

## *I. A GREAT FRIEND GONE*

It is not usual in these columns to have obituary notices of all the great men who pass away. This is a journal devoted to a special cause. Such notices are taken generally only of those who had specially identified themselves with the Harijan cause. I had to use extraordinary self-restraint to avoid noticing Kamala Nehru's death. It almost become an oppression. But I need exercise no such restraint about Dr. Ansari's death. For he was essentially a symbol of Hindu-Muslim unity with Hakim Saheb Ajmal Khan. Dr. Ansari never wavered in his faith even when it was put to a severe test. He was an orthodox Mussalman proud of his descent from the helpers of the Prophet when the latter was most in need of help. His very staunchness and his intimate knowledge of Islam made Dr. Ansari a believer in Hindu-Muslim unity. It is no exaggeration to say that he had at least as many Hindu as he had Mussalman friends. He was one of the ablest physicians in all India. His advice was freely available to the poor of all races. And what he earned from the princes and rich men, he spent with both hands among his many needy friends. No beggar approached him without emptying whatever his pocket contained, and he never counted what he gave. He was a tower of strength to hundreds of men and women who swore by him. I have no doubt that he has left many literally weeping for the personal loss they have sustained. He has left a wife who is a philosopher though invalid. She is too brave and too much of a believer to shed a tear over her loss. But the many whom I have in mind are no philosophers. Their faith in God is vapoury; their faith in Dr. Ansari was living. It was no fault of theirs that their faith in God was weak as with most of us. They had many proofs of the Doctor's friendship when they thought God had forsaken them. They little knew that even the great Doctor could only help them so long as his Maker allowed him. Would that what he could not accomplish while he was alive would be accomplished by his death.

*Harijan*, 16-5-1936

## 2. HINDI OR HINDUSTANI-II

In the previous article<sup>1</sup> I have already showed how and why I regard Hindi and Hindustani as synonymous terms and why it is necessary to retain the use of the word 'Hindi'.

An objection to the use of the word 'Hindi' has been thus stated in the letter<sup>2</sup> reproduced in the last issue:

It has been studied by Mussalmans in the past and they have done as much if not more than their Hindu brethren to raise it to the status of a literary language. But it has also religious and cultural associations with which Mussalmans as a whole cannot identify themselves. Besides, it is now evolving a vocabulary that is exclusively its own and is generally unintelligible to those who know only Urdu.

If the Mussalmans of old studied and enriched Hindi in the past, why should they of the present generation avoid it? Surely the Hindi of old had greater religious and cultural associations than modern Hindi has today. And should one avoid the use of a language because of its religious and cultural associations? Must I avoid Arabic and Persian for their religious and cultural associations? I may not be affected by the latter, if I do not want to be or if I have antipathy towards them. Surely if we are to live together as blood-brothers that we are, we may not fight shy of each other's culture. And why quarrel with the use of Sanskrit words, in Hindi to the point of rebelling against the language itself? The unnatural process of using Sanskrit words in the place of simpler current words or giving the derived words their original Sanskrit form is undoubtedly a reprehensible practice and robs a language of its music. But a certain use of Sanskrit words, as the nation expands, is inevitable in the hands of Hindus who know only Sanskrit, as the use of Arabic is inevitable in the hands of Mussalmans who know only Arabic, though both write the same language and have no special likes or dislikes. Educated Hindus and Mussalmans will have to acquaint themselves with both the forms. Is this not true of all growing languages? Educated Englishmen know both 'sympathy' and 'fellow-feeling' or 'fatherly' and 'paternal' or

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Hindi or Hindustani", 9-5-1936

<sup>2</sup> For extracts from the letter, *vide* Appendix, "For Hindustan only", 9-5-1936.

yearly' and 'annual'. The difficulty with us is that just now our hearts are not one and the best of us are affected by the virus of mutual suspicion.

Hindi, Hindustani and Urdu are different names for the same speech just as the dialects of Cornwall, Lancashire and Middlesex are different names for the same speech. What is being aimed at today is not to evolve a new language but to adopt the language known under the three names as the inter-provincial language. I believe Shri Munshi was right when he defended the form of the language used in *Hans*. For rendering, say, a Tamil or Telugu piece into Hindi or Hindustani, the use of Sanskrit words is almost inevitable, even as the use of Arabic words would be inevitable if one was translating an Arabic piece into Hindi or Hindustani. Rabindranath's *Gitanjali* in Hindi would read much less musical than it does, if its Hindi or Hindustani translation studiously avoided the Sanskrit words with which Bengali is replete. Literary Mussalmans like Moulvi Abdul Haq Sahib or Aquil Sahib have but to make thier own contribution to the common speech to avoid its degenerating into a language only spoken by the Hindus. I would if I could wean them from treating the Urdu form as the exclusive speech of Mussalmans, as I would wean literary Hindus from treating Hindi as the exclusive speech of Hindus. If none of them is weaned, there will be no common speech for Hindus and Mussalmans of the North, no matter by what name it is known. Here at least, therefore, we do not need to quarrel about the name. Call it by what name you like, if only you mean the same thing in all sincerity.

There remains the question of script. At the present moment insistence on Devanagari by Mussalmans is not to be thought of. Insistence on the adoption of Arabic script by the vast mass of Hindus is still less thinkable. What therefore I have suggested as the definition of Hindi or Hindustani is 'that language which is generally spoken by Hindus and Mussalmans of the North, whether written in Devanagari or Urdu'. I abide by that definition, in spite of protests to the contrary. But there is undoubtedly a Devanagari movement with which I have allied myself whole-heartedly and that is to have it as the common script of all the languages spoken in the different provinces, especially those which have a large Sanskrit vocabulary. Anyway, an attempt is being made to transcribe in Devanagari script the most precious treasures of all the languages of India .

*Harijan*, 16-5-1936

### 3. LETTER TO PURUSHOTTAM GANDHI

NANDI DURG,  
May 16, 1936

CHI. PURUSHOTTAM,

You must have received an unexpected letter<sup>1</sup> from me even before I got yours. The noble hopes expressed in it could be entertained only of one like you brought up in the Ashram from childhood. Vijaya alone would know the state of her mind but you have to be a teacher to her. The circumstance is common in the Hindu family. If you wish to follow the duties of married life as I have suggested, I have also outlined its restriction in my article. If you find these difficult, it only means that you have not really understood the one purpose of sexual intercourse. Even to the husband the wife is a mother. It has been said in a book that the woman giving birth to a child gives birth to a portion of the husband himself, and that therefore after she has conceived she deserves to be daily honoured with a *namaskara* much as his own mother. Such things are looked upon as intellectual indulgence. The conviction that such things need to be put into practice has not gone down people's throat. Hence they turn a deaf ear to any talk of acting according to it. "The path of God is for the brave alone." Read this to Vijaya if you think it fit.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

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

### 4. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

May 16, 1936

CHI. NARANDAS,

Herewith a letter<sup>2</sup> for Purushottam and Marybehn's letter to you. Yesterday I had a telegram telling me of the death at Rishikesh of a very benevolent lady, Tarabehn Chesley, whom you do not know.

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Letter to Purushottam and Vijaya Gandhi", 14-5-1936

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

She was on her way to Badri-Kedar with two other women. She was a learned person, living an exceedingly simple life.

Kusum is having a nice time. She comes out daily for a walk with me. I do hope this place will help her recover her health. Kanu moves about, absorbed in his work. He has been trying to train his hand on the *dilruba*<sup>1</sup>, and his instrument accompanies the *Ramayana* recitation every day. All the three brothers<sup>2</sup> sing the verses in unison, and now Kusum has joined them. Sardar walks for four hours every day, and Mahadev and Mani accompany him. It is beyond my capacity to take such long walks. Kumarappa and Shantabehn are of course here. Both are good company to each other and spend their time working. Ba keeps fairly good health. This is how our little world here goes on.

I learn from Kusum's talks that the Bal Mandir has been running at a loss. In my opinion, we should send an account of income and expenditure to the parents and notify to them that the Bal Mandir would be closed if they did not help to meet this expenditure. You may also mention that the house rent, etc., is not included in the accounts. You should, however, include Kusum's salary of Rs. 35 or 40 as also those of the other teachers, if any, whatever they are paid. We might go about begging to run the school if the children belonged to the Harijan or some other so-called lower communities, but certainly not for the others; and emphatically not a Bal Mandir. The very poor cannot afford to send their children there; nor is there any great need that they should. Please think over this and, if you are convinced about it, you should consult the Committee and give the parents notice of one or two months. Kusum says that you have increased the fee already, in which case the increase should be only to the extent of meeting the increased cost. You must be aware that there are several schools in the country, which bring profits to the owners after defraying all expenses. Many schools, for example, the Bharda High School, are a source of income. Only the Proprietary High School of Ahmedabad and some others regarded as national schools and some experimental schools are run with the help of contributions

<sup>1</sup> A stringed musical instrument

<sup>2</sup> Kanti Gandhi, Kanu Gandhi and Navin Gandhi; in fact, cousins

raised from the public. I think we should get away from this kind of work and give our time to work among Harijans and in the villages.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II. Also C.W. 8490. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

### 5. LETTER TO AMRITLAL T. NANAVATI

*May 16, 1936*

CHI. AMRITLAL,

I read the two lines you added to Nimu's letter to me. See that you preserve your health. Give the body as much milk, curds and ghee as it might need. It is only if you preserve your health that I shall be able to take from you all the work I want. Tell Bhanubapa that an obstacle has again cropped up. A fresh estimate is contemplated for the place where the building is to be put up. This is a complicated affair. Perhaps Mahadev will have to be sent to Nasik.

Did you hear anything further as regards the summons?

Let Nimu have her studies to her fill.

All are well and happy here. The coolness here and the hot winds there—what a contrast! Yet one may not say that here I am in better health than there. The fact is that heat does not affect me.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 10714

### 6. LETTER TO NEKI RAM SHARMA

NANDIDURG,

*May 17, 1936*

BHAI NEKI RAM SHARMA,

Please convey my blessings to Chi. Chandrakala and Chi. Omprakash. May their married life be happy and devoted to service.

*Vandemataram from*

M. K. GANDHI

SHRI NEKI RAM SHARMA

BHIWANI

(PUNJAB)

From the Hindi original: Gopichand Bhargava Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

## 7. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

NANDI DURG,  
May 17, 1936

DEAR DAUGHTER,

All that you write about Doctor Saheb is perfectly true. We have no one to take his place. But we do not know if his death was for the good or otherwise. God alone is the best judge. He gives and He takes away. We should only learn a lesson from Doctor Saheb's death. We should carry on from where he left. Mourning and fasting serve no purpose. Those who believe in God have no reason to fear death. Those who are born are bound to die. You do not want any more clarification on your earlier letters, do you? Now you do not have to go to Patiala or Chitrakoot or even to join me. To me you can come whenever you feel like it. Otherwise the Harijan Ashram is all you should devote yourself to. This is not my own suggestion but deduced from the last letter from Doctor Saheb. You are taking, I hope, the medicine prescribed by him. We are all well. I do not write separately to Tyagiji. Rajkishori is happy, I suppose.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Urdu: G.N. 335

## 8. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

NANDI HILL,  
May 18, 1936

MY DEAR REBEL,

You must have seen all I have written about Dr. Ansari.<sup>1</sup> I may weep over his death selfishly. But there need be no sorrow over his death, if one is certain, as I am, that it is only the perishable body that has perished, not the indestructible soul within. Having put off the old garment, it will put on a new and better one.<sup>2</sup> His services are not lost. If we have faith we may be sure that he is serving even now though in an unseen manner. Being used only to relying upon the feeble and

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "A Great Friend Gone", 16-5-1936

<sup>2</sup> *Bhagavad Gita*, II. 20 and 22

often unreliable evidence of our senses, we refuse to believe that things go on which transcend our senses and which are far more durable and useful than the passing show our senses note and make us alternately weep and laugh. Enough of this wisdom-spinning.

Yes, I shall try to secure for you ivory goods and the rest within the limits assigned by you.

Ku. is flourishing. Dr. Subba Rao will examine him and Shanta about the 20th instant.

I hope you have been able to persuade Dalip to take “rest and be thankful”. The court work will go on without him for a few weeks or months. The services have taken good care about their work.

Why do you worry about your inability to invite Mira? These are limitations of a joint family which both you and I must recognize. Friendships do not exist, must not, for selfish gratification. Mira is quite happy though she is melting in Wardha heat. She is joyous in that she is superintending the creation of my hut. She is looking after the minutest detail with the greatest care. And she is glad too that I shall be her neighbour in the very near future D.V.

You are exasperating. When you meet me you will forget all about Kallenbach<sup>1</sup>. Why not out with the talk? Let me share the joke or own up the shame, if I see any in what I might have said. But I hear so many things about myself about which I am an utter stranger that I shall not be surprised if what you have heard ranks among them.

Love to you all.

TYRANT

From the original: C.W. 3573. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 6382

## 9. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

May 18, 1936

CHI. MIRA,

I hope you got my letter<sup>2</sup> from Nandi.

Yes, Dr. Ansari's death is a great personal loss. Both birth and death are great mysteries. If death is not a prelude to another life, the

<sup>1</sup> A German architect who became a friend and associate of Gandhiji in South Africa; *vide* also “Letter to Amrit Kaur”, 28-5-1936

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* “Letter to Mirabehn”, 14-5-1936



intermediate period is a cruel mockery. We must learn the art of never grieving over death no matter when and to whom it comes. I suppose that we shall do when we have really learnt to be utterly indifferent to our own and the indifference will come when we are every moment conscious of having done the task to which we are called. But how shall we know the task? By knowing God's will. How shall we know the will? By prayer and right living. Indeed, prayer should mean right living. There is a *bhajan* we sing every day before the *Ramayana* commences whose refrain is "Prayer has been never known to have failed anybody. Prayer means being one with God."

I am glad you are making progress with the buildings. Rs. 300 for the land and the building in Varoda should prove enough for the time being at any rate. I wish you would be able to squeeze in the fence. There need be no paid labour for it. Balwantsingh and Munnalal should be able under your direction to put it up. The material should cost practically nothing. Fence and some shade is the chief thing. We are all flourishing. But those who are profiting most are Sardar, Shanta and Ku. They were the ones who positively needed the bracing air of a hill. The others not so much and so they do not show visible signs of gain. I see we shall not be able to move away from Mysore before 15th June.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 6335. Courtesy: Mirabehtn. Also G.N. 9801

### 10. LETTER TO ESTHER MENON

May 18, 1936

MY DEAR CHILD,

You are being tested. Why should you have "flu even in a cool place like Kodai? But I know you will keep your peace even in the midst of tortures and live up to your motto.<sup>1</sup> You will tell me when you are free. My prayers and my love are with you.

BAPU

From a photostat: No. 140. Courtesy: National Archives of India

<sup>1</sup> Vide "Letter to Esther Menon" 14-5-1936

*11. LETTER TO DR. GOPICHAND BHARGAVA*

NANDI HILL,

*May 18, 1936*

DEAR DR. GOPICHAND,

The people in Maganwadi report that they have not yet got cow-milk ghee. They will be presently out of stock. Please see to the supply.

*Yours,*

BAPU

DR. GOPICHAND BHARGAVA

LAHORE, PUNJAB

From a copy: Dr. Gopichand Bhargava Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

*12. LETTER TO GOVIND V. GURJALE*

*May 18, 1936*

DEAR GURJALE,

I have your letter. Much as I should like to visit you, I cannot do it. I have come here for Sardar's health. I have other patients, too, with me. And I must keep time.

My advice to you is for you simply and solely to live like a villager. Therefore your own expenses can only be under Rs. 10 per month. If there is any productive work to be done, get it done by paid labour. Labour combined with intelligence must always be self-supporting.

*Yours,*

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 1399

### 13. LETTER TO AMRITLAL V. THAKKAR

May [18, 1936]<sup>1</sup>

BHAI BAPA,

I see the point about Amtussalaam. Her silliness we can afford to suffer, but Rukmini's hurts.

I do not see how Rajaji's suggestion can be acted upon. We may procure ten thousand acres of land right now, but who will put it to use? How can it be colonized? Supposing we get the land in Dharampur<sup>2</sup> would it be of any use? I think, therefore, the idea is not worth consideration. We have no remedy but that of exposing the missionaries' tactics and rendering more and more service if possible to Harijans.

Now about the Rs. 3, 000. He has left it to me and hence I have not sent the sum on to you. I would soon spend it all if I came across a place suffering from acute scarcity of water. I understand that the sum is not such as could be included in our current fund. Do you know of any cause for which you can spend it right now? If so I shall send the sum for it or to you if you ask for it. Otherwise my idea is to spend the sum on the repair of wells for Harijans, which comes under my purview. Would it not be right to spend it that way rather than ask for money from you when such need arises? All the same, I am prepared to act according to your wishes.

Now the fourth thing, which is a new one. Hardly could we persuade Surajbehn<sup>3</sup> to quit when a demand for the building has come on behalf of the Women's Servants of India. For my part, I think that these women's idea is quite different. It smells of Western polish. These women do not wish to go along the lines that I have all along followed in the course of my work among women. There may well need for their work, but I think we should not use this income for such a purpose. You should however give your opinion with a free mind, and explain to me if I am making any mistake. While you are roasting there, we are enjoying the coolness of this place. What can be done? I envy you.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 1157

<sup>1</sup> From the contents and the G.N. Register

<sup>2</sup> A small town in the inhospitable terrain of the Dangs

<sup>3</sup> A worker of the Bhagini Samaj, Bombay

#### 14. LETTER TO PRABHAVATI

May 18, 1936

CHI. PRABHA,

You have been causing some anxiety. It is over 12 days since I got your little note. There was a wire from you, to which also I have replied.<sup>1</sup> How are you keeping now? Have you started taking milk? How much milk do you take? What is your decision?

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3469

#### 15. LETTER TO PYARELAL

NANDI DURG,

May 18, 1936

CHI. PYARELAL,

I have read both your letters carefully. Why do you write in English? You ought to write either in Gujarati or Hindi. We must take a vow not to talk or write in English except when it is unavoidable. Is this habit of conversing and writing in English not a great drawback?

You must also cultivate writing a neat hand.

Your impression of Yashodhara is not wholly correct. I found Akshaychandra's behaviour faultless. Yashodhara will be seeing me. I had a long lucid letter from Akshaychandra. I know Yashodhara very well.

Hence your case must be examined independently. Haribhau's letters to me give an altogether different impression. I do not think Yoga has gone to the length you imagine. Yoga is not just repeating what she is tutored to speak. But your case is not related to your like or dislike of her. I find your case amazing. Your love did not need a response.

Your getting her or the desirability of your getting her was not, is not, and should not be a necessity in your life. That is one sign of pure love. Your love was extraordinary, yet it had certain ordinary features, such as the need for Haribhau's mediation. It would have

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Telegram to Prabhavati", 13-5-1936

been better without it. But what even if it was brought in? The idea occurred to you too. Perhaps it was inevitable. You are not perfect, are you? You can say that perfect love was born in an imperfect man and that made love imperfect. I shall act on your suggestion if there is an occasion. But I know that you would not find anyone who would pass the test you have suggested.

I must stop here or I shall miss the post.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

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

### *16. LETTER TO PRABHUDAYAL VIDYARTHI*

NANDI DURG,

*May 18, 1936*

CHI. PRABHUDAYAL,

If your nose bleeds, clean it with cold water every morning and also inhale water through the nose. Keep a wet cloth on your head throughout the day as I am doing. Otherwise, consult a doctor. There is no need to go to Sind. Tell Nanavatiji that I have given instructions about ghee. Tell Bhanu Bapa that I have sent a letter to Nasik. Pursue your studies diligently.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

SHRI PRABHUDAYAL

MAGANWADI

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 11670

### *17. LETTER TO BRIJKRISHNA CHANDIWALA*

*May 18, 1936*

CHI. BRAJKISAN,

Only today have I reached your letter of May 1. It was received during the days of our preparation for Nandi and it remained unattended to. Now Dr. Ansari is no more. I had such faith in his treatment that whenever a patient was under his care I used to rest

fully assured. But I do not know what you will do now. Illness seems to be your constant companion. Now give me all the details.

It was the right thing to close down the Bhandar. Your helath would not permit you to cope with this work. And it becomes difficult to carry on such an enterprise solely depending on others. I understand what you say about Nair<sup>1</sup>. If no one will stay with him the Ashram may be closed down. Nair may return to Malabar or work under the Harijan Sangh or come over to me. Coming to me implies that I shall post him anywhere. It will not be possible to keep him at Segaon where I am going to live. You may show this letter to him, so that I need not write separately to him. If not the whole of it, give him a copy of this paragraph.

If you have a balance or Rs. 50 or whatever the amount, please send it to me. I shall utilize it as I wish. You should keep with you only the amount required for your maintenance.

You have of course my permission to come to Wardha whenever you wish. You must not take up any work involving permanent responsibility. You may take up only such work as can be relinquished whenever you have to, or none at all. Your primary duty is to improve your helath which you must somehow improve. It appears that the Delhi climate suits you best; therefore you should live there most of the time and engage yourself if you can in the kind of work I have suggested. It will be good if you live in a rented place in the Harijan Nivas. Kshama had offered to erect a room if some land near the colony could be acquired. You could live there paying rent if she accepts it. I have made all the suggestions I could, except one. Gadodiaji<sup>2</sup> has come across a hakim practising nature cure. Please see him. His treatment might prove beneficial to you.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 2447

<sup>1</sup> Krishnan Nair

<sup>2</sup> Lakshmi Narayan Gadodia

## 18. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

May 18, 1936

DEAR DAUGHTER,

Why are you quarrelling with Bapa? Was not whatever he wrote meant for your own good, to protect you from Rukmini? Is he to blame? Bapa asks me to explain it to you. Tell me what there is to explain.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Urdu: G.N. 336

## 19. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

NANDI HILL,  
May 19, 1936

DEAR TEACHER OF SLANG,

You are adding to your titles. Your breast won't hold them all. Then perhaps you will shed some or better still select one and reject the rest.

Terrible lightning has just now burnt up all the fuses and we are in utter darkness. A little light has been made up for me with cotton wicks and eating oil. This bungalow seems to have no substitute for electric lights.

It was good you got the Tr.<sup>1</sup> Maharani to give you Rs. 500.

I do hope they will accept your terms about Urdu broadcast. You certainly deserve congratulations.

Mrs. Marsden will be supplied with Mahadev's fine yarn. His is the finest.

I must trace the lace. It must not be lost.

I hope you are quite restored now.

Ku. and Shanta are flourishing.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 3574. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 6383

<sup>1</sup> Travancore

## 20. A LETTER

May 19, 1936

My search is not outward, it is inward. Perhaps the search is its own reward. If an embodied guru is a necessity in my case, God will send him to me.<sup>1</sup>

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

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

## 21. LETTER TO PRABHAVATI

May 19, 1936

CHI. PRABHAVATI,

After many days I have your letter today. Apart from the letters I wrote to you in April, I wrote on May 1, 12<sup>2</sup> and 18. Whose fault could it be if you got none of them? You must take it that I do write in reply to yours and, in the absence of any letter from you, would certainly write a reminder card. I shall ask Kanti why he has not been writing.

You miscalculate the dates. Yours was [received] not on the 17th but on the 19th and was written on the 14th, and on that basis this should reach you on the 24th, and if you do not get my letters by then wire receipt of this. I shall await your wire on the 24th and the 25th unless I hear from you in the mean while. Yes, Jayaprakash saw me and spoke to me. Patwardhan had accompanied him. He said nothing in reply to the letter I had written. I understood that he did not want to reply. He spoke to me only of your future, proposing that you should undergo Montessorie training for three months at Kashi and then he wants you to live in Patna. He sought my consent, which I readily gave. There can be no harm in your learning the Montessorie method, though I don't fancy it. You should, however, follow his wish and train yourself in the Montessorie method. I expect you will then be staying in Patna or some such place. I believe you will decide this

<sup>1</sup> The addressee had suggested to Gandhiji to accept as his guru a certain person living near Madras.

<sup>2</sup> This appears to be a slip for '13'.



point with him in a personal talk. This is the substance of our talk. Your things have gone with Jayaprakash.

How very foolish of you that you did not write to me to say that you were unwell. Do you have the fainting fits now? What about taking milk? Why did you have to go to Banaras? And again why to Sitab Diyara? What is your routine at Srinagar?

I have already told you about our party. All are fine. Sardar is daily having walks for four hours, Mani and Mahadev accompanying. Kumarappa and Shanta have benefited much. Kaka arrived the day before yesterday. Ba and I are well. Tari and Kusum continue to be weak. *Ramayana* recitation and the prayers go on as usual. I expect the Ayodhyakanda will be over tomorrow. The address is given in my letter of the 1st of 12th.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3470

## 22. LETTER TO RAMIBEHN K. PAREKH

*May 19, 1936*

CHI. RAMI,

I have your letter. You did well in writing to me. I shall send for Manu after I have reached Wardha, although, if Manu so wishes, she might even now go to Wardha since Nimu has taken up her stay at Maganwadi. I trust you and the children are keeping well. I hope Kunvarji is well enough.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9726

## 23. LETTER TO MANU GANDHI

*May 19, 1936*

CHI. MANUDI,

You managed all right to escape. You know that Taribehn is here, don't you? All are well and happy.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9726

## 24. LETTER TO FATAH-ULLA-KHAN

NANDI,  
May 20, 1936

The holy Koran I regard as a book of spiritual experiences, the same as, say, the Bible or the Zend-Avesta. I do not know the Quran offers more real solution to the modern problems than the other scriptures of the world. The competition today is not between the different scriptures of the world but between the representatives thereof and then between the latter on the one hand and those who reject the authority of the scriptures altogether.

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

## 25. LETTER TO BRIJKRISHNA CHANDIWALA

May 20, 1936

CHI. BRAJKISAN,

I read your letter about the Union. Taking into consideration all the circumstances, I feel that you should dissociate yourself from this affair of the workers. You must put it out of your mind; it is beyond your strength. Your word will not carry weight. Hence your presence is in the long run likely to harm the workers instead of benefiting them. Your duty at present is only to recover your health. Who can come over from Ahmedabad? Whoever comes, can he succeed? We must content ourselves with the tasks within our capacity. There is therefore no need to offer any opinion about the scheme. Tell me all the details regarding Dr. Ansari.

You must have got my earlier letter.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 2446

## 26. LETTER TO ASAF ALI

NANDI HILL, BANGALORE,  
May 21, 1936

DEAR ASAF ALI,

You have done well in writing to me. I can drink in all the news you can give me about the deceased brother. He was nothing less to me. I have already written to Zohra and Zakir Husain<sup>1</sup> about the details. I should receive their replies tomorrow or the day after. But you will now send me what they may not be able to.

As to the memorial, I fear we can get nothing worthy just now. Even the little thing about Kamala is causing difficulty. Since Lalaji<sup>2</sup> memeorial I have discountenanced any memorials for big people like Dr. Ansari. I should wait for better times not materially but politically. Sardar who is here joins me in this view. But let me know what G. and R. have to say.

*Yours sincerely,*  
M. K. GANDHI

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

## 27. LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

May 21, 1936

MY DEAR JAWAHARLAL,

Here are two cuttings from *The Hindu*.<sup>3</sup> I have refused to believe that you are correctly represented by the reporter. But I would like the

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Letter to Zakir Husain", 11-5-1936

<sup>2</sup> Lala Lajpat Rai

<sup>3</sup> The first cutting read: Bombay, May 18—Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru, addressing a ladies' meeting this evening, said that he was asked in several places why he had not included women in the Congress Working Committee. He was surprised that no such question was forthcoming from women.

He continued, "The responsibility of choosing the Working Committee members rests with the President, and you all know what the situation was at Lucknow. You know the price I had to pay for my views and I will have to continue to pay such price. Choosing the Working Committee members was not so easy. You are also aware, I, as President, encountered many odds at Lucknow and my wishes were not carried out. Possibly, another man in my place would have resigned but I propose to do my utmost."

The other cutting read: Bombay, May 18—Mr. Nehru when he visited the Khadi Bhandar today expressed doubts as to whether hand-spinning and weaving were an economic proposition. From his experiences in the united Provinces, he could say that it was not so. He, therefore, favoured development of machinery.

correct version, if you can send me one on both the subjects.<sup>1</sup> The exclusion of women was entirely your own act. Indeed, nobody else had even thought it possible to exclude a woman from the cabinet. As to khadi I have understood you to say that it is indispensable in the present economy of the nation and that when the nation came to its own, hand-made cloth might have to give place to the mill-made.

Love.

BAPU

Gandhi-Nehru Papers, 1936. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

## 28. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

May 21, 1936

CHI. MIRA,

This fever I do not like at all. I hope you have given yourself adequate rest. If your hut cannot be ready at the expected time, it does not matter, nor for that matter my hut. You must not put an undue strain on yourself and should take all the fruit you may need. I am glad both B.<sup>2</sup> and M.<sup>3</sup> were with you in the nick of time. I am impatient to be with you. But it cannot be before 17th or 18th.

Tara's death has disturbed me much. She was an extraordinarily good woman, possessing great strength of mind. Her love was amazing. I have a graphic description of her death. Brave Mahadevi<sup>4</sup> was by her side all the time.

Love.

BAPU

[PS.]

Do you know the price paid for your plot in Varoda?

From the original: C.W. 6336. Courtesy: Mirabehn. Also G.N. 9802

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* Appendix "Letter from Jawaharlal Nehru", 25-5-1936, also "A False Alarm", 6-6-1936.

<sup>2</sup> Balwantsinha G. Shah

<sup>3</sup> Munnalal G. Shah

<sup>4</sup> Vinoba Bhave's disciple Mahadevitai

### 29. LETTER TO JAMNALAL BAJAJ

May 21, 1936

CHI. JAMNALAL,

Tarabehn was indeed an extraordinary woman. Her singleminded devotion, firmness of mind, purity, generosity and love of India baffle description. Mahadevi, too, rendered excellent service and also showed courage.

Mirabehn writes to me of her illness. The lady's faults are negligible, but her merits are worthy of emulation. May God save her.

Madalasa, Om are fine. I am returning both the letters.

I expect you are taking care of your health. Are you following the instructions I sent you in the matter of diet? Do you take enough rest? Do you take a daily walk? Do not ignore Janakibehn's suggestion regarding the abdominal belt.

Everything is all right here.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 2980

### 30. LETTER TO MANILAL AND SUSHILA GANDHI

May 21, 1936

CHI. MANILAL AND SUSHILA,

I got your letters here at Nandi Durg. The photos are excellent. I have sent them to Ramdas and Devdas. What is Ali doing? Are Ali and Ismail partners in business? What is the trade they carry on? I hope they are not baffled by the great rise in population.

I should be glad if someone would look after your work and you could make a trip here. But avoid the temptation to visit me if you cannot save the necessary money. Do not incur the heavy expense merely for the sake of a trip if you all keep well and enjoy other amenities too.

It does not surprise me to hear that *Indian Opinion* is under a boycott. Continue to publish it as long as the people want it; stop it if they do not like it. We surely ought not to be unduly insistent. What is

the present number of subscribers? How many of them are Hindus and how many Muslims? Do you sell any copies otherwise?

130 lb. is too much weight for Sushila. She should and can easily reduce it by 10 lb. She should eat less of starch and take enough fruit, give up ghee for some time if necessary, but not milk. This will certainly bring down the weight. She must not omit to take exercise but walk at least six miles every day, that is to say, for two hours at her normal speed. She should also take hip-baths.

Maybe I have written to you earlier about our party here at Nandi Hill. If I have not, here it is. Sardar, Manibehn, Tari, Kusum Gandhi, Navin, Kanti, Kanu, Ba, Kumarappa, Shantabehn (the Englishwoman) and Kakasaheb. Sardar, Manibehn and Mahadev have daily walks for four to five hours. Kusum and Shantabehn, too, walk just as much, and the rest of us for two hours. The climate here may not be said to have proved quite beneficial to Tari, though she is better than on the plains. Her health has suffered pretty much on account of worry and indifference to treatment. Kusum, too, is weak, no doubt, but comparatively better.

Recitation from the *Ramayana* is conducted daily. A fairly good number of people attend it. The morning and evening prayers are of course held as usual.

Devdas may now be said to be well enough. I think the letter is now long enough.

We shall be going to Wardha on June 15.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujar ati: G.N. 4851

### 31. LETTER TO LILAVATI ASAR

*May 21, 1936*

CHI. LILAVATI,

Your weight has gone up fairly well. Hence you should be asked to stay on there. You did very well to have visited Gangabehn. You gave me no news of Bachubhai's health.

What is Tansukh's<sup>1</sup> salary?

<sup>1</sup> Tansukh Bhatt

It was hasty of you to have begun walking. Never be impatient in anything. Rest your leg and have it completely cured. Why don't you use home-made paper? It is quite easy to make and is cheap, too. We ought to pay attention to things that are regarded as trivial. Now that you are confined there, should you not introduce as many country-made things as possible?

You may pay a visit to Nagpur. You may go wherever you want to before reaching Segaon.

It seems I shall reach Wardha on the 17th at the earliest.

All here are doing well.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

[PS.]

Tarabehn passed away on her way to Badri-Kedar. Mahadevi nursed her exceedingly well. She had a severe attack of fever.

*Hoodbal*<sup>1</sup> means rashness.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 9342

### 32. LETTER TO PREMABEHN KANTAK

*May 21, 1936*

CHI. PREMA,

Here in Nandi Durg, I may claim, I am able to dispose of each day's mail practically on the same day. I read your letter of the 18th last evening, and am replying to it today.

It matters little what hopes I cherish about you. You may go on striving according to what you think these hopes are and according to your ability.<sup>2</sup>

You have put the question very well. You could have put it still more plainly.<sup>3</sup> I have always had involuntary discharges. In South

<sup>1</sup> Gandhiji had used this expression in the letter dated May 14, 1936.

<sup>2</sup> The addressee had pleaded lack of confidence in her own capacity to grow into an illustrious *brahmacharini*, as hoped for by Gandhiji. *Vide* "Letter to Premabehn Kantak", 13-2-1933

<sup>3</sup> The addressee could not readily believe Gandhiji's confession of involuntary violation of *brahmacharya*. *Vide* "Nothing without Grace", and letter to the addressee, "Letter to Premabehn Kantak", 6-5-1933. After an inconclusive discussion with and at the instance of Acharaya Bhagavat the addressee had hesitantly sought clarification from him.

Africa they occurred at intervals of several years. I do not remember exactly. Here in India they have been of months. I have mentioned the fact of my getting discharges in a few articles of mine. If my *brahmacharya* had been completely free from discharges, I would have been able to place before the world very much more than I have succeeded in doing. But it seems practically impossible that a person who has indulged in sex gratification from the age of 15 to 30, maybe with his own wife only, can, on taking a vow of *brahmacharya*, control the discharge of his vital fluid completely. One whose capacity for retention has progressively weakened from day to day for fifteen years cannot recover it fully all at once. Both his body and mind will have become too weak for that. I, therefore, consider myself a very imperfect *brahmachari*. But my position is like that of the castor oil plant which looks big on a heath where there are no trees. People know this shortcoming of mine.

The experience which tormented me in Bombay was a strange and painful one. All my discharges so far had occurred in dreams and they never troubled me. I could forget them. But the experience in Bombay occurred while I was fully awake and had a sudden desire for intercourse. I felt of course no urge to gratify the craving, there was no self-forgetfulness whatever. I was completely master of my body. But despite my best efforts the organ remained aroused. This was an altogether strange and shameful experience. I have already explained the cause.<sup>1</sup> As soon as that cause was removed the state of remaining aroused came to a stop, that is, waking state.

Despite my imperfection, one thing has always come easily to me, viz., that thousands of women have remained safe in my company. There have been occasions in my life when certain women, though aroused, were saved by God, or say, I was saved. I am a hundred per cent certain that it was God who saved us and, therefore, take no pride in the fact. It is my unceasing prayer to God that I might remain in the same condition till the very end of my life.

I have been striving to attain to Shukadeva's<sup>2</sup> condition. I have not succeeded in that aim. If I succeed, I would become a eunuch<sup>3</sup> though possessed of the vital fluid and discharges would become impossible.

<sup>1</sup> Vide "Letter to Premabehn Kantak", 6-5-1936

<sup>2</sup> Son of Vyasa and the ideal *brahmachari* described in the *Bhagavata*.

<sup>3</sup> Vide *New Testament, St. Matthew*, XIX, 12.



However, the views which I have recently expressed<sup>1</sup> regarding *brahmacharya* have no flaw in them and contain no exaggeration. With effort, any man or woman can attain that ideal. This does not mean that the whole world or thousands will realize, it in my own lifetime. Let it take centuries to be realized, but the ideal is correct, is realizable and must be realized.

Man has a long way to travel yet. His instincts are still those of a beast. Only his frame is human. Violence seems to reign all round. Untruth fills the world. And yet we do not doubt the rightness of the path of truth and non-violence. Know that the same is the case with regard to *bramacharya*.

Those who strive but continue to burn inwardly are in fact not striving. They nurse lust in their minds and only wish to control loss of the vital fluid, to refrain from the physical act of intercourse. Such persons are correctly described in Chapter II<sup>2</sup> [of the *Gita*]. They may be regarded as hypocrites.

What I am at present striving to achieve is purification of thought.

Modern thought regards *brahmacharya* as *adharma* and recommends the ‘dharma’ of self-indulgence and control of progeny by artificial means. My soul rebels against this.

Sex-craving will always remain in the world, but its moral basis rests and will ever rest on *brahmacharya*.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 10381. Also C.W. 6819. Courtesy: Premabehn Katak

### 33 . LETTER TO MUNNALAL G. SHAH

*May 21, 1936*

CHI. MUNNALAL,

You reached there quite in the nick of time. You could get the

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* “For Contraceptives”, 4-4-1936 and “For Women Reformers”, 2-5-1936

<sup>2</sup> In fact Chapter III. 6

right type of work since you arrived when Mirabehn was really hard pressed. I am hoping to reach there on the 18th.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 8605. Also C.W. 6991. Courtesy: Munnalal G. Shah

### 34. LETTER TO PYARELAL

NANDIDURG,

*May 21, 1936*

CHI. PYARELAL,

I have your letter of the 17th. It would be better to learn the facts from me instead of knowing my mind. Hence, only that step would be correct which does justice to both. I was really unhappy that you did not come. Otherwise, why should I have got the ticket?

I consider the service of the lepers, etc., the greatest thing only if you can stick to it. I did believe that Yoga would not have approved of your becoming a fakir. Those day are gone. Faith is the only thing left for the present age. For that, I would consider renunciation the best thing. There is hardly any scope for human endeavour. Occasions may occur when human endeavour is possible. Right now, there is a feeling of utter defeat. Hence there is nothing left except to depend on God's power. That is the reason why I did not show displeasure at your going to Calcutta or Orissa. I never considered it important. I had already suggested that it would be right for you only to stay with me. Even now, that is how I feel independently of anything. Hence I would appreciate it if you abandon what you are pursuing and came to me. But I would not like it if you ran away from Calcutta or Orissa after settling there.

As I see it you still do not have mental poise. You are not at peace. You have not found faith. It seems your mind is wavering between faith and human endeavour. If that is the case, I think your place is only with me.

I have no doubt at all about Yashodhara. Her love was merely attachment. It had not the backing of the spirit or strength of sacrifice.

Had she been even a little firm, she would not have had any trouble. I shall know more when she sees me.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

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

### 35. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

*May 22, 1936*

MY DEAR REBEL,

Your note-paper is certainly very good. It shows the very great progress made by the hand-made paper industry. I think it is a good idea your sending for uncut paper and hav[ing] it cut to order there. Perhaps that would support a few poor people there, if you get enough orders there. The question then would be whether it would be worth while your devoting your time to such details. You must be the best judge. You have to make the best use possible of your time in Simla consistently with the preservation of your health such as you have.

You are quite idiotically reserving so many things to tell me when we meet. When that great event comes to pass, you will have forgotten most of the things. I am sure you are not making notes of these reservations. For once therefore you had better be a little wise and reserve nothing for the next meeting. There will be enough to discuss when we meet. And I hope you are telling the Adampur people whatever they need to be told. Certainly you should tolerate nothing fraudulent, no matter what it costs. No cost is too great to pay for your putting down fraud in a pure movement.

Did I tell you about Tara's death during her pilgrimage to Badri-Kedar? You will see all about this in *Harijan*.<sup>1</sup> She was one of the noblest of women I had the good fortune to meet.

Love.

TYRANT

From the original: C.W. 3575. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 6384

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "In Memoriam"

### 36. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

NANDI HILL,  
May 22, 1936

CHI. MIRA,

My heart is with you though my body is here.<sup>1</sup> I had expected a word from you but I have one from Radhakrishna. His letter contemplates bringing you to Wardha. I hope it was not necessary. Of course whatever is thought necessary for quick recovery must be done. You must not allow the building programme or anything else to prey on your mind. Without good health, you can carry out no programme. I look forward to tomorrow bringing good news.

Love.

BAPU

[PS.]

We descend to Bangalore on 31st.

From the original: C. W. 6337. Courtesy: Mirabehn. Also G.N. 9803

### 37. LETTER TO CHUNILAL

May 22, 1936

BHAI CHUNILAL,

I have your letter. Now that Thakkar Bapa is arriving there everything must settle down. From now on it is not necessary to send the papers to me.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

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

<sup>1</sup> The addressee “had gone down with a severe attack of malaria.”

### 38. *IN MEMORIAM*

Miss Mary Chesley, an Englishwoman, came to India in 1934 when the Congress was in session<sup>1</sup> in Bombay. As soon as she landed she came to my hut in the Congress camp and told me she knew Mirabehn and had expected to come with her but somehow or other she had preceded her by a week or there-about. Her desire was to serve India through her villages. She did not prepossess me by her talk and I thought she would not stay in India many months. But I was wholly mistaken. She had come to know of Miss Mary Barr who had already commenced village work in Khedi, a village a few miles from Betul (C.P.). Miss Chesley found her way to Mary Barr. Mary Barr brought Mary Chesley to Wardha and we were together for a few days. Miss Chesley showed a determination that surprised me. She began work with Mary Barr in Khedi, adopted the Indian costume and changed her name to Tarabehn and toiled at Khedi in a manner that alarmed poor Mary Barr. She would dig, carry baskets full of earth on her head. She simplified her food as much as to put her health in danger. She had her own handsome income from Canada from which she kept only a paltry sum of about Rs. 10 for herself and gave the rest to the A.I.V.I.A., or to Indians with whom she came in contact and who seemed to her to give promise of being good village workers and who needed some pecuniary help. I came in closest touch with her. Her charity was boundless, she had great faith in the goodness of human nature. She was forgiving to a fault. She was a devout Christian. She belonged to a Quaker family. But she had no narrowness about her. She did not believe in converting others to her own faith. She was a graduate of the London School of Economics and a good teacher, having conducted together with a companion a school in London for several years. She realized at once that she must learn Hindi and was regularly studying it. For being able to pick up conversational Hindi she lived for a few months in the Wardha Mahila Ashram and there with two members formed a plan of going to Badri-Kedar during summer. I had warned her against the adventure. But it was difficult to turn her from such adventures when once her mind was made up. So only the other day she started with her friends on

<sup>1</sup> In the last week of October

her perilous pilgrimage. And I got a brief message on the 15th from Kankhal saying, "Tarabehn expired". In her love for India's villages she was not to be excelled by anybody. Her passion for India's independence was equal to that of the best among us. She was impatient of the inferiority complex wherever she noticed it. She mixed with poor women and children with the greatest freedom. There was nothing of the patron about her. She would take service from none, but would serve anybody with the greatest zeal. She was a self-effacing mute worker whose left hand did not know what the right had done. May her soul rest in peace.

*Harijan, 23-5-1936*

### 39. BRIBERY

Bribery in the name of *mamul*<sup>1</sup> and the like to railway officials and the others is not an unusual occurrence in Indian life. Any official with whom the public has anything to do is generally said to be open to receive bribes even for the performance of his duty, not to speak of committing breach thereof. I have had to suffer in my time for refusing to pay a paltry anna at the third-class ticket windows for getting my ticket in my turn which would never come because favourites had to be served first. I have had to wait for hours sometimes before I could get a chance of buying my ticket. The customs and the railways are the two departments with which the general public have to come in frequent touch. And it is there that the public suffer most. A correspondent draws my attention to the woes of public workers who want to despatch goods or receive consignments. At either end unless you are prepared to bribe officials, you are made to wait exasperatingly long. He wants to know how this evil can be remedied. There is desire among spirited workers to resist this immoral blackmail. It is difficult to advise in this matter. Obviously no bribe<sup>2</sup> may possibly be given. Equally obviously public work must not be allowed to suffer. There is no quick remedy against a petty official who misuses his brief authority. Threat to lodge a complaint produces no effect on hardened officials. They know their strength and use it mercilessly, for it is a matter of pecuniary gain for them. They have come to think these perquisites are a part of their pay. And he who

<sup>1</sup> Custom

<sup>2</sup> The source has "bribery".

questions their right to demand them needs to be taught a lesson. Lesson or no lesson, someone has to have the courage to bring to book those who will not recognize the new spirit that is seizing so many workers. Despatch or clearance work may suffer for the time being. It is worth while taking the risk, if thereby officials will learn the elementary morality of not taking bribes. If they are ill paid, let them demand a higher pay, but they may not take bribes from the public whom they are paid to serve. I hope the higher authorities will see these lines and deal effectively with the evil which they know does flourish widely.

*Harijan, 23-5-1936*

#### 40. MARRIAGE BY PURCHASE

Some months ago *The Statesman* opened its columns to a discussion of the dowry system prevalent among many castes almost all over India, and dealt with it editorially. I used to write on the cruel custom<sup>1</sup> often enough in the columns of *Young India*. The cuttings from *The Statesman* revive the cruel memories of what I used to know then. My remarks were aimed at *deti leti* as the custom is known in Sind. Enough educated Sindhis were found who exacted large sums of money from parents who were anxious to see their daughters well married. *The Statesman* has carried on a crusade against the custom in general. There is no doubt that the custom is heartless. But so far as I am aware it does not touch the millions. The custom is confined to the middle-class who are but a drop in the ocean of Indian humanity.

Whenever we talk of evil customs, we usually think of the middle-class. The millions living in the villages have their customs and woes of which we have as yet but little knowledge.

This however does not mean that one may ignore the dowry evil because it is confined to a comparatively small number of the people of this country. The system has to go. Marriage must cease to be a matter of arrangement made by parents for money. The system is intimately connected with caste. So long as the choice is restricted to a few hundred young men or young women of a particular caste, the system will persist no matter what is said against it. The girls or boys or their parents will have to break the bonds of caste if the evil is to be eradicated. Then the age for marrying has also to be raised and the

<sup>1</sup> The source has "customs."

girls have to dare to remain spinsters, if need be, i.e., if they do not get a suitable match. All this means education of a character that will revolutionize the mentality of the youth of the nation. Unfortunately the system of education has no connection with our surroundings which therefore remain practically untouched by the education received by a microscopic minority of the boys and girls of the nation. Whilst, therefore, whatever can be done to abate the evil must be done, it is clear to me that this evil and many others which can be named can only be tackled if there is education which responds to the rapidly changing conditions of the country. How is it that so many boys and girls who have even passed through colleges are found unable or unwilling to resist the manifestly evil custom which affects their future so intimately as marriage does? Why should educated girls be found to commit suicide because they are not suited? Of what value is their education if it does not enable them to dare to defy a custom which is wholly indefensible and repugnant to one's moral sense? The answer is clear. There is something radically wrong in the system of education that fails to arm girls and boys to fight against social or other evils. That education alone is of value which draws out the faculties of a student so as to enable him or her to solve correctly the problems of life in every department.

*Harijan*, 23-5-1936

#### 41. LETTER TO F. MARY BARR

NANDI HILL,

May 24, 1936

CHI. MARY,

I have your letter. You will see my note<sup>1</sup> on Tara in *Harijan*. Yes, she made in Rishikesh a will in Hindi making over everything to me. It is signed simply Tarabehn. Do you know who her relatives are? Do you know her address in Canada? If you do, please send [it]. Her friend in England is Miss. P. Blythe, Anthorn School, Quakers Lane, Potters Bar, London. I have written to her at length and so has Shanta. I am sending your letter to Sumitra through Satyadevji. His address is Gurukul, Kangri, U.P.

<sup>1</sup> Vide "In Memoriam", 23-5-1936



I have heard from Miss Madden. I am glad you have given me particulars about her. It is plucky at her age to come to village work. But faith can overcome mountains. I am writing to her.

The climb up did not hurt me at all.

Love.

BAPU

[PS.]

Address: Bangalore City. After 31st May till 15th June.

Herewith for Gopal.<sup>1</sup>

From C. W. 3391. Courtesy: F. Mary Barr

#### 42. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

May 24, 1936

CHI. MIRA,

The late-fee letter of 20 and the one of 21 reached me at the same time. It does often happen like that to late-fee letters. However, nothing is lost. I had R.'s<sup>2</sup> note the previous day. I do hope you had no further fever. I hope too that you are still taking rest. You never give yourself enough rest after these attacks of malaria. I wish you could become proof against them. You should go to some hill or seaside for that rest. I could easily send you to a Kathiawar seaside place where you would have quiet, would be happy and be doing some village work. Let us see what the coming rains have in store for us. No rooms as yet for Mahadev & Co.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 6338. Courtesy: Mirabehn. Also G.N. 9804

#### 43. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

May 24, 1936

CHI. MIRA,

I am glad you are free from fever. Of course you were quite right in ordering oranges. You should order from outside any other

<sup>1</sup> The letter is not available.

<sup>2</sup> Radhakrishna; *vide* "Letter to Mirabehn", 22-5-1936

fruit you may need. And do take plenty of rest before beginning strenuous work. And you should seriously consider my proposal for a change at a seaside place.

I would like you not to incur the expense of having partitions made. I would like to improvise them as they may be need[ed] almost like what Chhotelal had arranged for my bathroom, you will remember. As it is I dread the cost of the hut. I hope Divanji is keeping within the limits prescribed by me. The plinth, four walls and a waterproof roof with open verandah and fence round is the indispensable minimum. But you are giving me in addition a kitchen and bath-room and a stable.

Let the other additions wait till after my arrival.

Love.

BAPU

[PS.]

Give my blessings to Ram<sup>1</sup> and Lakshmi<sup>2</sup>. Tell them I hope they will prove worthy of each other and the country.

From the original: C.W. 6339. Courtesy: Mirabehn. Also G.N. 9805

#### 44. LETTER TO FARID ANSARI

May 24, 1936

MY DEAR FAREED<sup>3</sup>,

Your letter gave me an agreeable shock. Your handwriting is an almost exact copy of Dr. Ansari's. And I wondered how I could receive the Doctor's letter when I saw your signature.

Neither Ammajan's fortitude nor Zohra's grief surprises me. Zohra is a tender flower. She knows nothing of philosophy. She has tasted abundantly of human love that has sustained her all these years. Now the poor girl feels the void. It can never be wholly filled, not even when she is married. Dr. Ansari's love for Zohra was unique. There was nothing he would not do to make her good and happy. And all this was out of pure selfless love.

I can understand your grief too. He was to you all you describe him. The fact [is]<sup>4</sup> he was a selfless friend and guide . . .<sup>5</sup>. Such was his

<sup>1</sup> Presumably, Rameshwardas Poddar's son Shriram and Purushottamdas Jajoria's daughter Lakshmi

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*

<sup>3</sup> Dr. M.A. Ansari's brother's son

<sup>4</sup> Illegible

<sup>5</sup> *ibid*

[greatness] ! May his spirit sustain us and enable [us to condu-] ct ourselves [so] as to prove worthy [of] him.

You vainly approach me [for] relief and strength. I have none of his great [nursing] skill nor do I possess the [devotion] of you all that he had. But if my love for Dr. Ansari can be sufficient passport for entry to the hearts of you, Zohra and others who were specially his care, I can present that passport. For his death has deepened that love whose bottom was as sound as that of human love can be.

I hope you are making steady progress.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

From a facsimile: *Mahatma*, Vol. IV, between pp. 112 and 113. Also C.W. 9797

#### 45. LETTER TO PRABHAVATI

*May 24, 1936*

CHI. PRABHA,

I was very happy to have your wire at the expected time. This document leads me to conclude that you did not get my three earlier letters.<sup>1</sup> Nor have they come back; I therefore do not know what happened to them. Whatever it may be, I have of course given you the substance of the earlier letters in the one you got. Kanti also did write two letters. Write to me what food including milk you take and in what measure, and also your daily programme.

Should you not speak frankly to him and seek his advice as you do with me because I am away? There should be no hesitation in doing so. By all means you may ask whatever can be asked through letters. But you may certainly seek Father's assistance in anything that calls for quick decision.

The chief mark of faith is that whatever the situation the inner joy should abide. Everything is all right here.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

[PS.]

Send your reply to Bangalore where we shall go on the 31st. Kumara Park, Bangalore City.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3466

<sup>1</sup> Vide "Letter to Prabhavati", 19-5-1936

## 46. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

May 24, 1936

CHI. NARANDAS,

I am sending to you Prema's first letter after the illness, as originally desired by her. I hope the wedding<sup>1</sup> passed off without any hitch and you received my letters.<sup>2</sup>

Has Balkrishna reached Chorwad?

Kusum keeps fairly well. She comes with me for a walk daily.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

[PS.]

Leaving Nandi on the 31st, we shall go to Bangalore and most probably stay there for 14 days. The address is: Kumara Park, Bangalore City.

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II. Also C.W. 8491. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

## 47. LETTER TO MUNNALAL G. SHAH

May 24, 1936

CHI. MUNNALAL,

I think you did well in going there. You should look upon Mirabehn's company as a vertitable *satsang*<sup>3</sup>. Serve her as much as you can and put your heart in doing what she bids you. Don't you be a burden to her in any way. Learn from Balwantsinha the entire processing of cotton.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 8604. Also C.W. 6992. Courtesy: Munnalal G. Shah

<sup>1</sup> Of Purushottam and Vijaya

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "Letter to Purushottam and Vijaya Gandhi", 14-5-1936

<sup>3</sup> Association with the good.

#### 48. LETTER TO C. VIJAYARAGHAVACHARIAR

NANDI HILL,  
May 25, 1936

DEAR FRIEND,

It would have been delightful if you could have come to Bangalore where we shall be from 31st to 15th June probably. Do come even now, if health allows it

As you know I have planned to settle down in Segaon, a village near Wardha. How far God will allow the plan to succeed He alone knows. But I may not disturb it voluntarily. Therefore I dare not attend the Exhibition, much as I would like to.

It is difficult to give a decisive opinion about the Lucknow Congress. There was nothing alarming about it. And I do entertain the hope that only good will come out of the confusion that seems to have been created in the minds of Congressmen. After all has that not been our history since 1920? It was inevitable when new ideas and new policies were being introduced. I have great faith in Jawaharlal's nobility, sobriety and loyalty to the Congress. He won't place it in jeopardy.

*Yours sincerely,*  
M. K. GANDHI

[PS.]

I did not attend the session for the opening. The telegram . . . <sup>1</sup> were read after I had left . . . <sup>2</sup> was read

From the original: C. Vijayaraghavachariar Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

#### 49. LETTER TO ZAKIR HUSAIN

May 25, 1936

MY DEAR ZAKIR,

Your letter has just reached me. The same post has brought a copy of what Agatha Harrison wrote about the Doctor for *Hitavada*—Servants of India paper in Nagpur. I send it to show what he meant to me. I know he had interrupted his journey<sup>3</sup> to Europe. My pleading

<sup>1</sup> & <sup>2</sup> The source is mutilated here.

<sup>3</sup> During Gandhiji's 21-day fast which commenced on May 8, 1933

for the journey was in vain. He had run to me without [my] asking. And he had gathered round him all the best doctors he knew. It was almost worth fasting to have that extraordinary demonstration of love. It might be taken in another light. One might well say it was folly to fast if it was to cost the precious time of so many first-class physicians who during those three weeks deprived their many patients of the assistance they badly needed. Who knows how such demonstrations should really be taken? We can but obey, in all humility, the will as we can know it of Him who is the Controller-General of every second of our life.

This long paragraph shows you the state of mind I am in. Not that I have time enough and to spare here from the daily tasks. But I am in the position of poor Zohra. If I had not the peremptory call of duty from moment to moment, I should be as distracted as she is.

For the last three days I have been framing in my mind a letter to you alone and then I thought of Shwaib<sup>1</sup>, then Khwaja<sup>2</sup> and then quite forgetfully of Sherwani<sup>3</sup>, not just then realizing that the big man was also no more in the flesh with us. There are other Muslims I know. But for this moment these were the names vividly before me.

But I know that none of you can become the infallible guide Dr. Ansari had grown to be. It is not a question of merits. It is a question of faith.

As I am writing this I feel I must confine myself to you. The question I wanted to ask was and I still want to ask is, will you be to me what the Doctor was on the Hindu-Muslim question? What distracts me is not the absence of the warmth of a gentleman-friend, of a God-believing and godfearing doctor. It is the absence of an unfailing guide in the matter of Hindu-Muslim unity. My silence at the present time on this question is not a sign of my apathy, it is a sign of an ever-deepening conviction that the unity has got to come. Then I ask, will you take Dr. A[nsari]'s place? In answer, do not think of your status in society. If you have self-confidence, you must say 'Yes'. If you have not, you must say 'No'. I shall not misunderstand you. I know and love you too well to misunderstand you.

Whether you become my guide or not, please answer the question I asked, among others, Dr. Ansari in my last letter. Is this step

<sup>1</sup> Shwaib Qureshi

<sup>2</sup> *Vide*, "Letter to Khwaja Abdul Majid", 7-6-1936.

<sup>3</sup> Tasadduq Ahmed Sherwani

the Frontier Government has taken, that of practically refusing the grant to Sikh Hindu girls' schools that teach through Hindi and Gurumukhi right? I have been asked for months to express my opinion. I have resisted the invitation till now. But the question is one of principle and bears in its womb great consequences. I have approached Sahibzada Sir Abdul Qayum in the matter. He has sent me what is a painful reply. You can have a copy if you want it, before expressing your opinion.

I do not know whether you share the opinion Mujeeb expressed in his letter to me on Hindi-Hindustani question.<sup>1</sup> I would like you, him, Aqil and other friends to read my two articles<sup>2</sup> in *Harijan* and if they do not give satisfaction, I would like you all to argue the thing out with me, if you like through *Harijan* or privately. I see no cause for difference of opinion. But if there is, we must try to remove it.

Love to you all.

BAPU

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

## 50. LETTER TO BHUJANGILAL CHHAYA

NANDI DURG,  
May 25, 1936

CHI. BHUJANGILAL,

I have your letter. Young people should never write with a pencil. In fact no one should. Pencil-writing fades out with passage of time. It presents difficulty in reading.

You should have patience and be polite. Your father will not come in your way if your conduct is faultless in all matters. He has the right to test your firmness.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 2603

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* Appendix, "For Hindustani Only", 9-5-1936.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "Hindi or Hindustani", 9-6-1936 and 16-5-1936.

## 51. LETTER TO JAMNALAL BAJAJ

May 25, 1936

CHI. JAMNALAL,

I send herewith Gopal's letter for you to read. He seems to have been greatly shocked at Tarabehn's death. He has some faults as also some good qualities. It now falls to my lot to guide him. I see no difficulty in it; I have only to direct him from a distance. For the present, I have suggested that he should stick to his insurance business and prepare himself for village welfare work.

The question of Sumitra and Subhadra is complicated. I think Tarabehn had taken them to Hardwar. I am inquiring. I am also trying to know sumitra's mind. If, as Gopal says, Sumitra hands over custody of Subhadra, I think we might keep the latter at the Mahila Ashram. As for Sumitra, I have suggested that she should stay with Marybehn in Khedi. Perhaps she may have to be given something towards her expenses.

Do tell me your opinion in the matter. You must rest yourself.

[PS.]

In Nandi Durg up to May 30 and at Bangalore City from May 18 to June 15.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 2981

## 52. LETTER TO RAIHANA TYABJI

May 25, 1936

DEAR SISTER RAIHANA,

It is wonderful to have your letter after so many months and in such excellent Gujarati! You seem to have been improving your knowledge of the language. How good if I could do the same with my Urdu! But then, is the teacher or the pupil to blame for it?

What a way you have of telling me of Abbajan<sup>1</sup>! Inscrutable are God's ways of saving him He wishes to! What beautiful situations He brings about! A master Manipulator of strings, He makes us dance by plucking at any of the strings He likes. We do not even feel that

<sup>1</sup> Addressee's father, Abbas Tyabji



He is pulling the strings if we dance as He wishes. It is when we resist Him that we feel the pull of the string, and then we begin complaining. Observe Abbajan's face as you read this to him and write to me what you notice. You should, however, suppress the letter if he does not have the strength to listen and the doctors do not permit it.

You have mentioned so many members of the family that most of them are no more than names to me. I do not remember any of the faces, and I have to commit to memory the names. All the same, I am myself a member of the family, am I not? And such a one as does not even know the names of his own family members or their faces either! But what can be done? That must be the plight of a person becoming one of a vast family. But what is great about knowing name and form? We are all children of the same Mother. If we truly understood this, we could do without name and form, couldn't we? Read this to all, apologize to them on my behalf and make them forgive me. Anyway, do convey my good wishes and blessings.

Yes, Dr. Ansari's passing away has created a big void which will be difficult to fill. Poor Zohra is lost in grief. I am sending her today a second letter<sup>1</sup> in my broken Urdu.

Sardar [and] Kaka are of course here and very much remember Abbajan and Ammajan.

My address is Bangalore City up to June 15.

Can you read my writing? Has Hamida<sup>2</sup> come?

SMT. RAIHANA TYABJI  
SOUTHWOOD

[From Gujarati]

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

<sup>1</sup> Neither letter is available.

<sup>2</sup> Addressee's brother's daughter

### 53. LETTER TO S. AMBUJAMMAL

NANDI DURG,  
May 25, 1936

CHI. AMBUJAM,

I was delighted to get your letter. Krishnaswami<sup>1</sup> must be happy now. Your daughter-in-law too is happy, I hope. You must be keeping well, physically as well as mentally. Your parents too must be doing fine.

The climate here is friendly. Sardar takes plenty of walks daily. The others too are all right and so am I.

Yes, we shall be in Bangalore for a fortnight, going there on the 31st instant. It will be good if [you] too can come. We have to go to Wardha *via* Madras only.

Kamala wants to spend two or three days with me. I have sent my consent.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

[PS.]

Tell me if you can read the above with ease. There is Mrs. Esther Menon living there in Shamrock Cottage. See her if you can on my behalf and befriend her.<sup>2</sup>

From a photostat of the Hindi: C.W. 9607. Courtesy: S. Ambujammal

### 54. TELEGRAM TO MAGANLAL P. MEHTA

May 26, 1936

MAGANLAL PRANJIVAN MEHTA  
MOGHUL STREET, RANGOON

YOU MUST NOT GO WITHOUT SEEING ME. NANDI HILL TILL THIRTY-FIRST THEN BANGALORE FORTNIGHT. COME IF ONLY FOR ONE DAY.

BAPU

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

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

<sup>2</sup> The postscript is in English.

## 55. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

May 26, 1936

CHI. MIRA,

Your two letters 23rd, 24th came in today.

Of course if you are happier and better in Segaoon, you will go there. You must have rest and the food you want at the time you want. Tell someone quietly there and perhaps matters will mend. I return the maps.<sup>1</sup> No corrections. You have thought the thing out well and it stands.

No more today, as I am anxious to catch the post just now going.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 6340. Courtesy: MirabeHN. Also G.N. 9806

## 56. LETTER TO VIYOGI HARI

BANGALORE CITY,<sup>2</sup>

May 26, 1936

BHAI VIYOGI HARI,

Only today I got your letter. The telegram regarding Sukirti's<sup>3</sup> wedding will go tomorrow. It is a good development. Send my blessings to both. Convey to Bhagavati Prasad that I hope the motive behind this marriage was not lust but only pure religious feeling. The purity in Sukirti and Bhagavati Prasad's life from now on will have a great impact on the Hindu world.

I have already written about you. Your decision, I find, is correct.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

<sup>1</sup> The addressee had drawn "two alternative plans for the lay-out of the buildings, prayer-ground and compound".

<sup>2</sup> Gandhiji apparently meant this for the addressee's reply

<sup>3</sup> An inmate of the Harijan Ashram, Delhi

[PS.]

Hand over the enclosed letter to Amtussalaam.

It must be made clear that Sukirti's marriage had no connection with the Harijan Sevak Sangh. It need not be announced to the Press. Does Bhagavati have parents or any other relatives? Has he been thrown out by his caste or is there any such possibility?

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 1071

### 57. LETTER TO K. HAZAREESINGH

[AS AT] WARDHA,  
May 26, 1936

BHAI HAZAREESINGH,

I was about to leave for Nandi Durg when your letter reached me. I had already received your book which however has been left at Wardha. I have your letter before me.

I stayed in Mauritius for about ten days, while my boat was lying at anchor.<sup>1</sup> There was no other purpose in my visit and this is why only a few people may have been aware of my presence there.<sup>2</sup> I stayed in the house of some Muslim friends and that gave me an opportunity of meeting other people. I also met the Governor at a social function. Please convey my greetings to all my fellow-countrymen. *Vandemataram*.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

From a facsimile of the Hindi: *A History of Indians in Mauritius*, Appendix E

### 58. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

May 27, 1936

CHI. MIRA,

I gave a hurried reply yesterday to your two letters. I returned also the two plans for the fenced yard. I did not examine your maps critically, as I regard your judgment to be superior to mine. You have a natural faculty for these matters.

<sup>1</sup> Gandhiji, in fact, stayed in Mauritius for 20 days; *vide* "Speech in Mauritius", 13-11-1901

<sup>2</sup> What follows is a translation as given in the source, the corresponding Hindi original not having been reproduced.

I think I have already told you<sup>1</sup> that Mahadev's hut need not be thought of just yet. I want first to feel my legs before incurring the expenses of further buildings. It is wise to move slowly. The experience of five days shows that contact can be retained even while Mahadev & Co. are in Maganwadi. This is merely said to justify cautious movement.

I must discuss with you the disorganization you noticed at J.'s<sup>2</sup> when we meet.

The storm you describe is an indication of what things can be in the villages in the rainy season. Perhaps the things were better in Segaon, because it is not on an eminence as Paunar is. Every position has both its advantages and disadvantages. It is better therefore not to make elaborate plans about things which are themselves unenduring.<sup>3</sup>

I think I have told you, we descend to Bangalore on 31st to remain there a fortnight. We leave Bangalore any day between 10th and 15th. It depends upon the engagements there. My inclination will be to hasten the date of departure. I have not needed the outing. I think Sardar has gained well. He won't need the full 15 days in Bangalore. Therefore if we stay on till the last day, it will be business that would keep us.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 6341. Courtesy: Mirabehn. Also G.N. 9807

### *59. LETTER TO MAULVI M. ASHRAF*

AS AT WARDHA,  
May 27, 1936

DEAR ASHRAF,

What can you expect from me? No doubt you have written to Kumarappa and Shankerlal Banker. They can send you what little literature the two Associations<sup>4</sup> have produced. I am sure you do not

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Letter to Mirabehn", 24-5-1936.

<sup>2</sup> Jamnalal Bajaj

<sup>3</sup> Explaining this the addressee writes: "While I was building Bapu's mud cottage, a pucca brick bungalow happened to be being prepared for Jamnalalji at Paunar. In the severe storm referred to the little mud cottage stood firm and the brick bungalow collapsed."

<sup>4</sup> The A.I.S.A. and the A.I.V.I.A.

want *Harijan*, which deals with untouchability mainly and some moral problems.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

MAULVI M. ASHRAF  
POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC INFORMATION DEPARTMENT  
SWARAJ BHAWAN, ALLAHBAD

A.I.C.C. File, 1936. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

### 60. LETTER TO KANAIYALAL AND LILAVATI MUNSHI

*May 27, 1936*

BHAI MUNSHI AND CHI. LILAVATI,

If I could persuade myself to yield to your love, I would certainly accept your hospitality. But now I am a party to keeping even Sardar back. We had a talk yesterday and both of us came to the conclusion that he too should not go [to Ooty]. From the point of view of health, Nandi has agreed with us all, and especially with Sardar. Do not think for a moment that the place can offer Nandi's solitude. It is now cool in Bangalore too, and we hope to be able to do some work after going there. It, therefore, seems unwise that Sardar should part from me even for two days. Since my programme in Bangalore will be crowded, I suggest that you should come here and spend your last two days with us. If you do so, we shall be able to talk a little and also do some work. The climate of Ooty is certainly excellent, and so is the scenery. But I don't feel like going there just for that reason, nor can I summon the courage to do so. Sardar has already enjoyed your hospitality. I also shall enjoy it some day. As for your love, I am tasting it daily.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 7574. Courtesy: K. M. Munshi

## 61. LETTER TO VITHAL V. DASTANE

NANDI DURG,  
May 27, 1936

BHAI DASTANE,

It appears you are expecting too much from me. You know my present limitations in placing the thing before the country. Publicity, however, is inherent in diligence in your own work.

In response to his letter I have asked Dev to let me know the location, plan and other facts. In the mean while here are my answers to your questions:

(1) In the rainy season you should grow there the requisite vegetables as also a few flowering plants. You should also grow such food grain as could be harvested by December. All this should be utilized at the time of the Congress session. Measurements of the land should be obtained right now. Make notes of places which are waterlogged during the rainy season. If there is any tank which gets filled up, this water too should be conserved. For this job you should immediately obtain the services of an expert agriculturist and an expert engineer. I take it that you will get their help gratis.

Do see Shankerlal right now. He knows about this more than anyone else. Mhatre the architect has worked for two sessions; so please take him there right now. Again ask Shankerlal about Nandalal Bose and the material from the Santiniketan exhibition. Contact Lakshmidas, as also Jajuji and Kumarappa.

Mhatre will help you with the calculations regarding the time and space for the *pandal*, barracks, etc. Assume that the minimum time required would be three months, so that the construction work should start soon after the monsoon is over. But first of all prepare a plan [of work].

The site should accommodate a hundred thousand people. Enroll the names of men and women volunteers right from today. Start with . . .<sup>1</sup>, Vatsala<sup>2</sup> and others.

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

<sup>1</sup> Illegible

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

62. *LETTER TO TIRUPUR KHADI-PRODUCING ASSOCIATION*<sup>1</sup>

[Before May 28, 1936]<sup>2</sup>

All I can say is that it is wrong for you to sell khaddar in the circumstances in which you are doing. It hurts the poor people in whose interest the affairs of the All-India Spinners' Association are conducted.

*The Hindu*, 30-5-1936

63. *LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR*

May 28, 1936

MY DEAR REBEL,

Your letter came in yesterday. The post comes after the closing of the outgoing mail.

You are a proper family party Judge, Government Member, Doctor, with rebellious sister in their midst and you want the Collector Brother in your midst to finish your happiness. Remember that feeding up an exhausted brother is not the only manner of expressing a sister's love. She has to know the food that is required for a given constitution. I know cases where rich and nutritious food has resulted in harm. But you have lived with me in vain if you do not know how to choose the correct articles. The manner of preparing them must be your very own.

When I read the sentence in your letter, attributed to me as having ever said to Kallenbach, I couldn't believe it. I re-read the thing and then I laughed. I never lay down the law like that even for little children. Though K. had immense faith in me, he would not tolerate the autocracy and arrogance attributed to me. And faith like his would not require such assertions of infallibility. You must now fill in the gap and tell me who regaled you with the precious information

<sup>1</sup> The Association had pointed out that they were paying the spinners decent wages and ...that if they had really reduced the wages of spinners, they would not spin for them but would forthwith go to the All-India Spinners' Association and that the prices raised by the All-India Spinners' Association were too high. *Vide* "Uncertified Khadi", 11-4-1936.

<sup>2</sup> The report appeared under the date-line "Tirupur, May 28, 1936".



and I might be able to throw some more light on the grave problem ! But my denial should not be taken to mean that I won't lay down the law for rebels and idiots and require obedience because it is given by me. I must live up to the title given to me if only to give you the satisfaction of proving your rebellious spirit! And then heaven help me, if such assertion being heard by somebody is quoted as an authentic example of my arrogance !!!

When we descend to Bangalore I shan't have time to give you such nonsense. Here there is quiet and therefore comparative leisure for giving you senseless things.

I do hope this hospitality even of nearest and dearest is not proving a strain on your weak body. I know what closest attention to the tiniest details, of which you are capable when it is a matter of loving service, means to the person giving such love. Happily Shummy is there to prevent you from overdoing it.

Mira was badly ill but she is better now. She was taken to J.'s bungalow. She must have returned to Segaon.

Rameshwari Nehru comes here today for three days. She had a very successful tour in the Harijan cause in Travancore.

There was no indication in your note<sup>1</sup> on Lucknow Exhibition that you did not want it published. I read it carefully, made alterations to hide your identity and let it go. You will tell me how it reads. And why did you not want it published? Next time you will mark all such things suitably so as to indicate your wishes. That note had little value if it was not meant to tell me people what a town-bred woman had felt about the Exhibiton.

Here is a note received from Mr. Marsden which speaks for itself.

Love.

TYRANT

[PS.]

Remember we descend to Bangalore City on 31st and stay there not beyond 15th June.

From the original: C.W. 3728. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 6884

<sup>1</sup> Published in *Harijan*, 23-5-1936, under the title "A City Woman on the Lucknow Exhibition"

## 64. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

May 28, 1936

CHI. AMTUSSALAAM,

I have a letter from you after a long time. Nowadays I am afraid of writing to you. You see in my words what was not intended because you have grown very suspicious. I am even considering whether I should stop writing in Urdu. You were hurt by an innocent letter containing nothing offensive because you put a contrary interpretation on it. I was only jesting when I wrote to you not to quarrel with Thakkar Bapa<sup>1</sup>. I know that you are not one to quarrel with anybody, and hence it can be only a jest if I talk of a quarrel with reference to you. I made the joke only after I had Thakkar Bapa's loving letter and understood that it was all over. Why should you then feel unhappy and not be glad about it?

Shall I henceforth give up all joking with you?

What if there are all kinds of stories about you? Are you sure it is not your suspicious nature that is at work here again? You are concerned with your work alone. Tell me what other work can be better than cooking for the Harijan children, feeding them and keeping all things clean. Moreover, you have Tyagi and Rajkishori with you and you should therefore experience no difficulty.

It will pain me greatly if you ruin your health. You ought to forget the grief over Dr. Ansari's death and take up the work he has left behind.

The talk you had with your brothers at Patiala was not right. It was nothing but your foolishness and it evoked the response it deserved. What else would an unhappy member of the family say? All have to bend before your obstinacy.

I had already sent for Saraswati and her mother even before you made the suggestion. I believe they will come to Bangalore. Have no anxiety on Kanti's account.

The reply should now be addressed: Bangalore City.

I am writing to Sukirti and Raj. Write about your health.

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Letter to Amtussalaam", 18-5-1936.

Tell me whether you can correctly read this letter.  
Have I not answered all your questions now?

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 595

*65. LETTER TO RAJKISHORI TYAGI*

*May 28, 1936*

CHI. RAJKISHORI,

Your letter. You need not return if you do not like to live in the Mahila Ashram. You should write a letter to Sethji<sup>1</sup> regarding this. Write to me in detail what you did not like at the Mahila Ashram.

It is better to stay with Amtussalaambehn and Tyagiji is of course there. Learn form him as much Hindi and arithmetic as possible.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 6637. Also C.W. 4285. Courtesy: Chand Tyagi

*66. TELEGRAM TO PYARELAL*

NANDI,  
*May 29, 1936*

PYARELAL  
15 COLLEGE SQUARE  
CALCUTTA

YOU HAVE WHOLLY MISUNDERSTOOD MY LETTER.  
ABANDONING REFERS PRESENT WORK.

BAPU

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

<sup>1</sup> Jamnalal Bajaj

## 67. LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

May 29, 1936

MY DEAR JAWAHARLAL,

I have your letter of 25th instant.<sup>1</sup> So you are touring with almost feverish speed. May you have the requisite strength. Even a week at Khali will be a godsend.

I propose to make public use of your statement on khadi<sup>2</sup>. I have received so many inquiries. The distorted summary<sup>3</sup> has caused consternation among our people who have faith in khadi. Your statement will ease the situation a bit.

Your explanation about the omission of a woman on the W. C. does not give me satisfaction. If you had shown the slightest desire to have a woman on the Committee, there would have been no difficulty whatsoever about any of the older ones standing out. There was pressure if it may be so called only about Bhulabhai.<sup>4</sup> And the first time his name was mentioned you had no objection. There was no pressure about any other member. And then you had this unfettered choice of omitting a socialist name and taking a woman. But so far as I remember you yourself had difficulty in choosing a substitute for Sarojini Devi and you were anxious to omit her. You even went so far as to say that you did not believe in the tradition or convention of always having a woman and a certain number of Mussalmans on the cabinet. Therefore so far as the exclusion of [a] woman is concerned, I think it was your own unfettered discretion. No other member would have had the desire or the courage to break the convention. I must also tell you that in certain Congress circles the whole blame is being thrown on me, for I am reported to have excluded Mrs. Naidu and to have insisted on having no woman—a thing for which as I said to you I had not even the courage. I could not exclude even Mrs. N., not to mention a woman.

As to the other members too, I have been under the impression that you chose the members because it was the right thing to do for

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* Appendix, "Letter from Jawaharlal Nehru", 25-5-1936.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide*, "A False Alarm", 6-6-1936.

<sup>3</sup> *Vide* footnote to "Letter to Jawaharlal Nehru"

<sup>4</sup> Bhulabhai J. Desai

the cause. There was no question of *behaya*<sup>1</sup> or *hayadar*<sup>2</sup> when all were actuated by the noblest of motives, i.e., service of the cause according to their lights. I may say that your statement which your letter confirms has given much pain to Rajen Babu, C. R.<sup>3</sup> and Vallabhbai.<sup>4</sup> They feel and I agree with them they have tried to act honourably and with perfect loyalty towards you as a colleague. Your statement makes you out to be the injured party. I wish you could see this viewpoint and correct the report if it is at all possible.

As to the third thing. I would love to have the thing cleared. I cannot guess what you want to say. But that must wait till we meet. I must not add to the strain you are already bearing.

About Dr. Ansari Memorial, I have given<sup>5</sup> Asaf Ali my clear opinion that the memorial for the Doctor should await better times politically as it has for Papa<sup>6</sup>. Do you think otherwise?

The Kamala memorial is making slow progress.

Herewith the Princess's letter containing a reference to Indu.

Love.

BAPU

[PS.]

Bangalore City till 10th.

Gandhi-Nehru Papers, 1936. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

## 68. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

May 29, 1936

CHI. MIRA,

So you are in Segaon already. I do not mind. If you get there the comforts you need, it will be where your heart is. If you get the rains, of course there can be no building. Therefore let all labour that can be used be given to the walls and the roof. If these are ready and the walls dry, the rest can be finished even after the rains. But I am not going to worry, if in spite of all effort the building is not ready for

<sup>1</sup> Shameless

<sup>2</sup> A self-respecting person

<sup>3</sup> C. Rajagopalachari

<sup>4</sup> Vide Appendix "Letter from Vallabhbai Patel to Rajendra Prasad", 29-5-1936.

<sup>5</sup> Vide "Letter to Jawaharlal Nehru", 21-5-1936

<sup>6</sup> Motilal Nehru, who had passed away on February 6, 1931

occupation by the time we return. No strain should be put upon your weak body.

Love.

BAPU

[PS.]

The accompanying for Munnalal. I hope you got a basket of fruit sent by Janammal<sup>1</sup>

From the original: C.W. 6342. Mirabehn. Also G.N. 9808

### 69. LETTER TO MUNNALAL G. SHAH

May 29, 1936

CHI. MUNNALAL,

I have your letter. Both of you<sup>2</sup> are passing through a severe test. We ought to learn to live in a village, come wind, come rain. The city-dwellers have their own risks to run and yet live there, and so do the villagers. At present we have ceased to belong to the town nor have we come to belong to the village and, hanging midway between the two, we are in a miserable state.

*Blessings to both from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 8603. Also C.W. 6993. Courtesy: Munnalal G. Shah

### 70. LETTER TO AMRITLAL T. NANAVATI

May 29, 1936

CHI. AMRITLAL,

You must have got my reply to your telegram. The reason for replying by wire was that if for some reason Nimu should wish not to go she need not go. I am not enthusiastic about Nimu's going to Bombay. Her mother would not very much need Nimu's services as her sister is in Bombay and so are her sister's husband and her brother. However, I permitted her to go thinking that since Ramdas has sent a telegram she might think it necessary to go. Show this to her if she is there.

<sup>1</sup> Cousin of S. Ambujammal

<sup>2</sup> The other being Balwantsinha

Dispose of the letters enclosed herewith. If no one from Mirabehn has turned up to receive the mail, make inquiries at Jamnalalji's. And if no one from Jamnalalji's is going, someone at Maganwadi should take it to her. Munnalal too is with Mirabehn.

Letters should now be sent to Bangalore City.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 10715

### 71. SELF-CONTROL AGAIN

Your recent articles<sup>1</sup> on self-control have created quite a stir. Persons who are in sympathy with your views find it difficult to exercise self-control for any length of time. They argue that you are applying your own experience and practice to the whole mankind. And even you have admitted that you do not fulfil the definition of a complete *brahmachari*. For you yourself are not free from animal passion. And since you admit the necessity of limiting the number of children a married couple may have, the use of contraceptives is the only practical method open to the vast majority of mankind.

Thus writes a correspondent.

I have admitted my own limitations. In this matter of self-control *v.* contraceptives, they constitute my qualifications. For my limitations show quite clearly that I am like the majority of earth earthy and can have no pretensions to any extraordinary gifts. The motive for my self-control was also quite ordinary, *viz.*, the desire to limit the progeny for the purpose of serving the country or humanity. Inability to support a large family should be a greater incentive than the very distant one of serving one's country or humanity. That in spite of thirty-five years of successful (from the present standpoint) self-control, the animal in me still needs watching shows in an eminent degree that I am very much an ordinary mortal. I, therefore, do suggest that what has been possible for me is possible for any human being who would make the required effort.

My quarrel with the advocates of contraceptives lies in their taking it for granted that ordinary mortals cannot exercise self-control. Some of them even go so far as to say that even if they can,

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "For Contraceptives", 4-4-1936; "For Women Reformers", 2-5-1936; also "Birth-Control [-I]", "Birth- Control-II" and "For the Young", 28-3-1936

they ought not to do so . To them, no matter how eminent they may be in their own spheres, I say, in all humility but with utmost confidence, they are talking without experience of the possibilities of self-control. They have no *right* to limit the capacity of the human soul. In such instances the positive evidence of one person like me, if it is reliable, is not only of greater value but decisive. To dismiss my evidence as useless because I am popularly regarded as a ‘mahatma’ is not proper in a serious inquiry.

Far more weighty is the argument of a sister who says in effect:

We, the advocates of contraceptives, have come on the scene only recently. You self-controllers had the field all to yourselves all these long generations, maybe thousands of years. What have you to show to your credit? Has the world learnt the lesson of self-control? What have you done to stop the misery of over-burdened families? Have you heard the cry of wounded motherhood? Come, the field is even now open to you. We do not mind your advocacy of self-control. We may even wish you success, if perchance you save wives from the unwanted approaches of their husbands. But why should you seek to decry the methods which we employ and which take note of and make every allowance for common human weaknesses or habits and which when properly employed almost never fail to accomplish their purpose?

The taunt is dictated by the anguish of a sister filled with compassion for the families that are always in want because of the ever-increasing number of children. The appeal of human misery has been known to melt hearts of stone. How can it fail to affect high-souled sisters? But such appeals may easily lead one astray, if one is lifted off one’s feet and, like a drowning man, catches [at] any floating straw.

We are living in times when values are undergoing quick changes. We are not satisfied with slow results. We are not satisfied with the welfare merely of our own caste-fellows, not even of our own country. We feel or want to feel for the whole of humanity. All this is a tremendous gain in humanity’s march towards its goal.

But we won’t find the remedy for human ills by losing patience and by rejecting everything that is old because it is old. Our ancestors also dreamt, perhaps vaguely, the same dreams that fire us with zeal. The remedies they applied for similar ills, it is possible, are applicable even to the horizon that appears to have widened beyond expectations.

And my plea based on positive experience is that even as truth and ahimsa are not merely for the chosen few but for the whole of



humanity to be practised in daily life, so exactly is self-control not merely for a few 'mahatmas' but for the whole of humanity. And even as because many people will be untruthful and violent, humanity may not lower its standard, so also though many, even the majority, may not respond to the message of self-control, we may not lower our standard.

A wise judge will not give a wrong decision in the face of a hard case. He will allow himself to appear to have hardened his heart because he *knows* that truest mercy lies in not making bad law.

We may not attribute the weaknesses of the perishable body or the flesh to the imperishable soul that resides in it. We have to regulate the body in the light of the laws that govern the soul. In my humble opinion, these laws are few and unchangeable, capable of being understood and followed by the whole of the human family. There would be differences of degree but not of kind in their application. If we have faith, we won't lose it because it may take a million years before humanity realizes or makes the nearest or visible approach to its goal. In Jawaharlal's language, let us have the correct ideology.

The sister's challenge, however, remains to be answered. The "self-controllers" are not idle. They are carrying on their propaganda. If their method is different in kind from the method of contraceptives, so is and must be their propaganda. "Self-controllers" do not need clinics, they cannot advertise their cure for the simple reason that it is not an article to be sold or given. But their criticism of contraceptives and warning to the people against their use is part of their propaganda. The constructive side has always been there, but naturally in an unfelt and unseen manner. Advocacy of self-control has never been suspended. The most effective is that of example. The larger the number of honest persons who practise successful self-control, the more effective becomes the propaganda.

*Harijan*, 30-5-1936

## 72. NOTES

### PRIZE ESSAY ON BARTER

Those who are interested in the question of barter in the place of exchange are reminded that the date for closing the competition is

drawing near. I reproduce below the notice<sup>1</sup> that appeared in *Harijan* dated August 31, 1935.

#### CERTIFIED DEALERS, NOT CERTIFIED KHADI

The manager of the Burma Branch of the A. I. S. A. writes to the Secretary:<sup>2</sup>

With reference to the article of Gandhiji under the caption “Uncertified Khadi” in *Harijan* of 11-4-1936, I beg to bring to your notice the fact that here in Burma also, spurious khadi is sold in large quantities and it is a common practice amongst the uncertified dealers to demonstrate to the buyers that they are stocking and selling khadi certified by A.I.S.A., by showing to them the words “Certified by A.I.S.A.” stamped on (some) cloth or the label bearing these words affixed on (some) cloth ....

We have therefore often and often to bring to the notice of the public and the credulous buyers the fact that khadi or cloth is never certified by A. I. S. A. but it is only the dealer or the party that is certified, (and the public are advised to buy only from A.I.S.A. or A. I. S. A. certified dealers or depots.) You will thus see that it is wrong for us to use the words “certified khadi” or “uncertified khadi” because it only strengthens the hands of uncertified dealers.

Now that the use of these words is made even by Gandhiji. . . I have not been able to check myself from bringing to your notice the mistake that we unconsciously commit by using the words “certified khadi” or “uncertified khadi”. . . .

I gladly make amends. It is undoubtedly an error to speak of certified khadi. It will be difficult to certify pieces and it is futile to expect buyers to make sure of every article they purchase, whether it is genuine or not. The A.I.S.A. has always therefore followed the practice of certifying stores and dealers selling only genuine khadi in the cloth line. I hope that, whether in Burma or elsewhere, lovers of khadi will make themselves sure that they buy only from *stores* or *dealers* certified by the A.I.S.A.

*Harijan*, 30-5-1936

<sup>1</sup> Not reproduced here; *vide* “Prize Essay on Barter System”, 26-8-1935

<sup>2</sup> Only excerpts of the letter are reproduced here.

### 73. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

NANDI HILL,  
May 30, 1936

CHI. MIRA,

I have your letter of 28th.

Of course you will incur the expense of a latrine. It may be well to rig up a bathroom also side by side as we had in Sabarmati.

I would not want you to go to a seaside, if your hut on an apology for a hill serves the same purpose.

I hope we shall reach Wardha on 15th June, Monday, if not on 14th. My effort would be to reach there on a speaking day. That can only be Sunday. But if I cannot manage it, I shall be satisfied to reach there even on Monday.

You must have by now heard about Harilal's acceptance of Islam. If he had no selfish purpose behind, I should have nothing to say against the step. But I very much fear that there is no other motive behind this step. Let us see what happens now.

We descend to Bangalore City tomorrow.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 6343. Courtesy: Mirabehn. Also G.N. 9809

### 74. LETTER TO RAMDAS GANDHI

*Saturday, May 30, 1936*

. . . <sup>1</sup> just read in the paper about Harilal's exploit. There could be no harm in his being converted to Islam with understanding and selfless motives. But he suffers from greed for wealth and sensual pleasures. At Nagpur he gave me to understand that he would do anything whatever to satisfy his greed. I shall be spared all the mental pain if I find my impression wrong and if he turns a new leaf. But here it is [like] adding meat-eating to drinking, and he had more or less assumed the freedom to eat meat. All the same none of you

<sup>1</sup> Omission as in the source

should be unhappy about it. What is destined must be. He had ceased to belong to any faith and now he has taken on the label of Islam. That does not make him a follower of the faith, though we should indeed feel satisfied if he truly practises in his life what is best in Islam. And if this is a mere show, it does not deserve to be lamented.

This instance should make us all alert and we should [try to] understand whatever religion we follow and bring credit to it.

Read this to Devdas and send an extract to Manilal.

[From Gujarati]

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

### 75. LETTER TO PRABHAVATI

May 30, 1936

CHI. PRABHA,

I got your letter which arrived just today. I read it and promptly destroyed it. Hence I am writing this 'out of my head', i.e., on the basis of my recollection.

You are bound to have a burden to shoulder while there. God is there to take care of you. You are quite right in reducing your food when there is much work to attend to, but it would be good not to have to give up milk. Perhaps you will be getting more rest at Sitab Diyara.

I follow the point about Chandramukhi<sup>1</sup>, Vidyavati<sup>2</sup>. You have well escaped it. You must have learnt about Tarabehn's [death]<sup>3</sup>. My opinion is that you should go to Banaras and learn what you can. After all, you do wish to read. You should, therefore, welcome this new knowledge. You will meet some new persons and it will please Jayaprakash. It is a different matter if you could convince him with your arguments, but the better thing is not to have much argument. It is all right if you could persuade him with a casual discussion. Only after the completion of the Banaras course shall we consider what is to be done.

<sup>1</sup> Jayaprakash Narayan's brother's daughter

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

<sup>3</sup> This sentence, being illegible in the source, is taken from *Bapuna Patro-10: Shri Prabhavati behnne*,. The book however places the letter under May 20, which is a slip.

Don't you think you have now my opinion of the Banaras proposal fully?

Give me an account of Chandrakanta's wedding, if you can. Where is Sumangal<sup>1</sup> and how is he? Do you know anything about him? Tomorrow we leave for Bangalore City from where we proceed to Wardha on the 13th at the latest, reaching there on the 15th. I shall be living at Segaon, five miles from there. Perhaps I shall be visiting Wardha once a week. My hut is under construction.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

[PS.]

The newspapers report that Harilal has become a Muslim.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3471

## 76. LETTER TO PYARELAL

[May 30, 1936]<sup>3</sup>

CHI. PYARELAL,

You must have received the telegram I sent you yesterday. What should I write to you? Such utter lack of faith ! Where there is faith, even a wrongly written word would be rightly interpreted. I did not write anything wrong. You must know that I do not revise my letters. I have many letters to write. Sentences are written as they come from the pen. They should be interpreted only in the context of the relevant facts. How can “abandon what you are pursuing and come to me” be interpreted the way you have done? “What you are pursuing” is a reference not to Yoga but to your work in Calcutta or Orissa. I wrote that way because I felt that although that work is worth doing, it may be better in your interest to stay with me. But what is the remedy when you see such a contrary meaning in it? In my view that indicates the height of suspicion and lack of faith! But it is like ‘once bitten twice shy’. But in this case it is like being shy even though there is no bite at all.

It is possible that I may have the remedy even for such lack of faith.

Have you understood the meaning of what I have said? There

<sup>1</sup> Sumangal Prakash

<sup>3</sup> From the reference to the telegram; *vide* the preceding item.

is no scope for wrong interpretation at least in this.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

[PS.]

I shall be at Bangalore city after Mar 31.

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

### 77. LETTER TO LILAVATI ASAR

*May 30, 1936*

CHI. LILAVATI,

I have your letter. It is an excuse that hand-made paper is not available there. Do not people find similar pretexts for not wearing khadi? All these are signs of laziness and lack of earnestness.

I shall reach Wardha latest on the 17th or 18th. It is probable that I shall leave by the 14th or the 15th.

Prema's address is: Sasvad, near Poona.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

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

### 78. LETTER TO NIRMALA GANDHI

[Before *May 31, 1936*]<sup>1</sup>

CHI. NIMU,

I got your letter. Also Nanavati's with it. I was very pleased to learn that you feel quite at home there and are having the education that you wanted. That Nanavati will give you a certificate is equally gratifying. Look after every thing carefully as if it was your own. Preserve cleanliness. Keep the kitchen perfectly neat. There will be little for you to do yourself but certainly you can keep an eye over everything. As a general rule, women are better at such jobs. This may not be true of all women but it can certainly be said of you. I will not

<sup>1</sup> From the reference to Gandhiji's proposed visit to Bangalore on May 31; Gandhiji left Nandidoorg for Bangalore on May 31, 1936; *vide* "Letter to Begum Mohammad Alam", 9-1-1933

write to Nanavati today. Tell him so. . . .<sup>1</sup> I hope it will not be necessary to go to Ahmedabad. I wrote to you what Ramdas wrote to me about his illness. I have written to Sarita as well. I will leave for Bangalore on 31st May. If you address your letter to Bangalore City, it will do.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From the Gujarati original: Mrs. Sumitra Kulkarni Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

### 79. DISCUSSION WITH C. V. RAMAN AND LADY RAMAN<sup>2</sup>

[Before May 31, 1936]<sup>3</sup>

The young men wanted Gandhiji to go to their Institute . . . . If he listened to them, he would have to listen to many other requests, he argued in reply. Some of them wanted his autograph and had also thought of presenting him with a purse for Harijans.

[GANDHIJI:] I wish every one of you would want my autograph so as to swell that purse; but you must do all that where I am staying, but not drag me to the Institute.

The moment he was told that it was the Science Institute, he capitulated.

Of course, if it is the Science Institute you are talking of, I must make an exception in its favour, provided Sir C. V. Raman will show me some magic there.

He said to Lady Raman:

I have heard all kinds of good things about you from your husband, but I have to find out how far they are true. He told me the other day that whilst he is absorbed in his science, you find time for all kinds of humanitarian activities.

[LADY RAMAN:] Not as much as I should be doing. But I am certainly interested in khadi and Harijan welfare and social service and things of that kind. You know, Mahatmaji, I have been a spinner since many years ago. Some fifteen years ago I sent you a quantity of my own hand-spun yarn to be woven into cloth and the

<sup>1</sup> Some words here are illegible in the source.

<sup>2</sup> Who were accompanied by some students of the Science Institute

<sup>3</sup> According to Mahadev Desai's "Weekly Letter", from which this and the following item are reproduced, these discussions took place at Nandi Hill where Gandhiji stayed till May 31, 1936.

late Maganlal Gandhi sent the cloth on to me. But my husband had no faith in the wheel then. He would put away my wheel, smash it and break it; but I am glad to tell you that in my own life-time the day has come when he no longer ridicules the wheel. He too believes in it.

I am very happy. Well, then, I want you to do a little work for me. Did you ever meet the late Kamala Nehru?

Once or twice, Mahatmaji. But I know the old Mrs. Nehru very well.

But you of course know what a good woman Kamala was. You know how she spent herself for the country. But what I prize most of her is not her political contribution but her great spiritual beauty which I should like every man and woman to know.

Yes, I know of her services and her moral beauty.

Then you must help me in collecting some money for the Memorial we are having for her.

And he explained to her the object of the Memorial.

“Oh yes, Mahatmaji,” she said, “don't I know how you sat down in Calcutta after Deshbandhu Das's death<sup>1</sup> for a few months and collected as much as 8 lakhs? You can certainly collect a lot if you sat down like that here. I had the privilege of helping in that collection. I was in Calcutta then.

Oh yes, but I have not the time I had then at my disposal. But you can bring to bear all your influence and collect as much as you can.

Lady Raman heartily agreed. As this business was going on, in came. . . Sir C. V. Raman. She was talking in Hindi as he came in. “Now, is that Hindi any good?” he asked jocularly.

Certainly as good as your science.

“Oh yes” spoke... Sir C. V. Raman, “she has an amazing capacity for picking up languages. She knows Hindi, she knows Bengali better than Hindi.”

Of course, she has stayed in Calcutta for some years.

“Not necessarily for that reason. I, too, have stayed with her. But I know not a word. And now here she has picked up Kannada and talks it.” Sir Chandrashekhara [Venkataraman] then began wondering what language could be the language for the masses of India and seemed for a moment to be inclined to the belief that English had the chance.

Don't you think it will be a bad day for the many millions of India who know Hindi without learning it to attempt to know English?

<sup>1</sup> On June 16, 1925.



And Sir Chandrashekhara [Venkataraman] immediately said he was glad that Hindi was making rapid strides in South India and added: "I know Hindi, too, Mahatmaji. I understand it very well. I learnt it from no less a teacher than Malaviyaji whose wonderful Hindi I had sometimes to hear for hours when I was in Kashi, and I could not help learning it. But I cannot speak Hindi. It is that conceit, you know, that I am full of as much as you."

*Harijan*, 6-6-1936

## 80. DISCUSSION WITH DR. ERIKA ROSENTHAL<sup>1</sup>

[Before *May 31, 1936*]<sup>2</sup>

[DR. ROSENTHAL:] Could you teach me how to make them co-operate with us?<sup>3</sup>

[GANDHIJI:] I am trying to learn it myself. You may have heard that I am now going to settle in a genuine village instead of living in a glorified village that Wardha is. Well, all that I have been saying to the people and my co-workers will be there put to the test. But if I have said that I am going to learn the art, there is no doubting the fact that the only way is to go in their midst and do the things oneself. Dumping educated patrons amongst them or even mere enlisting the help of monied men cannot go a long way. One must do as the late Mary Chesley did.

And with that he narrated the pathetic life-story of Tarabehn Chesley who met her death on her pilgrimage to Badri-Kedar.

"But," said Dr. Rosenthal, "that was, if I may say so, a rash adventure and I should not imitate her."

No, I do not want you to. I am talking of her spirit—the spirit in which she tried to identify herself with the poorest. There is Miss Mary Barr there who, if you please, is more sensible, who makes allowances for her own limitations and still has completely identified herself with the people. You must see for yourself the work she is doing.

I must. What I mean is that a foreigner cannot and must not adopt all the ways and habits of Indians. He should assimilate what is best in their life. Many an Indian

<sup>1</sup> Daughter of Dr. Paul Deussen and wife of a doctor who, following the Nazi persecution of Jews had come of India. She was doing welfare work in Mysore.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* footnote 3, "Discussion with C. V. Raman and Lady Raman", 31-5-1936

<sup>3</sup> She had asked Gandhiji "the secret of teaching people to help themselves".

goes to Europe and picks up the superficial things of European life, much to his own damage. That is what I don't like.

What you say is cent per cent true. The foreigners ought not to attempt to adopt more than they naturally and easily can. Miss Barr has, I think, struck the true balance.

“Yes, one has to sit down in the midst like missionaries,” said Mr. De Souza who accompanied her.

“Yes,” said Dr. Rosenthal but energetically added, “but not with the desire to convert the people. The religious motive is what spoils most of their work I hate conversion.”

No doubt you would, being the daughter of your father.

And yet, you will be rather surprised that I have come up against a sentence in my father's writings which I cannot understand. He says, in effect, that he could not understand why people were unable to accept a religion because of the outside temptations that were offered them.

It must be just the contrary. I should like to see that text. It cannot be as you say.

I shall send you the text.

Yes, do. And then if I am right and you are wrong you will have to admit that I am a better son of your father than you are his daughter.

Yes. I think, Mahatmaji, we have to contend against religion being mixed up too much with the daily life of our people.

No, if it is true religion we want more of it.

I do not want to exclude true religion. I shall give you an example. We have in one of our centres a very good Harijan nurse. One day a Brahmin came there with his son who was suffering from sores. The doctor with the help of the nurse washed the sores and dressed them and bandaged them. But lo and behold the consternation of the Brahmin when he found that it was a Harijan nurse who had dressed his boy's sores. He took him to the nearest river, bathed him and washed away the whole dressing and bandage!

That is no religion. It is rank superstition. You will come across instances of that kind, but they are getting fewer every day.

*Harijan, 6-6-1936*

## 81. LETTER TO CHIMANLAL N. SHAH

BANGALORE CITY,  
May 31, 1936

CHI. CHIMANLAL,

I have your postcard. It is surprising that you never are quite free from illness. However, watch the result of the serum injection. Why should Babu<sup>1</sup> write to me, now that she is a learned lady? However, I would not complain if she never wrote to me, so long as she does not fall ill or grow weak. I know complaining will not avail but I would not complain even to myself, if Babu made her body like copper.

How very seriously you take the Narandas episode! It is contrary to non-violence. Not to mind the pain inflicted whether by a friend or by a foe is one more form of non-violence. Such conduct is part and parcel of non-violence. Moreover, we must also think of the friend's point of view. Why should we be pained if he said or did something without ill will even though his words or act were improper? You could point out his error, if any, to Narandas in case you are convinced that he is not a man to take any step out of ill will. Be patient if he is unable to see his error, but never take offence. Even if you think that he had an evil motive, your heart should feel no shock because a malicious person deserves to be pitied. Should we take offence at the act of one who deserves pity? My purpose in writing this is that you may analyse the state of your mind, apply to it the touchstone of non-violence and, if you detect your error, rectify it, cleanse your heart and calm down.

*Blessings to you all from*

BAPU

[PS.]

We shall be here till the 12th.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.G. 18

<sup>1</sup> Sharda, addressee's daughter

## 82. SPEECH AT CHICKBALLAPUR

May 31, 1936

Addressing the gathering in Hindi<sup>1</sup> Mahatmaji said as the doctor had asked him not to overexert himself he did not propose to make a long speech to them. He was very glad to address them that day which happened to be the birthday of H.H. the Maharaja of Mysore. Along with the people of Mysore, he joined in praying to God to give long life and prosperity to their beloved Ruler.

He prayed further that it may be given to H. H. the Maharaja of Mysore to approach more and more to *Ramarajya* in Mysore. In olden days, *Ramarajya* meant a government in which everyone in the country, including the lowest ryot, had peace and plenty.

Continuing, Mr. Gandhi thanked the people of Chickballapur for their cordial welcome. He and members of his party had all been very well cared for during their stay at Nandi Hills and they had all benefited greatly by their stay. The Government as well as the people had shown him great love and he and his party were duly thankful to them.<sup>2</sup>

*The Hindu*, 1-6-1936

## 83. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, CHINTAMANF

May 31, 1936

Addressing the gathering, Gandhiji said that medical advisers had prohibited him from raising his voice. Fortunately, it was one and the same thing to them whether he raised the voice or not. He wished he knew their own language. It would have been better perhaps if many of them could have followed his . . . Hindi or Hindustani. He still lived under the hope that before he died he would see educated India speaking the inter-provincial language Hindi or Hindustani. He knew that there were some people who entertained, quite falsely, in these parts of India the notion that the movement of Hindi was conceived in order to supplant the provincial languages, but this belief proceeded from gross ignorance. This movement had contributed handsomely to further the working knowledge of Hindi or Hindustani. It had . . . intended to strengthen the vernacular provincial languages. But provincial languages would suffer stagnation so long as they could not extend help to other

<sup>1</sup> Ismail Sheriff translated Gandhiji's speech into Kannada.

<sup>2</sup> A purse of Rs. 100 was presented to Gandhiji. Accepting the purse he smilingly said: "It is too small. Only hundred rupees. Three times shame!"

<sup>3</sup> An address on behalf of the Municipal Council was presented to Gandhiji. Over 2,000 people attended the meeting.

languages. The English language had a definite place and an international character. But it had certainly no place whatsoever in the heart of the masses of India.

Proceeding, Gandhiji said that it was a great day for the people of the State as it was the birthday of His Highness the Maharaja of Mysore. He would also join them in their prayers wishing the Almighty to give him long life and prosperity. (Cheers)

They all knew what views he held about the quality of the rule of Princes in India. Princes forgot their duty. In ancient days they carried their administration in a way which was called *Ramarajya*. In *Ramarajya*, there was no such thing as grinding poverty. People lived in absolute peace. There was no one high or low. He wished that that principle of *Ramarajya* was translated into practice in all parts of India.

Continuing, Mahatma Gandhi said that they had done well in presenting him with a little purse<sup>1</sup> for the Harijan Fund. He called it little because it was possible for them to give him a better purse. Nothing that they could give for the Harijan cause was sufficient penance. There could be no peace for them until the Harijans were levelled up to the highest status in Hindu society. They must enjoy absolutely the same rights as other Hindus. While they were entitled to take credit for what little they had done for Harijans, he was glad that they admitted that much more remained to be done. He therefore hoped that they would redouble their efforts in that direction.

*The Hindu*, 1-6-1936

#### 84. SPEECH AT KOLAR

May 31, 1936

Mahatmaji thanked the Municipal Council for the address and the townsmen for the purse. He would like to join the people of Kolar in wishing His Highness the Maharaja of Mysore many a return of the birthday which his subjects all over the State were celebrating with great joy. He was glad to hear that the Municipality was doing some work in the cause of the Harijans. He was also very much pleased to hear that the Municipality had many more things to do for the Harijans. Unless untouchability was blotted out, root and branch, the Hindu society would perish. Therefore, so long as untouchability remained in the land in one form or another, they could not say that they had done anything for the cause of the Harijans.

Proceeding, Mahatmaji congratulated the Mysore Government on the establishment of khadi centres and appealed to the people to take to khadi. He wished he could go to other parts of India and say that in Mysore State at least, the people wore khadi and used swadeshi articles.

*The Hindu*, 1-6-1936

<sup>1</sup> Of Rs. 201

## 85. SPEECH AT LABOURERS' MEETING

KOLAR GOLD FIELDS,  
May 31, 1936

Gandhiji, speaking to a mass meeting of mine-labourers for a few minutes, said he had paid a hurried visit to the labour huts which seemed to him too small, too ill-lighted and too low-roofed to be fit for human habitation. If the workers only knew what they could do for themselves by combining their training and intelligence they would realize that they were no less proprietors of the mines than the managers and shareholders. Their labour was better gold than the metal they extracted with their labour from the bowels of the earth.<sup>1</sup>

Gandhiji made an earnest appeal to the mining authorities to see to the betterment of the lot of coolies working in the mines, through whom the mining authorities derived their maximum benefit. Mahatmaji wanted that the mining officials should give the same facilities to the coolies working underground as they did to the highly paid officials.

Mahatmaji said that he could not congratulate the management on their efforts to house the poor. He understood that the labourers were charged about twelve annas to one rupee per hut. The rent should be much less.

He reminded the mine-owners that unless they voluntarily recognized the due status of labour and treated it as they treated themselves, time was not far distant when labour would dictate its own terms. He mentioned his theory of trust which he had propounded before the Ahmedabad mill-owners. He told the workers that whilst it was right and proper to assert their rights they ought to do their tasks as if the mines were their personal property. He also asked them to shun drink, gambling and other vices.

Mahatmaji observed that considering the cause for which the money was collected, this sum of Rs. 619 from the Kolar Gold Fields area was not much.<sup>2</sup>

*Harijan*, 13-6-1936, and *The Hindu*, 1-6-1936

<sup>1</sup> The following two paragraphs are from *The Hindu*.

<sup>2</sup> This sentence is from *The Hindu*.

## 86. LETTER TO JAMNADAS GANDHI

NANDI HILLS,

Wednesday [May 1936]<sup>1</sup>

CHI. JAMNADAS,

I got your letter.

For your throat, you must consult a good doctor. Consult Haribhai in Ahmedabad or Dr. Mehta or Dr. Rajab Ali in Bombay. Let me know what you propose to do.

Do not pay the rent to the old aunt herself but pay it to the owner of the house and obtain a receipt from him. Pay the rent which has been fixed. Keep the balance with you. Meet the owner of the house and inquire.

If the quantity decreases in spite of the students working . . .<sup>2</sup>

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From the Gujarati original: S.N. 33820

<sup>1</sup> The letter is written from Nandi Hills which Gandhiji visited twice—in 1927 and 1936. The 1927 material has no reference to the addressee whereas the 1936 material indicates that Gandhiji was in communication with the addressee and there is evidence of the addressee teaching at the Rajkot Rashtriya Shala; *vide*, “Letter to Narandas Gandhi”, 3-7-1935; “Letter to Narandas Gandhi”, 20-9-1935 and “Letter to Narandas Gandhi”, 25-9-1935. Hence, the letter was presumably written between May 10 and 31, 1936 when Gandhiji stayed at Nandi Hills.

<sup>2</sup> The last sentence is illegible.

## 87. SPEECH AT MUNICIPAL COLONY, BANGALORE <sup>1</sup>

[After May 31, 1936]<sup>2</sup>

I was taken to the huts of the workers in the Kolar Gold-fields the other day. I could not help remarking that the huts were not fit for human habitation. With the mining Company declaring fat dividends of 30 to 40 per cent it seemed to be cruel to me that those who earned the profits for them were housed in those dismal hovels. The huts you have built here are certainly better, they are well ventilated and well situated. But there ought to be something like a minimum standard of a hut for unmarried people and of a hut for married couples and couples with children. We ought to realize that husband and wife must not share the same room with grown-up children. These cabins provide for no privacy. I cannot understand municipalities measuring out land for their poor employees by so many feet. One more room for each of these huts and a verandah is an absolute necessity. I am glad you propose to provide the same facilities for the Harijan employees, but pray bear this suggestion in mind when you build houses for them. There are, I am pained to say, still numerous municipalities which provide no housing facilities for their lowest paid employees. I do not know when we shall realize our duty to the most essential of our servants. If we do not do so ere long, the doom will soon settle on our society, as it must, if the society does not correct itself.

*Harijan*, 11-7-1936

<sup>1</sup> Extracted from Mahadev Desai's "Weekly Letter". The colony, consisted of 250 huts, built by the Municipality for its employees.

<sup>2</sup> From the reference to Kolar Gold-fields in the speech it is evident that this visit took place after May 31, 1936.



88. TELEGRAM TO THE SECRETARY, HINDU SABHA,  
DELHI

June 1, 1936

HINDU SABHA  
CARE KALIA, DELHI

THANKS. IGNORE SUCH ABERRATIONS EXCEPT FOR PURGING  
RELIGION OF ALL IMPURITIES.

GANDHI

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

89. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

BANGALORE CITY,  
June 1, 1936

CHI. MIRA,

Your letter of 30th is before me. I am glad you are making steady progress. If you will always keep some strength in reserve, you will be proof against malaria.

Yes, we had a strenuous time yesterday. I was none the worse for it. Sardar picked a bad cold on the way and he won't give it up even today. The boys and the girls remained behind to see the gold mines. They return today. The right hand has been giving excellent work. I am therefore giving it rest.

The Gujarati papers are full of Harilal's exploits.<sup>2</sup>

If you will be in local Simla,<sup>3</sup> there will have to be a local line to it too. And there will have to be variations in the two temperatures to attract me!

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 6344. Courtesy: Mirabehn. Also G.N. 9810

<sup>1</sup> This was in reply to the addressee's telegram saying: "Hindus shocked over Harilal's conversion. Please guide how we can reclaim misguided brother."

<sup>2</sup> He had embraced Islam and changed his name to Abdulla.

<sup>3</sup> The reference is to the addressee's cottage which was going to be built at Varoda, "an apology for a hill", as Gandhiji had described it in a previous letter; *vide* "Letter to Mirabehn", 30-5-1936

## 90. LETTER TO SATIS CHANDRA DAS GUPTA

June 1, 1936

DEAR SATIS BABU,

You give me a satisfactory account of your health. Not so Pyarelal. He says your heart is not sound and that you are constantly overstraining yourself. I wish you would recognize that such treatment of the body is a positive sin.

Are you dealing with the same famine that Profulla is dealing with? Or is this some other?

I see several difficulties about leaving something permanent after every exhibition. We never get a site where we can build anything solid. Then there must be that [local]<sup>1</sup> desire which would pay for the thing and ensure its upkeep. We are having the next Congress in a *bona-fide* village. What would you suggest? How cheaply can we organize it? You know that the Lucknow [show]<sup>2</sup> did after all become self-supporting.

We leave Bangalore City probably on 12th instant.

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 1630

## 91. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

June 1, 1936

MY DEAR REBEL,

We descended yesterday and work began. We toured the gold area the whole day, collected over Rs. 1,000 for Harijan cause and returned after 10 p.m. not much tired.

It is warm in Bangalore compared to Nandi Hill. And nothing pleases after the bracing air and isolation of Nandi Hill which for me has a charm which no other hill possesses. It was not without a sigh I left Nandi. Sardar is almost disconsolate. He won't even go out for awalk. I had my usual hour. But Bangalore itself is undoubtedly pleasant at this time of the year. Only Nandi has spoiled us.

<sup>1</sup> Not clear in the source

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*

I am glad you are again able to spin.

Yes, your envelope is good. But you must not pay through the nose for them. It must be an idle hour's job for someone who is in the household or given to those who would be thankful to earn an honest anna.

Why should you feel helpless? Why not be wholly satisfied with what you can get through during the day? You may be angry with yourself when you neglect anything. But what can you do when time runs against you?

You must have seen Harilal having adopted Islam! He must have sensation and he must have money. He has both. I am thinking of addressing a general letter to Mussalman friends.<sup>1</sup> I will see how it shapes itself. Poor Ba and poorer Kanti<sup>2</sup>. Both were much upset.

Love.

TYRANT

[PS.]

You are right about our unbusiness-like habits. Go for those who betray them.

SHRI RAJKUMARI AMRIT KAUR  
MANOR VILLE  
SIMLA W.

From the original: C.W. 3729. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 6885

## 92. LETTER TO NARAHARI D. PARIKH

*June 1, 1936*

CHI. NARAHARI,

I hope you have all returned, and in much better health. How did Manibehn<sup>3</sup> fare at the place? Is she now quite well? Did Vanamala<sup>4</sup> and Mohan<sup>5</sup> gain in health? You used to take long walks, didn't you?

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9094

<sup>1</sup> Vide "Statement to the Press", 2-6-1936

<sup>2</sup> Harilal's son

<sup>3</sup> Addressee's wife

<sup>4</sup> Addressee's daughter

<sup>5</sup> Addressee's son

### 93. LETTER TO H. L. SHARMA

June 1, 1936

CHI. SHARMA,

Last night, on reaching Bangalore, I got your letter of May 12. By now you must be in Khurja. I hope you are keeping fit. I shall certainly reach Wardha on the 15th; you can come over then. In the mean while write to me at Bangalore City.

Blessings from  
BAPU

From a facsimile of the Hindi: *Bapuki Chhayamen Mere Jivanke Solah Varsh*, facing p. 251.

### 94. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS<sup>1</sup>

BANGALORE,  
June 2, 1936

The newspapers report that about a fortnight ago my eldest son Harilal, now nearing fifty years, accepted Islam and that on Friday last 29th May in the midst of a large congregation in the Jumma Musjid at Bombay, he was permitted to announce his acceptance amid great acclamation and that, after his speech was finished, he was besieged by his admirers who vied with one another to shake hands with him. If his acceptance was from the heart and free from any worldly considerations, I should have no quarrel. For I believe Islam to be as true a religion as my own.

But I have the gravest doubt about this acceptance being from the heart or free from selfish considerations. Everyone who knows my son Harilal, knows that he has been for years addicted to the drink evil and has been in the habit of visiting houses of ill-fame. For some years he has been living on the charity of friends who have helped him unstintingly. He is indebted to some Pathans from whom he had borrowed on heavy interest. Up to only recently he was in dread of his life from his Pathan creditors in Bombay. Now he is the hero of the hour in that city. He had a most devoted wife who always forgave his

<sup>1</sup> The Statement, published in *Harijan* under the title "To My Numerous Muslim Friends", was issued to the Press on June 2, 1936.

many sins including his unfaithfulness. He has three grown-up children, two daughters and one son, whom he ceased to support long ago.

Not many weeks ago he wrote to the Press complaining against Hindus—not Hinduism—and threatening to go over to Christianity or Islam. The language of the letter showed quite clearly that he would go over to the highest bidder. That letter had the desired effect. Through the good offices of a Hindu councillor he got a job in Nagpur Municipality. And he came out with another letter<sup>1</sup> to the Press recalling the first and declaring emphatic adherence to his ancestral faith.

But, as events have proved, his pecuniary ambition was not satisfied and in order to satisfy that ambition, he has embraced Islam. There are other facts which are known to me and which strengthen my inference.

When I was in Nagpur, in April last, he had come to see me and his mother and he told me how he was amused by the attentions that were being paid to him by the missionaries of rival faiths. God can work wonders. He has been known to have changed the stoniest hearts and turned sinners into saints, as it were, in a moment. Nothing will please me better than to find that during the Nagpur meeting and the Friday announcement he had repented of the past and had suddenly become a changed man having shed the drink habit and sexual lust.

But the Press reports give no such evidence. He still delights in sensation and in good living. If he had changed, he would have written to me to gladden my heart. All my children have had the greatest freedom of thought and action. They have been taught to regard all religions with the same respect that they paid to their own. Harilal knew that if he had told me that he had found the key to a right life and peace in Islam, I would have put no obstacle in his path. But no one of us, including his son now twenty-four years old and who is with me, knew anything about the event till we saw the announcement in the Press.

My views on Islam are well known to the Mussalmans who are reported to have enthused over my son's profession. A brotherhood of Islam has telegraphed to me thus:

Expect like your son you truth-seeker to embrace Islam truest religion

<sup>1</sup> For Gandhiji's comment on it, *vide* "Letter to P. M. Naidu", 3-3-1936

of world.

I must confess that all this has hurt me. I sense no religious spirit behind this demonstration. I feel that those who are responsible for Harilal's acceptance of Islam did not take the most ordinary precautions they ought to have in a case of this kind.

Harilal's apostasy is no loss to Hinduism and his admission to Islam is a source of weakness to it if, as I apprehend, he remains the same wreck that he was before.

Surely conversion is a matter between man and his Maker who alone knows His creatures' hearts. And conversion without a clean heart is, in my opinion, a denial of God and religion. Conversion without cleanness of heart can only be a matter for sorrow, not joy, to a godly person.

My object in addressing these lines to my numerous Muslim friends is to ask them to examine Harilal in the light of his immediate past and, if they find that his conversion is a soulless matter, to tell him so plainly and disown him and if they discover sincerity in him to see that he is protected against temptations so that his sincerity results in his becoming a godfearing member of society. Let them know that excessive indulgence has softened his brain and undermined his sense of right and wrong, truth and falsehood. I do not mind whether he is known as Abdulla or Harilal if, by adopting one name for the other, he becomes a true devotee of God which both the names mean.

*Harijan, 6-6-1936*

### 95. LETTER TO JAMNALAL BAJAJ

*June 2, 1936*

CHI. JAMNALAL,

I have your letter.

I shall be satisfied if you can get proper rest at Juhu; take exercise and observe the food restrictions. You certainly need the belt for your abdomen though you may also consult a doctor if you like.

We shall reach Wardha on the 15th. Madalasa<sup>1</sup> has scribbled a couple of lines perfunctorily. I would not mind her not writing if by

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

going there she has gained weight and thrown her mental worries into the sea.

Where is Om<sup>1</sup>? I of course have Shriman's Hindi work<sup>2</sup>. I shall write something and send it. You must have read about Harilal.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 2982

### 96. LETTER TO PARIKSHITLAL L. MAJMUDAR

*June 2, 1936*

BHAI PARIKSHITLAL,

The enclosed letter<sup>3</sup> is for your information. I have written to him that he should place his suggestion before you and before Bapa if the latter happens to go to Bharuch.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

[PS.]

We shall be here till the 13th.

This letter certainly does not mean that you are to accommodate him. I do not even know him. This responsibility is yours entirely. The reply to Jagjivandas amounts only to this.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4039

### 97. LETTER TO ABUL KALAM AZAD

[After *June 2, 1936*]<sup>4</sup>

DEAR MAULANA SAHEB,

If you have seen the enclosed I would like your considered opinion on the points raised therein. Is such conversion valid in

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

<sup>2</sup> A collection of Hindi poems, *Rotika Raga*; vide "Letter to Shriman Narayan Agrawal", 13-7-1936.

<sup>3</sup> This is not traceable.

<sup>4</sup> Vide "Statement to the Press", 2-6-1936

Islam? Is the method adopted lawful? Is the way the thing is being advertised lawful or permissible? Will you publish your opinion or permit me to publish it?

*Yours sincerely,*  
M.K. GANDHI

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

### 98. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

*June 4, 1936*

MY DEAR REBEL,

I congratulate you on not being nominated<sup>1</sup>. If some of the things you have drop out of themselves, it would be a gain.

As to the Y. M. C. A., I would not hazard an opinion without having fuller knowledge.

I have myself chosen the ivory things for you today. They will be sent to you by the depot with invoice. If the things are ill-chosen or not to your taste, you must blame yourself for having commissioned for the choice an ignoramus. You will give me your opinion without reserve. Proper address has been given.

The weather in Bangalore, too, is cool enough.

I have addressed a fairly long letter to Muslim friends. I observe that the papers over here have been afraid to publish the full text. You shall have it if it is not published anywhere.

Love.

TYRANT

From the original: C.W. 3576. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 6385

### 99. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

*June 5, 1936*

MY DEAR IDIOT,

Yours of Ist has just arrived. "Empty bottles" are more needed in Segaoon than perhaps in Maganwadi. But I am not less in Maganwadi for being in Segaoon than when I was there without Segaoon. But no extra exertion should be put forth to secure them.

<sup>1</sup> To the Jullundur Municipality



Whatever you have to spare should come my way when you are coming. The razors are not used for knives. They are used for shaving. You shall see the specimen knives when you come. Yes, you will occupy a corner wherever I am both on your way to Waltair and return.

Self-praise is no praise. And when one always insists that she can never be coerced the hearer will take it with a grain or two of salt. *A la J.* you belong to a system that is based on coercion. Therefore the less you talk of not being coerced the better!!

The return of the *khes* to you is a double-distilled stupidity. Did you get the lace too? Poor Jerajani sent me a copy of the letter he sent to his people saying that the *khes* was to come to me and the lace to you. This is an idiotic circle. Are you responsible for the infection? Anyway do write a strong letter of protest to the sender. And do not spend money on sending it. You should bring it. You *must obey*.

Love.

TYRANT

From the original: C.W. 3577. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 6386

### 100. LETTER TO MIRZA ISMAIL

BANGALORE,  
*June 5, 1936*

DEAR SIR MIRZA,

Many thanks for your letter. It emboldens me to ask you, please put the following before His Highness.

I understand Harijans are not allowed even to attend the Durbars whenever they are held. I can find no warrant in Hindu religion for the bar. Unless there are valid and insuperable objections to the relief being granted, I do hope that the prohibition will be removed.

I would urge the necessity of opening all State temples to Harijans on the same terms as the *savarna* Hindus.

I am hoping we shall meet before we leave Bangalore which we expect to do the 12th inst.

With renewed thanks for the hospitality and attention we are receiving.

*Yours sincerely,*

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

## 101. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

June 5, 1936

CHI. NARANDAS,

I was silent over your letter because I wanted to have a talk with Kanu, which I had at length yesterday. He does not wish to be away for the present at any rate. He particularly wishes to acquire from me whatever he can just by remaining by my side although he no doubt wants to learn a good deal of music from Panditji<sup>1</sup>. Hence, I have assured him that he may rely without fear on my promise that I would gladly let him go any time he thinks he has had enough of me or wants to go to Panditji or anywhere else and obtain some special knowledge. I think this is enough for the present. Of course I shall be watching him.

He has a clean mind, but after all he is only an adolescent. Some-times he suffers from melancholy but it is momentary and there is no particular reason for it. Didn't we all at his age have a similar experience more or less?

As for the school, I am getting convinced more and more that we should start thinking in terms of closing it unless it becomes self-supporting. For, if it does not stand on its own it could be looked upon as being run to serve our needs. We however believe that knowledge should be imparted only to the seeker. Yes, of course we would go begging money for such students if we have any as might thirst for knowledge and yet be unable to pay their way. If we had such seekers, they would cheerfully carry out our word and within a year fully bear their financial burden. There are many institutions of the kind in America where immediately on admission the student begins to earn his board side by side with his studies. You may continue this discussion in your letter if you wish.

Kanu has gone through this letter and says that I am not correct in saying that he has a great desire to learn music under Panditji. If he is ordered to go to Ahmedabad, he would rather learn it at the Gandharva Vidyalyaya under Shankarrao<sup>2</sup> Vyas although it cannot be said that this is what he wishes. According to his present state of mind,

<sup>1</sup> Narayan Moreshwar Khare

<sup>2</sup> 'Shankarlal' in the source, which is obviously a slip.

his only wish is to be with me and do what I ask him to. He will be under my care and there is no reason to worry on his account. He has written a long letter to you.

I have written to the Press on the subject of Harilal, though nothing has been published yet. I do not say anything here, hoping it will be in print in due course.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

[PS.]

The progress made there in spinning is excellent in my view. As for Sardar, I will speak to him. He should, however, make it a point to come if he can have an opportunity.

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./III. Also C.W. 8492. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

## *102. LETTER TO GANGABEHN VAIDYA*

*June 5, 1936*

CHI. GANGABEHN,

I have your letter. I was pained to read about Bachubhai<sup>1</sup>. You cannot leave him as long as he is bed-ridden. Tell Jugatram<sup>2</sup> to consult a homoeopath. Homoeopathy has not won my faith, but it helped Devdas and a medical specialist<sup>3</sup> whom we met here is all praise for it. In any case it will do no harm, and may do some good.

I am returning Kusum's letter. I should like it very much if she went to Bochasan. If Lilavati feels inclined to go, I would certainly encourage her to do so. I will have a talk with her when I return to Wardha on the 14th. Amtul Salaam is not at Wardha. She is still in Delhi and is not too eager to leave it. If she joins, she can of course give you much help and the work will benefit her, too. Write to her at Delhi; she reads Gujarati. Her address is: Harijan Nivas, Kingsway, Delhi.

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

<sup>2</sup> An Ayurvedic physician of Bombay

<sup>3</sup> Captain C. Oommen, the Medical Expert of the Grace Medical Mission

Do come and see me when I visit Gujarat. I will find some time for you.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

*Bapuna Patro—6 G.S. Gangabehnne*, pp. 90-1. Also C.W. 8831. Courtesy: Gangabehn Vaidya

### 103. LETTER TO H. L. SHARMA

*June 5, 1936*

CHI. SHARMA,

You must have received the letter I sent. I got your telegram here. You must have passed through Wardha at that time.

Amtul Salaam is in Delhi ailing. You should go there and try your newly acquired knowledge and then come over to Wardha when you can.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

[PS.]

We reach Wardha on the 14th.

From a facsimile of the Hindi: *Bapuki Chhayamen Mere Jivanke Solah Varsh*, facing p. 252

### 104. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

*June 5, 1936*

CHI. AMTUL SALAAM,

I have your letter.

Shall I ever prevail with you? Why should you not come to me if you are in bad health? Why should you stick on there in spite of your bad health? I have of course written to Sharma who has now reached Khurja.<sup>1</sup>

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

I follow your point about the food there. For the present, however, I cannot think of any suggestion. I shall be much pained if you do not eat what you should.

Ask the resident boys to write to me once so that I can start writing to them. It would be helpful if I knew their names, their standard of knowledge, etc.

Where is Sukirti gone?

We shall be reaching Wardha on the 14th.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 617

### *105. LETTER TO RAJENDRA PRASAD*

*June 5, 1936*

BHAI RAJENDRA PRASAD,

Pass on the enclosed letter to Pierre Ceresole<sup>1</sup>. I saw your letter. You must have received a copy of Jawaharlal's letter. This time we shall have to further clarify many things.

I hope you are keeping well.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a copy of the Hindi: C.W. 9875, Courtesy: Rajendra Prasad

### *106. THE LEPROSY PROBLEM*

Wardha is a Tahsil having a fair share of lepers. Village workers often come in contact with them. What are the workers to do? May they freely mix with the lepers? How may they help these unfortunate people? Is there any cure? These are daily questions for serious village workers. I, therefore, approached Rev. Donald Miller, whom I have had the pleasure of knowing for years as a great worker among lepers in the Purulia Leper Asylum and otherwise, for simple

<sup>1</sup> A Swiss pacifist, President of the International Voluntary Service, who had come to India for helping in the relief work in Bihar

directions for village workers. He readily agreed and a series of letters to an imaginary village worker was the result. The first letter is given below.<sup>1</sup>

*Harijan*, 6-6-1936

### 107. A FALSE ALARM

When I saw a newspaper report purporting to be a summary of what Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru had said on khadi during his recent visit to the Khadi Bhandar at Bombay, I refused to believe it. It seemed to me to be so thoroughly contrary to what I had understood to be his considered view about khadi. I, therefore, sent the cutting to the Pandit,<sup>2</sup> and the following is the reply he promptly sent me.

I attended and spoke at several dozen meetings in Bombay—I have lost count of them—and had no time to see reports. I spoke in Hindustani of course, and reporting was no easy matter—and then condensed reports are apt to be misleading. The report of what I said on khadi, however, was pointed out to me and was corrected the same day or the next day. What I had said was that for many reasons—economic, political, social—khadi was an important item in our present programme and must be encouraged, but that I did not think that it could finally solve our poverty problem, especially if the present social system continued. This system transferred the improvements and additional earnings of the peasant to the landlord. But I pointed out that this theoretical argument did not apply today. For this I said that although I was in favour of big industry, I believed that even with the increase of industrialization there would be considerable room for the development of cottage industries in India. At present, of course, they were even more important from various points of view.

This position may not satisfy the ‘whole-hoggers’. But it is vastly different from the misleading report. Such misreporting is the lot of public men, especially in India, where they have to speak in an Indian language which reporters do not always understand and which has invariably to be translated into English for the purpose of transmission by wire. The moral is, the public should wait for authentic

<sup>1</sup> Not reproduced here. This and the other four articles of the series first appeared in *Harijan* and later in the form of a booklet, *The Leprosy Problem*.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide*, “Letter to Jawaharlal Nehru”, 21-5-1936

information before believing the so called pronouncements of leaders in important matters.

Form the letters I have received I see that the report created great uneasiness among some khadi workers. To them I should like to give a warning. It is fortunate that, for all practical purposes, what Pandit Jawaharlal actually says is satisfactory. He is too noble to say anything to please anybody if he does not believe in it. The quotation from his letter, therefore, derives added weight from the fact that the helmsman of the Congress holds views favourable to khadi, But khadi workers should know that there are many important public men outside the Congress who decry khadi and would never touch it. They should know too that even in the Congress ranks there are some who do not believe in khadi, who are never tired of ridiculing it, and use it merely as a measure of discipline till they succeed in banishing it from the Congress programme. Khadi has progressed in spite of these obstacles. No doubt it would have made greater progress if we had not such opposition to contend against. It is a matter of very great consolation that Pandit Jawaharlal believes in khadi as he does. But what should khadi workers do if he, on further study, finds it necessary to declare himself against it? I hope that after sixteen years of experience of khadi and its possibilities, we have a sufficient number of confirmed believers whose faith in it is based on thier own knowledge of its working. If it is still a derived faith, the prophecy of a great journalist will undoubtedly come true that on my death khadi will also die and that the wheels that would be broken after the natural event would be sufficient for full cremation of the body.

This nervousness over the false alarm is a portent if it is a token of weak faith of khadi workers. I suggest to them that they examine their own position and if they have doubts about the great economic importance of khadi, let them revise their attitude. In order to help them to carry on the examination, I propose, if at all possible, in the next issue,<sup>1</sup> to put my view of the importance of khadi for India from several points of view.

*Harijan*, 6-6-1936

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Is Khadi Economically Sound?", 20-6-1936.

## 108. INDIA IN A VILLAGE

I tender my congratulations to the Maharashtra Provincial Congress Committee on their decision to hold the next Congress Session at Khirdi, a village near Faizpur—another village in East Khandesh. If the plans are properly laid and preparations undertaken in advance, the Reception Committee will be able to put up a brave show at a comparatively less cost than is usually incurred at these annual national gatherings. The conditions are obvious. The Committee must not aim at reproducing a city in the village. That would be doing violence to the whole conception. They should aim at giving the city people who, let us hope, will gather in their thousands, such hospitality as a model village should be able to supply. In other words, we should see in December a miniature edition of village India in Khirdi. By wise planning the organizers will find that there is practically nothing that a model village cannot supply in the way of hygienic comforts, proper food, proper sanitation, and in case of sickness proper medical aid. These are not to be had today in the generality of villages. Therefore, I have used the expression 'model village'. A model village should lack nothing that is required for healthy living. But everything in a village has to conform to the village scale which need never be shoddy and [has to] be, at the same time, subdued. For lighting, I would suggest electric light, though it may be a long time before our villages are able to have electricity. The whole show should be an object lesson both for villagers and townfolk. The chief attraction of the Congress will necessarily be the exhibition. The Lucknow Exhibition was undoubtedly a success when one realizes that it was the first effort of its kind. The coming exhibition should be a much greater success and yet, so far as I can see, need not cost as much as the Lucknow Exhibition did. In order that it may become a success, artists, engineers and like professional men will have to volunteer their services free of charge on a larger scale than heretofore. And they will have to approach what to me is a sacred task with the village mentality.

*Harijan*, 6-6-1936



### 109. FOR UNCERTIFIED KHADI DEALERS

Unfortunately it has been found that owing to the increased scale of wages that are being offered to hand-spinners on behalf of the A.I.S.A. and a consequent slight rise in the price of a certain style of khadi, several uncertified dealers are selling khadi as if it was certified by the A. I. S. A. and some of them do not even hesitate to defend their unpatriotic and unhumanitarian action on the ground that the A. I. S. A. is not a registered body.<sup>1</sup> In order to ascertain the true legal position instead of relying on his own ancient knowledge of law, Shri Rajagopalachari referred to an eminent lawyer for opinion and this is his decisive opinion:

I have no doubt that the Tirupur merchant has been wrongly advised as to the law. The law protects unregistered bodies as much as registered bodies in this respect. To use an unregistered name pretending to be somebody that he is not is as much a deceit of the public as it would be if the name had been registered. Registration under a statute may have statutory consequences and protections; but in the protection of the public from deceit there is no distinction between registered and unregistered names. It is absurd *prima facie* that because a name is not registered, he can assume the same name and pass off goods as certified by A. I. S. A. An action will lie for injunction and damages. Injunction you will have. Damages will depend on proof that persons purchased believing the stuff had been made or certified by the A. I. S. A.

If formal opinion with authorities is required I shall get it drawn for you at an early date.

(Sd.) T. R. V. SASTRI

Ooty, 23rd May, '36

The eminent lawyer is no other than the ex-Advocate-General of Madras, Shri T. R. Venkatarama Sastriar. I hope that in view of this opinion those dealers who are carrying on unauthorized sales of khadi as if they were authorized by the A. I. S. A. will desist from the practice which has been described as fraudulent. If it becomes necessary, opposed though I am to resort to law-courts, I would not hesitate in the interest of poor dumb spinners to advise legal steps being taken against those who knowingly injure their poor sisters.

*Harijan*, 6-6-1936

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Uncertified Khadi", 11-4-1936

## 110. LETTER TO LILAVATI ASAR

June [6]<sup>1</sup>, 1936

CHI. LILAVATI,

I have your letter. Serve Mirabehn as much as you can. It would have been better if you had been to see Premabehn. Do not undertake anything beyond your capacity. Do not talk too much. Do nothing but bury yourself in work. Do not talk unless it is necessary. I expect you have brought to Segaon only the necessary things.

I hope you are in good health.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 9343. Also C. W. 6618. Courtesy: Lilavati Asar

## 111. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

June 6, 1936

CHI. MIRA,

I have your three letters received by the same post.

*Devkaps*<sup>2</sup> seed can be had from Bengal and other places. I am writing to Satis Babu.

I do not like the idea of bring [ing] the commode and pot or the desk from Wardha. For commode there should [be] a stool with the middle open and a half tin or a bucket or some such thing. For pot we may use a bottle or keep a village metal pot. For desk something quite cheap and serviceable made in Segaon. There need be no hurry about these things. If you have not quite understood what I want, you may wait till I return. Wooden bedstead may be brought, *lota* also. Stool should be rigged up there. Another cow will be necessary. Consult Chhotelal about it.

Did I tell you the date of departure is not 13 but 12. We reach therefore on 14th, Sunday, D. V.

<sup>1</sup> Illegible in the source. This letter appears to be the one mentioned in the letter to Mirabehn dated June 6, 1936, the following item.

<sup>2</sup> A Variety of cotton

You may expect Lilavati by the time this reaches you. The accompanying is for her.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C. W. 6345. Courtesy: Mirabehn. Also G. N. 9811

*112. LETTER TO S. AMBUJAMMAL*

BANGALORE CITY,

*June 6, 1936*

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

Your letter.

I am glad Padma is proving so good and satisfactory. You must not judge sons from what you can say of Kichi<sup>2</sup>. Poor boy! His has been an unfortunate development. Let us hope Padma's goodness well infect Kichi and make him also good.

I am glad you went to Esther. If you found her glad to receive your visit, I would like you to go to her as often as you conveniently can.

I was sorry to hear about Father's continued illness. How nice it would be if he would take nature cure. Mention this to him on my behalf. He ought to pull through and get perfectly well through proper dieting and water and sun treatment.

Love.

BAPU

[PS.]

Bangalore City till 12th.

From the original: Ambujammal Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library.

*113. LETTER TO PRABHAVATI*

*June 6, 1936*

CHI. PRABHAVATI,

I have your letter of the 29th. You must have got my letter repeating the reply I gave earlier. You did well in returning to milk.

<sup>1</sup> Daughter of S. Srinivasa Iyenagar. This is written in Hindi.

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

Take 4 lb. and see. Do you get any fruit there, and do you find time for walks? You seem to have been deeply immersed in serving the family. Never give up your fixed course of prayers, etc. Teach spinning [to the people there]. There are likely to be many singers of the *Ramayana* there. Learn from them the tune in which to recite the *Ramayana*. You can find the time once you have a settled programme. For you have already learnt how to utilize even a short interval of five minutes. You must be getting *Harijanbandhu* if not anything else. Write regularly to Jayaprakash whether you hear from him or not.

You should find a carding-bow.

Write to Mathuradas<sup>1</sup> at Madhubani, P. O. Champaran, so that he may send you what you need.

You should never lose your inner peace in spite of the many outer worries.

I write nothing about Harilal here as I have said much through the Press. Write to Amtul Salaam at Delhi; her address: Harijan Nivas, Kingsway, Delhi.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

[PS.]

At Bangalore City till the 12th and at Wardha on the 14th.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 3472

### 114. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

[After June 6, 1936]<sup>2</sup>

CHI. MIRA,

Yours of 3rd just to hand. Yes, Sejila should have a shed by himself, so as to leave your verandah free. On second thoughts I think it will be wise to bring the commode and the pot from Maganwadi for European visitors. Therefore this is in addition to the plan suggested by me.

<sup>1</sup> Mathuradas Asar, a khadi expert of Sabarmati Ashram who had gone to work in Bihar

<sup>2</sup> From the contents it is evident that this was written after the letter to the addressee dated June 6, 1936; "Letter to Chhaganlal Joshi", 11-10-1935

If you get hold of peacocks, I do not mind. But I know nothing of their habits.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C. W. 6346. Courtesy: Mirabehn. Also G. N. 9812

### *115. LETTER TO KHWAJA ABDUL MAJID*

AS AT WARDHA,

*June 7, 1936*

Wonderful! I was about to write to you today about another matter when I got your welcome letter. To hear from you is like meeting a long lost friend or brother whichever you will; have both.

In my diconsolateness over Ansari's death I thought of you, Shuaib and Zakir Husain. I decided to write a long letter to Z.<sup>1</sup> I am daily awaiting his reply.

Asaf Ali wrote to me about some memorial. I told him this was not an opportune time politically for a national memorial to so big a man. I gave the same opinion over Motilalji's death. I have in mind not the financial stringency but the political condition. If people spontaneously send money and if we get a large enough sum, we might make some use as a memorial by personal admirers and obligers (cannot find the right word just now). I hold on to the cheque<sup>2</sup> till I hear from you or till we meet.

Your exposition of politics is deeply interesting. "*Et tu, Brute!*" Do not take this literally in its application. How have the mighty fallen? Do you remember your remark at the Ansari Hotel? But I do not blame you. I have nothing but praise for your downright honesty. Yes, we must meet. Do come to Wardha any day after 16th June. You know that at the end of the month the whole Working Committee will be there. But I know you want to discuss the thing first with me. Only therefore the earlier you come the better.

Now for what I was to write about. If you have not seen my public letter about my eldest son's so-called conversion, I enclose a cutting herewith. Read it and let me know your views. Is such a conversion permissible and right? Is all this advertisement the poor

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Letter to Zakir Husain", 25-5-1936

<sup>2</sup> The addressee had sent a cheque for Rs. 1, 000 for a memorial to Ansari.

wreck and rake is receiving a proper thing? I have no anger against Harilal. He is hardly responsible for his acts. During the past three months he has gone through many changes. You must know that it is not loafers who are responsible for what has happened and is happening. Those who are accepted as responsible Muslims in society are doing all this. Do study this phenomenon, interest yourself in it for the sake of religion and this unhappy land. If you put a different construction on the event, you will not hesitate to tell me so frankly.

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

### *116. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR*

*June 7, 1936*

MY DEAR REBEL,

Do not be alarmed at the reduced prices of the articles sent to you. I asked for it because you were to sell them as swadeshi propaganda and might have to lose on them, too, if you are unable to dispose of them. Let not your princely pride be wounded. You should charge the full selling price plus postage, etc. No idiocy allowed in business matters. For these things you are no *rajkumari* but a simple *sevika* and trustee. I have a copy of the letter and bill sent to you.

Hope you are quite restored.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 3578. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 6387

### *117. LETTER TO F. MARY BARR*

*June 7, 1936*

CHI. MARY,

I return the letter from Hardwar and retain the other papers sent by you.

Sumitra had left for Nagpur when your letter and mine were received at the Gurukul. I now send them all to you. If Gopal is there, he might know her address.

As to Tara's<sup>1</sup> other papers and things, they should be left untouched till we know what can be done with the will.<sup>2</sup> We have first to trace her relatives who may be interested in her property. The bicycle can certainly be used by Gopal. Similarly you may use the *sita* [r].

I fear Dr. Nur Jahan has to be asked to keep her English things with her for the time being. We reach Wardha [on 14th]<sup>3</sup>  
Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 6062 Also C.W. 3392. Courtesy: F. Mary Barr

### *118. LETTER TO GOVIND V. GURJALE*

*June 7, 1936*

MY DEAR GOVINDRAO,

You have given me interesting bits about your activities. May they prosper. Never depart from the golden rule of cutting your cloak according to your cloth. No debts to be incurred.

Love.

BAPU

[PS.]

Bangalore City till 12th.

From a photostat: G.N. 1400

### *119. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM*

*June 7, 1936*

CHI. AMTUL SALAAM,

I have your letter. I am sorry to learn about the sudden death of Prakashmani. Please convey my condolences to his relatives there if any.

Where has Sukirti gone?

<sup>1</sup> Mary Chesley, who died of pneumonia in May 1936, on her way to Badri-Kedar; *vide* "In Memoriam", 23-5-1936

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "Letter to F. Mary Barr", 24-5-1936

<sup>3</sup> Illegible in the source.

Nothing can be better if looking after the children brings you back to health. How does Rukmini behave now? Do you visit Dr. Ansari's?

Ask Sharma to come there; I have written<sup>1</sup> to him.

Papamma<sup>2</sup> and Saraswati<sup>3</sup> are arriving here tomorrow morning. There is no question of Kanti going to Harilal now. He has calmed down. You must have read what I have written about Harilal.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 616

### *120. LETTER TO JANKIE AMMAL NAIDOO*

[AS AT] WARDHA,  
*June 8, 1936*

MY DEAR JANKIE,

I was delighted to have your letter. It is good Father is coming to India. I wish you too had come. Of course after the rich living of Natal, you may not appreciate the simple life here. And you will be horrified to see the appalling poverty of the villages. That experience would chasten you. However, Father will tell you on his return what India is like.

Yes, all the Phoenixites are well.

Love.

BAPU<sup>4</sup>

[PS.]

Address: M. K. Gandhi  
Wardha  
India

SHRI JANKIE AMMAL NAIDOO  
37 MALLINSON RD., SYDENHAM  
DURBAN, NATAL

From a photostat: G.N. 10463

<sup>1</sup> Vide "Letter to Amtussalaam", 5-6-1936

<sup>2</sup> G. Ramachandran's sister.

<sup>3</sup> G. Ramachandran's sisters' daughter.

<sup>4</sup> This is in Tamil script.



*121. LETTER TO F. MARY BARR*

*June 8, 1936*

CHI. MARY,

I am in no hurry. Do finish your slivers and other urgent work before tackling Tara's box. I wrote<sup>1</sup> yesterday or the day before returning your letter to Sumitrabehn.

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 6063. Also C.W. 3393. Courtesy: F. Mary Barr

*122. LETTER TO MANILAL AND SUSHILA GANDHI*

BANGALORE,

*June 8, 1936*

CHI. MANILAL AND SUSHILA,

I have the letters from you both. You must have read of Harilal's exploit. I am not sending you a separate copy of my article as it has appeared in several newspapers. Nor have I anything to add as I have said enough in my article. Ba has been unhappy but bears it very patiently. Kanti is calm. I should have no worry or objection if he reforms himself now.

We shall reach Wardha on the 14th. Tari is still not cured of her ailment, but she is bound to get well if she follows my treatment with patience. All the youngsters here, both boys and girls, are at present busy sight-seeing in this State.

Lakshmi has been keeping indifferent health. She fell ill at Bombay just when Devdas was about to leave for this place.

Ramdas is doing his agency business satisfactorily.

I have not the least grudge against Sushila's going to live in the city. One has to practise self-denial for the children's sake. Without this the latter cannot advance in life. It is just proper that both [the children] are with you. I shall be satisfied if you do not Anglicize them, but bring them up under the influence of dharma. Do not let them forget their mother tongue and also teach them Hindi. I should like them to learn Tamil since you are living there. None of your acts

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Letter to F. Barr", 7-6-1936

should encourage in them an infatuation for English. They will acquire a working knowledge of the language. However, if one acquires knowledge through one's mother tongue, one can better understand, digest and utilize it in one's life. But then this is what I think is wise. It is for you to adopt the course that you both find agreeable. There is no question of doing anything merely to please me.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4852

### *123. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR*

BANGALORE,  
*June 9, 1936*

MY DEAR IDIOT,

Your exploit in going with drawing-room slippers and missing your way and walking till you were exhausted was worthy of an idiot. You have more than earned the title !

This letter will probably be the last from Bangalore. We leave here on 12th, reaching Wardha 14th.

Yes, Mira is quite well working as hard as she can at my hut. *Vidya hi seva*<sup>1</sup> is quite good. But it is better to have *Seva hi Vidya*<sup>2</sup>. Why not *Vidya Sevayai*, meaning Knowledge for Service? I suppose you will have it somewhat like this:

This as artistically drawn as is possible to do. But you know what I mean.

Love.

TYRANT

From the original: C.W. 3730. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 6886

<sup>1</sup> "Knowledge itself is service"; the motto was needed for the crest of the Lady Irwin College in Delhi.

<sup>2</sup> "Service itself is knowledge."

## 124. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

June 9, 1936

CHI. MIRA,

This will be perhaps my last letter from here. We hope to be in Wardha on 14th inst.

Cartmen seem to be having a fine time there. 50 carts working at a single job simultaneously must be a record for Segaoon. I hope they were all local. I expect to see you hale and hearty.

Evidently Balwantsinha and Munnalal were a godsend for you. When I felt like accepting Munnalal's offer and suggested to Balwantsinha to seek your unbroken contact, ,à,ç<sup>a</sup> I had no notion you would find them almost indispensable. Anyway, their being with you during your illness and convalescence was a source of great comfort to me.

The Madras basket contained apples. Did you have them? They were all from Janammal.

Love.

BAPU

From the Original: C.W. 6347. Courtesy: Mirabehn. Also G.N. 9813

## 125. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

June 9, 1936

CHI. NARANDAS,

You have, I believe, my letter<sup>1</sup> about Kanu. They have all been very busy sight-seeing. We hear from them from time to time. The other day they paid us a visit also. Here is another letter from Prema. You got the earlier too, I hope.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II. Also C.W. 8493. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

<sup>1</sup> Vide "Letter to Narandas Gandhi", 5-6-1936

*126. LETTER TO AMRITLAL T. NANAVATI*

*June 9, 1936*

CHI. AMRITLAL,

We expect to reach there on the 14th morning. Attend to the enclosed letters. I hope you are in good health and Bhansali is practising his penance within limits. Of course I remember others, too, but don't write about them to save time.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 10716

*127. TELEGRAM TO RAIHANA TYABJI<sup>1</sup>*

BANGALORE,  
*June 10, 1936*

ONE OF MY STAUCHEST FRIENDS GONE.<sup>2</sup> MOTHER AND YOU WILL FIND ME EQUAL SHARER IN LOSS. FATHER WAS TRULY GRAND OLD MAN OF GUJARAT AND FAITHFUL SERVANT OF NATION WHO KNEW NO DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HINDU AND MUSLIM. SARDAR AND OTHERS ALL JOIN ME.

*The Bombay Chronicle, 11-6-1936*

*128. MESSAGE TO MANJULA M. MEHTA*

*June 10, 1936*

Return with greater purity, kindness, health and self-restraint. I have great expectations of you both. May you prove Doctor's<sup>3</sup> true heirs.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a copy of the Gujarati: C.W. 1602

<sup>1</sup> An almost identical telegram was sent to Mohammed Habib, son-in-law of Abbas Tyabji.

<sup>2</sup> Addressee's father Abbas Tyabji died on June 9, 1936.

<sup>3</sup> Addressee's father-in-law, Dr. Pranjivan Mehta

129. INTERVIEW TO ADI-KARNATAKA  
SANGH

June 10, 1936

Mahatma Gandhi stated that he was in full agreement with the view that no work for the uplift of Harijans could be carried on satisfactorily unless it had their co-operation. No one had emphasized more than he the fact that in the service that they had undertaken, to remove all social and other disabilities in the case of Harijans, they were only discharging a debt of obligation, as they had committed the sin which had doomed the persons to social and other hardships.<sup>1</sup>

He pointed out that the Kengeri Gurukul did not belong to the Harijan Sevak Sangh; and that far from the Kengeri Gurukul excluding Harijans, it expressly served Harijans and took in Harijans whenever they were forthcoming.

The next important thing was that the Conference was one of *savarna* Hindu workers who were going to assemble in order to compare notes, discuss their difficulties, find out their own weaknesses and to organize their work better. The

Conference was one of hereditary sinners who wanted to find out ways and means of repaying the debt they owed to Harijans. How were the Harijans going to help in this Conference? They were certainly welcome to attend it, but how would they help in the deliberations?

D'souza: You may call yourselves debtors but the Harijans cannot help suspecting a superiority complex in all that you do, and you will lend yourselves to the suspicion that instead of devising means to help them you are devising new means to keep them down.

GANDHIJI: If there is suspicion for which there is no ground, I do not mind the suspicion. The *savarnas'* action if it is honest will dispel it. I do not blame the Harijans because they have known nothing better.

A HARIJAN: There is no suspicion. We simply wanted to narrate our hardships.

GANDHIJI: Need you narrate them to me? Don't I know them?

<sup>1</sup> Extracted from Mahadev Desai's "Weekly Letter". P.G. D'Souza, leader of the deputation, among other things pointed out that the Harijan Sevak Sangh took no account of work being done by Harijans who wanted H.S.S. Funds to be made available to them, that if Hindu opposition persisted the Missionaries were bound to accentuate their antagonism, that the Harijans were not being admitted in the Gurukul Ashram at Kengeri, that the Harijan Workers' Conference about to be held was going to be a purely non-Harijan affair and that it was no use concentrating on temple-entry when Harijans' economic and social conditions badly needed improvement.

Don't I proclaim from the house-tops that you have to rise all along the line? No; I want you to understand that it is a conference of sincere sinners. You are all welcome of course, but you will find that the complexion of the meeting is different from what you expect it to be. We are all debtors; we know that we can pay nothing more than small instalments, and that our creditors may be so enraged as to fling those instalments in our faces and kick us out. But we have to tolerate even this if such is to be our lot. For our goal is to pay the principal with interest. When Dr. Ambedkar abuses us, I say that it serves us right. Then sometimes the creditor becomes so great that he does not care for the debt of the debtors. We, however, have to forget everything else and concentrate on repaying the debt. The Shastras say that when the cup of a people's iniquity is full, they perish. Hinduism is a dying cult if it will not purge itself of untouchability and will perish, Ambedkar or no Ambedkar. If our attempt is sincere, I assume you will see no superiority complex among the reformers. I admit that as I see Hinduism, darkness envelops many *savarnas*. They call irreligion religion. Now it is out of this darkness that a very imperfect class of sinners are trying to come out. As regards the condition of some Harijans, I am reminding the *savarnas* day in and day out that it is they the *savarnas* who are responsible for the filthy habits of some of the Harijans. I tell them it is wrong of them to insist on Harijans getting clean before they receive the same status as other Hindus. We have to admit them first and then make them clean. As regards your disabilities, housing conditions, etc., I am pleading with the State. Pray be patient. We may not be able to deliver the goods as quickly as you want us to, but do not question our motives.

D'SOUZA: We thank you for having given us the assurance you have given. We want you to extend to the Harijans the hand of fellowship. A sinner should not behave as though in expressing penitence he was doing some service to God. I want you to get the Harijans direct representation in the Mysore Assembly in proportion to their population. They should be recognized as having attained manhood.

GANDHIJI: For that I must make a suggestion to you. You must displace the present Maharajah and have me as such for a week !

*Harijan*, 27-6-1936, and *The Hindu*, 11-6-1936

130. SPEECH AT HARIJAN WORKERS'  
CONFERENCE, KENGERI<sup>1</sup>

June 10, 1936<sup>2</sup>

Whoever conceived the idea of this Conference gave vent to a happy idea and we should be able to make good use of this meeting. Though there are at this Conference representatives invited from all parts of South India, there are others here, too, and instead of confining myself only to the actual work of the delegates, I will make some general observations.

These general observations I shall make for the benefit of the *savarna* Hindus. Let them understand that this movement for the removal of untouchability is different from other current movements in India. So far as I am concerned, and so far as the Harijan Sevak Sangh is concerned, the anti-untouchability movement is not a political movement. Nor is it intended purely for the economic amelioration of the Harijans nor yet for their social regeneration. But this does not mean that we do not aim at the Harijans' social, economic or political advancement. We want all these improvements. If we are honest about our work, progress in these directions is bound to follow from our efforts.

But our goal is quite different from the things I have mentioned just now. It is this: that untouchability is a blot upon Hinduism and must be removed at any cost. Untouchability is a poison which, if we do not get rid of it in time, will destroy Hinduism.

I know that those of you who are outside the ranks of workers and delegates—nay, even some of the workers and delegates—do not realize the real significance of what I am saying. But whether you realize the significance or not, I must continue to express the views which I hold and hold very strongly.

I can see in the continuance of untouchability slow destruction overtaking Hinduism now, and I promise that if you study the thing itself as I am doing, you will observe that the slow disintegration which Hinduism is going through, may become so rapid as to make it impossible for the workers to overcome it.

<sup>1</sup> This was published in *Harijan* under the title "The Inwardness of Harijan Movement."

<sup>2</sup> From *The Hindu*

And why do I say that untouchability is a curse, a blot and a powerful poison that will destroy Hinduism? It is repugnant to our sense of humanity to consider a single human being as untouchable by birth. If you were to examine the scriptures of the world and the conduct of peoples other than Hindus, you would not find any parallel to the untouchability I have brought to your attention just now. I can well understand a person being untouchable whilst he is performing a task which he himself would feel makes him untouchable. For instance, a nurse, who is nursing a patient who is helpless and bleeding and soiling his clothes and suffering from a disease giving out from his body a foul smell, such a nurse whilst she is nursing such a patient is untouchable. But when she has washed herself, she becomes as touchable as ourselves. Not only that. She is not only just as fit to move in society as any of us, but she is also adorable for the profession which she follows. She is worthy of our respect and, so long as we have ranks in our society, she must occupy a very high place amongst us.

Now look at the other side of the picture. Take, for instance, Dr. Ambedkar. He is pronounced as belonging to the Depressed Classes and as being untouchable. Intellectually he is superior to thousands of intelligent and educated caste Hindus. His personal cleanliness is as high as that of any of us. Today he is an eminent lecturer in Law. Tomorrow you may find him a Judge of the High Court. In other words, there is no position in the Government of this country to which he may not aspire and rise, and to which an orthodox Brahmin can rise. But that orthodox Brahmin will be defiled by the touch of Dr. Ambedkar and that because of his unpardonable sin that he was born a Mahar (Untouchable)!

If we had not been habituated to think that untouchability by birth is an integral part of Hinduism, we would not conduct ourselves towards our fellow human beings as many of us conduct ourselves even today.

I know that I have told you nothing new in this my talk to you today. I know I have said this same thing in a much more burning language than I have done today. Yet what I say is not, and will not be, superfluous so long as this simple fact of the need for the removal of untouchability does not affect your understanding or conduct.

Untouchability is a phenomenon which is peculiar to Hinduism only and it has got no warrant either in reason or in the Shastras, and



what little I have studied of the Shastras and what I have been told by people who have made a deeper study of them shows that there is no warrant for untouchability by birth in Hinduism. I have not the time now to go into the Shastric precepts. Nor is it necessary at this time of the day to give you Shastric proofs for my statement. But what is necessary is that if you are satisfied that untouchability is a blot on Hinduism and that there is a danger of its destroying Hinduism, you must set about removing it.

What will you do to remove it? If all of you will say that you have done your duty by declaring that untouchability is a blot on Hinduism, it will be a mockery. It will not be enough even if you in a flush of enthusiasm go to a Harijan and touch him and embrace him, and then forget all about him. It will not do even if you go to the Harijan quarters every day and make it a point to touch a number of Harijans as a token of your conviction.

What is required of you is that you should regulate your day-to-day conduct in such a manner that you make it absolutely evident to the Harijans whom you come across that a better day has dawned for them all.

You will begin by taking the Harijans along with you to the temple if you are in the habit of going to a temple. But if you discover that you will not be allowed into the temple along with your Harijan companions, then if you have the living belief that I have that untouchability is wrong, you will shun that temple as you shun a scorpion or fire. You will then believe with me that such a temple is not inhabited by God. I will take by way of illustration the greatest temple known all over the world, viz., Kashi Vishwanath in Banaras. The Lord who is supposed to reside there is known as the Lord of the Universe. And yet in the very name of that Vishwanath the *savarna* Hindus have today the impudence to say to the Harijans: 'You shall not come to this temple'!

I claim to be as good a Hindu as any orthodox Hindu. I have endeavoured to enforce all precepts of Hinduism in my own life to the best of my ability. I admit that my ability is small. But that does not affect my attitude to and love for Hinduism. Yet, in spite of all that love for Hinduism, with a due sense of my own responsibility I am here to tell you that so long as the doors of the Banaras temple are closed against a single Harijan, Kashi Vishwanath does not reside in that temple and I could not possibly approach that temple with a

belief in its sanctity or in the faith that by worshipping there I should be purified of my sins. I can have no sense of piety in respect of such a temple. And what is true of Kashi Vishwanath is true of every other temple in India which bars its doors to Harijans. It applies of course to all such temples in South India, including the Guruvayur temple.

Thank God, the gates of the Guruvayur temple are closed to me. But even supposing the trustees of that temple, or whoever is in authority there, gave me permission to enter that temple, I could not possibly avail myself of it so long as members of the Harijan community are shut out. Unless every one of you here begins in the way I have pointed out, he has not removed untouchability from his heart.

It is absolutely of no consequence that a vast majority of Harijans are uninterested in our campaign. Only this morning Mr. D'Souza, leading a deputation of Harijans,<sup>1</sup> told me that the Harijans were not so interested in temple-entry as in their political and economic amelioration and perhaps a rise in their social status. Naturally, they cannot think otherwise. For we are responsible for deadening their sense of unity with us and their desire to worship in common with us in our temples.

Therefore I say that the God of Hinduism is really non-existent for them. It is true that the God of Hinduism is not different from the God in Islam or Christianity. Only the mode of worship is peculiar to each religion. If Harijans because of our own sins—our own unpardonable treatment of them—have been taught to consider that the temples visited by *savarnas* are not for them, you could not blame them for their indifference in this matter. Force of habit has made them indifferent. That Harijans in Travancore and other parts of India have still got the desire to enter the temples and claim the same rights as other Hindus, is a good thing and a comforting thing, but it does not affect my argument.

There is another aspect of the opening of temples to Harijans which you must not fail to realize. If you open your temples to Harijans because they demand that they shall be so opened, you will not be doing any great thing. But if you open the temples to them because of a sense of sin for which you should atone, it becomes a religious act. I should insist on Hindu temples being thrown open to

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

Harijans even if the Harijans in India were converted to another religion and there was only one Harijan left in the Hindu fold. It is this religious attitude that isolates the Harijan question from all other questions, and gives it a special importance. If our present programme was merely one of policy or political expediency, it would not have the religious significance that it has for me. If it was demonstrated to me to my satisfaction that the political or economic regeneration of Harijans would be enough to retain the Harijans in the Hindu fold, I should still want to open the temples and remove every trace of inequality. Because for me it is, as it must be for you, a question of repentance and reparation for the wrong we have done to our fellowmen.

Thus the threat of the conversion of Harijans to other religions which is agitating so many Hindus today, has no bearing on our duty to Harijans. If we begin to quicken our activities, because of the threat of conversion, then such opening will lose the significance which I have outlined. I promise you that Hinduism will not be saved by such means.

Hinduism can only be saved when it has become purified by the performance of our duty without the expectation of any return whatsoever from the Harijans. Nothing less than that can possibly save Hinduism. If you do something by Harijans as a matter of expediency or political manoeuvre, you have not rid yourselves of untouchability in your hearts. There will come many occasions when that poison will erupt on the Hindu social organism to such an extent that we shall be confounded. If we are ashamed of untouchability, we must shed it, no matter what results follow or may not follow.

I become impatient when *savarna* Hindus tell me from their platform of high superiority that they will remove un-touchability when Harijans give up their habits of drinking, eating carrion, uncleanliness, etc. Suppose my father, mother, son or daughter were lepers, can I say that I will touch him or her only when he or she had got rid of leprosy? I will be false to our sacred tie if I do not serve him or her in his or her need. The position regarding Harijans is infinitely worse, because we ourselves are responsible for the condition to which Harijans have been reduced. For their drinking, eating carrion, and other unclean habits we are directly responsible. Therefore, if we are true, we have to embrace them in spite of their shortcomings; and I hope, not without foundation, that immediately you adopt an attitude

of mind looking upon the Harijans as your brothers they will change their habits. People who had experience in this direction will confirm this statement. It is therefore first necessary that *savarna* Hindus should purify their hearts and change their attitude towards Harijans.

I would ask you, please, not to fling in my face bad cases you may have come across—cases where you befriended Harijans and they refused to improve.

But having uttered this word of caution, I want to give you my evidence. I do not know a single Harijan adopted by a Hindu who has not reformed himself. As a matter of fact, it cannot be otherwise. The Harijan is bound to feel the change to be too good to be true. The novel experience of his improved surroundings will enable him to get rid of the craving for drink or carrion-eating. As for cleanliness it is a question of facilities made available to him. It is merely the cussedness of the *savarna* Hindus that employs the arguments about the uncleanness of the Harijans, so that they themselves need not act correctly.

I will close with a material thought. I have told you exactly my views of the duty of every *savarna* Hindu to Harijans. There are many more things that the *savarna* Hindu can do in his own personal conduct.

But I know that there will be a lot of discussion among members assembled here as to how to conduct the work of Harijan Sevak Sanghs without money. I say to such delegates that the fear comes out of their own want of faith. We want to move not half a dozen *savarna* Hindus, we want to touch the hearts of millions of *savarna* Hindus. Paupers though we are, we find that no Hindu temple has ever to be closed for want of funds. I invite you to study this phenomenon. But do not run away with the false idea that millions of Hindus always pay to their temples merely out of superstition. There may be a partial truth in that statement. But it is only a partial truth. The better part of the truth is that the people who support these temples by their offerings of pice or rice or coconut or *supari*<sup>1</sup>, do so because of an indefinable faith that they are doing an act of piety. And I tell you that you will not be doing justice to yourselves, or to India or to humanity, if you will characterize these things as superstition. I know that superstition is a long-lived thing. There are many monsters of

<sup>1</sup> Areca-nut

superstition which have been given a long rope by the Almighty. But however long their life, it is nothing in the cycle of time. The better half of the truth is that there is some-thing undoubtedly holy and true about the faith that takes millions to the temples. If you have faith in the piety of the dumb humanity who support these temples, and faith in your mission, each of you will become little temples and gather pice or rice from the people.

If you remain content with the lazy delusion that a few millionaires like Ghanshyamdas Birla will always send money to you for your work, I assure you that the movement is bound to fail. You will never be able to bring this movement to a successful conclusion unless you realize the need to go to the dumb millions and collect pice or even their rice as a token of their conviction that untouchability is a sin to be got rid of.

Never mind if it takes time before you are successful. Whether it takes a few years or ages you must have unbounded faith that it is the only way to convert *savarna* Hindus and bring this message to every Hindu home. Know that time never runs against Truth. And this is the downright truth: You have to get rid of untouchability or perish. Only those become impatient who want to prop up a mission about whose correctness they have a doubt. Have faith that when all the forces that are arrayed against us—and they are mighty forces—have died down, there is still this movement which will go on to purify Hinduism. But if you lose heart, courage and faith and become too lazy to remain on the watch-tower, do not blame people for not paying. The movement will perish not because of external forces but because of internal weakness. I urge every worker to approach the problem in this light.

*Harijan*, 20-6-1936

### 131. LETTER TO BALKRISHNA BHAVE

BANGALORE,  
*June 11, 1936*

CHI. BALKRISHNA,

When you go for change of air or take other cures it never occurs to me that you do it out of attachment for life. The body is a field of duty. We must maintain it by taking proper care of it and for that reason you should take all the necessary treatment. I am greedy to take a lot of service from you and that is one of the reasons why I

make you wander from place to place. As long as you are weak you will have to take service from others wherever you are. I do not see any harm in it if it is done with humility in the name of God. The idea behind it after all is that if God grants you health it will be utilized only for rendering service. My advice therefore is that you should not obstruct the improvement of your health by entertaining any kind of worries.

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

### 132. LETTER TO VALLABH

June 11, 1936

CHI. VALLABH,

Mahadev has already briefly answered your two letters yesterday. "Vallabh" is all right. If you want to add anything to it, I would suggest "das"<sup>1</sup>. First, because it is a simple suffix and secondly because we have voluntarily accepted the dharma of service and also because, the varnas having vanished, we are Shudras. Moreover, Vallabhadas is generally a name given to sadhus. Let everyone in the Ashram abuse you in just by calling you Swami but outside merely Vallabh or Vallabhadas will be proper. You do not want to become 'bhai' so you are only a half rival of Sardar. You should remain so.

Both of you are certainly servants. Let him be a 'Sardar'; you always remain a "das"

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

### 133. LETTER TO RAIHANA TYABJI

June 11, 1936

DAUGHTER RAIHANA,

It was very good you wired. For us, Abbajan is always alive. This body is but a play lasting "a few days"<sup>2</sup>. However, the *atman* living within is immortal. His body we consigned to the tomb. Our association with it was momentary. He who had taken on the body and whom we loved as our own is no doubt even now watching us. May he witness all our acts, and save us from doing anything unworthy.

It was good that nearly the whole family was present at the time.

<sup>1</sup> A servant

<sup>2</sup> From a *ghazal* by Nazir Akbarabadi

Please offer condolences on my behalf to all. Who will console me?  
You know the bond between us.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

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

### 134. INTERVIEW TO M. V. JAMBUNATHAN

*June 11, 1936*

Gandhiji appreciated the efforts of Mr. Jambunathan<sup>1</sup> in publishing an Urdu-Hindi dictionary and gave a few suggestions to make his work more exhaustive and more complete.

Referring to the Urdu-Hindi controversy, Gandhiji said it was due more to the mentality of the Hindus and Muslims of the present generation than the scripts themselves.

*The Hindu*, 13-6-1936

### 135. DISCUSSION AT HARIJAN WORKERS' CONFERENCE, KENGERI<sup>2</sup>

*[June 11, 1936]*<sup>3</sup>

Q. You were rather hard in your speech<sup>4</sup> about the temples. The *savarna* orthodoxy feels that we have no faith in the temples and your remark will support their feeling.

A. You are begging the question when you say that *savarnas* feel that we have no faith in their temples. They are *our* temples as much as theirs. My remarks were addressed to those who have faith in the temples. We do not create any hostile feeling in the *savarnas* by saying that God had left temples whose doors were barred against Harijans. For God there is the God of *our* creation. If it was God of His own creation, He would say: "Fools! Do you not see me everywhere?" But God is good enough to forget that we are fools,

<sup>1</sup> Of the Mysore University

<sup>2</sup> Extracted from Mahadev Desai's "Weekly Letter".

<sup>3</sup> From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary.

<sup>4</sup> *Vide* "Speech at Harijan Workers' Conference, Kengeri", 10-6-1936

and thinks that we have enshrined Him in order to purge corruption from our hearts. But when we discover that God whom we had enshrined in our temples permitted a class of His devotees to be regarded as untouchables, we said God had fled from such temples. I therefore say we must not visit the temples that forbid the entry of Harijans, and after we have finished with the members of our families we should go out with the same advice to others.

Q. Is the Harijan Sevak Sangh entitled to fight caste as we know it, since untouchability cannot go without the present caste going?

A. Untouchability has to go in its entirety, but so far as the Sangh as a body is concerned we have confined its work to the removal of the extreme form of untouchability. Therefore we do not begin with an attack on caste, though most of the members individually do not believe in and have discarded from their lives all caste restrictions about food and marriage.

Q. Shall we ever at some stage have to attack caste?

A. Why not? We recognize our limits and have thus restricted the rate of our progress. When we have got confidence we can change the creed of our Sangh and go a step further. Individuals, as I have said, have gone further. So far as restrictions about intermarriage and inter-dining are concerned, they are no part of varnashramadharm. Both of them are individual matters. No Shastra can compel me to feed or marry or refuse to do so with particular individuals. I urge you to recognize the fundamental distinction between our own personal conduct and the policy of the Sangh, which can only be changed in accordance with its constitution.

Q. There were places where Harijans had as a result of the present awakening given up handling dead animals and their disposal. There were places where Harijan reformers had to ask their Harijan brethren to give up the work, if only to give up carrion. In some places these had incurred the wrath of the *savarna* Hindus who had declared a boycott against them and stopped all social amenities. What were the Harijan *sevaks* to do?

A. It is our duty to protect the Harijans wherever such a thing happens, and if life is made difficult for them, we should help them to migrate to some more hospitable neighbourhood. But the best thing is for Harijan *Sevaks* to find out from amongst *savarna* reformers, including themselves, men ready to learn the art of curing hides and tanning. There are tanneries where all the processes from the skinning of carcasses to tanning are taught, and if we have many *savarnas*



ready to do this work the awakened Harijans will not fight shy of it. But they have every right to abandon the work and take up anything else, and wherever they will not take charge of it we must take it up ourselves. Let us make the community realize the terrible waste of wealth that is going on from day to day. If we knew the science of dealing with carcasses, we should find that often a carcass pays more than the animal being worn out and starved would have fetched when alive. For the dead flesh can be turned into fine manure; the bones need to be simply charred in order to be turned into rich manure, they are also used to make buttons, handles, etc.; fat which can be easily preserved is precious for various purposes; the intestines are valuable for guts for carding-bows and musical instruments.

Q. But in our place a curious situation has arisen. The Harijan community is strong, and they have resolved to face even social boycott. There is only a small minority of Harijans who are in favour of continuing the work of the disposal of carcasses. What advice am I to give them?

A. Of course they should be free to continue their calling.

Q. Even at the risk of being boycotted by their own community?

A. No. Then we should not divide the community.

Q. Have we given up the Temple-entry Bill? Can't we take it up again?

A. We have not given it up. It will be taken up as soon as the conditions are propitious.

Q. Can't we make greater provision in the budget for propaganda?

A. No. If I could help it, I should not permit even 5 per cent of the budget for propaganda. But if you must expend money on propaganda, you may collect money specially for propaganda, but even then the Sangh will ask you to account for every pie you have spent.

Q. In our work we find the existence of sub-castes and untouchability among Harijans themselves a very great barrier. How are we to break the barrier?

A. By removing sub-castes and untouchability from ourselves. The Harijans are simply imitating their masters. We have kept them as slaves and taught them to imitate us. And you must remember that an imitator improves on the original, i.e., he disfigures it.

Q. Don't you think that the whole Harijan problem is in the last analysis an economic problem, and that the moment you improve the Harijans' economic status you solve the problem?

A. No. You may solve the economic problem, but unhappily the Harijan problem, which is essentially that of the eradication of a disease in Hinduism, will not be solved thereby. Dr. Ambedkar who is economically much better off than most of us is still regarded as an untouchable.

Q. A worker, apparently an iconoclast, seemed to be impatient of some of the forms of worship among Harijans--including even their worship of Rama and Krishna—and naively said: “I know that they worship sticks and stones, even when they say they worship Rama and Krishna. And worship of these, however great they may be, does not inspire me. May I ask them to regard you as an incarnation of God and worship you, as I do?”

Amidst the laughter of all present Gandhiji calmly replied:

A. There is this difficulty staring me in the face: I am, you must know, an idol of mud, and those who seem to you to be revolting as ideals are my revered ideals. The names of Rama and Krishna fill me and Krishna fill me with hope. So I would advise you to break your incarnation—me—to pieces. That will be better than condemning Rama and Krishna which is nothing short of violence to Hinduism and to religion.

“But”, replied the friend, “Rama and Krishna were human beings.”

You think I am such a fool as to worship Rama and Krishna who existed ages ago? I worship Rama and Krishna who exist today, who have existed for all time, who know my innermost thoughts and who continually correct me. If I were not sure of my Rama and Krishna, existing on both sides of me, I should have gone mad with Sjts. X and Y and questioners like you.

“But”, put in C.R.<sup>1</sup>, “this explanation may not improve matters. He might regard you as an incarnation all the more for this explanation !”

Well, then I must remind you, young man, that if you are confirmed in your opinion that I am an incarnation you will find that one day I am no more. Will then God disappear for you?

But Christians also worship Christ?

Let me tell you that Christians worship the Christ who was resurrected. In the same manner those who worship Rama and Krishna worship Rama and Krishna who are more living than you are, or certainly more living than I am. They live now and will live until eternity. If ideals of Rama and Krishna are revolting to you, you

<sup>1</sup> C. Rajagopalachari

should advise Harijans to forsake Hinduism, for I am quite sure that if a man does not believe in Rama and Krishna as God he is not a Hindu. A Muslim who says he does not believe in his *Kalema* will be hounded out of Muslim company. Do not then ask me, if I worship Rama who killed Shambuka and Krishna about whom we hear all kinds of legends. I worship the living Rama and Krishna, the incarnation of all that is True and Good and Perfect.

*Harijan*, 4-7-1936

### 136. DISCUSSION WITH A HARIJAN COUPLE<sup>1</sup>

[On or before June 12, 1936]<sup>2</sup>

Not knowing that they were Harijans, Gandhiji asked:

You are a married couple? What have you brought for me?

“We have brought flowers”, the bridegroom said.

But flowers won’t do. You are married and would you ask me to be satisfied with flowers only?

Sir, we have brought grapes too.

The grapes are sour. Can’t accept grapes, can’t accept flowers. Go and consult together and decide what to give me for the poor Harijans.

“We are ourselves Harijans”, they exclaimed, and Sjt. Ramachandra put in on their behalf: “Bapuji, he is Dewan Bahadur Srinivasan’s grandson.”

For a moment Gandhiji paused, as he had forgotten that the Dewan Bahadur was a Harijan. and then said:

I see, I see. Then it is not *you* who should give, but I should give you something.

We have come to have your blessings.

Of course you have them. Now tell me, are you happy in Hinduism, or will you give up the wretched religion?

We are perfectly happy and we will never give up Hinduism.

May I then proclaim to the world that Dewan Bahadur Srinivasan’s grandson and granddaughter-in-law are happy in Hinduism?

<sup>1</sup> Extracted from Mahadev Desai’s “Weekly Letter”.

<sup>2</sup> According to the source, this and the following discussion took place at Bangalore where Gandhiji was till June 12, 1936.

Please do. We are perfectly happy.

“May we touch your feet?” Both did so and received hearty thumps on the back—Gandhiji’s favourite way of giving blessings to those nearest to him.

*Harijan*, 27-6-1936

### 137. DISCUSSION WITH A POLISH STUDENT<sup>1</sup>

[On or before *June 12, 1936*]

[STUDENT:] I am keenly interested in rural reconstruction. There is at...<sup>2</sup> a school conducted by Catholic Fathers. I shall help the school from the proceeds of the sale of this photograph<sup>3</sup>.

Returning the photograph Gandhiji said:

Ah, that is a different story. You do not expect me to support the Fathers in their mission of conversion? You know what they do?

And with this he told him... the story of the so-called conversions in the vicinity of Tiruchengodu, the desecration and demolition of the Hindu temple, how he had been requested by the International Fellowship of Faiths to forbear writing anything about the episode as they were trying to intervene, how ultimately even the intervention of that body composed mainly of Christians had failed, and how he was permitted to write about it in *Harijan*. He, however, had deliberately refrained from writing, in order not to exacerbate feelings on the matter.

“But”, said the student, “the Christians among whom the Fathers I mention are working became Christians long ago.”

Well, there they foment fresh troubles. I do not know why the professors of a noble faith should assist in creating deadly quarrels between two sections of the same faith.

But I myself am a Christian convert. I cannot tell you the happiness and the solace that Christianity has meant to me.

I can understand that. You are using the language of a truly converted Christian. You have a heart to lose or to keep. If the Harijans in India reach your intellectual and spiritual level, and experience your sense of original sin, I would bless them for voluntarily embracing Christianity. Have you read what I have written on my son’s so-called conversion to Islam? If he had become a

<sup>1</sup> Extracted from Mahadev Desai’s “Weekly Letter”.

<sup>2</sup> Omission as in the source.

<sup>3</sup> On which the student wanted Gandhiji’s autograph.

Muslim from a pure and a contrite heart, I should have no quarrel with him. But those who had helped him to embrace Islam and are enthusing over his apostasy simply exploited his weaknesses. They are no true representatives of Islam. My letter to the Muslims, I tell you, was written with my pen dipped in my heart's blood. Similarly there is no redeeming feature about the Tiruchengodu conversions I have spoken to you about.<sup>1</sup>

*Harijan, 27-6-1936*

### *138. ADVISE TO HINDI WORKERS<sup>2</sup>*

BANGALORE,  
*June 12, 1936*

Gandhiji advised Hindi *pracharakas* who are imbued with a sense of service, not to fritter away their energies in all possible spheres, but to confine themselves to the one work they had undertaken.

Gandhiji observed that it was quite possible for anybody, man or woman, to attain full mental development through the mother tongue alone and he considered all those who did not agree with the view as being guilty of treachery against their mother tongue. Even if Sir Venkata Raman were to say that he could not explain his researches in his mother tongue, Gandhiji would ask him to keep his Nobel Prize and Knighthood to himself.

*The Hindu, 12-6-1936*

### *139. SPEECH AT HARIJAN WORKERS' CONFERENCE, KENGERI<sup>3</sup>*

*June 12, 1936*

We should do nothing having in view the threat of conversions. For I am sure that everything that you will do merely to stop them will fail of its purpose. Conversions or no conversions, we have to redouble our efforts in order to remove all the disabilities under which

<sup>1</sup> Here Mahadev Desai remarks: "The young man could see the deep pain with which Gandhiji was speaking. He did not press him to give the autograph and took his leave."

<sup>2</sup> More than 100 Hindi workers, including about 30 women drawn from all parts of the State, met Gandhiji in the morning.

<sup>3</sup> Extracted from Mahadev Desai's "Weekly Letter".

Harijans are labouring. The reaction that we should do something because of the threat of conversions was bound to take place as we are human beings. We may therefore take note of the fact but do no fact but do nothing because of it. If we redouble our efforts because of the threat, we shall slacken our efforts immediately the threat is carried out, or the moment we find that the threat was empty. Either way, if we slacken our effort we shall be harming the cause. Harijans will feel that the whole of our agitation was, like a soda-water bottle affair, momentary, and that there is now going to be nothing more. Our movement is essentially religious and independent of political vicissitudes. There can, therefore, be only greater and greater dedication on our part. What shall we, then, a handful of us do for the cause, when we find that thousands and thousands of our people are wholly indifferent and will do nothing beyond passing a few resolutions? Somehow or other they do not feel that these resolutions are addressed to them individually. Years ago eloquent speeches used to be made on *swadeshi*, but speakers did not feel that they were bound to carry out what they said. They took shelter under the phrase 'as far as possible'. There is no 'as far as possible' on the question of untouchability. If it is to go, it must go in its entirety, from the temples as from everywhere else. So if the thousands who passed the resolutions in Travancore were serious when they raised their hands, no power on earth can prevent the entry of Harijans to temples. Those of us, therefore, who are working for the removal of untouchability must convince the Harijans of our *bona fides*. I have, however, a suspicion that all who have come here are not as thorough in their action as they should be. Most of you do not go far enough in identifying yourselves with the Harijans' difficulties. You will say, 'We believe in the removal of untouchability only to the extent of the Harijan Sevak Sangh programme.' If Harijan workers take shelter under this 'thus far and no further', it will be difficult to convince Harijans that we are sincere. Naturally Harijans want to have positive proofs of daily increasing progress. They want to rise to the highest status that a Hindu is capable of. I ask you, therefore, not to leave this conference without discussing the difficulties that face us. If all our workers were capable of making cent per cent delivery of goods and of becoming cent per cent Harijans voluntarily, it would be well with us.

I do not want to blame anyone, I am simply thinking aloud, and when Ramachandran wanted me to say what should be done I could not put the thing more concretely. It is a question of ourselves feeling

the thing. This cannot happen except with the conviction that if untouchability does not go Hinduism will perish. I would go even further and say: 'I would pray that a religion which damns any human beings because they were born in a particular section should perish.' And I want you, if you feel with me, to pray that it ought to perish if this blot on humanity is not removed. That points to the necessity of our becoming Harijans in every sense of the term. Does it mean that we should start eating carrion or drinking or living filthily? No, we must feel miserable whenever they feel miserable, and try to remove all that makes them miserable, Let us never say their misery is due to their karma, but let us say we have made up our minds to discharge at least a portion of our debts to them. Let us ask ourselves every morning if we have done anything in discharge of that debt. Unless we do this all our resolutions will be a fruitless effort.

Q. What is to be our attitude to those who want to come back to Hinduism?

A. We shall simply say to them: 'You are perfectly welcome,' but you will offer no inducements to those you expect to win back by doing so.

Q. Oh no. That is out of the question. I was wondering if you would approve of any purification ceremony.

A. No purification ceremony is necessary. If they had become converts wantonly, they will regretfully come back, in which case those who take them back may ask them to do some *shuddhi*. I would simply ask them to take Ramanama a hundred times.

Q. Won't you object to a Harijan sevak attending a voluntary *shuddhi* ceremony of this character?

A. I see no objection to his attending such a ceremony, but let him be clear that *Shuddhi* is no part of the Harijan Sevak Sangh's programme, and also he should be sure that the man wanting to be reconverted was doing so absolutely freely and without the offer of any inducement. The question is: Are you convinced of the downright sincerity of the man wanting to be reconverted? If you are, do everything to befriend him.

*Harijan*, 4-7-1936

*140. CONVOCATION ADDRESS AT HINDI PRACHAR  
SABHA, BANGALORE<sup>1</sup>*

[June 12, 1936]<sup>2</sup>

I had no idea that when I promised to give you half an hour this evening I was going in for an elaborate function and should have to give you more time than I had bargained for. Not that I should not have liked to give you more time. If it had been possible I should certainly have given you two hours, examined you in Hindi, done a little business by asking for contributions for Hindi propaganda, and possibly for your ornaments. But that was not to be. Within a couple of hours I shall be leaving Bangalore. That however, does not mean that those who want to contribute may not do so after I have left.

I congratulate those who have won their diplomas and certificates today. I hope they will keep up their studies and go on adding to their knowledge every day. Those who go to ordinary schools and colleges go there for a career, read their books for examinations and the moment they leave their examination-hall forget the books along with what they have learnt from them. Many care more for degrees than for knowledge. But those who have won their diplomas today have not done so for the sake of diplomas, for the obvious reason that the Institution for the Propagation of Hindi does not aim at helping you to win jobs. The diplomas and degrees conferred on you are meant only as proof of the knowledge your teachers have imparted to you. It is quite possible, of course, for a few of you to earn your livelihood from your Hindi studies, but that certainly is not our object.

It delights my hearts that a majority of the successful candidates today are members of the fair sex. That indicates a bright future for Hindi *prachar* and for Mother India, for I am firmly of opinion that India's salvation depends on the sacrifice and enlightenment of her women. In many of the women's meetings I used to address, I emphasized the fact that when we wanted to speak of our ancient heroes and heroines or gods and goddesses we would name the latter first, e.g., Sita Rama, Radha Krishna and not Rama Sita or Krishna Radha. This practice is not without its significance. Women used to be

<sup>1</sup> Published in *Harijan* under the title "The Question of Hindi". Gandhiji presided over the Convocation, which was attended among others by Srinivasa Sastri, C. Rajagopalachari and Satyamurti.

<sup>2</sup> From *The Hindu*, 13-6-1936.



honoured and their work and worth were regarded of special value. Let us continue the tradition in its letter and spirit.

I shall take this occasion to give you a few obvious reasons why Hindi or Hindustani alone can be the national language. So long as you live in Karnataka, and do not look out of it, a knowledge of Kannada is enough for you. But a look at any one of your villages is enough to show that your outlook and your horizon have widened, you no longer think in terms of Karnataka but in terms of India. Events outside Karnataka interest you, but the interest cannot obviously go very far, without a common medium of expression. How is a Karnataka man to establish and maintain contact with men from Sind or U.P.? Some of our people have held and perhaps still hold that English can be this medium. If it was a question of a few thousands of our educated people, English would certainly do. But I am sure none of you will be satisfied with that. You and I want millions of people to establish interprovincial contacts, and they cannot obviously do so through English for generations to come, if ever. There is no reason why they should all learn English, and it certainly is no sure or substantial means of winning a livelihood. Its value for this object will, if anything, become less and less as more people come to learn it. Then Hindi-Hindustani offers no difficulty in studying as English must. Study of it is never going to take the time that study of English would do. It has been estimated that the number of Hindus and Mussalmans speaking and understanding Hindi-Hindustani exceeds 200 million. Would not the 11 millions of men and women of Karnataka like to learn a language that is spoken by 200 millions of their own brothers and sisters? And can they not very easily learn it? The answer is supplied by a fact I noticed very strikingly a moment ago. You have all listened to a Kannada translation of Lady Raman's Hindi speech. You could not but have noticed that the translation adopted unaltered quite a large number of words which Lady Raman had used in her Hindi speech—words like *prem*, *premi*, *sangha*, *sabha*, *adhyaksha*, *pada*, *ananta*, *bhakti*, *swagata*, *adhyakshata*, *sammelan*. All these words are common to Hindi and Kannada. Now supposing someone was translating Lady Raman's speech into English, could he have retained any of these words? By no means. The English equivalent of every one of these words would be new to the listeners. When therefore our Kannada friends say that Hindi is difficult for them, they amuse me no less than they make me angry and impatient. I am sure it is a matter of a few hours' careful study for a month. I am 67 and have not many years before me, but I assure you that when I listened to the Kannada translation I felt as though I should not take more than eight days to learn Kannada if I gave a few

hours to it each day. With the exception of half a dozen, like the Rt. Hon. Srinivasa Sastri and myself, all of you here are quite young. Have you not energy enough to devote to a study of Hindi four hours each day for just one month? Do you think it is too much to devote this time to cultivate a contact with 200 millions of your own countrymen? Now suppose those of you who do not know English decided to learn English. Do you think any one of you would be able to learn the language in a month by devoting four hours to it each day? By no means. The reason why Hindi is so ridiculously easy is that all the languages, including even the four South Indian spoken by Hindus in India contain a large number of Sanskrit words. It is a matter of history that contact in the old days between the South and the North used to be maintained by means of Sanskrit. Even today the *shastris* in the South hold discourses with the *shastris* in the North through Sanskrit. The difference in the various vernaculars is mainly of grammar. In the North Indian languages even the grammatical structure is identical. The grammar of the South Indian languages is of course vastly different, and even their vocabularies, before they came under the influence of Sanskrit, were equally different. But now even these languages have adopted a very large number of Sanskrit words, so much so that I have not found it difficult, whenever I have gone South, to get a gist of what was being said in all the four languages.

I come now to our Mussalman friends. They know the vernaculars of their provinces as a matter of course and Urdu in addition. There is no difference whatsoever between Hindi and Urdu or Hindustani. The grammar is common to both, it is only the script that makes the difference, and when one comes to think of it one finds that the three words Hindi, Hindustani and Urdu denote only one language. If we were to refer to the lexicons of these languages, we should find that most of the words are the same. For them, therefore, barring the question of script which will adjust itself, there is no difficulty whatsoever.

To return therefore, to where I began, if your horizon goes as far as Srinagar in the North and Cape Comorin in the South, Karachi in the West and Dibrugarh in the East—as indeed it should—there is for you nothing for it but to learn Hindi. English, I have shown to you, cannot be our lingua franca. I have no prejudice against English. A knowledge of English is necessary for a few scholars, it is necessary for international contacts, and for a knowledge of the sciences pursued in the West. But I am pained when an attempt is made to give

English a place it cannot take. That attempt, I have no doubt, is bound to fail. Everything looks proper in its own place.

There is a scare of which I should like to disabuse your minds. Is Hindi to be taught at the expense of Kannada? Is it likely to oust Kannada? On the contrary, I claim that the more we propagate Hindi the more shall we stimulate a study of our vernaculars and even improve their power and potency. I say this from my experience of different provinces.

A word about the question of script. Even when I was in South Africa, I thought that all the languages derived from Sanskrit should have Devanagari script, and I am sure that even the Dravidian languages could be easily learnt through the Devanagari script. I have tried to learn Tamil and Telugu through the Tamil and Telugu scripts, as also Kannada and Malayalam, for a few days, through their respective scripts. I tell you I was frightfully upset over having to learn four scripts when I could see that if the four languages had a common script—Devanagari—I should learn them in no time. What a terrible strain it is on those like me who are anxious to learn the four languages? As between the speakers of the four South Indian vernaculars, does it need any argument to show that Devanagari would be the most convenient script for the speaker of one to learn the other three? The question of Hindi as lingua franca need not be mixed up with the question of script, but I have referred to this simply in order to point out the difficulty of those who want to know all the Indian languages.

*Hirijan, 27-6-1936*

### *141. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS*

BANGALORE,  
*June 12, 1936*

I believe Sjt. Kodanda Rao to be incapable of having made the claims attributed to him. viz., of being a Congress representative or my 'envoy'<sup>1</sup> I consider him to be too straightforward a man to make any such claim.

<sup>1</sup> P. Kodanda Rao of the Servants of India Society was on a visit to Trinidad.

I do not know anything about his views on Hindi, but I must decline to believe the statement put into his mouth that Hindi is of no use for Indians overseas, or that he advised the educational authorities there that they should not listen to any such claim put forth by Indian settlers. I should be sorry if it is found that he holds these views, because I think it is absolutely essential for Indian settlers not only not to forget their mother tongue but to keep themselves in touch with the literature and growth of Hindi.

*The Hindu*, 13-6-1936

#### 142. A WITNESS FROM AMERICA

Miss Mabel E. Simpson of Montana (U. S. A.) writes to the Editor:

I wish to express my appreciation of your publication. What it lacks in size it more than makes up in quality. I greatly enjoyed Mr. Gandhi's article on birth-control displaying his usual clear insight into the heart of things. If he had visited America twenty years ago when birth-control was disapproved and now when it is in full swing, he would know that it brings moral deterioration. But he would not be able to convince anybody of it, for it also brings a blindness to both moral and spiritual perception that makes it impossible for its followers to discern with sensitivity along high moral and spiritual lines. If India follows the West in this it will surely lose two of its most. priceless and beautiful jewels: affection for little children and reverence for parenthood. America has lost both—and does not know it. Could you print a statement of the meaning of *brahmacharya*? I have been asked about it and while I have an idea I am not sure enough to attempt to explain it to others. Thank you.

The reader may place what value he or she chooses on this piece of evidence. I suggest however that such evidence against the use of contraceptives is worth far more than that of those who claim to derive benefit from their use. The reason is obvious. The benefit in the sense that advent of children is often checked is not denied. What is contended is that the moral harm the use does is incalculable. Miss Simpson has given us a measure of such harm.

Now for the definition—the meaning—of *brahmacharya*. Its root meaning may be given thus: that conduct which puts one in touch with God.

The conduct consists in the fullest control over all the senses. This is the true and relevant meaning of the word.

Popularly it has come to mean mere physical control over the organ of generation. This narrow meaning has debased *brahmacharya* and made its practice all but impossible. Control over the organ of generation is impossible without proper control over all the senses. They are all interdependent. Mind on the lower plane is included in the senses. Without control over the mind mere physical control, even if it can be attained for a time, is of little or no use.

*Harijan*, 13-6-1936

### 143. WHERE IS THE LIVING GOD?

The following is taken from a letter from Bengal.<sup>1</sup>

I had the privilege to go through your article<sup>2</sup> on birth-control with the heading 'A Youth's Difficulty'.

With the original theme of your article, I am in full agreement. But, in that article, you have expressed in a line your sentiment on God. You have said that it is the fashion nowadays for young men to discard the idea of God and they have no *living* faith in a *living* God.

But, may I ask what proof (which must be positive and undisputed) can you put forth regarding the existence of a God? Hindu philosophers or ancient *rishis*<sup>3</sup>, it seems to me, in their attempt to describe the *swarupa* or reality of *Ishwara* have at last come to the conclusion that He is indescribable and veiled in *maya* and so on.... I do not dare to deny that a true Mahatma like you or Sri Aurobindo, or the Buddha and Sankaracharyas of the past, may well conceive and realize the existence of such a God, who is far beyond the reach of ordinary human intellect.

But, what have we (the general mass), whose coarse intellect can never penetrate into the unfathomable deep, to do with such a God if we do not feel His presence in our midst?...

So, it is not at all surprising that young men of the present day do not believe in a God, because they do not want to make a *supposition* of God—they want a *real living God*. You have mentioned in your article of a *living* faith in a *living God*. I shall feel highly gratified and I think you will be rendering a great benefit to the young world, if you put forth some positive, undeniable proofs of the existence of God. I have the confidence that you will

<sup>1</sup> Only extracts are reproduced here.

<sup>2</sup> Vide "A Youth's Difficulty", 25-4-1936

<sup>3</sup> Seers

not more *mystify* the already mystified problem, and will throw some definite light on the matter.

I very much fear that what I am about to write will not remove the mist to which the correspondent alludes.

The writer supposes that I might have realized the existence of a living God. I can lay no such claim. But I do have a living faith in a living God even as I have a living faith in many things that scientists tell me. It may be retorted that what the scientists say can be verified if one followed the prescription given for realizing the facts which are taken for granted. Precisely in that manner speak the *rishis* and the prophets. They say, anybody following the path they have trodden can realize God. The fact is we do not want to follow the path leading to realization and we won't take the testimony of eye-witnesses about the one thing that really matters. Not all the achievements of physical sciences put together can compare with that which gives us a living faith in God. Those who do not want to believe in the existence of God do not believe in the existence of anything apart from the body. Such a belief is held to be unnecessary for the progress of humanity. For such persons the weightiest argument in proof of the existence of soul or God is of no avail. You cannot make a person who has stuffed his ears, listen to, much less appreciate, the finest music. Even so can you not convince those about the existence of a living God who do not want the conviction.

Fortunately the vast majority of people do have a living faith in a living God. They cannot, will not, argue about it. For them "it is".

Are all the scriptures of the world old women's tales of superstition? Is the testimony of the *rishis*, the prophets, to be rejected? Is the testimony of Chaitanya, Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Tukaram, Dnyandeva, Ramdas, Nanak, Kabir, Tulsidas of no value? What about Ramamohan Roy, Devendranath Tagore, Vivekananda—all modern men as well educated as the tallest among the living ones? I omit the living witnesses whose evidence would be considered unimpeachable. This belief in God has to be based on faith which transcends reason. Indeed even the so-called realization has at bottom an element of faith without which it cannot be sustained. In the very nature of things it must be so. Who can transgress the limitations of his being? I hold that complete realization is impossible in this embodied life. Nor is it necessary. A living immovable faith is all that is required for reaching the full spiritual height attainable by human

beings. God is not outside this earthly case of ours. Therefore exterior proof is not of much avail, if any at all. We must ever fail to perceive. Him through the senses, because He is beyond them. We can feel Him, if we will but withdraw ourselves from the senses. The divine music is incessantly going on within ourselves, but the loud senses drown the delicate music which is unlike and infinitely superior to anything we can perceive or hear with our senses.

The writer wants to know why, if God is a 'God of mercy and justice, He allows all the miseries and sorrows we see around us. I can give no satisfactory explanation. He imputes to me a sense of defeat and humiliation. I have no such sense of defeat, humiliation or despair. My retirement, such as it is, has nothing to do with any defeat. It is no more and no less than a course of self-purification and self-preparation. I state this to show that things are often not what they seem. It may be that what we mistake as sorrows, injustices and the like are not such in truth. If we could solve all the mysteries of the universe, we would be co-equals with God. Every drop of the ocean shares its glory but is not the ocean. Realizing our littleness during this tiny span of life, we close every morning prayer with the recitation of a verse which means: "Misery so-called is no misery nor riches so-called riches. Forgetting (or denying) God is the true misery, remembering (or faith in) God is true riches."

*Harijan*, 13-6-1936

#### 144. LETTER TO AGATHA HARRISON

[AS AT] WARDHA,

*June 13, 1936*

MY DEAR AGATHA,

I have your love letter and a longer one from Horace<sup>1</sup>. This is for you both. I did not mean to suggest that we have not to convert Englishmen. What I meant and mean even now is that our contribution must be from this side. We must show that we mean no harm to England. It is not our fitness which is in dispute. Our harmlessness is, and rightly. This cannot be proved by any protestations made by the ablest Indian representative in England. It can only be proved by our uniform conduct here. But our conduct is

<sup>1</sup> Horace Alexander

by no means uniform. Not every Indian means well by England. And the best of us do not wish well in the same sense that Englishmen would have us to. Thus it was very difficult for me to convince the Lancashire operatives that I meant and wished well even in the act of preaching the immediate boycott of foreign cloth. <sup>1</sup>

Do you see that the non-violent way requires patience and has to be worked after the style peculiar to it?

This is not to say that it is wrong for any Indian ever to go there. No doubt chance visits of women like Mrs. Hamid Ali or men like Bhulabhai<sup>2</sup> must be exploited. I can even conceive occasions when men like Jawaharlal might specially go to remove misunderstandings. Let us wait for such a time.

C.F. Andrews expected here on 18th inst.

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 1494

#### 145. LETTER TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL

[AS AT] SEGAON,  
*June 13, 1936*

BHAI VALLABHBHAI,

I have written to Mangaldas<sup>3</sup> during the free time I now have in Madras. If there is time Mahadev will enclose a copy. I hope you did not find the journey difficult. Finish your work soon and come back. Do keep up the walks.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

SARDAR VALLABHBHAI PATEL  
89 WARDEN ROAD, BOMBAY

[From Gujarati]

*Bapuna Patro—2: Sardar Vallabhbhaine, p. 195*

<sup>1</sup> Gandhiji visited Lancashire on September 26/27, 1931; *vide* "Talk with Representatives of Cotton Industry", 26-9-1931 and "Statement to the Press", 27-9-1931

<sup>2</sup> Bhulabhai J. Desai, leader of the Congress Party in the Legislative Assembly.

<sup>3</sup> Mangaldas Pakwasa, President, Bombay Legislative Council.



## 146. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

June 14, 1936

CHI. MIRA,

We arrived here<sup>1</sup> at 8 a.m. The train was late. I have your letter. My mind is there. But my body must be here till Monday for *Harijan's* sake. If the weather is good, I hope to be with you on Tuesday morning about 7.30 a.m. I shall have taken milk on the way. I understand about Lilavati. I do not know who will be with me if any at all. We shall see. Do not worry. I quite see that till the things have shaped, you will have to be in Segaon. 'Be careful for nothing.' If someone is at the gate to show me the exact way to take, it would be good. It may be Govind or Dasrath—is that the other comrade's name? But it does not matter if no one can be spared.

Love.

BAPU

[PS.]

Some fruits will go with this if the bearer...<sup>2</sup>

From the original: C.W. 6348. Courtesy: Mirabehn. Also G.N. 9814

## 147. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

June 14, 1936

CHI. NARANDAS,

Kusum must have reached there by now. I do not remember if I wrote to you of her wish to have perfect training in music from Panditji. Alongside, she would like to earn something and undertake some studies, if possible. Or, she might, for the present, give up the desire to earn. Talk with her on the subject and then let me know. We might arrange for her studies, but what is to happen there? You should consider where, in view of her nature, her own good lies and guide her and tell me what you propose. She is as tender as her name implies.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> At Wardha.

<sup>2</sup> Illegible

<sup>3</sup> 'Kusum' literally means a flower

In a single moment I could read her whole self on the day we parted.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.M./II. Also C.W. 8494. Courtesy:  
Narandas Gandhi

*148. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR*

WARDHA,  
*June 15, 1936*

MY DEAR IDIOT,

We reached here yesterday morning. The weather is superb. The clouds all the day and a cool breeze, not much rain yet to speak of. I hope, if there is no rain in the morning, to leave for Segaon tomorrow, though my hut is not quite ready yet. Things move slowly in villages. But I know there will be no difficulty about getting a dry corner for myself.

Rameshwari Nehru is with me. She travelled 3rd class with us all the way. Of course 3rd class with me is no discomfort except for the crowds that gather at every station. She had two nights with us in the train. Her tour in Travancore was quite successful. She will be leaving Wardha on Wednesday.

Kanti went to Poona and returns on Friday. Navin stayed behind to learn the art of carving. He expects to be able to carve ivory-goods like what I have sent you.

Ba had a sandal-wood box sent to her. It was no use to her. I thought the best use was to send it to you either to sell or keep. It was left with Navin to send by post.

I hope you are better and the weather has improved. You must find a better place to go to in summer. From your descriptions Simla seems to be none too good.

Love.

TYRANT

[PS.]

My weight on leaving Bangalore was 112 lb.!!! B.P. 156/90.  
Quite good as the doctor said.

From the original: C.W. 3731. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 6887

149. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

June 15, 1936

MY DEAR IDIOT,

It is a great thing for a rebel to own defeat. At last you have a plethora of letters from me! Your humiliation delights me. But you are not to think of making yourself sick in an attempt to overtake my letters. Remember you are in Simla having calls on your time which I have not.

Now to change the topic. You wouldn't be an idiot if you had guessed why I had chosen the brooches with flimsy pins. Your dense head could not see that the purchaser or wearer belonging to the exploiting class would have a solid gold pin put on in the place of the flimsy one. The question is: is the carving of the brooch good or not? Is it neat enough? I gave much time to the selection of the two brooches. Most were loud. These two I thought might pass Your Highness's test.

Love.

TYRANT

[PS.]

It is raining now.

From the original: C.W. 3579. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 6388

150. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

June 15, 1936

CHI. MIRA,

Your note. It is raining here well. I expect therefore that I shall [not] be able to get out.<sup>1</sup> Yes, I shall bring the *bhaji*<sup>2</sup>. And I can do without it, too, for a time.

No more till we meet.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 6349. Courtesy: Mirabehn. Also G.N. 9815

<sup>1</sup> For Segaon

<sup>2</sup> Leafy vegetable

## 151. LETTER TO PRABHAVATI

June 15, 1936

CHI. PRABHA,

Kanti is not here today. I saw your letter and opened it. I am preserving it as you have permitted Kanti to read it. I shall not destroy it till Kanti and Saraswati arrive on Friday. However, no one else will read it.

I do not myself fancy Kashi. I gave the advice I did because it is your duty to please Jayaprakash in such a matter. Now there is no question of your going there since Harsubabu himself says no and J.P. does not wish to displease him. Sitab Diyara is your Kashi for the present, and all that you do there with understanding is of course your education. Do acquaint yourself with the villagers. Do you pray alone or do other women join you? It is surprising that there is none in the village who can sing the *Ramayana*.

I shall go to Segaon tomorrow. Probably I shall go alone since my hut is not yet ready. Perhaps Lilavati may accompany me.

My weight at Bangalore was 114 lb. and my blood pressure 156/110, which may be taken as satisfactory. Sardar is at Bombay.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3474

## 152. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

June 15, 1936

CHI. NARANDAS,

Here are some of my thoughts. We should not run the school from a rich man's viewpoint, but have as teachers only those whose motto is service. They should be satisfied with a maximum salary of Rs. 15 a month and devote their whole time to it. To start with, there should be one teacher for just one pupil of whatever age. The teacher should prepare his own textbook and impart knowledge through the use of the eyes and the ears and teach the pupil to use his hands for wielding implements to make things. He should himself do what he teaches. It would be better to have such a school in some village. As

for you, you have to make the beginning at the place where you are. You can start with yourself. Accept pupils from middleclass families if they agree to your terms. They must pay fees, but one should not depend on this income while undertaking the work. You may start the experiment only if you accept the idea whole-heartedly. You should swallow only what you can digest.

If you understand this, this is what you should do for the present. Put the thoughts before your associates. It is our dharma to run the existing school if it pays its way but those parents who can should pay the full fees.

I have put all these ideas before Nanabhai<sup>1</sup>. He likes them but he is himself so deeply involved that the changes suggested by me are beyond his power. The help I used to get for Dakshinamurti has now stopped.

You may ask me time and again whatever you want to. Kanu is my responsibility. He will be under my supervision whether at Segaon or at Maganwadi. He has my permission to live at Segaon. Hence if he continues to stay at Maganwadi, it will have been his own decision. Now that Kanti has gone to stay with Kaka to attend on him, Mahadev will be left alone. If, on that account, Kanu is required to be with Mahadev, that too will be left to his choice.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

[PS.]

I have not been giving anything to Kanu.

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II. Also C.W. 8495. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

<sup>1</sup> Nrisimhaprasad Kalidas Bhatt who conducted Dakshinamurti, an educational institution in Bhavnagar

*153. MESSAGE TO RAJPUTANA HARIJAN  
SEVAK CONFERENCE*

[Before June 16, 1936]<sup>1</sup>

Hinduism is on trial today. Those alone can become true sevaks who have faith in dharma and who have love for Harijans and are prepared to dedicate themselves to the service of Harijans.

[From Hindi]

*Gandhiji aur Rajasthan*, p. 197

*154. LETTER TO RAMESHWARDAS PODDAR*

*June 16, 1936*

CHI. RAMESHWARDAS,

I want Parnerkar to visit the Delhi and Pilani dairies. He will, of course, make arrangements about Dhulia before leaving. Anyway, there the work is already well organized. After all we want to serve the cow; if we could do it better by Parnerkar's going to Delhi and Pilani, it becomes our dharma to let him go. You may, therefore, release him. The rest he will explain to you.

*Blessings from  
BAPU*

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 211

*155. LETTER TO J. K. SHARMA*

WARDHA,  
*June 17, 1936*

MY DEAR SHARMA,

You are in a hurry. Your business is to convert many. I am pursuing the subject. All the letters so far received show that the restriction is wholesome and necessary. They say khadi does not gain by being exhibited alongside mill-cloth. It is not intended to supplement the latter, it is intended to sup-plant it. Khadi has a mission of its own. It is part of national education and it stands for new and true economics at least for India.

<sup>1</sup> The conference was held on June 16 and 17, 1936 at Nareli near Ajmer.

You are hasty in your criticism of khadi workers. They are working in the light of their experience and for the sole good of the poor. You should understand their viewpoint and difficulty before criticizing them.

*Yours sincerely,*  
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: G.N. 88

*156. LETTER TO DILIP KUMAR ROY*

WARDHA,  
*June 17, 1936*

MY DEAR DILIP,

Mahadev Desai gave me your letter and the correspondence only yesterday. I glanced through the very interesting correspondence between you and Raihana!<sup>1</sup> I have perhaps a theory of my own about Krishna. I need not discuss it here as it is of no consequence. I hope with you that we shall meet some day. Then we can usefully discuss the Krishna legends and many other things of common interest. And of course I should listen once more to your music.

Love.

M. K. GANDHI

*Golden Book of Dilip Kumar Roy, p. 121*

*157. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER<sup>2</sup>*

*June 17, 1936*

For me the whole of philosophy is contained in truth at any cost.

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

<sup>1</sup> Raihana Tyabji

<sup>2</sup> According to the source the addressee was an American woman.

*158. LETTER TO AMRITLAL V. THAKKAR*

*June 17, 1936*

BHAI THAKKAR BAPA,

I have the invitation from Palampur.

Send immediately the sum of Rs. 2,000 which Valunjkar has not yet received. You can always take from him the detailed accounts, etc., that you would require. Do not let his work be held up.

The Bharuch matter must have been decided. Karsandas has thrust on me the responsibility for the building at Vile Parle. A meeting of the Trustees has to be called. I hope Kishorelal has written to them. We may hold the meeting on hearing from you about the convenient date.

I shall of course be going to Wardha for meetings and such other work, even though I am settled in Segaon.

*Blessings from  
BAPU*

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 1159

*159. LETTER TO MRIDULA SARABHAI*

*SEGAON,  
June 17, 1936*

CHI. MRIDU,

You have not acknowledged my long letter. I do expect a detailed letter from you.

I had sent a reply to your telegram. Now you may come over any time you feel like it. I have returned to Segaon. But that does not matter in the least.

The occasion for writing this is the enclosed letter. I am under the impression that you need good women workers. The writer of the enclosed letter belongs to a good family in Rajkot. She does not have much education, but she is efficient and experienced. She can be useful in taking care of the girls and so on. Think about the possible ways in which you can use her. She is needy. But that is of secondary importance. Think over it and write to me if she can be useful or not. Do not think that she has to be absorbed somewhere because I have



recommended her. As I had to do something for this widow, I am asking you first because you had asked for women workers.

You must be receiving happy news from Vienna and Oxford.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

[PS.]

Write only to the Wardha address.

From the Gujarati original: C. W. 11198. Courtesy: Sarabhai Foundation

### *160. LETTER TO VIJAYA N. PATEL*

*June 17, 1936*

CHI. VIJAYA,

Well, I am in Segaoon, though residential arrangements are yet to come. The work cannot be completed on account of the rains. I would be prepared to put you up at Maganwadi or in the Mahila Ashram if you came over. You can visit me from there. Even Ba has not yet come to stay with me. You will have to wait if you must stay with me.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 7061. Also C.W. 4553. Courtesy: Vijayabehn M. Pancholi

### *161. LETTER TO H. L. SHARMA*

*June 17, 1936*

CHI. SHARMA,

I have two letters from you. I am sorry to hear the news from your family.<sup>1</sup> Do treat the patients if you have now gained confidence in your treatment or leave them to themselves; let them carry on with the routine treatment.

Come over here to discuss your own future and Draupadi's<sup>2</sup> too. That I am living away in Segaoon should not matter. It is possible to make daily trips from Maganwadi. The air is pretty cool here, the rains have been copious and have not stopped even now. What was the

<sup>1</sup> The addressee's elder brother's only son had passed away.

<sup>2</sup> Addressee's wife.

total expense of your travels? Did you achieve what you wanted? Is there still anything else that you might have learnt there? Did you acquire sufficient knowledge of anatomy-physiology?

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

[From Hindi]

*Bapuki Chhayamen Mere Jivanke Solah Varsh*, p. 253

## 162. A MESSAGE

*June 17, 1936*

Every Hindu organization can easily do the following five things:

1. Root out untouchability, treating it as a sin.
2. Take up the service of the cow, which at present suffers from slackness due to ignorance, and pursue it with intelligence.
3. Serve *Daridranarayana* to the extent possible by adopting khadi.
4. Serve the villagers by buying the goods produced by them.
5. Do away with such bonds of caste as are destructive of dharma.

M. K. GANDHI

[From Hindi]

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

## 163. LETTER TO AGATHA HARRISON

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
*June 18, 1936*

MY DEAR AGATHA,

This is from my new abode—a proper village which may be defined as a place with no post-office, no store for food-stuffs of quality, no medical, comforts and difficult of access in the rainy season. I could add many more adjectives but these should be enough for the time being. This is not to say that I am suffering any discomfort. I have told you this to let you understand the nature of [the] task before me.

I appreciate all you say about news. Jawaharlal is trying to cope with the problem. Let us see what is in store for us during the next six months.

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 1495

*164. LETTER TO MURIEL LESTER*

*June 18, 1936*

MY DEAR MURIEL,

You have overtaken me. When young Kalelkar described his meeting you, finding you malaria-ridden and asking me to insist upon your treating yourself decently, I wanted to write at once. And lo and behold, your first letter came and now second with Dorothy's.

You are ever before my mind's eye and often in our talks but pressing work here prevents my writing as often as I would to friends and co-workers living away from India.

And how am I to insist on your taking care of yourself? If your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost and not a den of thieves, you must rest when the body needs it. 'Be careful for nothing' is a wonderful admonition. If we would adopt it in daily life, we would not, in fearful hurry to achieve results, neglect our bodies and then be incapacitated for further work. You have no business to have malaria in England. God be with you.

Well, I am at last in Segaon in the cottage Jamnalalji has built for me. I do not know what the future has in store for me. But for the moment my headquarters are in Segaon. The postal address must be Wardha. There is no post-office here. You cannot but a stamp here as you cannot but many things.

I dare not write to Dorothy separately: There is no time.

My love to you, her and all the other members of the family.

Kamalnayan, Jamnalalji's son, will be soon with you. You will mother him and put him where he will be taken care of.

*Yours*

BAPU

[PS.]

Your article<sup>1</sup> will receive prompt attention.

From a photostat: G.N. 3807

*165. TELEGRAM TO PADMAJA NAIDU*

WARDHA,  
*June 19, 1936*

PADMAJA NAIDU  
C/O PALACE, BOMBAY

PRAYING SUCCESSFUL OPERATION. LOVE.

BAPU

From the original: Padmaja Naidu Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

*166. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR*

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
*June 19, 1936*

MY DEAR REBEL,

Your complaint about my faint writing is quite legitimate. Nor are you the only complainant. I must improve village ink. Village [ink] and village paper is not a combination I can yet advertise. You will admit, however, that if I give in, improvement may become impossible. Rebels like you must persist in their rebellion and you will soon find that even the tyrant will have to mind his manners. Perhaps I shall have to give up using this thin paper. Tell me if you were able to read this without the magnifier

You have certainly done well over your sales. I have answered<sup>2</sup> your objection about the shoddy pin for the brooches. If the answer is not satisfactory, they will, I am sure, exchange the brooches for any article you may fancy of the same value.

<sup>1</sup> "Tissington Well-dressing", written by the addressee and Dorothy Hogg, appeared in *Harijan*, 5-9-1936.

<sup>2</sup> Vide "Letter to Amrit Kaur", 15-6-1936

I hope you got the sandal-wood box that was separately sent to you. You must get out of this chronic overwork even if it is to be by living in Segaoon. I can build you a hut according to your plan. You can drive straight from the station reaching Segaoon at the most in 1½ hours. You should do it in one hour. You must not drive if it is raining or if it is just after a heavy downpour.

My hut has thick mud-walks, twice the breadth of ordinary brick-wall. The mud is rain-proof. I think you will fall in love with the hut and the surroundings.

Mira is quite well.

Love.

TYRANT

From the original: C.W. 3732. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 6888

### 167. LETTER TO ESTHER MENON

[June]<sup>1</sup> 19, 1936

MY DEAR CHILD,

You are naughty. You will write on all the sides of your letter without giving any direction as to where you began writing in all the margins. Why don't you add one more sheet? But no more of grumbling. I sent Saraswati and Kanti as I thought you would like to see them.

Strange! I have a letter from Maria<sup>2</sup> this week. She shows considerable anxiety about you.

It must be torture to K. that he cannot do just what he thinks is best for want of funds. We have however to take comfort from the fact, God does not always allow us to do what we think is the best. I suppose we don't always know what is best.

Do not make the children write to me. Let them write when they are led to do so of their own free will.

I hope you have completely recovered from your illness. How I should love to see you as hale and hearty as you were when we first

<sup>1</sup> From the contents it is evident that this letter was written after the letter to the addressee dated May 18, 1936; *vide* "Letter to Esther Menon", 18-5-1936. On June 19, 1936 Gandhiji was in Wardha.

<sup>2</sup> Anne Marie Petersen.

met. You were such a picture of health that I had thought you to be incapable of getting ill.

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: No. 138. Courtesy: National Archives of India.

*168. LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU*

*June 19, 1936*

MY DEAR JAWAHARLAL,

I was about to send you the enclosed<sup>1</sup> for your information when I got your letter yesterday.

I am glad Ranjit is better. He must take care of himself.

I do not want you to issue any special statement about the omission of [a] woman from your cabinet.<sup>2</sup> I think that this omission does not stand on the same footing as the inclusion or exclusion of others. None of us had either the courage or the wish to exclude [a] woman altogether from the W. C. If this is the correct interpretation of your attitude, it should be made clear if the occasion offers itself.

As to the others I am sorry you feel still sore about what happened. You swallowed the Bhulabhai pill in the interest of the cause. And surely at the very first discussion I had said before you had mentioned the thing that there must be Socialists in the cabinet. I mentioned also the names. What however I want to emphasize is not who mentioned whom but that all were actuated by no other motive than that of serving the common cause.

So far as I remember, what you have sent me is not the statement I had seen. What you have enclosed I seem to see for the first time. Please ask Dr. H. if he issued any other. Even the one you have sent me is at variance with what the Doctor used to tell me. I take no exception to the expression of his views faulty, in my opinion, though they are. My complaint is that he said one thing to me and said another thing [for] publication. You are at liberty to show this to Dr. H.

I hope you are well. I was following your Punjab hurricane tour not without anxiety.

Love.

BAPU

<sup>1</sup> This is not traceable.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "Letter to Jawaharlal Nehru", 29-5-1936

[PS.]

If the writing is too faint to read, please throw away the letter.<sup>1</sup>

Gandhi-Nehru Papers, 1936. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library.  
Also *A Bunch of Old Letters*, pp. 178-9

*169. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI*

*June 19, 1936*

CHI. NARANDAS,

I have your letter. As for the school, do only what you think proper. I am in no hurry. I have no doubt about our duty, but there may be some practical difficulties.

Tell me whether you can now read my writing correctly.

I am enclosing two letters. Kanu sees me every day almost.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II. Also C.W. 8496. Courtesy:  
Narandas Gandhi

*170. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM*

*June 19, 1936*

CHI. AMTUL SALAAM,

I accept the blame for sending Sharma to you. Please forgive me. I shall not repeat such a mistake. Do you ever listen to anyone's advice? Why then should you act upon Sharma's? Once you revered him, followed his advice and even used to say that it had done you good. That you do not now like his advice shows how times are changing.

I did not suggest to Kanti to go to Kakasaheb. He got ready for the work because he learnt that Kakasaheb was in need of his services and assistance. I like his readiness. It will indeed do him good. Kanti will come to me when Kakasaheb's work is finished or when Kanti wishes to come.

<sup>1</sup> In the original this is written at the top of the letter.

I see that you have already written to your brothers and your brother's wife. I see no politeness in it. I see in it your stubbornness. But who can persuade you? A man like me has only to watch helplessly whatever you do. Do come over when you have your holiday. My health is fine and I am in Segaon. I expect Saraswati has come today. The letter<sup>1</sup> for the children accompanies this.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 338

*171. LETTER TO MANGALA PRASAD  
AND OTHERS*

*June 19, 1936*

CHI. MANGALA PRASAD, JOGIRAM, BANWARI LAL,

I was glad to read your letters.

Mangala Prasad's words run into each other, and his writing can well improve. Jogiram's is shaky and Banwari Lal's good. Mangala Prasad and Jogiram should write better.

All three of you should pay full attention to your studies and account for every single minute. Live in harmony with each other and observe simplicity.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 1085

*172. LETTER TO LILAVATI ASAR*

*June 19, 1936*

CHI. LILAVATI,

Don't you be in a hurry. Mahadev has personally seen how difficult it is to accommodate anyone here just now. Should we not at least have a bathroom and a latrine? These just do not exist. The rains continue, workmen do not turn up as required, and even the mason does not appear so that the culvert is half built. Now I doubt whether we shall have things done within the next month or two. Besides, you

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



have not cured your cough so that you can think of coming over. This is not good. Are you indulging your taste for chillies and oil? I have heard a lot about your fondness for tasty foods. Even here, you missed your spicy things, didn't you? Conquer this weakness. Things are difficult here. In such matters you should not go by what Ba does. That, however, is another thing. Get over your cough by taking salt in warm water and other things.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 9577. Also C.W. 6549. Courtesy: Lilavati Asar

### *173. G. O. M. OF GUJARAT*

It was in 1915 I first met Shri Abbas Tyabji. Wherever I have gone and there has been a Tyabji, he or she has made it a point to come to me as if I was a member of that great and numerous family. I do not know what the binding tie specially was, except perhaps that the distinguished judge to whom the family owe their fame had befriended me in 1890<sup>1</sup> when I had come to India from South Africa as an utterly unknown man, possibly an adventurer as some had thought. Not so however thought Badruddin Tyabji and several others I can name.

But I must come back to Abbas Mian of Baroda. As we embraced each other and I looked into his face, it reminded me of the late Justice Badruddin. That meeting laid the foundation of a life-long friendship. I found in him not merely a friend of Harijans, he was himself one. When at Godhra<sup>2</sup> long ago I had, to the surprise of my audience, invited them to have an anti-untouchability conference in the evening at the untouchable quarters, Abbas Mian was there taking as lively an interest in the Harijans as any staunch Hindu. Yet he was no ordinary Mussalman. He had given lavishly to the cause of Islam and was supporting several Islamic institutions. And yet he had never any designs upon Harijans. His Islam had room for all the great religions of the earth. Hence he looked at the anti-untouchability campaign with the fervour of a Hindu. And I know that he retained

<sup>1</sup> Actually 1896; *vide* "Letter to Jamnalal Bajaj", 5-5-1936

<sup>2</sup> In November 1917.

that fervour to the end of his time on this earth.

The fact is he never took up anything half-heartedly. There were no mental reservations about Abbas Tyabji. At a moment's notice he answered the call of the Punjab.<sup>1</sup> At his age and for one who had never known hardships of life it was no joke to suffer imprisonments. But his faith conquered every obstacle. He put to shame many a young man by his ability to live with an infectious smile the simple life of the Kheda peasant, to share their simple food, travel in all seasons in their rude carts. I have never known him complain about inconveniences which could have been avoided. "His was not to reason why, his was to do and die." He who had once the power as Chief Judge of imposing the death penalty and exacting obedience showed an amazing capacity for submitting unquestioningly to discipline. He was a rare servant of humanity. He was a servant of India because he was a servant of humanity. He believed in God as *Daridranarayana*. He believed that God was to be found in the humblest cottages and among the despised of the earth. Abbas Mian is not dead, though his body rests in the grave. His life is an inspiration for us all.

*Harijan, 20-6-1936*

#### *174. IS KHADI ECONOMICALLY SOUND?*

If by the question is meant whether khadi can compete with Japanese 'fent' or even with the cloth manufactured by the Indian Mills in price, the answer must be emphatically 'no'. But the negative answer would have to be given about almost everything turned out by man-power as against labour-saving power. It would have to be so even with regard to goods manufactured in Indian factories. Cloth, iron, sugar made in factories require State aid in some form or other to withstand foreign competition. It is wrong to put the question in that way at all. In the open market a more organized industry will always be able to drive out a less organized one, much more so when the former is assisted by bounties and can command unlimited capital and can therefore afford to sell its manufactures at a temporary loss.

<sup>1</sup> Abbas Tyabji was one of the five Commissioners appointed by the Congress Sub-committee to study the evidence and prepare a report on the Punjab disorders in April 1919.

Such has been the tragic fate of many enterprises in this country.

Any country that exposes itself to unlimited foreign competition can be reduced to starvation and therefore subjection if the foreigners desire it. This is known as peaceful penetration. One has to go only a step further to understand that the result would be the same as between hand-made goods and those made by power-driven machinery. We are seeing the process going on before our eyes. Little flour mills are ousting the *chakkis*, oil mills the village *ghani*, rice mills the village *dhenki*, sugar mills the village *gur-pans*, etc. This displacement of village labour is impoverishing the villagers and enriching the monied men. If the process continues sufficiently long the villages will be destroyed without any further effort. No Chengis Khan could devise a more ingenious or more profitable method of destroying these villages. And the tragedy of it all is that the villagers are unconsciously but none the less surely contributing to their own destruction. To complete the tale of their woe let the reader know that even cultivation has ceased to be profitable. For some crops the villager does not cover even the cost of seed.

With all these deadly admissions, what do I mean by saying that khadi is the only true economic proposition? Let me then state the proposition fully: "Khadi is the only true economic proposition in terms of the millions of villagers until such time, if ever, when a better system of supplying work and adequate wages for every able-bodied person above the age of sixteen, male or female, is found for his field, cottage or even factory in every one of the villages of India; or till sufficient cities are built up to displace the villages so as to give the villagers the necessary comforts and amenities that a well-regulated life demands and is entitled to." I have only to state the proposition thus fully to show that khadi must hold the field for any length of time that we can think of.

The present pressing problem is how to find work and wages for the millions of villagers who are becoming increasingly pauperized, as anyone who will take the trouble of going to the villages can testify for himself and as is amply proved by contemporary expert evidence that people are becoming poorer economically, mentally and morally. They are fast losing the will to work, to think and even to live. It is a living death that they are living.

Khadi supplies them with work, tools and a ready market for their manufactures. It gives them hope where but yesterday there was blank despair.

“Then why has khadi made so little progress if it is such a hopeful proposition?”—the sceptic asks. The answer is the progress khadi has made in terms of the millions, though little in itself, is comparatively the largest of all the other single industries. It distributes yearly the largest amount as wages among the largest number of wage-earners in the villages with the minimum of overhead charges and every pice practically circulates among the people. This can be verified by anyone who would study the figures published by the A.I.S.A.

Khadi has to work against almost settled prejudices among the villagers, against unscrupulous competition without State protection, and against the prevalent opinion of so-called experts in the science of economics, against even the demand of khadi wearers for progressively cheaper khadi. It is thus largely a question of the education of the villagers and the city-dwellers in the true economics for this land of tears. These transcend all religions. Hindus, Mussalmans and Christians who live in the villages suffer from the same disease of poverty and want. If there is a difference it is only one of degree.

I therefore maintain that though yard per yard khadi may be dearer than mill-made cloth, in its totality and in terms of the villagers it is the most economic, practical proposition without a rival. Khadi may be interpreted to include other village industries for the purposes of a thorough examination of the proposition.

*Harijan, 20-6-1936*

### *175. LETTER TO S. AMBUJAMMAL*

*June 20, 1936*

CHI. AMBUJAM,

I have your letter and fruit. I shall certainly write to you when I need fruit from your end. Generally, Bombay is nearer. But sometimes oranges are almost unavailable in B[ombay] when sweet limes of the South are most welcome.

I am glad Father is feeling better.

I know... <sup>1</sup> too needs the hip-baths and sitz-baths. Women are more easily cured by sitz-baths than men.

I would like you both to join the Kodambakkam Committee. I would like you as such to visit the Institution at least once a week when you are in Madras and inspect the work and make inspection report. You should come in touch with the inmates.

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: C.W. 9608. Courtesy: S. Ambujammal

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

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
*June 20, 1936*

MY DEAR MALKANI,

I have not-heard from you for a long time as it seems to me.

How is the school going? Is Rukmini causing further trouble?

Please pass the enclosed<sup>2</sup> on to Thadani. The article gives another method [of] interpreting the Vedas. Is his theory making any headway?

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 918

### *177. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM*

*June 20, 1936*

CHI. AMTUL SALAAM,

I have your letter. What can one say to a person with endless flights of fancy? You would of course want to see Saraswati; that is why I wrote to you as I did. It was neither to test you nor to tempt you. I cannot send Saraswati there. It involves a lot of expense. This I would certainly call *moha*<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Two words here are smudged in the source

<sup>2</sup> This is not available.

<sup>3</sup> Infatuation

There would be some sense in your coming to Wardha, but none in Saraswati going there. She will stay here long if she likes to.

The Harijan children who know the Urdu script should be encouraged to keep it up.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 337

### *178. LETTER TO LILAVATI ASAR*

*June 20, 1936*

CHI. LILAVATI,

There was no need to have taken a vow to give up chillies but now that you have, do keep it. I wish you to improve your speech. You have formed a habit of uttering thoughtless words. This is not right. It is better to accept as true that sense which the listener derives from our words. By this we learn to speak less and that too thoughtfully. I am eager to have you here but I do not want you to suffer the inconveniences. Moreover, there is another consideration. If I bring you here on the 24th or 25th and go away on the 27th leaving you behind, you will not like to spend the week at Segaon without me.

There you have the opportunity to serve Ba if nothing else. Talk less.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 9578, Also C.W. 6550. Courtesy: Lilavati Asar

### *179. LETTER TO AMRITLAL T. NANAVATI*

*June 20, 1936*

CHI. AMRITLAL,

I have already disposed of your letter orally.

Many persons are now likely to interfere in the kitchen affairs, but be patient in dealing with them.

Do not try to restrict the group favouring spiced food. Say no to

none.

Get the required khadi and have it stitched into garments.

By all means refuse to spare time for Manu if you cannot afford it. It will be right for her to stick to the *sitar*.

Take care of Bharatan's food.

Improve your health by taking the diet you need.

I expect Gajanan has recovered. Ask him to write to me about his health as also about the Sindi work.

Tell Bhanubapa that the Nasik work must not be delayed even for a day because of laxity on my part. The Government office is a new unforeseen factor.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 10717

### *180. LETTER TO ATAR SINGH AND OTHERS*

*June 20, 1936*

CHI. ATAR SINGH, PRABHU DAYAL AND JAYAKARAN,

I was glad to have your letters. Write a good hand, work hard and gain proficiency in the craft.

Atar Singh asks about the benefit of observing silence. It brings peace, conserves energy and leaves more time for meditation.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

[PS.]

The boys knowing the Urdu alphabet should not forget it.

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 1083

*181. LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU*

SEGAON, WARDHA,

*June 22, 1936*

MY DEAR JAWAHARLAL,

This is another batch of cuttings<sup>1</sup>, of more importance perhaps to you than to me. My right hand is resting.

No more, since we meet soon.

Love.

BAPU

Gandhi-Nehru Papers, 1936. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library.

*182. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR*

*June 22, 1936*

MY DEAR IDIOT,

Three rupees have been paid. You have already had letters from Segaoon which I leave for a week on 27th to be in Wardha for several meetings.

It has been raining daily off and on. Nothing serious. There was no damage here or none to be noticeable.

Of course, only an idiot could expect customers to cure their purchases of defects. I fully expected to make the brooches presentable to the royalty adding the extra cost entailed in doing so. However, it is something that you thought at last of the right thing.

I see nothing wrong in your trying to give to Arjan the best of your knowledge and experience. Ba did not want the sandal-wood casket. Now for profuse apologies.

Love.

TYRANT

From the original: C.W. 3733. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 6889

<sup>1</sup> These are not traceable.



183. LETTER TO DR. B. PATTABHI SITARAMAYYA

June 22, 1936

DEAR DR. PATTABHI,

You have a brilliant boy, quite like his father. But he does not seem to have been able to carry the whole joke to you. When I saw Mrs. P. decked literally from top to toe, I said: "Now I know why Father was afraid to come to Bangalore.<sup>1</sup> For the sin of this barbarity is more on Father's shoulders than Mother's." Now you may take the joke as seriously as you like. I quite agree with your philosophy. Wives and grown-up children must have vacation from their husbands and parents.

Love.

M. K. GANDHI

*Incidents of Gandhiji's Life, p. 226*

184. LETTER TO K. M. MUNSHI

June 22, 1936

BHAI MUNSHI,

I have both your letters. I have not yet been able to read the articles. I am returning with minor changes the one you wanted. My idea about the office would be a little different. If you come to hold the same view it is as well. But if I set out to incorporate it in your article, the language would be changed and the article would take a different form. I do not think it necessary. Let your own idea get around. I am writing my own article and it may be ready by Tuesday. You may, if you like, withhold the article in question till then. And after seeing my article if you want to revise it you may do so. However I see no need for that. Anyway do what you think best. Consult Sardar if you like.

I understand what you say about Premchandji.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 7602. Courtesy: K.M. Munshi

<sup>1</sup> Gandhiji and Vallabhbhai Patel, who were in Bangalore some days previously had asked the addressee to come over. He did not go.

## 185. LETTER TO PRABHAVATI

June 22, 1936

CHI. PRABHA,

I got your letter just now. You are very clever. There is still nothing certain about your coming and you ask me about Segaon. After you have got the leave you can ask me telegraphically or if you are not impatient you can ask me after you have arrived.

It is not proper that you keep falling ill. You will certainly not get Father's disease, provided you take milk and fruit regularly, garlic with vegetables or curds, regular exercise, hip-bath and friction-bath. You will never fall ill if you do this.

My letter bore the postmark of the following day because I wrote it after the clearance of the mail.

I am in good health and take the usual food without any change. The weight was 112 lb. when I left Bangalore.

I shall be going to Maganwadi on the 27th for a week.

The mail is delivered in Segaon once a week, so you should address your letter to Maganwadi, Wardha, only. I get my mail every day from there.

Blessings from  
BAPU

[PS.]

Mirabehn is well. Balwantsinha and Munnalal are with me. Ba is at Maganwadi.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3475

## 186. LETTER TO JAYANT E. PATEL

June 22, 1936

BHAI JAYANTBHAI,

If you cannot leave your wife and if you are truly free from lust, you can be a true teacher to her and make of her an accomplished woman. If your *brahmacharya* is only theoretical, then it is better given up.

I cannot give you more guidance than this.

JAYANTBHAI E. PATEL  
CHAMPAKLAL BROS.  
143 PRINCESS STREET  
SAI BHUVAN, BOMBAY

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

*187. LETTER TO SURENDRA*

*June 22, 1936*

CHI. SURENDRA,

Which of your questions have I not answered? I have the impression that I did not leave out anything. Maybe, since I didn't have your letter before me when I wrote to you, something was left out. When this happens you should write again. I do not have your previous letter with me.

Now I have stopped using Nepalese paper. I have yet to solve the problem of the ink. You must let me know without fail when the handwriting becomes illegible.

You must observe this rule for the diet. When the body requires a certain thing you must give it that as a medicine. At that time you should not count the annas and pies. Milk must be considered indispensable.

Balwantsinha has decided to stay in Segaoon. He will go anywhere I send him. Let us see whether he will settle down here or not. I hope he will.

Today I shall be completing a week here. There is no question of my not liking it, as my mind was always here.

How shall I address you? I cannot write "Mr." Every Surendra can be addressed as "Shri". "Maharaj" was certainly written in jest but that appellation is being used there, isn't it? "Sadhu" Surendra seems good. "Brahmachari" is also all right. Now have your choice. Mirabehn will go to stay at her chosen place, Varoda, on Wednesday.

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

188. LETTER TO SHOBHALAL GUPTA

June 22, 1936

BHAI SHOBHALAL,

The test through which Hinduism is passing...<sup>1</sup> They alone can be true servants who have faith in dharma and genuine love for Harijans and who are prepared to sacrifice themselves in the service of Harijans.

SHOBHALAL GUPTA  
C/O HARIJAN SEVAK SANGH  
AJMER

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

189. LETTER TO KRISHNACHANDRA

June 22, 1936

CHI. KRISHNACHANDRA,

That nature cure is not effective for all ailments is admitted by all medical practitioners.

I see no need for permitting the use of turmeric and other condiments unless specifically required although anyone may take them as medicine.

Unboiled milk cannot be the cause of mucus, but you may start taking *neem* leaves; you may also try garlic. Hip-bath is of course beneficial. You should take it in the morning before eating anything. Then take a walk and drink milk an hour later.

Sharma's book is not entirely reliable.

You may certainly go to Europe if it can improve your health. For my part I have no other interest. But you should follow only the dictates of your own conscience. Never mind what I think about it.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 4286

<sup>1</sup> Omission as in the source

*190. LETTER TO RAMESHWARI NEHRU*

*June 22, 1936*

DEAR SISTER,

I was awaiting your letter. Although you suffered discomfort in coming to Segaon, the matters discussed at the end were essential. God will grant you the strength to follow your duty. Keep writing to me.

You will be glad to learn that Ghanshyamdass's telegram says he has had satisfactory interviews with the Maharaja<sup>1</sup>. Let us watch developments.

...<sup>2</sup> must be very happy.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 7983. Also C.W. 3079. Courtesy: Rameshwari Nehru

*191. TELEGRAM TO G. D. BIRLA*

WARDHAGANJ,

*June 23, 1936*

GHANSHYAMDAS BIRLA

GUEST HOUSE

TRIVANDRUM

RECEIVED. GOD BLESS YOU.<sup>3</sup>

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 7975. Courtesy: G.D. Birla

<sup>1</sup> Of Travancore

<sup>2</sup> A word here is illegible.

<sup>3</sup> This was in reply to the addressee's telegram which read: "... Had two interviews with His Highness. Promised satisfactory results next Birthday Anniversary." *Vide* also the preceding item.

*192. LETTER TO G. N. KANITKAR*

*June 23, 1936*

DEAR BALUKAKA,

You did well in writing to me. I know the value as well as the limitations of oil lamps and even मसाल<sup>1</sup>. But I thought that some patriotic firm might put a dynamo light [in] the place free of charge or at a trifling cost. I should defend the use of electric lighting if it can be done on my terms.

*Yours sincerely,*  
M. K. GANDHI

SHRI SEWANANDJI  
341 SADASHIV  
POONA CITY

From a photostat : C.W. 967. Courtesy : G.N. Kanitkar

*193. LETTER TO MRIDULA SARABHAI*

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
*June 23, 1936*

CHI. MRIDU,

Our letters crossed. You must have received my letter. I have destroyed yours. I have read the statement. I do not approve of it. The language does not describe the actual state of affairs. I do not wish to make such a remark intentionally. There is no time to analyse it. Some time, when both of us are free and you are eager, I shall explain. But it is not as if by issuing this statement you have disobeyed my order. You were perfectly entitled to issue the statement. Nor do I think you have intentionally committed any mistake in doing so. It does not also diminish my love in any way. You have all the right to seek my advice.

It appears to me from your letter and also from Jawaharlal's public statement that there is a difference between what I had told you and what you have said. If that is so, then let me know so that if there

<sup>1</sup> A torch or flame.

is any lapse of memory on my part, I would make amends or reaffirm what I have said.

Blessings to brothers.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C. W. 11199. Courtesy: Sarabhai Foundation

### *194. LETTER TO RAJENDRA PRASAD*

*June 23, 1936*

BHAI RAJENDRA BABU,

I delayed replying to your letter till Ceresole arrived. He tells me that all the difficulties have been resolved. That is why I did not hurry. If there are still some loose ends you can tell me on coming here. I shall leave here on the 27th. I am now using my left hand, having overworked the right one.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a copy of the Hindi: C.W. 9875. Courtesy: Rajendra Prasad

### *195. DISCUSSION WITH PIERRE CERESOLE AND CHRISTIAN MISSIONARIES<sup>1</sup>*

[ About *June 23, 1936* ]<sup>2</sup>

[PIERRE CERESOLE]: Religion which should bind us divides us. Is it not a sorry spectacle that whilst people of various denominations find no difficulty in working together all day in hearty co-operation, they must disband when the time for prayer comes? Is religion then meant to divide us?

Must it be allowed to become an expression of conceit rather than of a desire to be of service? I want some sort of religious communion between men of different faiths.

[GANDHI]: Quite possible, if there is no mental reservation.

<sup>1</sup> Extracted from Mahadev Desai's "Weekly Letter". Pierre Ceresole, founder of Service Civil International—a moral equivalent for war—met. Gandhiji at Segaon with two other missionary women.

<sup>2</sup> Ceresole arrived in Wardha presumably on 23-6-1936; *vide* the preceding item.

[P.C.] But a friend of mine, a great humanitarian worker, believes that but for evangelism he should not have taken up his mission work. He gets the driving power from communion with Jesus, he says, because Jesus was always in communion with God.

[G.] The greatest trouble with us is not that a Christian missionary should rely on his own experience, but that he should dispute the evidence of a Hindu devotee's life. Just as he has his spiritual experience and the joy of communion, even so has a Hindu.

Dr. Ceresole seemed to have no doubt about this, and he said that the broadest view of Christianity seemed to him to have been presented by Frank Lenwood; whose book *Jesus—Lord or Leader*, deserved to be better known than it is. "He says he has the greatest respect for the personality of Jesus, but he thought he might respectfully criticize him."

[MISSIONARY LADY]: I have not had the time or desire to evangelize. The Church at home would be happy if through our hospital more people would be led to Christian lives.

[G.] But whilst you give the medical help you expect the reward in the shape of your patients becoming Christians.

[M.L.] Yes, the reward is expected. Otherwise there are many other places in the world which need our service. But instead of going there, we come here.

[G.] There is the kink. At the back of your mind there is not pure service for its sake, but the result of service in this shape of many people coming to the Christian fold.

[M.L.] In my own work there is no ulterior motive. I care for people, I alleviate pain, because I cannot do otherwise, The source of this is my loyalty to Jesus who ministered to suffering humanity. At the back of my mind there is, I admit, the desire that people may find the same joy in Jesus that I find. Where is the kink?

[G.] The kink is in the Church thinking that there are people in whom certain things are lacking and that you must supply them whether they want them or not. If you simply say to your patients, 'You have taken the medicine I gave you. Thank God, He has healed you. Don't come again,' you have done your duty: But if you also say, 'How nice it would be if you had the same faith in Christianity as I have,' you do not make of your medicine a free gift.

[M.L.] But if I feel that I have something medically and spiritually which I can give, how can I keep it?

[G.] There is a way out of the difficulty. You must feel that what you possess your patient also can possess but through a different



route. You will say to yourself, 'I have come through this route, you may come through a different route.' Why should you want him to pass through your university and no other?

[M.L.] Because I have my partiality for my Alma Mater.

[G.] There is my difficulty. Because you adore your mother, you cannot wish that all the rest were your mother's children.

[M.L.] That is a physical impossibility.

[G.] Then this one is a spiritual impossibility. God has the whole humanity as His children. How can I limit God's grace by my little mind and say this is the only way?

[M.L.] I do not say it is the only way. There might be a better way.

[G.] If you concede that there might be a better way, you have surrendered your point.

[M.L.] Well, if you say that you have found your way, I am not so terrifically concerned with you. I will deal with one who is floundering in mud.

[G.] Will you judge him? Have you people not floundered? Why will you present your particular brand of truth to all?

[M.L.] I must present to them the medicine I know.

[G.] Then you will say to him, 'Have you seen your own doctor? You will send him to his doctor, ask the doctor to take charge of him. You will perhaps consult that doctor, you will discuss with him the diagnosis, and will convince him or allow yourself to be convinced by him. But there you are dealing with a wretched physical thing. Here we are dealing with a spiritual thing where you cannot go through all these necessary investigations. What I plead for is humanity. You do not claim freedom from hypocrisy for the Christian Church?

DR. CERESOLE: Most of us believe our religion to be the best and they have not the slightest idea of what other religions have revealed to their adherents, Dr.....<sup>1</sup> has made a careful study of the Hindu scriptures, and he has observed what Hinduism gives to the Hindus.

[G.] I say it is not enough for him to read the *Song Celestial* or the Koran. It is necessary for him to read the Koran with Islamic spectacles and the *Gita* with Hindu spectacles, just as he would expect me to read the Bible with Christian spectacles. I would ask him: 'Have you read the *Gita* as reverently as I have or even as reverently as I have read the Bible?' I tell you I have not read as many books on

<sup>1</sup> Omission as in the source.

Hinduism as I have about Christianity. And yet I did not come to the conclusion that Christianity or Hinduism was the ONLY way.

Gandhiji discussed the instance of Mr. Stokes—now Shri Satyanand—who was, in his early years in India, nearly killed for preaching Christianity to the Pathans, but who in a truly Christian spirit secured his assailant's reprieve, and who in the later years said to himself, 'My faith in Jesus is as bright as ever, but I cannot deliver the message of Jesus to the Hindus unless I become a Hindu. Unless I make the Hindus better Hindus I shall not,' he said, 'be true to my Lord.'<sup>1</sup>

But then, wondered the missionary friends, what exactly should be missionaries' attitude?

[G.] I think I have made it clear. But I shall say it again in other words: *Just to forget that you have come to a country of heathens, and to think that they are as much in search of God as you are; just to feel that you are not going there to give your spiritual goods to them, but that you will share your worldly goods of which you have a good stock. You will then do your work without a mental reservation and thereby you will share your spiritual treasures*<sup>2</sup>. The knowledge that you have this reservation creates a barrier between you and me.

[P.C.] Do you think that because of what you call that mental reservation the work that one could accomplish would suffer?

[G.] I am sure. You would not be half as useful as you would be without the reservation. The reservation means that you belong to a different and a higher species, and you make, yourself inaccessible to others.

[P.C.] A barrier would be certainly my Western way of living.

[G.] No, that can be immediately broken.

[P.C.] Would you be really happy if we stayed at home?

[G.] I cannot say that. But I will certainly say that I have never been able to understand your going out of America. Is there nothing to do there?

[P.C.] Even in America there is enough scope for educational work.

[G.] That is fatal confession. You are not a superfluity there. But for the curious position that your Church has taken, you would not be

<sup>1</sup> Satyanand Stokes's letter clarifying his position was published in "Weekly Letter" in *Harijan*, 15-8-1936.

<sup>2</sup> Italics in the source.

here.

[P.C.] I have come because the Indian women need medical care to a greater extent than American women do. But coupled with that I have desire to share my Christian heritage.

[G.] That is exactly the position I have been trying to counter. You have already said that there may be a better way.

[P.C.] No, I meant to say that there may be a better way fifty years hence.

[G.] Well we were talking of the present, and you said there might be a better way.

[P.C.] No, there is no better way today than the one I am following.

That is what I say is assuming too much. You have not examined all religious beliefs. But even if you had, you may not claim infallibility. You assume knowledge of all people, which you can do only if you were God. I want you to understand that you are labouring under a double fallacy: That what you think is best for you is really so; and that what you regard as the best for you is the best for the whole world. It is an assumption of omniscience and infallibility. I plead for a little humility.

*Harijan, 18-7-1936*

### 196. *ADVICE TO VISITORS*<sup>1</sup>

[After *June 23, 1936*]<sup>2</sup>

To appreciate all the advantages of walking you must read Thoreau. I have made it a rule that no one, unless he is completely disabled, should be encouraged to come here in a bullockcart—not even Jamnalalji with his heavy body. In fact I told him that trudging to Segaoon and back was for him the best possible remedy to reduce his paunch and to add a few years to his life. And no one should fight shy of it, seeing that European ladies who have seldom walked on roads waded through mire with their shoes and stockings on!

*Harijan, 25-7-1936*

<sup>1</sup> Extracted from Mahadev Desai's "Weekly Letter".

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* the preceding item; the visitors were two missionary ladies who accompanied Ceresole to Segaoon.

*197. LETTER TO S. AMBUJAMMAL*

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
*June 24, 1936*

CHI. AMBUJAM,

Perhaps the work of begging from the parties named in the enclosed is not beyond you. I do not feel like writing to them. I know you are shy. But you must shed your shyness if you are to render service for which God has made you. You may take Janammal<sup>1</sup> with you if you like.

But you will not hesitate to say no if you find the mission beyond you.

Hope Mother is doing well and Father is keeping up the improvement.

Love

BAPU

From the original: Ambujammal Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

*198. LETTER TO PREMABEHN KANTAK*

*June 24, 1936*

CHI. PREMA,

There is no harm in undertaking the work for the duration of the Congress session.<sup>2</sup>

Your complaint regarding the paper is justified.<sup>3</sup> I hope this paper will satisfy you.

You should go on educating public opinion about flour, rice and oil. Though these articles cost more, they are cheap in the end. We are building up a new economics. Conditions differ from country to country. And, moreover, the rich and the poor have their own economics. Please, therefore, do not lose heart.

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

<sup>2</sup> The addressee had agreed to organize a women's volunteer corps for the Faizpur session.

<sup>3</sup> Gandhiji had used inferior hand-made paper and ink. The superior paper supplied by the addressee had been given away by Gandhiji to another person.

I know about *bajra*. However good the seed may be, if the soil, water, etc., are not suitable, the seed loses its virtue.

Here is a four-line Foreword.<sup>1</sup>

[*Be*] *Khudai Khidmatgar* is a book that ought to be translated in all the languages of India. It has already come out in Gujarati, Urdu and Hindi. It will probably be translated into other languages also. It is in the fitness of things, therefore, that a Marathi translation is being published; and the greater cause of pleasure is the fact that the translation has been done by a dedicated woman worker. She deserves compliments for her commendable venture. I hope that the people of Maharashtra will read with loving devotion the lives of the two Khudai Khidmatgars or Servants of God.

M. K. GANDHI<sup>2</sup>

To be an atheist till one comes to have faith in God is as reasonable as one's trying to cremate the body of a man who has entered *samadhi*, assuming him dead till one can be sure that he is alive.

If *bhavana*<sup>3</sup> and *shraddha*<sup>4</sup> can be distinguished from each other, one benefits by joining the prayer with a sincere heart even in the absence of *bhavana*, in order to acquire *shraddha*.

If we are living among primitive people, instead of propagating our religion we should propagate the religion of morality. As and when the doors of their hearts open, they may choose whichever religion they like. We shall have given them general information about all the religions.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 10382. Also C.W. 6820. Courtesy: Premabehn Katak

<sup>1</sup> To Mahadev Desai's *Be Khudai Khidmatgar*, which the addressee had translated into Marathi; for Gandhiji's "Foreword" to the English original, *vide* "Interview to *The Natal Mercury*", 30-9-1908

<sup>2</sup> The Foreword is in Hindi

<sup>3</sup> Feeling of devotion

<sup>4</sup> Firm faith

199. LETTER TO PARIKSHITLAL L. MAJMUDAR

June 24, 1936

BHAI PARIKSHITLAL,

I do not remeber to have told Sardar that the Godhra Ashram<sup>1</sup> was running very well. I told him that the Ashram was working and had not been closed. However, you certainly did well in informing me of the situation. Do what you think right.

You do not say whether the decision about Bharuch is correct. I have not been able to understand the effect of the decision. Is that the whole resolution, or is there anything more to it?

Blessings from  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4038

200. LETTER TO CHIMANLAL N. SHAH

June 24, 1936

CHI. CHIMANLAL,

I have your letter. You ought to recover your health. If a course of injections does it, well and good. You must find out why your well-knit frame broke down. Believe me it is impossible that the observance of these *niyamas*<sup>2</sup> can affect health; but dangerous consequences do follow from a lapse in the observance of *yamas*,<sup>3</sup> etc. For example, the greatest lapses are to be found in the observance of *brahmacharya*. It being a bodily penance, the consequences of its faulty observance must adversely affect the body. The same is true of *aswada*<sup>4</sup>. I mention these only as illustrations. It is difficult to say where you might have committed a slip. The detection of your fault, if possible, can now benefit only to the extent of proving helpful in your treatment.

<sup>1</sup> Harijan Ashram, managed by Vithal L. Phadke

<sup>2</sup> Any self-imposed religious observance, dependent on external conditions

<sup>3</sup> Any moral duty or religious observance; the *yamas* are usually said to be ten, but their names and given differently by different writers. According to Patanjali's *Yogasutras*, they are ahimsa, truth, non-stealing, *brahmacharya* and non-possession.

<sup>4</sup> Control of the palate

Why is not your mind composed? To one constantly thinking of non-violence it should be like a myrobalan held in the hand.

Sharda<sup>1</sup> may have a change if the climate does not suit her.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.G. 19

## 201. LETTER TO SHARDA C. SHAH

*June 24, 1936*

CHI. SHARDA,

It is a lame excuse that you had nothing to write about. Many boys and girls engaged in work which is not to my liking keep on writing to me.

Your argument is not worthy of your intelligence. You say that your body being delicate you would like to develop your intellectual faculties to make a living. But you do not see that mental work can have an adverse effect on health. It is a lowly idea to acquire knowledge for the sake of earning money. It is also a mistaken notion that you will be a burden. Why don't you realize that you are going to be a burden if, in spite of acquiring the highest knowledge, you have to remain bed-ridden? I would certainly be happy if you acquired knowledge. I would not grudge it if, like Bal, you studied in a college and acquired a high degree. But certainly not at the cost of your health. Your primary duty is to improve your health. This is of course my view. What matters is your own bent. Now that you have started, continue writing to me.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 9971. Courtesy: Shardabehn G. Chokhawala

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

202. LETTER TO NIRMALA GANDHI AND SUMITRA  
GANDHI

[WARDHA]<sup>1</sup>

June 25, 1936

CHI. NIMU,

I am having quite a good discussion with Ramdas these days. He is very keen that you should come over to Wardha, look after Kanam and other children and pursue whatever studies you can. Ramdas himself will not be able to remain fixed at one place. He will have to keep moving. You should therefore come over as soon as you can. You will of course have to stay where Kaka Saheb decides. In no case at Segaoon. Nanavati is with Kaka and so you will feel at home. It will also help the children. If you stay at Segaoon, I should like it very much indeed. But Wardha is a more suitable place for the work you have to do. We will be here at least upto July 1. After that nothing is certain. The visit to the Frontier Province is not quite certain.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

CHI. SUMI,

Your letter is very good. If you could go walking up to Mussoorie, I would count it as excellent. But if such a long walk is likely to tire you, do not go. Kanam's letter is enclosed.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: Mrs. Sumitra Kulkarni Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

<sup>1</sup> Though the letter is written on a printed letterhead with the address: 'Birla House, Mt. Pleasant Road, Bombay' Gandhiji was at Wardha on this date.



### 203. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
June 26, 1936

MY DEAR REBEL,

The length of the kerchief is  $1\frac{3}{4}$  of the length of this paper and width  $1\frac{1}{2}$ . I have no measure-tape or rod here.

Yes, you were free to keep the sandal-wood box for yourself. Ba had expected as much.

There is not likely to be heavy rain at the end of July. If there is, you will walk part of the way. It will be perfectly pleasant. It is only a certain class of people who die many times before their death. Thank heaven you do not belong to that class. Are you not the lion brand?

No more today.

Love.

TYRANT

[PS.]

Mira went to her hut on Wednesday at Varoda,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles from here.

From the original: C.W. 3580. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 6389

### 204. LETTER TO NAN MENON

June 26, 1936

MY DEAR NAN,

I had hoped to send you a long chatty letter but I never got the time. Now Esther sends me a reminder. So here is this note to tell you that though I cannot write, I can never forget you. I hope both of you are happier than before.

Love and kisses to both of you.

BAPU

*My Dear Child*, p. 122

205. *LETTER TO F. MARY BARR*

*June 26, 1936*

CHI. MARY,

Your letter. The receipt of the cheque and the credit-note for £800 disturb me. I do not know how to overtake this work. God will open the way.

I know Margaret was looking forward to the Assam work.

The Christian sadhu must be a real sadhu. You will tell me more about him, if there is more to tell me.

You must fight this terrible reduction in weight. You should discover the cause and remove it, even if it means another vacation. Are you taking balanced diet? Do tell me what it is.

I am glad you have stumbled upon weavers.

Love.

BAPU

[PS.]

Mira is now in Varoda, 1½ miles from here.

From a photostat: G.N. 6064. Also C.W. 3394. Courtesy: F. Mary Barr

206. *LETTER TO G.V. KETKAR*

*June 26, 1936*

DEAR FRIEND,

I have just finished reading your note.

I do not remember the incidents referred to by you.

If you do not strain the meaning of whatever I said, your interesting research does not affect my general position. But if there is in your opinion a real conflict between my remark and your discovery, I have no hesitation in saying that your discovery should be

preferred to my remark

*Yours sincerely,*  
M. K. GANDHI

G.V. KETKAR  
'MARHATTA' OFFICE  
568 NARAYAN PETH, POONA 2

From a photostat: G.N. 7866. Also C.W. 983. Courtesy: G.V. Ketkar

### *207. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI*

*June 26, 1936*

CHI. NARANDAS,

After I had half torn up Prema's letter, which I am enclosing, I remembered that I should be sending it to you. Hence I joined the pieces.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II. Also C.W. 8497. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

### *208. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM*

*June 26, 1936*

CHI. AMTUL SALAAM,

What do you want me to withdraw? You say, "You should not have sent Sharma at all. I am not going to follow his instructions." But I committed the mistake of sending him. Should I not now ask to be forgiven for my mistake? I wrote<sup>1</sup> "You used to revere Sharma"; and you say, "I worship no man." Now tell me how we should manage to agree with each other. I, on my part, revere everyone, including you. I thought you revered Kanti, you worshipped Draupadi. What will the worshipper of God do if he does not worship His creation? Will not one holding me in reverence revere my Kanti? But how can I cope with you? You presume to be a veritable storehouse of knowledge. What do you care for my grace or anybody's? It is doubtful if you would care for His grace.

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Letter to Amtussalaam", 19-6-1936

To be stubborn means 'to refuse to be persuaded'. Neither by the mother, nor by the brother, nor by a companion, nor even by a poor adopted father like me. Now tell me, who is merciless? You or I? You do not discard your own pride and kiss Bapu's feet. Only when you sincerely reduce yourself to zero and think that not you but God is the Doer of all things, will your self reveal itself to you. At present, however, your pride has been leading you away. Why don't you persuade yourself that the work you have is enough and be content? Why should you take up any new work that Bapa might entrust to you? Your agreement with me is that you will do only what I tell you to do. When did you have my permission to take up new work?

Give the enclosed letter<sup>1</sup> to Lilavati when she returns from Badri-Kedar. Krishnan Nair will learn in due course. The letter<sup>2</sup> for the students accompanies this. Saraswati has gone to the Mahila Ashram.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 378

## 209. LETTER TO DEVNANDAN AND OTHERS

*June 26, 1936*

CHI. DEVNANDAN, RAMEHAR, RAMSWARUP, SHRIRAM AND RAMVRIKSHA,

I have your letters. You did well in writing. Out of the four<sup>3</sup> the best handwriting is Devnandan's, the worst Ramvriksha's. The least the learners can do is to perfect their handwriting. If the handwriting does not improve now it will be extremely difficult to improve it later. I write a wretched hand and it can hardly be improved in my old age.

And just as we should maintain a neat and tidy hand, so should we keep our heart good and pure. This is the easiest thing to attain.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 1084

<sup>1</sup> This is not traceable.

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

<sup>3</sup> A correction in the original suggests that the fifth name was added as an afterthought.

## 210. LETTER TO SHANNODEVI

June 26, 1936

CHI. SHANNO DEVI,

What can I say to you? Your energies will certainly be misspent on the daily.

From being a teacher you what to become an editor. Although I am your well-wisher, how can I give my blessings to a venture which does not interest me at all?

Blessings from  
BAPU

[From Hindi]

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

## 211. BARBAROUS IF TRUE

A correspondent sends me the following paragraph<sup>1</sup> from *The Hindu's* own correspondent dated 8th June at Ramnad:

At a meeting of the Devacottah Panchayat Board held on Saturday at the Board's office,... the usual procedure was adopted, viz., the Harijan member entered the meeting hall, signed his signature in the attendance register, receded to the exit door of the meeting hall, and stood all the while till the close of the meeting...

I take the following<sup>2</sup> from his letter enclosing the cutting from *The Hindu*:

I am sending herewith a cutting from *The Hindu*...

The Panchayat Board referred to is in the heart of Chettinad and is supposed to be composed of Congressmen or men who had been elected quite recently on the Congress ticket to advance through local boards and panchayats the aims and objects for which the great Indian National Congress stands.

It is shocking to read that a body like this should in this twentieth century has the audacity to compel a Harijan member to stand out of the meeting hall in spite of the fact that he is himself a member of that body duly

<sup>1</sup> Of which only excerpts are reproduced here.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*

elected and representing a section of the community and thereby enjoying all the privileges to which such a membership entitles him...

I do not know whether my correspondent is correct in saying that the Devacottah Panchayat is composed of Congressmen. If it is, so much the worse for the Congressmen concerned, for apart from the manifest injustice of the conduct adopted by the Panchayat towards its Harijan members, Congressmen are pledged opponents of untouchability. But whether the Panchayat is composed of Congressmen or not, the conduct of the Board can only be characterized as barbarous, even as it would be of the Legislative Assembly if it made its member Rao Bahadur Rajah stand in a corner whilst its proceedings were going on.

But *The Hindu* correspondent lets the public know that the procedure is usual for the Devacottah Panchayat. It is to be presumed that the occasion for noticing the usual event has been supplied by the fact that untouchability just now looms large especially in the South. Even if the practice of making Harijan members stand in a corner by certain panchayats is usual, public opinion should make it impossible of repetition. Evidently, however, the paragraph does not appear to have caused any public stir. The editorial columns of the Southern Press seem, too, to have taken no notice of the incident which is ugly enough to demand strong condemnation. Thanks are therefore due to my correspondent for lifting *The Hindu* paragraph from oblivion.

Not only is the practice barbarous, I think it is also illegal. The Harijan member has a legal right to demand a seat side by side with his fellow members. It would be no answer to the charge that the Harijan member was party to his own insult. I can well understand poor Harijans in remote parts of India being too timid to assert their rights. And for Harijans, Devacottah is unfortunately remote enough.

Anyway, it is the duty of the Provincial and the local Harijan Sevak Sanghs to investigate the matter and take such steps as may be proper to avoid a repetition of the insult offered not merely to the Harijan member but the whole society, if it is jealous of the rights of the least among its members equally with the greatest.

*Harijan, 27-6-1936*

## 212. HARIJANS AND ELECTIONS

The talk I had on my return journey from Bangalore, with Shri. A. Kaleswara Rao and Shri V. Kurmiah, a Harijan lawyer, has been published in *The Hindu*. Friends have written to inquire whether the correspondent of *The Hindu* has correctly reported the conversation. They also ask me to give my opinion in my own language.

*The Hindu* correspondent's version is substantially correct so far as it goes. It omits the preliminary part of the talk. In answer to Shri Kurmiah's question I said I adhered to the written advice I had sent to Shri Gavai of Nagpur, M.L.C. "But what are we to do if we are not one undivided party, and if individuals or groups are not strong enough to act unaided?" asked Shri Kurmiah.

"Then," I said, "naturally you will ally yourselves to that party which gives you the greatest advantage. "In my opinion such a party is undoubtedly the Congress. It is pledged to the removal of untouchability root and branch; the largest number of Congressmen are to be found among workers engaged in doing anti-untouchability work. But you will do well not to participate in any council boycott or civil resistance campaign, if the Congress is driven to any such thing in the pursuit of its clearly defined goal of complete independence. And this I say, if only because the vast majority of Harijans are hardly equipped for such a fight. Your immediate goal is to vindicate your status of absolute equality which is denied to you in the sacred name of religion by the so-called sanatani Hindus. You ask as if you were only an isolated individual. But all Harijans are not like you. An ocean separates you from the fellow-Harijans in education and understanding. If I am true to you, I must speak only in terms of the vast mass of illiterate Harijans in whose name Harijan members of councils will speak."

This is the purport of the conversation and it represents my considered opinion. The reader will be interested to know that this was the advice I tendered Harijans even when I launched on the first civil resistance campaign and prevented Ashram Harijans from either joining the campaign or the exodus from the Ashram.

*Harijan, 27-6-1936*

### 213. LETTER TO N. R. MALKANI

WARDHA,  
June 27, 1936

MY DEAR MALKANI,

My whole heart goes out to you. You ought to tear yourself away from Rukmini for a time and [rest your nerves a bit.]<sup>1</sup>

I fancy that the trouble with Bapa is partly due to the tension under which you are living.

Why should you worry about boys from Delhi or the provinces. If you succeed in training the boys you have so that they become good citizens and wage earners, your fame will spread and you will have to reject applications for want of space.

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 922

### 214. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

June 27, 1936

My Europe is in Segaon. It is difficult even to wait till September.<sup>1</sup>

*The Hindu*, 1-7-1936

### 215. LETTER TO A HARIJAN WORKER<sup>23</sup>

June 27, 1936

Hinduism is not opposed to humanism. Untouchability being a disease peculiar to Hinduism, our work in this regard should be confined to Hindus alone. There can be no such expression as a Muslim untouchable. The problem you have to face is due to the peculiar local conditions. If someone who was a Harijan yesterday is a Christian today, we need not take note of such conversion. To us he

<sup>1</sup> The portion in square brackets is very faint in the source.

<sup>2</sup> A correspondent from Calcutta had enquired whether the Press report about Gandhiji's sailing in September for Europe was correct.

<sup>3</sup> Of the Punjab



remains a Harijan so long as he receives help from us. Of course if a person is educated it is a different matter. For instance, if someone is getting aid for his college education he ceases to be entitled to it on his conversion.

*Yours,*  
M. K. GANDHI

[From Hindi]

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

### 216. TALK WITH A FRIEND<sup>1</sup>

[About June 27, 1936]<sup>2</sup>

We all know that conditions of life in a village are particularly hard in the monsoon. Why then should I not begin with that rich experience and wait until conditions were better? I had been nursing the thought of going to live in a village ever since I had heard of the experiences of Timappa Naik and his friends, and I tell you that now that I am there, I grudge having to come here even for a single day. I came this week because it would have been too much to expect all the members of the Working Committee and other friends to tramp to Segaoon in this weather. But I may tell you that though I am here, my mind is there.

*Harijan, 11-7-1936*

### 217. LETTER TO GITA BAJAJ

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
*June 28, 1936*

CHI. GITA<sup>3</sup>,

You should live up to your name. Widowhood and the married state are not of our choosing. No one has control over life and death.

<sup>1</sup> Extracted from Mahadev Desai's "Weekly Letter"

<sup>2</sup> From the reference to the Working Committee meeting it is evident that the conversation took place at Wardha where Gandhiji had gone to attend the meeting on June 27 and stayed on for a week.

<sup>3</sup> Widow of Girdharilal, Jannalal Bajaj's nephew who had met with an untimely death

Hence remain calm and dedicate yourself to service. I just got the news from Jamnalalji. Write to me.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

[From Hindi]

*Gandhiji aur Rajasthan*, p. 204

### 218. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

*June 29, 1936*

CHI. MIRA,

This is merely a love letter. Nothing to say except that I am praying for your relief. Do not make any experiments is the lesson to be learnt from this new experience.<sup>1</sup>

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 6350. Courtesy: Mirabehn. Also G.N. 9816

### 219. LETTER TO PURUSHOTTAM BAVISHI

WARDHA,  
*June 29, 1936*

BHAI BAVISHI,

Unless I write this postcard, writing to you may be delayed. God will surely lead you to where your mind is fixed. You will find no one to advance you money until your experiments succeed. The Bhangi quarter incident is surprising.

To you both,

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 126. Also C.W. 4751. Courtesy: Purushottam Bavishi

<sup>1</sup> In *Bapu's Letters to Mira*, Mirabehn says: "As far as I can remember, I had tried eating a wild plant *panwar*, as vegetable, which the villagers had recommended."

## 220. LETTER TO PYARELAL

WARDHA,  
*June 29, 1936*

CHI. PYARELAL,

Today is a silence-day. And then there is your letter. I have not been able to see all the letters. I have glanced through your original letter. I had been waiting for your letter every day. I had intended to write you a letter of reprimand. But I could not find the time. Then your letter came and I was relieved of the anxiety.

Is it clear to you that my letter did not mean what you had understood it to mean? I shall know this when I read your letter in full. I shall read the papers enclosed with it and shall write you another letter if necessary. I must have your letters regularly.

I have understood about Sushila. Only God knows to what extent I can win her heart. I will certainly try. I have always tried to draw her to me. As in the case of others, in Sushila's case also my attempt has been to be a mother and a father. But I was not aware that she had greater need of a father. In my future efforts I shall remember this. I shall be willing to keep her at Segaon if she can carry on there, and I shall take work from her to my heart's content. This is of course my aspiration and yours. But there is no question of my imposing my aspiration and yours on her. Let her do only as much as she wishes. I shall be ready from my side.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

[PS.]

I shall definitely go to Segaon on the 6th if not on the 5th.

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

## 221. LETTER TO BALWANTSINHA

*June 29, 1936*

CHI. BALWANTSINHA,

Your letter was up to my expectations. Munnalal should have got well by now. He is not very restless, is he? I am sending a bottle of

milk. He should drink as much as he can and you can drink the rest or make it into curds. Do return the bottle. I shall send some milk tomorrow, too.

I understand what you say about the well. Let us be patient. All will be well.

Your work is indeed progressing splendidly.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 1885

### *222. LETTER TO MIRABEHN*

*June 30, 1936*

CHI. MIRA,

If there is no satisfactory clearance, why not castor oil or Epsom salt. If you need any other opening medicine, I can send it. Shall I send any vegetable from here?

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 6351. Courtesy: Mirabehn. Also G.N. 9817

### *223. LETTER TO PRABHAVATI*

WARDHA,  
*June 30, 1936*

CHI. PRABHA,

I destroy your letter, but why does it need to be destroyed?

Your time-table shows that you sleep very little. Why can't you sleep soon at night? Do you worry about anything? You should go to bed uttering Ramanama. I see that you don't sleep during day-time either. You should have some sleep during the day also. It will be good if you take more milk. I follow your point about Patna. It seems to be your destiny not to be able to live with Jayaprakash and serve him. At Segaon either Balwantsinha or Munnalal cooks for me. Both of them insisted on living there. My food continues to be what it was, i.e., what you used to cook. I continue to take garlic and onions. The weight is 112 lb. At the moment I am in Wardha and shall go to Segaon on Saturday or Sunday. Mirabehn is at Varoda. It is a mile

and a half from Segaon. She is alone. When I go this time Lilavati might perhaps accompany me. My programme at Segaon so far has been writing letters and seeing visitors. I dispense medicines to the patients who turn up. How can I say what will happen next? We have there a goat and a cow. Cow's milk is for Mirabehn.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3477

*224. LETTER TO BALWANTSINHA AND  
MUNNALAL G. SHAH*

*June 30, 1936*

CHI. BALWANTSINHA AND MUNNALAL,

I shall find some other remedy for the worms. All my thoughts are with you.

I am again sending the milk today. It is no trouble. Yesterday too I sent it of my own accord. I have not met Kanchan<sup>1</sup> so far; she might come today.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

[PS.]<sup>2</sup>

You may use Jamnalalji's portion, and Nanavati may use Ba's. Hurry up with the weaving shed as soon as the skies are clear. What more need I say in the matter? Fill up the vacancy that might occur. Here too there is sure to be some vacancy. The person who has to do the work should find out what must be done.

From a photostat of the Hindi: C.W. 6995. Courtesy: Munnalal G. Shah. Also G.N. 8299

<sup>1</sup> Munnalal's wife

<sup>2</sup> The postscript which is in Gujarati is written on the reverse of the letter.

225. *LETTER TO MIRABEHN*

*July 1, 1936*

CHI. MIRA,

Yours is a good report. It is raining here. I am going to try to come on 5th. 6th is the real date.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 6352. Courtesy: Mirabehn. Also G.N. 9818

226. *LETTER TO MIRABEHN*

WARDHA,  
*July 2, 1936*

CHI. MIRA,

Do not try to come here unless you feel quite up to the mark and the day is fine. Mohanlal is going to the bazaar to get *bhaji* for you and if it is available it will be sent. If the bearer does not bring *bhaji* from here, try Segaon.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 6353. Courtesy: Mirabehn. Also G.N. 9819

227. *LETTER TO NARAYAN SWAMI*

*July 2, 1936*

DEAR FRIEND,

Pressure of work has prevented me all these days from thanking you for all the care with which you attended to the arrangements of our stay in Nandi and Bangalore. While I am thankful to the State for the generous hospitality extended to me and my party, I know that our comfortable stay had not a little to do with your careful stewardship.

*Yours sincerely,*

NARAYAN SWAMI  
BANGALORE

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

## 228. LETTER TO MUNNALAL G. SHAH

[July]<sup>1</sup> 2, 1936

CHI. MUNNALAL,

See that Balwantsinha does not fall ill. For the present, follow Mirabehn's instructions.

I understand the trouble caused by the strap. Only wait and watch where you can do nothing. Diwanji may help if he can. We shall see what can be done when I come. I am sending the milk....<sup>2</sup>

Blessings from  
BAPU

[PS.]

Kanchan, Hiramani<sup>3</sup> and Bhai<sup>4</sup> came to see me today.

SJT. MUNNALAL

SEGAON

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 8602. Also C.W. 6994. Courtesy: Munnalal G. Shah

## 229. MESSAGE TO "INDIAN OPINION"

July 2, 1936

The Editor of *Indian Opinion* asks me to send a message for the Diwali number of the paper. How can there be any Diwali—festival of lamps—for one who has a Holi—an all consuming fire—burning in his heart? How can one celebrate Diwali when one's ears are filled with the sighs of the millions of the living dead in this country? All I can think of saying to the readers of *Indian Opinion* is this: Celebrate Diwali by all means, but don't forget the skeletons in India. Set apart a share for them first.

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4853

<sup>1</sup> The source has "June" which obviously is a slip. It is evident from the contents that this was written after the letter to the addressee dated June 30, 1936; *vide* "Letter to Balwantsinha and Munnalal G. Shah", 30-6-1936

<sup>2</sup> The source is damaged here.

<sup>3</sup> Addressee's brother's daughter

<sup>4</sup> Addressee's brother

### 230. LETTER TO MUNNALAL SHAH

[Before July 3, 1936]<sup>1</sup>

CHI. MUNNALAL,

This man will bring sulphur if available. Smoke away the sulphur for about an hour. I am sending a spray pump and also some liquid Flit if available. You may be knowing how to use Flit. If not, we will use it when I come there. And then, what right have I to advise you when you are prepared to put up with the pest. But I will certainly go there and find some remedy for the irritation. It should be easy for you to discover a remedy. Have you not studied chemistry?

Why have you stopped taking milk? At present both of you should take it. Reduce the quantity of cereals.

There is nothing about the Mahar affair in today's letter.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 8601

### 231. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

WARDHA,  
July 3, 1936

CHI. MIRA,

I hope you found everything in order in Segaon. I am making a desperate effort to reach Segaon on Sunday. Yes, I read Mrs. Sanger's speech. Most leaders have gone. It was an anxious time.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 6354. Courtesy: Mirabehn. Also G.N. 9820

<sup>1</sup> From the contents; *vide* "Letter to Munnalal G. Shah", 3-7-1936



232. *LETTER TO SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE*

July 3, 1936

MY DEAR SUBHAS,

I have just received your letter. I hope to be able to write to you as frequently as I hear from you. I know what it means to prisoners or detenus to receive letters from friends.<sup>1</sup>

I am asking Mahadev to see that *Harijan* is sent to you every week.

If it is of any use, you may inform the authorities that any views you may express on non-political matters, I have no desire to publish unless permission is given thereto.

Love.

M. K. GANDHI

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

233. *LETTER TO MUNNALAL G. SHAH*

July 3, 1936

CHI. MUNNALAL,

I am sending the milk as usual, as also sulphur, a Flitsprayer and a bottle of Flit. We shall use the sulphur when I come but use the Flit right now. Climb on a ladder or a pile of planks and spray it into the thatch twice or thrice a day. Send back the bottle when the liquid is used up. We shall fill it again.

Ba will not come; Lilavati may. Most probably I shall come on Sunday if there is no rain. But then as He wills.

I understand what you say about the Mahar. Have the labourers started coming?

To you both,

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 8600. Also C.W. 6996. Courtesy: Munnalal G. Shah

<sup>1</sup> The addressee was in Darjeeling jail.

## 234. LETTER TO PYARELAL

WARDHA,  
July 3, 1936

CHI. PYARELAL,

I am sending you this brief note in order not to keep you without a letter. I have received your letter only today. But I am so deep in work that I have not yet found the time to read your letter. Perhaps I shall be able to read it only when I go to Segaoon. A lot of people are coming and going. Do I not know your feelings? Do not think that your dreams will never become a reality. You must proceed on the assumption that they will come true.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

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

## 235. FOR KHADI-WEARERS

Here are two extracts<sup>1</sup> from a longish letter from a Bihar correspondent:

I have a complaint against you. I am a habitual khadi-wearer. I have been using khadi since its first appearance.... If I ever be obliged to give up khadi due to my poor circumstances, I shall be much pained. And the present unexpected increase in its prices without proportion will, I fear, drag me to that verge.... This will, I think, bring about the total collapse of the khadi movement.

I am told that you desire to pay more to the poor spinners... But from whose pockets?... It will certainly be death to poor khadi-wearers if they are obliged to give up an ideal for which they stood and bravely fought... Your present decision is a great blunder. I fear by this you mean to give the movement a decent burial.

The following<sup>2</sup> is taken from a U.P. correspondent:

...Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru has so much minimized the importance, necessity and utility of khadi that many staunch khadi-wearers are placed in a

<sup>1</sup> Only excerpts are reproduced here.

<sup>2</sup> Only excerpts are reproduced here.

fix and the weaker believers have got a secure shelter behind Panditji. The Congress has also relaxed the rigidity in the use of khadi and you seem to be finding solace in your determined silence. Would you just guide us and let us know our duty under the present circumstances? Another difficulty lies on account of the existing organization of the supplying source of khadi, the All-India Spinners' Association. Under the present conditions khadi is becoming dearer and dearer and its supply is growing less and less. The independent and individual khadi producers have been almost debarred from producing even a yard of khadi. The rules and restrictions seem, firstly, unreasonable, secondly, almost impossible to be followed, and thirdly, they are applied in an objectionable way and not in the spirit they might have been stipulated by you... How do you justify the restrictions imposed on the private khadi producers who have been compelled to abandon their production?

There is a similar complaint from C.P. National Scouts. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was, as has been made clear by him, misreported.<sup>1</sup> In common with the other believers in khadi, till the country has attained its freedom he thinks khadi to be a vital necessity. His doubt about its economic value has a place, if at all, only when independence is achieved and industrialization on a vast scale takes place in the country. Surely no wise man will give up khadi now for fear of its being overwhelmed by industrialization which may or may not envelop India in the far-off future. The restrictions on private producers are intended as well in the interests of artisans, especially the spinners, as the buyers. If they are removed the market will be flooded with spurious khadi resulting in spinners being put out of work and the buyers being deceived. If there is irregularity in the working of the regulations, attention of the Secretary should be drawn to it and it will be set right without delay.

The increase in prices is the only question that demands satisfactory answer. It should be remembered that when khadi was not half as good as it is now and when there was much less variety, it was much dearer than under the new scale and there was hardly any complaint against the prices then ruling. Whilst the buyers have been benefiting all these many years, the spinners had till now practically no benefit whatsoever in the shape of rise in wages. They were dumb and helpless. They could not declare a strike against the Association. In the very nature of things, they could not combine, being so scattered for the betterment of wages or anything else. They were in such need

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "A False Alarm", 6-6-1936

of even PIES that they could not make any effective protest. If now the conscience of a few of us has begun to rebel against the wretchedly low wage given to the spinners, we deserve help from the buyers who have hitherto enjoyed the privilege of reduction in prices. The difficulty of poor buyers is obvious. But the value of khadi lies in its social and moral value. If the khadi buyers understand the implications of khadi, they will not complain of rise in prices, if and when it is conclusively shown, as it can be in the present instance, to be due to the increase in the wages of the spinners concerned. If they have the will they will discover many ways of making up for the increase they might have to bear in the purchase of khadi. But this they will do if they have burnt their boats and resolved never to use any other cloth but khadi so long as they are in India. If they leave an escape-door, they will make use of it on emergency. Invention comes generally from necessity. If the correspondents had made up their minds that for them there was no other cloth but khadi, they would not have written as they have done but, like the very large number who are no whit better off than these correspondents, they would have accommodated themselves to the slight increase that has taken place in the price of khadi.

At the same time let me comfort the correspondents by giving them the assurance that every care is being taken to make the increase as slight as possible for the poor lovers of khadi. Let them too peruse the reports from Rajendra Babu and the Secretary, A.I.S.A., Tamil Nad, on the great success that is attending the new experiment in giving unsolicited increase to spinners in their wages. If khadi-lovers will have patience, they will find that, if the price of khadi has slightly increased, there has been corresponding improvement in the quality and durability of khadi.

*Harijan, 4-7-1936*

### 236. *INFANTICIDE OF GIRLS*

It is difficult to believe that even today a cruel inhuman custom like infanticide of girls is prevalent in this unfortunate country. But, the letter that lies before me forces me to believe it. In the village Amarapur, in Bhagalpur District, Bihar, an association to oppose such infanticide among Rajputs has been formed. The secretary of this

body has written a very sad letter in this regard. A few excerpts<sup>1</sup> from it are given below.

Dharma teaches us that all souls are one. Plurality, being momentary, is only an illusion. Nationalism, too, teaches us this same lesson. We do not think of ourselves as Rajputs, or Biharis, Punjabis and so on. We consider ourselves Indians and we believe ourselves to be one nation and persuade others to believe so. Therefore whether from the point of view of religion or of patriotism we are one; the responsibility of the misconduct of any one falls on all of us. For this reason we are all responsible for the infanticide of girls among Rajputs, whether we are Rajputs or from any other community. Had we not been indifferent to one another's faults and troubles, infanticide of girls could not have continued to this day. There is no religious excuse and no need for this. There might have been a time when the life of a Rajput was insecure and therefore the birth of girls was considered calamitous. Today this excuse does not exist. It cannot be said that the lives of Rajputs are less safe than those of the others. War no longer threatens the Rajputs. Today a Rajput does not have to sleep with his sword by his side. There is still a Rajput community, no doubt, but there is nothing like the special dharma of the Rajputs. Why then this infanticide of girls? Why should girls be a burden? The burden certainly is on those who buy husbands for their daughters and have to pay such exorbitant prices that they are all but ruined. It is God's mercy that they have not reached the stage of killing their daughters. I am not aware if any excuse is put forward for the infanticide of Rajput girls. If there is any such excuse, it is the duty of this new association to throw light on the subject.

But even if there is a cause, it is our duty to remove it. No excuse can be accepted for the continuance of this barbarous custom. Public opinion must be mobilized to abolish this custom soon. The burden of mobilizing public opinion must fall on the Rajput Kanya Vadha Virodhini Sabha. This endeavour will not bear fruit by long speeches nor by passing resolutions. A little of both these will be needed. But the most important thing is a complete picture of the facts. You should prepare a chart which should tell at one glance where the infanticide of girls takes place and the number of girls killed in the previous year. It may be difficult to obtain the number of girls killed, it may even be impossible. The point is that all available

<sup>1</sup> These are not translated here.

information must be gathered and the Sabha's message conveyed to every home where there is a possibility of such an incident. Mere publishing of the resolutions in newspapers will have no effect on the parents who resort to this practice. It is important for the workers of the Sabha to remember that they should not exaggerate facts in any way. By ceaseless, sincere and peaceful efforts success in this cause can be attained soon. This is what I think and believe.

[From Hindi]

*Harijan Sevak, 4-7-1936*

### 237. *LETTER TO MIRABEHN*

WARDHA,  
*July 4, 1936*

CHI. MIRA,

I still entertain the hope of coming tomorrow. No more just now. I am in the midst of a meeting.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 6355. Courtesy: Mirabehn. Also G.N. 9821

### 238. *LETTER TO MUNNALAL G. SHAH*

*July 4, 1936*

CHI. MUNNALAL,

I am sending the milk and the Flit. I expect to reach there tomorrow when I shall go into the Mahar problem.

*Blessings to you both from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 8599. Also C.W. 6997. Courtesy: Munnalal G. Shah

### 239. *LETTER TO KANU GANDHI*

*July 4, 1936*

CHI. KANU,

Only half the work has been done. As you spoke to me of seven annas I mentioned the same amount to Govind. He promptly gave me

four annas and will be giving the three now. I shall send the money there. Debit it to the expense account and credit it on getting it from there.

Ramjilal may take his meals there as he pays for his board.

Never mind the Flit tin. I shall enter it into the accounts here.

You may change the time for the recitation of the *Ramayana* though we shall revert to the existing practice after I come...<sup>1</sup> it is good to have accounts which suit the convenience of all.

Send the pair of tongs which was set apart exclusively for my use, as also the griddle, and the saucepan if they have come back after welding. They get Marathi newspapers there; please send one or two of them. I should now have a red pen. For Munnalal a letter pad of ordinary unlined paper. Enclosed please find [letters] for Krishnadas, Kaka, Shambhu Dayal...<sup>2</sup>

I hope you are in very good humour.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

[PS.]

Tell Mahadev, if he is there when you get this, that I don't need fruit.

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

## 240. LETTER TO G. D. BIRLA

*July 4, 1936*

BHAI GHANSHYAMDAS,

I had not told Mahadev to write to you about the museum. I had instructed him to write only about the other buildings. You might remember that when I talked to you about my requirements I had stated the need of Rs. 1,00,000 for the purpose of erecting the other buildings. Later I included among them also the schools already constructed although at the time of mentioning one lakh I had excluded the school, for I had planned to use the amount for the other buildings only. But the construction of the school has involved a heavy expenditure which the Sangh is unable to meet fully. I had an impression that you had already transferred some funds out of the

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

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*

one lakh to Bachcharaj and Co. Now I learn that nothing has been deposited there to this account. Hence I sent you a letter<sup>1</sup> at Trivandrum which probably did not reach you. If any sum can be drawn now from this amount it may be done.

You must have got the copy of my letter<sup>2</sup> to Dr. Moonje. What has been settled with Parnerkar?

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From Hindi: C.W. 8020. Courtesy: G.D. Birla

### 241. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
July 6, 1936

MY DEAR REBEL,

Having returned to Segaoon last evening I can deal with correspondence.

How can a young man of 67 say from *experience* whether men (for women I won't be allowed to speak) become obstinate on old age creeping in?

Yes, I would gladly forgo the pleasure of having Idiot talk to me by post when she is attending to Malaviyaji who needs considerate listeners like you. How I would love to see him rest for a year! But he won't. He will die-in harness. God bless him. Nevertheless he departs from धर्म dharma in refusing to rest when both mind and body need to. You and I *must not* imitate him, though you are inclined always like him to overdo things. You must recognize it as an unpardonable weakness.

I shall find work for you in Bezwada if I know definitely when and how many hours you will be there.

You must impose silence on yourself to give your poor throat some rest. Do you know that a specialist has enjoined on Jawaharlal a week's complete silence on pain of having a complete breakdown. Not even a whisper allowed. Will you listen? Or will you prove the idiotic obstinate princess who will listen to no one? You will give me

<sup>1</sup> Not traceable

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*



the definite date of your coming. Mira is happy in her cottage. Her village instinct is a marvel to me.

Love.

TYRANT

[PS.]

Encl. for Malaviyaji.<sup>1</sup>

From the original: C.W. 3581. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 6390

*242. LETTER TO F. MARY BARR*

*July 6, 1936*

CHI. MARY,

This is by return post. Nothing wrong in your getting registered as a voter.

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 6065. Also C.W. 3395. Courtesy: F. Mary Barr

*243. LETTER TO H. S. L. POLAK*

*July 6, 1936*

DEAR HENRY,

This will be presented to you by Kamalnayan Bajaj, the eldest son of Jamnalalji. However much we may fight Great Britain, London is increasingly becoming our Mecca or Kashi. Kamalnayan is no exception. I have advised him to take up a course in the London School of Economics. Perhaps you will put him in touch with prof. Laski who may not mind guiding young Bajaj. Muriel has undertaken to mother him.

Please treat this also as acknowledgment of your letter received some time ago. I am trying to become a villager. The place where I am writing this has a population of about 600—no roads, no post-office, no shop.

Love to you all.

BHAI

From a photostat: G.N. 3053

<sup>1</sup> This is not traceable.

## 244. LETTER TO KAMALNAYAN BAJAJ

July 6, 1936

CHI. KAMALNAYAN,

I am sending herewith three letters of introduction which will serve the purpose. Woodbrooke is in Birmingham. It is an excellent institution. You should establish contact with these persons quite soon. As I am writing this, I think I should send you a letter addressed to Prof. Horace Alexander also. That makes four letters<sup>1</sup>. Prof. Alexander belongs to Woodbrooke. Write to me regularly. Listen to everyone, but do what you consider best and what agrees best with the hopes you raised in us when you went. There is no end of temptations out there. Live up to your name<sup>2</sup> and, recalling its qualities, remain untouched by the mire although surrounded by it, as does the lotus. Then all will be well. Don't delve beyond your depth and don't compete with anybody. Your potentiality will develop to its best if you make good use of every moment. Study deeply the *Ramayana* and the *Gita*, reading them every day. You will of course read the *Gita* in the original but also keep with you a copy of Edwin Arnold's *Song Celestial*.

*Blessings from*

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3052

## 245. LETTER TO HORACE ALEXANDER

July 6, 1936

MY DEAR HORACE,

This will be presented to you by young Kamalnayan Bajaj, the eldest son of Jamnalalji. I have advised him to join the London School of Economics. But if you think of anything better, please guide him likewise. In any case, I have asked him to put himself in touch with the Woodbrooke school of thought. The rest I leave to you.

Love to you, Olive and all other friends.

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 1425

<sup>1</sup> Of these only two are available; *vide* the preceding and the following items.

<sup>2</sup> Kamalnayan literally means "lotus-eyed".

## 246. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

July 6, 1936

CHI. AMTUL SALAAM,

I have your telegram and the two letters. In the matter of Saraswati, I did what Kanti had suggested. I wired to you at Kanti's instance as you could have returned after seeing her although I was afraid you would not be able to come. There was no question whatever of Saraswati or Kanti going there. We shall now see what to do when Saraswati returns.

What you write about Mahila Ashram is not at all proper. The institution has been growing day by day and girls have had to be refused admission. It is not right to say that Saraswati cannot stay just because Rajkishori, for instance, could not. The reason for Saraswati's not staying was quite different. I don't have the time to explain all that.

I like the idea of your going through the operation during the holidays. Viyogi Hari will tell you more. Kanti and Saraswati left only yesterday for Trivandrum. Lilavati is with me.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 339

## 247. LETTER TO NARAHARI D. PARIKH

July 6, 1936

CHI. NARAHARI,

I forgot to speak to you of one thing that I had intended. Nimu wants to go and stay there. Here she has no opportunity for studies. Besides, Sumitra would thus be under her supervision. The subjects she wants to learn are English, Arithmetic, History, Geography (i.e., through Gujarati), as also vocal music and the *sitar*. I would send her to the Vidyapith if you thought she could study there and she would not in any other way add to your inconvenience.

She should do her own cooking and of course pay the rent, etc. She should give one hour to service of Harijans. She can teach

tailoring, music (elementary) and Gujarati (elementary). You are [not] to accept her for my sake. I inquire about it as I would be glad to fulfil her wish if it could be done without difficulty.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9095

*248. LETTER TO AMRITLAL V. THAKKAR*

*July 6, 1936*

BAPA,

At Wardha I can hardly lift my head and read letters, and if I manage to read them I cannot reply to them. And what is more, if I am to live long, I must avoid working till late at night, or in the small hours of the morning.

Do call a meeting of the Committee in August to discuss the subjects you suggest. Obtain Jamnalalji's consent. I shall be occupied between August 10 and 12.

I have followed the point regarding contributions. It is surprising that you had no success in Bombay. I do not think we should cut down on work everywhere, though all the provinces should certainly become self-supporting.

In accepting conditional Government aid for Kodambakkam I can see nothing but ruin. I had mentioned to the Rao Bahadur very strong reasons and I thought he had been convinced. I now see I was mistaken. The chief reason of course is that if the money is not forthcoming from the Hindus even for this small institution, the Sangh or the Hindus cannot take the credit for running it. Of course if you say we are concerned with the end and not with the argument, then I shall have nothing to say. But even so I shall insist that considering the origin of the Sangh, if nothing else, our ideal should be not to shoulder any burden that the Hindus would not share. The rest is a matter of method or means. If it is somehow worth while running it even with Government aid, why should not the Committee run it on its own independently of the Sangh? I would be interested in keeping the Sangh's foundations firm and strong, though the range of my understanding is limited to Segaon. Hence the correct decision would

be the one that the Committee takes after they have listened to me.

My Malaya or whatever you call it is Segaoon, at least for the present. If God lets me spend three seasons here, I would deem it great favour of the Big Brother. But what flattery can work with Him?

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 1163

### 249. LETTER TO K. NATARAJAN

WARDHA,  
July 7, 1936

Mahadev has just sent me your letter. The editorial you have sent me from *Unity* is extraordinary. The views attributed to me and reproduced in inverted commas were never uttered by me and, what is more, they have never been held by me.<sup>1</sup> From nothing that I have heard from Jawaharlal's lips have I ever even suspected that he contemplated the use of violence for the attainment of India's independence.<sup>2</sup> It is surprising how Dr. Holmes has allowed himself to be duped into thinking that I had ever made the remarks said to have been made by me. You can make whatever use you like of this letter and to save time you may pass on this letter to Dr. Holmes if you think it proper.

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

### 250. LETTER TO KHURSHEDBEHN NAOROJI

July 7, 1936

Your statement contains a statement of eternal truth. But your previous letter contained a definite complaint which you had a perfect right to make. Indeed it was your duty to do so. Do you not owe it to me [that you should tell me] who were the culprits and what they had done? After all we approach eternal verities only by tackling details in terms thereof. Anyway, whatever glimpses I may have of truth I owe

<sup>1</sup> Vide "Are We Rivals?", on or before 22-7-1936.

<sup>2</sup> The report in *Unity inter alia* said: "Elected President of the Indian National Congress at its recent meeting at Lucknow, Nehru came out for a use of violence in the struggle for independence, and is reported to be planning a movement to shake British rule in India."

principally, if not entirely, to attention to the minutest details, always keeping the supreme objective in view. Do please therefore help.

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

## 251. LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

SEGAON, WARDHA,

July 8, 1936

MY DEAR JAWAHARLAL,

I have just received your letter<sup>1</sup>. I was seeking time to be able to write to you on the events in Wardha. Your letter makes it difficult. I would however just like to say that the letter of withdrawal does not bear the meaning you put upon it when it was given to you. It was sent to you after I had seen it. The sending of such a letter in the place of resignation was my suggestion. I wish that you could take a juster view of that letter. In any case I am firmly of opinion that during the remainder of the year, all wrangling should cease and no resignations should take place. A.I.C.C. will be paralysed and powerless to deal with the crisis. It will be torn between two emotions. It would be most unfair to spring upon it a crisis, in the name of democracy, which it has never been called upon to face. You are exaggerating the implications of the letter. I must not argue. But I would urge you to consider the situation calmly and not succumb to it in a moment of depression so unworthy of you. Why should you not allow your

<sup>1</sup> Of July 5, in which the addressee had complained about the attitude of some of his colleagues of the Working Committee with whom he had differences of opinion. At the meeting of the Working Committee held at Wardha on June 29, these differences had come into such sharp focus that seven members of the Working Committee, namely, Rajendra Prasad, C. Rajagopalachari, Jairamdas Doulatram, Jammalal Bajaj, Vallabhbhai Patel, J.B. Kripalani and S.D. Deo, found it necessary to submit their resignation from that body, which on Gandhiji's suggestion they later withdrew. Rajendra Prasad, however, sent a personal letter to Jawaharlal Nehru on July 1, explaining in detail the reasons which had impelled him and the others to send their resignation letter. All the three documents, viz., the letter of resignation dated June 29, Rajendra Prasad's letter to Nehru dated July 1, and Nehru's letter to Gandhiji dated July 5, not reproduced here, are to be found in *A Bunch of Old Letters*.

The differences in the Working Committee, which had become apparent at the Lucknow Session itself, at which Nehru was elected President, revolved round the question how far the Congress could commit itself to socialism in its programme. "The President," Pattabhi Sitaramayya says, 'was out of tune with the majority of the Working Committee.'

humour to play upon the meetings of the W. C.? Why should it be so difficult for you to get on with those with whom you have worked without a jar for years? If they are guilty of intolerance, you have more than your share of it. The country should not be made to suffer for your mutual intolerance.

I do hope you have accepted the very sane advice of the German doctor.

Love.

BAPU

Gandhi-Nehru Papers, 1936. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library.  
Also *A Bunch of Old Letters*, pp. 191-2

### 252. *LETTER TO GLADYS OWEN*

*July 8, 1936*

DEAR GLADYS,

I am glad you have accepted a year's appointment from the Rajghat Theosophical School<sup>1</sup>. Anyway it will enable you to gain some experience of Indian students and you will certainly be able to give something to the boys or girls who may be under your charge.

Yes, Abbas Tyabji is the one of Baroda whom you had intended to see and who, alas, is no more. He was one of the noblest of men I had the good fortune to meet, and you should still nurse the desire of meeting the members of his family. They are all chips of the old block, and especially Raihana, one of the daughters of the deceased. She is not only most accomplished but she is also deeply spiritual.

Love.

*Yours sincerely,*

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 6192

### 253. *LETTER TO ATULANANDA CHAKRABARTY*

*July 8, 1936*

DEAR FRIEND,

I had your letter. I wish you would appreciate my own difficulty. My method of approach to the question is unfortunately

<sup>1</sup> At Varanasi

different from yours. I would therefore at least for the time being suggest that you serve according to your own line. If your method ever commends itself to me I should have no difficulty in accepting it and for any organized efforts I would not do otherwise than to refer you to the Congress. Do not expect any paragraph from me. You will presently find that if I am to do the village work on which I am bent, I should have to cease correspondence at least for the time being.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: C.W. 1475. Courtesy: A.K. Sen

### 254. LETTER TO PRABHAVATI

*July 8, 1936*

CHI. PRABHA,

What a strange letter! It won't do if you keep falling ill time and again. Why do you not ask leave of everybody and come away here if you never keep fit there? Being ill, you will not be serving but taking service from them all. I could write to Jayaprakash if you wish. Why don't you say boldly what you have in your mind? You talk brave things to me but, I am afraid, you secretly worry all the while, which is not going to help in any way. Jayaprakash saw me. He writes that in Patna you will be living together. The Banaras proposal seems to have blown over completely. It seems he has already taken a house at Patna. He told me that the place was good. I think you know all this.

Kanti has gone to Trivandrum, taking Saraswati with him. His address is: C/o G. Ramachandran, Harijan Sevak Sangh, Trivandrum. He will return in a month.

Wire about your health as soon as you get this.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3478



## 255. LETTER TO JIVANJI D. DESAI

July 8, 1936

I have gone through the Glossary<sup>1</sup>. I presume the meanings given are just the ones given in *Anasaktiyoga*<sup>2</sup>. It looks quite all right.

Blessings from  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 9943. Also C.W. 6918. Courtesy: Jivanji D. Desai

## 256. TELEGRAM TO LADY FAZL-I-HUSSAIN

[July 10, 1936]<sup>3</sup>

PRAY ACCEPT MY CONDOLENCES.<sup>4</sup> I HAVE NOTHING BUT PLEASANT RECOLLECTIONS OF MANY HAPPY INTERVIEWS I HAD WITH YOUR DISTINGUISHED HUSBAND.

*The Hindu*, 13-7-1936

## 257. LETTER TO NARASINHRAO B. DIVATIA

July 10, 1936

SUJNA BHAISHRI,

If Gokulbhai were not to give me the news of the passing of your life companion, then who else would? He is one of your many admirers. Where is the need for offering condolence to you? I had been hearing about your illness. I did not know anything about Sushilabehn. Truly God tests his devotees. You have passed through many ordeals. You have to pass all the tests. To those whom God tests He seems to give strength to bear suffering. Your faith in God will make even an atheist a believer. May you always succeed.

Yours,  
MOHANDAS

<sup>1</sup> *Gitapadarthakosha*

<sup>2</sup> Gandhiji's Gujarati translation of the *Bhagavad Gita*.

<sup>3</sup> *Vide* footnote 1, "Letter to Kanu Gandhi", 10-7-1936

<sup>4</sup> The addressee had lost her husband on July 9.

[PS.]

No need to acknowledge this.

NARASINHRAO BHOLANATH  
MARINE VILLA  
14TH ROAD, KHAR [BOMBAY]

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

258. *LETTER TO PRABHAVATI*

July 10, 1936

CHI. PRABHA,

I have your letter and follow what you say. I don't mind how long you stay there provided you preserve your health. You can do much work while there. Meditate on what the verses of Chapter II<sup>1</sup> say and try to live accordingly. Be cheerful, concentrating your attention on the duty facing you at a given time. Try to live on milk, curds, vegetables, fruit and *rotli*<sup>2</sup>. Don't touch dal.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3467

259. *LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI*

July 10, 1936

CHI. NARANDAS,

I have your letter. I shall certainly make use of the figures you have given, and I have made a note of the corrections you have sent me. It is good that you are constantly thinking of khadi. That is as it should be. Swadeshi is one of our eleven vows. And from the beginning khadi has been considered the core of swadeshi. Even so, we have very few people giving constant thought to khadi. That is why the khadi activity is not as widespread as it ought to be.

There is chaos in national education, too. There are many who talk about it, few who understand it. Those who understand it seldom put it into practice. But there is no doubt that true national education is as I have described it. Therefore, just as we cannot permit any

<sup>1</sup> Of the *Bhagavad Gita*

<sup>2</sup> Chapati

adulteration of khadi whether it succeeds or not, so, too, we cannot permit adulteration of national education. And if, without our adulterating it even one student pursues it with love, I will say that national education is going on, its future is bright.

But I would not say that national education was flourishing merely because a number of children pursued what passed for national education but which was not really national education. This view of mine notwithstanding, you should go on doing what you can to the best of your ability. Do not derive any meaning from my words, other than that you will have my co-operation when you are fed up with adulteration and seek to introduce basic changes. You once asked me regarding Kanu's clothing. I do not remember if I replied to you. If I have not, all that I have to say is that you need not worry.

Getting used to as little clothing as possible helps towards a healthy body. I do, therefore, take care of Kanu's clothing to the extent of preserving his health. At the moment it would seem his training, too, is proceeding fast though the credit may not go to Mahadev. As neither Navin nor Kanti is here, I have to take from Kanu alone the work the two of them would be doing. So Kanu is getting his fill of training in the process. But this is the impression I get. The impression that Kanu gets should be the correct one. For the present I see very little of him and so have not been able to ask him about it. He remains deeply immersed in work and has no errands to run for Mahadev.

It seems Manju<sup>1</sup> is progressing well. Is Kusum<sup>2</sup> keeping fit? Did she gain or did she lose from her recent travels?

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II. Also C.W. 8498. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

<sup>1</sup> Daughter of Vrajlal A. Gandhi

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*

## 260. LETTER TO KANU GANDHI

July 10, 1936

CHI. KANU,

There used to be two nozzles with me, of which one has come here and the other is left behind. Send it over if you find it. I need my *takli* box, which has not come.

The letter to Narandas contains a reference to you. If I am correct, write so to him; write to me also whether it is correct. I enclose the text of a telegram<sup>1</sup>. Please despatch it immediately. The letters to be posted are there as usual. Today you have to bear the whole burden single-handed! Won't you shoulder the work by yourself when it comes to you some day for good? Won't you prove equal to it?

Blessings from  
BAPU

[PS.]

I am sending a cheque for Rs. 40 with my endorsement. Send me one or two small bottles which can hold an ounce or two, with corks if you have them there or without.

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

## 261. LETTER TO HARIBHAU UPADHYAYA

Unrevised

July 10, 1936

BHAISHRI HARIBHAU,

I have had exhaustive talks with L.<sup>2</sup> and S.<sup>3</sup> L. has nothing in her. She did not impress me favourably. S. did. He admitted that they had both been infatuated with each other and remained so. The situation even now is the same. According to S. the infatuation arose out of blameless service. L. kept mum on the point. She was willing to undergo medical examination but I seriously doubt whether she would stand before a doctor if she was really taken to one. S. assured me that the two of them did not reach the last stage of intimacy as they thought of you and me. I saw L.'s father at Beawar. From his

<sup>1</sup> Presumably this was the telegram to Lady Fazi-i-Hussain.

<sup>2</sup> The name has been omitted.

<sup>3</sup> *ibid*

talks I inferred that he had no knowledge of this illicit relationship and I also did not think it necessary to put him wise about it. Her father did not impress me at all. From one of your letters I gathered that you were satisfied that he was really not L.'s father. But another letter of your seems to show that you have now changed your opinion. According to L. he is indeed her father. Having examined the whole thing I, have given this decision:

(1) L. should go to M.<sup>1</sup> and live as his wife.

(2) If she does not wish to do so and can remain free of passion, she should observe *brahmacharya*.

(3) If she cannot control her passion she should marry some other young man.

She should have kept her relations with S. pure until marriage. Both claim that they have been pure. I, therefore, do not think it is proper for them to associate with each other. However, if they cannot live without each other's intimate company, they should do so openly. But in that situation, they cannot expect my blessings. They can then stay neither in the Ashram nor in an institution with which I am closely connected. I fear L. cannot live without S. It is my opinion that she is suffering from hysteria caused by sexual desire. S.'s contact is tainted with passion and aggravates the hysteria.

Now you may do what you think proper.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

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

## 262. DR. AMBEDKAR'S INDICTMENT—I

The readers will recall the fact that Dr. Ambedkar was to have presided last May at the annual conference of the Jat-Pat-Torak Mandal of Lahore. But the conference itself was cancelled because Dr. Ambedkar's address was found by the Reception Committee to be unacceptable. How far a Reception Committee is justified in rejecting a President of its choice because of his address that may be objectionable to it is open to question. The Committee knew Dr. Ambedkar's views on caste and the Hindu scriptures. They knew also that he had in

<sup>1</sup> The name has been omitted.

unequivocal terms decided to give up Hinduism. Nothing less than the address that Dr. Ambedkar had prepared was to be expected from him. The Committee appears to have deprived the public of an opportunity of listening to the original views of a man who has carved out for himself a unique position in society. Whatever label he wears in future, Dr. Ambedkar is not the man to allow himself to be forgotten.

Dr. Ambedkar was not going to be beaten by the Reception Committee. He has answered their rejection of him by publishing the address at his own expense. He has priced it at 8 annas. I would suggest a reduction to 2 annas or at least 4 annas.

No reformer can ignore the address. The orthodox will gain by reading it. This is not to say that the address is not open to objection. It has to be read if only because it is open to serious objection. Dr. Ambedkar is a challenge to Hinduism. Brought up as a Hindu, educated by a Hindu potentate, he has become so disgusted with the so-called *savarna* Hindus for the treatment that he and his have received at their hands that he proposes to leave not only them but the very religion that is his and their common heritage. He has transferred to that religion his disgust against a part of its professors.

But this is not to be wondered at. After all one can only judge a system or an institution by the conduct of its representatives. What is more, Dr. Ambedkar found that the vast majority of *savarna* Hindus had not only conducted themselves inhumanly against those of their fellow religionists whom they classed as untouchables, but they had based their conduct on the authority of their scriptures, and when he began to search them he had found ample warrant for their belief in untouchability and all its implications. The author of the address has quoted chapter and verse in proof of his therefold indictment—inhuman conduct itself, the unabashed justification for it on the part of the perpetrators, and the subsequent discovery that the justification was warranted by their scriptures.

No Hindu who prizes his faith above life itself can afford to underrate the importance of this indictment. Dr. Ambedkar is not alone in his disgust. He is its most uncompromising exponent and one of the ablest among them. He is certainly the most irreconcilable among them. Thank God, in the front rank of the leaders he is singularly alone and as yet but a representative of a very small minority. But what he says is voiced with more or less vehemence by many

leaders belonging to the depressed classes. Only the latter, for instance Rao Bahadur M.C. Rajah and Dewan Bahadur Srinivasan, not only do not threaten to give up Hinduism but find enough warmth in it to compensate for the shameful persecution to which the vast mass of Harijans are exposed.

But the fact of many leaders remaining in the Hindu fold is no warrant for disregarding what Dr. Ambedkar has to say. The *savarnas* have to correct their belief and their conduct. Above all, those who are by their learning and influence among the *savarnas* have to give an authoritative interpretation of the scriptures. The questions that Dr. Ambedkar's indictment suggests are:

1. What are the scriptures?
2. Are all the printed texts to be regarded as an integral part of them or is any part of them to be rejected as unauthorized interpretations?
3. What is the answer of such accepted and expurgated scriptures on the question of untouchability, caste, equality of status, inter-dining and intermarriages?

(These have been all ably examined by Dr. Ambedkar in his address).

I must reserve for the next issue<sup>1</sup> my own answer to these questions and a statement of the (at least some) manifest flaws in Dr. Ambedkar's thesis.

*Harijan*, 11-7-1936

### 263. LETTER TO A. DONALD MILLER

WARDHA,  
*July 11, 1936*

DEAR MR. MILLER,

Your letter of 3rd July to Mahadev Desai. Thank you for the letters you have been contributing in connection with the terrible leprosy in India.<sup>2</sup> I know from personal experience of village workers of the increasing number. Only this morning Mirabehn who, as you know, has now for nearly 18 months settled down to village life,<sup>3</sup> was

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Dr. Ambedkar's Indictment—II", 18-7-1936

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "The Leprosy Problem", 6-6-1936

<sup>3</sup> At Varoda, a village near Wardha

telling me how many lepers have been coming in contact with her, hoping to find some remedy for their disease. I know that she will derive much help from your letters. And now that I have just begun the village life, I am already making use of the instructions which you have given in your letters.

Needless to say your fifth letter will be published. Of course the readers of *Harijan* should know fully what missionary effort has done to alleviate the suffering of lepers. It would be churlish of me or anybody to ignore the medical work of the various missions in India and elsewhere. My complaint is that that work is not done without an alien motive behind it. I could not give you an adequate conception of the barrier that this motive erects between them and the thousands who would gladly take advantage of medical and other help that missionaries could render. You will probably rejoin that missionaries are not deflected from the call which they consider to be divine, by knowledge of the barrier. Persons like me who believe in the essential truth of all religions feel on the contrary that the proselytizing effort prevents so many Indians from benefiting by the unadulterated teachings of Jesus which ennobles life in spite of their not believing in him as the only begotten Son of God.

I hope you will not regard this paragraph of my letter as in any way qualifying my gratefulness for your articles. I felt that it would not be complete if I did not let you know that my view on proselytization could not in any way affect my recognition of the good that is done by the mission, apart from their proselytizing attempt. I need hardly say that this little discussion of my view is not meant as an invitation to a debate on the subject. This letter itself does not call for any reply. It is merely meant to be one of thanks and nothing more. You may expect questions on leprosy as may be prompted by personal contact with lepers which will probably be my daily lot.

*Yours sincerely,*  
M. K. GANDHI

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers Courtesy: Pyarelal



264. LETTER TO SAHEBJI MAHARAJ

July 11, 1936

DEAR SAHEBJI MAHARAJ<sup>1</sup>,

I know you have supplied the Karachi Harijan Tannery a competent tutor for shoe-making and so you have for the Harijan Colony in Delhi. We have in Wardha also a tannery to which a few young men are devoting their time principally for their love of Harijans! But we are feeling the want of a competent teacher for shoe-making and other leather manufacture. If we can teach shoe-making to the Harijans and others in village-tanning, they will have an additional capacity for earning and we would be able to have more men if we can add manufacture to finished tanning. If you have such a teacher to spare, could you please lend one for six months? The idea is that the teacher will prepare from among the students a promising young man as a teacher. If you can send such a person you will please tell me when he can come and what he will expect to be paid.

*I am,*

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: G.N. 2163

265. LETTER TO UMADEVI BAJAJ

July 11, 1936

CHI. OM,

I want you to send me little Marathi books that may be with you, Madalasa, or anybody else and are not of immediate use there, since I wish to set up a small library here and need Marathi books. They should be textbooks as well as books for general reading. The books will be returned to their owners if my scheme does not work. These should be lent for six months at least. And those books which can be given away are to be given away for good. Send me a list of the books that may be given away. I don't propose to have a library costing more than ten rupees. This will give you an idea of the kind of books I want. If anybody preserves Marathi newspapers I would like to have

<sup>1</sup> Head of a Radhaswami Sect in Dayalbagh, Agra

them, too, after they are read there. This is not asking for any big donation. Nor do the seniors need be disturbed. However, some persons like you can easily undertake such work if they have a thought for the villagers. Do this job with your heart in it. If you do not find interest in it, say no, so that I may plead with someone else.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

*Panchven Putrako Bapuke Ashirvad*, p. 343

### 266. LETTER TO VIJAYA N. PATEL

*July 11, 1936*

CHI. VIJAYA,

You yourself will write whenever you fancy, and I am expected to reply by return of post. Nor will you apologize for your laxity! Where did you have all this training? I am settled in Segaoon all right but I have no facility to accommodate you. You may go to the Mahila Ashram if you wish. Ba has not yet come. She is still at Maganwadi.

There is within us divine going on constantly; it is, no doubt, beyond the perception of sense-organs, but we can believe in it on the strength of our faith. Moreover, just as we have sense-organs, so too we have the *atman* within us, don't we? Hence the *atman* may experience it, being itself beyond the senseorgans. I experience every moment the presence of the *atman* and therefore I occasionally catch the echoes of the divine music. With effort you, too, can hear the music if you wish. It is not the music that another can help one hear. One can communicate to another only that which is perceptible to sense-organs. About the *atman*, the *atman* alone can know.

Wait if you wish to stay nowhere but with me.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 7060. Also C.W. 4552. Courtesy: Vijayabehn M. Pancholi

267. LETTER TO D.B. KALELKAR

July 11, 1936

CHI. KAKA,

I have gone through Rameshwardas's letter. Since you have offered no comments I do not know what you desire. I shall explain as I see the situation.

Parnerkar will not give up responsibility for the Dhulia Goshala. He will keep an eye on it. He has not gone there to take up any other work for Rameshwardas. He cannot involve himself in Rameshwardas's domestic affairs, though there has been some interference on his part. This was natural since he has been staying with the family. Both the husband and wife are foolish and though they do not get along well together, Rameshwardas cannot do without Gangabehn even for a moment and quarrels are inevitable. What can anyone do in this situation? Neither of the two can make use of Shivaji who stays there. Gangabehn cannot put him to any good use; though she would certainly misuse his presence if she could. So awful is the situation. If you can see the situation differently please ignore my letter. If your view is much the same as mine, give any advice that you think fit after considering my view. Perhaps the better course might be for you to see Vinoba and advise me as you two decide. But this is only what occurs to me on reading the letter. You should do as you may have decided.

I am returning the letter.

Blessings from  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 7700

268. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
July 12, 1936

MY DEAR IDIOT,

I have your letter. *Do not* strain to write to me. You must not thin away. Do not waste your energy. Your letters to me must be a pleasure and a recreation or they must not be written at all. We shall

not come closer by reason of letters. Absence of them can't separate us or create coolness. Why should you become a chronic invalid?

Your sense though of an idiot evidently led you aright. For your Simla khadi experiment seems to be succeeding beyond expectations. I suppose I must call it a mere accident. Idiots can't design good things !

The cottage here is a picture. I have just now a young sadhu.<sup>1</sup> He is a great *bhajani*, singer of bhajans of his own composition. He will be with me for a month. I occupy one corner, he occupies another, the third is occupied by Munnalal, a co-worker. The first accommodates a plank bedstead which you have seen. That corner will be taken up by Ba, if she comes, *and* you. So, you will prepare yourself for the proper village life. No privacy except in the bathroom which you will share with me. You must shudder to think of the fate that awaits you. You will enjoy the newness. There is no noise in spite of the seemingly crowded state of the room. All round is open and beautiful. Fresh breeze blowing throughout the day. It is quite cool. Perfect walks all over. When you come for two nights you will tell me what changes you will want.

You are there perhaps much more crowded than you are likely to feel here. All of us sleep under the sky without a roof separating us from it. Nevertheless you should bring your mosquito net and the cork for your thermos which you have made mine. I am managing with the one which is now almost all eaten away.

Agatha<sup>2</sup> expects to attend the Ceylon Conference which you have tabooed for yourself.

This is the newest sample of Maganwadi paper. You will have this in an envelope of Maganwadi make.

Love.

TYRANT

From the original: C.W. 3582. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 6391

<sup>1</sup> Tukdoji Maharaj: *vide* the following item.

<sup>2</sup> Agatha Harrison

## 269. LETTER TO GANGABEHN VAIDYA

*July 12, 1936*

CHI. GANGABEHN,

Cooking and washing clothes are no small service. There is an idea abroad these days that only the educated can do public service and the value of cooking and similar work has gone down very much. But did you not see that at Sabarmati the responsibility of the kitchen was entrusted only to a mature and experienced Ashram worker? When the Ashram was first established at Kochrab, I had in the beginning assumed the responsibility myself. Subsequently it was passed on to Vinoba, Kaka and others, and a worker like Vrajlal<sup>1</sup> lost his life while attending to the washing of clothes. Even when he joined, he had asked to be allowed to do all the clothes-washing, though he could do accounting and possessed a handwriting beautiful as a string of pearls. At a time of difficulty once, the charge of the store had to be entrusted to him. Without such workers we can never hope to win swaraj.

What I have said above doesn't mean, however, that you may not increase your knowledge of letters when you get the opportunity to do so or that you should not encourage others in their desire to learn. All that I mean is that anybody who hankers after education, neglecting the dharma that has fallen to his lot unsought, is committing an error.

Do come to Wardha before going to Bochasan. Gomati will try to drag you to her place. Besides, there are Maganwadi and Mahila Ashram also. Janakibehn is there, too, and, if you wish, you can come to me at Segaon and even stay with me, though we have only one room here for all of us. Only lately Tukdoji Maharaj has come and has been assigned one corner. The room is large enough, 29 x 14, with a 7' verandah running all round. In one corner of the verandah is a small kitchen and in another a bathroom for me. The walls are made of mud. The entire building is constructed with purely local materials. All around in this season our eyes rest on green fields.

<sup>1</sup> Vrajlal Gandhi who had descended into a well to bring up someone's water pot which had fallen in. While climbing up he slipped and was drowned

Mirabehn lives by herself in a hut smaller than this room, about a mile and a half from here.

It is very essential that Bachubhai does not ignore any of the restrictions regarding food or exertion.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

*Bapuna Patro*—6: *G.S. Gangabehn*, pp. 91-2. Also C.W. 8832. Courtesy: Gangabehn Vaidya

### 270. LETTER TO PYARELAL

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
[July]<sup>1</sup> 12, 1936

CHI. PYARELAL,

Now that I have given the first priority to your letter, I cannot give it up. Hence I am sending this letter at my earliest. But Sushila's letter is still lying unanswered because I am still waiting for a free moment. I want to make it a beautiful letter. Where should I send it?

You may go wherever you please, but please understand that you will be most welcome whenever you come here. I am in a hut here. There is shortage of space. But surely you are not bothered by that? You have seen the *dharmashala* at Maganwadi, have you not? This little place is becoming just like that. I like it. There is peace. Right now Tukde Maharaj is keeping me company. He will be staying for a month. He has an endless treasure of *bhajans*. All of them sound beautiful. Come if you feel you want to listen to them. For the rest I am just getting acquainted with him. I see that much service can be had from him. People have great faith in him.

Others living with me at present are Munnalal, Balwantsinha and Lilavati. Ba is planning to come. Now that Devdas has gone to Delhi,

<sup>1</sup> The source bears the date "12-6-1936", evidently a slip, for Gandhiji was in Bangalore on this date. Further, from the contents of the letter it is clear that it was written on July 12; *vide* also "Letter to Amrit Kaur", 12-7-1936

she may come.

What is your diet?

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

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

*271. LETTER TO PRABHAVATI*

*July 13<sup>1</sup>, 1936*

CHI. PRABHA,

I got your wire yesterday evening and was very glad. I will not tolerate your falling ill as it would put you and me to shame. Why should one who has learnt from me the key to health fall ill? Take only the food that agrees with you, breathe fresh air and take regular exercise. Take hip-bath whenever you need it. Do not worry under any circumstances. This anyone can do. You should never work beyond your capacity.

Ba came here last evening with Manu. A sadhu also has come to spend a month with me. We are all in the same hut. The sadhu is known by the name Tukdoji Maharaj.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

[PS.]

Kanti is at Trivandrum.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3473

*272. LETTER TO SHRIMAN NARAYAN AGRAWAL*

SEGAON,  
*July 13, 1936*

BHAI SHRIMAN,

Your letter I could read only just now. I am unable to read the whole mail as soon as it arrives.

I am sending *Roti ka Raga*. Return it to me after Kakasaheb does his writing on it. In fact I had understood that my opinion was

required solely for your own satisfaction. But now I cannot find anything to write which can go into print. All the same let us see what can be done. You may come over whenever you wish to. You are not going to take my time, are you? Do whatever work Mahadev asks you to do for *Harijan*.

Blessings from  
BAPU

[From Hindi]

*Panchven Putrako Bapuke Ashirvad*, p. 239

### 273. LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

*Unrevised by me*

SEGAON,  
July 15, 1936

DEAR JAWAHARLAL,

(1) I hope you got my wire about *The Times of India* letter. I procured it yesterday and read it through. Nobody has ever written to me about the subject-matter. My reading of the letter confirms my view that you should take legal notice of the libel.

(2) If you will not misunderstand me, I would like you to keep me free of the Civil Liberties Union. I do not like for the time being to join any political institution. And there is no meaning in a confirmed civil resister joining it. Apart however from my joining or not joining the Union, maturer consideration confirms me in my opinion that it would be a mistake to appoint Sarojini Naidu or for that matter any civil resister as President. I am still of opinion that the President should be a well-known constitutional lawyer. If that does not commend itself to you then, you should have an author of note who is not a law-breaker. I would also ask you to restrict the number of members. You need quality, not quantity.

(3) Your letter is touching. You feel to be the most injured party. The fact is that your colleagues have lacked your courage and frankness. The result has been disastrous. I have always pleaded with them to speak out to you freely and fearlessly. But having lacked the courage, whenever they have spoken they have done it clumsily and you have felt irritated. I tell you they have dreaded you, because of your irritability and impatience of them. They have chafed under your rebukes and magisterial manner and above all your arrogance



of what has appeared to them your infallibility and superior knowledge. They feel that you have treated them with scant courtesy and never defended them from socialists' ridicule and even misrepresentation.

You complain of their having called your activities harmful. That was not to say that you were harmful. Their letter was no occasion for recounting your virtues or your services. They were fully conscious of your dynamism and your hold over the masses and the youth of the country. They know that you cannot be dispensed with. And so they wanted to give way.

I look upon the whole affair as a tragi-comedy. I would therefore like you to look at the whole thing in a lighter vein. I do not mind your taking the A.I.C.C. into your confidence. But I do want you not to impose on it the unbearable tasks of adjusting your family quarrels or choosing between them and you. Whatever you do you must face them with accomplished things.

Why do you resent their majority being reflected in all subcommittees, etc.? Is it not the most natural thing? You are in office by their unanimous choice but you are not in power yet. To put you in office was an attempt to find you in power, quicker than you would otherwise have been. Anyway that was at the back of my mind when I suggested your name for the crown of thorns. Keep it on though the head be bruised. Resume your humour at the committee meetings. That is your most usual role, not that of a care-worn irritable man ready to burst on the slightest occasion.

How I wish you could telegraph to me that on finishing my letter you felt as merry as you were on that New Year's Day in Lahore when you were reported to have danced round the tricolour flag.

You must give your throat a chance.

I am revising my statement. I have decided not to publish it till you have seen it.

I have decided that nobody should see our correspondence, besides Mahadev.

Love.

BAPU

Gandhi-Nehru Papers, 1936. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

## 274. LETTER TO PRABHAVATI

July 15, 1936

CHI. PRABHA,

I have your letter. Don't fall ill again. What was the cause of the last illness? Do you take hip-baths? In no case should you give it up.

Kanti is still at Trivandrum. Nimu is going to join Ramdas in Bombay. Manu will come to stay at Segaon. Lilavati is already here. So here, too, we shall be congested.

I seem to be keeping good health, and the food, too, continues to be as usual. For the present, Tukdoji Maharaj is here to spend a month with me.

I have written to you about the talk with Jayaprakashji.<sup>1</sup> When will you be going to Patna?

Blessings from  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3479

## 275. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

July 15, 1936

DEAR DAUGHTER AMTUL SALAAM,<sup>2</sup>

I have your letter today, and I am sending the reply with Kanu so that it might be carried by the morning train.

The operation<sup>3</sup> can certainly be performed at Delhi and I shall arrange for it. I shall let you know the names of the doctors when I learn them.

Why should you believe what others say to you about my displeasure? Would I not express my displeasure myself? What a daughter you must be to believe what others say about your father!

Haven't I told you that you should have from me the money to meet your needs? You will take from me the money for coming

<sup>1</sup> Vide "Letter to Prabhavati", 8-7-1936

<sup>2</sup> This is in Urdu.

<sup>3</sup> For nose trouble

over here.

I had a bit of a letter from Kanti. He is happy. He will return in a month.

Have your nose examined by someone there. Consult Devdas.

I think I have answered the questions in your letter. There is no time to write more.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 340

### 276. *LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR*

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
*July 16, 1936*

MY DEAR REBEL,

There are tyrants and tyrants. You will see on 22nd how you feel. If the night is fine, the roads dry and you do not feel fatigued, drive to Segaoon after having your food. I shall be ready to give you a shake down at Segaoon. If the fates are not propitious, you will sleep at Maganwadi and walk or drive, as you will, to Segaoon in the morning. You must not be tired out in any way. You may brave all kinds of experiences, subject to the tyrant's will, on your return when you are expected to stay for a period.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 3583. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 6392

### 277. *LETTER TO HORACE ALEXANDER*

*July 16, 1936*

DEAR HORACE,

Your letter was most welcome. You will get a note<sup>1</sup> from me through Kamalnayan Bajaj. But that is a mere introduction. Only it was written before the receipt of your letter.

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Letter to Horace Alexander", 6-7-1936

I anticipated you about Agatha. I cabled approval of her plan.<sup>1</sup> Her expenses in India can certainly be found but, on principle, her passage to India and back should be found from your end. That is what I have generally followed.

I quite agree with you that such visits are helpful. Therefore if the Heaths<sup>2</sup> can come it would [be] a good thing.

Jawaharlal is tirelessly preaching his message. He has an unconquerable faith in his mission.

Love to you both.

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 1424

### 278. LETTER TO KHURSHEDBEHN NAOROJI<sup>3</sup>

July 16, 1936

When did the pilgrimage become due? If you are merely referring to Khan Saheb's manifesto, it contains no such message for me. The incident is too trivial for me to notice. My undertaking with the Brothers is that I am not to rush without a call from them, unless I have an irresistible urge. I have none of the latter.

Saints are both real and false. The real ones never *want* any noise round them but it does become their hard lot. The false ones cannot live without noise.

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

### 279. LETTER TO AMRITLAL T. NANAVATI

July 16, 1936

CHI. AMRITLAL,

I got your note well in time. It is easy to say, 'May you live a hundred years.' However, It is for you to make the effort. It is enough

<sup>1</sup> The cable is not available. Agatha Harrison was to attend the Ceylon Conference. *Vide* "Letter to Amrit Kaur", 12-7-1936

<sup>2</sup> Presumably Carl Heath, a Quaker, and his wife

<sup>3</sup> The addressee had informed Gandhiji that there was a call for him from the Frontier to go there silently and had also remarked. "Can't saints do anything without noise?"

if we regard our body as a trust held in behalf of God and use it accordingly. Take care of your body. Take up no more burden than it can carry.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 10718

*280. LETTER TO J.P. BHANSALI*

*July 16, 1936*

CHI. BHANSALI

I have your note. I cannot help feeling anxious. You have to become a model for others. You ought to preserve your health in good condition. You cannot get up without assistance. Why this sign of old age? I want you to do this: Live on unboiled milk alone, or eat any flour and almonds, or take coconut, gram and lemon. It is possible to keep the vow of abstaining from cooked food. True discipline would lie in this: You should eat nothing to indulge the palate. By way of medicine, you may take any food in the prescribed measure. Your weakness and night blindness must disappear.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

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

*281. LETTER TO NARAHARI D. PARIKH*

*[July 16, 1936]<sup>1</sup>*

CHI. NARAHARI,

I have your letter. Nimu [is going]<sup>2</sup> to Bombay. Ramdas insists that she should now stay with him. He is now engaged in the . . .<sup>3</sup>.business.

I follow your point about Ramji. Do not give up your firmness in any case. Service of the cow we shall entrust to Vinoba.

. . .<sup>4</sup>

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9096

<sup>1</sup> From the S.N. Register

<sup>2</sup> Illegible

<sup>3</sup> *ibid*

<sup>4</sup> *ibid*

## 282. LETTER TO KANTILAL GANDHI

July [16]<sup>1</sup>, 1936

CHI. KANTI,

You have been proved right and I wrong. What misuse and misinterpretation of a quite innocent statement of mine! Even so, why should it touch you? I have explained to you that you should not be touchy. Our letters crossed; yours reaching Wardha the day I sent mine from Segaon.

I don't think there is anything particular in Saraswati asking leave to stay on for two months. What comment did my letter evoke? And who made it?

You say nothing about your health. Where had you been to? I have not understood what Saraswati writes.

Nimu is leaving today to join Ramdas. Kanam<sup>2</sup> will be here. Ba and others have gone to Wardha to see Nimu off. She will return tomorrow. She comfortably works from Wardha to this place and has the courage also to walk back the same day. Manu too will come here.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 7302. Courtesy: Kantilal Gandhi

## 283. TELEGRAM TO PYARELAL

WARDHAGANJ,  
July 17, 1936

PYARELALJI  
KHADIPRATISHTHAN  
15 COLLEGE SQUARE  
CALCUTTA

WIRE HEALTH. WRITING FULLY TODAY.

BAPU

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

<sup>1</sup> The source has July 26, which apparently is a slip as Nirmala went to join Ramdas on July 16; *vide* "Letter to Manilal and Sushila Gandhi", 18-7-1936

<sup>2</sup> Son of Ramdas Gandhi

## 284. LETTER TO PYARELAL

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
July 17, 1936

CHI. PYARELAL,

I received your letter only last night. It is painful that your health should be spoilt. You must have received the telegram I sent you today. If you have not committed yourself to go to Utkal, come to Segaoon. There is plenty of work waiting here. Only in this jungle can we have a couple of hours to ourselves. Therefore my wish is that you should now settle down only with me. Who knows about October? We shall see when that time comes. "Enjoy the present moment, who has seen the morrow?"

I had then and there read the note you had sent in a small cover. I have not been able to read your article. I have kept it safe. I shall read it when I find some time.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

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

## 285. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

WARDHA,  
July 17, 1936

CHI. NARANDAS,

I have corrected the note<sup>1</sup> you sent me and am now returning it with my endorsement. It would be proper not to expect a visit from me at present. If you persist in your request to Sardar, he will, I expect, try to come, though no one can say if that will be on the 12th<sup>2</sup> exactly. I have struck out those names as things are all uncertain. It would of course be admirable if people joined purely out of love of khadi; otherwise what does it matter if we get or do not get a little

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

<sup>2</sup> Gandhiji's birthday according to the Vikram calendar

more khadi? How long can we sustain their enthusiasm for them? However, you many publish the names if in course of time you can ascertain who will be coming.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II. Also C.W. 8499. Courtesy:  
Narandas Gandhi

## 286. *LETTER TO KHADI WORKERS*

*July 17, 1936*

Before this<sup>1</sup> was printed a draft was sent to me. I know Narandas's love of khadi so I cannot refuse his request for my signature under it. The more khadi we produce with a pure heart the nearer comes swaraj for all. What Narandas asks of the readers is as good as nothing; it should therefore be complied with without reserve.

MOHANDAS KARAMCHAND GANDHI

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II. Also C.W. 8500 Courtesy:  
Narandas Gandhi

## 287. *TALK WITH JAIRAMDAS DOULATRAM AND DEVDAS GANDHI<sup>2</sup>*

[Before *July 18, 1936*]<sup>3</sup>

I am very happy that you have come here, but, I hope, not to see this dignified hut of mine. I am responsible for little of the planning here, and I have given to it none of my art or my labour. But I wonder if you saw on you way Mirabehn's hut. It was worth while coming all the way to see her hut certainly. That is really and truly HER hut. This

<sup>1</sup> It was a note on the programme for Gandhiji's sixty-eighth birthday which was revised by Gandhiji. It read: "If a spinner wishes to use for himself the yarn spun by him, he will get it back as *prasada*; if not, it will be used to promote khadi activity.

It is not too much to hope that everyone will understand the significance of this occasion and give an impetus to khadi activity."

<sup>2</sup> Extracted from Mahadev Desai's "Weekly Letter"

<sup>3</sup> Devdas Gandhi had reached Delhi by July 18; *vide* "Letter to Manilal and Sushila Gandhi", 18-7-1936



is a hut built FOR me, not MY hut. Here is her own hut, planned and built by herself (of course with other people's labour). But it is not merely a hut. It is a poem. I studied it in detail only yesterday, and I tell you I had tears of joy as I saw the villager's mentality about everything in it. You know I often have my quarrels with her, but let me tell you that no one from amongst us can claim to have the real rural-mindedness that she has. Did you study the position of her little bath-room and the inside of it? She has utilized every stone that the blasting of the underground rock in her well, made available to her. The seat for the bath is all one stone fixed to the ground. Next to the bathroom in the same little hut is the latrine. No commode or wooden plank or any brickwork. Just two beautiful stones, half buried in the ground, and with two halves of kerosene tins between the stones. Any villager can do this, but never does it. All the water naturally runs to carefully made beds for plants and vegetables. And look at the care with which she has built the little stable for her horse, on the grooming and feeding and keeping of which she lavishes all her love and attention. Her love of animals is a thing to learn from her. Even whilst she is sitting and working in her hut; the stable is so arranged that she can give an occasional look to the horse. And now let us see the inside of the hut—all mud and split bamboo and wattle of palm-branches. You note every little article in the hut and the place given to it. Her *chula* (fire) is all made with her own hands, and though she has learnt it from us no one can beat her in the art. Then see the bamboo mantelpiece (if you will give it that big name) on which she keeps her earthen cooking utensils. Then see the little doorless windows and bamboo bookshelf and note the palms and peacocks over the windows, moulded in relief by herself. Also note her little kitchen and the carding room. The village where she works is about two to three furlongs from the hut. All the women and many of the men in the village know her, and the women confide to her many of their household secrets and look to her for advice and guidance—not always an easy matter, but always unfailingly for solace and comfort. She looks like one of them. Well, if you have not studied her hut carefully I would like you to go there again on your way back.

*Harijan, 25-7-1936*

## 288. DR. AMBEDKAR'S INDICTMENT—II

The Vedas, Upanishads, *Smritis* and Puranas including *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* are the Hindu scriptures. Nor is this a finite list. Every age or even generation has added to the list. It follows, therefore, that everything printed or even found handwritten is not scripture. The *Smritis*, for instance, contain much that can never be accepted as the word of God. Thus many of the texts that Dr. Ambedkar quotes from the *smritis* cannot be accepted as authentic. The scriptures properly so called can only be concerned with eternal verities and must appeal to any conscience, i.e., any heart whose eyes of understanding are opened. Nothing can be accepted as the word of God which cannot be tested by reason or is not capable of being spiritually experienced. And even when you have an expurgated edition of the scriptures, you will need their interpretation. Who is the best interpreter? Not learned men surely. Learning there must be. But religion does not live by it. It lives in the experiences of its saints and seers, in their lives and sayings. When all the most learned commentators of the scriptures are utterly forgotten, the accumulated experience of the sages and saints will abide and be an inspiration for ages to come.

Caste has nothing to do with religion. It is a custom whose origin I do not know and do not need to know for the satisfaction of my spiritual hunger. But I do know, that it is harmful both to spiritual and national growth. Varna and ashrama are institutions which have nothing to do with castes. The law of varna teaches us that we have each one of us to earn our bread by following the ancestral calling. It defines not our rights but our duties. It necessarily has reference to callings that are conducive to the welfare of humanity and to no other. It also follows that there is no calling too low and none too high. All are good, lawful, and absolutely equal in status. The callings of a Brahmin—spiritual teacher—and a scavenger are equal, and their due performance carries equal merit before God and at one time seems to have carried identical reward before man. Both were entitled to their livelihood and no more. Indeed one traces even now in the villages the faint lines of this healthy operation of the law. Living in Segaoon with its population of 600, I do not find a great disparity between the earnings of different tradesmen including Brahmins. I find too that real Brahmins are to be found even in these degenerate days who are

living on alms freely given to them and are giving freely of what they have of spiritual treasures. It would be wrong and improper to judge the law of varna by its caricature in the lives of men who profess to belong to a varna whilst they openly commit a breach of its only operative rule. Arrogation of a superior status by any of the varnas over another is a denial of the law. And there is nothing in the law of varna to warrant a belief in untouchability. (The essence of Hinduism is contained in its enunciation of one and only God as Truth and its bold acceptance of ahimsa as the law of the human family.)

I am aware that my interpretation of Hinduism will be disputed by many besides Dr. Ambedkar. That does not affect my position. It is an interpretation by which I have lived for nearly half a century and according to which I have endeavoured to the best of my ability to regulate my life.

In my opinion the profound mistake that Dr. Ambedkar has made in his address is to pick out the texts of doubtful authenticity and value and the state of degraded Hindus who are no fit specimens of the faith they, so woefully misrepresent. Judged by the standard applied by Dr. Ambedkar, every known living faith will probably fail.

In his able address, the learned Doctor has over-proved his case. Can a religion that was professed by Chaitanya, Jnanadeva, Tukaram, Tiruvalluvar, Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Maharshi Devendranath Tagore, Vivekanand and a host of others who might be easily mentioned, be so utterly devoid of merit as is made out in Dr. Ambedkar's address? A religion has to be judged not by its worst specimens but by the best it might have produced. For that and that alone can be used as the standard to aspire to, if not to improve upon.

*Harijan, 18-7-1936*

## 289. NOTES

### HARIJAN SEVAK SANGH AND MUNICIPAL GRANTS.

The Secretary of the Harijan Sevak Sangh writes:

The Government auditors have raised objection to the grant made to the Harijan Sevak Sangh by the Dhulia Municipal Borough during the last year, on the ground that the work of Harijan uplift is not an educational object and the Municipal Borough cannot spend for it. Here is a serious question to be tackled.

It is also contended that hostels of students are not educational institutions. This is an astounding interpretation and unless set right at an early date will adversely affect the work of the Sangh and other institutions as well.

If what is stated here is true, there must be some misunderstanding. It may be debatable whether Harijan uplift can be classed as an educational effort, but when a school is conducted for Harijans or a hostel run in the interests of students surely both are educational efforts, and as such there should be no objection to a municipal borough financing such institutions. I hope, therefore, that the remarks said to have been made by the Government auditors are due to a pure misunderstanding of the position. It may be that the Dhulia Board voted a grant for 'Harijan Uplift' and if it has no power to make grants except to educational institutions, Harijan uplift as such might not be classified under grants to education. The matter requires further elucidation. Any further comment must be withheld till all the facts of the case are known.

#### A VILLAGER'S HUMANITY

The reader will be glad to see the following two pictures sent by Miss Mary Barr of Khedi of what I have called "A Villager's Humanity".

1. Yesterday I found an old woman sitting in the wet with her calf. I asked her why she did not sit in the verandah (meaning the verandah of Miss Mary Barr's Cottage) with the rest of her party and keep dry. (They were some wandering people who had asked leave to camp for 24 hours on the verandah) She replied, 'I am sitting by this 'ëøË (calf). Its mother is dead.'

2. This afternoon I found two donkeys had come on to the verandah out of the rain and my first instinct was to 'shoo' them off as they would spoil the floor. They obediently 'shooed' and I immediately felt ashamed remembering yesterday's old woman and invited them back. They came.

I am sure Tara would be glad to know that HER verandah is sheltering all kinds of men and beasts during these wet days.

The reference to Tara, i.e., the late Mary Chesley, entirely bears out what I knew of her, and now that her numerous intimate friends have come to know about her premature and unexpected death, I have been receiving touching letters about the qualities of her heart and head. From those I copy the following.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Only extracts are reproduced here.

Polly (Miss Chesley) was built of the stuff from which martyrs are made. She never knew fear. She was keen pacifist and persuaded me to take the post left vacant at her mother's death as Superintendent of Peace and Arbitration in the W.C.T.U. for Canada... Polly and I worked together to gather money for the Russian and Chinese famines, getting ten thousand dollars..... We also collected one thousand dollars for German children's relief.

#### A CORRECTION

With reference to my note 'Barbarous If True'<sup>1</sup> the President of the Panchayat Board, Devakottai writes:<sup>2</sup>

... There has been no objection raised at all at any time by myself or any other member of the Board to the Harijan member taking his seat alongside the other members. On the other hand he has been repeatedly requested during each and every meeting to take his seat. He has complied with our request during a few of the meetings that were held during the last four months.

... The Harijan member was questioned about the alleged treatment and he has issued a statement... that he was never objected to by anybody in the Board in taking his seat, and at times when he hesitated to take his seat along with others as per age-long custom, he has been promptly cheered up by the President to take his seat and advised not to get disheartened.

... Finally I wish to inform you that the Harijan member is no doubt sitting along with other members during the whole of the meeting now, and I want to assure you that all facilities are accorded to him by me so that his rights and privileges are duly enjoyed by him.

I gladly publish this letter. I am gladder still to find that the statement published was wholly untrue. In these days of suspicion and ferment among Harijans, it is necessary for correspondents to be accurate about the information they give. It is worth while knowing how the correspondent came to make the statement which appears to have been without any foundation whatsoever.

*Harijan*, 18-7-1936

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Barbarous if True", 27-6-1936

<sup>2</sup> Only excerpts are reproduced here.

290. LETTER TO MANILAL AND SUSHILA GANDHI

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
July 18, 1936

CHI. MANILAL AND SUSHILA,

I got your letter. For some time past I have not been able to attend to your letters regularly.

There is nothing special concerning Harilal for the present. He goes about talking at random.

Sushila seems to think that I am insisting on your coming over here, but I don't remember having suggested such a thing in any of my letters. I do not think that you need come over if you are comfortably settled there. I would of course wish you not to feel helpless. Do what you both think right.

Ba, Manu and Kano came over to stay with me yesterday. Lilavati is here already. I may say we are now cramped for space.

I think I have told you earlier that there is just one room.

Ramdas has set himself up very well for the present. Let us now see how he fares. Nimu went to join him two days ago.

Devdas and Lakshmi had been here and have now reached Delhi. Chhaganlal and Kashi continue to stay at Wardha.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4854

291. LETTER TO MRIDULA SARABHAI

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
July 18, 1936

CHI. MRIDU,

The bulletins arrived two days after your letter. You have strong shoulders and they will bear the burden of this work. But if you pass some of that burden on to my shoulders, I am afraid they will be crushed. What more can I say or do beyond giving you the empty blessings that God may grant you glory in the gigantic task you have undertaken. My strength is limited and every single movement of

mine is taken up by my rural but nevertheless new work. Even so I have spared the time required to read your bulletins. I have made the necessary comments which you will receive along with this letter.

I had a long letter from Jawaharlal in which he writes that you have become a matter of controversy between him and me. When will you write to me about this? I am awaiting the letter. I am trying to get to the root of this problem.

Give the enclosed letter to Mummy.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From the Gujarati original; C. W. 11200. Courtesy: Sarabhai Foundation

### 292. *LETTER TO NIRMALA GANDHI*

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
*July 18, 1936*

CHI. NIMU,

I received Sumi's letter...<sup>1</sup> I have written today. She must have reached the place. Kanam is fine. Write to me in detail.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From the Gujarati original Mrs. Sumitra Kulkarni Papars. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

### 293. *LETTER TO MIRABEHN*

SEGAON,  
*July 19, 1936*

CHI. MIRA,

You need not attempt to come here for the statement. There is no hurry. I cannot even give time, today being *Harijan* editing day. And of course you were right in postponing the statement to the plants which in village life take the prior place.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 6356, Courtesy: Mirabehn. Also G.N. 9822

<sup>1</sup> Some words here are illegible in the source.

294. TALK WITH STUDENTS OF VILLAGE  
WORKERS' TRAINING SCHOOL<sup>1</sup>

[July 19, 1936]<sup>2</sup>

He<sup>3</sup> does not talk like me; he simply sings *bhajans* and preaches and teaches through them. I must needs talk as I can neither compose nor sing.

After the entertainment... the talk began with a light banter of a student who believes in growing long hair. Gandhiji asked him:

Is this just for show, or for the sake of health? If it is for no particular purpose, why not get rid of it?

Well, don't you run away with the idea that one can do village work by just going and sitting down in a village. To be a real villager is to serve them, and you may remember that to be a real villager is more difficult than to obtain a graduate's degree. I have been talking of villages and villagers for the past thirty years, but have been able to come to stay in a village only today. And that too is just the stay and no work. We eat unpolished rice and hand-ground flour, but how can we compel the villagers to do likewise? Even if we had the power to do so, we should not exercise it. We have to convince them by patient persuasion.

Q. Without power, can we really achieve much?

A. Did I not say that even if we had it, we should not use it? We have to convert them to our way of thinking. We have to bring to bear on them moral pressure.

Q. If you take such a desperate view, where are we?

A. I am far from taking a desperate view and it would be wrong to suppose that potentially you are weaker than I. Physically of course there may be considerable difference between you and me, and the spiritual power in you may be dormant in your case, active in my case. But this is no task where one could do things as if by magic. What magic is there in merely staying in a village? Even six months' stay in a village may not by itself achieve anything. Much

<sup>1</sup> Extracted from Mahadev Desai's "Weekly Letter", 25-7-1936

<sup>2</sup> According to Mahadev Desai the conversation took place on a Sunday. The Sunday prior to July 25 fell on July 19.

<sup>3</sup> Tukdoji Maharaj



depends on the spirit in which one goes to stay there. We stay for years in cities without affecting the life around us. We have to go there as their voluntary servants. They come and labour for us in cities for a wage. We have to go to villages and labour for them without a wage.

Q. I see. Do the village folk come to see you?

A. They do, but not without fear, and perhaps even suspicion. These also are among the many shortcomings of villagers. We have to rid them of these.

Q. How?

A. By gently insinuating ourselves into their affections. We must disabuse them of the fear that we have gone there to coerce them, we must show them by our behaviour that there is no intention to coerce, nor any selfish motive. But this is all patient work. You cannot quickly convince them of your *bona fides*.

Q. Don't you think that only those who work without any remuneration or allowance can inspire confidence in them, i.e., those who accept nothing whether from any association or from the village?

A. No. They do not even know who is and who is not working for remuneration. What does impress them is the way in which we live, our habits, our talks, even our gestures. There may be a few who suspect us of a desire to earn; we have to dispel their suspicion no doubt. And then do not run away with the feeling that he who accepts nothing from an association or from the villages is by any means an ideal servant. He is often a prey to self-righteousness which debases one.

Q. You teach us village crafts. Is that to give us a means of earning our livelihood or to enable us to teach the villagers? If it is for the latter object, how can we master a craft in the course of a year?

A. You are being taught the ordinary crafts, because unless you know the principles you will not be able to help people with suggestions. The most enterprising among you would certainly earn a living by following a craft. Now here you see I had a hut ready made for me, thanks to Jamnalalji and thanks to my 'Mahatmaship'! But you will have to build your own hut, unless of course you also get a friend to build it for you—in which case I will say you were old and decrepit like me!

Q. Shri Rajagopalachariar who was here the other day told us that it was no use our going to villages without mastering a craft, for then we should not be able to

teach them anything. You must be better agriculturists than they are, he said, better cobblers, better weavers, and so on.

A. What he said is true. But we have no agricultural course here, because mastery of agriculture would take a century. And the things we teach here are such that you are likely to be able to bring to the villagers better knowledge of them. We have improved grinding stones and rice-husking stones and oil-presses. We are carrying on experiments in improving our tools and we have to take the improvements to them. Above all there is truth and honesty in business that we have to teach them. They adulterate milk, they adulterate oil, they will adulterate truth for petty gain. It is not their fault, it is ours. We have so long ignored them and only exploited them, never taught them anything better.. By close contact with them we can easily correct their ways. Long neglect and isolation has dulled their intellect and even moral sense. We have to brighten them up and revive them all along the line.

Q. What about the Harijan problem here?

A. It is as acute as anywhere else.

Q. There is untouchability as amongst the Harijans?

A. Of course. A Mahar would keep a Bhangi at arm's length. Here is a well belonging to Jamnalalji, no public well. After consultation with the man in charge of the estate, we decided to declare it open to all the Harijans and invited Mahars, Chamars, Bhangis and others to use it. They would not do it. They hesitated. One or two Mahars then came forward, a Bhangi also came. That created an uproar. The Harijans stopped using the well, and the tumult has ceased. But there it is. It is like an armed truce. But it is no use blaming them. What are we doing? I have heard with horror the incident from Rajputana where Harijans would not be suffered to cook their food in ghee and to prepare sweetmeats, and that, because of the perversity of the *savarnas*, the situation reached such a pass that firing had to be resorted to and three *savarnas* were killed. It is a tremendous problem. Now, can we who have not cast out untouchability expect the Harijans to cast it out from their midst in a moment?

*Harijan, 25-7-1936*

295. *LETTER TO MIRABEHN*

*July 20, 1936*

CHI. MIRA,

No one understands what message the bearer has brought. Lilavati is too careless to understand. I cannot speak. Munnalal is half dead. B. threatens to follow suit. In these circumstances, it is better to write out what you want. This has become a confused household instead of a hermitage it was expected to be. Such has been my fate!! I must find my hermitage from within.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C.W.6357. Courtesy: Mirabehn. Also G.N. 9823

296. *LETTER TO GANGABEHN VAIDYA*

WARDHA,

*July 20, 1936*

CHI. GANGABEHN,

I have your letter. Even if somebody offers a big donation, do not spend money received from outside on the sanitation work. I have forbidden the spending of even a single rupee in the village here where sanitation work is being carried on, for then people miss the education. We should work as hard as we can but must not spend money. Let the work remain incomplete till the people themselves are prepared to pay for it. We may ourselves do the sweeping, remove the night-soil and bury it. But until the people put up latrines with their own money, let them relieve themselves in the open. We may instruct people in the ways but they must themselves find the means. The Taluka Board may find the money. It may not cost more than ten or twenty rupees. If you do not follow all this, ask me again.

Have no doubt that sanitation work and educating the people with regard to a healthy diet is the only real medical service. Why should not Shamalbhai, Shivabhai and the other men staying there join the sanitation work? It will be enough to devote one hour daily.

You should set out every morning like the Bhangis with brooms, spades and baskets.

You may ask me anything you wish to.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

*Bapuna Patro—6: G.S. Gangabehnne, p. 93. Also C.W. 8835. Courtesy: Gangabehn Vaidya*

### 297. LETTER TO PANNALAL JHAVERI

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
*July 20, 1936*

CHI. PANNALAL,

I have your letter. You have given a good account of your activities. May they bring you credit. I have neither the desire nor the strength to write anything beyond what I write for the *Harijan*. I would certainly reply to the questions that someone like you may ask.

I was indeed surprised when I saw your name on the Reception Committee and Sardar showed me the speech of the Chairman of the Committee. I thought the Chairman's speech was impudent and devoid of truth. I did wonder how you could lend support to such a speech. But what can I say to anyone today? Is Dinkar any different? He has given up all sense of decency. There are other similar examples also. As far as you are concerned, I know that you would do only what you thought was proper. No one has a right to expect more than this from anyone. If someone expected more even from me, I would feel he was being unfair to me.

All of you who act in adherence to truth are bound to prosper.

But I am forgetting the main thing. I will certainly send Walunjkar. He will be getting his railway fare from there, won't he?

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

*Manavtana Prahari—Pannalal Jhaveri, p. 32*

298. LETTER TO NANIBEHN JHAVERI

SEGAON, WARDHA.

July 20, 1936

CHI. NANIBEHN,

Your letter came in all right. I would certainly like to settle down in Gujarat in the midst of all of you. But my *sadhana* has to be at Segaoon for the present. My coming in October will be as good as not coming. We shall of course have the satisfaction of seeing each other.

I hope you and Gangabehn are keeping yourselves fit. I shall not ask about your minds.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

[PS.]

Ba, Manu and Kanu, Prabhavati, Balvantsinha are doing well.

[From Gujarati]

*Manavtana Prahari—Pannalal Jhaveri*, p. 28

299. LETTER TO BABURAO D. MHATRE

SEGAON,

July 21, 1936

DEAR MHATRE,

Shoorjibhai<sup>1</sup> sends the message that the absence of mention of your name in *Harijan*<sup>2</sup> has been felt by you. I assure you that it is not intentional. As you know I am sparing in my compliments. I should have mentioned you when Shri Kar was mentioned. Only at that time I had not your name before me. I know your valuable services too well to underrate them. But I am not going to make an opportunity for mention. It will come in the natural course.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

From a copy: C.W. 9824. Courtesy: B.D. Mhatre

<sup>1</sup> Shoorji Vallabhdas

<sup>2</sup> Presumably this is a reference to Gandhiji's speech published in *Harijan*, 4-4-1936; *vide* "Speech at Khadi And Village Industries Exhibition, Lucknow", 28-3-1936

### 300. LETTER TO PYARELAL

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
July 21, 1936

CHI. PYARELAL,

I have your telegram and letter. I had to wait for your reply to my last letter. But I am writing this because I have read your articles in the mean time. The articles are good. I shall publish them in the *Harijan* in four parts.<sup>1</sup> More could be written about the remedies. You can still do so if anything further occurs to you.

I hope your health is in perfect shape. If you decide not to come here, it must be after careful thought. You should not need any time to decide to come. If there is any doubt the benefit of it should be in favour of coming.

Let me know if you had any talk with Haribhau about which I should know.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

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

### 301. LETTER TO CHAND TYAGI

July 21, 1936

BHAI TYAGI,

I cannot read the whole of your letter. It is sad news that Balvir<sup>2</sup> has contracted tuberculosis. How is he now?

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 6097

<sup>1</sup> The articles appeared under the title "The water they drink", in six parts in the *Harijan* issues of the 8th, 15th, 22nd and 29th of August and the 5th and 12th of September 1936.

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

302. LETTER TO RAJKISHORI

July 21, 1936

CHI. RAJKISHORI,

Your letter. Stay wherever you find peace.

Blessings from  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 6638. Also C.W. 4286. Courtesy: Chand Tyagi

303. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

July 21, 1936

CHI. AMTUSSALAAM,

I hope you have received my letter. I am enclosing letters to Tyagi<sup>1</sup> and Raj<sup>2</sup> and also one<sup>3</sup> to the students.

Return the letter to Rammehar<sup>4</sup> noting on it all the facts. Ask Malkaniji<sup>5</sup> why he had to be relieved.

Blessings from  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 341

304. LETTER TO NIRMALA GANDHI

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
July 21, 1936

CHI. NIMU,

Your fears about Kanu came true. Since you have written to me, I am sending him with an escort. I am no doubt unhappy about it but feel that at the moment God wills it that way.

The snake that bit Satyavan was not a snake in the physical sense; the snake was lust. Savitri got the venom out by her purity and

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* the preceding two items.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*

<sup>3</sup> This is not traceable.

<sup>4</sup> Inmate of the Harijan Ashram, Delhi

<sup>5</sup> N.R. Malkani

love. That is the mystery of the story of Savitri. A person whose purity can overcome lust in another can overcome anything. You should thus by your purity and by your love become fit to overcome the threefold afflictions of Ramdas. That is my wish.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: Nirmala Gandhi Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library.

### 305. ARE WE RIVALS?

[On or before *July 22, 1936*]<sup>1</sup>

I have had two typical cuttings sent to me giving altogether false news about relations between Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and myself. Remarks said to have been made by me have been reproduced in quotation marks. Thus I am reported to have said, “My life-work is ruined” (i.e., by Jawaharlal's programme); “not even the firmness and repression of the British Government have harmed my work as much as the policy outlined by Nehru.”<sup>2</sup>

I have never said anything of the kind nor uttered one single remark attributed to me in the two articles sent to me. What is more, I have not even entertained the opinions contained in them. So far as I am aware, Jawaharlal has come to the conclusion that India's freedom cannot be gained by violent means and that it can be gained by non-violent means. And I know for a fact that he did not in Lucknow “come out for the use of violence in the struggle for Independence.”<sup>3</sup>

No doubt there are differences of opinion between us. They were clearly set forth in the letters we exchanged some years ago, and in reply to correspondents I hope at an early date to bring our differences up to date. But they do not affect our personal relations in any way whatsoever. We remain the same adherents to the Congress goal that we have ever been. My life-work is not, cannot be, ruined by Jawaharlal's programme, nor have I ever believed for that matter that it

<sup>1</sup> The report in *The Hindustan Times* carrying this item is dated July 22, 1936.

<sup>2</sup> This was reported in the *Literary Digest*.

<sup>3</sup> This was reported by *Unity*; vide footnote 2, “Letter to Amrit Kaur”, 18-11-1935



has been harmed even by “the firmness and repression of the British Government”. My philosophy, if I can be said to have any, excludes the possibility of harm to one’s cause by outside agencies. The harm comes deservedly and only when the cause itself is bad, or being good its champions are untrue, faint-hearted, or unclean. The article in question refers to “Gandhiji’s secret plans”.<sup>1</sup> If I know Gandhi at all I can vouchsafe for it that he never had any secret plans in his life. And if beyond what the readers of *Harijan* know there is no plan that I can disclose, it is because I know none myself. Then one of the articles presents Jawaharlal and me as rivals. I cannot think of myself as a rival to Jawaharlal or him to me. Or if we are, we are rivals in making love to each other in the pursuit of the common goal, and if in the joint work for reaching the goal we at times seem to be taking different routes, I hope the world will find that we had lost sight of each other only for the moment and only to meet again with greater mutual attraction and affection.

*Harijan*, 25-7-1936

### 306. LETTER TO SAHEBJI MAHARAJ

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
July 22, 1936

DEAR SAHEBJI MAHARAJ,

Many thanks for your prompt attention to my letter.<sup>2</sup> Do please send the *mistry* as soon as he can come. I may mention that we have no *tools* save nine casts, one simple sewing machine and a village awl. Whatever tools may be needed should be brought by the *mistry*. If they are within our means we shall buy them. If they are not they may go back with him when the time for return arrives. Rs. 60 per month

<sup>1</sup> The *Literary Digest* had reported: “As anxious as India’s 350,000,000 people to prove Gandhi’s secret plans is the Marquess of Linlithgow,... Facing a turbulent Nationalist Party, Linlithgow next year will institute India’s new British made Constitution, which provides for a Parliamentary Government by a series of compromises in favour of India’s minorities, mostly the sixty million Moslems... To placate Moslems, who fear Hindu dominance, the Constitution grants them almost as many seats in the Federal Legislature, which will exercise no control in India’s foreign and defence affairs.... Knowing that neither Gandhi nor Nehru’s Nationalists cherish the new Constitution, Lord Linlithgow is watchful of the two rivals’ next move.”

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* “Letter to Sahebji Maharaj”, 11-7-1936

will be paid from the day he reaches Wardha or, if you prefer, from the day he leaves Agra. Will you please also let me know what will be expected of us for his accommodation? The tannery is situated in the open about 1½ miles from the post-office. We can place at his disposal two rooms in the tannery.

I appreciate your kind wish that I should revisit Dayal Bagh if it be only to see your new dairy. I should love to do so. But my present *sadhana* lies in not leaving Segaon. I want to feel my feet in this little village and be constantly in it for 3 seasons. I know that there will be at least 3 breaks during the time. I do not want to add to the list. But I can say this that I need no inducement to go to Dayal Bagh.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: G.N. 2164

### 307. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

*July 22, 1936*

MY DEAR AMRIT,

You are not to venture out tonight. Come as early as you can tomorrow morning but without disturbing your rest. And on your way look in at Mira's cottage.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C.W.3734. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 6890

### 308. LETTER TO PREMABEHN KANTAK

*July 22, 1936*

CHI. PREMA,

I have your postcard written on your birthday. You did right in taking my blessings for granted. In order to be a Mahatma's disciple you will have to imagine one yourself. The person who is called Mahatma is not one at all, though he is certainly able to take the place of father to many and is content with that. He would be fully satisfied

if most of them testified to his being a good father.<sup>1</sup>

I hope your work is going on well.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

[PS.]

With me at present are Ba, Manu, Lilavati, Balwantsinha and Munnalal.

Tukde Buva also is staying with me these days.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 10383. Also C.W. 6821. Courtesy: Premabehn Kantak

### 309. LETTER TO NARAHARI D. PARIKH

*July 22, 1936*

CHI. NARAHARI,

After all Bhaskarrao<sup>2</sup> did not come up to the mark. Nothing can add to my grief. What does it matter to the ocean if the number of rivers emptying themselves into it is one more or one less? But then don't we sing in our daily prayers that misery is not really misery and happiness is not really happiness? A mountain of misery will confront us when we forget Narayana.

Bhaskarrao is a man who does not subscribe to this view. I have also informed Vinoba today.

I have understood what you write about Ramji.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9097

<sup>1</sup> The addressee insisted on calling Gandhiji 'Mahatmaji' unlike others who called him 'Bapuji', arguing that she would not call anyone else father as long as her own father was living and that a name ought to denote only one person.

<sup>2</sup> Bhaskarroa Behere

### 310. LETTER TO VIJAYABEHN GANDHI

July 22, 1936

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

I have your little note. You do not write with an open heart still. I am glad that Jamna<sup>2</sup> has asked for a copy of the *Gita* with the Sanskrit text and printed in large type for your use. I have asked for one and shall send it to you both.

The third chapter of the *Gita* which you have learnt is very useful to us. Its effect is true to its heading<sup>3</sup>. It interprets (in the highest sense) *yajna* as body labour. However, I have described fetching water, grinding corn, sweeping and the process connected with spinning as the *panchamahayajnas*.<sup>4</sup> How many of them do you perform?

Blessings from  
BAPU

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

### 311. CABLE TO KAMALNAYAN BAJAJ

July 23, 1936

KAMALNAYAN BAJAJ  
INDIAN CONTINGENT  
OLYMPIC VILLAGE  
BERLIN

ENGAGEMENT<sup>5</sup> MADE ANNOUNCED. GOD BE WITH YOU. LOVE.

BAPU

*Panchven Putrako Bapuke Ashirvad*; p. 290

<sup>1</sup> Wife of Purushottam Gandhi

<sup>2</sup> Wife of Narandas Gandhi

<sup>3</sup> Viz., "The Yoga of Karma"

<sup>4</sup> The five great sacrifices traditionally enjoined on the householder are *svadhya*, *homa*, *balivaishvadeva*, *pindakriya*, *atithipujan*.

<sup>5</sup> Of the addressee with Savitri, daughter of Laxmanprasad Poddar; *vide* the following item.

### 312. TELEGRAM TO LAXMANPRASAD PODDAR

July 23, 1936

SETH LAXMANPRASADJI PODDAR  
2 HASTINGS PARK ROAD  
ALIPORE, CALCUTTA

BOTH KAMALNAYAN AND SAVITRI HAVE MY BLESSINGS.  
MAY THIS CONNECTION BE FRUITFUL OF GOOD FOR THEM  
AND FOR COUNTRY.

GANDHI

*Panchven Putrako Bapuke Ashirvad*, p. 267

### 313. NOTE TO JAMNALAL BAJAJ

[After July 23, 1936]<sup>1</sup>

1. The marriage should not be solemnized in less than four years or before Kamalnayan completes his studies.

2. Whatever education Savitri wants to have, she should have only in India. After they are married the two of them may travel for sight-seeing or for work.

3. Kamalnayan and Savitri should have full freedom to correspond with each other. I do not see why such correspondence need be secret.

4. Even before marriage, Savitri should from time to time visit Wardha or any other place where Janakibehn, etc., may be staying.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3054

### 314. LETTER TO ELENI SAMIOS

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
July 24, 1936

DEAR SISTER<sup>2</sup>,

Your book had escaped me till Mirabehn showed a letter from

<sup>1</sup> Vide "Cable to Kamalnayan Bajaj", 23-7-1936

<sup>2</sup> Widow of the Greek author Nikos Kazantzakis. She had written a book entitled *The Holy Life of Mahatma Gandhi* and sent a copy to Gandhiji.

Mons. Jean Herbert. I am sorry I was never able to have the whole book read to me. I hope that those for whom you took the trouble of writing the book will profit by it.

*Yours sincerely*

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: C. W. 11075. Courtesy: Eleni Samios, Nicosia

### 315. LETTER TO KANTILAL GANDHI

SEGAON, WARDHA,

*July 24, 1936*

CHI. KANTI,

I have your letter. How can I relieve your depression? You are so sensitive that one never knows when you might take offence. First, this is in your nature and secondly, you are at present unhappy. You cannot forget Harilal, so you are unhappy over everything that you either do not find pleasant or do not understand. In this, God alone can help you and He will. May those *bhajans* which you sing with such relish be your shield, since they are the balm to soothe all your burning.

I cannot at all see why Ramachandran and Papamma are angry. Explain it to me if you have understood it.

We shall discuss the question of Harilal when you return. I understand from Ramdas's letter that Harilal is perpetually in a drunken stupor. When Ramdas spoke to him about the unrestrained language of his Rander speech, his reply was that it was their way of propaganda. You have been sent a copy of the speech of course.

I destroyed Papamma's letter. It contained nothing special about you. On the contrary, from beginning to end it was full of praise for you. You are a sadhu, you are clever, Saraswati got you on account of great *punya*<sup>1</sup>, and so on. So I wrote: "May your hopes be fulfilled!"

You certainly ought not to extend your stay beyond a month notwithstanding their importunity. You may obtain Kakasaheb's permission and stay on if you are very keen but it does not look well

<sup>1</sup> Spiritual merit

to ask for such permission unless the need is very great. You should yourself consider if it is necessary.

I have not understood the telegram from Devdas. You don't have to think of it.

Build up your health well while you are there.

I am enclosing a letter for Saraswati.<sup>1</sup>

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 7301. Courtesy; Kantilal Gandhi

### *316. LETTER TO SARASWATI*

SEGAON,  
[July 24, 1936]<sup>2</sup>

CHI. SARASWATI,

I did get a letter from you at long last. Keep it up.

You are not like what? Did you not say that you wished to marry the same day if it were possible? What is wrong with it? Yours was a childlike wish. I fail to understand Mama's and Mother's anger.

What a smart girl you are! I let Kanti go for a month and now you ask him to stay for two. Don't do it. Do not detain Kanti beyond one month.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 6153. Also C.W.3426. Courtesy: Kantilal Gandhi

### *317. AVOIDABLE MISERY*

From a correspondent's long letter of wail I take the following.<sup>3</sup>

This letter is one out of many such. The majority of letters are written in Hindi. But we know that English education has made things

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

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

<sup>3</sup> Not reproduced here. The correspondent, a father of seven daughters, had dwelt on his straitened circumstances and sought Gandhiji's help in meeting the expenses of one of his daughter's marriage.

no better for parents of daughters. In some cases they have become worse in that the market price of possible young men who would suit an English-educated daughter of an English-educated father suffers an appreciable increase.

In a case like the Bengali father's the best help that can be rendered is not a loan or a gift of the required sum, but it should consist in persuading and strengthening the parent to refuse to purchase a match for his daughter but choose or let the daughter choose one who would marry her for love, not for money. This means a voluntary extension of the field of choice. There must be a breach in the double wall of caste and province. If India is one and indivisible, surely there should be no artificial divisions creating innumerable little groups which would neither inter-dine nor intermarry. There is no religion in this cruel custom. It would not do to plead that individuals cannot make the commencement and that they must wait till the whole society is ripe for the change. No reform has ever been brought about except through intrepid individuals breaking down inhuman customs or usages. And after all what hardships can the schoolmaster suffer if he and his daughters refused to treat marriage as a marketable transaction instead of a status or a sacrament which it undoubtedly is. I would, therefore, advise my correspondent courageously to give up the idea of borrowing or begging and to save the four hundred rupees he can get on his life policy by choosing in consultation with his daughter a suitable husband no matter to what caste or province he belongs.

*Harijan, 25-7-1936*

### *318. IN WATERLESS SALEM*

The Secretary, Salem District Harijan Sevak Sangh, writes:

The District is dry and the Harijans are not allowed to take water from the wells owned by caste Hindus. The Gandhi Ashram has provided wells in two or three villages. In the village of Avangier the Harijans are now depending on the visit of the railway engine to the railway station for their drinking water supply. The engine driver doles out some water and the villagers have to be content with that. There is another place called Managalapuram where water scarcity is severe.

This reveals a shocking state of affairs. No private organization can ever cope with this terrible distress. As it is, Salem District has a



perpetual scarcity of water. And when to this is added scarcity of common fellow-feeling on the part of a large part of its inhabitants, the distress becomes unbearable as it has become in the case of Harijans in Salem District. Is it not the first duty of the District Board to ensure a regular supply of water for the Harijans--the most neglected and yet the most useful servants of society? And now that the Government of Madras has a department dealing with difficulties of such classes as Harijans, one may hope to hear less and less of scarcity of pure water for Harijans. But this is not to mean that Harijan *sevaks* are to relax their vigilance or that private charity need not concern itself with water supply to Harijans. Aid must reach Harijans in the shape of water no matter from what source it comes. And it will come only when all sources combine to cope effectively with the distress.

*Harijan, 25-7-1936*

### 319. LETTER TO NIRMALA GANDHI

SEGAON,  
*July 25, 1936*

CHI. NIMU,

This time your going away pricks me a lot. I liked your staying with me. The next place I would have liked is Sabarmati. But your dharma clearly is to go to Bombay and serve Ramdas. So go there, look after your health, be happy, remain cheerful and, as Ramdas wants, become his teacher. I have already explained to you what it was Savitri saved Satyavan from, haven't I? Save Ramdas in the same way. Do not worry about Kanam. Keep on writing to me regularly at least once a week.

A letter for Ramdas is enclosed. I could not at all find time to write to him earlier.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: Nirmala Gandhi Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

### 320. LETTER TO NIRMALA GANDHI

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
July 25, 1936

CHI. NIMU,

Kanu left with Jamnalalji just yesterday. Ba went to see them off. For me it was. . .<sup>1</sup> I ardently looked forward to being able to help him advance. I did not realize my limitation. And so this happened. I see that his spoon, dish and bowl are still here. I do not know why Ba kept them back. She is at Maganwadi. Send for whatever you want from among the things lying here or at Maganwadi. Write to me a detailed letter. Never be tardy in writing to me. What was forgiven in Ramdas's case, will not be forgiven in yours.

With Tukdoji Maharaj, Kano had come to feel at perfect ease. Write to me and tell me all about yourself and Sumi.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: Mrs. Sumitra Kulkarni Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

### 321. LETTER TO M.C. RAJAH

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
July 26, 1936

DEAR RAO BAHADUR,

I have no difficulty about giving general endorsement to your letter to Dr. Moonje.<sup>2</sup> I do not at all understand Dr. Moonje's or Dr. Ambedkar's position<sup>2</sup>. For me removal of untouchability stands on a

<sup>1</sup> A word here is illegible.

<sup>2</sup> &<sup>3</sup> Dr. B.S. Moonje's proposal, accepted by Dr. Ambedkar, was as follows: "If Dr. Ambedkar were to announce his decision that he and his followers are prepared to embrace Sikhism in preference to Islam and Christianity, and that he shall honestly and sincerely cooperate with the Hindus and the Sikhs in propagating their culture and in counteracting the Moslem movement for drawing the Depressed Classes into the Moslem fold, the Hindu Mahasabha will be prepared, in view of their having agreed to remain within the Hindu culture, to make an announcement that it will not object:

(I) To the conversion of the Depressed classes to Sikhism  
(ii) To the inclusion of the neo-Sikhs in the list of the Scheduled Castes; and  
(iii) To the enjoyment by the Depressed Classes of the political rights of the Poona Pact by free competition between the non-Sikh and the neo-Sikh Depressed Classes as provided for under the Poona Pact." For Gandhiji's views, *vide* "Letter to B.S. Moonje", 31-7-1936

footing all its own. It is to me a deeply religious question. The very existence of our religion depends on its voluntary removal by *savarna* Hindus in the spirit of repentance. It can never be a question of barter for me. And I am glad you take nearly the same position<sup>1</sup> that I do.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

From a copy: C.W. 7787. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

### 322. LETTER TO CHHAGANLAL JOSHI

*July 26, 1936*

CHI, CHHAGANLAL,

Today I must write to you. I very much wished to write to you all these days, but could get no time at all.

Enclosed is a letter from the Bhangis of Bhavnagar. I have written to them and advised them that they should seek and follow the advice of the local branch of the Sangh. I am sending the letter<sup>2</sup> only for your information. Read it and take whatever action, if any, may be necessary.

I often think about what you wrote in your personal letter. These are troubled times and it is difficult to keep one's moorings at such a time. Be sure about this: that reason without moral sense is like a prostitute who may be outwardly attractive, may dance and sing and cast a spell on one, but who will ruin a man. I see the prostitute reason doing that to many people at the present time.

See that you yourself do not abandon even the smallest of the Ashram rules.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: B.N. 5539

<sup>1</sup> In his letter the addressee had challenged the position of Moonje pointing out that there was a difference between religious conversion and communal migration such as he was advocating and declared that he could not be a party to the political manipulation proposed by Moonje.

<sup>2</sup> Not available

### 323. LETTER TO TARA N. MASHRUWALA

July 26, 1936

CHI. TARA,

I wanted to reply to your letter immediately and with a long letter, but it could not be. Now, however, I must reply. Do continue Dr. Gauri's treatment.

You must write to me regularly.

You should try to stay at Mahila Ashram, if you are not certain that it is your duty to stay at Akola. There, you may, if you wish, increase your knowledge of English. Besides, you will be able to see me from time to time if you are in the Mahila Ashram. Kishorelal and Gomati are also there, and Jamnalalji, too, will generally be there.

I have lent you a helping hand but it remains to be seen how long you will let me help. I shall not tire of it, nor should you. I want to lead you just as far as your mind and your heart can take you. You are therefore safe with me.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 7527. Also C.W. 5003. Courtesy: Kanubhai N. Mashruwala

### 324. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

SEGAON,  
July 27, 1936

CHI. MIRA,

I had prepared myself for the news, especially when I found that you had not come. Will you have Manu or Lilavati? You will tell me when I come in the evening. Whether germ or chill, let us hope you will be free tomorrow. I shan't negotiate the hillock tomorrow but walk straight to you. I wish you will take an earth bandage for the head. The ache will go. Take soda with hot or cold water. More when I come.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C.W.6360. Courtesy: Mirabehn. Also G.N. 9826

### 325. LETTER TO UTTAMCHAND

July 28, 1936

What are you referring to when you say that there has been silence observed at this end about your drops as you call your donations? I assure [you] in the forlorn causes I handle, every drop is an ocean. Your latest cheque is most welcome.

I appreciated your caution about Kamala Memorial. There are trustees behind it who will control it. I am hoping that it will be a home for ailing women and children.

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

### 326. LETTER TO MANDY MACCARTHY

July 28, 1936

I have received your articles with much interest. But before I publish them in *Harijan*, I would like to know much more about you than you have said in your postcard. What is your occupation, what is your age, what led you to India, what led you to adopt an Indian name<sup>1</sup>, what is your faith, how do you support yourself? I hope you will not consider these questions to be impertinent. Generally we take in *Harijan* articles from those whom we know and who try to live up to what they write. I have observed over the past 50 years that the simplest writings of earnest persons are effective when brilliant writings of mere clever people fall flat. Words seem to take the vitality of their writers or speakers.

And if I am to use your articles, I should have your full permission to cut them about always taking care not to change the sense.

Yours,

M. K. G.

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

<sup>1</sup> Tandradevi

327. *LETTER TO EFY ARISTARCHI*

*July 28, 1936*

It is ages since I wrote to you. So you have lost your uncle. For seekers of God every loss is a gain. Separation is purely nominal and temporary. Death is a deliverance for all without exception. But you need no sermon from me. Since I wanted to write on your uncle's death, I could only give you my innermost thoughts long held on death.

I dare not give myself the time to write to you about things going on in this little village.

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

328. *LETTER TO RAJARAM R. BHOLE*

SEGAON, WARDHA,

*July 28, 1936*

DEAR RAJARAM,

Pray don't expect me to answer all your letters. I have but limited time for such work now.

I still retain the opinion that the d. c. should retain independence of action. But the position changes, when some of them go to the Parliamentary Board and seek assistance and advice. The P. B. may not put them off. You see the distinction.

*Yours,*

BAPU

From the original: R. R. Bhole Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

### 329. LETTER TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL

SEGAON,  
July 28, 1936

BHAI VALLABHBHAI,

You have been suffering much indeed. You must have got yourself operated upon by now.<sup>1</sup>

The revelation about...<sup>2</sup> is a serious one. But such corruption is not to be found in the States People's [Conference] only. It is a widespread evil. There are a great many people like...<sup>3</sup> among us...<sup>4</sup> sin has been discovered. Let us see what he does now.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

[PS.]

Take complete rest. It will not matter if you cannot come here. I am in excellent health.

[From Gujarati]

*Bapuna Patro—2: Sardar Vallabhbhaine, p. 196*

### 330. LETTER TO LAKSHMI NARAYAN GADODIA

July 28, 1936

BHAI LAKSHMI NARAYAN,

I am happy to see the signatures of you both.<sup>5</sup> My hipbaths still continue. There is no need of steam-baths as I perspire enough as it is. I am not using the mud-pack at night. I am not used to a sitz-bath. I shall now see about it.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 5625

<sup>1</sup> The addressee was operated upon for septum of the nose at a polyclinic on July 30, 1936.

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

<sup>3</sup> *ibid*

<sup>4</sup> *ibid*

<sup>5</sup> Presumably the addressee and a hakim who practised nature-cure

331. LETTER TO SATIS CHANDRA DAS GUPTA

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
July 29, 1936

BHAI SATIS BABU,

There is little likelihood of Chandranath following your advice if he does not wholly believe in truth and non-violence.

Why does Hemprabha keep worrying?

How are matters with the Harijan Sevak Sangh? And how is Arun<sup>1</sup>?

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 1627

332. LETTER TO PYARELAL

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
July 29/30, 1936

CHI. PYARELAL,

I am awaiting your letter. I have of course received the post-card. You will have fully recovered by now.

I understand about the articles. You must hurry about whatever further you want to write.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

[PS.]

Your letter has just reached me. I shall write after reading it.

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

<sup>1</sup> Addressee's youngest son



### 333. LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
July 30, 1936

MY DEAR JAWAHARLAL,

How I wish you would put down your foot on 'insane' programmes and save your energy for the common good.

All will be well if you will never lose your humour and make up your mind to stay out your period, trying to push through your policy as much as you can through the present team. Time has arrived to think of the future, i.e., next year's plans. Whatever happens, you must not be in opposition. That is my confirmed opinion. When like Father you feel that you are ready to take sole charge of the Congress, I think that from the present company you will find no opposition. I hope you will have plain sailing in Bombay.<sup>1</sup>

Kamala Memorial is disturbing me. I do not know what is happening about the collections or the scheme. If Khurshed or Sarup<sup>2</sup> or both are concentrating on the thing, it is well. Please tell Sarup I expect her to keep me informed of her doings in this connection.

I won't discuss here the question of socialism. As soon as I finish revision of my note, you will have the draft before it goes to the Press. My difficulty is not about the remote future. It is always the present that I can concentrate upon and that at times worries me. If the present is well taken care of, the future will take care of itself. But I must not anticipate.

I hope you are keeping really well.

Love.

BAPU

[PS.]

You will see the correspondence between Jenkins and myself. I too hate legal proceedings. But this seems to me to be a case where action is called for.

Gandhi-Nehru Papers, 1936. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

<sup>1</sup> At the A.I.C.C. meeting scheduled to be held on August 22 and 23

<sup>2</sup> Vijayalakshmi Pandit

### 334. DRAFT OF APPEAL FOR FUNDS<sup>1</sup>

[July 30, 1936]<sup>2</sup>

An appeal is respectfully made for at least Rs.... on behalf of the Harijan Sevak Sangh. Gandhiji cannot be expected to tour as he did in 1933-34 for collections and stirring public conscience. There is no cause other than the Harijan cause that can claim greater support from caste Hindus who believe that untouchability is a blot on Hinduism. The only question therefore for the public to consider is whether the Harijan Sevak Sangh is the organization that is enough to discharge the trust it has undertaken.

The Appendix gives enough details to enable the public to judge this for themselves. And if they are satisfied about the fitness of the institution, we hope that a generous response will be made to this appeal.

From a photostat: G.N. 10503. Also C.W. 7976 b. Courtesy: G.D. Birla

### 335. ENDORSEMENT OF APPEAL FOR FUNDS

July 30, 1936

I heartily endorse this appeal<sup>3</sup>. Removal of untouchability is a matter of change of heart. Hearts are not changed by expenditure of money however wise it may be. The change will come when we have enough selfless spiritually-minded workers. Monetary contributions will be an effective test of the existence of such persons. For one of the results of the change of heart should be incessant work among Harijans. This cannot be done without plenty of funds. Schools and hostels cannot be opened nor can wells be dug without ample funds. I hope therefore that this appeal will receive liberal support from both the rich and the poor according to their means.

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: G.N.10503. Also C.W. 7976 a. courtesy: G.D. Birla

<sup>1</sup> This was drafted by Gandhiji; *vide* "Letter to S.R. Venkataraman", 30-7-1936

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*

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

### 336. LETTER TO S.R. VENKATARAMAN

July 30, 1936

DEAR VENKATARAMAN,

In accordance with Shri Birla's wish, I have drafted the appeal<sup>1</sup> for funds. I enclose also my endorsement<sup>3</sup>. I have not the time to make a fair copy for facsimile reproduction. If shri Birla's conception is different from mine, the draft should be altered as he wishes. I am of opinion that the appeal should not be issued unless some support is guaranteed and arrangements made for collections throughout India.

*Yours truly,*

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: G.N. 10503. Also C.W. 7976. Courtesy: G.D. Birla

### 337. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

July 30, 1936

DEAR DAUGHTER AMTUL SALAAM<sup>2</sup>,

I have with me two of your letters to answer. There is no harm in your being operated upon there. I shall do through Devdas whatever is possible. Moreover, there will be Brajkisan when he comes. Give the accompanying letter<sup>3</sup> to Devdas.

I have understood your point about Rukmini. And now she has after all gone. It was just the proper thing that Malkani should have gone to leave her at Hyderabad.

I shall ask you to come after your operation. Meanwhile look after your health carefully. Do send for anything that you need. You should freely ask Devdas for anything that you need if you truly regard him as your brother.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 342

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* the preceding two items.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*

<sup>3</sup> Not traceable

### 338. LETTER TO ANANDSHANKAR B. DHRUVA

July 30, 1936<sup>1</sup>

SUJNA BHAISHRI (PROF. DHRUVA)<sup>2</sup>,

I have carefully gone through both your letters to Mahadev. What I want is not something for the learned but something which Harijans and workers can understand and put into practice. I do not want you to make a fresh study, but only that form your wide knowledge you should send me something which you can write in...<sup>3</sup> hours or at the most in eight hours.

I had already written to you that I liked your book on Hindu religion very much. I will certainly read it again. But I do not want extracts from anything. For a moment imagine yourself among Harijans in a village, converse with the old men, women and children and teach them religion. I want whatever is available in this way and it should have your stamp. Mahadev won't even translate it into English. The testimonial you give him is deserved, but first he hasn't the time and then I want your language. It is not beyond you to write simple English and finally you will grant the two of us the right to make some suggestions. Won't you? The suggestions will be put into the writing only if you approve of them.

Now about your programme. Going through it I am scared. At the moment Gujarat or Hindu religion does not require scholarship. That will not save either religion or India or Gujarat. I do not mean to say that there is absolutely no need for scholarship. There are many who will give us scholarly writings. But there are very few religious enthusiasts who would make themselves one with the people. I have believed that you are one of them. You have given quite a big share of your scholarship to the scholars and the educated. But what have you given to the villagers and persons like me? A person like me would steal something from what you have given to the educated. But that does not amount to giving. Do what Tolstoy did. In his old age he had before his eyes the unknown peasants of Russia and the literature he produced for them will live for ever. Can't I expect something like that from you?

<sup>1</sup> The source has Ahmedabad in the date-line which is obviously a slip.

<sup>2</sup> 1869-1942; Sanskrit scholar and Gujarati man of letters

<sup>3</sup> The source is illegible here.

Be that as it may. I have said whatever I wanted to. I did not want to write so much. Accept whatever appeals to you and throw away the rest. I won't feel unhappy. Why should a beggar feel shy? Donors will only give according to their wishes and means.

*Vandemataram from*

MOHANDAS

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

### 339. LETTER TO KANU GANDHI

*July 30, 1936*

CHI. KANU,

I am sending six letters with this. Keep copies of the letters<sup>1</sup> to Jugalkishore and Gangabehn. The rest may be posted straight away. Make a copy of the letter<sup>2</sup> to Satyanand Bose also.

In this way you are getting closer to Mahadev's place.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

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

### 340. LETTER TO SATYANAND BOSE<sup>3</sup>

*[July 30, 1936]<sup>4</sup>*

DEAR SATYANAND BABU,

I quite agree with you that the Congress has to respond to variations in public opinion. Pandit Jawaharlal is wide awake and handling the questions as they arise. My work is strictly limited to advising those who find it necessary to refer certain matters to me.

I would therefore like you to pass on your views to Pandit Nehru.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

<sup>1</sup> These are not traceable.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*

<sup>3</sup> Although it is explained in the footnote on p. 184 that the letter to the addressee referred to in the text is not traceable, it is possible that this is the letter meant, a copy of which became available after the volume was sent to the press.

<sup>4</sup> Pyarelal has kept this letter with those of 1936.

### 341. LETTER TO JAYANTI N. PAREKH

July 30, 1936<sup>1</sup>

CHI. JAYANTI<sup>2</sup>

I had always sought and got news about you. I am glad that you wrote to me. I do not have to say anything about the change in your views. May you go on making progress in your thinking and do fearlessly whatever you feel is right. Your good lies in that.

As you were bound by pledge it was your duty before violating it to meet the leader of your batch and acquaint him with your dilemma. You have not done that. A soldier's duty is not easy. If all the eighty soldiers interpret the pledge as they like, what will the leader do? Can the country's work be done like that? But the milk that has been spilt cannot be collected again. This is to be remembered for the future.

I know ill-feeling prevails in Gujarat. It is difficult to say who is to blame for it. But I have seen that socialists in Gujarat do not discriminate between truth and untruth. There are some among them of whom I would not have believed it. I do feel unhappy about it. I do hope that you have not accepted diplomacy as your dharma.

You had been to see me. I was happy to know that both of you brothers are doing very well financially.

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

### 342. LETTER TO H.L. SHARMA

July 30, 1936

BHAI SHARMA,

We are looking for Babbitt<sup>3</sup> but it has not been found so far. How much was the yarn<sup>4</sup>? The corresponding length of khadi of the same count will be sent. I am looking for the fine yarn; it simply slipped from my mind. You know my attitude to going to the villages.

<sup>1</sup> The source has Ahmedabad in the date-line which is obviously a slip.

<sup>2</sup> An Ashram inmate who later became a communist.

<sup>3</sup> *Principles of Light and Colour* by E.D. Babbitt, obtained by the addressee in Switzerland

<sup>4</sup> The yarn spun by the addressee for his own *kurtas*

Do not incur heavy expenditure. Draupadi and the child are well, I hope. Do keep writing to me.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a facsimile of the Hindi: *Bapuki Chhayamen Mere Jivanke Solah Varsh*, facing p. 258

343. *LETTER TO B.S. MOONJE*

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
*July 31, 1936*

DEAR DR. MOONJE,

R.B.M.C. Rajah has sent Seth Birla and me copies of your correspondence with him on the Yeravda Pact<sup>1</sup> for such use as we may wish to make. But the correspondence on your side is marked confidential. My own opinion is that the subject-matter admits no confidence. But before I can avail myself of the Rao Bahadur's permission, I would like to have your consent to the publication of the correspondence. Meanwhile you will permit me to say that your proposal<sup>2</sup> is subversive of the spirit of the Yeravda Pact and wholly contrary to the object of the anti-untouchability movement.

*Yours sincerely,*

From a copy: C.W. 7788. Courtesy: G.D. Birla

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* Appendix, "Agreement between depressed classes leaders and caste hindu Leaders", after 17-10-1932.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* footnotes 1 and 2, "Letter to M. C. Rajah", 26-7-1936

344. LETTER TO KANTILAL GANDHI

July 31, 1936

CHI. KANTI,

At this place one needs the tools every moment. I tried to obtain country-made tools, but could not. They are now being made at Bangalore. Meanwhile I sent for your kit as it was not needed at Maganwadi.

It seems some of the tools are missing. Whatever that may be, I have made a list of those that came to hand. You will find it on the reverse. Let me know which ones you remember having been lost. I shall arrange to search for them.

From the handwriting on the reverse you will see that Rajkumari is here. She came last evening. You will now admit that my place has become similar to your dharmashala—one corner to me, another to Rajkumari, a third to Tukdoji Maharaj and a fourth to Munnalal. In the centre are Ba, Lilavati and Manu; and Tukdoji includes himself and his followers who stream in all day long. Have you heard of him? He had come to see me at Nagpur.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 7303. Courtesy: Kantilal Gandhi



### 345. A TALK<sup>1</sup>

[Before August 1, 1936]

Now, you must see that I am being compelled to grow a beard!

“But my husband is ready to come whenever you summon him!”, says the woman.

That I know, but will he shave the Harijans?

I do not know that, Maharaj; but he is quite prepared to shave you.

But how can I have his services when my Harijan brothers cannot have them?

*Harijan*, 1-8-1936

### 346. A TALK<sup>2</sup>

[Before August 1, 1936]

So, Patil, I must remain without the services of the barber?

No, Mahatmaji, he is ready. Shall I send him?

I know you can send him. But what about my Harijan son? You must know that I have a family here and Govind is my son. How can I have the barber's services if he will not allow Govind to go near him? What would you do if you were in my position? Tell me. Supposing you were invited to a place from where your son was deliberately excluded. Would you go there?

“ Now, there, Bapuji, don't you touch him on the raw”, says Jamnalalji, who has known the old Patil for years. “If someone could assure him that he would go straight to *swarga* (Heaven) if he were to cast off untouchability, he would do so. But he wants a reliable assurance, and he would not accept ours.” And the room resounds with laughter in which the old Patil joins. “ Everything is permissible to a Mahatma like you, but not to folks like us,” he says and returns.

*Harijan*, 1-8-1936

<sup>1</sup> Extracted from Mahadev Desai's “Weekly Letter” The headman of Segaoon had made clear to Gandhiji that he would not co-operate with him on the question of untouchability and for that reason the local barber was prevented from rendering his services to Gandhiji. For Gandhiji's talk with the headman, *vide* the following item.

<sup>2</sup> Extracted from Mahadev Desai's “Weekly Letter”

### 347. DISCUSSION WITH VISITORS<sup>1</sup>

[Before August 1, 1936]

The sadhu or the Buva<sup>2</sup> who is for the moment a member of the family has for visitors a number of devotees. They are frankly surprised that the sadhu is not only associating with the Mahatma but eats under his roof food cooked by a Harijan boy....They come and argue, sometimes the sadhu cannot solve their doubts and difficulties and they turn to Gandhiji.

[A VISITOR:] But, even the lower creation observes untouchability, Mahatmaji, and you would have even man to shed it!

[GANDHIJI:] Now that's something novel. Let me understand.

Donkeys don't associate with dogs; a crow would not touch a pigeon's eggs. Every species has its own sphere, its own place, its own use in God's creation.

But cows, donkeys and dogs will gladly remain under the same roof if you feed them and own them. And do you hold that there is the same difference between you and an untouchable, as there is between a cow and a dog?

Don't we shun wild animals?

You shun lions and tigers and snakes, because they are untouchable? Absurd! You shun them because you fear them. You would fain tame them if you could, and crowds flock and attribute miraculous powers to one who can domesticate them.

But we don't touch pigs because they are dirty, and not because we are afraid of them.

Well, then, supposing a man in cleaner clothes looked upon you as dirty and regarded you as an untouchable, you won't mind? And what of your women who do all the dirty jobs for your children? They are the mistresses of the family. Why so?

Well, then, supposing the so-called untouchables were dressed as well as you, and washed themselves clean after doing the dirty jobs for you, and for which you should thank them rather than despise or shun them, would you touch them? Supposing they ate clean food and did not touch beef or carrion, would you touch them? I tell you there are numerous so-called Harijans in India who satisfy all these conditions, who live cleaner and purer lives than we do and yet we regard them as

<sup>1</sup> Extracted from Mahadev Desai's "Weekly Letter"

<sup>2</sup> Tukdoji Maharaj

untouchables. How will God forgive this heinous sin of ours?

But you want us to admit them to the temples too! How can people doing dirty jobs be admitted to temples?

Have I ever asked them to go to temples with baskets of filth on their heads? Have I not said that they would satisfy all the conditions about bath and cleanliness that the other Hindus satisfy? According to you all surgeons and all nurses are unfit to go to our temples!

*Harijan*, 1-8-1936

### 348. DISCUSSION WITH A FRIEND<sup>1</sup>

[Before *August 1, 1936*]

[FRIEND:] Why do you insist on eight hours' manual work a day? Is it not possible in a well-ordered society to reduce the working day to two hours and leave the citizen ample leisure for intellectual and artistic pursuits?

[GANDHIJI:] We know that those who get all that leisure—both the working and the intellectual class—do not make the best use of it. In fact we too often find the idle mind being turned into the devil's workshop.

No; he would not be idling away. Supposing we divided the day into two hours' physical labour and six hours' intellectual labour; would it not be good for the nation?

I do not know that it would be feasible. I have not mathematically calculated it, but if a man will do the intellectual labour only for profit and not for the nation, I am sure that the scheme will break down; unless of course the State pays him amply for the two hours' labour and compels him to do other work without paying him anything. That would be a fine thing, but it cannot be done without a kind of State conscription.

But take for instance you. You cannot in the nature of things do eight hour's physical labour, and have to do eight hours' or more intellectual work. You do not abuse your leisure?

It is compulsory work and leaves no leisure, as for instance it would if I was going out to play tennis. But I tell you even taking my case that I am sure our minds would have been infinitely better if we

<sup>1</sup> Extracted from Mahadev Desai's "Weekly Letter"

laboured with our hands for eight hours. We would not have a single idle thought, and I may tell you that my mind is not entirely free from idle thoughts. Even now I am what I am because I realized the value of physical labour at a very early stage of my life.

But then if physical work has such inherent virtue, our people have been working more than eight hours a day, not with any appreciable effect on the purity or strength of their minds.

Physical labour by itself is not an education even as mental labour is not. It has been with our people deadly drudgery without their knowing this, and that deadens one's finer instincts. That is where I have my strongest complaint against the *savarna* Hindus. They have rendered work for the proletariat a task of hard drudgery, from which they have no pleasure and in which they have no interest. If they had been considered members of the society enjoying the same status as they, theirs would have been the proudest position in life. This is supposed to be the *Kaliyuga*. In the *Satyayuga*, or golden age, whenever it was, the society I dare say was better ordered than today. Ours is an ancient land where civilizations have come and gone, and it is difficult to say what exactly we were like in a particular age. But there is no doubt that we are where we are because we have long neglected the Shudras. Today's village culture, if culture it can be called, is an awful culture. The villagers live as worse than animals. Nature compels animals to work and live naturally. We have so dabased our working classes that they cannot work and live naturally, If our people had laboured intelligently and with joy, we should have been quite different today.

Work and culture cannot be separated, then?

No. They tried to do it in ancient Rome and failed miserably. Culture without labour, or culture which is not the fruit of labour, would be 'Vomitoria' as a Roman Catholic writer says. The Romans made indulgence a habit, and were ruined. Man cannot develop his mind by simply writing and reading or making speeches all day long. All my reading I tell you was done in the leisure hours I got in jails, and I have benefited by it because all of it was done not desultorily but for some purpose. And though I have worked physically for days and months for eight hours on end I don't think I suffered from mental decay. I have often walked as much as 40 miles a day and yet never felt dull.

But you had this mental equipment.

No fear. You don't know how mediocre I was at school and in England. I had never the courage to speak at debating society meetings or even in a gathering of vegetarians. No. Don't you run away with the thought that I was blessed with any extraordinary powers. God, I think, advisedly did not give me then the power to speak. You must know, among us I am the least read man.

*Harijan*, 1-8-1936

*349. DISCUSSION WITH STUDENTS OF VILLAGE  
WORKERS' TRAINING SCHOOL<sup>1</sup>*

[Before *August 1, 1936*]

Q. How to dipossess people of ill-gotten gains which is what the Socialists are out to do?

A. Who is to judge what gains or riches are ill-gotten or well-gotten? God alone can judge, or a competent authority appointed both by the 'haves' and the 'have-nots' can judge. Not anyone and everyone. But if you say that All property and possession is theft, all must give up property and wealth. Have we given it up? Let us make a beginning, expecting the rest of follow. For those who are convinced that their own possessions are ill-gotten, there is of course no other alternative but to give them up.

Q. What is the root of violence? Does it not take place to prevent injustice and humiliation?

A. Hardly. The root of violence is selfishness, anger, lust, etc.

Q. I have not made myself understood. I see in front of me terrible wrong being done and I am provoked to violence. Is not the wrong at the root of it?

A. No, anger is at the root of your violence. Whether your violence is justified or not on such an occasion is another question, but there is no doubt that anger is at the root.

Q. How to deal with beggars? How can we turn them away when we see they are famishing?

A. Beggars must be distinguished from famishing people. Beggars are often enough sturdy. Some are thieves. There is nothing like a right to beg, there is certainly a right to ask for work. And whilst

<sup>1</sup> Extracted from Mahadev Desai's "Weekly Letter"

you may not give alms, it is your duty to give work to those who ask for it.

Q. But how are you going to do it when you have work for four and eight turn up? Will you engage all the eight?

A. No, because I must recognize my limitations.

Q. Then they will beg rather than starve?

A. They shall not beg. They must do some work. I have not yet settled down in Segaoon. When I do so I shall see that no one goes away for want of work. I will have spinning wheels and *chakkis* for those who being in want of work ask for it.

Q. When we go to villages we are bound to come up against opposition. For instance, they are opposed to sanitation work. What are we to do?

A. We have to put up with the opposition.

Q. They boycott us, they will not allow us to use their wells.

A. They may; we will use other wells, but we shall not fight them. We will not provoke them, but argue with them until they understand. We have to face all kinds of difficulties.

Q. My difficulty is that if my sanitation work scares people away, if they will not attend the prayers, if they will not do even spinning, must I persist?

A. It depends on the spirit in which you have sat down there. If you have gone there principally for sanitation work, you will certainly not give it up, whatever happens. After all we will certainly do our own sanitation, keep our own surroundings clean. But it is open to one to begin with spinning, night classes, etc., and go on to sanitation if one thinks that would enable one to do one's work easier.

*Harijan*, 1-8-1936

### 350. A COBWEB OF MISUNDERSTANDINGS

I have before me a number of cuttings from various Urdu papers severely and even bitterly criticizing the proceedings<sup>1</sup> of the recently formed Bharatiya Sahitya Parishad and thereanent Babu Rajendra Prasad, Babu Purushottamdas Tandon, Pandit Jawaharlal and me. They attribute motives and designs to which, I know, we are all strangers. The writers have not taken the trouble of even understanding what was said or done by us or at the Parishad. Thus

<sup>1</sup> At Nagpur; *vide* "Speech at Akhil Bharatiya Sahitya Parishad", 24-4-1936

they think that the design at the bottom of the Association is to push Hindi at the expense of Urdu, and so to Sanskritize Hindi as to make it almost impossible for Mussalmans to understand it. They also infer from a speech of Babu Purushottamdas Tandon delivered at Allahabad at the time of the opening of the Literary Museum of the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan that he distorted facts when he claimed that there were nearly 23 crores of Indians who spoke or at least understood Hindi. There are in these writings other innuendoes which I need not notice, my purpose being simply to remove if possible the misunderstandings that have led to the innuendoes.

To take the last first. If the writers had the whole speech of Tandonji before them they would have known that in the 23 crores he deliberately included the Urdu-speaking Hindus and Mussalmans. He therefore included Urdu in the use of the word Hindi. This will be clear if it is borne in mind that Hindi according to the resolution adopted at Indore in 1935,<sup>1</sup> to which Tandonji was party, meant that language which was spoken in the North by Hindus and Mussalmans and was written either in Devanagari or Urdu scripts. If the writers had known this definition, surely they would have had no complaint on any account unless they objected to the very name Hindi. If they did, it was deplorable. Hindi is the original word for the language of the North. Urdu, as is well known, was the name specially given for a special purpose. The script was also a graft for the convenience of the Muslim rulers. If that is the historical sequence, there ought not to be any opposition to the use of the word 'Hindi' so long as it is used inclusively. In any event at the most the difference, if there must be any, narrows itself down to the use of one word or the other for signifying the same thing.

The complaint about Sanskritizing has some justification in that some writers of Hindi insist on unnecessarily introducing Sanskrit words in their writings. A similar charge can justly be brought against some Urdu writers who insist on equally unnecessarily introducing Persian or Arabic words. And what is worse, they even alter the grammar of the language. These extremes are bound to disappear in course of time because they would never be adopted by the masses. A speech that is beyond the comprehension of the masses has but a brief existence.

<sup>1</sup> At the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan held from April 20 to 23; *vide* "Two Good Resolutions", 4-5-1935

As for the Bharatiya Sahitya Parishad, it aims at making through Hindi as above defined available to the whole of India the best thought in the provinces. Surely there is in this nothing sinister or communal, as suggested in some writings.

The adoption of 'Hindi-Hindustani' was at my instance. It was adopted in order to bring out in a compound word the meaning of the definition of Hindi. Moulvi Abdul Kadar Sahib had suggested the use either only of Hindustani or Hindi-Urdu instead of Hindi-Hindustani. I should personally have no objection to either course, but the Bharatiya Sahitya Parishad could not ignore its own origin. The idea was born at the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan at Indore and took a definite shape at Nagpur under its aegis. The retention of the word 'Hindi' was therefore necessary in the nature of things. The substitution of Urdu would have been bad for the reasons I have already stated. But as I have endeavoured to show, Hindi, Hindustani and Urdu are synonymous terms and refer substantially to the same language.

*Harijan*, 1-8-1936

### 351. A CRIMINAL TRIBE

Perhaps there are not many places on this globe where crime is the profession of tribes as it is in India and it flourishes under the garb of religion. We have therefore in this country a law called the Criminal Tribes Act. The Aheris of Hissar District are supposed to be one of such tribes. On 7th June a conference of Aheris was held in the village of Gangan Kheri under the presidentship of Lala Thakurdas Bhargava. It was attended by over 1,000 Aheris and over 200 *savarna* Hindus. From the report before me it appears that the Aheris were told by some persons that if they embraced Islam they would be helped to become free from the application of the Act and the stigma of being a criminal tribe would no longer attach to them. Therefore the Aheris assembled declared their 'undying faith' in Hinduism and appealed to the Government to free them from the application of the Act.

In these days of ferment mere conferences and resolutions will not prevent appeals for conversions against material inducements nor bring the freedom sought. The only way to avert danger of defection and to procure freedom from special hardships is self-purification and selfless continuous service of the depressed people by the *savarnas*. Criminal tribes and untouchable castes are a scourge upon Hindu



society for its godless treatment of its own members in the sacred name of religion. You cannot have a diseased limb without the whole body being affected. Therefore the only effective method is reform from within. If the whole society is purified, it will be immune from external attacks, no matter how fierce they are. Conversely, no battling against external attacks can prevent internal disintegration. Indeed the energy expended in repelling external attacks must result in further exhaustion and therefore speedier destruction. I hope that the responsible *savarna* Hindus who attended the Conference will continue the work begun at the Conference and direct their energy in constructive channels.

*Harijan*, 1-8-1936

### 352. LETTER TO RAFI AHMED KIDWAI

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
*August 1, 1936*

MY DEAR KIDWAI,

To ask for a message from me is like drawing... <sup>1</sup> live tooth and then too for a meeting such as you are describing.

Surely at a meeting at which Mr. Jinnah presides and which Jawaharlal opens any message would be superfluous.

*Yours sincerely,*

MOULVI RAFI AHMED KIDWAI  
4A RUTTLEDGE ROAD  
LUCKNOW

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

### 353. LETTER TO BAL D. KALELKAR

*August 1, 1936*

CHI. BAL,

From my experiments in cooking I have come to the following conclusions: By cooking for oneself one saves money, improves health, becomes more enthusiastic and improves general knowledge.

<sup>1</sup> The source is damaged here.

One also automatically gains knowledge of the science of nutrition and becomes more efficient in serving food to others.

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

### 354. LETTER TO KIKABHAI LAVAJI

August 1, 1936

BHAI KIKABHAI,

I have received your letter. We can say that Yeravda Pact is for all. If it finds appeal, everything will be all right. I see no need for reprinting it now. If it is necessary, I shall certainly have it reprinted.

We must put up with whatever Dr. Ambedkar says. One who is born a Hindu would not give up his religion because of the misdeeds of other Hindus. We can very well say that Harijans are unhappy because of their deeds. But a person like me would not forget that the ill-treatment by the so-called *savarna* Hindus adds to their unhappiness. If the *savarna* Hindus mend their ways and repent of their deeds, then very soon the seeming faults of Harijans will be on the wane even if they do not go root and branch.

Drinking will certainly increase with the increase in the number of mills.

BAPU

KIKABHAI LAVAJI  
PATTHAR KUVA  
AHMEDABAD

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

### 355. LETTER TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL

August 1, 1936

BHAI VALLABHBHAI,

It is good that you got the operation done: If it proves successful, you will have permanent relief.

You must have received the copy of my reply to Rajaram.<sup>1</sup> If you have not replied yet, I suggest this: "Your letter contains no fresh

<sup>1</sup> The letter is not traceable.

point which calls for a reply. I have, therefore, nothing to add to my previous letter.”

Do not be in a hurry to leave the hospital and do not resume work without taking complete rest.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

*Bapuna Patro—2: Sardar Vallabhbhaine, pp. 196-7*

### 356. LETTER TO GANGABEHN B. JHAVERI

*August 1, 1936*

CHI. GANGABEHN,

After a long time I did receive your letter. I cannot form any opinion about the new school. I cannot swallow the views of its manager which are destructive of morality. However, treat this view of mine as of no consequence. Consult Pannalal and, having heard him, do what you wish.

If you have not read everything pertaining to socialism, then take a decision only after reading something more about it. Socialism is one thing and Jawaharlal is another. There has always been a difference between individuals and ideology.

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

### 357. LETTER TO NIRMALA GANDHI

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
*August 1, 1936*

CHI. NIMU,

I received your letter. Do not fail to relieve Ramdas of the burden of writing to me. The children must have got well. Send for Kanam's things which may be required. Do not postpone writing to me. Write to me in time and give all the details.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: Mrs. Sumitra Kulkarni Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

### 358. LETTER TO KRISHNACHANDRA

August 1, 1936

CHI. KRISHNACHANDRA,

Your letter. You will fall and rise, fall again and rise again and by thus falling and rising attain success. Never give up your efforts. You must certainly write to me but you may not expect a reply from me as I have no time to spare. If I have I shall scribble a couple of lines.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 4287

### 359. LETTER TO MANILAL AND SUSHILA GANDHI

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
August 2, 1936

CHI. MANILAL AND SUSHILA,

This time Manilal did not write to me. I am writing this with my left hand as the right one is tired. Let those who want to brag about Harilal's action do so with pleasure. Here at any rate they have almost forgotten him and he is always under the influence of drink. The fault must lie somewhere in my own method of bringing him up. Mine has been a life of wanderings and it has had a number of vicissitudes. It is quite obvious that I could not manage it all.

Manu is with me at present, enjoying herself. And of course Ba and Lilavati are also with me. Sushila ought to control her palate and improve her health. Indulging the palate is not limited to eating starchy foods and sugar alone. You can get so much fruit there that you can very well maintain your health. Milk and fresh fruit must improve your health. Moreover, you must never miss your daily walk.

Ramdas, one may say, has now settled down. Nimu too has gone to join him. Devdas and Lakshmi are in Delhi.

Kishorelal went to Akola and from there to Bombay.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4855

360. LETTER TO RAOJIBHAI M. PATEL

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
August 3, 1936

CHI. RAOJIBHAI,

Your letter. You may take it that Andrews has left Fiji. All the same I shall make inquiries.

It would be nice if you could procure good ghee. On my part, I have been insisting on producing it at Maganwadi, where we now have an expert. At Segaoon, too, I am having a cow.

Your work seems to be going on well. Write to me from time to time.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

SJT. RAOJIBHAI  
P.O. PETLAD *via* ANAND  
B.B. & C.I. RLY.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 9008

361. LETTER TO B.K. DIWANJI

SEGAON, WARDHA, C.P.  
August 4, 1936

DEAR DIWANJI,

It cannot be desirable for Indians to act as agents of foreign concerns whose traffic is detrimental to the moral or material interests of the country. This covers all your questions but I may add that acceptance of advertisements, Indian or foreign, whose object is to advertise things which are contrary to the policy advocated by the newspapers cannot be defended.

The medical profession is a noble profession only when medical men practise it for service, not for money, and if they give predominant place to prevention rather than cure, and accept the limits to their remedial measures so that they are not contrary to humanness towards non-human life.

*Yours sincerely,*  
M. K. GANDHI

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers: Courtesy: Pyarelal

### 362. LETTER TO K.M. MUNSHI

August 4, 1936

BHAI MUNSHI,

Since he<sup>1</sup> insists on starting another magazine, why should we retain *Hans*? Why not write to him:

“Since you contemplate another magazine you must keep *Hans*. Parishad can easily manage with other title.”<sup>2</sup>

You may carry out your suggestion if you do not think this right.

Blessings from  
BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 7604. Courtesy: K.M. Munshi

### 363. LETTER TO SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE

SEGAON WARDHA,  
August 5, 1936

MY DEAR SUBHAS,

You may be late replying but I must reply per return. I know what it means for a prisoner to hear from friends.

I share your regret that we cannot freely exchange views [even] on absolutely non-political questions.

I am surprised that you are not getting your copy of *Harijan*. I am inquiring.

Yes, my dietetic experiments continue unabated. Just now I am trying to find jungly edible leaves. and I have succeeded beyond expectations. I am not having any fresh vegetables from outside Segaoon. The second thing I am doing [is] to use lemons and *gur* [as] an effective substitute for fresh fruit.

After many experiments I have come to the conclusion that cow milk, fresh green vegetables (including leaves and fruit of plants), onion and garlic, wheat or any other grain, *gur* and any juicy fruitmake a perfect diet. Generally I recommend avoidance of pulses

<sup>1</sup> Munshi Premchand

<sup>2</sup> This paragraph is in English

for brain workers—vegetable protein is not so easy to digest as animal protein. I have mentioned onion and garlic. They are both strongly recommended by many medical men.

*Yours sincerely,*

SHRI SUBHAS BOSE  
C/O SUPERINTENDENT OF POLICE  
DARJEELING

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

*364. LETTER TO SAHEBJI MAHARAJ*

*August 5, 1936*

DEAR SAHEBJI MAHARAJ,

Many thanks for your letter. We shall await the *mistry* on the 12th. He will be paid his travelling expenses to and fro and the pay will begin as from the date of his departure from Agra.

I am expecting much out of this experiment.<sup>1</sup>

*Yours sincerely,*  
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: G.N. 2165

*365. LETTER TO GANGABEHN VAIDYA*

*August 5, 1936*

CHI. GANGABEHN,

Why need you fall into despair? Why do you feel that you have wasted fifty-seven years? Ever since I have known you, I have observed that you are always striving. God has given man only the strength to strive and nothing more. If we ever remain absorbed in doing our duty without lethargy, we have no reason to feel despair.

Ramibai seems to be very unhappy. Can anything be done to

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* letter to the addressee, "Letter to Sahebji Maharaj", 22-7-1936

help her? I understand about Bachubhai.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

SMT. GANGABEHN VAIDYA  
RAMBAG, BORIVLI  
B.B. & C.I. RLY.

[From Gujarati]

*Bapuna Patro—6: G.S. Gangabehnne, p. 94. Also C.W. 8834. Courtesy:*  
Gangabehn Vaidya

### 366. LETTER TO PANNALAL JHAVERI

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
August 5, 1936

CHI PANNALAI,

Shri Walunjkar will be starting from here on the 19th and thus reaching there on the 21st morning. He will be put up at the Harijan Ashram, I suppose. He has to reach Wardha latest by the 26th. Send me a telegram if this date is not suitable.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

[From Gujarati]

*Manavtana Prahari—Pannalal Jhaveri, pp. 32-3*

### 367. LETTER TO N. C. KELKAR

SEGAON WARDHA,  
August 6, 1936

DEAR MR. KELKAR,

You are reported to have said: “When he (Gandhi) openly says that his object is to run down the Tilak school of politics, etc., etc.” If you have said it, will you kindly let me know when I did so? I have no



recollection of ever having said any such thing and how could I when, as you rightly say, I have “carried forward the work of Mr. Tilak”?<sup>1</sup>

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: C.W. 3120. Courtesy: Kashinath N. Kelkar

### 368. LETTER TO MRIDULA SARABHAI

SEGAON, WARDHA,

August 7, 1936

CHI. MRIDU,

I am pleasantly surprised to see that you are able to find time to write such long letters. You are taking upon yourself so much work that even a person like me shudders. May God grant you the strength to attend to all your tasks.

I do not know what you would be able to do in the Women’s Conference to be held at Ahmedabad.<sup>2</sup> I have no clear idea of that organization and what little I know is only through Rajkumari<sup>3</sup>. I have not formed the impression that it can do anything for village women. Rajkumari herself is very keen to serve in the villages. It remains to be seen how far she can carry her other friends with her.

You are greatly mistaken if you think that there are no Hindu-Muslim distinctions among women. There certainly are. They have not found extreme expression because women do not come out in public very much. When they come out like men and they are awakened, they too will be found making these distinctions to a considerable extent. They will become conscious in a few years. But the possibility of Hindus and Muslims uniting in the mean time is remote. Nevertheless it is your duty as well as mine to carry on the work on the assumption that those distinctions do not exist among

<sup>1</sup> In his reply the addressee said: “The work of Tilak which you have carried forward is the work intensive political agitation, but by the Tilak 'school' of politics I mean Tilak's philosophy and methods and in respect of these, you and he vastly differ.”... “Your open insistence on non-violence, truth and non-co-operation was taken to imply that the school of political thought you superseded favoured the antithesis of these three....” *Vide* also “Letter to N.C. Kelkar”, 24-8-1936.

<sup>2</sup> The All-India Women’s Conference commenced on December 23 and was presided over by Margaret Cousins.

<sup>3</sup> Amrit Kaur, Secretary of the All-India Women’s Conference

women. Among the avoidable things I have enumerated the measures you suggest are of course included. But at that place I had to stress one point only. Other things were irrelevant there.

Now about giving recognition to the Jyoti Sangh<sup>1</sup>. Your arguments are interesting. I would only say that for the moment you do everything you are doing, but give up any talk about recognition. Citing the instance of tailors, etc., is not proper because the Sangh does not recognize them. It provides them work. Till now they had even been given by the mills the work of dyeing and washing. I stopped it only recently. Your arguments befit those who are indifferent to khadi. But you are a khadi volunteer. You believe in the power of khadi. How can you bend in the face of difficulties? But you say that you are ready to come if it is necessary. If you are not convinced by all this from me, come over at your earliest. At least we can meet under that pretext.

I hope Mummy is well. The letter for Suhrid<sup>2</sup> is enclosed.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C. W. 11201. Courtesy: Sarabhai Foundation

### 369. LETTER TO G.D. BIRLA

SEGAON WARDHA,  
*August 7, 1936*

BHAI GHANSHYAMDAS,

I read both the letters. Other things later. Parnerkar has not come to me so far.

The interview<sup>3</sup> was all right but I see nothing hopeful in it; he will not be able to do a thing. Their policy and ours are poles apart. I firmly hold that no further overtures should be made to him. It is not correct to say that I had made any promise. Whatever I did was all worth doing. This is the reason why it was done and not because of any promise of mine. It was not in the public interest to proceed any further. I write all this in order to make things clear for the future.

<sup>1</sup> An institution in Ahmedabad for socially oppressed women

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

<sup>3</sup> The addressee had met the Viceroy Lord Linlithgow on August 5, 1936.

What can I do in connection with the elections? Yes, I can try to avoid friction within the Congress; in fact I am already engaged in this.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From Hindi: C.W. 8021. Courtesy: G.D. Birla

*370. INTERVIEW TO PAULA LECLER AND Y.S. CHEN<sup>1</sup>*

[Before August 8, 1936]

In reply to several questions Gandhiji said:

On the political programme you should go and visit Pandit Nehru who, though he is busier than I, might give you a useful half hour. I am no authority on politics, and having retired from the Congress for two years now, I am a kind of a back number.

But may it not be that you have retired to give the other people a chance, and in the conviction that after they have had their chance they are bound to come back to you?

That is not my way. I am a votary of truth. I meant it cent per cent when I retired from the Congress and the so-called politics of the country. My mind and body are buried in Segaon. What the future has in store for me God alone knows.

[Y. S. CHEN:] Your body is here, but your spirit travels over the whole world.

Yes, but not my political spirit. What I am doing today, i.e., living in a village, I might have done in the beginning of my career. Instead I am doing it in the evening of my life.<sup>2</sup>

The American lady wanted... him to... give a message to the distracted world as to how best to get out of the trouble and chaos.

I am off talking. I can give you no message. You can see what I am doing if you will stay in this village. How to help the world out of

<sup>1</sup> Extracted from Mahadev Desai's "Weekly Letter". Paula Lecler was an American woman and Y.S. Chen a member of the Cotton Industry Commission of China.

<sup>2</sup> Paula Lecler here quotes Gandhiji having said: "You may be sure I am living now just the way I wish to live. What I might have done at the beginning, had I more light, I am doing now in the evening of my life, at the end of my career, building from the bottom up. Study my way of living here, study my surroundings, if you wish to know what I am. Village improvement is the only foundation on which conditions in India can be permanently ameliorated."

chaos is a vast question which cannot be answered at a moments' notice. But if there is an answer it is this: 'By waiting on God.'

I want to transmit to America a picture of the faith and light you have.

I could not give it by word of mouth. I am not in a talking mood.

But you have your faith?

Oh yes, I have.

Then could you not put it in a few words?

How can I impart it in words?

Then you can just say a few words of prayer, i. e., what is your innermost desire. You can just pray audibly.

No, I cannot possibly do so. Is it not enough for you to know that I am trying to live a simple village life as simple villager? When I succeed in it. I shall have achieved my ambition.

And what happens to your children, the people of India?

They are in the villages. I live with them. They will live with me.

Are you happy?

Ah! I can answer that question. I am perfectly happy.

More happy that you were outside the village?

I cannot say, for my happiness is not dependent on external circumstances.

[Y. S. CHEN:] wanted to know something about our social programme.

I have no doubt that untouchability is going. It can go quicker, but we have not got a corps of social workers adequate to the task. It is social work indeed, but more than that it is great spiritual effort. If untouchability remains, Hinduism perishes and with it Hindu culture. And if that calamity comes, the whole face of India will be changed. The ruining of Hindu culture is fraught with incalculable harm for the general culture of India. But I am firm in my faith that untouchability is bound to go, it is going. Here you will see I am surrounded by untouchables. We have, for instance, for our cook an untouchable boy. He never knew cooking, certainly he did not know how to cook hygienically. He is now learning it. He is a fine boy, eager to learn, and hard-working. This process is going on throughout India. The best of our workers are trying to work amongst the untouchables in this fashion. That is the complete reform. We have to obliterate all the

differences of social status. That is the essence of this part of our social reform.

I want to correct the impression that has got abroad in America that Mr. Gandhi is sulking....But what is the truth about the supposed antagonism between you and Nehru?

You must see my disclaimer.<sup>1</sup>

I have seen it.

I have said that it was an absolute travesty, an absolute falsehood.

What is your feeling about Nehru?

My feeling about Nehru is nothing but that of love and admiration. We are not estranged from each other. I hear from him nearly twice a week.<sup>2</sup> There are things on which I do not talk the same way. There are obvious differences in outlook, but in spite of them our affection has not diminished. And these differences are not new. He has never kept from me whatever he has felt from time to time. Even what he said in Lucknow was not new. It was a summary of views he had stated in different places on different occasions.

But you don't see the truth entirely his way?

I don't. But it is one thing to say that I do not sympathize with some of his views and quite another to say that he had ruined my life-work! It is a lie. There is no other name for it.<sup>3</sup> I have never had even the suspicion that Jawaharlal's policy has ruined any part of my work.

Because the truth you stand for is still there?

That is a truism. I am not talking from that higher philosophical point of view. I am just talking in mundane terms. I want to say that he has taken no such steps as would ruin my programme or my work. If he had said: 'You have blundered all along. You must retrace your steps. You have taken the country back a century', as some have certainly said, he, because he is he, would embarrass me. But he has

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Are We Rivals?", 22-7-1936

<sup>2</sup> Paula Lecler quotes here: "Jawaharlal Nehru and I are friends. It is true our beliefs may differ in some ways. But to say there is enmity between us, that is a lie. Even when he is travelling around the country on speaking tours, as he has been doing, I hear from him at least twice each week. There is no rivalry in work like ours."

<sup>3</sup> Paula Lecler reports here: "They quoted me: 'My life-work is ruined... not even the firmness and repression of the British Government have harmed my work as much as the policy outlined by Nehru.' But much as I dislike to use so strong a word, it is an absolute lie. I never said anything like that nor do I think it."

said nothing of the kind. Also, it is not wholly true to say that I do not sympathize with his programme. What is he doing today with which I cannot sympathize? His enunciation of scientific socialism does not jar on me. I have been living the life since 1906 that he would have all India to live. To say that he favours Russian communism is a travesty of truth.<sup>1</sup> He says it is good for Russia, but he does not give an unequivocal certificate to it even about Russia. As for India, he has said plainly that the methods to be adopted in India would have to answer India's needs. He does not say that there must be class war, though he thinks it may be inevitable;<sup>2</sup> and only recently he declared emphatically that there should be no confiscation without compensation. There is nothing in all this which I oppose. Nevertheless there are differences of method; but to say that they make us opponents or rivals is a caricature.<sup>3</sup>

There is nothing he believes, nothing in his programme today about which I can say, as I certainly would if I felt that way: I oppose this tooth and nail. I would not present the same thing in the same way. Certain methods I adopted Jawaharlal would not adopt.

Are you fond of him?

Yes, as I am fond of you. But that is not saying anything much.

Do you approve of him for India?

Yes.

This our friend had got the impression in Karachi that your own internal cleavages were far worse than outside tyranny, and that was the impression she was going to fly off with to America.

That remark of hers elicited one sentence of withering criticism from Gandhiji:

If I did not believe in human nature, I would say that to give you that impression was a diabolical plot to blacken India's name.

Asked if he would emerge from his retirement to lead his people if they again needed him, Gandhiji replied firmly, with a quick look from under irregular eyebrows at his interrogator.

<sup>1</sup> Paula Lecler reports: "To say he favours communism on the Russian model is doing a grave injustice to Jawaharlal."

<sup>2</sup> Paula Lecler adds here: "I believe he thinks a class war may be inevitable, but he is doing his best to avert one."

<sup>3</sup> The paragraph that follows is from Paula Lecler's report reproduced in *The Bombay Chronicle*.

That depends upon God. I never decide beforehand but wait for the contingency to decide. Planning ahead for myself, even for a few years, is opposed to my principles.

*Harijan*, 8-8-1936, and *The Bombay Chronicle*, 7-3-1937

### 371. TWO PEN-PICTURES

Babu Hara Dayal Nag, the G. O. M. of Bengal, is never weary of well-doing. In the constancy of love of his country he is not to be excelled. The reader will appreciate the following instructive description<sup>1</sup> of his village as he saw it in his youth and as it is today.

*Harijan*, 8-8-1936

### 372. PROPAGANDA BY VILIFICATION

A correspondent sends me a proselytizing pamphlet, being a Gujarati version of the original in Urdu. The Gujarati translator and publisher is Shekh Umarbhai Mohmedbhai and the pamphlet is printed in Ahmedabad. I take the following<sup>2</sup> from the correspondent's letter.

Permit me to send you a copy of a pamphlet published...with a view to induce Harijans for conversion to Islam and create hatred among them against Hindus. This pamphlet is full of such remarks about the Hindu religion and the Hindu rites as are not only false but are likely to intensify the communal tension....

You will kindly...suggest the course to be adopted so that these poor and illiterate Harijan people may not be entrapped by such false and inflammatory pamphlets.

I had the pain of going through the pamphlet. It is as mischievous as it has been described by the correspondent. It is in the form of a dialogue between two Harijans, father and son. At the instance of the father the son reads Hindu scriptures and ridicules them. Everything held sacred by Hindus is caricatured so as to excite disgust towards Hinduism and *savarna* Hindus. Even the sacred name of Swami Shraddhanandji has been dragged in the discussion and words have been put into his mouth which I hold him to be incapable

<sup>1</sup> Not reproduced here

<sup>2</sup> Only excerpts are reproduced here.

of having uttered. Here is a sentence which no gentleman would write of his fellow-men: "Some Hindus sit in squares smeared with cow-dung as if they were sitting to evacuate themselves. Cursed be such eaters." the pamphlet is full of distortions. And it holds out material hopes to Harijans which can hardly be fulfilled especially about the mass of Harijans if they are ever tempted to forsake their ancestral faith. Thus the Moulvi who is responsible for the conversion of the Harijan's son is represented to be a convert from being a Chamar and having married a girl belonging to a noble Muslim family. The new convert drinks from the same cup as the Moulvi and the remains of the water are drunk by the company. He is treated to a feast at a Munshi's palatial house. The feast fills the dining hall with fragrance.

"Every morsel was a nectar, every potion the water of life," and this erstwhile Harijan is treated to the inhalation of a *hookah* which goes the round of the whole company.

It is tragic to see that religion is dragged down to the low level of crude materialism to lure people into which the most cherished sentiments of millions of human being are trodden underfoot.

I hope that the pamphlet has no support from thoughtful Mussalmans who should read it to realize the mischief such pamphlets can create.

My correspondent asks me how to deal with the menace. One remedy I have applied, viz., to bring hereby the vilifying propaganda to the notice of the responsible Muslim world. He himself can claim the attention of the local Mussalman leaders to the publication. The second and the most important thing to do is purification from within. So long as the poison of untouchability remains in the Hindu body, it will be liable to attacks from outside. It will be proof against such attacks only when a solid and impregnable wall of purification is erected in the shape of complete removal of untouchability.

*Harijan*, 8-8-1936

### 373. NOTES

#### WHEELERS, NOT SHOULDERS

Shri C. Tejpal has for years been conducting a campaign in favour of using light vehicles instead of shouldered for carrying dead bodies. He knows that he has to fight against a sentiment cherished by millions of Hindus and Mussalmans from times immemorial. Persons



vie with one another in giving their shoulders for carrying the dead. The carrying of corpses on human shoulders is an impressive sight. So at any rate we have been used to think. But apart from sentiment there is nothing to recommend the practice. Where the burial ground or the crematorium is some distance from the place where death occurs, carrying on shoulders becomes a trying task. Again when a caste has only a few members, or it is a poor man who has lost a relative, no matter how near the place of disposal is the question assumes serious proportions. And we know that in times of plague and famine corpses are often left in the streets to rot or to be food for vultures. There is no doubt, therefore, that there is much to be said in favour of carrying corpses on carts. Shri Tejpal has constructed a cart which costs a little over 100 rupees. In a poor country like India a hundred rupees is a consideration not to be lightly dismissed. But if village Mahajans<sup>1</sup> and municipalities were to own such carts and hire them out at a trifling charge, the question of expense can be eliminated. And local enthusiasts who appreciate the reform may popularize the practice in their surroundings. Shri Tejpal informs me that the Municipality of Ahmedabad keeps one such cart and so do Mahajans or Seva Samitis in Surat, Baroda, Jamnagar and Porbandar. The Parthana Samaj of Bombay is also reported to have one. It will be interesting to know the extent to which the reform has made headway in the places where such carts are kept.

#### HAND-GINNING

Like the wheel, the carding-bow and the hand-gins have been undergoing progressive improvements though not to the same extent as the wheel. But the processes anterior to spinning are just as important as spinning itself. Evenness, strength and speed depend upon good cotton, good picking, good ginning and good carding. If any of the processes are defective, they tell upon the quality and the quantity of yarn turned out in a given time. Experiments are therefore being conducted by Shri Radhakrishna Bajaj in Wardha in finding out the possibility of improvement in the hand-gin. If there are khadi lovers who have made improvements, they should correspond with Shri Radhakrishna and send him specimens if any.

*Harijan*, 8-8-1936

<sup>1</sup> A representative body of responsible citizens

374. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

August 9, 1936

CHI. MIRA,

Yes, it is well for you not to come. I am sending more milk. If not wanted, let Motibehn bring it back.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C. W. 6358. Courtesy: Mirabehn. Also G. N. 9824

375. LETTER TO KANTILAL GANDHI

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
August 9, 1936

CHI. KANTI,

How you have hurt me like a thorn!<sup>1</sup> Since I had this news, your face has been present before my mind's eye, and I have been brooding constantly. What is this that has happened and why did you do it? But how could you help it? Who could overcome his nature? And it is quite proper that you should not curb your nature, as this would only lead to hypocrisy. It is thus I console myself. I am considering what I can do, within my limits, to help you fulfil your ambition.

I shall send you a *dhoti* if you write to me the length and the width you want. Or, you may yourself cut it out when you come here. I have three rolls with me.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C. W. 7304. Courtesy: Kantilal Gandhi

<sup>1</sup> The reference is to the addressee wanting to have formal education and a degree; *vide* "Letter to Manilal and Sushila Gandhi", 16-8-1936.

### 376. LETTER TO PYARELAL

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
August 9, 1936

CHI. PYARELAL,

I see that our views are divergent. You still appear to have faith in outward effort. I have given up outward effort altogether. I depend only on the grace of God. The reason for my asking you to come is that it is here that your *sadhana* has to be, not in Bengal or Utkal. Your natural place is also here with me and perhaps it is here that you can be most useful. This therefore is my advice to you. If my writing strikes a chord in your heart, do come.

What you write about Khan Saheb is correct. He came yesterday to stay with me. He is occupying a corner of the room at the moment. I like this *dharmashala*. How wonderful it would be if you could also join! Still a small room has been built for Khan Saheb. You can also make use of it. He is not using it. Maybe he will not use it at all.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

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

### 377. LETTER TO KANU GANDHI

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
August 9/10, 1936

CHI. KANAIYO,

Tell Chhotelal to send me two vessels each big enough to hold five to seven seers of milk. They should preferably be tin-coated brass ones. Zinc vessels will do if they are cheaper.

Send me some mustard oil.

A few letters accompany this.

I want hand-made paper for making note-books, etc.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

P. T. O.

August 10, 1936

On the reverse I wrote yesterday.

But it got left behind. I find, however, that it was not very urgent. I am now sending some letters and an article. I propose to send some more later. I want the enema things we have here. If they are needed there, new ones have to be bought for this place.

BAPU

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

378. *LETTER TO MIRABEHN*

August 10, 1936

CHI. MIRA,

I hope the progress will continue. If there is any complication, you will at once let me know.

Love

BAPU

From the original: C. W. 6359. Courtesy: Mirabehn. Aslo G. N. 9825

379. *LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU*

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
August 10, 1936<sup>1</sup>

MY DEAR JAWAHARLAL,

Khan Saheb has received the usual notice to attend the meetings<sup>2</sup> in Bombay. He has no desire to attend them and I do not want to press him. And in Bombay he will be asked to attend meetings and functions at which he would be called upon to speak. I do not want him to do so just now. I want him rather to pass the year with me. And he is none too strong nor invulnerable to attacks of illness. Will you, therefore, please excuse him from attendance?

Love.

BAPU

Gandhi-Nehru Papers, 1934. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

<sup>1</sup> In the source this letter is placed among 1934 papers and the same year is assigned to it in *A Bunch of Old Letters*. This however is a mistake as Gandhiji shifted to Segaoon only in 1936.

<sup>2</sup> Of the A. I. C. C.

### 380. LETTER TO PREMABEHN KANTAK

August 10, 1936

CHI. PREMA,

I had a reason for not being content with a three-pice postcard.<sup>1</sup>

I didn't get your *rakhdi*<sup>2</sup>. I would certainly have worn it had I received it. Since you sent one, however, you have had the joy and earned the merit of sending it.

You seem to be picking up knowledge of a good many subjects. I shall at any rate glance through the book sent by you.

I can certainly enlarge the area of experience in Segaon, but not just now. I have neither the time nor the inclination. The experiences don't seem to me worth communicating to anybody.

Man's speech has a conventional meaning but in addition each utterance also has a specific meaning intended by the speaker which can be known from the context. Nobody has known truth in its perfection and, therefore, each person describes a thing as he sees it and that is the truth for him, even though as a matter of fact his view might be false.

In like manner man's view of a thing changes from age to age and the view held in a particular age is the truth for that age. This is the meaning or idea in *asato ma sadgamaya*<sup>3</sup>.

Where the notion of high and low has disappeared I see no harm in the Shudras serving the other three varnas.<sup>4</sup> [Nobody]<sup>5</sup> is compelled to be a Shudra. [If, then, service is the natural bent of mind of a Shudra,]<sup>6</sup> why should he change that calling for another? If the Brahmin and the Bhangi both get just enough for their sustenance,

<sup>1</sup> The addressee had enquired why Gandhiji had used an envelope for his letter dated July 22, 1936, when the matter could have been fitted in a postcard.

<sup>2</sup> The thread tied by a sister to her brother's wrist symbolizing the brother's obligation to protect her

<sup>3</sup> Lead me from untruth to truth.

<sup>4</sup> The addressee had maintained that the whole tradition of the saint-poets of Maharashtra had more or less acknowledged the idea of high and low as inherent in the varna system; how then could they look upon all with equality?

<sup>5</sup> This sentence is incomplete in the source.

<sup>6</sup> *ibid*

what is the difference between the two? Nobody will prevent a Bhangi from becoming a *jnani*<sup>1</sup>. In the varna system of my conception, no varna will have the monopoly of knowledge. Think over the verses in the women's prayer.<sup>2</sup> What are the common dharmas of the four varnas? Maybe you will find some utterances of Jnanadeva<sup>3</sup> and others which seem to support the distinction of high and low. But nobody should be judged in this way by a few isolated sayings of his. I know what you wish to say regarding Ramdas<sup>4</sup>. Even if those examples could be shown to be inapplicable, my argument remains untouched.

I cannot accede to your request, for you have given no thought as to its propriety. You have just been carried away by the present tide. You, I and all others are cast in the moulds inherited from our parents. There is as much sense, or lack of sense, in rejecting it as there is in forgetting the fact and claiming ourselves to be different. We can remain in the old mould and still make many changes. That is growth or progress. To assume a completely new appearance will mean a total revolution or a new religion altogether. Does Hinduism have no definite mould in any respect? Children daily trace new letters in water which disappear the moment they are formed, but they enjoy the game. It seems you wish to do the same. But do you think you can lure an old man of 67 who has grown up in the old mould, and interest him in drawing circles in water? Standing on the bank, I watch the play of such as you. In the next issue of *Harijan*, you will see something having a bearing on this in my comments on a letter.<sup>5</sup>

You have discovered my ignorance all right. If you search more, you will discover still grosser ignorance. But I hope you will not desert me when you have discovered all my ignorance. If you promise me that, I will confess that I don't know anything at all, for I have not made such a study.

I have read enough about communism to satisfy me. What we shall need in swaraj I can tell only when I see the swaraj. Any opposition from me that you may notice will be concerning the question of

<sup>1</sup> A spiritually enlightened person

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "Letter to Prabhavati", 15-12-1930

<sup>3</sup> Jnaneshwara, saint-poet of Maharashtra

<sup>4</sup> Samartha Ramdas Swami, Shivaji's guru

<sup>5</sup> *Vide* "Varna v. Caste," 15-8-1936

truth-untruth and violence-non-violence.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 10384. Also C. W. 6822. Courtesy:  
Premabehn Katak

### *381. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI*

*August 10, 1936*

CHI. NARANDAS,

I am enclosing Prema's letter. Lilavati does not wish to move out of this place, though you have been inviting her and, on my part, I have gladly given the permission. She is very unsettled in her mind and wants to try and see if she can steady herself with a year's effort. And she believes that going there might disturb her. There is some truth in it, no doubt.

I therefore recommend that you manage without her if you can. Yesterday she told me that she was going to write to you.

Kanaiyo comes often to see me. I see he is in a very happy mood.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II. Also C.W. 8501. Courtesy:  
Narandas Gandhi

### *382. LETTER TO NARAHARI D. PARIKH*

*August 10, 1936*

CHI. NARAHARI,

Have you ever extracted juice from a dried lemon? If you say 'no', how will you squeeze out of me a lesson for your series of readers? I went through your circular request. It is good, but not for me. I would stop all writing if I could have my way. Don't ask for anything new. Go ahead with your work, taking me as gone.

Maruti<sup>1</sup> desires to build a house. The land should be from the Harijan Ashram. What happened to Avantikabai's<sup>2</sup> plot? Can we give him that or some part of it? Or he might keep with us the sum he wishes to invest and so long as he does so he might put the land to his use and enjoy ownership rights of the house. If it does not suit us, we may return his deposit after estimating the current value of the property. I am saying all this on the supposition that Avantikabai's land might not be available or that the Ashram land might not be sold. For my part, I have no objection whatever to selling it. Think over the whole matter and do what seems proper.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 9098

### 383. LETTER TO H.L. SHARMA

*August 10, 1936*

CHI. SHARMA,

Your letter. I feel ashamed that Babbitt's book has not yet been found though I am sure it will be found. The yarn got mixed up with the other yarns. You should accept the khadi form me...<sup>3</sup>

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a facsimile of the Hindi: *Bapuki Chhayamen Mere Jivanke Solah Varsh*, facing p. 259

### 384. LETTER TO PYARELAL

*August 11, 1936*

CHI. PYARELAL,

I started reading your letters in detail after writing to you. I see that you suffered from bleeding. That also is a sign that it would be unwise for you to go to Utkal and that you should come here. I have always been telling you that it is your duty to make your body healthy. I was pained to hear about the squalor in the College Square.

<sup>1</sup> Husband of Lakshmi, a Harijan girl adopted by Gandhiji

<sup>2</sup> Avantikabai Gokhale

<sup>3</sup> The last sentence is illegible, the original having been damaged.



Have you drawn Satis Babu's<sup>1</sup> attention to it? Do let me have news of your health if you are not coming immediately.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

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

385. *LETTER TO AMRITLAL V. THAKKAR*

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
August 12, 1936

BAPA,

You have made a pretty full miscellany of a single letter. I hope Devdas's presence causes no distraction to life there.

I had a long letter from Malkani whose plight is indeed pitiable. The question constantly occurs to me whether to call Rukmini a shrew or an absolutely foolish person.

What shall we do about Satis Babu? On the one hand he has made a great sacrifice and, on the other, he is very suspicious by nature. Of course we shall be able to keep him as long as we wish to.

Ramachandran has caused me a surprise. Let me know if any difficulty concerning him arises.

Surely, some day you are going to look at things at Segaoon....<sup>2</sup> Tukdoji occupies the corner in front of me, Khan Saheb the one beside me; Munnalal by Tukdoji's side. Rajkumari's bed is between me and Tukdoji. On the wooden stand before her rests a rustice medicine box which is nothing but a used fruit-case and other odds and ends. Ba, Lilavati and Manu accommodate themselves where they can. Again, we have quite a different scene at night. Isn't 'houselessness' one of the distinguishing characteristics of a *bhakta*? At any rate, am I not indulging in all sorts of pranks, trying to play the *bhakta*? Whatever it may be to others, Segaoon is to me an inexhaustible source of joy. Yesterday the last corner fell vacant—for the present at least. Munnalal's of course is permanent.

I expect you are doing well.

BAPU

<sup>1</sup> Satis Chandra Das Gupta

<sup>2</sup> A word or two are illegible here.

[PS.]

I had very little time even to scribble this silly stuff. But shouldn't I rather relax in this way? I have only followed you.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 1169

386. *LETTER TO CHANDRAKANTA*

SEGAON, WARDHA,

*August 13, 1936*

CHI. KANTA,

I was glad to have your letter, though late. Doubtless you had to do what your father wanted. But surely he did not tell you to bedeck yourself in finery. He would never ask you to array yourself in ornaments. And even if he did, he must have left it to your *wish*. He got you married, but surely he would not run your household. But I do not wish to write a long letter. Be straightforward, simple and good. Be a good worker and serve. Fulfil at least some of the hopes you have aroused. Preserve your health—physical, mental and spiritual.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

SHRI CHANDRAKANTA  
BHAKTI BHAVAN  
SIGRA  
BENARES CITY

From a photostat of the Gujarati: Chandrakanta Papers. Courtesy: Gandhi National Museum and Library

387. LETTER TO MANGIBAI

SEGAON,

August 13, 1936

CHI. MANGIBAI,

I have just heard of your husband's death. Why should we grieve over the death of our loved ones. In the long run death spares no one. This too should be regarded as one of God's blessings. Now be calm and devote yourself to service.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 172

388. LETTER TO F. MARY BARR

WARDHA,

August 14, 1936

MY DEAR SISTER,

This is to acknowledge your letter to Bapu of the 9th inst. I assume that you are still in Khedi though Dr. Baretto told me that he was expecting you on Tuesday last. Evidently his date did not suit you and you asked for another, otherwise you should have been here by now.

In your letter too, you do not say when exactly you are arriving here.

Bapu likes very much your idea of taking a brief holiday in England. We will discuss the details about your travel after you arrive. In the mean time he wants me to tell you that much as he likes the idea of your getting England to take a bigger share in helping India's poor, you must not think that you are not giving to India more than you are taking from her. You must dismiss the thought from your mind that you have ever been a burden or are ever likely to be one. Whilst you may ask for support from English friends, it will not be in order to find the wherewithal for your livelihood, but in order to help our work here. You are a member of the family and are entitled to wage as much as the rest of us.

More when we meet.

*Yours sincerely,*  
MAHADEV

MISS MARY BARR  
KHEDI SAOLIGARH  
DISTT. BETUL, C.P.

From a photostat: G. N. 6066. Courtesy: F. Mary Barr

### 389. TALK WITH A PATIL<sup>1</sup>

[Before August 15, 1936]

The old Patil... went one evening to Gandhiji saying, "I am ready to have the barber's services...immediately after he has served Govind."<sup>2</sup>

[GANDHIJEE:] What then is the difficulty?

[PATIL:] But now he is asking of me a thing I cannot give.

[GANDHIJEE:] What is that?

[PATIL:] It is that I should once go and feed at his place. With God as witness, Maharaj, I say I have never in my life of about four score years had tea or any kind of refreshment in a hotel. How does he expect me to go and feed at his place?

I quite appreciate what you say, but why does he insist on your feeding at his place?

Because he thinks his castemen might boycott him, and he wants to make assurance doubly sure by having me in his place to eat. Now, Maharaj, is that part of your anti-untouchability programme?

Certainly not. I am satisfied if you have conquered the prejudice of touch. Inter-dining is no part of the anti-untouchability programme, though as you know I am having Govind to cook for me. But that is what I would expect every Harijan sevak to do, not you.

*Harijan, 15-8-1936*

### 390. TALK WITH A BARBER<sup>3</sup>

SEGAON,

[Before August 15, 1936]

One morning when I went to Segaoon, I found Gandhiji busy pulling to pieces a hair-cropping machine, in order to clean and oil it. That done, he began having a crop with his own hands with a mirror in front of him.

At the same moment one of the devotees of the sadhu came in, and he happened to be a barber. "Bapuji," shouted the sadhu from the opposite corner, "Let Bhima crop your hair. He knows the art."

<sup>1</sup> Extracted from Mahadev Desai's "Weekly Letter", 15-8-1936

<sup>2</sup> The barber for fear of being boycotted by the village Patil and others had refused to shave Govind, a Harijan boy.

<sup>3</sup> Extracted from Mahadev Desai's "Weekly Letter"

[GANDHIJI:] But how does he know it?

He is a barber by profession.

Ah, that is very good. Come along then.

But as soon as Bhima began the operation, Gandhiji asked him:

But I hope you have no prejudice against shaving our Harijan brethren. Have you?

He slightly hesitated, and said: "I have in my heart no prejudice against Harijans."

That I can believe. But will you shave a Harijan on the same terms as you would shave me?

Again he hesitated. Thereupon Gandhiji said to the sadhu:

I thought you had ascertained from him this thing before you asked me to have his services.

"I am sorry," said the sadhu, "that aspect had for the moment escaped me."

Then I shall have to consider whether I should stop in the middle of the crop and dispense with Bhima.

But Bhima said: "No, though I do not usually do it, I promise from now to serve Harijans on the same terms."

*Harijan*, 15-8-1936

### 391. MORE COBWEBS

A seeker of truth cannot afford to write or speak to please anybody. During my long search after truth in all things which have come my way, I know that I have hardly ever succeeded in convincing all of the correctness of my position regarding the matters then in question. In the matter of Hindi propaganda, if I have displeased certain Muslim friends I have no less displeased Hindu friends. But unless my critics convince me of my error, they should not expect me to change merely because they want me to. Thus a correspondent actually says that although my position is logically and historically correct, I should change it to suit the Muslim critics who would have me either to advocate the adoption of the expression 'Hindi-Urdu' or merely 'Urdu' to denote the same common speech, the objection being not to the speech but the name which it has hitherto carried. Now there is a letter before me which quarrels with my address to the

Hindi Prachar Convocation recently held at Bangalore<sup>1</sup> from another standpoint. It is a long letter from which I quote below the most relevant extracts:

In your convocation address at Bangalore you have asked the 11 million men and women of Karnatak to learn Hindi in order to establish contact with them. You have not even restricted the appeal to those who are already educated in the mother tongue. Even taking for granted that all are educated in the mother tongue, it is neither possible nor desirable, though possible, nor natural that the masses should learn a language other than their mother tongue. Only all India national workers, business men and other people who come in daily contact with the people of North India can and should learn Hindi. Necessity will make them learn the language even without any propaganda.

Though you say that Hindi does not supplant but supplements the provincial languages, in effect it is not so. The bulk of the intellectuals of Tamil Nad today don't think nor even feel in Tamil but in English. They have completely neglected Tamil. You can understand to what depths of cultural slavery they have fallen when you know that they are even proud of declaring in public meetings and other places that they cannot speak or write well in Tamil but they can do both fluently in English. Now some of them have taken to the study of Hindi more with the help of English than with the help of Tamil. The result is going to be the same. They will begin to think in Hindi instead of English. If a Gujarati tells you that he can write a beautiful essay in Hindi but not in Gujarati, you will be only sorry for him and think that our country is far from attaining *purna* swaraj. Many have begun to say in Tamil Nad that they know Hindi better than Tamil.

One should not learn any language even though it be the language of the gods, to the detriment of one's own mother tongue. In this connection I used to cite your own example to the Hindi fanatics. Though you declare that Hindi is the common language of India you have not written either your *Autobiography* or *Satyagraha in South Africa* in Hindi but in Gujarati. If you had written them in Hindi many more people would have known what you say in your own words. But you preferred to write them in Gujarati. Though your teaching and personal example differ in this matter, I hold your action to be correct and proper. Therefore I want people to follow not what you say but what you do.

Swaraj should not mean the imposition of one language over those who speak different languages. Primary importance ought to be given only to the

<sup>1</sup> On June 12, 1936; *vide* "Convocation Address at Hindi Prachar Sabha, Bangalore", 12-6-1936

mother tongue. Only secondary importance can be given to Hindi, the common language of India. Real inspiration and elevation can come only through the mother tongue.

Let me come to the question of script. In *Harijan* dated 4-5-1935, writing on the resolution passed by the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan held at Indore you show a partiality for the Urdu script which passes my understanding. In your convocation address at Bangalore also you show the same partiality for the Urdu script. You want to destroy the scripts of all Indian languages derived from or largely influenced by Sanskrit and substitute Devanagari for them for the sake of those who want to learn the various languages. You want to preserve the two scripts, Devanagari and Urdu, for one and the same language spoken by Hindus and Muslims. Others, who also number millions and who have the misfortune of speaking different languages, should allow their scripts to be destroyed and displaced by Devanagari, learn Hindi-Hindustani and also learn Urdu script in order to understand and come into contact with 130 million Hindus and 70 million Muslims! Does this not sound ridiculous and represent the highest form of tyranny? The logical conclusion of this policy would inevitably be the abolition of all languages except Hindi with both of its scripts, for the Devanagari script would have been adopted for all the languages, all would have learnt Hindi and all the important works in the mother tongue would have been translated in [to] Hindi. I want you to reflect for a moment whether this consummation would be desirable in the best interests of India, our common land of birth. Before you propose to destroy the various scripts, should you not attempt to destroy one of the scripts, Devanagari and Urdu, for one and the same language? Why should Muslims and Hindus speaking the same language use two different scripts?

I do not know that I asked all 11 million men and women of Karnatak to learn Hindi-Hindustani. I should be more than satisfied if all those who ever have to come in contact with the people from the North would learn Hindi-Hindustani. But I would certainly not only not deplore, as my correspondent would have me to, on the contrary I would welcome, all people of all the non-Hindi provinces learning Hindi. Why is it not desirable or natural for all India to know an all-India speech *in addition to* every province knowing its own language and in addition knowing All-India speech? Why should such knowledge be the privilege of the cultured few and not of the masses? It will surely show a very high degree of culture for a whole nation of over 300 million souls to know two languages. That such an event is highly improbable is unfortunately too true.

What, however, would be most unfortunate would be for any province to neglect its own language and to prefer another speech as the correspondent complains is happening in Tamil Nad. My frequent travels in Tamil Nad have confirmed the opinion expressed by my correspondent. But latterly I have noticed a change for the better in that province. And the process of preferring the provincial speech to every other where the choice is possible will be hastened without an effort as the educated in every province recognize more and more the necessity of seeking and establishing contact with the masses.

The correspondent incidentally touches the eternal rivalry between English and Hindi-Hindustani to be the common speech. I have held and declared, ever since I have entered public life, the definite opinion that English never can or ought to be the all-India speech and that it can only be Hindi, i.e., Hindustani, the speech spoken by the millions of Hindus and Mussalmans of the North. The attempt to treat English as such is to establish a permanent bar between the masses and the English-educated classes and to retard the progress of the country to its destination. I have repeatedly explained that English has a definite place in our culture. In order to understand the rulers and the whole Western world and to bring to India the best that the West has to give, a few of us must learn English which is the most widely known speech of the West. But a thousand times more Indians have to know Hindi-Hindustani if the illiterate masses are to be one with the educated classes.

The correspondent is wholly ignorant of my opinion when he thinks that I have even been guilty of advising preference for Hindi over the provincial speech. There is no hiatus between my principle and my practice in this connection. I heartily endorse the proposition that primary importance should be given to the mother tongue.

On the question of script my correspondents' fear is justified, nor do I apologize for the opinion I hold. Different languages descended from or intimately connected with Sanskrit ought to have one script and that is surely Devanagari. Different scripts are an unnecessary hindrance to the learning by the people of one province the language of other provinces. Even Europe which is not one nation has generally adopted one script. Why should India, which claims to be and is one nation, not have one script? I know I am inconsistent when I tolerate both Devanagari and Urdu scripts for the same language. But my inconsistency is not quite foolish. There is Hindu-



Muslim friction at the present moment. It is wise and necessary for the educated Hindus and Muslims to show mutual respect and toleration to the utmost extent possible. Hence the option for Devanagari or Urdu scripts. Happily there is no friction between provinces and provinces. Hence the desirability of advocating a reform which means a closer knitting together of provinces in more ways than one. And let it be remembered that the vast mass of the people are wholly illiterate. It would be suicidal to impose on them different scripts for no other reason than a false sentiment and laziness to think.

*Harijan*, 15-8-1936

### 392. VARNA v. CASTE

Shri Sant Ramji, of the Jat-Pat-Torak Mandal of Lahore, wants me to publish the following:

I have read your remarks<sup>1</sup> about Dr. Ambedkar and the Jat-Pat-Torak Mandal, Lahore. In that connection I beg to submit as follows:

We did not invite Dr. Ambedkar to preside over our conference because he belonged to the Depressed Classes, for we do not distinguish between a touchable and an untouchable Hindu. On the contrary our choice fell on him simply because his diagnosis of the fatal disease of the Hindu community was the same as ours, i.e., he too was of the opinion that caste system was the root cause of the disruption and downfall of the Hindu. The subject of the Doctor's thesis for doctorate being caste system, he has studied the subject thoroughly. Now the object of our conference was to persuade the Hindus to annihilate caste, but the advice of a non-Hindu in social and religious matters can have no effect on them. The Doctor in the supplementary portion of his address insisted on saying that that was his last speech as a Hindu, which was irrelevant as well as pernicious to the interests of the conference. So we requested him to expunge that sentence, for he could easily say the same thing on any other occasion. But he refused and we saw no utility in making merely a show of our function. In spite of all this, I cannot help praising his address which is, as far as I know, the most learned thesis on the subject and worth translating into every vernacular of India.

Moreover I want to bring to your notice that your philosophical difference between caste and varna is too subtle to be grasped by people in general, because for all practical purposes in the Hindu society caste and varna are one and the same thing, for the function of both of them is one and the

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Dr. Ambedkar's Indictment- I", 11-7-1936

same, i.e., to restrict intercaste marriages and inter-dining. Your theory of *varnavyavastha* is impracticable in this age and there is no hope of its revival in the near future. But Hindus are slaves of caste and do not want to destroy it. So when you advocate your ideal or imaginary *varnavyavastha* they find justification for clinging to caste. Thus you are doing a great disservice to social reform by advocating your imaginary utility of division of varnas, for it creates hindrance in our way. To try to remove untouchability without striking disease or to draw a line on the surface of water. As in the heart of their hearts *dwijas*<sup>1</sup> do not want to give social equality to the so-called touchable and untouchable Shudras, so they refuse to break caste, and give liberal donations for the removal of untouchability, simply to evade the issue. To seek the help of the Shastras for the removal of untouchability and caste is simply to wash mud with mud.

The last paragraph of the letter surely cancels the first. If the Mandal rejects the help of the Shastras, they do exactly what Dr. Ambedkar does, i.e., cease to be Hindus. How then can they object to Dr. Ambedkar's address merely because he said that that was his last speech as a Hindu? The position appears to be wholly untenable especially when the Mandal, for which Shri Sant Ram claims to speak, applauds the whole argument of Dr. Ambedkar's address.

But it is pertinent to ask what the Mandal believes if it rejects the Shastras. How can a Muslim remain one if he rejects the Quran, or a Christian remain Christian if he rejects the Bible? If caste and varna are convertible terms and if varna is an integral part of the Shastras which define Hinduism, I do not know how a person who rejects caste, i.e., varna can call himself a Hindu.

Shri Sant Ram likens the Shastras to mud. Dr. Ambedkar has not, so far as I remember, given any such picturesque name to the Shastras. I have certainly meant it when I have said that if the Shastras support the existing untouchability I should cease to call myself a Hindu. Similarly, if the Shastras support caste as we know it today in all its hideousness, I may not call myself or remain a Hindu since I have no scruples about inter-dining or intermarriage. I need not repeat my position regarding the Shastras and their interpretation. I venture to suggest to Shri Sant Ram that it is the only rational and correct and morally defensible position and it has ample warrant in Hindu tradition.

*Harijan*, 15-8-1936

<sup>1</sup> The twice-born

### 393. LETTER TO MANILAL AND SUSHILA GANDHI

SEGAON WARDHA,  
August 16, 1936

CHI. MANILAL, SUSHILA,

I have your letters. There is no need at all for you to come here if you are happy where you are. No matter where we are we should render whatever services we can, and regard the people wherever we are as members of our own family. The true meeting is that of hearts, and they are quite close though we are millions of miles apart. If the hearts of two prisoners in the same cell are not one their physical proximity is meaningless. Hence, I do not long to have you come here to see me. You may live there permanently if you find your peace there.

Now a surprise for you both. Kanti's mind is now set on getting formal education and obtaining a degree. However one may try, he cannot possibly be deterred. I tried hard, but without success. Now, the question of the expenses for his education remains. Kanti, too, agrees that it cannot be paid from the public funds and that it would be a crime to take anything from his mother's sisters who have already spent a good deal on him. Hence, either you three brothers should pay his expenses or he must earn and learn. In my opinion, you three should share the burden, which is likely to be Rs. 75 to Rs. 100 a month, though I do not know about it. It is enough if you give your share of Rs. 33. Start sending the sum if you agree with the proposal.

Manu and Ba are with me. We are getting on quite well.

I got a letter from Harilal, his first after his conversion. He asks for a copy of the Golden Number<sup>1</sup> and wants to see me. I have written<sup>2</sup> to him, saying that he may come provided he agrees to my terms for the visit.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4856

<sup>1</sup> Of *Indian Opinion*

<sup>2</sup> The letter is not traceable.

394. TELEGRAM TO KASTURBHAI LALBHAI<sup>1</sup>

[On or before *August 17, 1936*]<sup>2</sup>

THE NOTICES ARE AGAINST THE PRINCIPLE OF ARBITRATION AND ARE FRAUGHT WITH SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES.

*The Bombay Chronicle*, 18-8-1936

395. LETTER TO N.R. MALKANI

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
*August 17, 1936*

MY DEAR MALKANI,

You did well in pouring out your heart to me. You should ignore what others may say. Thakkar Bapa has often made mistakes in judging people. And he writes letters often without careful thinking. But it is idle to expect him at this time of life to change his ways. We must take him as he is and love him for his sacrifice, single-minded devotion to the poor and the oppressed. I never attached any value to his remarks over the visit of the lady. It was undoubtedly wrong to have written at all about the incident and written in the way he did.

You did well in leaving Rukmini in Sind. You will have to be firm with her for her own sake. She must not be allowed to make life miserable or interfere with your work.

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 919

396. LETTER TO SUMANGAL PRAKASH

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
*August 19, 1936*

CHI. SUMANGAL,

I have your letter after a long time. I have been keeping myself informed about you. What can I write? I shall not give up hope of you. Some day your mind will become steady. Please note that should

<sup>1</sup> President of the Mill-owners' Association. According to *The Bombay Chronicle* the telegram was addressed also to Chimanlal Parekh who had put up the wage-cut notices in his mill.

<sup>2</sup> The report bearing the telegram was dated August 17, 1936.

you wish to lead a married life there would be nothing wrong in it. No one can transgress the bounds of his nature.

Write whenever you feel inclined.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: Sumangal Prakash Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

### 397. *LETTER TO PRABHUDAS GANDHI*

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
*August 19, 1936*

CHI. PRABHUDAS,

You should have written earlier but better late than never. You seem to have made yourself unhappy for some things without any reason. But what wisdom can I give you from this distance? For, you showed wisdom in not calling over Kashi. Our family is where we live. We should be content with what help they give.

I still advise you not to work beyond your strength. We are not omnipotent like God that we can help all people in all their troubles. We may go only as far as our strength permits. The baby is not likely to derive much benefit from glucose. As for cod-liver oil, I do not like it at all. If, however, you are very keen on it, you also may do as others do. You yourself have taken it. So have Kusum and Navin. It may possibly help.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: S.N. 32997

### 398. *LETTER TO S. AMBUJAMMAL*

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
*August 20, 1936*

CHI. AMBUJAM,

So, you can't be satisfied without letters written by me. You shall have them

You must be composed whatever happens. You should not worry over Kichi's indifferent health. God protects us all and we may not distrust Him when things do not go as we wish or when our dear ones get ill. So I am glad to see that you say you have resigned yourself to God. Let that resignation be from the heart and not merely mechanical. For often we utter these truths without their finding a set in our hearts.

My food is just now milk, pumpkin or any vegetable obtainable in Segaoon or surrounding villages, a little garlic and fruit when there is any. I do not find the need for fruit as I used to before.

I hope you have recovered your strength and that Father and Mother are also well.

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: C.W. 9609. Courtesy: S. Ambujammal

### 399. A LETTER

*August 20, 1936*

Your letter makes me think. If all the principal relatives have no objection, if...<sup>1</sup> is free to retain her own faith and does as a matter of fact retain it, and [her] future partner is likewise and does as a matter of fact retain his own faith and both have equal regard for each other's faith and practices, so far as I can see now, I should have no difficulty in blessing the union.

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

### 400. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

*August 20, 1936*

CHI. NARANDAS,

Could you give Kumi some work at the school or elsewhere, if I arranged an allowance of Rs. 15 a month for her from this place? To put the question differently, does she in your opinion have the disposition to be entrusted with some work?

Will a copy of the *Gita* with the words split up and with their meanings, do for Purushottam and Vijaya? They had asked for only a

<sup>1</sup> Omission as in the source

Sanskrit text. I now learn that there is such an edition in large type and with meanings. There will of course be no difficulty in getting the bare Sanskrit text.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II. Also C.W. 8502. Courtesy:  
Narandas Gandhi

#### *401. LETTER TO PRABHAVATI*

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
*August 21, 1936*

CHI. PRABHA,

A letter from you after many days. I had been waiting for it day after day. I very well understand the reason why you could not write. It would be enough to write out a postcard when under such a stress. Who am I to worry on you account? And after all how would my worrying avail? God alone worries and protects us all. May you have the faith that He is the Lord of every breath we take ! Everything will then go well. Otherwise you are being fully put to the test and you are sure to pass it. Do nothing beyond your capacity. Do manage to take milk and fruit. You will not then have to worry about the rest of your food. Who stays there? This is all I am writing today.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3480

#### *402. LETTER TO H.L. SHARMA*

*August 21, 1936*

CHI. SHARMA,

. . .<sup>1</sup> Give me the full title of Babbitt's book. You may not mind the loss of the book but I cannot help feeling upset till it is found. How can a book disappear like this? And the same goes for the khadi.

<sup>1</sup> Omission as in the source

However, I do not feel as bad about it as about the loss of Babbitt. I still hope I shall find it.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

[From Hindi]

*Bapuki Chhayamen Mere Jivanke Solah Varsh*, p. 260

#### 403. A LETTER<sup>1</sup>

[Before August 22, 1936]

I see that you do not know the origin of the word ‘Harijan’ as applied to the so-called untouchables. Hindu literature and, so far as I know, even Christian literature is full of the idea that the despised of the earth are favoured children of God; and so we have a proverb in daily use which means that God is the help of the helpless. Who could be better fitted to be called Harijans in this sense than the millions whom the insolence of men has made the outcastes of society? It would be a different thing if the untouchables themselves said, ‘We are Harijans because we are without sin’—but can any man born of woman say ‘I am without sin whether he has experienced what you call ‘new birth’ or not?’

*Harijan*, 22-8-1936

#### 404. DISCUSSION WITH A PANDIT<sup>2</sup>

[Before August 22, 1936]

A Pandit was one of the visitors to Segaon the other day. He was introduced as one learned in the Shastras and as one who gave regular discourses on the *Gita*. Gandhiji asked him if untouchability had the sanction of the *Gita*. It seemed to depend, according to him, on how one defined an untouchable. He said:

<sup>1</sup> Extracted from Mahadev Desai’s “Weekly Letter”. The addressee, a missionary, had enquired: “Does it not indicate that to be really and truly Harijans we must have the experience of a new birth, a spiritual regeneration, which the ordinary man can have no very great understanding of, so long as he is in the unregenerate state? Instead of designating the poor villagers who are still ‘dead in trespasses and sins’ as ‘sons of God’, would it not be better to call them all men and women who might become true sons of God?”

<sup>2</sup> Extracted from Mahadev Desai’s “Weekly Letter”



An untouchable is he who thinks evil thoughts, speaks foul language, does evil deeds. Such a one would be an untouchable according to the *Gita*.

But at that rate every one of us would be an untouchable. Who is there amongst us who is without sin? Let me ascertain. Tukde Maharaj, are you without sin?

No, by no means.

Then, Khan Saheb, what about you?

The same thing. Who can claim to be perfect?

Which means that we are all untouchable. Anyway, it is better that we regard ourselves as less pure than others, for we know ourselves better than we do others, and we may judge none. That is why saint Surdas sang: "There is none so wicked and base as I."

"But then one needs the help of the Shastras to purge oneself of evil thoughts?" said the Pandit.

Yes, but I refuse to accept the authority of a Shastra which supports untouchability, i.e., which condemns a certain class of people, by reason of their birth, as untouchable. Such a Shastra, far from purging us of sin, adds to our load of sin.

*Harijan, 22-8-1936*

#### 405. DISCUSSION WITH A SADHU<sup>1</sup>

[Before August 22, 1936]

Another sadhu, a header of the Harijans, one day came in with a curious poser: "How can we serve God when we do not know God?"

[GANDHIJ:] We may not know God, but we know His creation. Service of His creation is the service of God.

But how can we serve the whole of God's creation.

We can but serve that part of God's creation which is nearest and best known to us. We can start with our next-door neighbour. We should not be content with keeping our courtyard clean, we should see that our neighbour's courtyard is also clean. We may serve our family, but may not sacrifice the village for the sake of the family. Our own honour lies in the preservation of that of our own village. But we must each of us understand our own limitations. Our capacity for service is automatically limited by our knowledge of the world in

<sup>1</sup> Extracted from Mahadev Desai's "Weekly Letter"

which we live. But let me put it in the simplest possible language. Let us think less of ourselves than of our next-door neighbour. Dumping the refuse of our courtyard into that of our neighbour is no service of humanity but disservice. Let us start with the service of our neighbours.

*Harijan, 22-8-1936*

#### 406. A DANGEROUS PROPOSAL

Rao Bahadur Rajah has rendered public service by publishing the correspondence between himself and Dr. Moonje.<sup>1</sup> There was no breach of confidence in the publication. Privilege of confidence is surely not available for proposals which the receiver may regard to be dangerous or harmful to a cause as the Moonje-Ambedkar proposal most undoubtedly is. That neither Dr. Moonje nor Dr. Ambedkar regards his proposal as dangerous does not make it less so in the estimation of those who disapprove of it. What else was R.B. Rajah to do if he intended by all legitimate means to thwart it? He entered into correspondence with some of those who were parties to the Yeravda Pact, and when he saw that not one of them favoured the proposal he promptly released the correspondence for publication. One may hope that we have seen the last of any bargaining between Dr. Ambedkar and *savarna* Hindus for the transfer to another form of several million dumb Harijans as if they were chattels.

The Pact is between one large section of Hindus and another. It frustrated the attempt to cut the Hindu body into two and gave the opportunity to *savarna* Hindus to make reparation to those millions whom they had ill-treated for centuries.

Dr. Ambedkar wants to scourge the *savarna* Hindus as he has every right to do, but he may not expect the latter to be party to it. He has every right to be impatient. But prejudices and superstitions centuries old do not die in a moment. No one who has at all cared to study the reform movement will deny that every attempt humanly possible has been and is being made to bring home to the *savarna* Hindus the message of the anti-untouchability movement. If Dr. Ambedkar's proposal were accepted, the reform movement would receive a setback which might mean death to it in the end. For it

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Letter to M.C. Rajah", 26-6-1936

contemplates a paper but legal transfer of Harijans from the Hindu fold to some other, no matter by what name the latter is called. It must mean fratricide. Harijans themselves will be cut up into two rival sections, and if they are both classified as Harijans within the meaning of the Pact their state then will be worse than it is today, and it will be an evil day for unhappy India if such a calamity descends on her.

It is futile to argue that although there will be nominal change of religion, there won't be a real one, and if there is any, it would not be so bad as if Harijans were called Christians or Muslims. If it is a change of religion, it matters little under what label they are classified. Only if they are said to belong to another religion and still remain Harijans, an additional cause of internecine quarrel would be created; and all this to satisfy the desire to punish *savarna* Hindus. If in his anger or impatience Dr. Ambedkar refuses to see the obvious result, surely Dr. Moonje ought to.

And who are we, the self-constituted leaders, to barter away the religious freedom of Harijans? Has not every Harijan, however dull or stupid he may be, the right to make his own choice? It is one thing for Dr. Ambedkar and those who wish to change over to some other religion to do so, and wholly another for political or other parties to assume such change for the mass of Harijans and to base thereon legal and other consequences of a farreaching character.

If the leaders of different religions in India ceased to compete with one another for enticing Harijans into their fold, it would be well for this unfortunate country. I have the profound conviction that those who are engaged in the competition are not serving the cause of religion. By looking at it in terms of politics or economics they reduce the religious values, whereas the proper thing would be to esitmate politics and every other thing in terms of religion. Religion deals with the science of the soul. Great as the other forces of the world are, if there is such a thing as God soul force is the greatest of all. We know as a matter of fact that the greater the force the finer it is. Hitherto electricity has held the field among the finer physical powers. And yet nobody has seen it except through its wonderful results. Scientific speculation dares to talk of a force finer even than that of electricity. But no instrument devised by man has been able to know anything positive of soul force or spiritual force. It is on that force that the true religious reformer has hitherto relied and never without hope fulfilled. It is that force which will finally govern the welfare of

Harijans and everyone else and confound the calculations of men however gifted they may be intellectually. The reformer who has entered upon the duty of ridding Hinduism of the disease of untouchability has to depend in everything he does on that force and nothing else.

*Harijan, 22-8-1936*

407. *LETTER TO MEHERCHAND AHLUWALIA*

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
*August 22, 1936*

DEAR FRIEND,

My agreement is general. I have never advocated nor do I now advocate class war or class hatred. I do not believe the former to be inevitable. But I have never said nor believed that capitalist help is necessary for the Congress cause.

*Yours sincerely,*

SHRI MEHERCHAND AHLUWALIA  
RAJPURA  
N.W.R.

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

408. *LETTER TO MEHRABEHN ZABWALA*

*August 22, 1936*

DEAR SISTER,

I have your nice letter. There is no direct relation between Harijan workers and khadi. Even those who wear foreign clothes can serve Harijans. Therefore keep on doing social work without paying any heed to the criticism.

But you are also a devotee of *Daridranarayana*. *Daridranarayana* means thousands of starving villagers. Those who serve them can certainly bear the weight of khadi. It is enough that you do all that is possible for you. May I give you one suggestion? You are able to spin very fine yarn. If you do that you can get a very light sari made for five or six rupees. Many poor women do the same.

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

409. LETTER TO AMRITLAL V. THAKKAR

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
August 23, 1936

BAPA,

I do not remember the talks regarding the Sevak Mandal of South India. For the present at least, I form an opinion about each situation as and when it is represented to me. I see no objection if deserving workers can be found for the South India Mandal and the expenses are met from the South itself. The centre cannot give any aid.

I hope Amtul Salaam is not, on the whole, a source of worry to you. She is preparing to return. You have to accept payment from here for Nilam's expenses. The burden is not to be thrown on you there. Most probably Jamnalalji will pay her expenses or as a last resort my purse is always there.

Valunjkar will need more money. I have already written to you to accept his *hundi*. He has been working under my supervision and consults me in all matters.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 1165

410. LETTER TO N.C. KELKAR

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
August 24, 1936

DEAR MR. KELKAR,

I am late acknowledging your letter.

Do you not think your statement<sup>1</sup> was based on very flimsy evidence? You might have referred Swami Satyadev's article to me for confirmation. If I had the time I would love to enter into correspondence with him and find out the names of parties to whom I was supposed to be talking. But I have neither the time nor the inclination to pursue the matter any further. Truth stands.

*Yours sincerely,*  
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: C.W. 3119. Courtesy: Kashinath N. Kelkar

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Letter to N. C. Kelkar", 6-8-1936

411. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

August 24, 1936

MY DEAR REBEL,

Time only to send you love in abundance for two wires. Thank God thumb well.

TYRANT

From the original: C.W. 3735. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 6891

412. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

August 24, 1936

CHI. MIRA,

Here is Sitaram Sastri's letter for you to deal with. You forgot the sandals. I wonder if you got your own pair. If not, you should procure a pair there or write to Valunjkar at once.

I hope you are well and well settled.<sup>1</sup> I am looking forward to your first letter after settling down to the new life. Do not make any time-table.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 6362. Courtesy: Mirabehn. Also G.N. 9828

413. LETTER TO B. G. KHER

August 24, 1936

MY DEAR KHER,

Having little time, I have delayed acknowledging your important letter.<sup>2</sup> This is no question of anybody becoming a Buddhist. The temple is meant to be one dedicated to Buddha as temples are dedicated to Rama, Krishna and the like. There is no proselytizing

<sup>1</sup> The addressee had moved to Betul.

<sup>2</sup> Wherein the addressee had written: "Shri Dharmanand Kosambi told me that you would like to look into the way the amount given by Birlaji for the Naigaum Vihar is spent. I will do so; until the building is ready I shall see to the application of this amount. Thereafter I do not know what I could do, being today identified with the Harijan Seva Sangh. How am I to work on a Buddhist Vihar committee? Are they all going to become Buddhists? Where is the need?..."

taint about this movement. At the most it is to be a Hindu temple of an advanced type in which a very learned man will be keeper or *pujari*. That is how I have understood the whole scheme of Prof. Kosambi. You may share this with the Professor, and if he endorses my position, with Shri Natarajan, so that there may be a common understanding about the temple.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

From a copy: C.W. 7977. Courtesy: G.D. Birla

#### 414. LETTER TO MANILAL AND SUSHILA GANDHI

*August 24, 1936*

CHI. MANILAL, SUSHILA,

I have your letters to me and have also read the one to Kishorelal. The idea of having share-holders does not seem right. Where there is a field ready for share-holders, one for customers and expert workers can well be assumed. Having share-holders does not mean having subscribers or expert workers. In my opinion, there may be difficulty in getting men in spite of a flow of funds. Plainly speaking, the subscribers to *Indian Opinion* are not exactly its readers but rather patrons. This is a pitiable situation. You should stop running around and find another honest trade which can support both of you. You may pay the loss in running *Indian Opinion* or those who desire its continuance should give a guarantee to bear the loss. You should close down *Indian Opinion* if this cannot be done. The insistence on continuing it could be right only up to a point. You ought to have the ability to support yourself by means of some other trade in case *Indian Opinion* cannot run. You should also be equipped to support yourself solely on agriculture. You ought to think over all this patiently. Very little help can be had through exchange of ideas across this distance. You alone know the present condition there. It may, however, be right to inform me before taking a final decision. If there is no time for it there is no harm in deciding independently. In any case do observe these conditions:

- (1) Incur no debts.
- (2) Transact no business on credit.

(3) Take up no business in forbidden goods such as selling *bidis*.

(4) Don't engage in a business to get rich quickly.

I am pained to read about Sorabji. Sheth Rustomji's fears about him seem to be proving true. After all things must go the destined way and one's understanding follows the same way.

Perhaps I have already written to you about Kanti, who too is drawn into the current of examinations and degrees. He would not be satisfied without it. Now I recollect that I even asked you to help him.<sup>1</sup> It seems Devdas has offered him some help which would reach here in two or three days when I expect to learn more about it. Ramdas writes to say that he will not be able to help.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4857

#### *415. A DISCUSSION WITH MAURICE FRYDMAN<sup>2</sup>*

[On or before *August 25, 1936*]<sup>3</sup>

[GANDHI:] So that is Frydman. You have come to study the spinning-wheel. But you will not win the Rs. 100,000 prize, as the prize has been withdrawn.

[Maurice Frydman] joined heartily in the laughter and said, "Oh, no, I do not want the prize, my only aim is to give you the wheel you want."

He again asked a number of questions about the wheel, discussed various improvements and left for Wardha.<sup>4</sup>

He inquired if Gandhiji's aim was just humanitarian in sitting down in the village, just serving the villagers as best he could !

I am here to serve no one else but myself, to find my own self-realization through the service of these village folk. Man's ultimate aim is the realization of God, and all his activities, social, political,

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Letter to Manilal and Sushila Gandhi", 16-8-1936

<sup>2</sup> Extracted from Mahadev Desai's "Weekly Letter". Maurice Frydman was a Polish engineer, interested in village reconstruction movement, who had met Gandhiji earlier at Nandi Hill. He was given the name Bharatanand.

<sup>3</sup> According to the source the discussion took place on a Tuesday. The Tuesday before 29-8-1936 fell on 25-8-1936.

<sup>4</sup> The discussion which follows took place on a subsequent visit.



religious, have to be guided by the ultimate aim of the vision of God. The immediate service of all human beings becomes a necessary part of the endeavour simply because the only way to find God is to see Him in His creation and be one with it. This can only be done by service of all. And this cannot be done except through one's country. I am part and parcel of the whole, and I cannot find Him apart from the rest of humanity. My countrymen are my nearest neighbours. They have become so helpless, so resourceless, so inert that I must concentrate on serving them. If I could persuade myself that I should find Him in a Himalayan cave, I would proceed there immediately. But I know that I cannot find Him apart from humanity.

But some comforts may be necessary even for man's spiritual advancement. One could not advance himself by identifying himself with the discomfort and squalour of the villager?

A certain degree of physical harmony and comfort is necessary, but above a certain level it becomes a hindrance instead of help. Therefore the ideal of creating an unlimited number of wants and satisfying them seems to be a delusion and a snare. The satisfaction of one's physical needs, even the intellectual needs of one's narrow self, must meet at a certain point a dead stop, before it degenerates into physical and intellectual voluptuousness. A man must arrange his physical and cultural circumstances so that they do not hinder him in his service of humanity, on which all his energies should be concentrated.

What then was the secret of his concentration on the village?

I have been saying that if untouchability stays, Hinduism goes; even so I would say that if the village perishes, India will perish too. It will be no more India, Her own mission in the world will get lost. The revival of the village is possible only when it is no more exploited. Industrialization on a mass scale will necessarily lead to passive or active exploitation of the villagers as the problems of competition and marketing come in. Therefore we have to concentrate on the village being self-contained, manufacturing mainly for use. Provided this character of the village industry is maintained, there would be no objection to villagers using even the modern machines and tools that they can make and can afford to use. Only they should not be used as a means of exploitation of others.

*Harijan, 29-8-1936*

#### 416. TELEGRAM TO AMRIT KAUR

WARDHAGANJ,  
August 25, 1936

RAJKUMARI AMRIT KAUR  
MANORVILLE  
SIMLA

WIRE EXACT CONDITION BODY INCLUDING THUMB AS MEDICALLY CERTIFIED.  
LOVE.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 3736. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 6892

#### 417. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

August 25, 1936

MY DEAR AMRIT,

What have you done? Shummy says you “return an ill woman” and naturally he says he “feels very disappointed all round”. You shall not be cross with him for having told the truth. The wire distresses me. What could be wrong with you? I have sent you a peremptory wire.

I hope you will not leave me in suspense and will give me a faithful report. Why is Shummy disappointed *all round*? You will enlighten me. You told me not to write to Shummy. But I could not ignore the wire. I have sent him a brief note.<sup>1</sup>

I do hope there is nothing seriously wrong with you. More when I know the whole truth.

Yes, Mira left for Betul yesterday and Puri<sup>2</sup> occupies her hut.

Your corners are vacant ! And the bathroom? All the playthings gone ! But how can you return to me if you cannot keep good health here?

Love.

BAPU

<sup>1</sup> This is not traceable.

<sup>2</sup> Anant Ram Puri

[PS.]

You dare send me a blank sheet when you leave not a blank corner on your written sheet!

B.

From the original: C.W. 3737. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 6893

*418. LETTER TO F. MARY BARR*

*August 25, 1936*

CHI. MARY,

Your letter<sup>1</sup> does you credit and draws me nearer to you if that is possible. We do need to have scrupulous regard for truth. The fact is that I inquired only to know whether you were disturbed. I did not want you to respond to the bell. Even for the few who are with me in Segaoon, I am not rigid. They are free not to attend the morning prayer. The moral is never do anything to please people, even the dearest, unless the doing of it pleases you also. This broad proposition does raise side issues. But you know what I mean.

Give my love to Moti. I am glad she likes her life there. I hope she is keeping quite well.

Mira has gone. Let us hope she will be comfortable there. If she is not, she must return. I could easily have sent her to another but a distant place. She was disinclined to go far.

Mahadev will be inquiring about cargo boats.

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 6067. Also C.W. 3397. Courtesy: F. Mary Barr

*419. LETTER TO BRIJKRISHNA CHANDIWALA*

*August 25, 1936*

CHI. BRAJKISHAN,

The replies to your letters have been overdelayed. The reason is nothing but lack of time. Even today I am writing just at bedtime.

<sup>1</sup> In this the addressee had written that she had told Gandhiji "practically an untruth" when she had given an excuse for not getting up for prayer at Segaoon while she had not intended to get up at all.

You ask me who lives with me. The three were already here. Among others are Ba, Manu and Khan Saheb. I stop those whom I can from coming here. What do we stand to gain by allowing you to come? You never keep well here.

Give up the village industries work if you cannot find any help.  
But do write to me if you do not keep well there.

BAPU

[PS.]

I had not finished my letter with this. I wrote the last sentence half asleep, the pen slipped out of my hand and I promptly fell asleep. I am now writing this after I awoke from my nap and had some hot water. This is no sign of any ailment or weakness; if at all, it is a sign of good health. Give up the longing to live with me and live there or at any other place where you can engage yourself in some occupation and earn not more than you spend. Why not join some khadi bhandar? Or go to live at Narela and work with the help of others. It is not good to sit idle. Consult Devdas. Take it that the reason you attribute to my not writing is an utter impossibility. How can I ever forget you?

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 2445

*420. LETTER TO R.S. PANDIT*

WARDHA,  
*August 26, 1936*

CHI. RANJIT,

Why are you keeping indifferent health? Sarup writes that now you are a little better. You must make your body as strong as steel even if it requires some effort. One can certainly make a boat to cross the Ganga. The real achievement would be to make a boat to cross the waters of slavery. But you cannot do this with a hollow chest. You should be strong enough not to let the oar slip from your hands.

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

## 421. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

[Before August 27, 1936]<sup>1</sup>

DEAR DAUGHTER,<sup>2</sup>

I have your two letters. You ought to have faith in what Dr. Bharadwaj tells you. Dr. Ansari would have done the same. You are therefore going to clean your nose and carry out whatever else he has recommended.

I am enclosing Nilam's letter<sup>3</sup>. I would certainly have sent for you had it not been for Nilam's illness. I shall show both your letters to Kanti and shall permit him to go if he wishes. I also do not like the step he proposes to take, but I do not wish to suppress him either.

I have no more time now, so I stop here.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 603

## 422. TELEGRAM TO AMRIT KAUR

WARDHAGANJ,  
August 27, 1936

RAJKUMARI AMRIT KAUR  
MANORVILLE  
SIMLA WEST

YOUR WIRE. THANK GOD. WIRE CONDITION DAILY. LOVE.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 3738. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 6894

<sup>1</sup> From the reference to Kantilal Gandhi's proposed visit to the addressee; *vide* letter to the addressee, "Letter to Amtussalaam", 27-8-1936

<sup>2</sup> This is in Urdu.

<sup>3</sup> This is not available.

### 423. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
August 27, 1936

CHI. AMTUL SALAAM,

Let me see what great feat you perform, now that Kanti has gone there. Do not pick quarrels. Persuade him sweetly if you wish to. As far as I can tell, it is now impossible to stop him.

Carry out Dr. Bharadwaj's instructions. While you have been advising others, you yourself need to look after your own health. Do not expect any long letter from me for some time now.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 343

### 424. LETTER TO PARIKSHITLAL L. MAJMUDAR

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
August [27, 1936]<sup>1</sup>

BHAI PARIKSHITLAL,

I have your letter. You should clearly write so to Bapa if you feel that he has made a mistake. I wrote to him nothing since I had not read everything fully. However, I am quite aware that a judge's function is over with the delivery of his decision, and that he is not even entitled to interpret his judgment. However, I have not written to Bapa even to say that if both the parties approach him again with a representation he might take it up, because I am so much immersed in work that many such things are left out. You may send this to Bapa if you now write to him. Now that I have written so much to you I feel like writing to him also, but where is the time?

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4037

<sup>1</sup> From the G.N. Register

## 425. LETTER TO PRABHAVATI

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
[About August 27, 1936]<sup>1</sup>

CHI. PRABHA,

You must have got my letter to the Sitab Diyara address though you have gone to Patna. Now obtain milk and fruit there and improve your health. Look after the household properly. You have now the opportunity to take full care of Jayaprakash's food. I do not write here about your questions since I have replied to them earlier in detail. Tell me about the house you live in and about other things I should know. How is the climate, for example? Do take regular walks. My weight as recorded yesterday was 109 lb.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

[PS.]

Mahadevi and others have returned from Badrinarayan. Nilam, one of the party who fell ill, is with Amtul.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3464

## 426. TELEGRAM TO AMTUSSALAAM

WARDHAGANJ,  
August 28, 1936

AMTUSSALAAM  
SEVAK  
DELHI

YOU MUST COMPOSE YOURSELF. GET WELL QUICK. AM LOOKING AFTER KANTI.

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 344

<sup>1</sup> From the reference to Nilam's illness and her stay with Amtussalaam; *vide* "Letter to Amtussalaam", 27-8-1936

## 427. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

WARDHA,  
August [28]<sup>1</sup> 1936

MY DEAR REBEL,

I am writing this at J.'s in the early morning to catch the train.

I can't give you the assurance that I am without anxiety. How can I be when you act so rebelliously? You were docile in the presence of the tyrant. Behind his back the rebellious spirit breaks out. Therefore the only way to free me from anxiety is for you to get quickly well and, if fish-eating would restore you, you should unhesitatingly take it.

But I can give you this assurance that nothing that Shummy can say will affect me in the least. His great anger is the measure of his love for you. Brought up as he is, he has every right to accuse me of having ruined your health and otherwise disturbed the even tenor of your life. How can he feel otherwise? I had told you that much was to depend upon your returning to Simla in a first-class condition. You did not, you could not. We would settle accounts after you have got well and look better than ever before. You would continue to write and wire daily while the illness lasts. You must not take up any work till you are completely restored. I hope you had my wire<sup>2</sup> yesterday.

I came to Wardha yesterday. I walk back this evening.

Mira is returning today from Betul.

Love to you and Shummy.

TYRANT  
ROBBER  
BAPU, etc.

From the original: C.W. 3584. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 6393

<sup>1</sup> The source has "29-8-1936", but below it someone has written "Really", 28-8-1936", which is confirmed by the postmark.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "Letter to Amtussalaam", 27-8-1936



## 428. LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

SEGAON,  
August 28, 1936

MY DEAR JAWAHARLAL,

Our conversation of yesterday has set me thinking. Why is it that with all the will in the world I cannot understand what is so obvious to you? I am not, so far as I know, suffering from intellectual decay. Should you not then set your heart on at least making me understand what you are after? I may not agree with you. But I should be in a position to say so. Yesterday's talk throws no light on what you are after. And probably what is true of me is true of some others. I am just now discussing the thing with Raja. I should like you to discuss your programme with him if you can spare the time. I must not write at length, having no time. You know what I mean.

Love.

BAPU

## 429. NOTES

### UNCERTIFIED V. CERTIFIED

The difficulty that cropped up in the Tamil Nad on the introduction of the new scale of wages for spinning has arisen in other places and specially in Andhra, as appears from several letters I have received from that part of India. Correspondents complain bitterly of the harm uncertified dealers of khadi are doing to the cause of the poor women who have no chance of earning an additional pice. I do not know whether the uncertified dealers will listen to my exhortation not to be so selfish as to snatch the pice from thousands of poor spinners. I hope they will. But the real remedy lies in the hands of the khadi-buying public. If they will not buy khadi except from the bhandars certified by the A.I.S.A., the uncertified bhandars will have to close down. The public should realize that there can be no khadi if there is no A.I.S.A. Until khadi becomes current coin and has found general favour in the villages, it must be nursed by a vigilant body having the capacity for performing the onerous duty. Such a body is the A.I.S.A. The public know or ought to know that it is a purely philanthropic institution having no interest save that of the millions of poor women spinners of the villages of India. As its name

implies, all its activities are intended to subserve their interest. Economic salvation of the villages is impossible, unless the millions of women who have no occupation for nearly six months in the year have a steady and profitable occupation fitted to their constitutions. There is no such universal occupation as hand-spinning. I have been obliged to restate this oft-told truth in order to emphasize the necessity of the public patronizing certified khadi bhandars to the exclusion of uncertified ones, even though the latter sell khadi at less than the Association rates. The public should know that the Association rates alone make it possible to pay higher wages to spinners.

#### HUTS WITHOUT MONEY

Last year I had 60 Harijans accommodated in the village of my future abode. The question of building huts for them was ticklish. But it was solved for me by Harijans themselves. When I went to the village a month after their settlement, I found 12 huts already erected evidently without the cost of a pice. The walls were made of palm branches or stalks of *juari*, cotton or *tuver*; the roof of split stalks of *juari*, knitted into *chatais*<sup>1</sup> and those were covered with leaves of *khakhra*. The ropes were made from the fibres of *khakhra* roots.

Thus writes an enthusiastic agriculture graduate who is keen on settling down in a village. Where labour is not exploited and where it has free access to the material that Nature produces in abundance and which is generally allowed to go to waste or sold for a trifle, poor Harijans have no difficulty in getting for themselves comfortable cottages and other amenities of life. But orthodox prejudice makes it a sin or a crime for Harijans to touch even its wells !!!

*Harijan, 29-8-1936*

#### 430. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
*August 29, 1936*

MY DEAR AMRIT,

I hope you got my letter of yesterday. I am writing this in Segaoon; therefore this can't go by late fee post. Your daily telegrams and letters giving cent per cent truth are absolutely necessary for the peace of my mind. Why must you send vegetables too? Surely that is repugnant to the village sense. Trust me to ask for what I need from you.

<sup>1</sup> Mats

There is no hurry about the surgical instruments. I can wait till Shummy is himself again. You have to make up your mind to win him back. It is sheer nonsense for you to talk of running away from the home. It is so unlike you. 'Love is patient and long suffering.' And what are you if not embodiment of love? Your precious association with me is not going to make you less loving and less lovable. If you have not been able to give satisfaction to the family by showing better health, surely it is within your power to show an equable mind and a love that will quench the fieriest anger. Do wire to me that you have reconquered Shummy. I tell you the thought of his pain over your illness haunts me all the day long. I do not know how I can appease him except by your unmistakably showing him that you have not lost, but if possible gained by your contact with me, in all that counts.

Mira came back yesterday. The appointments in Betul were too dirty for her.

Love to both of you.

BAPU

From the original: C. W. 3585. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G. N. 6394

### *431. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR*

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
*August 30, 1936*

MY DEAR AMRIT,

You are good. You are sending me full letters and wires. I needed them all. Your letters are also cheerful. But whilst I do not worry in the sense you do. I must confess that your illness has given me a rude shock and Shummy's estrangement has proved unbearable. You must walk to his room and stoop to conquer. Bathe him with your tears. I want his wire that he has forgiven me from his heart. It hurts me to think that I should be the cause of estrangement between you and him.

Here you were perfect in your obedience. I want you to obey me in this from your heart. Voluntary obedience always carries its own conviction. And I know that your obedience will restore the

harmony of the household. The exact, method of winning over Shummy I must leave to you.

When you are entirely restored, I shall discuss with you and Shummy, if he is then composed, my own opinion about the cause of your painful collapse.

It may be well for you to reduce the quantity of milk rather than giving up eggs. The heaviness need not be looked for in that direction first. And if the doctor agrees, you should take a little garlic always. I cannot vouch for it but I am inclined to think that onion oil should be good for eczema.

I was not amused over Subhas's fear. There is much truth in what he says. If you were feigning strength however unwittingly, under the impulse of your enthusiasm and your intense love for me, naturally the separation would produce a collapse. You alone could be the judge of the condition, which [you] can fathom by introspection. No more tonight.

Love

BAPU

From the original: C. W. 3586. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G. N. 6395

#### 432. LETTER TO PRABHAVATI

*August 30, 1936*

CHI. PRABHA,

This time your letter is late. You must fix a day for writing. For my part, I have never been lax. I reply to you as soon as I get your letter. Your last letter reached me yesterday and today I am writing this reply. I hear that Jayaprakash is reaching Wardha today. I have not known the reason. Are the letters henceforth to be sent to the new address? Are letters to the *Searchlight* address delayed? How did you get the cough? You should regain your strength quickly if milk is now available.

You should shoulder only as much responsibility as you can bear. One does not have to repent if one takes up service in proportion to one's capacity.

I am just told that Jayaprakash has arrived.

In your letters you make mistakes of gender. I am returning today's with the corrections. Ask me if you don't follow them.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 3481

*433. TELEGRAM TO G. D. BIRLA*

WARDHA,  
*August 31, 1936*

GHANSHYAMDAS

CARE LUCKY

BOMBAY

COME AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. VALLABHBHAI WAITING FOR YOU.  
WIRE REPLY.

BAPU

From the original: C. W. 7979. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

*434. LETTER TO JAMNALAL BAJAJ*

SEGAON,  
*August 31, 1936*

CHI. JAMNALAL,

I forgot to discuss three points with you.

What happened in the case of Babarao Harkare? I think it is good to send him Rs. 25 every month.

If his brother deserves more, he should be paid more.

Shankarrao Tikekar seems to be in a pitiable plight. A summons to pay Rs. 1,500 has been served on him, and he is unemployed. Have you thought of doing anything for him?

You are better placed to think over all these matters.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 2983

### 435. A TALK<sup>1</sup>

[Before September 2, 1936]<sup>2</sup>

It was interesting one morning to watch a number of urchins collected in the verandah of Gandhiji's hut....Their eyes were fixed on a snake in a glass jar....Though the place cannot... be said to be infested with snakes, a fair number of snakes are to be found there during the season. There must therefore be a fair number of cases of snake-bites, and in all cases the villagers kill the snakes at sight. Explaining the presence of the exhibit Gandhiji said:

That is hardly proper or necessary. We cannot tell a poisonous from a non-poisonous snake and therefore we kill all without discrimination. The bulk of them are non-poisonous, and in many cases it is the fright that kills the victim of snake-bite. The snakes have their place in the agricultural economy of the village, but our villagers do not seem to realize it. They perform a particularly useful function, in that they clear the fields of rats, vermin and other pests. It is best therefore to know the elementary principles of snake-lore and to teach them to the villagers. They must know how to distinguish between a poisonous and a non-poisonous snake, they must know that it is not necessary to kill all snakes, which although they may be poisonous do not usually bite unless they are trodden upon or mishandled, and they must also know that certain snakes at least are useful. With that purpose in view I have decided to have here snakes alive or dead to be shown to the villagers. This one in the jar was caught alive by an inmate of our household. We have a simple device with which it is easy to catch snakes alive without doing them physical injury, and this one was found clinging to a roof in the farmyard over there. I decided to send it on to the Civil Surgeon for examination. He was good enough to examine it. He found that it was a Krait, one of the most poisonous varieties, and so he killed it and sent it back. I decided to preserve it and sent for a glass jar with rectified spirit. We had to wait several hours for the jar to come, and when it did come we found on opening the basket that the snake was alive. It seems to be particularly tenacious of life, and so it lingered on until the third day, when we decided to end its pains by immersing it in water. The fact was that the

<sup>1</sup> Extracted from Mahadev Desai's "Weekly Letter"

<sup>2</sup> This and the subsequent interviews evidently took place before Gandhiji was hospitalized on September 2, 1936.

Civil Surgeon had smashed its brain and stunned it, and as he explained later its spinal cord was intact and therefore it had remained alive. I have now got a cage to keep live specimens in. As you see, the little urchins are already being attracted. I have begun to study snake-lore and hope to place before the villagers the broad facts regarding these creatures.

*Harijan*, 5-9-1936

#### 436. DISCUSSION WITH TEACHERS<sup>1</sup>

[Before September 2, 1936]

A group of school teachers went to Segaoon one morning with that old Platonic problem—Knowledge is virtue—and asked if it was true. Why was it that though we knew very well indeed that a particular course of action was morally wrong, we could not avoid it? Replying to them Gandhiji said:

Human life is a series of compromises and it is not always easy to achieve in practice what one has found to be true in theory. Take this very simple case. The principle is that all life is one and we have to treat the sinner and the saint alike, as the *Gita* says we have to look with an equal eye on a learned pundit and a dog and a dog-eater. But there I am. Though I have not killed the snake, I know I have been instrumental in killing it. I know that I should not have done so. I know, besides, that snakes are *kshetrapals* (guardians of the field); and therefore too I should not have helped in killing it. But as you see I have not been able to avoid it. But it is no use my thinking that I cannot avoid it. I do not give up the principle which is true for all time that all life is one, and I pray to God that He may rid me of the fear of snakes and enable me to achieve the non-violences necessary to handle snakes and as we handle other domestics. Take another instance, again a very simple one. I know that as a villager and as one who has made it his business to promote village crafts, I must use a village-made razor, but you see that I am using a foreign one.<sup>2</sup>

I might have got a village-made razor, if I had written to friends to procure one for me. But I thought I must help the village barber, no matter what kind of razor he used. I therefore decided to cultivate him, and put up with his dirty clothes and uncouth instruments. But on one thing I could not possibly compromise. He said he would not

<sup>1</sup> Extracted from Mahadev Desai's "Weekly Letter"

<sup>2</sup> Gandhiji was having a shave when the teachers arrived.

shave Harijans on the same terms as he was prepared to shave me, and I had to do without his services. Now you find me having a shave with a foreign razor, though it is open to me to procure a village-made one. Here there is obviously an indefensible compromise. And yet there is an explanation. I have been sticking on to a set of shaving tackle given me by a loving sister, whose gift I could not resist and whose feelings I could not hurt by rejecting the foreign razor and insisting on having a village-made one. But there it is, the compromise is there. I do not commend it for imitation. We must be prepared to displease the dearest ones for the sake of principles.

There are eternal principles which admit of no compromise, and one must be prepared to lay down one's life in the practice of them. Supposing someone came and asked you to give up your religion and to embrace another at the point of the sword, would you do it? Supposing someone were to compel you to drink wine or eat beef, or tell a lie, would you not rather lay down your life than yield to the coercion? No. A principle is a principle, and in no case can it be watered down because of our incapacity to live it in practice. We have to strive to achieve it, and the striving should be conscious, deliberate and hard.

Has not our Poet sung for all time that fearless striving is the very condition of freedom?

Where the mind is without fear, and the head is held high,...Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection;...

Into that heaven of freedom, Oh Father, let my country awake.<sup>1</sup>

*Harijan*, 5-9-1936

#### 437. TALK WITH BHARATAN KUMARAPPA<sup>2</sup>

[Before *September 2, 1936*]

I have no heart in this correspondence, no zest in it. I am actually tired of it and feel like asking people not to write to me at all. I long to wander among the villages around us rather than go to Wardha where so many friends are coming and I may have to go. But I feel it a wrench to be torn from my work. It is, if I may call it, my *sadhana*, and I would, if I could, not let anything interrupt it. I have

<sup>1</sup> *Gitanjali*, 35

<sup>2</sup> Extracted from Mahadev Desai's "Weekly Letter"



two or three engagements which I accepted long ago and I shall have to keep them, though I would love to find some excuse to put them off or avoid them. I would like to walk out every morning to the villages in our neighbourhood. I am doing practically little physical work now, and I am longing to do it. We have taken a couple of cows and are trying the experiment of making our own ghee. Now I should like to look after the cow myself, look after her feed and her general upkeep. My idea is to show these villagers that a cow can easily pay for her feed and the charges of her upkeep. Then look at the number of ailments these villagers suffer from, and how they will try all kinds of quack remedies but will not do the simplest things they must do.

All this is slow work, and it is no use expecting startling results as those of the Five Year Plan in Soviet Russia. We have to realize that we are eating the salt of the poor, and we have to make an adequate return to them. Never mind if you do not get agents for this difficult work. If we have only one genuine agent, I should be satisfied. Indeed I should not worry even if we had none. Our acid test is: Have we organized any single village according to our programme? Have we introduced food reform there? Are their roads and their lanes clean and perfect? Have we revived any industries? Have we tackled the problem of drink and vice? If we could do this successfully even in one village, I should think we had achieved a good deal. From individuals you may get a response but I should not call it making headway. Making headway is touching one whole village. Jajuji<sup>1</sup> was wondering if we might not have a wider scheme. No, we cannot have it. It is not one item of work like hand-spinning for instance. It is whole village-work, and today our work centres round three or four things I have mentioned. It may centre round thirty things some day, but not today.

*Harijan, 5-9-1936*

#### 438. TELEGRAM TO AMTUSSALAAM

WARDHAGANJ,  
*September 2, 1936*

AMTUL SALAAM  
CARE SEVAK  
DELHI

YOU CAN GO INDORE PATIALA BOMBAY WARDHA FOR IMPROVING

<sup>1</sup> Shrikrishnadas Jaju

HEALTH. KANTI JOINED VAKIL'S SCHOOL BOMBAY. WHEN BA I  
DEVNAS DO NOT WORRY IT IS WRONG FOR YOU TO  
WORRY.

BAPU

From a photostat: G. N. 345

*439. MESSAGE TO WORLD PEACE CONGRESS<sup>1</sup>*

*September 2, 1936*

NO INDIAN CAN HELP SYMPATHIZING WITH PEACE EFFORT  
GOING ON IN WESTERN COUNTRIES.

*The Bombay Chronicle, 3-9-1936*

*440. TELEGRAM TO AMTUSSALAAM*

WARDHAGANJ,  
[September]<sup>2</sup> 3, 1936

AMUTUL SALAAM  
CARE SEVAK  
DELHI

SARASWATI GOING TRIVANDRUM MONDAY. COME BEFORE IF  
POSSIBLE.

BAPU

From a photostat: G. N. 346

*441. TELEGRAM TO AMRIT KAUR*

WARDHAGANJ,  
*September 4, 1936*

RAJKUMARI AMRIT KAUR  
MANORVILLE  
SIMLA

YOU MUST BEHAVE YOURSELF AND NOT GRIEVE OVER MY  
ILLNESS.<sup>3</sup> NO FEVER YET. LOVE.

BAPU

From the original: C. W. 3739. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G. N. 6895

<sup>1</sup> The message was sent through Sarojini Naidu.

<sup>2</sup> From *Bapuke Patra*—8: *Bibi Amtussalamke Naam.*, The original is damaged.

<sup>3</sup> Gandhiji was down with malaria; *vide* also the following item.

#### 442. MESSAGE FOR AMRIT KAUR<sup>1</sup>

September 4, 1936

Tell her she must be content with a letter from you, at least for two or three days. Also tell her my prophecy about the thermos was correct; it is broken, and that she has now to replace it.

From a copy: C. W. 10100. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur

#### 443. GOD OF LOVE, NOT WAR

*The Statesman* of Delhi has devoted four articles to an unmeasured condemnation of the no-war movement led by Canon Sheppard and other earnest Christians in England. The paper has dragged into its support the authority of the *Bhagavad Gita* in these words:

Indeed the true but difficult teaching of Christianity seems to be that society must fight its enemies but love them.

Such, too,—will Mr. Gandhi please note—is the clear teaching of the *Bhagavad Gita*, where Krishna tells Arjuna that victory also goes to him who fights with complete fearlessness and is utterly devoid of hatred. Indeed on the highest plane the argument between the conscientious objector and the knightly warrior is for ever settled in the second book of that great classic. We have little space to quote and the whole poem deserves to be read not once but many times.

The writer of the articles perhaps does not know that the terrorist has also used in his defence the very verses quoted by him. But the fact is that a dispassionate reading of the *Bhagavad Gita* has revealed to me a meaning wholly contrary to the one given to it by the *Statesman* writer.

He has forgotten that Arjuna was no conscientious objector in the sense the Western war-resisters are. Arjuna believed in war. He had fought the Kaurava hosts many times before. But he was unnerved when the two armies were drawn up in battle array and when he suddenly realized that he had to fight his nearest kinsmen and revered

<sup>1</sup> This was conveyed by Mahadev Desai to Amrit Kaur in a letter which, *inter alia*, read: “[Gandhiji] deliberately went to the hospital in order that the doctor may not have to be troubled over and over again. He is being properly looked after and is progressing well. There was no fever until 2.30 [p.m.] Even if it does come, I am sure it will be mild. He is taking complete rest . . . .”

teachers. It was not love of man or the hatred of war that had actuated the questioner. Krishna could give no other answer than he did. The immortal author of the *Mahabharata*, of which the *Gita* is one—no doubt the brightest—of the many gems contained in that literary mine, has shown to the world the futility of war by giving the victors an empty glory, leaving but seven victors alive out of millions said to have been engaged in the fight in which unnamable atrocities were used on either side. But the *Mahabharata* has a better message even than the demonstration of war as a delusion and a folly. It is the spiritual history of man considered as an immortal being and has used with a magnifying lens a historical episode considered in his times of moment for the tiny world round him but in terms of present-day values of no significance. In those days the globe had not shrunk to a pinhead, as it has today, on which the slightest movement on one spot affects the whole. The *Mahabharata* depicts for all time the eternal struggle that goes on daily between the forces of good and evil in the human breast and in which though good is ever victorious evil does put up a brave show and baffles even the keenest conscience. It shows also the only way to right action.

But whatever the true message of the *Bhagavad Gita* may be, what matters to the leaders of the peace movement is not what the *Gita* says but what the Bible, which is their spiritual dictionary, says and then, too, not what meaning the Church authorities give to it, but what meaning a prayerful reading of it yields to the reader. What matters most of all is the objector's knowledge of the implications of the law of love or ahimsa, inadequately rendered in English as non-violence. The articles of *The Statesman* are perhaps a fair challenge to the objectors. I am sorry I do not know enough of the movement to give a definite opinion. My opinion need have no weight whatsoever with the objectors. But it has, inasmuch as I know intimately some of them, who even correspond with me. And now they have gone a step further in that they have adopted almost as their textbook Mr. Richard Gregg's book called *The Power of Non-violence* which is claimed by its author to be a Western interpretation of what non-violence as I interpret it stands for. It may not therefore be presumptuous on my part if I set down without argument the implications and conditions of success of non-violence. Here they are:

(1) Non-violence is the law of the human race and is infinitely greater than and superior to brute force.

(2) In the last resort it does not avail to those who do not possess a living faith in the God of Love.

(3) Non-violence affords the fullest protection to one's self-respect and sense of honour, but not always to possession of land or movable property, though its habitual practice does prove a better bulwark than the possession of armed men to defend them. Non-violence in the very nature of things is of no assistance in the defence of ill-gotten gains and immoral acts.

(4) Individuals or nations who would practise non-violence must be prepared to sacrifice (nations to the last man) their all except honour. It is therefore inconsistent with the possession of other people's countries, i.e., modern imperialism which is frankly based on force for its defence.

(5) Non-violence is a power which can be wielded equally by all—children, young men and women or grown-up people—provided they have a living faith in the God of love and have therefore equal love for all mankind. When non-violence is accepted as the law of life it must pervade the whole being and not applied to isolated acts.

(6) It is a profound error to suppose that whilst the law is good enough for individuals it is not for masses of mankind.

*Harijan*, 5-9-1936

#### 444. WHAT A GIRL NEEDS

A fair correspondent writes: <sup>1</sup>

Your article "Avoidable Misery"<sup>2</sup> seems to me to be incomplete....If parents were to educate their daughters as they educate their sons, so as to enable them to earn an independent living, they would not have to worry themselves over the selection of husbands for their daughters.... When girls have had the opportunity of developing their minds fairly and are able to support themselves in a dignified manner, they have no difficulty, when they are desirous of marrying, in being suitably matched... What I plead for is a training of girls in useful knowledge and some calling that would make them fully confident about their ability to face the world and not to feel dependent upon parents or their future husbands.... I wish you could emphasize this

<sup>1</sup> Only excerpts are reproduced here.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "Avoidable Misery", 25-7-1936

aspect of the question in considering the difficulties of parents having on their hands daughters of marriageable age!!

I heartily endorse the sentiments expressed by my correspondent. Only I had to deal with the case of a parent who had made himself miserable not because he had an incompetent daughter, but because he and perhaps even his daughter wanted to restrict themselves, in the choice of a husband, to their own little caste. The ‘accomplishment’ of the girl was itself a hindrance in this case. If the girl was illiterate, she could have accommodated herself to any young man. But being an accomplished girl, naturally she would need an equally accomplished husband. It is our misfortune that the sordidness of exacting a price for marrying a girl is not regarded as a decided disqualification. An altogether artificial value is put upon English collegiate education. It covers a multitude of sins. If the definition of ‘accomplishment’ was more sensible than it has become among the classes whose educated young men exact a price for accepting marriage proposals on behalf of girls, the difficulty of selecting suitable matches for girls would be much lessened, if not entirely removed. Whilst, therefore, I commend the proposal of my fair correspondent to the attention of parents, I must insist on the necessity of breaking down the highly injurious caste barriers. Breaking down the barriers will widen the range of choice and thus in a great measure prevent exactions.

*Harijan, 5-9-1936*

#### *445. TELEGRAM TO AMRIT KAUR*

WARDHAGANJ,  
*September 5, 1936*

RAJKUMARI AMRIT KAUR  
MANORVILLE  
SIMLA

COMPLETELY FREE FOR SIXTY HOURS. QUITE HAPPY. YOU SHOULD ACCEPT MEMORIAL<sup>1</sup> AGENCY FOR JULLUNDUR ONLY.

BAPU

From the original: C. W. 3740. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G. N. 6896

<sup>1</sup> Kamala Nehru Memorial

446. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

WARDHA,  
*September 6/7, 1936*

MY DEAR REBEL,

All these few days I was in no mood to play. Hence I had forgotten that you were a Rebel, Idiot, etc., etc. Now I am somewhat composed. You have still to send me the news that there is reconciliation between you and Shummy. If you have not gone to him, you must do so at once.

I told you I did not like that eruption on the thumb. You must not doctor it yourself. You should see a competent doctor, if Shummy will not attend to you. Nor can I guide you from here as to your food except in a general way. The bath is all right. You are right in raising its temperature. It is enough to have it is at least 5 degrees below the temperature of the body.

I must tell you later what I consider was the cause of your breakdown. This is being written after 8 p. m. So I must not write more.

Mahadev has kept you fully posted about my health. Hence I need say nothing more except that I am A 1.

Please thank Shummy for the book on snakes of which I saw some beautiful live specimens yesterday.

Much love from

ROBBER

*September 7, 1936*

[PS.]

My door can never be shut in your face.

From the original: C. W. 3587. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G. N. 6396

#### 447. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

WARDHA,  
September 7, 1936

DEAR DAUGHTER,<sup>1</sup>

For three days there has been no temperature and so it can be said that I am rid of the fever. I am writing this from my hospital bed. Kanti's letter accompanies this.

It is not right for you to worry about him. Can your relationship be deeper than Ba's and even mine? Can the measure of your love be greater? Be reasonable and calm down.

You do not care to improve your health; this is not good. You must have got my wire<sup>2</sup>, but there is no reply from you. How cruel you are!

Send me a full report and take a final decision.

It is foolish of you to be afraid of a visit to Wardha. However, I don't insist. Go wherever you can improve your health.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

[PS.]

Is Chitre there?

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 347

#### 448. LETTER TO KANTILAL GANDHI

September 7, 1936

CHI. KANTI,

I have been thinking of you every day, only my indifferent health would not let me write to you. But I cannot postpone writing today. I have no fever. I have written for *Harijan*, so why should I not write to you? I have your letter. I was certainly pained beyond measure. The edifice of my trust collapsed in a moment. You suddenly drifted away from me. Ba's grief is greater than mine; andpoor A.'s the greatest. You have justified the epithets I gave you.

<sup>1</sup> This is in Urdu.

<sup>2</sup> Vide "Telegram to Amtussalaam", 2-9-1936



You are a tyrant, you are treacherous. You stole A.'s heart and then you spurned her. Can you think of an act of greater cruelty? In your curriculum you will have occasions to drive needles into living beings and dissect them. Remember this letter then. You have started your lessons by torturing a living human being. But I am not at all angry at your strange sacrifice. What could you do? How far can you get over your nature? You have been carried away by the current of the prevailing atmosphere as well as by your own mental makeup. This happens more or less to everyone. May you be blessed. One thing hurt me very much. In the evening you came to me with a certain resolve. Next day you changed it altogether. You did not even think it necessary to discuss it with me. What kind of conduct is this? Do you regard your own word as absolutely worthless? It was a severe blow. You made me cry so much. You could have desisted from this act without difficulty. Well, one cannot collect spilt water. It will be enough if you learn to value your own word after this regrettable episode. Remember knowledge without a moral basis has no worth whatsoever. It is like a two-pice bit of copper coated with mercury to look like a rupee.

Take good care of your health. Don't reduce yourself to a skeleton by overwork. Don't exhaust your brain. I have no doubt that you will pass all the tests.

Write to me regularly.

I am still in the hospital. The fever may be said to have gone. Mirabehn's bed is by my side. She is still running a temperature. The third patient is Ba who is suffering from cough.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a copy of the Gujarati: C. W. 10707. Courtesy: Kantilal Gandhi

#### *449. LETTER TO JUGAL KISHORE BIRLA*

WARDHA,

*September 7, 1936*

BHAI JUGAL KISHOREJI,

I was about to have an attack of fever when your letter of 26th August reached me. I am now free from fever but am still confined to the hospital bed. Even then I should write to you. Thinking on objects

of sense is a delusion. I have not received any divine message. If what I say does not appeal to you, you must never listen to me. If I cannot hope to persuade you by this letter and in my present condition of health, I shall certainly try to do so when we meet. Perhaps I shall succeed.

Today I will only say that to me Sikhism is a part of Hinduism. But the situation is different from the legal point of view. Dr. Ambedkar wants a change of religion. If becoming a Sikh amounts to conversion, then this kind of conversion on the part of Harijans is dangerous. And that too with a stroke of the pen and without the Harijans being consulted. Conversion as well as change of community can only be a personal matter. It is not so in this case. If you can persuade the Sikhs to accept that Sikhism is a part of Hinduism and if you can make them give up the separate electorate, then I will have no objection to Harijans calling themselves Ramanujis or Sikhs.

More when I have the time.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

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

#### 450. LETTER TO MUNNALAL G. SHAH

*September 8/9, 1936*

CHI. MUNNALAL,

I am having good news from you. I got your note just now at seven in the morning. It was painful for me that your hearts could not be one. Not only that, it obstructed our work too. Let us hope that the [harmony]<sup>1</sup> now restored will never crack.

I understand what you say about Govind. You should visit him and the other patients from time to time.

I am sending the newspaper.

Send here the brass barrel for honey which is there, and also the lid of the white metal box to be used in the cooker. The box sent to Radhakisan cannot be put to full use because its lid got mixed up and another came in its place.

Ask Puri to send me a report of his health and his work.

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

I am having no fever at all and the weakness is disappearing gradually. I am still on milk and fruit. It seems the doctor will take some time to discharge me. Mirabehn had an attack of fever yesterday. She was given a purge. She is well now. She too is on milk and fruit.

Ba still has cough, but it looks like subsiding now.

Rajendra Babu, Brajkishore Babu and Jayaprakash are still here. R. Babu and J. are unwell and B. Babu has stayed behind to nurse J.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

[PS.]

I have detained Prahlad for the day. The needle will be extracted. We shall know only tomorrow where the needle is lodged.

*[September 9, 1936]*

After all this could not go yesterday. Prahlad is being operated upon just now at 10 o'clock. The needle has been located.

*At 10.30<sup>1</sup>*

Mirabehn and I went to watch the operation. The needle has been extracted. [Prahlad] is all right.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 8598. Also C. W. 6998. Courtesy: Munnalal G. Shah

#### *451. LETTER TO MUNNALAL G. SHAH*

*September 9, 1936*

CHI. MUNNALAL,

I got your letter, but here at the Hospital. Indeed, I forget the other newspapers. Now I can send for them only tomorrow. Today I am sending only *The Bombay Chronicle* and *Harijan*. The lid seems to have been returned to you; if so, send it tomorrow.

Prahlad has been progressing well. He asks for food. But today he will be on milk only.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 8597. Also C.W. 6999. Courtesy: Munnalal G. Shah

<sup>1</sup> This is in Hindi.

## 452. LETTER TO BALWANTSINHA

WARDHA HOSPITAL,  
September 10, 1936

CHI. BALWANTSINHA,

I have had three letters from you which I have acknowledged in my letter to Munnalal. I got the letter from Ramniklal too. I have also sent you my congratulations. I hope to reach there probably the day after tomorrow.

I am almost recovered.

I do not send for Munnalal now but I shall try to send Dr. Mahodaya. In the mean while he should subsist on milk only. If he does not have clear motions he may take castor oil and at least ten grains of quinine. Of course you are looking after him.

Neither Gangabehn's nor Munnalal's letter has reached me. Do not send milk for Prahlad or anyone else unless asked for. Prahlad was given milk yesterday as well as today from Maganwadi. He is quite comfortable. He will have to stay on for at least ten days. I shall not write to Puri today.

More tomorrow. Two bottles are being [returned]<sup>1</sup> today. The rest I shall try to send tomorrow.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 1886

## 453. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

September 10, 1936

MY DEAR IDIOT,

I had the physical capacity to write to you all these days. But I have been so busy talking things that I have not been able to do any writing except on Monday. I hope you got my letter<sup>2</sup> written that day.

Now too I am writing this before retiring for the night.

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

<sup>2</sup> Vide "Letter to Amrit Kaur", 6/7-9-1936

Yes, I had a good letter from Shummy. I do not agree with you that Segaon climate had nothing to do with my malaria. Indeed Segaon is noted for its malarial climate. It is for me to conquer it and not shun it. I hope to be there on Saturday. The plate<sup>1</sup> will be taken tomorrow. It will decide my fate.

Your letters, received with extraordinary regularity, have been a rich treasure. You must not trifle with your eczema or the eruption on the thumb. You *must* put yourself under a competent doctor and do as he tells you. So long as you take eggs, I do not think anybody will insist on your taking meat. I would like you to wire to me saying you have called in skilled assistance. Consult Shummy on the point. You must not be obstinate on the point.

No more just now.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 3588. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 6397

#### *454. LETTER TO LILAVATI ASAR*

WARDHA HOSPITAL,  
*September 10, 1936*

CHI. LILAVATI,

I understand from Mahadev that you have developed a dislike for Segaon, and whenever you think of the place you become miserable. You have lost your peace of mind. Since you had taken a decision, you want to spend a year somehow with me. I had known this all along. Now it is all the more clear. I must consider now what my duty is. For me to seek forgiveness from children is nothing new. The most recent example is that of Kusum. If you do not know about it ask her. Perhaps even Mahadev can tell you. If I had reason to ask Kusum's forgiveness, I have still more reason to ask your forgiveness. I thought I was protecting you like a flower. Whether you were aware of it or not, despite all the harsh words I threw at you, I was protecting you against attacks from others. But I set no store by it. What has value is the impression made on you. Judging by that standard, I acknowledge my failure. Forgive me for the unhappiness I caused you. I shall not let such a situation be repeated. But now I have lost self-confidence. You do not have to ask your freedom from me. But you have to free yourself of me. Or, say, I have to give you your

<sup>1</sup> X-ray

freedom. Only a few can learn from me by being physically near me. Countless persons have been able to do that while being away from me. You are one of them. If you wish to learn something from me while being away, I am willing to teach you regularly through letters. Your coming to Segaon is going to benefit neither you nor me. I shall have to be constantly on my guard if I take you with me. You would not like me to be in such a pitiable state. The situation in which parents have to guard themselves from children is always to be avoided. So you should give up your insistence on coming to Segaon. There is no reason to be unhappy about it. There is no reason for you to feel ashamed as you are not giving up Segaon. In despair I am making you give up Segaon. Respect this wish of mine in good cheer. It is my duty and yours to avoid a situation in which you may break down at the end of a year and your heart may be filled with contempt for me. How can I explain this better? I particularly wish that you should go to Rajkot and help Narandas. You have hardly any place now at Maganwadi. The kitchen is being discontinued. What would you do in that event? There is no provision at all at Maganwadi to accommodate women. Of course, you may stay in the Mahila Ashram. But Mahadev will guide you in this regard. I urge you once again that you should forget the unhappiness you have suffered at Segaon.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

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

**455. LETTER TO MUNNALAL G. SHAH AND  
BALWANTSINHA**

*September 11, 1936*

CHI. MUNNALAL AND CHI. BALWANTSINHA,

I have your letter. In any case the Doctor is surely coming today. Moreover, he is from Burhanpur like you. Tomorrow he will not come. He may examine the patients, if any, today. Prahlad is fine. What you write is likely to have happened to Balwantsinha's letters. For my part, I have an impression that I had acknowledged his letter.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 8597. Also C.W. 7000. Courtesy: Munnalal G. Shah

#### 456. LETTER TO AMRITLAL T. NANAVATI

September 11, 1936

CHI. AMRITLAL,

Who is taking up the responsibility for milk and other things from now on? Send the *khakhari*<sup>1</sup> for Mirabehn if they have prepared it, and butter. Keep the butter being sent herewith and send me another lot. The salt bottle is sent for refilling. Send ten *tolas* of flour, a small griddle, rolling-pin and board if the *khakhari* is not ready. You may send a bill for such of these articles as have to be taken from the new kitchen. Send dal, rice and vegetables for Prahlad. It does not matter if the three are put together.

Blessings from  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 10719

#### 457. LETTER TO AMRITLAL T. NANAVATI

[ Before September 12, 1936]<sup>2</sup>

CHI. AMRITLAL,

I extracted two lovely bits of hair from today's curds besides the once that I may have swallowed. They were Mother goat's hair. So the carelessness may be traced to the person who strained the milk. The curds were very sour. If the morning milk is curdled, I can take it now. If you send it I shall want garlic. No garlic if you send milk.

Blessings from  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 10720

#### 458. WHAT IT IS LIKE

The recent debate between Dr. Sokhey and Dr. Mangaldas Mehta on the ever-green topic of birth-control emboldens me to disclose the opinion of the late Dr. Ansari of revered memory

<sup>1</sup> A thin crisp chapati

<sup>2</sup> The addressee has placed this letter in August/September, 1936. It appears to have been written from the hospital in Wardha where Gandhiji's food used to be sent from Maganwadi; *vide* the preceding item. Gandhiji was discharged on September 12.

supporting Dr. Mangaldas's position. It was now nearly a year ago I wrote to the deceased asking him whether as a medical man he could endorse the position I had taken up on the vexed question. Much to my agreeable surprise he wrote heartily supporting it. When I was in Delhi last, I had a brief discussion with him on the subject and he promised at my request to contribute a series of articles showing by facts and figures from his own experience and that of other medical men how the practice had hurt both men and women who were party to it. He gave a graphic account of the condition to which the men were reduced after they had mated for some time with their wives or other women who they knew were using contraceptives. Freedom from the fear of the natural consequence of coition had made them reckless in self-indulgence leading to an inordinate craving for seeing women which ended in dementia. Alas! he died just when he was about to write the promised series.

Bernard Shaw is reported to have said that coition accompanied by the use of contraceptives was nothing less than sexual masturbation. A moment's reflection would show how accurate the description is.

I receive almost daily piteous letters from students and sometimes even from teachers complaining how they had become slaves to the habit and were being gradually reduced to loss of manhood. Recall, too, the correspondence<sup>1</sup> published in these columns from the principal of the Sanatan Dharma College, Lahore, bitterly complaining of teachers practising unnatural vice on their pupils and the consequences of the practice on their health and character. The deduction I draw from these examples is that even the union between husband and wife bereft of the possibility of its natural consequence must cause the same ruination that invariably attends masturbation or unnatural vice.

It is the philanthropic motive that no doubt impels many birth-control reformers to a whirlwind campaign in favour of the use of contraceptives. I invite them to contemplate the ruinous consequences of their misplaced philanthropy. Those whom they want to reach will never use them in any appreciable numbers. Those who ought not to use them will, without doubt, use them to the undoing of themselves and their partners. This would not matter in the least if the use of contraceptives was incontestably proved to be right physically

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "A Growing Vice", 27-4-1935



and morally. Dr. Ansari's opinion, if my testimony about it is accepted, is a grave warning to the reformers and would-be reformers.

*Harijan*, 12-9-1936

459. *LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR*

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
*September 12, 1936*

MY DEAR IDIOT,

Well, I am at last in dear old Segaoon without Ba, Lilavati and Moti. Amtul Salaam is here for a few hours and she goes back to Wardha. Lilavati is in Maganwadi under discipline and Ba has remained there out of sympathy. All is quiet here and looking nice. In front of me are two live snakes in the cage caught yesterday. Your green soap bit is there in its place. It will give a few day's work still.

You will be glad to learn that your thermos was broken to pieces after giving a night's good use. The door of the cart suddenly opened and the thermos fell out. You are not to replace it any more. I must do the best I can with improvised things. You know by this time that I am shameless enough to ask for things I need. And such a thing is a real good magnifying glass. But this at your leisure and not by post. Tell me what was the cost of the thermos broken today. It is pure curiosity that prompts the question.

I hope you have listened to me and taken expect advice about your eczema. It is a thing not to be lightly treated.

You won't be anxious about me. I shall take every care of myself.

Mira is now in her cottage.

Love.

TYRANT

From the original: C.W. 3589. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 6398

460. *LETTER TO MIRABEHN*

*September 12, 1936*

CHI. MIRA,

Puri has sprung a surprise on me. He says you do not want him, his presence will be a tax on you. You want to be left alone. If so, P. Must go. He too says he won't come up to your expectations. Balwantsinha will follow with milk. You will take what service you like from him. Who will sleep there? You must not put any strain on yourself. I wish I could come over to you and see you face to face. But that cannot be just yet.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 6363. Courtesy: Mirabehn. Also G.N. 9829

461. *LETTER TO PREMABEHN KANTAK*

*September 12, 1936*

CHI. PREMA,

I have your letter.

What service of a Mahatma means you can realize only if you become one yourself. At present you can only follow your imagination as far as it takes you. If a Mahatma gets a boil, the whole world talks about it. If, on the contrary, an ordinary man gets even fistula, it is given no more importance than a boil. Nobody would know about it. That is the way things happen.

I left the hospital only today and have returned here. I am still weak, but I hope to regain strength here.

It seems now it has been raining on your side. Here it has been raining much in excess of our needs.

Your other descriptions were enjoyable. You are going ahead with your work. Let the result be what it will.

I have no wish to criticize your writing activity.<sup>1</sup> You must put your God-given gift to good use.

<sup>1</sup> The addressee had taken to writing articles, stories and even books after going over to Sasvad. She was afraid Gandhiji might not approve and had sought his opinion.

Lilavati's case is certainly a very difficult one. My first attempt has failed. I am now making another. I will of course not admit defeat so easily.

Your question is correct. But I wish to bring swaraj. Why should I die before my time?

What you write about Mirabehn is also correct. She just cannot live away from me. Let us see what happens now.

I may not write more today.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 10377. Also C.W. 6823. Courtesy: Premabehn Kantik

#### 462. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

*September 12, 1936*

CHI. NARANDAS,

Prema's letter accompanies this. You must be getting news of my illness from time to time. Neither Sardar nor Jamnalalji will be able to go there. Whom else do you expect? I would advise you not to bank upon anyone but be satisfied with whatever you can do there. You should look upon my effort as absolutely independent.

The contributions raised for the spinning fund you may use for famine relief if a state of famine prevails. But then this is only a suggestion.

Today I put my signature in the copy of the *Gita* required for Purushottam and Vijaya's use.

I returned from the hospital to Segaoon today. Ba and Lilavati stayed back at Maganwadi.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II. Also C.W. 8504. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

### 463. LETTER TO RAMNIKLAL MODI

September 12, 1936

CHI. RAMNIKLAL,

I must be content with writing to you only a postcard. I have not yet regained full strength. Why should you believe that you are drifting away from me? The right thing is for everyone to work according to his capacity. This alone is truth. How far can we strain ourselves or work out of a false sense of shame? If for the present Tara<sup>1</sup> fails to influence the Patel women, she need not feel defeated. We should render whatever service they accept and be satisfied. Tell Surendra that I have no doubt made a note of writing to him but a number of obstacles come in the way. I write only to reassure you.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

SJT. RAMNIKLAL  
C/O BHAILALBHAI  
HARIJAN SEVAK SANGH  
BORIAVI, B.B. & C.I. RLY.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4183

### 464. FRAGMENT OF A LETTER

September 12, 1936

...She should begin by reading and pondering the verse: "Thou mournest for them whom thou shouldst not mourn for."<sup>2</sup> She should not squabble with Ba. She should not cry before her or anyone else. She should not dwell on her woes.

She should think of whatever good qualities she may have observed in Munnalal, Balwantsinha and Mirabehn and worship them for those qualities. She should not think of their shortcomings and if she is reminded of them she should show forbearance.

No more today. She should make a copy of this and send it to me. If anything further occurs to me I shall let you know.

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

<sup>2</sup> *Bhagavad Gita* II. 11

If the letter to Rajkumari cannot be posted today, then post it tomorrow with late fee paid.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

[PS.]

You will have got the bullock-cart by now.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 9579. Also C.W. 6551. Courtesy: Liavati Asar

#### 465. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

*September 13, 1936*

CHI. MIRA,

I have your cheerful letter. Had it been a dry path I would have walked up to you. You must not exert yourself. Patiently train Puri. Do not despair of him quickly.

Have you my torch? Have you the *falka*<sup>1</sup>?

I hope you have all you need.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 6364. Courtesy: Mirabehn. Also G.N. 9830

#### 466. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
*September 13, 1936*

MY DEAR IDIOT,

As you want me to destroy your letters at once, I have always to write from memory. Yes, Shummy wrote a sweet letter which I am going to a acknowledge, though he does not want me to.

Here is my diagnosis of your illness. You left in the midst of nature treatment. As it was not completed, there was a reaction in a radically changed climate. It would be called a healthy reaction if it could be treated *a la* nature-cure method. This [is] not merely hip-baths. There are steam-baths, light-baths, etc. But this was not to be. I

<sup>1</sup> A kind of frame for winding yarn

was not alarmed over the reaction but over the just resentment in the family. They cannot sympathize with nature-cure methods.

Have I made myself clear? Thank God, now there is peace in the family.

But you must not trifle with your eczema. I would certainly treat you if you were with me. But that cannot be, certainly not for cure. You have to go through the orthodox method. The quicker the better.

Yours is a departure from the orthodox routine. You may not therefore resent the criticism of the family. You will justify your rebellion only by your large-hearted charity, ever-increasing inner joy, equableness and possession of good health. Rebellions can only be justified by success. If you will therefore be patient and wise in your changes, all will be well.

Please give my love to Tai, if she is still there.

You need not now give me daily letters if you are pressed for time or too lazy to write. Writing to me must be no tax on your mind or body.

Cartloads of love.

ROBBER

From the original: C.W. 3741. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 6897

#### *467. LETTER TO SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE*

*September 13, 1936*

MY DEAR SUBHAS,

I hope you were given my wire in reply to your kind enquiry. My fever—an attack after twelve years of freedom—was the cause of the lateness of my reply to your questions.

(1) Tea or coffee I do not consider to be essential to health. They often do harm. They may remain harmless, if tea is weak and straw colour and coffee drunk with plenty of milk with only a spoonful or two of coffee.

(2) If received fresh from the udder well cleaned and from a healthy cow, milk drunk fresh unboiled unwarmed is the best food. Next best is pasteurized milk. For some stomachs sweet curds are the best. They having the yeast obviate even the use of fruit.

(3) Leafy vegetables must always be taken, better if taken as salads. All leaves are not edible in the raw state. Onion, pumpkin with

the skin, *pandora*, brinjal, lady's finger, turnips, carrots, parsnips, cabbage, cauliflower are good additions to leaves. Potatoes and starchy tubers should be taken sparingly.

(4) Dates are a fine food for a healthy stomach. Raisins are more digestible. I can take both freely but all cannot. All can take raisins and sultanas.

(5) Garlic and onion in a raw state are strongly recommended in the West. I take raw garlic regularly for blood pressure. It is the best antitoxin for internal use. It is also recommended for tubercular patients.

I think the prejudice against these two harmless vegetables is due to the odour which is the essence of them and it arose with the rise of Vaishnavism. Ayurveda sings the praise of both unstintingly. Garlic is called poor man's musk and so it is. I do not know what villagers would do without garlic and onion.

(6) Yes, lemons and *gur* or honey are a good substitute for sweet oranges.

I think this answers all your questions. I hope you are well. I would like to know the result of Drs. Sircar's and Roy's examination.

Love.

M. K. GANDHI

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

#### 468. *LETTER TO PURUSHOTTAMDAS THAKURDAS*

*September 13, 1936*

DEAR SIR PURUSHOTTAMDAS,

You will please explain to the South African delegation my sincere regret over my inability to welcome them in person.<sup>1</sup> Apart from convalescence it is difficult for me to tear myself away from my new home Segao.<sup>2</sup> I pray to God that this visit may result in removing cobwebs of misunderstanding and bringing the two countries closer together.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

<sup>1</sup> On the arrival of the delegation in Bombay on September 19, 1936. The addressee handed over this letter to J.H. Hofmeyer, the leader of the delegation.

<sup>2</sup> *The Bombay Chronicle*, 20-9-1936, has: "my new love—Segao".

469. LETTER TO SYED MAHMUD

WARDHA,  
September 13, 1936

MY DEAR DR. MAHMUD,

Bapu has your affectionate letter of the 9th inst. He is very happy to hear all that you say about wife and children and he is glad that you told her that unless she gave up *purdah* it was not possible for her to expect Bapu's welcome.

The fever has left Bapu very weak and he might take some time to recover all his lost strength. The doctor wanted him very much to stay in Wardha for some time, but his heart was in his village where alone he could get his peace.

It is quite like you to write in the way you have done about Harilal's so-called conversion. You are one of the very few Muslim friends who has written in this behalf with such warmth and sympathy and understanding. Misguided Muslims do not know how very much they are lowering the name of Islam by going on in the way they are doing. Of course Bapu saw the newspaper cutting that you have referred to but to beat everything else, an Urdu newspaper in Lucknow has given the news to the world that Bapu has become a Muslim. It is based on an interview supposed to have taken place with Bapu in the course of which he eulogized Islam, denounced Hinduism and declared that he was repeating Kalma every day. No such interview ever took place. This precious piece of news has been copied by dozens of Urdu papers and has now been translated into Gujarati and Marathi by Muslim papers in Gujarat and Maharashtra. What do you say to all this? I do hope you are now completely restored. The three Bihari leaders, Rajendrababu, Brijkishorebabu and Jayaprakash Narayan have converted Jamnalalji's guest-house into a hospital. All the three took suddenly ill on arrival here. Luckily they are progressing now.

*Yours sincerely,*  
MAHADEV

DR. SYED MAHMUD  
CHAPRA  
BIHAR

From a copy: Dr. Syed Mahmud Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library; also G.N. 5088



## 470. A LETTER

*September 13, 1936*

DEAR FRIEND,

With reference to your letter, I am powerless to help you. You may know that for the moment I have retired from active public life. But the public bodies in India and particularly the National Congress have been expressing their opinion in no uncertain terms.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

From a copy: Pyarelal Papers. Courtesy: Pyarelal

## 471. LETTER TO PRABHAVATI

*September 13, 1936*

CHI. PRABHA,

I have of course asked Mahadevbhai to write to you. I returned to Segaoon yesterday. Except for a feeling of weakness I am all right. I am still in a diet of milk and fruit only. Mirabehn has gone to her hut. Ba is not here at present. She will probably go to Devdas at Delhi. Lilavati is at Maganwadi. Manu is with Gomati. She might now go with Ba. This leaves Balwantsinha, Munnalal, Pyarelal and Khan Saheb here. Very probably, Nanavati will come over. Several persons are in a way free because the Maganwadi kitchen has been merged with the students' Moreover, the place is no more crowded.

Amtul Salaam has come and most probably she will leave for Bombay in the evening.

I showed your telegram to Jayaprakash, but he is not a person whom I or anyone else can stop from following his own bent. He may have left today. Father is here. He had a severe attack of fever. A doctor is going to examine him. The particular ailment which Jayaprakash suffered from has abated. Rajendra Babu will however stay on for the present.

Kanti has gone to Bombay for his studies.

Tell me now, haven't I given you plenty of news?

How are you? What is your diet? Do you suffer from headaches? Are you able to get milk? What about fruit?

*Blessings from*

BAPU

[PS.]

I just read your letter of 2-9-36. How could it be that you had no letter from me for 22 days? It is true that I could not write during my illness, but that was a matter of 10 days. I have not at all received the letter sent through Kanti. How could I be angry with you? Or, why should I be displeased with you? I remember no occasion when you ever gave me cause for anger or annoyance. It may be that letters go astray or that I am unable to write because of the pressure of work, but never think that I refrain from writing because I am annoyed with you. That I weigh 108 lb. after the fever should be regarded as a good sign. Instead of writing to Kanti's address, write now directly to me. Kanti's address is: Satyagraha Camp, Vile Parle, B.B. & C.I. Rly. Drive away your melancholy. Write to me regularly. My birthday [according to the Vikram calendar] falls on October 12.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3454

#### 472. LETTER TO K.M. MUNSHI

*September 13, 1936*

BHAI MUNSHI,

“It's good that we are out of the snare; we can easily reach Shrigopal.”<sup>1</sup> We are not going to keep *Hans* or its successor going by paying a security of Rs. 1,000. A *hans*<sup>2</sup> will feed on milk alone. Kakasaheb's suggestion seems to be correct; but wouldn't a quarterly need a security? If it does, we may not have that either. I expect you are both doing well.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 7605. Courtesy: K.M. Munshi

<sup>1</sup> These lines are from a *bhajan* by Narasinh Mehta.

<sup>2</sup> Literally 'swan'

### 473. LETTER TO LILAVATI ASAR

SEGAON,  
September 14, 1936

CHI. LILAVATI,

I have from Nanavati the painful news that you have been weeping like mad. You will postpone your coming to Segaoon so long as, while there, you do not do as I say. I had been expecting a letter in your beautiful handwriting but what I have is only bad news! What is this? Be reasonable and do as I tell you. I am helpless if you must persist in hurting me.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 9344. Also C. W. 6619. Courtesy: Lilavati Asar

### 474. LETTER TO KRISHNACHANDRA

September 14, 1936

CHI. KRISHNACHANDRA,

You had an attack of fever, and now it is my turn. Let us see what happens next. My diet consists only of milk or curds, *musambi* and garlic.

It is a pity that you have lost faith in spinning. It is such a great *yajna*; but I shall not argue.

You may, if you wish, take the vow of *brahmacharya* once again; but please understand that it is almost impossible to observe it strictly unless the palate has been conquered. There is no need of your coming to Wardha, I rarely go there. You may not come to Segaoon with the intention of staying.

Recoup your health.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 4288

475. LETTER TO H. L. SHARMA

September 14, 1936

CHI. SHARMA,

I have your letter. I do not have anyone of the kind you want. You must yourself find such men.

Your idea of staying in a village does not appeal to me in the least. At the moment we cannot spend so much money for propaganda work among the villages. Do not expect any help from me in this programme. Even now I would suggest that you start your work without any money, settle down in a village and assess your ability. But I find you have your head in the sky, while I am a creature of the earth and do not want to move my feet away from the earth. It seems, therefore, that our paths at present are different.

What will you gain by going to Satis Babu's?

His...<sup>1</sup> I am persuading him to reduce it still further. From 42 I am trying to get it reduced by another 12.

It is obvious that you do not know the villages. How will you learn midwifery from the books? Still, you may send me the list. I will then send you the books.

I am sorry that I am not able to give you a satisfactory reply. But isn't it better that I tell you what I feel.

I had gone to the hospital after leaving behind my fever. took quite a large quantity of quinine.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

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

476. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
September 15, 1936

MY DEAR IDIOT,

I am glad your thumb seems to be quite restored. But I shall wait. The oozing must be stopped, not merely suppressed. Please do

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

not trifle with it. I do not mind your feeling lazy and not taking up routine work. But you must not deceive yourself and imagine yourself to be well when you are not.

How I wish you could keep Tai there for some time. My love to her.

I have not yet read. the *Statesman* article. It is with me. I shall see what I can do with it.<sup>1</sup>

I have sent a longish letter<sup>2</sup> to S[hummy]. Do not worry over letters to me. Write daily, if it pleases and relaxes you. No strain, please. I shall not imagine all sorts of evil when I do not hear from you, now that I know you are free to miss a day or two.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C. W. 3742. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G. N. 6898

#### 477. LETTER TO MIRABEHN

*September 15, 1936*

CHI. MIRA,

I had expected to meet you at where we met yesterday and tell you why no *rengi*<sup>3</sup> was brought. I wanted to inspect the site when it was possible to walk there. Let us see what happens tomorrow. Are you prepared to make your own *dahi*<sup>4</sup> there? You need not, unless you wish.

Hope you and Puri are getting on famously.

The rains are now ruining everything. God's will be done.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C. W. 6327. Courtesy: Mirabehn. Also G. N. 9793

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "The Law of Our Being", 26-9-1936.

<sup>2</sup> This is not traceable.

<sup>3</sup> Small bullock-cart

<sup>4</sup> Curds

478. *LETTER TO LILAVATI ASAR*

*September 15, 1936*

CHI. LILAVATI,

You are still a bad girl. You would not shoulder the little burden placed on you. This shows the stuff you are made of. I have told you that you may give me a pleasant one hour, You should not create a scene with me. Know that the more you persist in your ways, the further you push your coming to Segaoon. You know best if all this is but a trick to avoid coming. How heartless of you that even for the sake of my peace you would not agree to stay five miles away!

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 9345. Also C. W. 6620. Courtesy: Lilavati Asar

479. *LETTER TO KANTILAL GANDHI*

*September 15, 1936*

CHI. KANTI,

I received your postcard only today. I am well. There is only a little weakness, which will pass.

Amtul Salaam has left Rs. 150 for you. This I have credited to her account, for she hasn't a cowrie of her own. She makes merry at the cost of her brothers, who spend all that they earn. But even if she has her own money, why should you beg of her? When we adopt someone as our mother, is it to serve her or to serve our own interests? I do not like your selfish attitude. It would be good if you got out of it. It is not right that while Devdas pays your expenses you should go about begging like this. For my part I have told you to put in some effort and earn while you learn. Why do you lose heart? Amtul Salaam has gone there. She had forbidden me, so I said nothing to you. However, it would be good if you could say to her: "Thinking further on the matter I feel that I ought not to accept any money either from you or from anyone else except Devdas. Therefore, I will not take money from you." But if it does not come out of your heart, then don't say it. Do not scold A. S. or feel constrained. Even while

doing what you want to, don't give up courtesy and humility. She is much hurt.

Put in as much work as you wish while taking care of your health. It is not trouble cooking one's own food. Find the necessary time and eat satisfying meals. Keep writing to me.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C. W. 7304. Courtesy: Kantilal Gandhi

#### 480. LETTER TO JETHALAL G. SAMPAT

*September 15, 1936*

CHI. JETHALAL,

I have a vague impression that I did dictate a reply to your letter of the 7th August. I have returned here after being discharged from the hospital. I feel weak. Some things I write myself, some things I dictate. Since Nanavati has come to live here, dictating has become convenient also. I shall not write more about my illness as you will know about it from *Harijan* or *Harijan Sevak* or *Harijanbandhu*. Your letter regarding the tools is encouraging. The important question for me is whether in ordering heavy implements from you the transport charges might not be as great as the price. I have been carrying on here the same experiment that you have been trying there. We have a solitary blacksmith in this village. He, too, poor man, is not very intelligent. Only recently I got him to make three knives from an old file. I paid him whatever he charged. But this is not enough for me. Let me have a list of the items you wish to sell outside along with their prices, the freightage to Wardha, and so on. I need hardly assure you that I will help you in the sale of your articles, if possible. you mention a detailed letter. I have not yet received it. Write it now. Who else are there at present and what are your activities?

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C. W. 9856. Courtesy: Narayan J. Sampat

*481. LETTER TO CHAND TYAGI*

*September 15, 1936*

BHAI CHAND TYAGI,

Your letter has been lying in front of me for many days but I could not attend to it till now. You have given me good news about Balvir. I cannot send for him as I am striving hard to live a village life. I do not have enough accommodation in this village nor do I want to add to the family here. I have now neither the strength nor the inclination to do what I could do in places like Sabarmati, etc. My aspiration of leading a village life can be realized only if I maintain a limited family. God alone knows the future, assuming that the thread of my life is to stretch farther. Rajkishori seems to have completely forgotten me. She does not even write to me. What does she do? How much does she spend?

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 6633. Also C. W. 4281. Courtesy: Chand Tyagi

*482. LETTER TO MARGARETE SPIEGEL*

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
*September 16, 1936*

CHI. AMALA,

You seem to have deserted me. How so? Do tell me all about yourself.

Love.

BAPU

Spiegel Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

*483. LETTER TO MIRABEHN*

*September 16, 1936*

CHI. MIRA,

The dinner bell has gone. You will not stir out today. I am



coming. You shall come to Segaon tomorrow.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C. W. 6365. Courtesy: Mirabehn. Also G. N. 9831

#### 484. LETTER TO LILAVATI ASAR

*September 16, 1936*

CHI. LILAVATI,

I have your letter. If you have not understood even after so many letters from me, how am I going to make you understand now? Read all the letters again and act accordingly — joyfully. I do not know how much and what kind of persuasion you want from me.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

[PS.]

I have written this in great haste.

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

#### 485. LETTER TO AMRITLAL V. THAKKAR

SEGAON, WARDHA,

[Before *September 17, 1936*]<sup>1</sup>

BAPA,

Kakalbhai brought your letter while I was still thinking of writing to you. Of course, I have not seen Kakalbhai or Balwantrao. Just now I can't see anyone, nor am I in a hurry about it. I am only slowly disposing of the arrears of work. The fever came on swift as a horse but my strength is returning at an ant's pace. This is not a complaint against God who alone knows what He has in store. He is the giver of strength; why then may He not withdraw it, too?

Why should I go to Almora to effect a reconciliation between Kakalbhai and Amritlal? Water cannot be parted by hitting at it with a lathi. The two were reconciled but is Amritlal reconciled with himself? I am not impatient to drag him back into public life; I am impatient to

<sup>1</sup> From the date of receipt recorded on the letter

see his mind purified. That is why I wrote to him as soon as I heard of the matter. He will not remain in Almora if he has regained purity. For my part I make no difference between public life and private life. However accomplished a man, if he is immoral the splashes from the mud of his immorality are bound to stain public life. That we cannot see the evil splashing does not mean that it is not doing so. I am, therefore, firmly of the opinion that those who wish Amritlal well, those who wish public life to advance, ought to let Amritlal cleanse himself. Only harm will be done to him and to public work by luring him into a hasty come-back. That is my view.

I fear I have not been able to make you see my point about Valunjkar. The question is only of giving to him the amount which I have promised from among the funds standing in my name. I believe that in doing so the Council's approval is not necessary. Isn't that right? Please correct me if my memory is failing me. I have of course no objection to the matter going before the Council. But on what basis would the Council generally sanction such amounts?

Rukmini is mad of course. Every fault, the famous Lombroso<sup>1</sup> has said, is a symptom of madness. But when is a *kubharya*<sup>2</sup> properly so called? It is a different matter if we dismiss the word altogether. My sympathy is with Malkani, and the pity I feel for Rukmini is of a different kind.

Do you want Amtul Salaam to return? You should not hesitate to warm me if, in spite of her good intentions, she proves a nuisance there. It was God's grace that Nilam survived. I shall await the figures. I have made the letter long enough.

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 1170

#### 486. LETTER TO LILAVATI ASAR

September 17, 1936

CHI. LILAVATI,

That you have no reed pen is a good excuse. I am sending a pen herewith. I am sending a copy of the *Gita*, such as I could find; I do not know which copy you call your own. Kanaiyo knows how to

<sup>1</sup> Cesare Lombroso, the Italian physician and criminologist

<sup>2</sup> Shrew

make a reed pen. Learn it from him. You have written out the verses well enough, but what about their meanings?

You are expected to use hand-made paper. What's the idea of having a hand-made pen and mill-made paper? I shall feel satisfied only when you are completely calm. Send over your *dilruba*<sup>1</sup> for Nanavati's use if you are not playing on it. If you are, there is no need at all to send it.

You have to make out a copy of the instructions I have written to you,<sup>2</sup> and send it to me.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 9580. Also C. W. 6552. Courtesy: Lilavati Asar

#### 487. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

SEGAON,

*September 18, 1936*

MY DEAR IDIOT,

Just a line only. Your apples have been eaten by all with relish. Not an invitation to send more.

Khan Saheb was most grateful for the attention given by you to the girls.<sup>3</sup> He wants you to go out of your way to befriend them and direct them the right way. Here is his letter.

I am glad Shummy is now attending to you. You will now get well quick. Obey him willingly like a good idiot that you are.

Cartload of love.

TYRANT

From the original: C. W. 3590. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G. N. 6399

<sup>1</sup> A stringed musical instrument

<sup>2</sup> Vide "Fragment of a Letter", 12-9-1936

<sup>3</sup> Mehrtaj and Mariam, Abdul Ghaffar Khan's daughter and niece respectively

488. LETTER TO KANTILAL GANDHI

[September 18, 1936]<sup>1</sup>

CHI. KANTI,

I liked your letter. Ten o'clock of Friday morning has passed by. It is four now. I will wait for *Yamaraj*<sup>2</sup> at ten at night.<sup>3</sup> You do know that as it is I am always ready to welcome him.

I will certainly pay the photographer's Rs. 50. Where shall I send it?

About the other things, I have understood whatever you have written. However unhappy I may have felt about your going,<sup>4</sup> I have certainly not given up hope of you.

I have destroyed your letter.

You certainly know more about Amtul Salaam. If you want to write to me something in particular, do so. About the money I wrote whatever she told me. Now I believe every word of what you say.

I understand about Saraswati. I am sure you will not do anything blameworthy. May God give you strength.

I shall not expect a long letter from you from time to time. But you will write me a postcard every week, won't you? Write a long letter, too, occasionally.

Ba and Manu will leave for Delhi tomorrow.

This will be enough for now as it is time for the post.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C. W. 7388. Courtesy; Kantilal Gandhi

<sup>1</sup> From the reference to Manu and Kasturba going to Delhi which they did on September 19. *Vide* "Letter to Amrit Kaur", 20-9-1936 Also, the letter was written on a Friday and September 18 was a Friday.

<sup>2</sup> Lord of Death

<sup>3</sup> *Vide* "Letter to Amrit Kaur", 21-9-1936

<sup>4</sup> For studying medicine. *Vide*, "Letter to Kantilal Gandhi", 7-9-1936

## 489. LETTER TO LILAVATI ASAR

8.25 p.m., September 18, 1936

CHI. LILAVATI,

I am alarmed by your last sentence. If you think of going to a school after a year, the worth-while thing is to begin now. One may start one's studies any time, but it ought to be painful to you as well as to me if you have to flee Segaon in disappointment and join a school. Search your heart and shake off your folly. Satisfy your hunger for learning. At Segaon, what can you have except the drudgery and my temper? I cannot help fearing that you will not find your stay here bearable. I spend a good deal of my time thinking of your welfare. Not that I grudge it. But it should be intolerable for both you and me if in the end you have to give me up in disappointment. If you must come to Segaon, it is for you to determine how soon it can be done. Read my instructions again and again and carry them out cheerfully.

Remove all ill will from your mind. If you resent someone with whom you have to deal every day, how will you be happy with me? How shall I be at peace? Isn't this quite easy to understand? There is never any shame in doing the right thing.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 9346. Also C. W. 6621. Courtesy: Lilavati Asar

## 490. NOTES

### ABOUT TARABEHN MARY CHESLEY

Almost every foreign mail, letters are being received from the late Mary Chesley's relatives and friends extolling her many virtues and telling me of the benefactions received by most of them from her and of promises of help made by her and even a will or wills left by her. Though Mahadev Desai has been giving these correspondents such detailed information as he can during the limited time at his disposal, it is necessary to make a public announcement for the benefit of all concerned that the will made by her in my favour just before her lamented death does not, in the opinion of legal friends, appear to be valid according to the Indian Succession Act. Even if it

can be proved, I have no desire whatsoever to use her property, except with the concurrence of her relatives and friends, for the sake of the Indian village industries work, which was her latest and last love for which she slaved and died heroically. If the property came into my hands, of which there is very little chance, I should examine all her commitments and promises in the West and try to satisfy them before making use of anything left by her undisposed of in her lifetime. I have cheques coming from her Bank which lie with me uncashed. My advice to her cousins, of whom I see there are many, is that the nearest of them should take out letters of administration and send me legal authority to part with whatever is in my hands or Miss Mary Barr's. I possess the uncashed cheques and the latter her papers and trinkets. The deceased had so reduced her personal wants in India that there is hardly anything left which can be converted into money. All she received during her lifetime was generally made over to me for village work. I hope this gives to all concerned such information as is in my possession about the affairs of the deceased humanitarian.

#### MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING?

Two friends write to me deploring my attitude in the Ambedkar-Moonje proposal.<sup>1</sup> Their argument may be summed up as follows:

Surely you are making much ado about nothing. Guru Nanak was a Hindu reformer like the others who have founded Hindu sects. Sikhs are Hindus to all intents and purposes. Their culture is the same as of the Hindus. If Harijans declare themselves as Sikhs, why do you call it change of faith?

The objectors seem to be alone in their opinion. Some time after 1915 when I returned home from my self-imposed exile of fourteen years, I happened to go to the Punjab. Addressing a meeting of Sikhs, I had said they were in my opinion Hindus belonging to a sect of reformers. A well-meaning Sikh friend spoke to me aside and said I had unwittingly offended Sikhs by calling them Hindus. Ever since that caution, I have never described them as Hindus. What they believe matters, not what I or a few individuals do. Sikhs have a separate electorate. Dr Ambedkar does not regard Sikhs as Hindus. He definitely wants a change of faith. If Sikhs were a Hindu sect, no change in the Pact would be necessary. It is open to any Hindu to change his sect and still remain a Hindu. Moreover, neither Dr.

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "A Dangerous Proposal", 22-8-1936

Ambedkar nor R. B. Rajah nor anyone else can change even the sect of a whole mass of Harijans by a stroke of the pen. Religion is essentially an individual matter which each one has to decide for himself. No one who believes in religion as a sacrament can therefore be party to the proposal put forth by Drs. Ambedkar and Moonje.

*Harijan*, 19-9-1936

#### 491. OF MY RECENT ILLNESS

I would not tax the reader about my recent malaria fever except for the fact that friends are involved in the decision I have prayerfully made and which I hope God will let me fulfil.

It went against the grain for me, a confirmed believer in nature-cure methods, to go to Wardha and seek admission to the hospital. Left entirely to myself, I would have treated myself in accordance with nature-cure methods as far as possible. But I could not do so without offending the friends who happened to be near me at the time. I knew that Jamnalalji too had a special responsibility, in that I had settled in a village near Wardha, his permanent place of residence. With the choice of the village he has had nothing to do. It was entirely Mirabehn's and it was made because Segaon was predominantly a Harijan village and far enough from Wardha and yet not too far. I was drawn to the village in accordance with a certain declaration I had made when Mirabehn went to Segaon. Jamnalalji to an extent and Sardar Vallabhbhai altogether were against my settling in a village as yet and then in Segaon. But I bore down their opposition when I told them that I was bound by the declaration to which I have referred to settle down in Segaon. No doubt the promise was agreeable to me for my heart was in the village. Having gone to Segaon it was my intention not to stir out of it for full three seasons, i. e., one year. Unfortunately there are obligations undertaken before the decision to settle in Segaon, which I shall have to fulfil and which will disturb the unbroken year's stay. I urge friends, therefore, not to make further inroads upon the period. For me it is my *sadhana*. I set the greatest value upon the village problem. It may not be put off except at the cost of our very existence. India lives in her villages, not in her cities. I am supposed to guide and direct the village industries movement to which at Bombay an autonomous existence was given by the

Congress.<sup>1</sup> I am incapable of guiding any movement in which I do not plunge myself actively and directly. Maganwadi, though a village, being a large village,<sup>2</sup> was not good enough for my instruction and inspiration. I needed to be in a real village presenting the problems that face one in generality of villages. Segaoon is one such village.

If then I may not leave Segaoon in order not to interrupt my instruction and first-hand experience, I may not also leave it for health reasons. Segaoon like most villages has its full share of malaria and other diseases which villagers suffer from. Of its population of 600 there is hardly anyone who has not suffered from malaria or dysentery. Of the record of nearly 200 cases that have come under my observation or Mirabehn's, most are those of malaria and dysentery. The simple remedies at our disposal with dietetic control have served their purpose effectively. The villagers do not go to hospitals, they cannot even go to dispensaries. They usually resort to village quacks or incantations and drag on their weary existence. I claim to have some workable knowledge of common ailments. I have successfully treated myself often enough without the assistance of medical friends though they have been ever ready to help me in my need. If I was not a 'Mahatma', so-called, no one would have known anything of the recent attack of malaria. I rarely have fever. The last attack I had was nearly 12 years ago and I had treated myself. There is all the greater reason for me now, if I have another attack of malaria or another ailment, not to stir out of Segaoon in search of health; and if I must have medical assistance, I must be satisfied with what I can get without fuss and without having to leave Segaoon. I am fatalist enough to believe that no one can put off the hour of death when it has struck. Not the greatest medical assistance available has saved kings and emperors from the jaws of death. One like myself struggling to become a humble village servant surely ought to be satisfied with remedies easily accessible to villages. By leaving my village in search of health or the like I deny myself the opportunity of knowing what village life can be when one's health is in peril.

My malaria has quickened my resolve to study the problem of making Segaoon malaria-proof. All round me the fields are waterlogged. The crops are rotting. The ground is unwalkable unless you are content to wade through knee-deep mud. Fortunately a pukka

<sup>1</sup> In October 1934

<sup>2</sup> The source has "in being a large village".



road was built for my convenience through Jamnalaji's fields which keeps Segaoon somewhat accessible to people from Wardha. The road has proved a great convenience for man and beast. If I had listened to friend's advice to postpone settling in Segaoon till after the rains, I would have missed the rich experiences I have gained during the heavy rains of the past two months. Everything I have seen hitherto therefore convinces me that, if I am to make any approach to the village life, I must persevere in my resolve not to desert it in the hour of danger to life or limb. And I ask all the friends to help me in carrying out the resolve and pray with me that God may give me the strength to do so.

*Harijan, 19-9-1936*

#### 492. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

SEGAON,  
*September 20, 1936*

MY DEAR REBEL,

You are in danger of losing caste even with Tai, if you persist in defending my non-violence so long as it has not become your very own. That the savage in us may get the better of us when we are tried does not affect our position, if we even while we are savage know that we are doing wrong. The fact is that in this age of doubt, we are never sure of our ground. Some attractive argument which we cannot answer baffles us instead of humbling our pride in our intellect. These questions of non-violence, birth-control, and the like are eternal problems. So it might be better for you in the long run, never to seek to defend *my* views. When it is your own views, I know [you] are more than able to hold your own. I do not want your great ability to be discounted because of your association with me. Rather would I like it to be said that neither your body nor your mind had suffered decay after you began to come to Wardha.

I am glad Shummy is now treating your eczema. You must not be touchy about the feet. Is it not better that what is in is now coming out. The only thing is to have a remedy that results in elimination, not suppression.

I hope you will have no difficulty in deciphering the leaf 4. You will have none if you will treat this as part of it. You know what I mean.

Even among closest relatives some can be shameless. I belong to that class. Therefore don't send me a thermos till I call for it. I assure you I am getting hot enough drinks. On that score you need not worry.

I entirely agree with you that women are better nurses and more attentive to details than men. Whether it is so for modern women or not you can speak with greater authority than I can.

Your recent letters make me feel uneasy. You seem to be overdoing things again. Learn to say "No" when you are physically or mentally too tired.

Ba and Manu went to Delhi yesterday. And Lilavati is still at Maganwadi. Mira has no temperature today as yet though this is the day for it.

Your apples were eaten with great relish by Khan Saheb and me. Sufficient for the day.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: C.W. 3591. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 6400

### 493. LETTER TO MAHADEV DESAI

*September 20, 1936*

CHI. MAHADEV,

Do send me some envelopes.

Write to Dr. Shah about Amtul Salaam, inquiring how she is, what she does, whether she can be cured, etc.

Did you write that your lemons should be included in the parcels that come from Bombay? So far none have come.

I went through Ba's letter in *The Hindustan Times*. It does reveal Ba's pain, and also Devdas's.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 11488

#### 494. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

September 20, 1936

CHI. AMTUL SALAAM,

How foolish of you ! No one reads your letters and, supposing someone does, what is there for you to be ashamed of? Don't you see that your purpose could not be served because your Express Delivery letter reached late? But no one reads it, having recognized your handwriting. But I read it to Mahadev to show him your folly, and both of us laughed at it.

Why do you write in Gujarati or in Hindi? By all means write in Urdu. Your handwriting is clear. Never mind if I take more time to read it.

How can I be persuaded to speak nothing to Kanti when you give money for him? You had forbidden me to discuss the matter with you and I respected your wish. I did rebuke Kanti and he then wrote to say that your wanting to help him was not a recent thing. But then if you persist in making yourself unhappy, how can I help it?

Write to me about the final decision regarding your operation.

Did you get the letter addressed to Santa Cruz P.O.? You have no more complaint regarding letters, have you? Won't you be a little reasonable, a little cheerful? You do not in any way prove your goodness by making yourself miserable.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 348

#### 495. LETTER TO LILAVATI ASAR

September 20, 1936

CHI. LILAVATI,

I have read your letter very carefully. If you could only have some idea of my anxiety about you, you would become straightened as a cane, curb the wild horse of your imagination and become absorbed in the work entrusted to you. I do not trust you and hence you cannot be at Maganwadi. I am anxious about you because I have expectations of you. I am thinking what my duty towards you is. If at

Segaon you can mix as sugar does with milk, even if you wanted to I would not let you go. You must admit that you do not have that strength right now. But all will come right in time. Be patient. I have understood the purport of your letter. It contains a few misunderstandings. But I have no time to clear them. It is not ever necessary. Do read *Prithvivallabh*<sup>1</sup> again. And let me know about the effect it has on you.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

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

496. *LETTER TO G.D. BIRLA*

*September 20, 1936*

BHAI GHANSHYAMDAS,

I gave three days to Parameshwari, Parnerkar, Saryuprasad, Dinkar and Dharmadhikari and talked with them to my heart's content. They all hold different opinions. Parnerkar is not prepared to take charge of the dairies. It does not seem proper to undo Parameshwari's sixteen years of experiments. I have not been able to reach a final decision as even the winding up of this will take two to three months. I feel that Parameshwari should be given a further Rs. 2,000 for the expenditure up to December 31. There was some talk about sowing, to which I have already agreed. He should be given Rs. 2,000 in the same manner as he was given Rs. 500 and, whatever may ultimately come about, the sum of Rs. 2,500 should be the first charge on the establishment. Meanwhile we should meet somewhere and take a final decision. I must go to Banaras on October 25.<sup>2</sup> Jamnalalji, too, will be there. I have further advised Parameshwari to obtain the opinion of the Government expert.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From Hindi: C.W. 8023. Courtesy: G.D. Birla

<sup>1</sup> A novel in Gujarati by K. M. Munshi; *vide* also "Letter to K. M. Munshi", 26-9-1936

<sup>2</sup> For the opening of the Bharat Mata Mandir

#### 497. LETTER TO G.S.N. ACHARYA

[Before September 21, 1936]<sup>1</sup>

I never knew that there was a movement in Andhra Desa against Hindi *pracha*<sup>2</sup>. But I would resist any attempt to displace the rich vernaculars of the different provinces. Hindi is not intended to take their place, but it is intended to supplement them as a medium of inter-provincial intercourse. Therefore, Hindi propaganda should not only not interfere with the progress of vernaculars, but it must enrich them.

*The Hindu*, 22-9-1936

#### 498. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
September 21, 1936

MY DEAR IDIOT,

Your eczema has to go. I do not know how. Will Shummy approve of gently steaming the part affected, then applying ice poultice? If you think you can discuss this with him you should do so. But at the same time you must not fret because it is a skin disease. You will be well earlier, if you will cease to think about the trouble. How I wish I was by your side at the present moment ! But that cannot be.

Please tell Fielden<sup>3</sup> with my regards that he is working himself to death without a just cause. He ought to take leave and get well quickly. Of course the effect of malignant malaria is said to be very bad.

I wonder if Mahadev passed on to you the yarn that I was to have died of heart failure at 10 a.m. on Friday last.<sup>4</sup> This was sent by a learned man in all seriousness to Jamnalalji. He told me all about it. And though he made light of the information, he could not help posting poor Mahodaya here for the night. Though he was deprived of the privilege of last rites, he came in handy as Mira happened to have high fever that very day.

<sup>1</sup> The news report carrying this item is dated September 21, 1936.

<sup>2</sup> Propaganda

<sup>3</sup> Lionel Fielden, first Director-General of All India Radio

<sup>4</sup> *Vide* also "Letter to Kantilal Gandhi", 18-9-1936

I hope the access of visitors has not proved a real strain on your scanty resources. I wish you could hide yourself somewhere during the cold season. Any other hill will be better than Simla. Is it impossible to try Mahabaleshwar or Ooty?

Love.

ROBBER

From the original: C.W. 3592. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 6401

*499. LETTER TO BHULABHAI J. DESAI*

*September 21, 1936*

BHAISHRI BHULABHAI,

Shoulder the whole burden of the parliamentary election, financial as well as organizational. You will yourself no doubt contribute the largest amount but also persuade others to do likewise. This task is primarily yours; others will join afterwards.

I hope Dhuru and Madhuri are fine. Blessings to them both.

*Vandemataram from*  
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: Bhulabhai Desai Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

*500. LETTER TO G.D. BIRLA*

*September 21, 1936*

BHAI GHANSHYAMDAS,

I become more and more convinced each day that for Harijan work in each province the necessary funds should be raised within the province. If money has to be provided by the centre to enable provinces to carry on their work, work thus accomplished cannot be enduring. We shall also not be able to gauge the feelings of the caste Hindu. Rather than we should be forced later to cut down on our work, it is better that we should recognize our limitations.

What it means is that each province should now submit its budget in the light of the above and having examined these budgets we should then provide to each province such assistance as may be feasible for a year or two. I see our work purely as a religious

undertaking. Expansion of the work therefore depends on our finding self-sacrificing and saintly workers. Money will go after them. They will not have to go after money. If this has not been made clear to our Council it is only unfortunate.

If it is necessary that there should be a meeting of the Council at Wardha to take a final decision in the matter, such a meeting may be arranged.

*Yours,*  
MOHANDAS GANDHI

From the Hindi original: C.W. 8022. Courtesy: G.D. Birla

### 501. LETTER TO ZOHRA ANSARI

*September 21, 1936*

DEAR DAUGHTER ZOHRA,

I cannot attend your wedding<sup>1</sup> but I shall certainly be with you in spirit. You will both have my blessings on that day. May God grant you long life and happiness.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a facsimile of the Urdu: *Mahatma*, Vol. IV, between pp. 112-3

### 502. LETTER TO MARGARETE SPIEGEL

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
*September 22, 1936*

CHI. AMALA,

I am glad you are keeping up your Gujarati and Hindi. How could you feel that I had ceased to take an interest in your welfare ! I am glad you are in a more commodious house. You must get rid of your malady. It is tragic how your mother is being hindered. Let us hope however she will be able to come at last.

Love.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

Spiegel Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

<sup>1</sup> With Shaukat. The wedding was to take place on September 25; *vide* "Letter to Amtussalaam", 25-9-1936

### 503. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

September 22, 1936

MY DEAR IDIOT,

Your two letters came in the same day one after another. I know that my letters comfort you. Therefore I am trying to write to you as frequently as I can.

How I wish I could have you under my care in December and onward. But your eczema must disappear before then. Sardar Vallabhbhai is due there on 24th. I have asked him to get Deshmukh<sup>1</sup> to examine you. He is a good all-round man. He might be able to find the real remedy. I take it Shummy won't mind that.

Of course I shall write to Shummy to let you come to me between December and February both inclusive. But I don't want to write just yet or you will tell me when.

The folding charkha will be sent as soon as you send me the address. It will be specially made.

I understand what you say about your letters. Your wish is being literally respected.

It does seem to me that you should let Shummy put you on a meat diet. Surely you won't refuse to take meat as medicine. You have not developed that independent conscience. Let the evolution be slow and steady. If I religiously avoid meat even as medicine, it has been a life-long *sadhana* independently and deliberately undertaken. Anyway I would urge you to yield to Shummy in this respect, if he is sure that he will cure you. You must not expect the impossible from him.

Love.

ROBBER

SHRI RAJKUMARI AMRIT KAUR  
MANOR VILLE  
SIMLA W.

From the original: C. W. 3743. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G. N. 6899

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Punjabrao Deshmukh



## 504. LETTER TO LILAVATI ASAR

September 22, 1936

CHI. LILAVATI,

I have finished *Prithvivallabh*<sup>1</sup>. I am now sending it to you. Read it carefully but quickly, and let me know what you think of it. The book belongs to Kakasaheb. Be careful not to soil it. Don't make any marks in it. The ones you will find in it are not made by me. We should never make any marks in other people's books.

I got your letter yesterday and the *slokas* you have copied out. How can the *slokas* convey any meaning to you unless you spend some time to understand them? Shouldn't we exercise the mind a little? The work I have given you so far is the least and the easiest. Today also I dreamt of you. What a sorry state. How nice it would be if I did not have to worry on your account!

Blessings from  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 9347. Also C. W. 6622. Courtesy: Lilavati Asar

## 505. LETTER TO JAYANTI N. PAREKH

September 22, 1936

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

I could manage only today to read your letter and I am dictating this at once while spinning. You wrote the letter on your birthday. Live long and bring glory to your elders and to the country by your work. I have followed your argument about the batch and it is correct. But the batch was never disbanded; for those who have this faith, it still exists. But I must admit that there are very few who have this faith. I give you the freedom you now ask for. I would have liked to have a little talk with you before granting you this freedom, if only I had the time to send for you and meet you. That would be purely for my own satisfaction. I have had to forgo such satisfaction on several occasions before; so I can forgo it now. Do only what your inner voice tells you. In this alone lies your good. Only make sure that you rightly understand what the inner voice says. If the inner

<sup>1</sup> A Gujarati novel by K. M. Munshi

<sup>2</sup> An Ashram inmate who later became Communist

voice prompts a murderer to commit murder, a debauch to commit debauchery, or a thief to commit theft, we shall not regard it as the inner voice. Men of experience have therefore laid it down that he alone can have recourse to the inner voice who has acquired the ability to hear it. As men have often failed to understand this clearly, they have pillaged and plundered in the name of religion. However, I know I don't have to explain all this to you. Write to me occasionally. I am in correspondence with several socialists, though not with our comrades from Gujarat. If I set out to seek such contacts on my own I would be overwhelmed by them. I reply to those who write to me, but at present I am curtailing even that kind of correspondence, as I desire as present to bury myself in Segaoon and be forgotten. Even if this desire cannot be wholly fulfilled, should I not at least do all I can to realize it? And that is what I am doing. A certain amount of correspondence has therefore come to a stop.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 6263

### 506. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
*September 23, 1936*

CHI. NARANDAS,

I am trying to send you somebody. Frontier Gandhi is not sent out anywhere. So this will be rather difficult.

Do keep throwing out the names that occur to you. Why is it not possible to find out from the books what amount was sent by Sorabji? Durban has been urgently demanding it. Maybe Chhaganlal [Gandhi] will know and maybe Chhaganlal Joshi, too. The books are there. For the rest, anyone can look into them and find out. We don't have so very many ledgers, do we? What is the difficulty?

I enclose a letter from Jaisukhlal. It contains complaints against Chhaganlal Joshi. I had written to him that he should allow me to show these complaints to Joshi. At last he has sent me the permission. But he has added that I should send the letter through you and obtain your opinion also. That is why I am sending you the letter. Do let me have your opinion and, unless you have some objection, show it to Joshi and ask him to send me his reply. Or I shall send it direct to

Joshi if you so wish.

You may always take for granted thousands of blessings from me on your birthday. I have cherished many hopes of you. They have also borne fruit, and will further do so. But the real test will come when I am no more, won't it? I have assumed that then, too, you will succeed.

I am reaching Ahmedabad on the 30th and from there I shall have to rush off to Nadiad the same day. My wish to see the elders before that is growing stronger and stronger. I shall therefore try and drop in if I can. I shall leave soon after receiving the blessings of the elders. There should be no fanfare. No one is to be informed. You should not expect me to do any other work. At the most I shall spend one night there. I shall not have all that time and I shall arrive in the morning and leave at night. For me this is nothing but a pilgrimage. You, too, should give up all thought of taking advantage of my presence for some other cause. Persons like Nanalal Joshi will of course know, and anyway Shuklasaheb will have to be informed. However, everyone should understand that my visit to Rajkot is not to be considered a visit at all. It is likely that Khan Saheb will accompany me, and you may take advantage of his presence then but don't make any announcement in advance.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II. Also C. W. 8505. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

### *507. LETTER TO KANTILAL GANDHI*

*September 23, 1936*

CHI. KANTI,

I have your letter. I do not wish to annoy you on account of Amtul Salaam. I am satisfied that you visited her.

It is certainly good that you have been using a mosquito-net. Do not take it for granted that you will remain free from fever in spite of taking all sorts of liberties with yourself. As for the studies, you should observe some restraint. Why should you strain your eyes at night after having studied the whole day?

I had forgotten to write about Saraswati. I shall enquire about her from Ramachandran and then let you know.

I expect you have been regularly writing to Devdas. Ba will be glad to have a little note from you. Did I tell you that Ba and Manu have gone to Devdas? Here at present we have two additions—Pyarelal and Nanavati. Lilavati continues to stay at Maganwadi.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C. W. 7306. Courtesy: Kantilal Gandhi

### 508. LETTER TO BRIJKRISHNA CHANDIWALA

*September 23, 1936*

CHI. BRAJKRISHNA,

Mahadev gave me your letter about Dekka. I have read Dekka's letter. Fortunately Shankerlal too happens to be here. I have had a talk with him too. A copy of my letter<sup>1</sup> to Dekka is enclosed from which you will see that you have no reason to worry about him. You must have got the letter I wrote to you some time back. I was sorry to read about Mother being unwell. I hope she is all right now.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 2444

### 509. LETTER TO SUNDARLAL

*September 23, 1936*

MY DEAR SUNDARLAL,

You did well in writing to me this letter<sup>2</sup>. I have not seen Maulana Abdul Haq's statement. I saw only a portion of it. Please send me a copy of that statement.

<sup>1</sup> This is not traceable

<sup>2</sup> In the letter the addressee had regretted that the Hindi-Urdu controversy, which was mainly a literary affair, should have been given a communal shape. Comparing the grammar and idiom of the two he emphasized that they were fundamentally the same. Urdu and Hindi writers were both obstructing the formation and development of a common Hindustani language and confusing its grammar. He explained that neither "Hindi" nor "Urdu" could rightly denote this common language.

Whatever I have done in this connection, I have done with absolutely pure intentions. My position is exactly what it was in 1920. My efforts are directed towards the acceptance of the word. That is why I got the word ‘ Hindustani’ passed by the Congress. I could not do so in the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan. Therefore, at Indore, I got the connotation of the word Hindi clarified. In the All- India Sahitya Sammelan<sup>1</sup> I went one step further. My object was the same, viz., to give one common name to the two forms of the language as used by the Hindus and by the Mussalmans, as well as to make them one language in reality.

You have yourself written that the adoption of the name Urdu had its special reasons. I never meant to attribute motives for this adoption.

You have also accepted what I said with regard to grammar. That Hindi writers commit mistakes of another type does not disprove or falsify my statement.

The prevalent misunderstandings are bound to be removed, because there is absolutely no ground for them. I do not at all want to give up Urdu. I have sufficient regard for it. I attach sufficient value to it. I daily read from some Urdu work or other. I also write letters in Urdu to several Muslim sisters and brothers. I have patience enough.

I think I have cleared all your points. If there still remain some doubts, we shall see about them later. Even for writing this I could with difficulty snatch a few moments.

*Yours,*  
BAPU

[PS.]

One thing more. The language of the sentences you have quoted is not mine. From where did you take them?<sup>2</sup>

*The Searchlight, 9-10-1936*

<sup>1</sup> At Nagpur on April 24 and 25, 1936; *vide* “Speech at Akhil Bharatiya Sahitya Parishad”, 24-4-1936

<sup>2</sup> The original letter was in Hindi.

## 510. PREFACE TO “GITAPADARTHAKOSHA”<sup>1</sup>

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
September 24, 1936

Kakasaheb has explained in his own foreword why this *kosha*, which was prepared twelve years ago<sup>2</sup> and which has not come up to the required standard yet, is being published today.

This *kosha* is indeed necessary for those who are at all interested in the translation<sup>3</sup> which has been published under my name. Maybe it will be useful to other students of the *Gita* as well. To them I would suggest that if they do not like the interpretations given in the *Padarthakosha* and prefer others, they should note these down in the book itself. By doing so, they will have a glossary of their own liking with very little effort. And if such students send me the interpretations of their choice, I shall be grateful.

The more I study the *Gita*, the more I am made aware of its uniqueness. For me, it is a spiritual dictionary. Whenever I am in doubt as to what I should or should not do, I fall back upon it, and so far it has never disappointed me. It is indeed a *Kamadhenu*<sup>4</sup>. In the beginning, we recited one *sloka* a day, then two, then five, then a chapter a day, then a complete recitation in two weeks and, finally, in the last few years some of us have been able to do a complete recitation in seven days. And on particular days of the week the sound of particular chapters is heard around 4.30 a.m. Some—a very few—have learnt all the eighteen chapters by heart. The morning prayers include the chapters in the following order during the days of the week.

Friday I, II

Saturday III, IV, V

Sunday VI, VII, VIII

Monday IX, X, XI, XII

Tuesday XIII, XIV, XV

Wednesday XVI, XXII

Thursday XVIII.

<sup>1</sup> This appeared in the book under the title *Request to Readers* and also in *Harijanbandhu*, 25-10-1936, under the title “Gitarupi Kamadhenu”. A *padarthakosha* is a concordance as well as a glossary.

<sup>2</sup> Gandhiji had prepared this *Padarthakosha* while in the Yeravda jail in 1922-24; vide “My Jail Experiences- XI”, 17-9-1924

<sup>3</sup> *Anasaktiyoga*; vide “Letter to Narandas Gandhi”, 23-5-1935

<sup>4</sup> Mythical cow that gave anything that was desired

Suffice it to say that there has been some deliberation behind this schedule. Our experience has been that this order facilitates understanding of the text.

It may well be asked why the recitation has to begin on a Friday. The reason for this is simply the following: For considerable length of time a complete recitation used to take fourteen days. In the Yeravda jail I thought of a seven-day recitation and the idea was put into effect on a Friday. In this way and since that day, the recitation week begins on a Friday.

There are two reasons why I mention the matter of complete recitation here: to show how far devotion to the *Gita* has taken some of us up to date and to indicate to the reader the way to encourage its study.

But we are not to rest content with merely reciting the *Gita*. It is a spiritual dictionary; it is a tremendous force for straightening the creases of the soul; it is the refuge of the afflicted; it is an awakener from stupor. Only those who have this faith can derive help from reciting the *Gita*. I do not in the least suggest that recitation of the *Gita* without an understanding of its meaning is by itself beneficial to a man. With sufficient effort a tame parrot can certainly be taught to memorize the *Gita*. But that is not going to bring the slightest merit either to the parrot or to its trainer.

The *Gita* is the living, life-giving immortal mother. The mother who suckled us will one day disappear and leave us in the lurch. We see countless mothers failing to protect their children from peril. But one who seeks the support of Mother *Gita* saves himself from the greatest peril. She is ever wakeful and she never lets one down. But a mother will not give one nourishment unless one asks for it. Mother *Gita* too gives nothing without our asking for it. Before taking anyone under her wing she tests him severely, expects whole-hearted devotion. The devotion, too, should not be dry. She wants single-minded devotion. Hence, she plainly refuses to help those who are not prepared to surrender their all to her.

The student of physics gains an insight into his subject only when he is crazy after it. Those who obtain M.A. and B.A. degrees read day and night, spend money and put themselves to great physical strain. From amongst those who make such efforts, only a few are successful at the first attempt. Those who fail do not despair but try again and again and only rest when they have passed. And in the

end—?

For those who wish to drink the nectar that is the *Gita*, much greater effort than this should be and is required. But how many want to partake of that nectar? Even of those who feel the need, how many are prepared to make a strenuous effort? We know that the number of people devoted to the *Gita* in the way I have suggested is negligible. Yet all agree that the *Gita* is the essence of all the Upanishads. No Hindu should remain ignorant of it. At present, however, all religion has depreciated in value. This is not the occasion to go into the reasons for this. In this note of appeal all that I have tried to do on the occasion of the publication of this volume is to draw the attention of seekers to the gem that is the *Gita* and to suggest how it can be put to good use. May it bear fruit.

MOHANDAS KARAMCHAND GANDHI

[From Gujarati]

*Gitapadarthakosha*, pp. iii to vi

### 511. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

September 24, 1936

MY DEAR IDIOT,

This is a left hand effort just to give the right a little rest.

You do seem to be overworking yourself. You ought to find a way out.

The newspaper cutting is funny. They cannot live without lies. Presently they will reduce you to thin air ! ! ! Then you will fly about everywhere without any escort and I shall need provide no corner for you when you choose to waft yourself to Segaon. The only difficulty will be how to make you out—a mere airy nothing. Well, by the time you become nothing, I shall have grown a sixth sense enabling me to recognize beings or non-beings of the air.

Don't you think that I have nothing else to do but to write nonsense. I wanted to chat with you. I don't want to be always lecturing to you on your eczema. And the wretched cutting gave me the text for this letter.

The apples have come in again. Are they still from your



garden?

Love.

ROBBER

From the original: C.W. 3593. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 6402

*512. LETTER TO S. AMBUJAMMAL*

*September 24, 1936*

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

Your fruit has been coming in regularly and it has been serving its purpose.

I returned to Segaon on Saturday. I am keeping well though still feeling weak. I don't want to move out of the place if I can at all help it.

I see that Mrs. Rangasami has given you Rs. 2,000 for the Hindi work.

I hope Kichi is better and that Father and Mother are also keeping well. And how about you?

I am glad you are continuing the *Ramayana*.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: Ambujammal Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

*513. LETTER TO A. H. WEST*

*September 24, 1936*

The Phoenix experiment for me was a life-work. And so, if you ever come to India, you will find me amid conditions simpler than in Phoenix. For the ideal has not only persisted but it bears today an ampler meaning.

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

<sup>1</sup> This is in Hindi.

## 514. LETTER TO BALWANTSINHA

September 24, 1936

CHI. BALWANTSINHA,

I have your letter. Who knows when this will reach you?

Everything is going on smoothly here. Every day there is a churning, giving lots of butter. Today two and a half seers of curds yielded fourteen *tolas* of butter which gave ten *tolas* of ghee. Pyarelal has become an expert at it. Munnalal looks after the milk.

We had a heavy rain today.

Kishorelal's letter is enclosed. He is all right now, though pretty weak.

Tell Maharaj<sup>1</sup> that I got his letter.

Yes, give them a sound training in sanitation too.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 1887

## 515. LETTER TO M. S. KELKAR

September 25, 1936

DEAR ICE<sup>2</sup>,

What shall I say to you? I would love to have you by me and yet with all your belief in stars, I have no faith in your treatment. Your belief, too, that I gained by your treatment is not quite correct. After all your effort, I had at last to undergo an operation.<sup>3</sup> You treated many patients in Sabarmati but except little Manu who had raw eggs, nobody derived any permanent relief. You have been trying all these many years to settle down to solid work but you still remain a rolling stone. I very much fear that you are self-deluded. It is high time you recognized your limitations. I know you have talent and energy. It grieves me to find it running to waste.

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

<sup>1</sup> Sant Tukdoji Maharaj; the addressee had gone to his Ashram at Mojhari to teach carding, spinning, etc.

<sup>2</sup> The addressee was a specialist in ice treatment.

<sup>3</sup> On January 20, 1919

*516. LETTER TO BAL D. KALELKAR*

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
*September 25, 1936*

CHI. BAL,

It is strange that you of all people should have this sudden craze for testimonials. However, if you want one here it is.<sup>1</sup>

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 2178

*517. TESTIMONIAL TO BAL D. KALELKAR*

*September 25, 1936*

Chi. Bal, the younger son of Kakasaheb Kalelkar, is well known to me. It may be said that he was brought up under my care at Sabarmati Ashram. He is very intelligent, sociable and cheerful. His ambition is to live a life of service after acquiring much knowledge. Chi. Bal rendered me excellent service during my second 21-day fast<sup>2</sup> and on other occasions. He is entitled to my blessings at all times.

MOHANDAS GANDHI

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 2177

*518. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM*

*September 25, 1936*

CHI. AMTUL SALAAM,

Not only are you foolish, but you are also silly. Your letter is full of nonsense. It appears that in your view no man is good. I got your letter regarding Dr. Gilder. He did not open any of your Urdu letters nor has he read any. I read out your last letter to Mahadev as it contained nothing confidential. Doesn't a parent have that freedom?

I had replied immediately to your letter regarding Dr. Gilder saying that if you needed to be examined by Dr. Gilder it could be

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

<sup>2</sup> From May 8 to May 29, 1933

arranged. Did you get my letter addressed c/o Bari, the Theosophical Lodge? I have not failed to reply to any of your letters. What can I do if letters fail to reach you? If you wish, I shall obtain a certificate of posting. Why do you make yourself unhappy for nothing?

Zohra and Shaukat are getting married today in Delhi. The ceremony will be entirely private.

Write to me regularly. You should write only in Urdu.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 349

### 519. LETTER TO TARABEHN N. MASHRUWALA

*September 25, 1936*

CHI. TARA,

What shall I say to you? I would not like to rebuke you but I cannot bear your not keeping your promises. Where is the account you were going to render every week? It is not even in the letter you write. Why are you so sluggish? When will you wake up?

Do you write to Dr. Ooman? You should have kept up the contact for the sake of your studies if for nothing else. If you have broken with him, I would recommend that you make it up with him. I have not given up hope. It is open to you to get from me fresh instructions from day to day. But you do not seem to be interested even in improving your health. Who can create this interest in you? It is our duty to preserve this largesse from God and make noble use of it. But it seems you have closed all your doors. This is not right. You have strength, a desire to serve, candour and purity. But there is also in you something—call it obstinacy or stupidity or some other failing—that does not let your potentialities flower. It would be a good thing for you to find out that shortcoming and resolutely remove it. Open up your mind, which you have locked.

I got the yarn. Congratulations to those who participated in the spinning. I trust your parents are doing well. Do you make use of Oommen's book or his box?

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 7528. Also C.W. 5004. Courtesy: Kanubhai N. Mashruwala

## 520. LETTER TO LILAVATI ASAR

September 25, 1936

CHI. LILAVATI,

You shouldn't be in a hurry to come to Segaon. You have as yet not even acquired a command over your handwriting. Ask yourself whether you can live at peace with Munnalal, Balwantsinha and Mirabehn. At present we have perfect peace here and there are no quarrels to annoy me. I tremble at the thought of a threat to this peace. So think calmly and tell me yourself. Meanwhile, you are already busy with the work there. You have peace. Mahadev gets your full help. He needs that help. Therefore it seems you are in the right place. You will not take this to mean that I do not at all want to have you in Segaon. I do wish to have you here, but not at the cost of any threat to peace. Even from here I do try to guide you. Do you expect anything more? You should patiently consider whether you yourself would be happy here. Do not encroach on Mahadev's time for this. Do the thinking yourself and write to me what you feel.

I hope your leg is all right now.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 9348. Also C.W. 6623. Courtesy:  
Lilavati Asar

## 521. LETTER TO GOPINATH

September 25, 1936

BHAI GOPINATHJI<sup>1</sup>,

. . . <sup>2</sup> Now tell me if there is in the Ayurvedic system any medicine for malaria as efficacious as quinine. Which medicine is definitely more effective than the allopathic drugs? In the villages, in spite of my strong inclination to the contrary, I have to take

<sup>1</sup> Editor of *Arogya Darpana*, a Hindi journal advocating Ayurvedic system of medicine; the letter was originally published in the November 1936 issue of the journal.

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

recourse to quinine, soda-bicarb, potassium permanganate and tincture iodine . . . .<sup>1</sup>

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

[From Hindi]  
*Gujarati*, 3-1-1937

## 522. LETTER TO KRISHNACHANDRA

*September 25, 1936*

CHI. KRISHNACHANDRA,

It is only natural for you to grieve over your father's death. What you write about [the devoted]<sup>2</sup> Hindu [wife]<sup>3</sup> is perfectly right. You must of course console your mother.

The question of giving up the effort to observe *brahmacharya* does not at all arise. Mother *Gita* assures us that "no well-doer meets with a sad end"<sup>4</sup>. You may certainly fast on Saturdays if you find it beneficial.

Consider carefully whatever you decide to do.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 4289

## 523. LETTER TO SHRIMAN NARAYAN AGRAWAL

*September 25, 1936*

BHAI SHRIMAN,

I read your *Naye Yugka Raga*. I liked the poems. Your purpose is clear and pure. But I do not consider myself qualified to express any opinion about its poetic quality. Only poets can judge whether your work deserves to be published.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

<sup>1</sup> Omissions as in the source

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

<sup>3</sup> *ibid*

<sup>4</sup> *Bhagavad Gita*, VI. 40

[PS.]

How much time I spent over writing this ! I didn't know what to write.

[From Hindi]

*Panchven Putrako Bapuke Ashirvad*, p. 299

## 524. *THE LAW OF OUR BEING*

*The Statesman* has devoted a reasoned article to the argument advanced by me in reply<sup>1</sup> to its criticism of Canon Sheppard's war against war. In that article a very clever attempt has been made to dispute the whole of the position taken up by me.

The writer says that whilst the *Bhagavad Gita* assists him, it does not assist the terrorist. Once you admit the lawfulness of the use of physical force for purposes other than the benefit of the person against whom it is used, as in the case of a surgeon against his patient, you cannot draw an arbitrary line of distinction. The *Mahabharata*, of which the *Gita* is only a tiny chapter, describes in gruesome detail a night slaughter of the innocents which, but for our recent experiences of our civilized war, would be considered unbelievable in actual practice. The grim fact is that the terrorists have in absolute honesty, earnestness and with cogency used the *Gita*, which some of them know by heart, in defence of their doctrine and policy. Only they have no answer to my interpretation of the *Gita*, except to say that mine is wrong and theirs is right. Time alone will show whose is right. The *Gita* is not a theoretical treatise. It is a living but silent guide whose directions one has to understand by patient striving.

The *Statesman* writer next likens Canon Sheppard's position to that of Arjuna. Surely this is a faulty analogy, hastily drawn. Arjuna was the Commander-in-Chief of the Pandava forces. He became suddenly paralysed when he contemplated the awful scene before him. As general he knew exactly what he had to do. He knew that he had to war against his cousins. His paralysis was due to momentary weakness. He could not have given up the task before him without creating the utmost confusion and disorder, and bringing disgrace on himself and his innumerable friends and followers. He was bound to engage himself and his followers in the terrible slaughter for which he

<sup>1</sup> Vide "God of Love, Not War", 5-9-1936

had trained himself and them. It is profitless to conjecture what would have happened if non-violence in thought, word and deed had suddenly but really possessed him.

That rich possession, let us hope, has come to Dick Sheppard and his companions. Anyway, so far as I know, his position is wholly different from Arjuna's. He is no general of an army drawn up in battle array. He makes no distinction between kinsmen and others. For him man is man, no matter where he is born or of what his skin is, or what he calls himself. After having prayerfully searched through the book which for him is the Book of Life, he has been driven to the conclusion that he may not hurt his fellowmen for gain for himself or his country, and that therefore he must himself abstain from participation, direct or indirect, in war. He naturally takes the next step of preaching to his neighbours the doctrine of peace or love and goodwill towards men without exception. This is a position which Arjuna never took up.

But the *Statesman* writer has many strings to his bow. And the strongest is his denial of non-violence or love as the law of the human race. If love or non-violence be not the law of our being, the whole of my argument falls to pieces, and there is no escape from a periodical recrudescence of war, each succeeding one outdoing the preceding one in ferocity. I cannot undertake, and least of all through a newspaper article written during moments snatched from the daily routine, to prove that love is the source and end of life. But I venture to make some relevant suggestions which may pave the way for an understanding of the Law. All the Teachers that ever lived have preached that law with more or less vigour. If Love was not the law of life, life would not have persisted in the midst of death. Life is a perpetual triumph over the grave. If there is a fundamental distinction between man and beast, it is the former's progressive recognition of the law and its application in practice to his own personal life. All the saints of the world, ancient and modern, were each according to his light and capacity a living illustration of that supreme Law of our Being. That the brute in us seems so often to gain an easy triumph is true enough.-That, however, does not disprove the law. It shows the difficulty of practice. How should it be otherwise with a law which is as high as truth itself?When the practice of the law becomes universal, God will reign on earth as He does in Heaven. I need not be reminded that earth and heaven are in us. We know the earth, we are strangers to the Heaven within us. If it is allowed that for some the practice of love



is possible, it is arrogance not to allow even the possibility of its practice in all the others. Not very remote ancestors of ours indulged in cannibalism and many other practices which we would today call loathsome. No doubt in those days too there were Dick Sheppards who must have been laughed at and possibly pilloried for preaching (to them) the strange doctrine of refusing to eat fellow men. Modern science is replete with illustrations of the seemingly impossible having become possible within living memory. But the victories of physical science would be nothing against the victory of the Science of Life which is summed up in Love which is the Law of our Being. I know that it cannot be proved by argument. It shall be proved by persons living it in their lives in utter disregard of consequences to themselves. There is no real gain without sacrifice. And since demonstration of the Law of Love is the realest gain, sacrifice too must be the greatest required.

The rest of the argument advanced by the *Statesman* writer in refutation of mine needs no answer if the Law is recognized. His argument is valid if the Law is denied or doubted.

One point may, however, be dealt with in passing. The writer seems to pooh-pooh the idea of honour derived from<sup>1</sup> individual and national gain. He says: "What is this honour that would be left to a nation that voluntarily destroyed itself?" There is no question for one<sup>2</sup> of self-destruction, voluntary or otherwise. But there is of "anation allowing itself to be destroyed" for the sake of preserving its honour, as would be the case, say, if Indians died to the man, without lifting a finger, in their determination not to surrender to the will of an invading host. A woman defends her own honour and that of her sex, when she non-violently refuses to the point of death the advances of a rake. Young Prahlad non-violently risked his life to defend his honour, which consisted in his persistence in declaring his belief in God. Jesus defended his honour and that of man when he preferred the death of a felon to the denial of his faith.

*Harijan, 26-9-1936*

<sup>1</sup> Slip for 'devoid of'; *vide* "A Correction", 10-10-1936.

<sup>2</sup> Slip for 'me'; *ibid*

## 525. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
September 26, 1936

MY DEAR IDIOT,

If the unbreakable thermos comes, I shall not return it. As I destroy all your letters, I have inadvertently destroyed the Mahmudabad address. Please repeat it on a separate sheet.

Surely it is 'idiotic' to pass summer in Simla merely because you possess a house there. You ought to select another summer resort where you can really recoup yourself.

Remember one of the attributes of non-violence. It seldom speaks, it simply and silently acts. It appeals not to the intellect, it pierces the heart. The more it speaks and argues, the less effective it becomes. Therefore do not hesitate to let your case be lost by default. Apparent defeat may be the hour of victory. Speech is often a sign of weakness.

You will please give a trial to meat if Shummy says it is necessary. Your vegetarianism will be on surer ground for your yielding now, if yielding becomes a duty.

Love.

ROBBER

From the original: C.W. 3594. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 6403

## 526. LETTER TO J. C. KUMARAPPA

September 26, 1936

MY DEAR KU,

Jajuji has sent in his resignation to be presented to you, if I would agree, for submission to the Board. I am not quite happy over the prospect. Though J. is quite capable of adjusting himself to new conditions, the manner. . .<sup>1</sup> to leave. . .<sup>2</sup> do not know that the resignation will be in the best interest of the Sangh. I will like you to examine the situation from that standpoint and that alone. Just think the thing over with Bharatan and let me have your opinion.

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

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*

Meanwhile I am holding the paper. I am asking J., too, to consider the question from that point of view.

From a photostat: G.N. 10111

*527. LETTER TO CHHAGANLAL JOSHI*

*September 26, 1936*

CHI. CHHAGANLAL,

I have your letter. The Bhangis' problem seems to have been solved satisfactorily. I am returning the letter which you want.

I am surprised about Chandulal<sup>1</sup>. I have sent him the relevant extract from your letter and asked for his reply.

I hope your work is going on smoothly now. It must. Very few workers are left now.

I am hoping to meet you all. I only wish to pay a visit of duty. There should be, therefore, no publicity.

*Blessings from  
BAPU*

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 5540

*528. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM*

*September 26, 1936*

CHI. AMTUL SALAAM,

I myself went through your letter written in pencil. I just got your wire and am sending a letter to Dr. Shah. You may show it to Dr. Jivraj if Dr. Shah is away. Send me a wire if you need anything.

You are foolish. You make yourself unhappy. You deliberately suspect people. Why did you have to go away when you had fever? Why don't you write a note to Kanti and ask him to come? At the moment I don't have the courage to keep you or anybody else in Segaon. Let me settle down in peace.

Why don't you listen to me?

What do you propose to do if Bari goes out of town?

<sup>1</sup> Chandulal Becharbhai Patel who was then Education Officer of the Gondal State. The reference is to the segregation of Harijans at public places.

Shall I make some other arrangement for you in Bombay itself?  
Who are there with you in the house?

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 350

529. LETTER TO K. M. MUNSHI

September 26, 1936

BHAI MUNSHI,

Kakasaheb's acquaintance with you has been growing and he is having the opportunity of reading your works. He read *Prithvivallabh* and has pressed me to read it and give my opinion on it. I read it four days ago and now send my opinion direct to you. Kakasaheb will read it. You had already sent me some of your books when I was in jail where, however, I could read none of them. You had even then asked for my opinion. I read *Prithvivallabh* with interest. Not one character appealed to me. I did not at all wish to be like Munj. Why so? It would not be quite in the fitness of things for you to say that you delineate the characters as they are. Some at least in this wide and varied world are likely to be noble, free from hypocrisy, loyal. Mrinal you reduced to pieces, and poor Vilas melted like wax before Rasanidhi. Could it be that men are so cunning and that even a forty-year-old, homely and self-restrained woman would fall for a man's love talk and suggestive gestures? What does a man read for? For mere enjoyment? And that too so low? Kalidasa wrote nothing of the kind. Shakespeare made no such impression on me. From them I learn something. Why not from you? Personally you appear to me nice and pleasant. I am drawn to you. I have hopes of getting much from you both. How did I fail to get a glimpse of your personality in *Prithvivallabh* which is regarded—or isn't it—your best work? I have little hope that Kaka can solve this puzzle for me. You alone can do it. There is of course no question in this which calls for a reply immediately.

Now allow me to have a little fun. Your last sentence is somewhat like this: Crushed under the elephant's foot, Munj's body lay flat like a *rotlo*<sup>1</sup>. The word *rotlo* was all right; but did it ever occur

<sup>1</sup> Cake made from millet or other coarse grain

to you that the body could not be turned into a *rotlo*? It may do to say 'turned into *chhundo*<sup>1</sup>'. The body can be turned into *murabbo*<sup>2</sup>, into *churna*<sup>3</sup>, but it can never be turned into a *rotlo*.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From Gujarati: C.W. 7606. Courtesy: K.M. Munshi

### 530. LETTER TO PRABHAVATI

*September 26, 1936*

CHI. PRABHA,

You have no reason to be irregular. I definitely wish to learn of your condition even before I have recovered my strength.

I am regaining my strength. I have at present reduced my food intake. I take about a pound and a half of milk. Among fruits I take *mosambis*, prunes and occasionally *chikoos* or some other fruit. I take plenty of rest.

You can find half an hour for a hip-bath whatever work you may be doing. You must. Nor would it do to be unmindful of your food. You will be bed-ridden if you are careless in this regard.

I had a good talk with Father. It was decided that Jayaprakash should get Rs. 50. I take it he will himself explain things to you better. Mirabehn is of course with me. She is improving. The rains may be said to have stopped now.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3482

<sup>1</sup> A preparation made by crushing the ingredients

<sup>2</sup> Jelly

<sup>3</sup> Powder

### 531. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
September 27, 1936

MY DEAR REBEL,

If you do not chew garlic well, it is likely to pass out undigested. It must therefore be well pounded. You may take it the last thing before retiring in an ounce of *dahi* or at the table.

You must send me a copy of your rural broadcast.

Khan Saheb wants me specially to thank you for all you are doing for Mehrtaj and Mariam. I am glad they are coming under your influence.

Does Navin ever write to you?

Too late to say more.

Love.

ROBBER

From the original: C.W. 3744. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 6900

### 532. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

September 27, 1936

CHI. AMTUL,

You are hard to please. I have written to you daily. The first letter was sent, as instructed by you, care of the Postmaster and the later ones to the Easter Villa address. Am I to blame if you don't get the letters? And is it my fault that I cannot do something beyond my power? Tell me now how I can satisfy you.

I see no need at present to consult Dr. Gilder. It would be right on our part to go to another after we have tried one. Nonetheless, if you wish I shall write to Dr. Gilder too. You may consult Dr. Jivraj if he is available and anyone else you think fit.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 351

533. *LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM*

September 27, 1936

CHI. AMTUL SALAAM,

I got your postcard. I do not at all like your having to suffer, but what am I to do? Do you take anyone with you when you go to Dr. Shah's? Does he carefully attend to you? Give me the full details regularly. Is Bari still there, or has he left? I cannot help it if you make yourself unhappy.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 352

534. *LETTER TO LILAVATI ASAR*

September 27, 1936

CHI. LILAVATI,

If I were to call you after you had copied out the whole of the *Gita*, I would ask you to copy out a hundred *slokas* a day and be done away with that excuse. What I am thinking about is the threat to my peace. Nor do I say that the fault lies with you alone. I have made the utmost demand on you because you wish to stay with me purely for training yourself.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 9581. Also C.W. 6553. Courtesy: Lilavati Asar

535. *LETTER TO MAHADEV DESAI*

September 27, 1936

CHI. MAHADEV,

I am sending with this Gadodia's cheque for Rs. 200, which for the present is to be credited to the Segaoon account. You will be sending it to Jamnalalji's, I suppose?

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 11485

### 536. LETTER TO LAKSHMI NARAYAN GADODIA

*September 27, 1936*

BHAI LAKSHMI NARAYANJI,

I am very happy to see that you are both taken up with hydrotherapy. Let this always continue. You have found a pure altruistic activity in which both of you have such great faith and I see the greatest good where the energies of you both are equally applied. I continued my morning hip-bath even through the attack of malaria, and my walks too. The hipbath still continues though the hour has been shifted to ten o'clock. After the morning prayers I go to sleep and I cannot manage a walk after the hip-bath at 10 o'clock. Anyway I do go for walks twice a day. I cannot take friction-bath because due to lack of practice the foreskin cannot be drawn back in the required manner. I had made an attempt on receiving your first letter. The skin is intact and I used to take friction-bath years ago. I have not yet started having the abdominal mud-pack at bedtime. Formerly I used to try mud-packs on many occasions and now I shall try it for your sake if for no other reason. If I come across an honest naturopath, I would certainly keep him with me and popularize the treatment. I have not so far found such a person. Most of the hydropaths in India have reduced their treatment to a means of making money. There are very few like your Moulvi Saheb, and they cannot give up their occupations. What can we do under such circumstances? I have thecheque for Rs. 200. I shall see how it can be utilized in Segaon. Three-fourths of the Segaon village is owned by Jamnalalji and he has authorized me to spend for the villagers' benefit whatever returns he gets from the property and I think the amount is sufficient. Hence I cannot tell you just now how and when I shall be able to use your Rs. 200 for the welfare of the people of Segaon.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 5624



537. *LETTER TO MARGARETE SPIEGEL*

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
September 28, 1936

CHI. AMALA,

You have made such progress in Gujarati as to tempt me to correct the few mistakes you have made.

I am quite well. I wish you could say as much about yourself.

I do hope you will soon have good news about and from Mother.

You must not stint yourself about food. You should eat plenty of fruit and salads.

The friend you have in mind is all right.

Love.

BAPU

Spiegel Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

538. *LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI*

September 28, 1936

CHI. NARANDAS,

Herewith the message. Tell Mother<sup>1</sup> that I am longing as a child to rest my head in her lap and Father's<sup>2</sup>. It is unthinkable that I should go to Ahmedabad and not see them. So take it that, God willing, I shall be there. The date will be around 27th or thereabouts.

Your purpose could be met if someone reaches there between the 2nd and the 12th. I am considering whom I can send. You may send me a wire if you have some other names in your mind.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II. Also C.W. 8506. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

<sup>1</sup> Devkunwar Gandhi

<sup>2</sup> Khushalchand Gandhi

539. LETTER TO MAHADEV DESAI

September 28, 1936

CHI. MAHADEV,

I am sending three articles with this. You may delete from the articles anything that you do not like. I wrote out what I had long been contemplating. I took up my pen at 8 and laid it down at 10. I took up the file at 7.30. It took me half an hour reading and rearranging the matter from Hardikar, drawing out the substance of Raja's writing and trimming the one<sup>1</sup> regarding the Madurai judge.

Narandas does need some public figure. Whom may we send? Can you think of somebody? How about Kaka, Jajuji, Kumarappa, Lakshmidas, Malkani? What about Bapa? Have you any woman in view? I would send no one but Mira if she were well.

Blessings from  
BAPU

[PS.]

Post the letter to Magan by air mail.<sup>2</sup>

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 11486

540. LETTER TO BRIJKRISHNA CHANDIWALA

September 28, 1936

CHI. BRAJKRISHNA,

You must have received my letter<sup>3</sup> about Deka. I am all right. Amtul Salaam is not here. She stayed for two or three days at Maganwadi but never at Segaon. She is now in Bombay. I had already read about your mother in your letter to Mahadev and I hope she is now better. How is your health?

I suppose you get my letters regularly.

Blessings from  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 2443

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Remnant of Barbarism", 3-10-1936

<sup>2</sup> The letter to Maganlal P. Mehta, however, is not traceable.

<sup>3</sup> *Vide* "Letter to Brijkrishna Chandiwala", 23-9-1936

541. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
*September 29, 1936*

MY DEAR IDIOT,

Your two letters at the same time.

Khan Saheb is delighted that you are giving all that attention to the girls.

You should yield to Shummy now and take what meat he wants you to. There will be grace in your yielding now. There will be little or none if you yield when you are driven to it. And there will be no restraint possible. That you took very little meat when you did is no argument to prove that it will produce no effect in your case. Since you have no religious objection, I would like you to listen to me and straightway tell Shummy to prescribe what he likes. You must get rid of the eczema before you begin to move about.

I see that you can't come to me in December. Let us see what is possible in January and February. Of course you are to be in Faizpur at the time of the Congress if you are able to go to Ahmedabad. When do you descend to Jullundur?

The idea of building a separate cottage for yourself in Simla is a chimera. If you had one, you would be torn to pieces. You are physically unfit to have an eternal round of guests. Mira is free from fever but is not herself still. But she will be quite well in a few days. I am getting stronger though slowly.

You will persevere with the hip-baths and try the sitzbath too. I have described the latter to you. Sit on a stool with the legs outside the water which should be level with the stool and then gently wash the genitals with a smooth towel. It is supposed to work wonders. You should take this separately.

Love.

TYRANT

From the original: C.W. 3745. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 6901

542. *LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI*

*September 29, 1936*

CHI. NARANDAS,

I know nothing about my birthday. I see it only as the Charkha Jayanti. The reason why you take an interest in observing the day is not that you are my kinsman but so that the charkha which is as dear to you as it is to me may gain impetus in your vicinity. In the sluggish atmosphere that prevails today this is an arduous, maybe even a rather dreary task. But faith can make a difficult task easy and a dreary task interesting. May your faith make the people around you see the power of the charkha.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II. Also C.W. 8507. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

543. *LETTER TO J.P. BHANSALI*

*September 29, 1936*

CHI. BHANSALI,

It is very good indeed that following Mahadev's advice you gave up the idea of coming to me and hiding yourself as in a cave. Your cave is there. Listen to another bit of advice. For the boil in your arm-pit, perhaps plain earth will not suffice. You should let ordinary poultice be applied to it. I see no reason why it should not mature.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

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

544. *LETTER TO PURUSHOTTAM K. JERAJANI*

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
*September 29, 1936*

BHAI KAKUBHAI,

You have given me good news. Samples of the exercise books

are good. It will be all to the good if people do not forget khadi.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C. W. 10838. Courtesy: Purushottam K. Jerajani

### 545. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

SEGAON, WARDHA  
*September 30, 1936*

CHI. AMTUL SALAAM,

Your letter is full of fancies. You listen neither to your brothers nor to me. Why a cottage? Why a visit of Ooty? You ought to improve your health in Bomaby. One's mother's home is the true cottage. I would have to hang my head if Dr. Shah did for money what he would not do on the strength of my letter. I advise you to accept his treatment and understand that he does what he thinks right. After the nose has been attended to, you may certainly take homoeopathic treatment if you want to.

Your Urdu letters have certainly not gone astray. I have of course replied to them. Mehrtaj will pursue her studies at Vakil's school there. Lali has gone to the High School at Panchgani. All will go well if you keep up your patience. The Rajkot climate is good if you should choose to go there. Balkrishna, who is staying there for the present, finds it good. I went through your letter myself.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 353

### 546. LETTER TO LILAVATI ASAR

*September 30, 1936*

CHI. LILA,

There is no end to your *lila*<sup>1</sup>. Yesterday you wrote, "We shall talk it out when we meet," and today you write to me that there is no letter from me. And what a bad hand you have written! It is all right if

<sup>1</sup> Play, sport, especially of God

you do not go to Rajkot just now. Go there when we go to Kashi and from Rajkot join us at Ahmedabad when we leave the place. Isn't that what you want?

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 11487

*547. LETTER TO MUNNALAL G. SHAH*

[About *September 1936*]<sup>1</sup>

CHI. MUNNALAL,

I cannot understand why there was no news yesterday.

Hearty congratulations to both of you for the termination of mutual non-co-operation. This news has removed a heavy burden of anxiety from my head. Let the co-operation grow from day to day. I hope to get much work from both of you.

I will inquire from the doctor why he did not come yesterday.

More kudos to Balwant Singh for progress in the production of butter. It is one more step forward that Prahlad, Govind and Rajaram have started taking butter-milk there. Everything will be all right if we hold our patience. I will inquire if anyone needs butter-milk here. I will procure the *Ramayana* for you. You need not try to secure it. Now I know that letters and newspapers were sent from Maganwadi yesterday also but they could not be forwarded from the bungalow. It would be better if someone brought them here. It seems necessary to spend some money over this arrangement. Now it is exactly five o'clock. Neither Sadashiv nor Prahlad has arrived. Sadashiv has already taken letters, and newspapers from Maganwadi.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G. N. 8595

<sup>1</sup> From the contents, it is evident that the letter was written about this time; *vide* "Letter to Munnalal G. Shah", 9-9-1936

548. *LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR*

SEGAON, WARDHA,

*October 1, 1936*

MY DEAR IDIOT,

I was glad to have your little note saying the toothache was over. I shall anxiously await the Dentist's report.

The unbreakable thermos has arrived after all. Let us see when that too shares the fate of the others.

More than half the apples were quite uneatable. Evidently they have now become too delicate for transport. Is there any fun in wasting money like that? Why not put to my credit all the money you thus save. It may then be used for buying good fruit as and when needed. That is a sporting offer that should appeal even to an idiot !!!

I dare not give you more time just now as I have to attend to Nanavati<sup>1</sup> who is laid up with fever whose kind I do not yet know.

Love

ROBBER

From the original: C.W. 3746. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 6902

549. *LETTER TO PREMABEHN KANTAK*

*October 1, 1936*

CHI. PREMA,

I have both your letters. Yesterday I got your last letter. Day before yesterday I had to write 'no' to Achyut Patwardhan. Narandas had invited me for Rentiya Baras.<sup>2</sup> But I could not accept it. Would you then wish me to make an exception in your case? You must understand that from the point of view of our ideals it is good for Khan Saheb to refrain, for the present, from going out for public speeches, etc. Slowly we are getting to know each other. Am I then relieved?

<sup>1</sup> Amritlal Nanavati

<sup>2</sup> Gandhiji's birthday according to the Vikram calendar

I will be able to answer your earlier letter only at leisure. At the moment I have too much work.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

[PS.]

Try to find some women worker; persuade Khurshedbehn.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3788

*550. LETTER TO F. MARY BARR*

*October 1, 1936*

CHI. MARY,

Just before retiring, this is merely to acknowledge your two love letters giving me very cheerful titbits.

My love to you both.

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 6068. Also C.W. 3398. Courtesy: F. Mary Barr

*551. LETTER TO MAHADEV DESAI*

[Before *October 2, 1936*]<sup>1</sup>

CHI. MAHADEV,

I didn't at all like your returning after having arrived so late in the day. However, I did not have the courage to insist on your staying over, with the result that both of you were quite exhausted and reached at 11 in the night. I would not wish to ask anyone to stop over and sleep for the night in this weather. Nanavati's fever persists. It is not malaria; it may be typhoid. There is no need to send a doctor from there; I hope to cope with it.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 11497

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Letter to Mahadev Desai", 2-10-1936



552. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
October 2, 1936

CHI. AMTUL SALAAM,

I am replying to your letter as soon as I have got it. I enclose a letter<sup>1</sup> also to Vadud<sup>2</sup>, from which you will see what my advice is in the matter. I do not write more as I am in a hurry. You should act thoughtfully in your interest. You have a number of ailments. The trouble with your nails requires immediate care. It is better to follow Dr. Shah's advice regarding your nose. If, however, you wish to undergo homoeopathic treatment, take that too there. There are many doctors in Ahmedabad and also in Rajkot, no doubt. I would suggest Rajkot if you definitely do not like Wardha. At Rajkot you will be happy and have peace of mind. The question that always troubles me is how to bring you peace and happiness.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 354

553. LETTER TO LILAVATI ASAR

October 2, 1936

CHI. LILA,

You have seen how from being Lilavati you have become Lila. Now before you become Lili I have to be worthy of it. If I were, I would not have to argue with you. It is difficult to become a kinsman without being a blood relation. About paper you may do as you think fit.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 9582. Also C.W. 6564. Courtesy:  
Lilavati Asar

<sup>1</sup> The letter is not traceable.

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

554. LETTER TO MAHADEV DESAI

SEGAON,  
October 2, 1936

CHI. MAHADEV,

You may bring in a doctor, if you wish, to put your mind at rest. It would be good if Amtul's letter goes today. The rest when you come. At present Rajendra Babu and others have gathered here. Nanavati is still not free from fever but he is cheerful.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 11489

555. LETTER TO MAHADEV DESAI

October 2, 1936

CHI. MAHADEV,

Did you find the Kavishar judgment in the *Times*? Do they send newspapers to Navin?—*Harijan*, *Harijanbandhu* and *The Hindustan Times*? I think Kanti too has asked for them.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 11490

556. REMNANT OF BARBARISM

We know by painful experience of what is daily happening in India that there are husbands enough who regard their wives as their property like their cattle or household furniture, and therefore think they have the right to beat them as they would their cattle. But I was unprepared for a judicial endorsement of the brutal habit till a friend put into my hands a newspaper cutting reporting a decision of the Sessions Judge of Madura recognizing the legal right of a husband of beating his wife. Fortunately an English Judge on going through the calendar detected this extraordinary Judgment of the Madura Sessions Judge and issued notice to the accused husband to show cause. In due course the case was heard by Justices Pandurang Row and K. S.

Menon, whose judgement<sup>1</sup> I make apology for quoting below:

... It is perhaps enough to say that though the learned Judge may be entitled to have his own views on the subject in a private capacity, yet he was not justified in laying down the law in this manner from his seat on the Bench declaring that the husband has the right of punishing his wife by beating her for impudence or impertinence. No such right is recognized by the Indian Penal Code and wife-beating is not one of the exceptions in the chapter of 'General Exceptions'.

One can easily imagine the serious consequences of such a declaration being made from the Bench by a Sessions Judge unless the declaration is declared to be wrong and unfounded by this court. That is the reason why we thought it necessary to state in unmistakable terms that the learned Sessions Judge's declaration of the rights of husbands in this regard has no foundation, so that no one may rely upon that in future as any justification or excuse for beating wives.

It has to be confessed with shame that even educated husbands are not free from the belief in the right of husbands to treat their wives as chattels and beat them whenever they feel the impulse to do so. Would that this judgment would show them that such treatment of wives is a remnant of barbarism.

*Harijan*, 3-10-1936

### 557. TEACHING OF HINDUISM

Referring to my recent articles<sup>2</sup> on the English peace movement led by Canon Sheppard, a friend writes:

I hold the view that independently of the context of the *Gita* and the preliminary conversation between Arjuna and Shri Krishna, Hinduism does not stand decisively for non-violence in regard to organized invasion. It would be straining too much to interpret all out best scriptures in this way. Hinduism no doubt holds the spirit of compassion and love as the very highest duty for man.

But it does not preach what you or the pacifists preach, and it is no good straining everything into an allegory for this object.

<sup>1</sup> Of which only extracts are reproduced here.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "God of Love, Not War", 5-9-1936 and "The Law of Our Being", 26-9-1936

I have admitted in my introduction<sup>1</sup> to the *Gita* known as *Anasaktiyoga* that it is not a treatise on non-violence nor was it written to condemn war. Hinduism as it is practised today, or has even been known to have ever been practised, has certainly not condemned war as I do. What, however, I have done is to put a new but natural and logical interpretation upon the whole teaching of the *Gita* and the spirit of Hinduism. Hinduism, not to speak of other religions, is ever evolving. It has no one scripture like the Quran or the Bible. Its scriptures are also evolving and suffering addition. The *Gita* itself is an instance in point. It has given a new meaning to karma, sannyasa, *yajna*, etc. It has breathed new life into Hinduism. It has given an original rule of conduct. Not that what the *Gita* has given was not implied in the previous writings, but the *Gita* put these implications in a concrete shape. I have endeavoured in the light of a prayerful study of the other faiths of the world and, what is more, in the light of my own experiences in trying to live the teaching of Hinduism as interpreted in the *Gita*, to give an extended but in no way strained meaning to Hinduism, not as buried in its ample scriptures, but as a living faith speaking like a mother to her aching child. What I have done is perfectly historical. I have followed in the footsteps of our forefathers. At one time they sacrificed animals to propitiate angry gods. Their descendants, but our less remote ancestors, read a different meaning into the word 'sacrifice' and they taught that sacrifice was meant to be of our baser self, to please not angry gods but the one living God within. I hold that the logical outcome of the teaching of the *Gita* is decidedly for peace at the price of life itself. It is the highest aspiration of the human species.

The *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana*, the two books that millions of Hindus know and regard as their guides, are undoubtedly allegories as the internal evidence shows. That they most probably deal with historical figures does not affect my proposition. Each epic describes the eternal duel that goes on between the forces of darkness and of light. Anyway, I must disclaim any intention of straining the meaning of Hinduism or the *Gita* to suit any preconceived notions of mine. My notions were an outcome of a study of the *Gita*, *Ramayana*, *Mahabharata*, Upanishads, etc.

*Harijan*, 3-10-1936

<sup>1</sup> Vide "Letter to Narandas Gandhi", 23-5-1935

## 558. *HEADING FOR PROMISCUITY*

Thus writes a young man:

You want everyone to become moral in order to change the world. I do not exactly know what you mean by morality-whether you confine it to matters sexual, or whether it covers the whole field of human conduct. I suspect the former, because I do not see you pointing out to your capitalist and landlord friends the great injustice and harm they are doing by making huge profits at the expense of labourers and tenants, while you are never tired of castigating young men and women for their moral lapses in sexual matters and upholding before them the virtues of celibacy. You claim to know the mind of Indian youth. I do not claim to represent anybody, but as a solitary young man I beg to challenge your claim. You do not seem to know through what environment the modern middle-class youth is passing, what with long spells of unemployment, crushing social customs and traditions, and temptations of co-education! It is all a conflict between the old and the new ideas, resulting usually in the defect and misery of youth. I humbly request you to be kind and compassionate to the youth and not to judge them by your puritanic standards of morality. After all, I think every act, when it is performed with mutual consent and mutual love, is moral whether it is performed within marriage or without. Since the invention of contraceptives the sexual basis of the institution of marriage has been knocked down. It has now become an institution mainly for the protection and welfare of children. You will, perhaps, be shocked at these ideas. I would here venture to ask you not to forget your own youth when judging the present-day youth. You were an over-sexed individual given to excessive indulgence, which seems to have created in you a sort of disgust towards the sexual act and hence your asceticism and the idea of sin. Compared to you, I think many young men of today are better in this respect.

This is from a typical letter. To my knowledge the writer has gone through several changes even during the past three months that I have known him. He is still passing through a crisis. The extract quoted is from a long letter which together with many of his other writings he would gladly have me publish. But what I have quoted just represents the attitude of many a youth.

Of course my sympathies are with young men and young women. I have a vivid recollection of the days of my own youth. And it is because of my faith in the youth of the country that I am never tired of dealing with problems that face them.

For me morals, ethics and religion are convertible terms. A moral life without reference to religion is like a house built upon

sand. And religion divorced from morality is like 'sounding brass' good only for making a noise and breaking heads. Morality includes truth, ahimsa and continence. Every virtue that mankind has ever practised is referable to and derived from these three fundamental virtues. Non-violence and continence are again derivable from Truth, which for me is God.

Without continence a man or woman is undone. To have no control over the senses is like sailing in a rudderless ship bound to break to pieces on coming in contact with the very first rock. Hence my constant insistence on continence. My correspondent is right in saying in effect that the coming in of contraceptives has changed the ideas about sexual relations. If mutual consent makes a sexual act moral whether within marriage or without, and by parity of reasoning even between members of the same sex, the whole basis of sexual morality is gone and nothing but 'misery and defeat' awaits the youth of the country. Many young men and women are to be found in India who would be glad to be free from the craving for mutual intercourse in whose grip they find themselves. This craving is stronger than the strongest intoxicant which has ever enslaved man. It is futile to hope that the use of contraceptives will be restricted to the mere regulation of progeny. There is hope for a decent life only so long as the sexual act is definitely related to the conception of precious life. This rules out of court perverted sexuality and to a lesser degree promiscuity. Divorce of the sexual act from its natural consequence must lead to hideous promiscuity and condonation, if not endorsement, of unnatural vice.

Since my own experiences are relevant to the consideration of the sex problem, let me just warn the reader who has not read my autobiographical chapters against drawing the conclusion that my correspondent has drawn about my sins of indulgence. Whatever over-indulgence there was with me, it was strictly restricted to my wife. And I was living in a big joint family where there was hardly any privacy except for a few hours at night. I awoke to the folly of indulgence for the sake of it even when I was twenty-three years old, and decided upon total *brahmacharya* in 1899,<sup>1</sup> i.e., when I was thirty years old. It is wrong to call me an ascetic. The ideals that regulate my life are presented for acceptance by mankind in general. I have arrived at

<sup>1</sup> However, Gandhiji actually, took the vow in 1906; vide "An Autobiography" sub-title "Brahmacharya-I"

them by gradual evolution. Every step was thought out, well-considered, and taken with the greatest deliberation. Both my continence and non-violence were derived from personal experience and became necessary in response to the calls of public duty. The isolated life I had to lead in South Africa whether as a householder, legal practitioner, social reformer or politician, required, for the due fulfilment of these duties, the strictest regulation of sexual life and a rigid practice of non-violence and truth in human relations, whether with my own countrymen or with the Europeans. I claim to be no more than an average man with less than average ability. Nor can I claim any special merit for such non-violence or continence as I have been able to reach with laborious research. I have not the shadow of a doubt that any man or woman can achieve what I have, if he or she would make the same effort and cultivate the same hope and faith. Work without faith is like an attempt to reach the bottom of a bottomless pit.

*Harijan*, 3-10-1936

### 559. *LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR*

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
*October 3, 1936*

MY DEAR IDIOT,

I was delighted to hear that you were examined by Dr. Deshmukh even though it was after daylight. Let us hope you will profit by his prescription.

S[hummy]'s antipathy to nature-cure is either a simple pose or simply due to prejudice born of ignorance. Ansari always appreciated it.

How I would love to have you with me even in your bad health and nurse you to good health! But you must not be impatient. No one can get out of his or her limitations whether external or internal without patient and persistent striving.

I fear your fretting over this eczema is due to the temporary disfigurement. What vanity, if my surmise is right. You will certainly have to come to me to shed it. And here at least you won't be conscious of the spots or any such thing. Here you won't have the society of your peers. Anyway this continual brooding over the

ailment worries me. I want you to be above it. Can you do it? Make a brave effort and forget the wretched thing.

Of course, when I say nothing about myself you should know that I am well. But I have a sick companion to nurse. He is Nanavati—a first-class worker and good singer. He was in chagre of the kitchen in Maganwadi. He seems to have a mild attack of typhoid. He is simply on orange juice or honey and hot water. He has hip-baths and enema daily. He is keeping up his strength and is quite cheerful. I expect he will be free in seven days. This is the fifth day. As you know, I love nursing. It is no strain on me. Pyarelal is in charge of the kitchen. He is a sleepless giant.

Sardar is due here today.

Love.

TYRANT

From the original: C.W. 3747. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 6903

### 560. *LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM*

*October 3, 1936*

CHI. AMTUL SALAAM

Yesterday I wrote to you in a great hurry. Today also I am in a hurry. Nanavati, beset by fever, lies in bed before me. I have wrapped him in a wet sheet. I would not approve of your going to Trivandrum for improving your health. The climate there cannot be said to be good. Nor would the food there quite agree with you, and an expert doctor may not be readily available. The place, moreover, is so far away for you that you should go there only after improving your health. I have no objection to your going there to meet Saraswati after you have recovered. I have already told you what you should do. As for Kanti, he always has my blessings.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 355



561. LETTER TO MAHADEV DESAI

October 3, 1936

CHI. MAHADEV,

I am sending with this some telegrams. Any news of Sardar?

Motihari perhaps has no telegraph office.

I am sending the letters also.

I will send away Jawahar from here at 10 o'clock since on account of illnesses here I shall not be in a position to provide meals to anybody tomorrow. You will of course be arriving here tomorrow. I proceed on the assumption that Sardar will certainly reach this afternoon.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

[PS.]

Ask Kumarappa or Bharatan to read the telegrams so that no mistake is left. Kanu should despatch the telegrams, post the letters and make the required copies, if Mahadev is already on his way here.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 11491

562. LETTER TO DEVDAS GANDHI

October 3, 1936

CHI. DEVDAS,

I see your pain in Ba's letter.<sup>1</sup> I was already aware of hers. But what is unavoidable you should not worry over<sup>2</sup>. Besides, no one can say what part, knowingly or unknowingly, I or we both parents might have played in Harilal's fall, and to what extent. The saying 'the quality is in the seed' contains a whole Shastra. There is a similar proverb in Gujarati, "As the banyan so its fruit, as the father so the son." When such thoughts occur, I don't feel like finding fault with Harilal. What is the use of being angry with myself? I know how lustful I was then. I do not know anything else. But who can

<sup>1</sup> To Harilal Gandhi

<sup>2</sup> Reference to *Bhagavad Gita*, II. 27

understand the inscrutable ways of God? We can only deduce principles from well-known illustrations.

Let me know if you have received any comments on Ba's letter whether through public or private correspondence.

How are you? Are you making any progress?

How is Lakshmi? Is Ba happy? Or is she annoyed? How is Manudi?

Kanti has plunged into his studies.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 2037

### 563. LETTER TO KASTURBA GANDHI

*October 3, 1936*

BA,

There has been no letter from you lately. Have you been ill? If so I hope you are recovered by now. Mirabehn is better. She is of course weak. She has no fever. Nanavati, who has some fever still, is likely to be free from it in a couple of days.

I read your letter in the newspaper. What made you write it? Your letter has prompted an Englishwoman to write to you. Understand the letter with the help of Devdas and ask him to write her a reply. Lilavati comes here from time to time with Mahadev. Things are going on fairly well.

All of you there, I expect, are now all right.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 2038

### 564. LETTER TO PRABHAVATI

*October 3, 1936*

CHI. PRABHA,

Your letter brings tears to my eyes. On the one hand, I think that what you say about milk and fruit is true, while on the other hand, we cannot afford your falling ill for want of that kind of food. What is

more, any saving thus effected would be spent in paying the expenses of the doctor and the medicines in case you fell ill. So difficult is dharma. It is not proper for me to send you the extra money nor proper for you thus to take more milk and fruit. I must keep my peace having said that you should, if somehow it is possible, take more milk and fruit. God will protect you. Who am I to worry on your account?

You are quite right in saying that you do everything after consulting me. You are also right in saying that you do it in obedience to my command. If your dharma to do what you have been doing is clear to me, how can I give you an order to the contrary? And, how can I arrange to pay you Rs. 25 as long as you remain occupied with your own family? Hence, I have decided to obtain another Rs. 25 also for Jayaprakash and have even given instructions to send it. You should of course take full rest, and also do a little walking. I expect you are not taking oils and spices, and that you take whole-wheat flour. What leafy vegetable can you get? Is the jaggery that you get good?

I have written to you about myself earlier. I am on milk, fruit and vegetables. I have not started taking chapatis for fear of fever. I have not been weighed recently, as the necessary arrangements do not yet exist. Ba is still with Devdas, and Manu too.

What else would I tell Father about you? He praised your nature and was pleased with you. Yes, I shall reach Kashi<sup>1</sup> on the 24th and leave it on the 26th for Rajkot. After paying my respects to Narandas's parents, I shall go to Ahmedabad and after staying there for three days, to Segaon. You aren't likely to come to Kashi, are you?

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3483

<sup>1</sup> Gandhiji was to open there a Bharat Mata Mandir at the invitation of Shivprasad Gupta.

565. LETTER TO LILAVATI ASAR

October 3, 1936

CHI. LILA,

It seems you expect a letter from me every day since I have got you into the habit. I never said that I would write to you daily. It just happened that I did so because I wanted to comfort you. Do you still need that support?

Blessings from  
BAPU

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

566. TALK WITH JAWAHARLAL NEHRU<sup>1</sup>

[October 3, 1936]<sup>2</sup>

That is why we have made you the King Canute so that you may do it better than others<sup>3</sup>.

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU: But is there no better way? Must you do all these things yourself?

Who else is to do it? If you go the village nearby, you will find that out of 600 people there 300 are ill. Are they all to go to the hospital? We have to learn to treat ourselves. We are suffering for our own sins. You must have seen in the series of articles Pyarelal has written on the water problem in Bengal that we have brought on all the diseases like malaria, cholera, and the rest ourselves. How are we to teach these poor villagers except by personal example?

*Harijan*, 10-10-1936

<sup>1</sup> Extracted from Mahadev Desai's "Weekly Letter"

<sup>2</sup> Mahadev Desai mentions in his "Weekly Letter" published in *Harijan*, 17-10-1936, that Jawaharlal Nehru along with Sardar Patel visited Segaoon on this date.

<sup>3</sup> Nehru had compared Gandhiji's insistence on nursing the patients himself to that of King Canute's attempt to stop the tides.

567. TALK WITH AMRITLAL T. NANAVATI<sup>1</sup>

[After October 3, 1936]<sup>2</sup>

If you feel like going because you think it would please your parents better if you were in the hospital or under Kakasaheb's roof, you should certainly go. I can ask for a stretcher at once and have you shifted. But if you think of going out of consideration for me, let me tell you that you will be untrue to me. No son would think of leaving his father out of consideration for him. The father himself would feel deeply hurt if he whispered a suggestion of that kind. And no consideration is needed. I can get any amount of help here, I know that I can nurse you back to health as clearly as I knew that I should nurse Ba back to health when she was at death's door in South Africa,<sup>3</sup> or as clearly as I knew that I should pull my son Manilal through his enteric which lasted for 42 days.<sup>4</sup> The doctors in both cases gave me grave warnings and said the responsibility for their deaths would be mine. But I was as ready to sacrifice them as I was anxious to save them and careful to nurse them. Well, God tried my faith, but He also gave me the strength to stand the trial. I may tell you, as you are a brave man, that I am not afraid to lose you, if it should come to it, but I know that I am doing all that is needed to pull you through. If, therefore, you will decide to leave me out of pity for me, you will be untrue to me and to yourself. I am making this so clear to you because we are satyagrahis, we have to weigh the motives and springs of action of everything that we do, and we should deceive neither ourselves nor others.

Nanavati had no difficulty about answering: "I am thinking of going only because of you. I feel that I should not be the source of so much worry to you. Otherwise I know that nowhere else in the world am I going to get better nursing and more loving attention". And he elected to stay.

*Harijan*, 17-10-1936

<sup>1</sup> In his "Weekly Letter" Mahadev Desai introduces this as follows: "[Amritlal Nanavati's] condition has been apparently giving us all some anxiety, and Kakasaheb and I and other friends thought that he should be removed to the hospital, both in order to relieve the congestion and lighten Gandhiji's task and anxiety as also to place the patient within reach of medical treatment. When we went with the proposal Gandhiji was perfectly agreeable to his removal but he insisted on making one or two things clear."

<sup>2</sup> As reported by Mahadev Desai

<sup>3</sup> *Vide* "An Autobiography", sub- title " Kasturbai's Courage"

<sup>4</sup> *Vide* "An Autobiography", sub- title "Settled in Bombay"

## 568. LETTER TO KANTILAL GANDHI

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
October 4, 1936

CHI. KANTI,

Your letter reached Wardha yesterday evening and came to my hand this morning. You must have received the telegram I immediately sent just for the peace of your mind even though it is Sunday.

I shall not write at length as I am sitting between two sick-beds. Balwantsinha and Nanavati are in the grip of fever.

You are in a painful situation from which you will no doubt free yourself. Have patience and courage. You should refuse politely but firmly to see her, saying that you have orders from me. I am writing<sup>1</sup> to her also not to see you at all and not to annoy you. For fear of the nuisance she may cause you, you do not have to go to Ahmedabad where too she is likely to follow you. I have myself suggested to her that she might go to Ahmedabad or to Rajkot. I have told her not to go to Trivandrum while she is unwell.<sup>2</sup> Even if she follows you everywhere, you will be free from her only be refusing to see her.

However, if you otherwise like the idea of going to Ahmedabad you may by all means go. You may stay with Maganbhai and Diwan and Ballubhai will welcome you [to their school]. Devdas will pay the fees. I only want you to pursue your studies in peace, without any obstacle. I shall see that you do not have to suffer annoyance from Amtul Salaam. Write to me from time to time. Take no step in a hurry.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: C.W. 7307. Courtesy: Kantilal Gandhi

## 569. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

October 4, 1936

CHI. AMTUL SALAAM,

I have today a very painful letter from Kanti. He says that you do not leave him alone and waste his time talking for hours about

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

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "Letter to Amtussalaam", 3-10-1936

useless things though he has not a minute to spare. I had told you specifically that you might see Kanti only if he wished it. I have forbidden Kanti to see you, and I am forbidding you also to see him. Kanti's future will take care of itself; you may not bother about him. Just get well as early as possible.

Tell me in your letter that you will not see him any more. Write to me whatever you want to say to him. You must have got my letter of yesterday.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 356

### 570. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
*October 5, 1936*

MY DEAR IDIOT,

Two baskets with apples and one containing honey have arrived, also the two glasses.

I do hope Deshmukh will see you again.

Of course I am not going to strive with you any more about meat. I do want to respect your scruples.

I await your experience of the S.A. Delegation<sup>1</sup>.

Don't expect long letters from me just now. I have two serious cases and now Mira is down again. She does not know how to regulate her diet. Who does? Idiots may.

Love.

ROBBER

From the original: C.W. 3595. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 6404

<sup>1</sup> South African Delegation; *vide* "Letter to Purushottamdas Thakurdas", 13-9-1936

*571. LETTER TO J. H. HOFMEYER*

*October 5, 1936*

DEAR MR. HOFMEYER,

It was a great pleasure to receive your warm letter.<sup>1</sup> I do hope you are having a profitable time in this land and that you find the people you meet to be hospitable.

It will be a matter of regret to me that although you have so many friends in India, we may not meet at all.

You may be interested to know that the paper I am writing on is hand-made written with a village reed pen. You ought not to leave India without seeing some typical villages. Of course it is foolish of me to expect you to visit Wardha and Segaoon and glance at the humble effort we are making.

With kind regards to you and fellow members.

*Yours sincerely,*  
M. K. GANDHI

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

*572. LETTER TO MAHADEV DESAI*

*October 5, 1936*

CHI. MAHADEV,

I am sending whatever could be got ready. My article is still unfinished, and I must detain Kanu for an hour more if I wish to complete it. I shall, therefore, send it with somebody who may happen to come or with a special messenger tomorrow morning or this evening. Amidst patients I am carrying on as best as I can for the day. Workers from Kathiawar may be invited if Sardar gives 12th/13th to Narandas. Intimate to him whatever Sardar wishes.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Letter to Purushottamdas Thakurdas", 13-9-1936



[PS.]

Somebody will be going there as I shall of course have some post to send.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 11494

*573. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI*

*October 5, 1936*

CHI. NARANDAS,

You should not expect any letter from me for some time now. Mira and Nanavati have been seriously ill. I have to spend the whole day in nursing them. Jamna<sup>1</sup> too should not expect a letter from me.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II. Also C.W. 8508. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

*574. LETTER TO CHHAGANLAL JOSHI*

*October 5, 1936*

CHI. CHHAGANLAL,

I got your explanation concerning Jaisukhlal. I am completely satisfied. I have received complaints against you from many sources. I have however not believed most of them. Those that I believed I have discussed with you. I shall send your letter to Jaisukhlal.<sup>2</sup>

I have received a long reply from Chandulal. Reply to his letter directly. Or better still, send your letter to me so as to avoid the necessity of making a copy.

It seems certain now that we shall be meeting, although I should like to run away on the very same day that I arrive there.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 5541

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

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "Letter to Jaisukhlal Gandhi", 6-10-1936

575. LETTER TO MAHADEV DESAI

[October 5, 1936]<sup>1</sup>

CHI. MAHADEV,

Just as I was about to send with Prahlad all the accompanying matter having finished it all, I got your gun-shot; but it has misfired. I had a hearty laugh when I read your message. Nowadays we don't have any occasions to laugh. I had no idea that my Note<sup>2</sup> contained any criticism of you. Even when Mirabehn drew my attention to it I told her, "What can Mahadev do?" Cancel my Note and send in yours. Why should I have to insist on anything? For my part I can manage even if nothing is issued. A similar mistake has occurred in the current number too, which I am not at all going to correct. I have in me a far greater strength to let such things pass than you might imagine. However, you are after all a poet and that too with a sensitive skin; so you are easily upset. Where can I have the remedy for this? It would have been enough, had you only asked, 'How if we draft the Note like this?' Why did you have to make an issue of it? But that is that. "Old habits die hard." It is useless to plead on Lilavati's behalf. Her coming up here has crowned her faults. However, why didn't she promptly take charge of him<sup>3</sup> when he fell ill? The fact is she is crushed under the weight of sympathy she gets.

Look here, don't you take offence again. If I haven't said the right thing you should correct me but never feel hurt.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

[PS.]

I am sending McArrison's speech, which may be included as it is after deleting the first paragraph.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 11492

<sup>1</sup> Vide "Letter to Mahadev Desai", 5-10-1936; "Letter to Mahadev Desai", 6-10-1936 and "Letter to Lilavati Asar", 6-10-1936

<sup>2</sup> Perhaps this is a reference to "A Correction", 10-10-1936

<sup>3</sup> Prabhu Dayal, *vide* the following item.

## 576. LETTER TO MAHADEV DESAI

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
October 6, 1936

CHI. MAHADEV,

I am sending herewith the letters that I wrote last night. Even today Nanavati's fever has not gone and he is noticeably weak. Balwantsinha has normal temperature. Mirabehn has suffered an attack again and her illness seems to go deeper. She has some kind of a sore on her nipple. She is bed-ridden.

The last blow dealt by Lilavati has hurt me very much. I never thought that she would forget anyone lying ill before her eyes. My impression has been that you encourage her. Why didn't you yourself put her in charge of Prabhu Dayal? Kanu had been keeping a vigil throughout the night. Bhansali happened to visit at 3 in the morning and he then relieved Kanu. This much Kanu told me when I wrote to him and inquired. He also said that she wasted a good deal of your time talking. But I felt she had a number of complaints. You should learn them from her as I don't have the time and am, moreover, as good as dumb. She will not benefit from undeserved pity. Her trouble lies deep within her. She herself says that she has never submitted herself to any rules.

Again my stock of envelopes is exhausted. Why not send me eight packets of them? I have had to send a few letters without envelopes. I need no postcards.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 11493

## 577. LETTER TO S. AMBUJAMMAL

October 6, 1936

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

Your letter. I am getting a regular supply of fruit from you. You must let me know the price. If the fruit is dear I must not have it from you. I must get it from where it is cheap even when it is a gift. I have

<sup>1</sup> This is in Hindi.

three sick-beds just now.

Your argument is both sound and unsound. I would have the hospital in preference to superstition. But there is a middle way—to have intelligent home treatment and then await the result with confidence. Even kings have to die. Thousands die in hospitals. It is all a toss. The key to life is in God's hands. We can but explore His laws and obey them. And I do not expect a time when every villager who wishes can have good hospital treatment. But I do expect a time when he can have at his door competent advice. But even that time is far off.

I hope you are all well.

Love.

BAPU

From the original: Ambujammal Papers. Courtesy: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

*578. LETTER TO NANDALAL BOSE*

*October 6, 1936*

DEAR NANDLAL BABU,

Just a line to thank you for your letter and to tell you I shall be at your disposal on 13th instant. You will please wire to Mahadev when you are coming.

*Yours sincerely,*  
M. K. G.

SHRI NANDLAL BOSE  
C/O RABINDRANATH TAGORE  
6 DWARKANATH TAGORE LANE  
JORASANKO, CALCUTTA

From a photostat: C.W. 9778

*579. LETTER TO GLADYS OWEN*

*October 6, 1936*

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

I was glad to receive your good wishes.

You are a bad woman to have free days just when I am to be away. I leave here on 22nd and do not return till 5th Nov. I am in Kashi on 24th and 25th [October]<sup>2</sup>. Tell me when you can come

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 6193

*580. LETTER TO RAIHANA TYABJI*

*October 6, 1936*

MY DEAR RAIHANA,

Your touching letter. Of course I am with you and Mother. When I received your first letter I could not understand how Mother was reconciled to a mixed union at this stage of our society. I am sure Hamida is too good to resist Ammajan and you. I expect you have seen my letter<sup>3</sup> to her. I am now corresponding with Shankerlal and if necessary with Prabodha. Please keep me informed of developments if any.

Love.

BAPU

From a photostat: S.N. 9650

<sup>1</sup> The addressee was a teacher in the Theosophical Society School, Banaras.

<sup>2</sup> The source has "November".

<sup>3</sup> This is not traceable.

## 581. LETTER TO LILAVATI ASAR

October 6, 1936

CHI. LILA,

Is it any less *lila* that from Lila you have become Lilavati again? What would have been my plight had you become Lili?<sup>1</sup> I like your decision. It was beyond your capacity to remain with me. I hope you will always carry my blessings with you wherever you are. You may certainly stay away from me but don't forget me altogether.

Your reason for leaving me is unusual. What do you ask to be forgiven for? Have you committed any fault? If you have, the proper atonement would be not to abandon me but to cling to me with greater resolve, to conduct yourself in conformity with it and show greater watchfulness. However, a correct decision, though taken for a wrong reason, is always welcome, and this applies to this decision of yours. Consult Mahadev in taking whatever step you may choose to take. Yesterday you could see my anger, but couldn't you see my unbearable pain—couldn't you read my love?

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 9349. Also C.W. 6624. Courtesy: Lilavati Asar

## 582. LETTER TO JAISUKHLAL GANDHI

October 6, 1936

CHI. JAISUKHLAL,

I am enclosing with this the reply to your complaint. For my part, I fully believe Chhaganlal's denial, and my impression is that Narandas too believes it. Anyway he does not support you. Now it remains for you either to prove your charges against him or cleanse your own mind in the matter. Chhaganlal has his faults but, I trust, he is free from the ones you attribute to him.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

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

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Letter to Lilavati Asar", 2-10-1936

583. LETTER TO H. L. SHARMA

October 6, 1936

CHI. SHARMA,

I have two patients on my own hands. They are both having fever. The temperature of one of them has now been below 99° for the last eight days and the other patient is at Simla. What will you do about such patients? Anyway there are many other patients as well. I hope everyone at home is all right.

Blessings from  
BAPU

From a facsimile of the Hindi: *Bapuki Chhayamen Mere Jivanke Solah Varsh*, facing p. 260

584. LETTER TO MAHADEV DESAI

October 6, 1936

CHI. MAHADEV,

Herewith I am sending whatever post I could write as I don't know when I shall be able to finish it. Lilavati's decision is quite correct although she has added insult to injury. She will never be happy with me. She needs to be guided for her future.

It seems the situation here has become very critical. Mirabehn has suffered a severe relapse. Her fever this time looks dangerous. Nanavati too is certainly not well enough. Inwardly he also seems to be losing hope. God's will be done.

The letters include a postcard to Nandalal Bose. It would be good if it goes with late fee paid.

Blessings from  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 11495

## 585. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

SEGAON, WARDHA,

*October 8, 1936*

MY DEAR IDIOT AND REBEL COMBINED,

Your own blank paper returns to you duly filled. The magnifiers are already being used for various purposes examining patients as well as snakes. I have two live specimens again.

Yes, Nanavati is with me—three beds going—Mira, Nanavati and Balwantsingh. The latter is free from fever. The other two cases are obstinate. Fever persists with ups and downs. They all require careful nursing. They are under water treatment and get fruit juices. No cause for anxiety as yet.

Of course there is as much illness in Simla as elsewhere and I was told when I came there for the first time that the place was notorious for venereal diseases. But those who choose can certainly benefit by its mountain air. Therefore if the climate agrees with you, you should stay as long as Shummy wants you to. Village work in Manganwal<sup>1</sup> will take care of itself meanwhile.

When I go to Ahmedabad I shall see what can be done about the women's differences. But I hold out no hope. I know the state of affairs there. From what you tell me it seems that you never received any letter from Mridula<sup>2</sup> in reply to yours. And she told me definitely that she had written to you inviting you to her house.

Khan Saheb says it is enough that the girls seek and like your company. He says he is grateful to you for the open invitation you have given them. He does not want or expect you to give them lessons. Khan Saheb was never ill. I suggested an examination of his teeth and sent him to Nagpur. One tooth was extracted.

Love.

TYRANT

From the original: C.W. 3748. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 6904

<sup>1</sup> A place in the Punjab

<sup>2</sup> Mridula Sarabhai



## 586. LETTER TO LILAVATI ASAR

October 8, 1936

CHI. LILA,

I have your letter. You would be stable if you stayed with Mahadev; going to Nagpur is lack of stability. Therefore you had better stay with him; or at the Mahila Ashram if you can bear with the life there, though I am afraid you will not be able to. Be sure I have not given you up for lost.

*Blessings from*

BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 9350. Also C.W. 6625. Courtesy: Lilavati Asar

## 587. TASK BEFORE HARIJAN SEVAKS

Ever since the inauguration of the Harijan Sevak Sangh, the central organization has been feeding, very properly, the provincial branches. But the time has certainly arrived for the branches to stand on their own and be self-sustained, even though it may be at the sacrifice of part of their programme. The work in each province, and for that matter in each district or taluka, should be an unequivocal demonstration of active *savarna* support. For the chief mission of the Sangh is to touch the *savarna* heart and change it. Supposing the central organization had collected from two or three reformers a crore of rupees, and with it established branches all over India to cover it with schools and hostels for Harijan boys and girls, it would not have hastened the day of the doom of untouchability. For the *savarna* heart would remain as stony as ever. Supposing conversely that without the cost of a single pice, by some stroke of good fortune the *savarna* heart was changed and untouchability became a thing of the past, the whole object of the Sangh would be fulfilled. For in that case every public school, place of worship and other institutions would be open to Harijans precisely on the same terms as to caste Hindus. That day may be far off or much nearer than many people expect. Anyway that is the goal of the Harijan Sevak Sangh and never the opening of separate schools, wells, temples and the like for Harijans and consequent perpetuation of untouchability. At present these things are

undoubtedly done, but they are done only as a means to THE end. They have become necessary because the *savarna* heart is slow to change.

The growing number of reformers must not sit still and make protestations of removal of untouchability from themselves. They must demonstrate that change by their visible conduct. The spending of their purse for the Harijan cause is a tangible proof of the change and therefore an essential part of the programme. But immediately it becomes a corner confined to a few individuals who salve their conscience by liberal donations, it ceases to be a token in the manner indicated by me. Hence it becomes a matter of duty for the Central Board to invite the attention of the branches to this fundamental part of the programme and for the branches to appreciate it and prepare the way to becoming wholly self-reliant. Indeed the burden has been progressively thrown on provincial boards of financing their own institutions. But the time has come for definite and decisive action in the direction.

This change to full self-reliance will never come unless all the workers realize that this is essentially a religious movement. We are a nation spending lavishly for causes which the masses believe to be religious. One has only to go to the places of pilgrimage to have an ocular demonstration of the fact. A study of the history of religious endowments will reveal the tragic story of fortunes being entrusted to them by credulous millions without ever caring to know how they were spent. It is enough for people to believe that they pay their mite to a cause which in their opinion is religious. Harijan workers have a cause that is wholly religious in the best sense of the term. If they have a living faith in it, if they do not move mountains they will at least get from their surroundings enough for the institutions in their charge.

*Harijan*, 10-10-1936

### 588. A CORRECTION

I know that *Harijan* contains almost always printer's errors. It would be tedious, if not even pedantic, to issue corrections every week. In the difficult circumstances under which *Harijan* is being issued, the problem before me is to cease publication or to continue it in spite of mistakes recurring with unflinching regularity. I have chosen the latter course whilst a sufficient number of subscribers tolerate the errors.

But the issue of 26th September contains two howlers in the article headed 'The Law of Our Being' which need correction:

Last para, II. 2-4.

INCORRECT:

"The writes seems to poohpooh the idea of honour derived from individual and national gain."

CORRECT:

"The writer seems to poohpooh the idea of honour devoid of individual and national gain."

Last para, II. 6-7.

INCORRECT:

"There is no question for one of self-destruction, voluntary or otherwise."

CORRECT:

"There is no question for me of self-destruction, voluntary or otherwise."

The errors seem to have originated in Wardha, the typist having misread the manuscript sent from Segaon.

*Harijan*, 10-10-1936

### 589. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
*October 10, 1936*

MY DEAR REBEL,

I have been obliged to neglect you these few days. My only comfort is that the correspondence has been practically suspended—all my time being given to the sick ones. I can't say they are yet on the mend. The temperature is slowly rising daily. There is no danger as yet. But both are very weak. They will be all right if they have enough vitality. Anyway neither they nor I have any anxiety. The C.S.<sup>1</sup> was here today to examine them. They are having only water-cure.

I have just finished your broadcast.<sup>2</sup> Your experience of the village is excellently reproduced. The other part is not well balanced.

<sup>1</sup> Civil Surgeon

<sup>2</sup> To village women

You say “old systems... have perished.” If they have, where is the cause for revival? But you yourself show later that they have at most decayed, not perished.

And then you begin at the wrong end—build roads and houses!! Who can do the thing? Surely sanitation comes first.

We were agreed upon it too!! And *you* began with it. But how should [you] be Idiot, if you remembered such a very simple fact? And then you have not made a sharp division between what people can and should do themselves and what the State can and should. You do not want more than this, do you? And you are in no need of praise. Of that you must have had a surfeit.

If you are only permitted to pass two months with me, I should hope to reconstruct your body. This eczema is certainly a source of anxiety from the medical standpoint. But I do not despair. Of course you won't go to Ahmedabad, if you are not quite fit.

The apples of late have been quite hardy and all in a good condi[tion]. You should tell me what the fruit costs each time and what the railage costs. The honey too came in quite safely. I finished the whole yesterday. It was quite nice.

I have not yet heard from Lionel.

Khan Saheb has all the fruit he can eat. I get apples from you and Ambujam—more than I need—*mosambis* from Bombay and oranges locally.

Love.

TYRANT

[PS.]

Khan Saheb leaves for Delhi on 14th.

From the original: C.W. 3749. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 6905

### 590. LETTER TO DEVDAS GANDHI

*October 10, 1936*

CHI. DEVDAS,

I am glad to learn that the whole line of thought has been Ba's own.<sup>1</sup> She certainly has that power, and the letter is indeed a good one. Dr. Mahmud writes a long letter which I am enclosing. Read it and

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* “Letter to Kasturba Gandhi”, 3-10-1936

tear it up. Am I to understand from the rather long letter you wrote that you can now write fairly well? The two patients take a good deal of my time, which I certainly like to give.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 2035

*591. LETTER TO V. L. MEHTA*

*October 10, 1936*

BHAI VAIKUNTH,

I heard only yesterday that Lallubhai<sup>1</sup> has fallen ill again. Things are bound to be all right where workers like you are available to look after him. I hope he is better now.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

[PS.]

I spoke to Shankerlal about the Agriculture Department.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 1363

*592. LETTER TO PRABHAVATI*

*October 10, 1936*

CHI. PRABHA,

I have your letter. Of course, I do wish you to see me at Kashi, but the wish ought not to conflict with dharma. If you cannot be freed, or if you can be freed but Jayaprakash does not want it, then it would be improper for you to come and my desire that you should would be against dharma. I should be glad if, subject to these two conditions, you could come. I might even wish that you could be by my side at present ! However, the wish would go contrary to dharma as your dharma at present is to do whatever service you can by remaining there. Both Mirabehn and Nanavati are laid up here. Both are very ill. You could be very helpful to me on the present occasion; but how can I entertain such a wish? That way, even Mahadev would prove helpful here. But wishing his presence here is against dharma.

<sup>1</sup> Lallubhai Shamaldas, addressee's father

He has before him the dharma I have assigned to him. Such is the case with the others too. Have you now followed me on the question of wishing? Does God let us fulfil all our wishes?

I have been keeping good health amidst all this work. Such work has remained part of my nature to this day. God has always kept me well while nursing the sick. I hope that this time too it will be so.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3484

### 593. *LETTER TO LILAVATI ASAR*

*October 10, 1936*

CHI. LILAVATI,

Your handwriting, instead of improving steadily, becomes worse. I asked Kanu<sup>1</sup> if you had been nursing Prabhudayal and he said that you had not gone anywhere near him. How is that? Can you find no time to serve a person when he falls ill there? You seem to be spending a lot of your time only in talking. I ask that you quietly apply yourself to the work entrusted to you. I am pained.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

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

### 594. *LETTER TO PRABHUDAYAL VIDYARTHI*

SEGAON,  
*October 10, 1936*

CHI. PRABHUDAYAL,

I have your letter. I was all the time having news of you. Never eat peanuts. When one is weak it is usual to have dreams. You need not worry about it.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 11703

<sup>1</sup> Second son of Narandas Gandhi

## 595. LETTER TO LILAVATI ASAR

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
5 a.m., October 11, 1936

CHI. LILA,

I warn you lest you should prove all my fears right. Do you think you are free from all restraints since you are released from the obligation of coming here? Have you stopped copying out the *slokas*? You do not mean that you will never be able to come here, do you? He who used to play on the *dilruba* is prostrate.<sup>1</sup> Shall I send it to you? Let me have a list also of your other belongings which are here so that I may send them to you, or you may come and collect them. Do as you think fit.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 9351. Also C.W. 6626. Courtesy:  
Lilavati Asar

## 596. LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM

October 11, 1936

CHI. AMTUL SALAAM,

I went through your letter carefully. Stick to your decision. Don't leave Bombay. Ask of me any help you need. Remain cheerful and do everything to recover your health. You may come to Segaon after recovering your health. Three-fourths of the people in this village are Harijans. Those attending on me are Harijans and they are enjoying themselves. You may serve them to your heart's content. Is there anything more that you want? Remember, however, that you will have to go back to Bombay if you fall ill. You are yourself responsible for your falling ill. Have your nails attended to.

You must have got my letter of yesterday regarding Kanti. Kanti, you and I will all be happy if you willingly act on it. If you had been thinking of God as you have been thinking of me you would certainly have got your wish fulfilled. Do it even now. Forget me, forget Kanti and forget Saraswati. Think of God alone. This in no way means that you should abandon me or I should abandon you.

<sup>1</sup> The reference is to Amritlal Nanavati, who was ill.

However, it does mean that you should give up your exaggerated notions of me and trust only God. You will surely have peace and happiness if you do this.

There is sense in weeping for God while remembering Him, but in weeping for a man one only hurts one's eyes. You would stay patiently where you are if you would follow my advice.

Tell Vadud I am not writing to him separately. Even this I am writing after 8 p.m.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 357

### 597. TALK WITH STUDENTS OF MARWADI VIDYALAYA<sup>1</sup>

*October 12, 1936*

Gandhiji asked the students to be worthy of the Principal, Sjt. Aryanayakam, who at the invitation of Jamnalalji had agreed to take charge of the institution. He had a distinguished career at Cambridge and London and later on at Santiniketan, and he has come to Wardha with his wife who is a great Sanskrit scholar and a distinguished graduate of the Banaras University. She has been placed in charge of the Mahila Vidyalaya,<sup>1</sup> also a creation of Jamnalalji. Gandhiji asked the boys to be not only worthy of the Principal, but of Jamnalalji... [He said:]

He had long ago broken the bonds of sect and community and creed, and though the institution owed its existence to donations from Marwadis only—that is what gave it its name—Jamnalalji would not be satisfied until it was thrown open to boys of all castes and creeds. He has no interest until he had found his way to destroy its exclusive character, to throw it open as much to the Harijans as to any other section of Hindus, as much to the Mussalmans as to the Hindus. He has no room in his heart for untouchability, and he had none at all for any feeling that Hinduism is in any way superior to any other religion. He has helped Muslim institutions no less than he has done Hindu ones, and he has several Muslim friends whom he treats as blood-brothers. I would ask you students, Hindus and Muslims, to take a leaf from Jamnalalji's book and to have the same regard for one another's religion that Jamnalalji has, and to treat one another as

<sup>1</sup> Extracted from Mahadev Desai's "Weekly Letter". The Principal and the students came to see Gandhiji on his birthday which according to the Vikram calendar fell on October 12.



blood-brothers. And let me tell you one thing which you may not know, and perhaps many do not know. This passion for removal of untouchability and freedom from communal feeling as well as equal regard for all religions, Jamnalalji does not at all owe to me. It is not possible for anyone to transfer his conviction to another. All one can do is to help another to manifest the conviction which is already in him. But in respect of Jamnalalji, I could not take the credit for having even helped him to arrive at or to manifest those convictions in his life. He had the convictions in him long before he met me and he had lived up to them. It was these inner convictions of his that brought him and me together and made possible the close co-operation in which we have been able to work together for so many years. You children have to be worthy of a man like him.

*Harijan, 24-10-1936*

### 598. *LETTER TO AMTUSSALAAM*

*October 13, 1936*

CHI. AMTUL SALAAM,

I got your letters, but the nursing of patients here leaves me no spare time. Nanavati and Mirabehn have been suffering from typhoid fever; somebody has to keep awake by their side day and night. I can hardly write a letter. By all means do go to Mecca Sharif if you get the required facilities and if your health permits.

If you recover your health somehow, it would indeed be an achievement. I continue to be well enough, though I have not taken my weight. There aren't the means.

I am enclosing a letter to Dr. Jivraj.<sup>1</sup> I am writing regarding Dr. Gilder also.

Do not expect more letters for the present.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 358

<sup>1</sup> The letter is not available.

599. *LETTER TO MAHADEV DESAI*

SEGAON,  
October 13, 1936

CHI. MAHADEV,

When you have already placed your head at my feet, where is the question of forgetting?

I think that the article<sup>1</sup> should go as it is. We had better let him proclaim his dissatisfaction rather than anticipate his argument. There is no harm in letting the article go as it stands, for it is, according to me, a fine thing that the same old argument should have occurred to me involuntarily even today though I had forgotten the subject. Haven't I said before that I have no matter with me? I am certainly not sorry that I can spare no time from amidst the patients. All is well.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

[PS.]

You should derive full satisfaction from the services assigned to you.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 11496

600. *LETTER TO PREMABEHN KANTAK*

SEGAON,  
October 14, 1936

CHI. PREMA,

I got your letter. You are flying high. All right fly. But see that you don't get exhausted and fall.

To my right and left are Mira's and Nanavati's sick-beds. Both are suffering from typhoid.

I have practically stopped attending to correspondence. But you certainly have my blessings for your camp which you have asked for. I hope that being the servant you are, you will go on serving silently and without ostentation and regard service as its own reward.

I don't know anything about my having to go to Bombay. Even

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Ahimsa Conundrums", 17-10-1936

the visit to Ahmedabad has become uncertain now. I cannot leave Mira in her present condition. Nanavati, one may say, is on the road to recovery.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 10385. Also C.W. 6824. Courtesy: Premabehn Katak

*601. MESSAGE TO MILL-OWNERS' AND LABOUR  
ASSOCIATIONS<sup>1</sup>*

[Before *October 15, 1936*]<sup>2</sup>

The Mahatma says he is surrounded by two typhoid fever patients, nevertheless he is prepared to give two hours on October 21. He has to depart for Benares on 22nd if the patients are well enough.

*The Bombay Chronicle, 16-10-1936*

*602. LETTER TO MAHADEV DESAI*

SEGAON,  
*October 16, 1936*

CHI. MAHADEV,

Nobody brought the papers yesterday. I am sending two letters and also the telegrams herewith. Nanavati shows much improvement today; his temperature in the morning was 99°. Mira, too, may be said to have improved; she too had 101° after several days. Lilavati's clothes which I sent with someone must have reached there. Is there anything more left? If so, she should write to me so that I might find it. There is an entirely discoloured and tattered sari with big holes—is it hers? How is Bhansali?

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 11498

<sup>1</sup> The Mill-owners' and Labour Associations had requested Gandhiji to fix a convenient date for hearing the wage-cut question.

<sup>2</sup> The report is date-lined "Ahmedabad, October 15".

### 603. LETTER TO AMRIT KAUR

*October 16, 1936*

MY DEAR IDIOT,

Since I have a free moment. I must utilize it for a few words to you. The patients are doing well, though fever persists. How many villagers can go to hospitals? Both would have gone to the hospital if I had wanted them to. I could not do so without denying my past and the recent article<sup>1</sup> I wrote. So long as God wants me to work on this earth in this body, He will take care of it. Not all the physicians in the world can save me when the hour strikes.

Love.

TYRANT

From the original: C.W. 3596. Courtesy: Amrit Kaur. Also G.N. 6405

### 604. LETTER TO VITHAL L. PHADKE

*October 16, 1936*

CHI. MAMA,

I cannot recall your earlier letter. For the present there is a mountain of letters before me as I lie between two sick-beds. As things stand at present, I am not to stay in Gujarat for more than three days. Sardar has the control of the programme there. You should write to Sardar though at the moment I don't feel like going anywhere. The rest if I find out your letter or if you write again. How should I be able to say at this stage who in Ahmedabad would take how many minutes?

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 3836

### 605. LETTER TO MAHADEV DESAI

*October 16, 1936*

CHI. MAHADEV,

You seem to be deeply immersed in work. The fever still persists though it is slowly subsiding.

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Of My Recent Illness", 19-9-1936

When can I go through the pile of the Sahitya Parishad papers? I am returning it after removing those about the constitution and the Chandravadan matter. If there is anything else that I should read, send it. Send me a copy of my programme. Very probably I shall have to go direct to Rajkot for a day, and from there Sardar may perhaps take me straight to Nadiad and I may reach Ahmedabad on the 30th afternoon or evening. Do mention that my Rajkot visit is only a family visit. From the present trend of things I see that you will be required to stay on at Segaoon. The final programme will be known by Monday.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 11499

### 606. AHIMSA CONUNDRUMS

A college professor and two representatives of a class of fifty students write:<sup>1</sup>

As you are no doubt aware, the Intermediate Prose Text-Book, Pearce and Aryatna's *Models of Comparative Prose*, used in most Intermediate Colleges in India this year, contains a selection about five pages long from your book *The Story of My Experiments with Truth*. The selection is entitled "Ahimsa", and contains your discussion of this most challenging principle and its application to our lives.

The fifty students in my prose class, and I, their instructor, have been spending several class periods studying and discussing the above essay....

At one point, however, both the students and I, their instructor, have been unable clearly to understand the precise nature of your views. I refer to your statement about the conduct of a votary of ahimsa in case of war, particularly the following passage<sup>2</sup>: "When two nations are fighting, the duty of a votary of ahimsa is to stop the war. He who is not equal to that duty, he who has no power of resisting war, he who is not qualified to resist war, may take part in war, and yet whole-heartedly try to free himself, his nation, and the world from War." A little further on (discussing three methods of recourse in case of the European War, for yourself): "... or I could participate in the war

<sup>1</sup> Only extracts are reproduced here.

<sup>2</sup> Vide "An Autobiography", sub-title "Miniature Satyagraha"

on the side of the Empire and thereby acquire the capacity and fitness for resisting the violence of war. I lacked this capacity and fitness, so I thought there was nothing for it but for me to serve in the War.”

We should be deeply and humbly grateful if you would expand and clarify this subject and your past and present views upon it...

I do not know that I need have suppressed the name of the college or the names of the signatories. The learned professor has sent me a stamped envelope for answer. This presumes a personal reply. But I have only limited time at my disposal especially when I am nursing two precious patients. I would not miss my weekly talk with the readers of *Harijan*. I am, therefore, with apologies to my correspondents, combining two purposes to save my time.

The question raised in the letter is of very great importance and has always caused me the greatest difficulty, not much in deciding upon the action to be taken at a given moment but in justifying my conduct in terms of ahimsa. For the same action may outwardly be taken by the believer and the unbeliever. At these times the motive alone decides its quality.

At the time of writing I have neither the text-book nor the original in Gujarati of which the text is a translation. But I have a recollection of what I wrote. What is more, so far as I am aware, my views on ahimsa, as I held them, remain the same today.

The general proposition that I laid down in the quotation was derived from my conduct during the European War. I had thrown myself whole-heartedly into it at the peril of my life—not because of the risks attendant upon serving at such times, but because at the time I was attending drills and camps I was suffering from pleurisy and general weakness as I had hardly regained the strength I had lost during an exhausting fourteen days’ fast I had undertaken two or three months or before the War. I believed then the British Empire to be on the whole a system beneficial to humanity. I had dreamt of one day converting it to methods of peace instead of war for the sake even of its own existence though in another form. But I was fully conscious of my limitations. I was an insignificant atom ineffective for resistance to its general policy. Whether I joined the War or not, I was helplessly party to it, inasmuch as I ate the food protected by the British fleet. I was enjoying personal liberty too under its protection. If, therefore, I helped the War somehow or other, I felt that for me as a votary of ahimsa, it was better to take a direct part in it so as to enable me the

sooner to end War. It is quite possible that all this was argument of the weak and that if I felt that war was an evil, I should have gone away from it even if it meant starvation or a rebel's death. Anyway I did not think so then, nor do I now.

It is wholly beside the argument what my attitude would now be, seeing that I no longer believe in the Empire as on the whole a beneficent power.

To illustrate my answer, let me take another argument from my own life. Even when I was a little urchin my heart and intellect rebelled against untouchability. But being then an insignificant member of the family I acquiesced in their conduct towards Harijans which I should not do now. Needless to say, I could not then have argued out my conduct. My personal belief did not appear to me to be inconsistent with my living in the family.

Indeed life is made of such compromises. Ahimsa, simply because it is purest, unselfish love, often demands such compromises. The conditions are imperative. There should be no self in one's action, no fear, no untruth, and it must be in furtherance of the cause of ahimsa. The compromise must be natural to oneself, not imposed from without.

I should not at all wonder if my answer has given no satisfaction to the professor and his pupils. I must be pardoned for the constant reference to my own actions. The reason is obvious. I am not a well-read man in any sense of the term. All I know of ahimsa is in the first instance derived from my own experiences and experiments carried on in broad daylight in a humble scientific spirit and in the fear of God which is Truth.

*Harijan, 17-10-1936*

### 607. LETTER TO PRABHUDAYAL VIDYARTHI

SEGAON,  
*October 17, 1936*

CHI. PRABHUDAYAL,

You must not eat rice and *dal*. Take only milk and fruit. I am sending six *Mosambis* from here. Eat them. Take milk. It is your duty to get well quickly. Do not take cereals.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 11701

608. *LETTER TO LILAVATI ASAR*

SEGAON,  
October 18, 1936

CHI. LILA

I understand your lamentations. I would have sent for you even today if I could have the courage. However, have patience. When I return from my journey, I shall accommodate you at Segaon. You may also stay at Segaon if I leave Mahadev behind. If both of us go, you may go to Rajkot and join us the day we leave Ahmedabad.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 9583. Also C.W.- 6555 Courtesy:  
Lilavati Asar

609. *LETTER TO RAMESHWARDAS PODDAR*

October 18, 1936

CHI. RAMESHWARDAS,

I like the scheme sent by Parnerkar for the Goseva section at the Exhibition. I think it would be proper for you to shoulder its expense around Rs. 1,300 to Rs. 1,500 if it is not too much for you. Not more than Rs. 5,000 is to be taken from the Congress Committee for the entire exhibition.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 173

610. *LETTER TO SYED MAHMUD*

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
October 19, 1936

MY DEAR MAHMOOD,

Two precious patients have stopped all my usual correspondence. I am writing this under great stress. I have not much to say in defence of my attitude on Hindi-Hindustani. I fear you do not know the whole history. Moulana Abdul Haq has given a distorted picture. I



entered the Hindi Sammelan not only a year ago. It is now nearly ten years that I was first invited to preside at their conference.<sup>1</sup> I pleaded then for recognition of Urdu as part of Hindi. The views I then pronounced I held even before 1908. I went a step further and got a definition accepted at the Indore Conference a year ago which included Urdu speech and script.<sup>2</sup> That is the *fons et origo* of my crime. Did you know all this? If you did, what is it you do not understand? It is a fault that I could not accept for that meeting either Hindi-Urdu or merely Hindustani? I have dealt with that question fairly fully in *Harijan*.<sup>3</sup> Please read these and then if you do not feel convinced, write to me fully and I shall strive with you. I should despair of myself if I cannot carry conviction to you on an issue which appears to me to be perfectly simple.

Love.

BAPU

DR. MAHMOOD, BAR-AT-LAW  
CHHAPRA  
BIHAR

From a photostat: G.N. 5079. Also the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary.  
Courtesy: Narayan Desai

### 611. LETTER TO NARANDAS GANDHI

October 19, 1936

CHI. NARANDAS,

I am returning the pamphlet after correcting it. I shall give you the exact date in my next letter.

It would not be correct to see Jawaharlalji<sup>4</sup> during the lecture. I would certainly see him if he would grace us with a visit. The timings both for the spinning sacrifice as well as for the prayers, are quite all right. Arrange Khan Saheb's interview with the Muslim brethren. You may arrange another gathering for meeting all the people, if possible, that is, if all wish it. I shall not be able to attend it. There is no harm if

<sup>1</sup> Gandhiji presided over the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan at Indore on March 29, 1918; *vide* "Statement of Transvaal Indian Case", 16-7-1909 sub-title "A Brief History of the Struggle"

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* "Letter to H. S. L. Polak", 29-9-1909

<sup>3</sup> *Vide* "Hindi or Hindustani", 9-5-1936 and "Hindi or Hindustani-II", 16-5-1936

<sup>4</sup> A Jain sadhu

nothing can be arranged for Khan Saheb. Whatever is done should be spontaneous.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a microfilm of the Gujarati: M.M.U./II. Also C.W. 8509. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

## 612. LETTER TO MANILAL AND SUSHILA GANDHI

*October 19, 1936*

CHI. MANILAL AND SUSHILA,

I liked the letters from you both. Manilal, it was your dharma to have pointed out my shortcoming which you did, nor was it indecorous. Filial piety consists in respect for parents in spite of one's knowledge of their shortcomings. In that test none of you fail, barring Harilal. But the fault is not entirely Harilal's. For how could we hold him responsible for what he does or says under the influence of drink?

I shall not write a long reply as I am surrounded by patients. Mirabehn as well as Nanavati are better today. I do not repent for the kind of education I gave you brothers. I should have been glad if I could have done more along the same lines. I offered you at the altar of my sacrifice, not unmindful of your well-being but knowing it fully well. Nor do I believe the result has been unhappy. There was a special purpose in sending Sorabji<sup>1</sup>. He achieved it too; we could have seen it had he lived. As for Chhaganlal<sup>2</sup>, he was sent to prepare himself for a specific task. It miscarried because he was threatened with tuberculosis and left England abruptly. How do you forget about Ritch<sup>3</sup> and Polak<sup>4</sup>? There was a purpose in sending them and there was one also in not sending you brothers. By the time you had reached the age of discretion my infatuation with Western education had worn away. It was not that I did not provide you such education for want of money. The Doctor's<sup>5</sup> purse was always at my disposal. When Ritch was sent I too was in a position to meet the cost. However, I purposely moulded you in the school of experience and drafted you for public

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Letter to Harilal Gandhi", 16-10-1912

<sup>2</sup> Chhaganlal Gandhi

<sup>3</sup> L.W. Ritch; *vide* "Speech at Farewell to L. W. Ritch", 9-3-1905

<sup>4</sup> H.S.L. Polak

<sup>5</sup> Dr. Pranjivan Jagjivan Mehta

service. I understand how you might regret the want in view of the present times, but that does not change my thinking. Don't you know that I have done the same with the boys and girls that came to be placed in my charge here too? I am not worried that Radha, Keshu, Shankar, Bal, Jayanti, Kanti, etc. rebelled against it. I see in it the force of the current stream and not any defect in my thinking. The best of workers here have no Western education, and men like Mahadev who have it are with me not because of it but because of their other qualities. I do of course make use of Mahadev's education by the way, but that is of no great significance. It may be my efficiency. Mahadev will himself admit that Maganlal was more valuable than he. How many educated men do you think there are in my army? To what position would I have been reduced had I depended on them? Don't you know that I had a hand in sending Joseph, both the Godfreys and Bernard? Where are they? What have they achieved? I also know the art of producing barristers and doctors, but it has borne no fruit. I think you brothers were spared the wild goose chase. Why can you not see my non-violence in the exceptions I made in the cases of West<sup>1</sup> and Sam<sup>2</sup>? Had I not been generous to them, how could I have accommodated them and others like them? You know that I encouraged Kitchin<sup>3</sup> to eat meat when he was ill and, as a result, he gave it up altogether. In the Boer War I myself served wine to the stonebreakers in my corps and served *bidis* to others. Discretion is very necessary in doing all such things. Generosity to others is as necessary as strictness with oneself.

I have dilated far more than I had intended. You need not send anything to Kanti as Devdas has undertaken to pay all his expenses.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 4858

<sup>1</sup> A.H. West

<sup>2</sup> Govindaswami; *vide* "Letter to Chhaganlal Gandhi", 13-5-1905

<sup>3</sup> H. Kitchin

613. LETTER TO BALVANTRAI K. THAKORE

SEGAON, WARDHA,  
October 19, 1936

BHAISHRI BALVANTRAI<sup>1</sup>

I am at present busy nursing patients. I finished your letter little by little yesterday evening. I have no idea what I would be able to do in Ahmedabad. I regard myself quite unfit to preside over the Conference. Being a Mahatma, perhaps, I am supposed to know all things. Would you send your suggestions in the form of an amendment? I should be glad to meet you, but how could there be such an occasion? After all I am not visiting Bombay. I shall be wandering into Ahmedabad.

I expect you are in good health.

*Vandemataram from*  
MOHANDAS

[PS.]

Your letter shall remain confidential. I have destroyed it.

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 9238

614. LETTER TO BENARSIDAS CHATURVEDI

October 19, 1936

BHAI BENARSIDAS,

Prabhu Dayal gave me the news of your brother's death. You are a man of knowledge and therefore hardly need to be consoled. We all have to go the same way as Ramnarayan, the only difference being in time. Why then should we grieve over it? But with the passing away of our loved ones, our responsibility increases and yours has grown heavily. God alone is our true help at such times. He alone can guide you.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 2516

<sup>1</sup> (1869-1952); Gujarati poet and man of letters

*615. LETTER TO MAHADEV DESAI*

*October 19, 1936*

CHI. MAHADEV,

I can say that I have done a fair amount of writing today. Baba has done a great thing. Mira's temperature today has been 98° and it has not risen so far. She however continues to be restless. There is no release of saliva in her mouth. It remains sticky and she has no wish to take glucose or even fruit. There is something else too. I want no oranges or lemons. Munnalal made a mistake in sending for the lemons.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a Photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 11500

*616. LETTER TO PRABHUDAYAL VIDYARTHI*

*October 19, 1936*

CHI. PRABHUDAYAL,

It is good you wrote. I am enclosing a letter to Pandit Benarsidas. Send it to him.<sup>1</sup> Take milk and fruit as necessary. Do not work beyond your strength.

*Blessings from*  
BAPU

From a Photostat of the Hindi: G. N. 11677

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Letter to Mahadev Desai", 19-10-1936

## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX I

#### LETTER FROM JAWAHARLAL NEHRU<sup>1</sup>

May 25, 1936

About women and W. C. I began by saying that I had received some protests for their non-inclusion. I would have welcomed even stronger protests for I wanted our women to be more aggressive and to insist on their rights, both political and social. I invited them to organize themselves to press for their rights which they were not likely to get if they waited for the goodwill of their menfolk. About the W. C. I said that it was formed under peculiar circumstances when I had to play an unusual part. The *hayadar* (self-respecting) president would probably have resigned and I being *behaya* (shameless) stuck on even though the majority of the Congress had decided against me on some vital issues. This peculiar position was reflected in the formation of the W. C., which certainly could not be under the circumstances of my choice although technically I was responsible for it. When various viewpoints have to be represented, the lesser ones go to the wall. You are perfectly right in saying that I was responsible for the exclusion of women. But yet this is not the whole matter. I would have liked to have a woman in the Working Committee but as the matters developed and a number of other names appeared and stayed, there was little choice left. Ultimately I felt that it mattered little to me who was in the W. C. and who was not. The Committee as it took shape was not my child, I could hardly recognize it and to some inclusions, as you know, I reacted strongly. Yet ultimately I submitted but inevitably with the thought that I was surrendering to others and almost against my own better judgment. At the very first meeting, almost without provocations, the inherent conflicts appeared. The whole purpose of a president nominating a homogeneous committee was thus frustrated.

File No. 32/12/36, Home, Political. Courtesy: National Archives of India

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "Letter to Narandas Gandhi", 27-9-1935

## APPENDIX II

### *LETTER FROM VALLABHBHAI PATEL TO RAJENDRA PRASAD<sup>1</sup>*

*May 29, 1936*

I have received your letter... of 24th with Kripalani's letter to you enclosed with it.

His<sup>2</sup> Bombay speeches have disturbed me much. I am not worried so much about khaddar. It will recoil on him if he goes on in this fashion. But I cannot stand the attitude of injured innocence he has assumed regarding the nomination of members in the W. C., particularly his statement regarding omission of a woman. Rajaji feels equally strongly.

Bapu had written to him on these points and the extracts of his reply and the last letter of Bapu to him on the subject of the W. C. nominations are enclosed herewith for your information. Re: khadi—he says the report is not correct and he had issued a correct version of his speech next day though. I have not seen it reported anywhere. His reply about the W. C. is bad enough and I don't think I can swallow it. It is a humiliating position in which I for one would not agree to stay at any cost. He was expected to act honourably with his colleagues but he cannot do so or if he feels that we are a drag on him we must clear the way for him.

I am going to Bangalore tomorrow where I am staying till the 12th and then we disperse for our respective places. Hope you are doing well.

File No. 32/12/36, Home, Political. Courtesy: National Archives of India

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* "About 'Conversion'", 28-9-1935

<sup>2</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru's