supa Gurukul in *Navajivan*, the reason was not indifference, it could certainly not be contempt. The responsibility for the omission must lie with Mahadev or with me. I know that I was not responsible. I believe it impossible that Mahadev has contempt for the gurukuls. But it is likely that flitting, flying from place to place in our tours like express trains, one may sometimes forget to mention an event. I believe Supa Gurukul to be a praiseworthy venture. I was impressed by the spirit and energy of its head. That is why I had agreed to visit the place. I could see that they were doing good work in the field of khadi. I am convinced that gurukuls, too, have been making a valuable contribution in the field of education and I wish prosperity to these institutions.

[From Gujarati]]

*Navajivan*, 17-1-1926

### 315. LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

[January 17, 1926]<sup>1</sup>

CHI. MATHURADAS,

I have your letter. I do not believe that your illness is going to be as prolonged as the doctor says. But I have no doubt at all that you should stay there until you are fully cured. You will begin to get the real benefit of the climate there only now as it starts getting warm. Do not be impatient about getting up and walking around. It does not matter if it takes some time before you can walk about. It is best to be patient so long as the pain persists.

Also your diet should be such as will help in the movement of the bowels. Are you not permitted as yet to take fruit? It is necessary to take oranges. And when the Nasik grapes are available, you must have plenty of them.

<sup>1</sup>From *Bapuni Prasadi*; vide "Letter to Mathuradas Trikumji", 17-1-1926.

I am very glad that Taramati will be arriving there on Tuesday. The child will be the chief gainer. Taramati should go out for walks every day.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

[PS.]

I think your company will be enough for Devdas. Besides, many people will be visiting Deolali. Devdas will be able to cultivate their company. The patient need not worry about the nurse.

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

### 316. *LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI*

*Maha Sud 4 [January 18, 1926]<sup>1</sup>*

CHI. MATHURADAS,

Congratulations on your being permitted to take walks. Now there should be no harm if slowly you do a little climbing. I am very happy that you have started walking just when Taramati is arriving there.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

SJT. MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

WINDY HALL

NASIK ROAD

DEOLALI

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

<sup>1</sup>The postmark bears the date January 19, 1926. *Maha Sud 4* corresponded to January 18.

### 317. SPEECH AT MARRIAGE CEREMONY<sup>1</sup>

January 18, 1926

We do two things on the occasion of a marriage here. We bless the couple on behalf of the Ashram and ponder over the propriety of participating in a function apparently opposed to the ideals of the Ashram.

In non-violence there is no room for force and so there should be, and there can be, no compulsion in the observance of vows. Myself and my companions have seen that it is easy to practise *brahmacharya*, once it is understood; but the understanding has to issue from the heart, not from the head. One cannot master it solely with the intellect. And so do the Shastras emphasize that only a rare individual can practise it in thought, word and deed.

Its practice becomes difficult for yet another reason. Our experiments here are opposed to the normal ways of the world. To keep the appearance of worldliness and yet to practise *brahmacharya*, this makes it all the more difficult. The Shastras do not seem to have laid much stress on restraining the palate; but if this can be achieved, *brahmacharya* is much more easy. Restraining the palate is more difficult than practising *brahmacharya*. I have tried many devices and resigned myself to the conclusion. A man may restrict himself just to four items or to milk alone but all these restrictions are of no avail. Thereby he controls the senses but does not conquer them. He may smack his lips over a single item of food. I have known it myself. A single item can give all the tickle to the palate, the mouth waters all through the day, and we are aware of it. If one eats for the sake of nutrition only without delighting in its savour and without being a slave of the palate, that is the correct attitude. Very few people can achieve this state.

It is difficult to say how many of us practise this restraint and to what extent. We do claim, however, that we practise *brahmacharya*. How strange, then, that we celebrate a function opposed to it! We do not know whether it is *dharma* or *adharm*a. I would translate "What to do and what not to do" of the Gita as "What is *dharma* and what is *adharm*a".

<sup>1</sup> Of Najuklal Choksi and Moti, daughter of Lakshmidas Assar, at Satyagraha Ashram, Sabarmati

In my view, marriage is *dharma*. All worldly activities are intended for learning self-restraint. Our sense gratification should therefore be restricted to the indispensable. Where other people find pleasure, my inner self finds none. On such occasions I pray to God for deliverance. Even while eating, I remember defecation. The occasion of marriage should remind us of self-restraint. If desires cannot be conquered, they should be harnessed, that is, they should be directed to one object. Such restriction is better than promiscuity. The marriage vow repeatedly enjoins on the bridegroom not to go astray, leaving his wife. Moreover, this marriage ceremony has been performed with bare religious rites. There were no inducements, no dowry, no ornaments, nor any discord between the marriage parties. All this again teaches restraint. In these matters also we should seek and practise restraint. That is why all and sundry have not been invited to this function. It is the good fortune of the Ashram that it has had an opportunity to solemnize the marriage of persons who understand what restraint means and are resolved to practise it.

All others who wish to marry should frankly say so and put all inmates of the Ashram at ease. Let them not feel that the Ashram would come in their way.

[From Gujarati]

Raojibhai's Manuscript Diary. Courtesy: R. N. Patel

### 318. LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

*Saturday* [Before January 19, 1926]<sup>1</sup>

CHI. MATHURADAS,

There has been no letter from you but Devdas has written on your behalf. I am glad. The more you rest the quicker you will recover. I shall be perfectly satisfied if Devdas keeps writing to me. I shall certainly want you to write when you are able to sit up and move about. Increase and decrease in pain are natural. You must only take care and see that you do not get fever. I like the change of diet that Devdas mentions. I consider raisins better than dried figs. And toast is better than biscuits.

<sup>1</sup>This letter appears to have been written before Taramati joined her husband at Deolali on January 19, 1926.

There is a letter from Nirmala today. I learn from it that Taramati and Dilip<sup>1</sup> are in good health.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

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

### *319. INTERVIEW TO LANGELOTH AND KELLY*

[Before 21 January 21, 1926]<sup>2</sup>

Mrs. Langeloth and Mrs. Kelly, delegated personally to present to Gandhiji the resolution of invitation to visit America on behalf of the Fellowship of Faiths, League of Neighbours, and Union of East and West, visited him last week. They were evidently prepared for the reply, but the resolution had to be presented. Not without considerable hesitation said Mrs. Kelly: "Would you not visit America, Mr. Gandhi? We would very much like to hear from you your message. Money, I know, is no consideration to you, but I may say that your visit can help us to render you pecuniary assistance in your work here. There are private homes there ready to receive you and to look after you whilst you are there."

[GANDHIJI:] I know, I would be overwhelmed with affection if ever I went to America. But as I have already explained to other friends I cannot as yet think of going there, without having finished my work here. I must work away amongst my own people, and not swerve from my path. Dr. Ward writing to me the other day said he was entirely at one with me in thinking that my visit would not be of much use in the present circumstances. And don't you think he is right? I know crowds would gather around me to hear me, I would get receptions everywhere but beyond that my visit would have no other result.

[KELLY:] Don't you think, Mr. Gandhi, we are ready to receive your message? Look at the gathering under the auspices of the Fellowship of Faiths. No less than ten faiths were represented there, and when a lecture about you was broadcast millions listened to it with intense interest. Mr. John Haines Holmes also earnestly desires you to pay a visit. We are growing, and we would like to accelerate the growth.

I know you are growing. But a gentle, steady growth would be more enduring than growth induced by lecturing campaigns and

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

<sup>2</sup> From a report by Mahadev Desai



fireworks display. You must, at present, study my message through my writings and try to live up to it if it is acceptable to you. I could not hope to make you live up to it unless I have succeeded in making my own people do it. Every moment of my time is therefore usefully employed here and I would be doing violence to my inner being if I left my work and proceeded to America.

Mrs. Kelly and Mrs. Langeloth seemed to be convinced and they now turned to putting a question or two before they left."Mr. Gandhi, is it true that you are a reactionary? I have heard some of your own people say so."

What do they mean by 'reactionary'? If they mean that I am a civil resister and law-breaker I have been that all these years. If they mean that I have discarded all other methods and adopted non-violence, symbolized by the spinning-wheel, they are right.

Mrs. Kelly could not say, but I could well guess what was at the back of her mind from the questions that followed. In his remarkable autobiography, Henry Ford refers to a species of reformers whom he calls 'reactionary' meaning thereby those who want to go back to an old order of things. And Mrs. Kelly's next question was,"Is it true that you object to railways, steamships and other means of speedy locomotion?"

It is and it is not! You should really get the book in which I have expounded my views in this connection—*Indian Home Rule*. It is true in the sense that under ideal conditions we should not need these things. It is not true in the sense that in these days it is not easy to sever ourselves from those things. But is the world any the better for those quick instruments of locomotion? How do these instruments advance man's spiritual progress? Do they not in the last resort hamper it? And is there any limit to man's ambition? Once we were satisfied with travelling a few miles an hour, today we want to negotiate hundreds of miles in an hour, one day we might desire to fly through space. What will be the result? Chaos—we would be tumbling upon one another, we would be simply smothered.

But do masses desire these things?

They do. I have seen mobs getting almost mad on Sundays and holidays. In London a long unbreakable train of motor cars at every corner is quite a usual phenomenon. And what is all this worry and fateful hurry for? To what end? I tell you if by some sudden catastrophe all these instruments were to be destroyed I would not shed a single tear. I would say, it is a proper storm and a proper

cleansing.

But supposing you need to go to Calcutta, how would you go unless by train?

Certainly by train. But why should I need to go to Calcutta? Under ideal conditions, as I have said, I need not traverse those long distances, not at any rate in the shortest possible time. I shall explain myself. Today two good people come from America with a kind and loving message. But along with the two come two hundred with all sorts of motives. For aught we know a large number may be coming just in search of further avenues of exploitation. Is that the benefit of quick locomotion to India?

I see, but how can we get back to the ideal condition of things?

Not easily. It is an express moving at a terrific speed that we are in. We cannot all of a sudden jump out of it. We cannot go back to the ideal state all at a jump. We can look forward to reaching it some day.

In short, the reactionary turn, if at all it was, meant a return to common sense, meant a restoration of what appears to common sense to be a natural order as distinguished from the present unnatural order, in a word not everything overturned or everything petrified but everything restored to its proper place.

But I do not think the friends quite saw the drift of the argument. For they too were hurrying through space. They had to catch a train, and were afraid to get to the station too late!

*Young India, 21-1-1926*

### 320. IN DEFENCE OF UNAPPROACHABILITY

A Travancore correspondent writes:

There seems to be a misunderstanding about the Brahmins and their customs or *acharas*. You praise ahimsa, but we the Brahmins are the only community that observe it as a religious function. Anyone who violates it is regarded as an outcaste by us. 'The very association with those who kill or eat flesh is considered by us as sinful. At the approach of the slaughterer, fisherman and toddy-extractor, as well as at the touch of the flesh-eater, wine-drinker, and the irreligious, our moral as well as the physical atmosphere becomes poisoned, *tapas* or religious merit diminishes, and pure magnetism becomes lost.

This, we consider as pollution, and we have to bathe forthwith. It is by keeping up such rules that the Brahmins have been able to preserve their

hereditary virtues so long even though time and fortune have undergone many changes. If free communication with others be allowed without these restrictions, the Brahmin will gradually degrade himself to the lowest of the outcastes, indulge in the vices in private, and pretend to be pure trying at the same time to do away with the barriers of restrictions which give him much trouble in keeping his sins secret. We know that many of the nominal Brahmins of today are of this sort, and that they are moving heaven and earth to drag others to their degraded level.

In a place where people are grouped together into different communities according to their habits and notions of right and wrong (not as per colour, wealth or power as is wrongly followed in the West) and located in different centres, according to their professional, social and domestic conveniences, with perceptible demarcation lines as in our motherland, it is not possible for anyone to remain unobserved for long, if he changes his habits.

If on the contrary one is put up in the midst of slaughterers, meateaters and drunkards, it is impossible for him to maintain himself there, preserving his foreign virtues. Naturally, we seek such surroundings as suit our tastes. Therefore it is that the surroundings of a Brahmin's abode have also to be preserved physically, morally and religiously pure, free from the encroachment of the slaughterers, fishermen, toddy-extractors.

In India profession and the caste-system have been inseparably linked together, and it is therefore natural to believe a man belonging to a caste, to be invariably following that profession.

These are the grounds on which unapproachability and untouchability have been enjoined on us. These, as mentioned above, not only protect the purity of our line but also act as a direct social or religious punishment of excommunication on the wrongdoers, and indirectly induce them to give up their bad habits if they want free communication with us.

You may therefore publicly ask them to renounce their sins and to take to weaving and spinning along with the necessary religious observances of bathing regularly, fasting, prayer, etc., if they want to destroy their unapproachability in the course of a few years. They should not also associate with those who have not mended their old ways of living. This is the way sanctioned by the Shastras. Since there is no way of verifying the private sins or virtues of a man, it is useless to talk of the mental purities of one or the mental impurities of another. It is from public habits that we should judge a man's private nature. Therefore, anyone, who cannot publicly embrace your or our Mother's ahimsa dharma, or at least to the extent of slaughtering, fish or flesh-eating, cannot be considered fit to transcend their hereditary unapproachability. In fact this unapproachability and untouchability are

nothing but a practical means of preserving and spreading our ahimsa dharma.

Though the question raised by the correspondent has been often dealt with in these columns, it is perhaps necessary to re-expose the fallacy underlying the correspondent's argument. In the first place the claim advanced on behalf of the Brahmins as to vegetarianism is not wholly true. It is true only regarding the Brahmins of the South. But elsewhere they freely eat fish and in Bengal, Kashmir, etc., even meat. Moreover, in the South all meat-eaters and fish-eaters are not unapproachables. And even an 'unapproachable' who is severely pure is an outcaste, because he is born in a family unlawfully regarded as 'untouchable' or 'unapproachable'. Do not Brahmins brush shoulders with meat-eating non-Brahmins if they happen to be persons in authority? Do they not pay respect to the meat-eating Hindu royalty?

It is surprising and painful to find cultured men like the correspondent in their blind zeal defend an indefensible and tottering system, forgetting the obvious implications of their own argument. The correspondent strains at the *himsaic* "gnat" of meat-eating and swallows the treble *himsaic* camel of deliberate suppression of millions of fellow-beings in order to preserve an imaginary purity. I suggest to the correspondent that a vegetarianism that demands for its protection a degrading excommunication of others is not worth preserving. Thus preserved it becomes a hothouse growth doomed to perish under the first blast of cold air. I treasure vegetarianism. I am convinced the Brahmins have gained spiritual advancement through their vegetarianism and other self imposed disciplinary restraints. But when they were at their height, they did not need protection for their purity from without. Every virtue loses its vitality when it becomes incapable of withstanding outside influences.

Moreover, it is too late in the day for Brahmins to claim protection of the type mentioned by the correspondent. Happily the number of Brahmins who not only disdain such protection but who are leading the reform movement at the peril of being persecuted is daily on the increase. And in that lies the best hope of the reform making rapid progress.

The correspondent wants me to preach purity among the suppressed classes. He is evidently no reader of *Young India* or he would have known that I never lose a single opportunity of preaching purity among them. I make him too a present of the information that they are responding to such effort in a most satisfactory manner. I

invite the correspondent to join the ranks of reformers who go in the midst of these long suffering men and women and work among them not as patrons but their true friends.

*Young India*, 21-1-1926

### 321. NOTES

BORODADA GONE

It is difficult to believe that Dwijendranath Tagore is no more. A wire from Shantiniketan gives me the sad news that Borodada known as Dwijendranath Tagore has found his rest. He was nearing ninety and yet he was so bright, so cheerful that one could never feel whilst in his presence that his days of earthly existence were numbered. Borodada was a distinguished member in that family of geniuses. Besides being a great scholar— as familiar with Sanskrit as he was with English—Barodada was a deeply religious man of broad sympathies. Whilst he held tenaciously to the teachings of the Upanishads, he was open to receive light from all the other scriptures of the world. He loved his country with the passion of a most devoted patriot. Yet his patriotism was not exclusive. He understood the spiritual beauty of non-violent non-co-operation, though he never failed to appreciate its political significance. He believed in the spinning-wheel with a full heart and had adopted khaddar even at his ripe age. He kept himself in closest touch with the current events with the ardour of a youth. Borodada's death means the withdrawal of a great sage, philosopher and patriot from our midst. I tender my condolences to the Poet and the members of the Ashram at Shantiniketan.

#### ALL-INDIA DESHBANDHU MEMORIAL

Sjt. Manilal Kothari is reaching Rangoon this week to collect funds on behalf of the All-India Deshbandhu Memorial, or in other words for the Khaddar Movement. He is also to collect from Kathiawaris for the budget of the Kathiawar Parishad which is principally khaddar work. Those Kathiawaris who would like to pay to the Deshbandhu Fund for khaddar work in Kathiawar only may so earmark their subscriptions. But I hope that there will be an adequate response to his appeal from those who revere the memory of the great patriot and also believe in khaddar.

## EDUCATION IN BARODA

Whatever may be said against the absentee kingship in Baroda and the niggardly reform policy of the State, there is no doubt about the progress of literary education of that State, as evidenced from a little brochure published by the State Education Department on the golden jubilee of His Highness the Maharaja Saheb. Fifty years ago there were only two hundred elementary private schools with only 800 boys in them. Today there are 78 English institutions including a College teaching 14,425 pupils of whom 345 are girls. Vernacular institutions number 2,916 instructing 2,17,138 pupils of whom 67,384 are girls. These include 219 schools for suppressed classes. There are also 124 Urdu schools of which 26 are for girls. There are in these schools 6,693 pupils receiving instruction. All this is no doubt creditable. But the question arises whether this education answers the wants of the people. As in the rest of India so in Baroda, the population is predominantly agricultural. Do the children of these farmers me better farmers? Do they show moral and material improvement for the education they have received? Fifty years is a long enough time for showing results. I am afraid the answer to the inquiry will not be satisfactory. The farmers of Baroda are no happier, no better than their brethren elsewhere. They are as helpless as any in times of famine. The sanitation of their villages is as primitive as in the other parts of India. They do not know even the value of manufacturing their own cloth. Baroda possesses some of the richest lands in India. It should not have to export its raw cotton. It can easily become a self-contained State with a prosperous peasantry. But it is bedecked in foreign cloth—a visible sign of their poverty and degradation. Nor are they better off in the matter of drink. Probably they are worse. Baroda education is as much tainted with the drink revenue as British education. The children of the *Kaliparaj* are ruined by the drink demon in spite of the education they may receive. The fact is the education in Baroda is an almost slavish imitation of the British type. Higher education makes us foreigners in our country and the primary education being practically of no use in after life becomes almost useless. There is neither originality nor naturalness about it. It need not be at all original if it would only be aboriginal.

### AN ADMIRABLE SPIRIT

A friend who was at the bedside of the Maharaja of Nattore

during his fatal illness thus describes the last scene:

The Maharani is bearing up wonderfully. It does one a lot of good just to see her once! Such a sensible dignified dear little woman! For four days and nights, before the death she took her place at his bedside, did not stir; without food, without sleep, she nursed him. Did everything with her own hands. Chanted hymns in his ears at the last and closed his eyes with the last breath. She does not weep, nor does she let anybody else weep. She goes about the house, like a shadow, attending to all her duties! Such a dignified house of mourning I have never seen.

Such devotion, dignity and resignation are worthy of imitation. In Hindu households there is too much unseemly weeping and gnashing of teeth though our religious literature strictly forbids weeping over death. In many places weeping over the dead has become the fashion and it is simulated where it is not spontaneous. It is a barbarous Godless custom and should be prohibited. Those who have faith in God should welcome death as a deliverance. It is a change as certain as youth and old age and no more to be deplored than the latter.

#### STILL AT IT

The Secretary, Khilafat Committee, Nellore, wires:

Nellore Hindu-Muslim tension strained relations. Reactionary Hindus carrying procession with music before mosques against *mamool* (custom). Mahomedans decided cow-sacrifice. Situation serious. Pray intervention.

It flatters my vanity to be asked to intervene although I have repeatedly declared that I exercise no influence over the fighting elements whose star seems just now to be in the ascendant. But my vanity can avail nothing for the cause of peace. I can only suggest to the parties the sane and civilized method of arbitration. But if that does not please them, the law of the stick is at their disposal.

*Young India*, 21-1-1926

### 322. UNINTENTIONAL OMISSION

A Bishanpur correspondent reminds me that contrary to my wont I omitted in my Bihar notes some time ago reference to the laying of the foundation-stone of the Dharampur Gandhi Vidyalaya. I hasten to repair the omission. I well remember the courtesy of the founders in not dragging me in my weak health to a distance of four or five miles to lay the foundation-stone. They were satisfied with having brought from Dharampur a brick for me to touch. I was told that self-sacrificing volunteers were devoting themselves to the work. The omission was purely unintentional. So many events were crowded in one single day and such things were repeated almost daily. It is no wonder if my notes written weekly omitted reference to several events, though in themselves, or at least for the persons concerned, of utmost importance. I hope that the school is now complete and that it is in working order.

*Young India*, 21-1-1926

### 323. STATEMENT ON GANDHI-SMUTS AGREEMENT

[January 21, 1926]<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Gandhi has made the following statement regarding the Smuts-Gandhi Agreement of 1914:

Mr. Andrews has sent me a cable inviting me to make a statement on the Smuts-Gandhi Agreement as it has given rise to a controversy in South Africa. I observe too that two South African divines have supported my contention.

Let it be remembered that the Agreement is a matter of record. It closed a struggle that had lasted for close on eight years and covered many intermediate and interlocutory arrangements and agreements. Let it be also noted that the Government of India was not unconcerned with the Agreement. It supplemented the Indian Relief measure that was almost simultaneously passed. As is common in all such arrangements, the correspondence between the parties is previously seen and approved by them. So was this correspondence mutually seen and accepted. My letter to General Smuts refers to disabilities

<sup>1</sup> Released on this date by the Associated Press of India from Bombay



not covered by the Relief Act and expresses the hope that even those disabilities which were not then dealt with would be removed in the course of time. It is not to be supposed that after eight years of solid suffering, the Indian settlers were satisfied with an arrangement that might lead, not to a further amelioration of their status, but to their further degradation, ultimately resulting in extinction.

But I do not wish to labour the point. There is the Indian offer, the Congress offer to go to arbitration on the point. Let the Government of India ascertain for themselves the meaning of the Agreement and invite the Union Government to accept the principle of arbitration.

It is not for the first time that the South African Ministers have repudiated the arrangements and promises made by themselves. They repudiated the promise made to Mr. Gokhale about the £3 tax which, as a point of honour was added to the objects of the passive resistance struggle and which ultimately the Union Government had to repeal. So it is the old trick now repeated. It is a matter of honour for India to insist upon the fulfilment of the Agreement of 1914.

*The Hindu, 22-1-1926*

### 324. APPEAL TO TRAVANCORE GOVERNMENT

SABARMATI,

*January 21, 1926*

The Travancore Government is entitled to congratulations on the step they have taken regarding the use by the so-called untouchables of public roads round. But, it is by no means the maximum it could do. I do hope the Government and the Popular Assembly will have the courage to go to the logical extent and insist on throwing open to the untouchables all public institutions including temples on the same terms as the rest of the population.

M.K. GANDHI

*The Hindu, 6-3-1926*

### 325. LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

January 21, 1926

MY DEAR JAWAHAR,

I am glad you are taking Kamala with you. Yes, if both of you cannot, you at least should come here before you go. About the Deshbandhu Memorial, your letter to Jammalalji will be enough. About A.I.S.A., you will remain Secretary but if an assistant is required, Shankerlal should have one. I cannot blame you for not preparing the chart. You have not idled away your time. You should have clothes that would answer in Europe.

Yours

BAPU

*A Bunch of Old Letters*, p. 46

### 326. LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

Thursday [January 21, 1926]<sup>1</sup>

CHI. MATHURADAS,

I have your letter and that of Devdas. Yes, by oranges I meant sweet lime. Now you can take even papaya. I cannot write to Devdas today. I forgot to write to you a couple of things that should please you. First, Ba said that she would be very happy to go there to nurse you. Secondly, she said last night: "Why don't you call Mathuradas and keep him here?" I told her that you could not bear the heat of this place. Of course the next fifteen days will be pleasant here.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

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

<sup>1</sup> From the postmark

### 327. LETTER TO JAMNALAL BAJAJ

Thursday [January 21, 1926]<sup>1</sup>

CHI. JAMNALAL,

I read your letter only on Tuesday; so I could not send for Rameshwarprasad, but yesterday he called on me along with Keshavdasji. I took them for a walk. I invited Rameshwar prasad to join the students in their prayer, and this he has started doing from today. I give them readings from *Bhaktarajani Yatra*<sup>2</sup>.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 2856

### 328. LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

Friday [January 22, 1926]

CHI. MATHURADAS,

I have your letter. You have additional company with the arrival of Taramati and Dilip. Dilip's presence should act as a tonic on you.

Ramdas's problem will not be solved by his going there. He may go there, if he wants. I am beseeching him to be calm.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

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

### 329. SPINNING-WHEEL v. MILL

A Hindi professor has written a long letter which, being of interest for Gujarati readers too, I summarize below:

Do you intend to continue the spinning-wheel movement even after we have swaraj? Will not the number of Indian mills go up automatically then and, their products being cheap, will not the cause of the spinning-wheel suffer?

<sup>1</sup> From the postmark

<sup>2</sup> Gujarati translation of *Pilgrim's Progress*

And finally, since these mills themselves will have accomplished the boycott of foreign cloth, will not your idea of ending hunger in the villages through the spinning-wheel remain a mere fancy? Or may it not happen that under swaraj we shall discover some other remedy for poverty? If so, why should you not devote your strenuous efforts to multiplying the number of mills in order to ensure the success of the boycott movement instead of to the spinning-wheel? If you agree that after we have swaraj the spinning-wheel movement is bound to stop, but think that it must continue meanwhile for ten or fifteen years, could you not have new mills set up during that period and ensure immediate boycott [of foreign cloth]?

The arguments advanced here have been answered some time or other in *Navajivan*. If, nevertheless, even a learned gentleman like this correspondent, a regular reader too of *Young India* and *Navajivan*, has still doubts in the matter, it may be worthwhile to try to answer his questions.

I am convinced that the spinning-wheel will stay even after we have won swaraj. The movement has its origin in the condition of villages. Even after swaraj, cultivators will need a subsidiary occupation and, in our country, spinning is the only possible occupation of the sort. It is not as if the moment we get swaraj new mills will spring up overnight like mushrooms after the rains. Setting up a mill requires capital, and those who put it up expect interest. For a mill we must have land, facilities of water, etc., and workers and machinery. These resources cannot be created as easily as spinning-wheels. If a sufficiently large number of people decide, they can produce one crore spinning-wheels in the country in one day; on the contrary, even if thirty crores wish it, they cannot set up a mill with thirty crore spindles in one day. Experience has proved positively that a spinning-wheel can produce nearly the same amount of yarn in eight hours which one spindle produces in a mill. If, therefore, the Indian people choose, they can, in a few months, produce enough cloth for themselves with the help of spinning-wheels and handlooms. Given a little will and corresponding action, it is possible to bring about immediate boycott [of foreign cloth] with the help of the spinning-wheel, whereas it is not possible to do so with the help of mills, however much we may wish or try. Moreover, if we seek to effect the

boycott with the help of mills, we shall have for a long time to depend on foreign countries for two things for years to come we shall have to get the machinery and engineers from outside.

Again, the multiplication of mills can never end the hunger of the poor. If we cannot find today some other means of ending their poverty, we have no reason to believe that we shall discover it after we win swaraj. No one, so far, has even tried and demonstrated how to employ the other means which have been suggested in place of the spinning-wheel for ending mass hunger.

I am, therefore, of the view that nothing besides the spinning-wheel can satisfy the hunger of the crores in the country.

This being my unalterable view, there can be no question, as far as I am concerned, whether the spinning-wheel movement will succeed or fail. I have even stated my view that without boycott of foreign cloth there can be no swaraj for the millions. I am firm in this view of mine too. Hence, whether it takes one year or a hundred years for the spinning-wheel to become universal, it is the sovereign means of winning swaraj. I am, moreover, serving the untouchable communities through it. I am also making a great contribution towards Hindu-Muslim unity, since I appeal to Muslims, too, that they should take up ginning, carding, spinning and weaving. Setting up more mills will produce none of these benefits. The effort will have been worth-while only if it succeeds. It can yield no great benefit. In my view, boycott brought about by any sort of means can do no good. Only the boycott which has been brought about by the concerted efforts of millions and which has, in the process, satisfied their hunger, can be of immense benefit. Moreover, whether the spinning-wheel movement succeeds or not, it is without any flaw and that is why it can never fail.

[From Gujarati]

*Navajivan*, 24-1-1926

### 330. LETTER TO KALYANJI DESAI

ASHRAM,  
January 24, 192[6]<sup>1</sup>

BHAI KALYANJI,

I wanted to write to you as soon as I had the news, but I just could not do it. And then I fell ill. All that is born is only destined to decay and die. Why then should we lament over it? It is natural that you should grieve for the death of a grownup daughter. But if we look deep into our grief we shall find there nothing but our selfishness and fear. There is selfishness in regarding her as belonging to us and since we ourselves do not want to die we are also frightened by other people's death. It is in the nature of the soul to be untouched by both [selfishness and fear]. But we mistake the body for the soul and therefore lament over one another's sorrows and go on feeding our fears.

May God grant you peace.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 12179

### 331. LETTER TO A SOCIAL WORKER

NAVAJIVAN, SARANGPUR,  
AHMEDABAD,  
January 24, 1926

BHAISHRI . . . ,

I am injured and cannot write my own letters. I wanted to write to you three days ago, but could not owing to rush of work. This pressure is the main cause of my fever. At the moment I have no temperature; nor is it likely to rise. You must have learnt from her letter that . . . has gone to Sehore. In view of the telegram I thought she must leave for Sehore. It was obvious that we could not treat the telegram as a fake. I have had no letter from her yet. I met her quite often while she was here and also talked with her on several occasions. From all this I have reached the conclusion that a marriage would prove undesirable for both of you, besides it might become a

<sup>1</sup> From the reference to Gandhiji's illness

hindrance to your work. She can think of nothing but marriage, and all because of her infatuation. She is a good woman, as simple as she is guileless. She has no urge to serve the country or the people. Her marrying cannot be regarded an ideal widow-marriage. A man like you can get along with a woman only if there is something extraordinary about her desire to marry at thirty. I find no such thing. I would therefore advise you to be firm and cure her of her infatuation. I had mistaken your disease for burns. It is not much if your friends expect you to set an example and forgo parenthood. After marriage I do not think you can escape it. I presume you will not debase yourself by resorting to contraceptives, once you start conjugal life. I am afraid a man with such ideas cannot work among women. Without marrying her you can render perfect service to her. You can regard her as your own sister, you may even support her and take as much work from her as she is capable of. We can have thousands of women as our mothers or sisters but if a number of them were to go crazy over us how many of them can we marry? And if it is . . . today, tomorrow some other woman may be drawn to you; what can we do then? Yes; one way there is. We may follow the doctrine of our age, or rather that of the West, viz., free love, i.e., licentiousness. I want you not to act without thinking.

Having considered all this you will do only what you deem correct. Many people seem to know about your proposed marriage, I do not like this. Even the women in the Ashram have come to know of it. And as Bhai Chhaganlal Joshi says, everyone in the college believes that your marriage has been solemnized in the Ashram itself.

I am going to read this letter to Bhai Kishorelal and ask him to write whatever he wants to.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 12180

### 332. SOUTH AFRICAN QUESTION

I am sorry to say that Lord Reading's pronouncement on the acute position that has arisen in South Africa does not inspire me with hope. He may by some diplomatic stroke secure postponement of consideration of the Bill during the present session of the Union Parliament. But the grim fact that stares us in the face is that, as the recent cablegram shows, action is being taken already in South Africa as if the Bill had become the law of the land, and renewals of licenses are being refused. The principle of the measure is itself wrong. What appears to me Lord Reading is after is that he will secure some trifling alteration in the details but nothing in the substance of the Bill, the substance being the curtailment of the rights of the resident Indian population as they existed at the Settlement of 1914. The fulcrum of that Settlement of that long struggle was no more disabilities, but the steady improvement in the position of the resident population, after the fear of unrestricted immigration of Indians had been removed for all time. That fear was removed, not merely in 1914 but when Natal passed its Immigration Law and the Cape followed suit. There never was a large Indian population in the Transvaal. The Indian population in the Orange Free State was never anything to speak of. But under a popular government once you excite feelings you are bound to satisfy them in some shape or other. All the South African statesmen had excited the feelings of the people, which to be accurate they themselves shared without having studied the question. The Government having however allayed the fear by passing a very strict immigration restriction measure, the resident Indian population had every right to hope that their position would steadily improve in process of time. But evidently such was not to be the case and the history since 1914 is a history of a series of attacks upon the Indian position. If Lord Reading means to do his duty he has not merely to secure a postponement of the consideration of the measure but to insist upon at least a reversion to the position of 1914, bad as even that position would be. Let it not be said when the result of his negotiations is known that Lord Reading had secured nothing which might be considered substantial relief from the point of view of the settlers themselves.

*Young India*, 28-1-1926



### 333. KHADDAR PROPAGANDA

It is a sign of the times that some of the most cultured people are at the present moment engaged in khadi work, with a selflessness reminding one of the old traditions of this land when national or religious religious was rendered for the love of it. I am reminded of this fact by a letter from Satis Babu of Khadi Pratishtan. He tells me that Dr. Prafulla Ghosh is tirelessly going about Bengal, popularizing khadi by lectures arranged for him by Congress organizations, and by hawking khaddar, Bharucha-like, carrying pieces on his own devoted shoulders. Dr. Ghosh was one of the favourite pupils of Dr. Roy, held an appointment carrying Rs. 500 in the Mint. He is now taking no more than Rs. 30 and I have seen personally how he is living at the present moment. Nor is he the only person in Bengal, or for that matter in India, who is living like a beggar and serving the cause of the poor through the spinning-wheel There are many youths of great ability and education in several organizations in Bengal and outside Bengal, who have made khadi their principal, if not sole occupation, and who are doing it for a mere pittance. But since khadi means the service of millions of India's paupers it naturally demands the devotion of not several hundreds but tens of thousands of young men and women.

*Young India*, 28-1-1926

### 334. LETTER TO RAMDAS GANDHI

ASHRAM,

January 29, 1926

CHI. RAMDAS,

I recovered some strength today and so I write to you this, my first letter. The right hand will again have to be rested; hence I shall have mostly to dictate.

Mahadevbhai has kept you informed from time to time about my health. This time the fever was fairly high and quite prolonged. It has come down since four days ago. Milk too has been discontinued since four days ago; I had it last on Sunday, the next two days I was on water, honey and lemon juice. For the last two days I am taking oranges and grapes. I shall take milk from today. There is nothing to worry on my account.

How nice if you could say the same thing about yourself. It is in your own power to bring down your mental fever. Will you not do this? What precisely is it, after all? You must delve deep, search your heart and come to a decision. What can you have in Bombay or in Calcutta? What is worth having lies in your own heart. Explore it; it has hills and dales and infinite riches. This inexhaustible treasure will never diminish however much you may take from it. What does Amreli lack if only you control your mind? Having resolved to stay there, how can you now go back on it? You are wanted there; make it your sphere of triumph. I would not like it at all if you ran away from there defeated and beaten. Hence forward I shall unfailingly try to send the injections. Write to me daily.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 12181

### 335. LETTER TO MOTIBEHN CHOKSI

Saturday, January 30, 1926

CHI. MOTI,

Now I get regular letters from you and am satisfied. My fever is gone; there is some weakness, but that too will go

We are all glad to learn that Najuklal is improving. Your nursing him with a pure heart will cure him entirely.

You seem to be studying well.

Your handwriting has to improve. You will have to write all your life. If you are neat and careful, your handwriting will improve at last.

You must not go on expecting letters from me. I write this with my left hand because the right one is aching.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 12115

### 336. LETTER TO RAMESHWARDAS PODDAR

ASHRAM, SABARMATI,

*Maha Vad 2 [January 30, 1926]<sup>1</sup>*

BHAI RAMESHWARJI,

I have your letters. A receipt has been sent to you for the amount which will be spent according to your instructions. Next time you want to send any money, please send it either by registered or insured packet. For your health, you should consult a specialist doctor or a  *vaid*  and the disease can most likely be cured if you follow his advice. Sprue is not an incurable disease. It is necessary to control your diet. *Ramanama* itself is an invaluable remedy for mental illness. You may find some difficulty in repeating that auspicious name but with constant and sincere efforts you will come to like it. We must not hanker after *preyas*<sup>2</sup> but only mind our *shreyas*<sup>3</sup>. And we should stick

<sup>1</sup> From the reference to addressee's health

<sup>2</sup> What is pleasant

<sup>3</sup> What is salutary

to it even though it may not be pleasant. There is no doubt that its ultimate outcome will certainly be very good.

*Yours,*  
MOHANDAS GANDHI

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 218

*337. LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI*

*Sunday [January 31, 1926]<sup>1</sup>*

CHI. MATHURADAS,

None of you should worry about me. I have no fever now and I am gradually gaining strength. I shall not write more.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

SJT. MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI  
WINDY HALL  
NASIK ROAD  
DEOLALI

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

<sup>1</sup>From the postmarks

### 338. ASHRAM TRUST-DEED<sup>1</sup>

February 2, 1926

Declaration of Trust, Rs. 2,75,000.

We, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi and Maganlal Khushalchand Gandhi, both *Vanias* by caste, aged about 55 and 43 years respectively, by profession weavers and cultivators, both residing in Satyagraha Ashram, Vadaj, Taluk North Daskroi, District Ahmedabad, hereby declare as follows:

After our return to India from South Africa in 1915, we and our co-workers established on 25-5-1915 an institution named Satyagraha Ashram with the aim of carrying on activities of public service. The land and buildings shown in the accompanying schedule, of the value of about Rs. 2,75,000 (rupees two lac and seventy-five thousand only), which are the property of that institution, were purchased on its behalf in our names and they have been and are being used and managed under the direction of the heads of the institution in accordance with its aims and objects. We hereby declare these aims and also declare that the said properties are held in our names in our capacities as trustees of the institution and that we and our heirs and successors did not and do not have any personal right or share in them.

The aims for which the property of the "Satyagraha Ashram", mentioned in the schedule to this document, is being used are as under:

1. *Antyaja* uplift;
2. cultivation of cotton and development of the crafts connected with it, hand-ginning, carding, spinning and weaving;
3. to train workers for activities necessary for the moral, economic and political uplift of India;
4. to establish and run schools to impart education in letters and other training; and
5. to undertake other activities for public welfare such as cow-protection, improvement in the breed of cows, etc.

<sup>1</sup> Presented for registration by Gandhiji at the office of the Sub-Registrar, Ahmedabad, on February 12, 1926, between 11 a.m. and 12 noon, and registered under serial No. 722, in Book No. 1. G. V. Mavalankar and Vinoba Bhave signed as witnesses.

We hereby declare that the following persons have been appointed trustees for the management of the property mentioned in the accompanying Schedule A for the purposes stated above:

1. Shri Jamnalal Bajaj
2. Shri Revashankar Jagjivan Zaveri
3. Shri Mahadev Haribhai Desai
4. Shri Imamsaheb Abdul Kadar Bawazeer
5. Shri Chhaganlal Khushalchand Gandhi

We declare that the said trustees have the following rights and powers in respect of the afore-mentioned property:

1. To do anything or take any steps which may appear necessary from time to time in furtherance of the objects and aims of the Trust and to manage and use the property which is the subject of the Trust in any manner they may deem fit;
2. to sell or mortgage the property which is the subject of the Trust for furthering its aims;
3. to appoint, by a majority vote, new trustees to fill up vacancies among themselves;
4. to act with the concurrence of not less than three from among themselves;
5. to raise, by a majorit vote, the number of trustees by two if it appears necessary for them to do so.

The property described in schedule A is situated within the limits of villages in the registration District of Ahmedabad, Taluk Daskroi. It was previously in the names of the persons who sold it to us and has remained in our possession from the time that we purchased it on behalf of the afore-mentioned institution up to date. Particulars<sup>1</sup> of the property:

We have made the above declaration of our own See will, knowingly and in sound mind and it binds our heirs, successors, executors and assigness.

MOHANDAS KARAMCHAND GANDHI  
MAGANLAL KHUSHALCHAND GANDHI

[From Gujarati]

From a copy of the registered document. 4 Courtesy: Chhaganlal Gandhi

<sup>1</sup> Not reproduced here. The schedule gives particulars of 18 pieces of land; *vide* Appendix "Schedule 'A' Appended to Satyagraha Ashram Trust-Deed", after 10-2-1926.

### 339. LETTER TO MANIBEHN PATEL

*Wednesday, February 3, 1926*

CHI. MANI,

Devdas is not here; he is still at Deolali. I am now in good health. There is still some weakness but it will not persist. I hope you are now well settled there. Let Kamala make as much progress as she can. Never worry about anything. I hope you keep good health. Take daily walks; Gangubai who is at the (Wardha) Ashram will perhaps go with you. Come here for Kamala's marriage, if you can. Write to me regularly.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

[From Gujarati]

*Bapuna Patro—Manibehn Patelne, p. 36*

### 340. TOTAL PROHIBITION

The Swaraj Party in Madras deserves the congratulations of all friends of the poor for having included total prohibition in their programme. Were it not for the very potential force of inertia we would long since have done away with this evil. It is sapping the vitality of the labouring classes, who need to be helped against themselves. There is no country in the world which is so well-fitted for immediate prohibition as India. Public opinion has always been on the right path. No referendum is necessary as it would be in European countries for the simple reason that in India the intellectual classes do not drink as in European countries. The Rev. W. L. Ferguson of Madras has brought out a pamphlet clearly showing the need for prohibition. Of the financial burden the reverend gentleman says:<sup>1</sup>

No country, however rich and prosperous, can really afford to drink, for drink brings nations to the verge of ruin and sometimes topples them over the brink. India is a poor country as yet. She is poor in her capital wealth; she is poor in education; she is poor in sanitation and public health; she is poor in housing, she is poor in agriculture and manufacturing, she is poor in means of communication in rural

<sup>1</sup> Only excerpts are reproduced here.

areas.... India cannot afford the use of intoxicants. Financially the drain is too heavy. Just what the cost is in rupees we are unable to say; but some idea of it can be obtained from the revenues derived by the Government in the Excise Department I do not believe that we shall err very far if we . . . place the amount at Rs. 80,00,00,000. Now of this vast sum the greater part comes from the earnings of the labouring classes—the very people who need it most for promoting the welfare of themselves, their families and their communities. If we assume that three-fourths of the drink and drug bill of India is paid by the poor and the labouring classes, some Rs. 60,00,00,000 is the burden they are bearing. And what could be done towards putting India's poor on their feet, if this vast revenue annually were saved from intoxicants and used for home-building and nation-building enterprises ! . . .

The moral loss is even greater than the financial. Drinks and drugs degrade those who are addicted to them and those who traffic in them. The drunkard forgets the distinction between wife, mother and sister and indulges in crimes of which in his sober moments he will be ashamed. Anyone who has anything to do with labour knows to what create the labourers are reduced when they are under the satanic influence of drink. Nor are the other classes better off. I have known the captain of a ship forgetting himself in his drunken state. The ship had to be entrusted to the care of the chief officer. Barristers having drunk have been known to be rolling in gutters. Only, these better-placed men are protected by the police all over the world whereas the poor drunkard is punished for his poverty.

If drink in spite of its harmfulness was not a fashionable vice among Englishmen, we would not find it in the organized state we do in this pauper country. If we were not hypnotized we refuse to educate our children out of the proceeds of vice which the drink and the drug revenue undoubtedly H.

Mr. Ferguson suggests fresh taxation to replace this vice-begotten revenue. In my opinion no taxation is necessary, if only Government will reduce the frightful military expenditure not required for defence against aggression but manifestly imposed to suppress internal commotion. The demand therefore for prohibition must go hand in hand with the demand for a corresponding reduction in military expenditure. The missionary bodies if they will range themselves alongside of public opinion and will insist on prohibition, study the question of military expenditure, and if with are satisfied that much of the expenditure is a false fear of internal trouble, must demand reduction in military expenditure at least to the extent of the



drink and drug revenue.

The duty before the Swaraj and other political parties is quite clear. They owe it to the country to demand total and immediate prohibition with one voice. If the demand is not granted, the Swaraj Part has an additional count in the indictment against the Government. Prohibition, as Mr. C. Rajagopalachari has so aptly shown, is an item of first class political education of the masses. And it is one item on which all parties, all races and all denominations can be easily united. Since writing the foregoing, I have seen the report of the proceedings of the prohibition Convention held at Delhi under the chairmanship of Dewan Bahadur M. Ramchandra Rao. The Convention has passed what I would call a third resolution. After avowing the imperative need for total prohibition it "urges upon the Government of India and the Local Governments to accept total prohibition of alcoholic liquor as the goal of their excise policy". This I suppose neither the Government of India nor the Local Governments would have any difficulty in accepting. Swaraj is the accepted goal of all parties including the Government of India, but it is the immediate thing for the Congress to attain, a distant goal for the Government to cherish, though unattainable. So will total prohibition be an unattainable goal with the Government. Quite in keeping with this resolution is the advice of the Convention to the Government to "afford adequate facilities for ascertaining the will of the people with regard to this question, the introduction of the local option laws being in the opinion of the Convention the best means of ascertaining the wishes of the people in this matter". As I have already stated, there is no question of ascertaining the wishes of the people, for they are already known. The question is one of the Government foregoing the drink and drug revenue. I wish the Convention had taken up a stronger, more enlightened and more consistent line of action. The Convention has now become a national prohibition party called the Prohibition League of India. Let me hope that this League will adopt a more forward policy and not treat total prohibition as a goal to be realized in the dim and distant future, but a national policy to be immediately adopted and enforced without the cumbersome process of taking a referendum.

*Young India, 4-2-1926*

### 341. NOTES

#### INDEFATIGABLE MR. ANDREWS

Whatever the fate of the anti-Indian measure of the Union Government, there is no doubt that Mr. Andrews' contribution to the solution of the problem will rank as the highest. His tireless energy, ceaseless watchfulness and gentle persuasive powers have brought us within hope of success. He himself though despondent in the beginning stages now holds out hope that the Bill is likely to be shelved at least for this session. He has been quietly interviewing editors and public men. He has been enlisting the sympathy of the clergy and drawing from them emphatic pronouncement against the measure. Thus he has shaken even South African European opinion that had ranged itself in favour of the measure. His deep study of the question has enabled him to show to the satisfaction of several leaders of public opinion in South Africa that the measure is a manifest breach of the Smuts—Gandhi Agreement. He has also brought together scattered Indian forces to focus themselves upon attacking the Bill. Mr. Andrews has thus made a very substantial addition to his many services to—India and humanity. No single living Englishman has done so much as Mr. Andrews to sweeten the relations between Englishmen and Indians. His one hope is to establish an indissoluble bond between the two peoples, a bond based upon mutual respect and absolute equality. May his dream be realized.

#### MIXED KHADI IS NO KHADI

A correspondent writes:

In Palnad in Guntur District is being prepared a variety of so-called khadi with special designs in the border, called 'Kuppadam' border.

The yarn used in the border is admittedly foreign. This is used as pure khadi and is being approved even by Mahatma Gandhi. Is this right?

This is certainly not right. I have never approved of any such thing. I consider it a fraud to describe such dhotis as pure khadi. The question was brought up even as early as 1919 when mill-made dhotis with borders of foreign yarn were used and I know several friends were obliged to reject their dhotis because their borders were discovered to be made of foreign yarn. Such things appear small on the surface but they constitute a silent encroachment upon the reality.

One cannot therefore be too correct about such matters. The only thing I have countenanced is the activities of the ladies in Bombay, who do embroidery work upon whole pieces of khadi. For this embroidery. they are obliged to use foreign silk. But then, they do not cheat anybody. They want to avoid this foreign silken thread if they can get hand-spun. But so long as they cannot, in order to sell their khadi amongst fashionable people, they are obliged to give them some embroidery, and they tell people plainly who use their saris, to what extent the embroidery contains foreign yarn. But from embroidery on pure khadi to the use of foreign yarn in the preparation of khadi itself and calling the latter khadi, is a long and dangerous jump, which cannot be tolerated.

#### THE SPINNING WHEEL IN MYSORE

*The Hindu* publishes a long report of what it calls "a grand charkha demonstration and spinning competition" held recently at Bangalore under the auspices of its Spinners' Association. The chief event of this interesting and instructive function was the address delivered by the Chairman, Mr. Z. Mecci, the Director of Industries and Commerce, Mysore. Mr. Mecci gave an exhaustive, and, in my opinion, a convincing reply to the critics of the spinning-wheel. He insisted that the wheel was to be considered from the point of view 'of poverty and unemployment'.

He said:

It was well known that more than 50 per cent of the population was engaged in agriculture and for about half the year they all remained idle. Not only this but the rainfall was so fitful and uncertain that famine conditions seemed to be a recurring factor every time.

And he showed that for this population the spinning-wheel was the only industry during its leisure hours. He added that but for the distortion and degeneration of the national taste, khaddar would make much greater headway than it had. Of the earning capacity of the wheel, Mr. Mecci said:

It has been ascertained by careful calculation that a person by devoting 2\_ hours a day to spinning could easily earn Rs. 2-8 a month, and taking the total number of persons on an average in a family to be 5, and 2 of these to take to spinning 2\_ hours a day, the total extra income to the 'have-nots' in the State would amount to more than 50 lakhs of rupees a month, or 6 crores of rupees per year. Did their critics seriously ask them to throw away this sum by

abstaining from spinning? There was no doubt that the spinning industry had a great future before it and was sure to gain a great stimulus, if the educated, cultured and the wealthy classes were favourably disposed towards the use of khaddar.

*Young India*, 4-2-1926

342. *LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI*

*Thursday [February 4, 1926]<sup>2</sup>*

CHI. MATHURADAS,

Though many were defeated you won the Municipal election. If you want me to congratulate you I hereby do so. It is surprising that Avantikabai lost.

My health is fine. I am also gaining strength. Hence there is no cause to worry about me.

Tell Taramati that she should write to me sometimes. How does she spend her days? Does she go for walks?

How much does Devdas Walk every day?

*Blessings from*

BAPU

SJT. MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

WINDY HALL

NASIK ROAD

DEOLALI

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

### 343. LETTER TO VASUMATI PANDIT

Thursday [February 4, 1926]<sup>1</sup>

CHI. VASUMATI,

Today I address this to you instead of to Ramdas. How does that lady's treatment work? Do you take any walks?

How does Kusum keep there? Does she continue her reading and writing? Does she have her *sitar* with her? How does she spend her time?

Does Shanta read anything? It will be good if you ask her to keep up her practice of writing.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

CHI. VASUMATI

KHADI KARYALAYA

AMRELI

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 469. Courtesy: Vasumati Pandit

### 344. LETTER TO MOTIBEHN CHOKSI

Saturday, February 6, 1926

CHI. MOTI,

I have never regarded or treated 'thee' as a stranger. In my letters I often address the older children as also the younger ones, as 'you'. There need be no difference between 'you' and 'thou' if there is none at heart. I certainly expect you to improve your handwriting.

Do ply the charkha regularly.

I shall have to glance through the book on duties of a householder.

You should write to me if you have not yet received your copy of *Ashram Samachar*.

I am glad that Najuklal is improving. Both of you may come when you want to.

<sup>1</sup> From the postmark

Gomatibehn is still bed-ridden. She takes some solid food but her health is not yet normal.

For the time being I have to write only with my left hand.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

SAU. SUKANYA NAJUKLAL CHOKSI

BHATIA SHERI

BARODA

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 12115-A

### 345. *HINDUISM OF TODAY*<sup>1</sup>

A correspondent styling himself ‘*Sanatani Hindu*’ writes:<sup>2</sup>

Hinduism of today presents many a curious anomaly. No one cares to study it, excepting perhaps some European missionaries . . . .

There is no definite body of doctrines of practices which may be called *sanatana* and should be respected. . . .

A Sudra’s status in a province where the Brahmins eat meat or fish is different from that in any province where the Brahmins and *Vaishnavas* alike refrain from meat or fish. You have somewhere said:”If you have no objection to drinking clean water given by a Sudra, you should have none to drink it at the hands of an untouchable. . . . some Hindus have religious scruples against having water at the hands of meat-eaters, some against doing so at the hands of beef-eaters.” . . . I wish you could call a meeting of the untouchables of the whole province and take promises from them to abstain from beef or carrion as a preliminary to their being taken into the Hindu fold.

The letter presents only one side of the case. There is reason for the correspondent’s complaint. But Hinduism is a living organism liable to growth and decay, and subject to the laws of Nature. One and indivisible at the root, it has grown into a vast tree with innumerable branches. The changes in the seasons affect it. It has its autumn and summer, its winter and spring. The rains nourish and fructify it too. It is and is not based on scriptures. It does not derive its authority from one book. The Gita is universally accepted, but even then it only

<sup>1</sup> The Gujarati original of this appeared in *Navajivan*, 7-2-1926. This is a translation by Mahadev Desai.

<sup>2</sup> Only excerpts are reproduced here.

shows the way. It has hardly any effect on custom. Hinduism is like the Ganges, pure and unsullied at its source, but taking in its course the impurities in the way. Even like the Ganges it is beneficent in its total effect. It takes a provincial form in every province, but the inner substance is retained everywhere. Custom is not religion. Custom may change, but religion will remain unaltered.

Purity of Hinduism depends on the self-restraint of its votaries. Whenever their religion has been in danger, the Hindus have undergone rigorous penance, searched the causes of the danger and devised means for combating them. The Shastras are ever growing. The Vedas, Upanishads, *Smritis*, *Puranas* and *Itihasas* did not arise at one and the same time. Each grew out of the necessities of particular periods, and therefore they seem to conflict with one another. These books do not enunciate anew the eternal truths but show how these were practised at the time to which the books belong. A practice which was good enough in a particular period would, if blindly repeated in another, land people into the 'slough of despond'. Because the practice of animal-sacrifice obtained at one time, shall we revive it today? Because at one time, we used to eat beet shall we also do so now? Because at one time, we used to chop off the hands and the feet of thieves, shall we revive that barbarity today? Shall we revive polyandry? Shall we revive child-marriages? Because we discarded a section of humanity one day, shall we brand their descendants today as outcastes?

Hinduism abhors stagnation. Knowledge is limitless and so also the application of truth. Every day we add to our knowledge of the power of *atman*, and we keep on doing so. New experience will teach us new duties, but truth shall ever be the same. Who has ever known it in its entirety? The Vedas represent the truth, they are infinite. But who has known them in their entirety? What goes today by the name of the Vedas are not even a millionth part of not real Veda—the Book of Knowledge. And who knows the entire meaning of even the few books that we have? Rather than wade through these infinite complications, our sages taught us to learn one thing: "As with the self, so with the Universe." It is not possible to scan the universe, as it is to scan the self. Know the self and you know the universe. But even knowledge of the self within presupposes a pure heart, which in its

turn depends on the practice of *yamas* and *niyamas*<sup>1</sup> —the cardinal and casual virtues.

This practice is not possible without God's grace which presupposes Faith and Devotion. This is why Tulsidas sang of the glory of *Ramanama*, that is why the author of the *Bhagavata* taught the *dwadashamantra* (*Om Namō Bhagavate Vasudevaya*). To my mind he is a *sanatani* Hindu who can repeat this *mantra* from the heart. All else is a bottomless pit, as the sage Akho<sup>2</sup> has said.

But to come to the other part of the letter. The Europeans do study our manners and customs. But theirs is the study of a critic, not the study of a devotee. Their 'study, cannot teach me religion.

Boycott of beef-eaters may have been proper in the past It is improper and impossible today. If you want the so-called untouchables to give up beet you can do so only by means of love, only by quickening their intellects, not by despising them. Non-violent efforts to wean them away from their bad habit are going on, but Hinduism does not consist in eating and not-eating. Its kernel consists in right conduct, in correct observance of truth and non-violence. Many a man eating meat, but observing the cardinal virtues of compassion and truth, and living in the fear of God, is a better Hindu than a hypocrite who abstains from meat. And he whose eyes are opened to the truth of the violence in beef-eating or meat-eating and who has therefore rejected them, who loves 'both man and bird and beast' worthy of our adoration. He has seen and known God; he is His best devotee. He is the teacher of mankind.

Hinduism and all other religions are being weighed in the balance. Eternal truth is one. God also is one. Let every one of us steer clear of conflicting creeds and customs and follow the straight path of truth. Only then shall we be true Hindus. Many styling themselves *sanatanis* stalk the earth. Who knows how few of them will be chosen by God! God's grace shall descend on those Who do His will and wait upon Him, not on those who simply mutter "Ram Ram".

*Young India*, 8-4-1926

<sup>1</sup> *Yamas*, the cardinal virtues, according to Yoga Shashtra are: *ahimsa* (non-violence), *satya* (truth) *asteya* (non-stealing) *brahmacharya* (celibacy), *aparigraha* (non-possession); and the *niyamas* or the casual virtues are, according to the same authority: *shaucha* (bodily purity) *santosha* (contentment), *tapa* (forbearance), *swadhayaya* (study of scriptures), *Iswarapranidhana* (resignation to the Will of God).

<sup>2</sup> Akha Bhagat, a poet-seer of Gujarat



346. LETTER TO SATIS CHANDRA DAS GUPTA

February 8, 1926

DEAR SATIS BABU,

On this my silent day, I have a few minutes for writing to you. Arun has become chums with the boys and promises soon to pick up Gujarati but Hemprabha Devi is not happy. She appears to be homesick. She asked to leave. I reasoned with her but she spoke to Ba again saying everybody in Calcutta was pressing her to return. Her great anxiety is about yourself. She thinks you have lost the previous joy of life, you are now moody and over-anxious about khadi. If she is justified in wishing to go back I *know* that you will damage khadi by being over-anxious Everything must be done fueZeks HkwRok<sup>1</sup>, I want your promise not to fret about khadi, no matter what happens to it. Who are we? God will surely make it prosper if it is a good thing. We are but instruments in His hands. We have deserved well if we keep pure and keep the door ever open for Him to enter. Let Him have the reins and drive us how He will.

I do not want you to disturb her. I simply pass on what I see so that you may tell me what to do and how to console her. Real consolation must come from you. I am ever on the watch but if there has been any neglect about her comforts and she has told you about them you will not hesitate to tell me everything.

With love,

BAPU

From a Photostat: S.N. 14081

<sup>1</sup> Being utterly unattached

### 347. TESTIMONIAL TO HASSANAND

ASHRAM, SABARMATI,

*Phalgun Shukla 9, 1982 [February 8, 1926]*

Professor Hassanand had demonstrated his conjuring tricks before the inmates of the Ashram with a patriotic commentary running side by side.

MOHANDAS GANDHI

From a block of the Hindi original in Gandhiji's hand in *Magician of Magicians*, p. 110

### 348. TELEGRAM TO SORABJI

[On or after *February 8, 1926*]<sup>2</sup>

SORABJI

SAVOY HOTEL

DELHI

BOTH BILLS INTRODUCE COLOUR BAR. MINES MATERIALLY NOT  
SO BAD AS ASIATIC. BOTH WORTHY RESISTANCE.

GANDHI

From a microfilm: S.N. 11934

<sup>1</sup> In reply to the addressee's telegram of February 8 which read: "Personally feel passing of Mines and Works Amendment Bill worse than anti-Asiatic Bill. It establishes for the first time the statutory colour bar for which principle you fought. Are my conclusions correct? Please wire your views care Savoy Hotel. Love.

<sup>2</sup> From the postmark

349. LETTER TO NARGIS D. CAPTAIN

ASHRAM, SABARMATI,

February 9, 1926

I shall be more prompt in my correspondence as I have from today got good shorthand assistance. It will delight your heart to see the way I am giving myself rest at the present moment. After the prayer, I sleep three times, remain in bed as much as possible; see very few people and write what is thought necessary for *Navajivan* and *Young India* and attend to the most pressing correspondence. No work after the evening prayer. I am slowly gathering strength. The weather is delightfully cool. There need therefore be no anxiety on my behalf.

I do wish you will close with the offer about Kashmere. You must really go there and put yourself right before you plunge into the work at Bombay. Do please therefore go to Kashmere as early as you can. It will gladden my heart to feel that you have permanently lost your headache and have become robust enough for the hard work that awaits you.

I am plotting so many things for you, Mithubehn and Jamnabehn, but it is not possible till you are restored.

The libel on Mira that I referred to was something that appeared in *The Sunday Chronicle* of London and was copied by the *Indian Daily Mail*. She gave an energetic and precise reply. Of course the word 'libel' is an exaggeration but I thought you had seen the effusion and you would understand what I meant.

Have you disposed of the khadi stuff that was left behind by me?

From a microfilm: S.N. 14082

### 350. LETTER TO C. RAJAGOPALACHARI

ASHRAM, SABARMATI,  
February 9, 1926

MY DEAR C.R.,

Mahadev is not here. He has gone to attend a conference in Gujarat. I opened your letter to him. Subbiah has just commenced work, I shall therefore be able to attend to my correspondence better than I have been able to hitherto.

I am not taking quinine. Have you known a single positive cure through quinine? I took it for three or four days in small doses. There is no fever at the present moment. Dr. Kanuga is giving iron and arsenic injections one per week. He has given two. I do not know whether even these are of much use. But I am taking them in order to avoid argument and possible risks. At the present moment I am giving myself almost complete rest, sleeping plentifully during the day. Strength is coming to me gradually. The last fever has certainly undermined the constitution as nothing has since the appendicitis<sup>1</sup>.

Jerajani's<sup>2</sup> advertisement you should not mind. He is advertising khadi in his own way.

What can I do about the National Medical College? Those who are in charge have their own way of doing things. I do not call it improper but I do not understand it. I dare not interfere. It would not be right for me to do so. I do not believe that any appeal to the Indian medical profession will bring the required financial assistance. The selflessness of us, educated men, has well-defined limits. There is a similar institution in Calcutta much older, by no means badly managed. It has to undergo the same financial difficulties. These institutions must plot in their own special way.

I have taken liberties with your latest article. You will see it and comment upon the change I have made.

SJT. C. RAJAGOPALACHARIAR  
GANDHI ASHRAM  
PUDUPALAYAM, TIRUCHENGODE

From a photostat: S.N. 14083

<sup>1</sup> Which was cured by appendectomy in Sassoon Hospital, Poona; *vide* "Interview to V. S. Srinivasa Sastri", 12-1-1924.

<sup>2</sup> The source has "Jheevara Jani's".

351. LETTER TO D. V. KALE

ASHRAM, SABARMATI,

*February 9, 1926*

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter. Much as I should like to accommodate you this is my difficulty. At the present moment I am partially in a sick-bed. I shall not be able to keep you by my side in the Ashram. It is very difficult to satisfy any literary ambition or taste.

The Ashram is a place designed particularly for body-labour. You will not therefore be satisfied with constant body-labour such as attending to sanitation, weaving, spinning, carding, etc. And in no case will it be possible for me to take you except with the permission and at the desire of Professor Vijapurkar.

*Yours sincerely,*

SJT. D. V. KALE

SECRETARY, NUTAN MAHARASHTRA VIDYA PRASARAK MANDAL

TALEGAON (DABHADE)

From a microfilm: S.N. 14084

352. *LETTER TO BHAGAT RAM*

ASHRAM, SABARMATI,

*February 9, 1926*

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your telegram to which I sent a telegraphic reply yesterday.

I value your anxiety on my behalf. I should also love to stay under your roof but I must resist the temptation. The weather during February and March is not oppressive at Sabarmati though it is not so bracing as at Jullunder. I must give these months to the Ashram. I am daily gathering strength and taking as much rest as is possible.

Dalhousie in April is an attractive proposition but I must postpone final decision till the middle of March. At the present moment Deolali is the objective. Punchgani has been also proposed and now proposals come from Singhgarh and Almora. It is difficult for me to decide off-hand whose hospitality will be most beneficial from the health standpoint. At the same time I would not for one moment ask you to keep your place at Dalhousie in reserve for me. If any friend needs it meanwhile or you yourself need it, you will not hesitate to give it or make use of it. I must simply take my chance when the time for decision comes.

*Yours sincerely,*

RAIZADA BHAGAT RAM, BAR-AT-LAW

JULLUNDER CITY

From a photostat: S.N. 14085

353. *LETTER TO K. SANTANAM*

ASHRAM, SABARMATI,

*February 9, 1926*

MY DEAR SANTANAM,

I sent you a telegraphic reply yesterday. It broke my heart to have to send you that reply but I did not want Krishna here when I cannot give her and the children any personal attention and when the Ashram is so fearfully crowded and is daily becoming more so owing to my presence.

Though I am attending to some work, most of my time I pass in bed. Mrs. Gandhi is at her wit's end. I should not forgive myself if Krishna came and was neglected or was crowded into a room. At the same time, this is her home and if she wants to come in spite of the warning let her come by all means and share the difficulties and troubles of the inmates of the Ashram.

I am not likely to leave for any hill-station before the end of March. I hope both of you are spinning.

*Yours sincerely,*

PANDIT K. SANTANAM

10, NISBET ROAD

LAHORE

From a photostat: S.N. 14086

354. LETTER TO K. VENKATAPPAYYA

ASHRAM, SABARMATI,

*February 9, 1926*

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter. Yes this last fever of mine has made me very weak. The climate at Sabarmati is at present quite cool and nice and I am giving myself ample rest. I do propose, if at all possible, when hot weather commences, to go out somewhere. Nothing is decided as to where I would go. But from all accounts I have of you, I fear that you are in no better condition, probably much worse. Are you yet troubled with domestic worries? I understood why you were unable to attend the Congress at Cawnpore.

I remember Hanumanta Rao having written to me some months ago about a friend. I suppose it is the one whom you mention in your letter. I have not since heard any further about him.

Do please tell me all about yourself and the activities in Andhra Desha.

*Yours sincerely,*

SJT. KONDA VENKATAPPAYYA GARU  
GUNTUR

From a microfilm: S.N. 14087



355. LETTER TO SATIS CHANDRA DAS GUPTA

ASHRAM, SABARMATI,

*February 9, 1926*

DEAR SATIS BABU,

I have your two notes with Hemaprabha Devi's note. The yarn you have sent is very fine indeed. It would be an achievement if you can get it woven.

Being prey to illness myself, now I suppose I cannot with much effect warn friends against getting ill. I can therefore only gently ask you to conserve your own. It would depress me to find your fine constitution broken down either under the weight of anxiety or overwork. You must be most careful and take rest where rest is needed.

This last fever of mine has left me much weaker than usual and I am therefore giving myself ample rest, confining work to only those things which are most needful, i.e., a little correspondence and a little editing.

*Yours sincerely,*

SJT. SATIS CHANDRA DAS GUPTA

KHADI PRATISHTHAN

170, BOW BAZAR STREET

CALCUTTA

From a photostat: S.N. 14088

356. LETTER TO JAMNALAL BAJAJ

Tuesday [February 9, 1926]<sup>1</sup>

CHI. JAMNALAL,

Your letter. We shall decide about Manibehn when you come here.

Surely, my weight has gone up a little. I hope it will go up more this week. There is no cause for anxiety.

I have been receiving the oranges sent by you.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 2857

357. LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

[Before February 10, 1926]<sup>2</sup>

CHI. MATHURADAS,

I have your letter. It is clear that you must take plenty of rest. So it will be good for you to pass your time in a leisurely way. If Taramati can form the habit of going for walks, she too can derive full benefit from her stay there.

I see that Nasik grapes are available. It would be good to include them in your diet. Milk, *chapati* and fruit would be the best diet for you. You can take grape juice with or without water if you find it troublesome to suck the grapes.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

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

<sup>1</sup> From the postmark

<sup>2</sup> The addressee received the letter on February 10, 1926.

358. CABLE TO NORTH AMERICAN NEWS ALLIANCE<sup>1</sup>

[February 10, 1926]

REGRET NO TIME FOR WRITING. HAVE NEVER WRITTEN  
FOR MONEY.

GANDHI

From a photostat: S.N. 12463

359. LETTER TO SUPERINTENDENT, LEPER  
ASYLUM, PURULIA

ASHRAM, SABARMATI,

February 10, 1926

DEAR FRIEND,

When I visited your Asylum you gave me the name of the oil that was injected for leprosy treatment. I do not know whether the oil injection is efficacious for white leprosy. A friend is showing signs of white leprosy. There is a big patch on the face near the lips. I shall be thankful if you will let me know whether the injection you are using can serve any purpose in this case. Doctors here are unable to do anything for the friend.

*Yours sincerely,*

THE SUPERINTENDENT

LEPER ASYLUM

PURULIA (BIHAR)

From a microfilm: S.N. 14091

<sup>1</sup> In reply to their cable of February 10, which read: "Would you write memoirs for American newspaper publication? Inform how many words, what price James Warton North American News Alliance. Cable address Nanewsal, Paris."

### 360. LETTER TO DHIRENDRANATH DAS GUPTA

ASHRAM, SABARMATI,  
*February 10, 1926*

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter. The meeting of the A.I.S.A. comes off on the 26th instant when I presume your application will be before it. My cancellation of the touring programme has brought the finances of the Association to a standstill and they are much too low for the applications in hand. There may be therefore unavoidable difficulty in helping you.

I am slowly regaining lost strength.

*Yours sincerely,*

SJT. DHIRENDRANATH DAS GUPTA  
VIDYASHRAM  
KULANRA POST (SYLHET)

From a microfilm: S.N. 14089

### 361. LETTER TO ESTHER MENON

ASHRAM, SABARMATI,  
*February 10, 1926*

MY DEAR CHILD,

I have your letter and I have the parcel too from Menon. There are no directions in the parcel beyond saying that there is a powder as an opening medicine and the contents of the bottle are for malaria. So far as I am myself concerned at the present moment, I am free. If I get a renewal of the attack I do not know that I can take the medicine, for as you are aware, I can take only five ingredients during any 24 hours whether for food or for medicine. Most of these Ayurvedic medicines contain dozens of ingredients. Therefore, however useful they may be in themselves, for me they are perfectly useless. But so many people get malaria here and I would gladly try Menon's remedy if I get the directions. Please, therefore, ask him to send them to me and if he knows the ingredients, he may give me an idea of them.

Now about Friendship. You have used the word 'friend' in three

different senses. If we have the capacity, we can all become friends as Jesus was. There, the word 'friend' means a kind helper. The friendship between ourselves and those who are superior to us is also a one-sided thing. A father is and should be his children's friend. There it becomes companionship with the good, *satsanga* as it is called in Sanskrit. What I have written about is intimacy between two or more persons, where there is no secret and where mutual help is the consequence of, not a motive for, friendship. The motive is some indefinable attraction. It is this exclusive relationship which I have considered to be undesirable and antagonistic to communion with God.

Such was the friendship between the person I have described in the Autobiography<sup>1</sup> and myself.

Does not spinning naturally interest you? I should expect you, if you spin at all, to spin because you are interested in it. And if you are interested, you should master the mechanism and keep your instrument in perfect order as you will keep your stove in order if you are interested in cooking.

Spinning for me is an emblem of fellowship with the poorest of the land and its daily practice is a renewal of the bond between them and ourselves. Thus considered, it is for me a thing of beauty and joy for ever. I would rather go without a meal. than without the wheel and I would like you to understand this great implication of the wheel. If you are to spin at all, I do not expect you to take up the wheel simply because I commend or the Congress recommends or because it is likely to be of economic value.

I am daily picking up strength little by little.

With love to you all,

*Yours,*

BAPU

MRS. ESTHER MENON

PORTO NOVO (S.I.R.)

From a photostat. Courtesy: National Archives of India

<sup>1</sup> Pt. I, Ch. VI and VII; published in *Young India*, 21-1-1926 and 28-1-1926.

## *APPENDICES*

### *APPENDIX I*

#### *A. I. C. C. RESOLUTIONS*

##### *THE FRANCHISE*

A. In view of the fact that there is a demand from a considerable section in the Congress for a revision of the franchise and there is a general consensus of opinion that having regard to the present situation the franchise should be extended, the All-India Congress Committee resolves that Article VII of the Congress Constitution be repealed and replaced by the following:

Article VII. (i) Every person not disqualified under Article IV and paying a subscription of 4 annas per year in advance, or 2,000 yards of evenly spun yarn of his or her own spinning, shall be entitled to become a member of any primary organization controlled by a Provincial Congress Committee, provided that no person shall be a member of two parallel Congress organizations at one and the same time.

(ii) The yarn subscription mentioned in sub-section (i) shall be sent direct by the spinner to the Secretary, All-India Spinners' Association, or to any person nominated by the Secretary in this behalf, and a certificate from the Secretary, All-India Spinners' Association, to the effect that he has received 2,000 yards of evenly spun yarn of the holders' own spinning as his or her yearly subscription, shall entitle the holder to the membership mentioned in sub-section (i) hereof, provided that for the purpose of checking the accuracy of the returns made by the All-India Spinners' Association, the A. I. C. C., or any P. C. C., or any Sub-Committee thereunder shall have the right to inspect the accounts, the stock and the vouchers of the All-India Spinners' Association or any subordinate organization thereunder and provided further that in the event of any inaccuracy or error discovered by the inspecting body in the accounts, stock or vouchers examined, the certificates issued by the All-India Spinners' Association in respect of persons with reference to whose membership the accounts have been examined, shall be declared cancelled; provided that the All-India Spinners' Association or the person disqualified shall have the right of appeal to the Working Committee. Any person wishing to spin for the membership of the Congress may, if he or she desires, be supplied, upon due security, with cotton for spinning.

(iii) The yarn of the membership shall be reckoned from the 1st January to 31st December and there shall be no reduction in the subscription to be paid by members joining in the middle of the year.

(iv) No person shall be entitled to vote at the election of representatives or delegates of any Committee or sub-Committee or any Congress organization

whatsoever or to be elected as such, or to take part in any meeting of the Congress or any Congress organization, or any Committee or Sub-Committee thereof, if he has not complied with sub-section (i) hereof or does not wear hand-spun and hand-woven khaddar at political and Congress functions or while engaged in Congress business; the Congress expects Congressmen to wear khaddar also on all other occasions and in no case shall they wear or use foreign cloth.

(v) All the existing members at the end of the year shall be entitled to remain such up to the 31st January following although they may not have paid their subscription for the new year.

Saving Clause: sub-section (i) shall not affect the rights of those who have been already registered as members under the Article repealed provided their membership is otherwise in order, and provided further that those who shall have paid yarn subscription, whether of self-spun or hand-spun yarn up to September 1925, shall remain members for the current year though they may not pay any further yarn.

B. Whereas the Congress in its 39th Session held at Belgaum endorsed an agreement entered into between Mahatma Gandhi on the one hand and Deshbandhu C. R. Das and Pandit Motilal Nehru acting on behalf of the Swaraj Party on the other, whereby the Congress activity was restricted to the constructive programme mentioned therein and it was provided that "the work in connection with the Central and Provincial Legislatures should be carried on by the Swaraj Party on behalf of the Congress and as an integral part of the Congress organization and that for such work the Swaraj Party should make its own rules and administer its own funds" and;

Whereas subsequent events have shown that this restriction should not continue under the altered circumstances that face the country and that the Congress should henceforth be a predominantly political body;

It is resolved that the Congress do now take up and carry on all such political work as may be necessary in the interest of the country and for this purpose do employ the whole of the machinery and funds of Congress, save and except such funds and assets as are specially earmarked and such funds and assets as belong to the All-India Khaddar Board and Provincial Khaddar Boards, which shall be handed over with all existing financial obligations to the All-India Spinners' Association to be started by Mahatma Gandhi as an integral part of the Congress organization, but with independent existence and full powers to administer these other funds for the fulfilment of its object;

Provided that the work in the Indian and Provincial Legislatures shall be carried on in accordance with the policy and programme laid down by the Swaraj Party under the constitution framed by the Party and the rules made thereunder subject to such modifications made by the Congress as may be found necessary from time to time for the purpose of carrying out the said policy.

*Young India*, 1-10-1925

APPENDIX II  
*FROM EUROPE*

Not only India but also the rest of the earth has heard your message of satyagraha and swadeshi. A great number of young people in Europe believe in your creed. They see in it a new attitude to political things put into action, of which till now they had only dreamed.

But also among the young people who are convinced of the truth of your message are many who dissent from some details of your demands on men which seem wrong to them. In their name is this letter written.

In answer to a question you declared on the 21st of March, 1921 that satyagraha demands absolute non-violence and that even a woman who is in danger of being violated must not defend herself with violence. On the other hand, it is known that you recommended the punishment of General Dyer by the English Government, which shows that you see the necessity for law guaranteed through violence. From this I can but conclude that you do not object to capital punishment and so do not condemn killing in general. You value life so low that you allow thousands of Indians to lose theirs for satyagraha and doubtless you know that the least interference with the life of men, imprisonment, is mainly based on the same principle as the strongest, killing, for in each case men are caused by an outside force to diverge from their dharma. A man who thinks logically knows that it is the same principle that causes his imprisonment for a few days or his execution and that the difference is only in the size not in the kind of interference. He knows, too, that a man who stands for punishment in general must not shrink from killing.

You see in non-co-operation not an ideal only but also a safe and quick way to freedom for India, a way possible only there where a whole population has to revolt against a government that has the force of arms. But when a whole State wants to get its rights from another State, then the principle of non-co-operation is powerless, for this other one may get a number of other States to form an alliance with it even when some of the other States remain neutral. Not until a real League of Nations exists, to which every State belongs, can non-co-operation become a real power, since no State can afford to be isolated from all the others. That is why we fight for the League of Nations, but that is also the reason why we try to retain a strong police force, lest internal revolts and disorder should make all foreign policy impossible. That is why we understand that other governments are doing what they forbade us to do: arming themselves in case of an attack by their enemies. They are, for the time being, obliged to do so, and we really ought to do the same if we don't want to be continually violated. We hope that you will see our point. If you do, we should be very much obliged to you if you would say so in answer to this letter, for it is necessary that the



youth of Europe learns your true attitude to these questions. But please do not think that we want you to forswear something that is one of the main points of your creed, satyagraha.

But we see satyagraha not in an absolute non-violence which never, nowhere, has been really carried out, even by you, or even by Christ himself who drove the usurers out of the temple. With us, satyagraha is the unreserved disposition to brotherhood and sacrifice which you are showing us so splendidly with the Indian people and we hope to be growing into the same state of mind, since it has been understood that a system may be wicked but never a whole class or a whole people (you wrote about this on the 13th of July 1921) and that one ought to feel pity but not hatred for the blind defenders of wickedness. Men who come to understand this are taking their first steps on the new way to brotherhood between all men and this way will lead to the goal, to the victory of truth, to satyagraha. We ask you, in your answer not only to advise us to fight for our country in the way we think right, but we would very much like to know, what you think to be right, especially how you justify an entire non-violence which we see as a resignation to all real fighting against wickedness and for this reason wicked in itself,—as we would call a policeman wicked who let a criminal escape unpunished.

Our conviction is that we ought to follow our own dharma first and before all that we ought to live the life designed for us by God, but that the right and the duty is given to us to interfere with the life of our fellow-men when they ask us to do so or when we see in such interference a way to fight a threatening evil for all the world. We believe that otherwise one is not right in interfering, for only God can see through the soul of men and judge what is the right way for men and we believe that there is no greater sacrilege to be found than to assume the place of God—which sacrilege we believe the English people to be guilty of, as they think to have the mission to interfere with people all over the world.

For this reason we don't understand how you can recommend to married people to deny themselves to each other without mutual agreement, for such an interference with the rights given by marriage can drive a man to crimes. You ought to advise divorce in those cases.

Please answer these our questions. We are so glad to have the model given by you that we want very much to be quite clear about the right way to live up to your standards.

*Young India*, 8-10-1925

APPENDIX III  
*EUROPEAN CIVILIZATION*

Europe boasts of her civilization, her Christian civilization.

The triumphant career of the white race throughout the earth is the watchword of the time .

A triumphant career of the race—that is true. But of civilization, humanity, Christianity? Justice turns her face away and weeps.

Will you find a hell of racial hatred and inhumanity? Then go to Europe.

Look at the collective policy of the Christian Powers in China. First act: shameless extortion, exercised for ages by European profiteers. Second act: the enraged natives react by killing a German ambassador. Third act: Europe undertakes her “Hunnish crusade” under German lead and in the spirit of that watchword, which was ironically pronounced by the satirical paper *Simplicissimus* in an imagined speech of a German officer : ‘Now I propose a toast to a vigorous propagation of the Gospel and a victorious walk over the Chinese swine-dogs (*schweinehunde*)!’

Too justly the Chinese have called us ‘the red-haired barbarians’ or ‘red-haired devils’.

Let us now look at some species of the European Homo sapiens.

The Italians may deserve honourable mention, because Christianity caused them to give up their bestial baitings of wild beasts about 400 A.D. How unwillingly the ancient Romans gave up their *circenses* appears from a curious anecdote. A clergyman found it difficult to keep the converted away from the circus. Then he said; ‘Dear Christians! You *must* avoid these bloody heathen plays. Then, in reward, you may hope that in heaven there may be a peep-hole through which you may regard the condemned sinners in the eternal fire of hell!’ Indeed, a fine and noble ‘Christian’ idea!

To characterize the standard of the ‘most Christian’ nation of Spaniards, it is sufficient to mention the fact that the favourite play of the nation is till this day the bullfight. The national hero is the grand toreador—a cruel tormentor of animals.

France has created the hunting *parforce*.

England adheres to the same noble sport. Look at the illustrated papers published in honour of the Christmas, the Christian feast of peace and charity! During a dinner in Denmark, a Danish gentlemen by the way told an English lady that he had shot a fox. ‘Good gracious! You don’t say so! Shot a fox?’ cried she immediately, seizing him by his arm. Then she turned him her back with contempt—for it was unworthy of a gentleman *not* to torment the poor animal to death! A Danish clergyman sailing on the Red Sea once witnessed the natives diving from the steamer for coins. But the English ladies were not content to see

them jump out from the deck; they ordered them to jump out from the tops of the masts, to make it more exciting! The opium war and the treatment of Ireland in past centuries are other proofs of English morals. Owing to the resistance of the English nation to conscription, England fortunately has avoided the use of forced cannon-food. But what was the munificently promised reward of the Indian volunteers in the Great War? It is sufficient to name Amritsar.

Germany has created the most brutal ‘moral of masters’ before the Bolshevism and the most systematic oppression of the nations ‘of minor value’ (*minderwertig*). The Pan-German programme of 1895 privileges the ‘full Germans’ to vote, to be elected for parliaments and offices, and to buy ground property. ‘They willingly tolerate the foreigners in the country as exercisers of the *inferior bodily labour*.’ A Danish surgeon as visitor in a German hospital once witnessed the transfer of living tissue from one body into another. As he wondered how it would be possible to obtain sufficient mass of tissue, the German professor answered : “*Wir haben ja Polen genug* (we have enough of Poles).” The Delbruck Law of 1912 enabled German emigrants to remain secretly citizens of the German Empire after they had officially obtained the citizenship of the unsuspecting foreign states—fine and noble means of creating thousands of underground agents of Pan-Germanism. Conscription procured the Germans millions of sons of the *minderwertig* nations to serve as cannon-food in their wars, while the relations of the victims were oppressed at home in the most brutal manner. 6,000 Danes from North Schlesvig were thus slaughtered in the Great War for a foreign and hated cause. Through the ‘civil conscription’, the Germans carried away thousands of Belgians into slavery; sometimes, these wretches were even forced to work within the line of fire.

Bolshevism is indebted to the great German Staff for the fortunate foundation of its rule. Pan-German methods of brutality and lie are unfortunately practised and even surpassed. We observe an element of Jewish fanaticism, which results in mere madness. We may here refer to the contents of a Bolshevist poem from the collection *Tsheks ulibajet*, published in 1922 by A. Saprudni: “You prefer to sing of love. I will teach you other songs, of blood, execution, and death. Enough of the gentle fragrance of lilacs! I prefer the flowers of murder. It is the highest delight to crucify the man who loves his neighbour. What a fun to cut a man to pieces. Look, how he quivers for fear, look at his convulsions while he is slowly strangled by the hangman. What a pleasure to inflict wounds. Listen to our sentence of death: a rope, a shot! A wall! Give fire!—And the grave is your fate.”

Three points of European morals are emphasized, viz, the moral of masters, the policy of lie, and the policy of murder. In order to illustrate the European standard, I quote an address delivered by Professor Theol. Baumgarten in Kiel, 1915 ( printed in *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, 15th May, 1915).

The pious professor states that the Sermon on the Mount simply excludes war. But this rule is only meant for single persons. "The ethical system of the Sermon on the Mount represents another compartment of our moral life than our national standard. Its rules for the single soul are not broken, because we realize that it is not at the same time a law for our national and social life." The State, says Prof. B., is created by God and must be defended with the utmost energy. "It is a characteristic of the great nation that it uses the most extreme means, and even the war of aggression, in order to carry out its great aims." "We Germans feel obliged, not only to agree with the war, but also to lead it with the most absolute recklessness. He who has not in these days made up his mind to salute the destruction of Lusitania with jubilant applause and to rejoice at the formidable power of German arms is no right German."

*Young India, 15-10-1925*

#### APPENDIX IV

#### THE CULT OF THE CHARKHA

BY RABINDRANATH TAGORE

Acharya Prafulla Chandra Ray has marked me with his censure in printer's ink, for that I have been unable to display enthusiasm in the turning of the charkha. But, because it is impossible for him to be pitiless to me, even when awarding punishment, he has provided me with a companion in my ignominy in the illustrious person of Acharya Brajendra Nath Seal. That has taken away the pain of it, and also given me fresh proof of the eternal human truth, that we are in agreement with some people and with some others we are not. It only proves that while creating man's mind, God did not have for his model the spider mentality doomed to a perpetual conformity in its production of web and that it is an outrage upon human nature to force it through a mill and reduce it to some standardized commodity of uniform size and shape and purpose.

\* \* \*

Our Shastras tell us that the divine *shakti* is many-sided, so that a host of different factors operate in the work of creation. In death these merge into sameness; for chaos alone is uniform. God has given to man the same many-sided *shakti*, for which reason the civilizations of his creation have their divine wealth of diversity. It is God's purpose that in the societies of man the various should be strung together into a garland of unity; while often the mortal providence of our public life, greedy for particular results, seeks to knead them all into a lump of uniformity. That is why we see in the concerns of this world so many identically-liveried, machine-made workers, so many marionettes pulled by the same string: and on the other hand, wherever the human spirit has not been reduced to the

coldness of collapse, we also see perpetual rebelliousness against this mechanical, mortar-pounded homogeneity.

If in any country we find no symptom of such rebellion, if we find its people submissively or contentedly prone on the dust, in dumb terror of some master's bludgeon, or blind acceptance of some guru's injunction, then indeed should we know that for such a country, *in extremis*, it is high time to mourn.

In our country this ominous process of being levelled down into sameness has long been at work. Every individual of every caste has his function assigned to him, together with the obsession into which he has been hypnotized, that, since he is bound by some divine mandate, accepted by his first ancestor, it would be sinful for him to seek relief therefrom. This imitation of the social scheme of anti-life makes very easy the performance of petty routine duties, but specially difficult the attainment of manhood's estate. It imparts skill to the limbs of the man who is a bondsman, whose labour is drudgery; but it kills the mind of a man who is a doer, whose work is creation. So in India, during long ages past, we have the spectacle of only a repetition of that which has gone before.

\* \* \*

It was while some of us were thinking of the ways and means of adopting this principle in our institution that I came across the book called "The National Being" written by that Irish idealist A .E., who has a rare combination in himself of poetry and practical wisdom. There I could see a great concrete realization of the co-operative living of my dreams. It became vividly clear to me what varied results could flow therefrom, how full the life of man could be made thereby. I could understand how great the concrete truth was in any plane of life, the truth that in separation is bondage, in union is liberation. It has been said in the Upanishad that Brahma is reason, Brahma is spirit, but Anna also is Brahma, which means that Food also represents an eternal truth, and therefore through it we may arrive at a great realization, if we travel along the true path.

\* \* \*

It is extremely distasteful to me to have to differ from Mahatma Gandhi in regard to any matter of principle or method. Not that, from a higher standpoint, there is anything wrong in so doing; but my heart shrinks from it. For what could be a greater joy than to join hands in the field of work with one for whom one has such love and reverence? Nothing is more wonderful to me than Mahatmaji's great moral personality. In him divine Providence has given us a burning thunderbolt of *shakti*. May this *shakti* give power to India,—not overwhelm her,—that is my prayer! The difference in our standpoints and temperaments has made the Mahatma

look upon Rammohan Roy as a pigmy, while I revere him as a giant. The same difference makes the Mahatma's field of work one which my conscience cannot accept as its own. That is a regret which will abide with me always. It is, however, God's will that man's paths of endeavour shall be various, else why these differences of mentality?

How often have my personal feelings of regard strongly urged me to accept at Mahatma Gandhi's hands my enlistment as a follower of the charkha cult, but as often have my reason and conscience restrained me, lest I should be a party to the raising of the charkha to a higher place than is its due, thereby distracting attention from other more important factors in our task of all-round reconstruction. I feel sure that Mahatmaji himself will not fail to understand me, and keep for me the same forbearance which he has always had. Acharya Roy, I also believe, has respect for independence of opinion, even when unpopular; so that, although when carried away by the fervour of his own propaganda he may now and then give me a scolding, I doubt not he retains for me a soft corner in his heart. As for my countrymen, the public accustomed as they are to drown, under the facile flow of their minds, both past services and past disservices done to them, if today they cannot find it in their hearts to forgive, they will forget tomorrow. Even if they do not, —if for me their displeasure is fated to be permanent, then just as today I have Acharya Seal as my fellow-culprit, so tomorrow I may find at my side persons rejected by their own country whose radiance reveals the black unreality of any stigma of popular disapprobation.

*The Modern Review*, September, 1925

## APPENDIX V

### *THE CANKER OF SUPERIORITY*

1. Our Samiti aims at unity and regeneration of our community.
2. Your mission as we understand is threefold:
  - (a) Introduction and spread of khaddar and charkha.
  - (b) Hindu-Muslim unity.
  - (c) Removal of untouchability.

The first two are common to all. We have come to you mainly in connection with the third item and beg leave to give you an idea as to how untouchability stands in the way of unification of the Hindus in Bengal.

3. In Bengal, Hindu Society may be principally grouped into two classes.
  - (i) *Jal acharaniya* (ii) *Anacharaniya*.

Group (i) consists of:

Brahmins  
*Baidyas*  
*Kayasthas*  
*Navashakas* (meaning 9 or 10 castes)

Group (ii) :

*Baishyashahas*  
*Subarnabanikas* (Goldsmiths)  
*Sutradharas* (Carpenters)  
*Jogis* (Weavers)  
*Sundis* (Wine sellers)  
Fishermen  
*Bhui Malis* (Sweepers)  
*Dhopas* (Washermen)  
*Muchis* or *Reshees* (Cobblers and Drummers)  
*Kapaliks*  
*Namsudras*, and others.

Some of these are classified as depressed classes by the Census authorities.

Of the first group the first three classes claim to dominate the rest of the Hindu Society and not only do they despise them (particularly those belonging to group (ii) at heart, but oppress them in various ways, e.g., (i) Freedom of worship in our access to public temples not allowed (ii) mess and hostel difficulties of the students of the 2nd group; (iii) entrance into hotels and sweetmeat shops resented.

In Bengal, those who are taking lead in the movement for removal of untouchability are not, in our opinion, adopting the right method and have not made any appreciable progress in this direction.

According to the census of 1921, of the total Hindu population of Bengal

numbering 2,09,40,000 and odd, the Brahmins (13,09,000, i.e., 17%) *Kayasthas* (12,97,000, i.e., 16%) and *Baidyas* (1,03,000, i.e., 1%) together count only 28,09,000<sup>1</sup> or thereabouts.

*Baishyashaha* community of East Bengal and Sylhet—one of the premier mercantile communities in Bengal—are mainly confined to parts of Mymensing, Pabna, Bogra, Rajshahi, Faridpur, Dacca, Noakhali, Chittagong, Tippera and Sylhet, the total population coming up to 3,60,000 i.e., 3½ % of the entire Hindu population of Bengal.

Literacy per *mille* among the *Baishyashahas* is 342; while that of

<i>Baidyas</i>	662	<i>Subarnabanik</i>	383
<i>Brahmins</i>	484	<i>Gandhabanik</i>	344
<i>Kayasthas</i>	413		

Literacy is much less amongst all other *Acharaniya* classes not to speak of those held *Anacharaniya*.

Our community does not lag behind others in founding and maintaining educational and charitable institutions, e.g. several colleges, many High and M.E. Schools and charitable dispensaries and hospitals, tanks, pucca wells, etc. besides private donations to institutions, educational, charitable and religious,

In point of manners, customs and hospitality this community yields to no other class. As regards female education, this community is by no means less advanced.

In spite of all these, we are treated as if we are outside the pale of Hindu society. And up till now no sincere attempt has been made to recognize our proper status in the Hindu community, although the members of these communities never keep aloof from taking part in all national movements. But for the social disabilities and difficulties attendant thereon, this community could be much more useful.

This community is quite distinct from the *Sundis*. Taking advantage of the fact that the *Sundis* also use the surname *Shaha*, the narrow-minded members of the Hindu society, envious of our prosperity, have been maliciously and falsely stigmatizing this community by classing them with the *Sundis* (liquor traders). We have, however, succeeded to a great extent to remove the mischievous and wrong notions created as above, establishing from history that this community belonging to *Baishya Barna* migrated from time to time for trading purposes from North Western India and settled in parts of East Bengal and Sylhet, and that, as this community could not shake off the Buddhistic influence as easily as the other classes when Brahminism revived, they were not given a proper place in the Hindu society and left in a despised condition.

<sup>1</sup> This appears to be a slip. The total should be 27,09,000.



For the purpose of ameliorating our condition and for having our proper status recognized, we have formed associations which are doing considerable work.

Total removal of untouchability is in the opinion of this community, essential to solidarity of the Hindus and, consequently, to Hindu-Muslim unity. We approach you, Mahatmaji, with the request that, in your public utterances, regarding untouchability, you will not lose sight of the peculiar features of the Hindu society in Bengal, as we have tried to give you an idea of; and we solicit your advice, as of one who is a born devotee and a fighter for the cause of the down-trodden, in our fight with the bureaucracy in the Hindu society.

*Young India*, 5-11-1925

## APPENDIX VI

### *SPINNING IN AMERICA*

The Revolution was a war of independence by independents; for aside from their pioneer daring and courage, faith, endurance and marksmanship, their main strength of preparedness lay in the fact that every home made its own food, drink, medicine, fuel, lighting, clothing and shelter. It was more effective than gun-powder.

In this winter climate without the handlooms and spinning-wheels, and the flax and sheep fold of every home, the American soldier would have died of exposure to the winter cold.

The wool and flax were raised and spun at home into thread and yarn, and knit into stockings, mittens, caps and blankets, or woven into clothing.

After the hard work of clearing trees and pulling stumps, as well as removing large stones, the flax and hemp patch was planted. This operation alone took all the energy that is consumed in several football games, with fewer fatalities.

Even the children were given a share in the work, as they had to weed the patch. The stalks were very tender when they first came up, and the children had to work bare-footed and step facing the wind, so if any plants were trodden down the wind would blow the fallen plant back into place.

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Daughters' feet in those days were used to work the treadle, and often to rock a heavy wooden cradle, while mother churned the butter, and she was cheered with the thought that at night, she could put on a clean kerchief and adjust her curls, and go on spinning, but she would have help for the sweetheart would come after sunset when he had finished swingling the flax. She would spin until the clock reel ticked at rare and propitious moments, when it had counted the exact number of strands in a knot—usually forty. Then the spinner would stop and tie the knot while her companion would do what he could in those rare moments toward trying

another kind of knot, for according to a quaint old ballad, "He kissed Mistress Polly when the clock reel ticked".

When the early American woman wished to spend the day in cheerful companionship, she would rise with the sun, do her household chores, then jump on horseback and with her flax wheel tied behind, and the baby under one arm, ride to her neighbour's home, sometimes at quite a distance from her home.

#### SPINNING TOURNAMENTS

In 1754, spinning exhibitions were held and on such occasions, ministers preached to the spinsters as they gathered with their wheels. One of these is described by an old antiquarian in a quaint way: "A number of respectable ladies of the town, met at sunrise with their wheels, to spend the day at the house of the Rev. Jedidiah Jewell, in the laudable design of a spinning match.

"At an hour before sunset, the ladies there appearing neatly dressed, principally in homespun, a polite and generous repast of American production was set for their entertainment. After which many being present of both sexes, Mr. Jewell delivered a profitable discourse from Romans xii, 2: 'Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord'."

Matters of church and patriotism were never far apart in New England, so when spinners gathered at New London, Newbury, Ipswich or Beverly, they always had a sermon, with an appropriate text. One favourite text was: "And all the women that were wise-hearted did spin with their hands." Exodus xxxv, 25.

"Truly it was a pleasing sight; some spinning, some reeling, some carding cotton, some combing flax, as they were preached to," said a contemporary writer.

\* \* \*

In 1640 the courts of Massachusetts and Connecticut passed two orders directing the growth of flax, ascertaining what colonists were skilful in breaking, spinning, weaving, ordering that boys and girls be taught to spin, and offering a bounty for linen, grown, spun and woven in the colony.

Every family was ordered to spin so many pounds of flax a year, or to pay a fine. Prizes were offered for quantity and quality and societies were formed for promoting industry, and frugality by the rich and poor.

Benjamin Franklin wrote later in Poor Richard's Almanac:

"Many estates are spent in the getting,  
Since women for tea forsook spinning and knitting."

The 'all wool and a yard wide' goods which we purchase so easily today meant the work of many weeks and months to the colonial dame.

Wool-spinning is one of the most flexible and alert series of movements imaginable and to its varied poises our grandmothers may owe part of the dignity of carriage that was so characteristic of them.

\* \* \*

In the summer of 1775, Congress made a demand on the people, for 13,000 warm coats to be ready for the soldiers by cold weather.

There were no contractors then to supply cloth and garments, but throughout the country by hundreds of hearthstones, wool-wheels and hand-loom were started eagerly at work, and the order was filled by the work of patriotic women of America.

#### HEROES IN HOMESPUN

Washington's army was called "the Homespuns" in derision, but there was more in the name than they knew just then. As for women, they grew to love their looms as companions in the conflict, and they wove their prayers and love into the cloth.

In 1775, one of these patriotic women of Colchester, Coun, named Abigail Foote, wrote down her daily work in her diary, and here is sample of a day's work:

"Fixed gown for Prude, mended mother's riding-ho, spun short thread, fixed two gowns for Welch's girls, carded tow, spun linen, worked on cheese basket, hatchel'd flax with Hannah, (we did 51 pounds apiece), spooled a piece, milked the cows, spun the linen, did 50 knots, made a broom of Guinea wheat straw, spun thread to whiten, set a red dye, had two scholars from Mrs. Taylor's. I carded two pounds of whole wool, spun twine, scoured the pewter,"

\* \* \*

The sound of the spinning-wheel, the song of the spinster, and the snapping of the clock reel, all have ceased. The thwack of the loom is heard only in the factory.

The spinning-wheel no longer hums in the house of the farmer but it has left a song in our hearts, so that for the sake of beauty alone, it is beginning to hum in the halls of learning.

Right here in the old Hampstead house atmosphere, the wheel is beginning to turn in Charter house, and the homelike art of weaving is being revived, and spinning contests take place at commencement, as the Priscillas of today seek their beloved wheels again.

Longfellow's poem "The Courtship of Miles Standish" has given us the words to the song of the spinning-wheel, and in this poem Priscilla shows the magic of the wheel in love:

"Straight up rose from her wheel the beautiful Puritan maiden.  
Pleased with the praise of thrift from him whose praise was the sweetest:  
Drew from the reel on the table, a snowy skein of her spinning,  
Thus making an answer, meanwhile to the flattering praises of Alden;  
'Come, you must not be idle if I am a pattern for housewives,

Show yourself equally worthy of being the model of husbands  
Hold this skein on your hands, while I wind it, ready for knitting.’

\* \* \*

Thus with a jest and a laugh, the skein on his hands she adjusted,  
He sitting awkwardly there, with his arms extended before him,  
She standing graceful, erect and winding the thread from his fingers,  
Sometimes chiding a little his clumsy manner of holding,  
Sometimes touching his hands, as she disentangled expertly  
Twist or knot in the yarn, unawares for how could she help it?”

If one has any prejudice against Priscilla, let him read this peaceful poem,  
and catch the spirit of the spinning, and the homely sound of the humming.

*Young India*, 19-11-1925