

# Selected Letters of Mahatma Gandhi

By M. K. Gandhi

THE SELECTED WORKS OF  
MAHATMA GANDHI  
VOLUME FOUR

GENERAL EDITOR  
SHRIMAN NARAYAN

**Rupees One Hundred Fifty for set of five volumes**

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Navajivan Trust

ISBN 81-7229-278-3 (set)

Printed and Published by Jitendra T. Desai Navajivan Publishing House  
Ahmedabad-380 014 (INDIA )

Phone: 079 - 27540635. 27542634 Fax: 079 - 27541329

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## FOREWORD

This volume contains selected letters written by Mahatma Gandhi from time to time. Very few of these letters were published in Gandhiji's own lifetime. After his passing away, systematic efforts were made to collect numerous letters written by him to many friends and co-workers. We have tried to select and classify under different heads significant thoughts contained in these letters.

In the first part of the Volume, we have included about a hundred letters in their complete form. Most of these letters were written on memorable occasions. I am sure the reader would be able to get an insight into Gandhiji's rich and varied personality through these letters.

The second part contains Gandhiji's ideas which have been lifted from a large number of letters written by Gandhiji to many of his co-workers as well as men of public importance. Most of these ideas are of universal significance and would, I am sure, interest our readers in different parts of the world.

Shriman Narayan

Raj Bhavan

Ahmedabad,

October 16, 1968

### **PUBLISHER'S NOTE**

A deluxe edition of **Selected Works of Mahatma Gandhi** was released in **1969**. It went out of print in about six months. To meet the popular demand for it and to make it available to individual readers at a reasonable price a new soft-cover edition was soon released. It, too, was enthusiastically received and the entire stock of the publication was sold out in less than three years.

We are very happy to say that the set was reprinted and was offered at a subsidised price to commemorate the Diamond Jubilee year of Navajivan Trust during **1993-94**. Looking to its continuous demand and so also to fulfill Navajivan's object of propagating Gandhian Literature, its fifth reprint is being published with new type-setting in five volumes. We are sure, this new revised edition, too, would be well-received by individual readers, in order to enrich their personal library.

## 1. TO DADABHAI NAOROJI<sup>1</sup>

[This letter appears to be the first of many that Gandhiji wrote to Dadabhai Naoroji. Dadabhai was acquainted with the problems of Indians in South Africa, having been approached by them as early as 1891 to place their petitions before the British Government. The complete letter is not available, and the following extracts from it are taken from R. E Masani's *Dadabhai Naoroji : The Grand Old Man of India*, pp. 468-9.]

*Durban, July 5, 1894*

The first Parliament of Natal under Responsible Government has been pre-eminently an Indian Parliament. It has for the most part occupied itself with legislation affecting Indians, by no means favourably. The Governor, in opening the Legislative Council and Assembly, remarked that his Ministers would deal with the Franchise which was exercised by Indians in Natal, although they never exercised it in India. The reasons given for the sweeping measure to disfranchise Indians were that they had never exercised the Franchise before, and that they were not fit for it.

The petition of the Indians seemed to prove a sufficient answer to this. Hence they have now turned round and given out the real object of the Bill, which is simply this: "We do not want the Indians any more here. We want the coolies, but they shall remain slaves here and go back to India as soon as they are free." I earnestly request your undivided attention to the cause and appeal to you to use your influence that always has been and is being used on behalf of the Indians, no matter where situated. The Indians look up to you as children to the father. Such is really the feeling here.

A word for myself and I have done. I am yet inexperienced and young and, therefore, quite liable to make mistakes. The responsibility undertaken is quite out of proportion to my ability. I may mention that I am doing this without any remuneration. So you will see that I have not taken the matter up, which is beyond my ability, in order to enrich myself at the expense of the Indians. I am

the only available person who can handle the question. You will, therefore, oblige me very greatly if you will kindly direct and guide me and make necessary suggestions which shall be received as from a father of his child.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. I, pp. 105-6

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<sup>1</sup>Dadabhai Naoroji (1825-1917)—Pioneer statesman known as "the Grand Old Man of India"; President, Indian National Congress, 1886, 1893 and 1906; was first to enunciate Swaraj as the objective of the Congress; was elected member of the House of Commons, 1893.

## 2. TO G. K. GOKHALE<sup>1</sup>

21-24, Court Chambers,  
Corner, Rissik & Anderson Street,  
P. O. Box 6522,  
Johannesburg,  
January 13, 1905

To  
THE HONOURABLE PROFESSOR GOKHALE,  
POONA

DEAR PROFESSOR GOKHALE,

The existence of *Indian Opinion* you know. It has now embarked on a career when I think I may fairly appeal to you for active sympathy. I propose to write perfectly frankly, as you know me too well to misunderstand me. When I saw that Mr. Madanjit could not carry on the paper without pecuniary assistance and as I knew that he was guided by thoroughly patriotic motives, I placed at his service the bulk of my savings. That, however, was not enough. Three months ago I took over the whole responsibility and management. Mr. Madanjit still remains nominally the proprietor and publisher, because I believe that he has done much for the community. My own office is at present being worked in the interest of *Indian Opinion* and I have already become responsible to the extent of nearly £ 3,500. Some English friends, who knew me intimately and before whom I placed the scheme as described in the enclosed, took up the idea and now it is in full working order and, although it does not show the same measure of self-sacrifice as shown by the founders of the Fergusson College in Poona, I venture to think that it is not a bad copy. It has been a most delightful thing to me to see the English friends coming forward so boldly. They are not literary men but they are sterling, honest, independent men. Each of them had his own business or employment where he was doing well, and yet none of them had the slightest hesitation in coming forward as a worker for a bare living which means £3 per month, with a distant prospect of getting profits.

It is also my intention, if my earnings continue, to open a school on the grounds, which would be second to none in South Africa for the education primarily of Indian children who would be resident boarders, and secondarily, of all who want to join the school but would also reside on the premises. For this, too, volunteer workers are required. It would be possible to induce one or two Englishmen and English ladies here to give their lifetime to this work, but Indian teachers are absolutely necessary. Could you induce any graduates who have an aptitude for teaching, who bear a blameless character and who would be prepared to work for a mere living? Those who would come must be well-tried, first-class men. I would want two or three at least but more could certainly be accommodated, and after the school is in working order, it is intended to add a sanatorium with open-air treatment on hygienic lines. My immediate purpose, however, is in connection with *Indian Opinion*. If you approve of all I have said regarding it, will you kindly send a letter of encouragement to be sent to the editor for publication; also if you could spare a few moments, occasionally write an article ever so small for it? I am also anxious to secure either honorary or paid correspondents who would contribute weekly notes in English, Gujarati, Hindi and Tamil. If it becomes expensive, I might have to be satisfied with only English correspondence which would lend itself to being translated in the three Indian languages. Could you recommend any such correspondent or correspondents? The weekly notes should give an idea of what is being done on your side with reference to the Indian question, giving extracts from notices of the question in the newspapers, and should contain matters that are likely to be interesting to the Indians in South Africa. You may at your discretion disclose partly or wholly the contents of this letter in so far as such a course may be necessary in the interests of the subject-matter hereof. I hope you are keeping good health.

*I remain,*

*Yours faithfully,* M. K. GANDHI

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. IV pp. 332-33*

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<sup>1</sup> Gopal Krishna Gokhale (1866-1915)—Statesman and educationist; was associated with the Indian National Congress since its early days; presided over its Banaras Session in 1905; founded the Servants of India Society at Poona; visited South Africa in 1912 at Gandhiji's invitation.



### 3. TO G. K. GOKHALE

*Cape Town, February 27, 1914*

DEAR MR. GOKHALE,

For the time being I am at Cape Town watching the course of events. I do not want to inflict on you any news as about the struggle. I shall be as brief as I possibly can.

Mr Andrews and Mr Pearson are truly good men, we all like them very much. Sir Benjamin has disappointed us. He has hardly done any good and he may do a great deal of harm. He is weak and by no means sincere. Even now he has hardly grasped the details.

And he undoubtedly, consciously or unconsciously, fosters divisions among us. Mr Andrews will tell you all about him. But I thought that I should give you my impressions of Sir Benjamin.

If there is a settlement in March, I propose to leave for India in April. I shall have with me probably about 20 men, women and children who will live with me. These will include the school children who are likely to come. I do not know whether you still want me to live at the Servants of India quarters in Poona or how. I shall be prepared to do so immediately after I have paid a visit to the members of my family. It is likely that the number living with me may be augmented by some members of my family who may wish to share my life and work. Please do not consider yourself bound to keep me at the Society's quarters. I am entirely in your hands. I want to learn at your feet and gain the necessary experience. No matter whether I am staying somewhere under your guidance or not, I shall scrupulously observe the compact of silence for one year after my arrival in India. The vow of silence as I have understood it does not include the South African question and may be broken at your wish for furthering any project about which both of us hold the same view.

My present ambition you know. It is to be by your side as your nurse and attendant. I want to have the real discipline of obeying someone whom I love

and look up to. I know I made a bad secretary in South Africa. I hope to do better in the Motherland if I am accepted.

May you benefit in health by the change and the calmer atmosphere on the continent.

This letter will be in your hands about the middle of March. If you deem it necessary to say anything to me about my movements, you will of course cable. I assume too that you will not want me to go to Poona before you return. If you did, I should of course go.

If I am enabled to leave for India in April, I propose to use the funds you have sent for our passages which shall be all deck. I have no means of my own and Phoenix can hardly supply funds now. It is drained totally dry.

*I remain,  
Yours sincerely,  
M. K. GANDHI*

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XII, pp. 360-61*

#### 4. TO TOLSTOY

*Westminster Palace Hotel,  
4, Victoria Street,  
London, S.W.,  
1st October, 1909*

SIR,

I take the liberty of inviting your attention to what has been going on in the Transvaal (South Africa) for nearly three years.

There is in that colony a British Indian population of nearly 13,000. These Indians have for several years laboured under the various legal disabilities. The prejudice against colour and in some respect against Asiatics is intense in that colony. It is largely due, so far as Asiatics are concerned, to trade jealousy. The climax was reached three years ago, with a law which I and many others considered to be degrading and calculated to unman those to whom it was applicable. I felt that submission to law of this nature was inconsistent with the spirit of true religion. I and some of my friends were and still are firm believers in the doctrine of non-resistance to evil. I had the privilege of studying your writings also, which left a deep impression on my mind. British Indians, before whom the position was fully explained, accepted the advice that we should not submit to the legislation, but that we should suffer imprisonment, or whatever other penalties the law may impose for its breach. The result has been that nearly one-half of the Indian population that was unable to stand the heat of the struggle, to suffer the hardships of imprisonment, have withdrawn from the Transvaal rather than submit to law which they have considered degrading. Of the other half, nearly 2,500 have for conscience's sake allowed themselves to be imprisoned, some as many as five times. The imprisonments have varied from four days to six months; in the majority of cases with hard labour. Many have been financially ruined. At present there are over hundred passive resisters in the Transvaal. Some of these have been very poor men, earning their livelihood from day to day. The result has been that their wives

and children have had to be supported out of public contributions, also largely raised from passive resisters. This has put a severe strain upon British Indians, but in my opinion they have risen to the occasion. The struggle still continues and one does not know when the end will come. This, however, some of us at least have seen most clearly, that passive resistance will and can succeed where brute force must fail. We also notice that in so far as the struggle has been prolonged, it has been due largely to our weakness, and hence to a belief having been engendered in the mind of the Government that we would not be able to stand continued suffering.

Together with a friend, I have come here to see the imperial authorities and to place before them the position, with a view to seeking redress. Passive resisters have recognized that they should have nothing to do with pleading with the Government, but the deputation has come at the instance of the weaker members of the community, and it therefore represents their weakness rather than their strength. But in the course of my observation here, I have felt that if a general competition for an essay on the Ethics and Efficacy of Passive Resistance were invited, it would popularize the movement and make people think. A friend has raised the question of morality in connection with the proposed competition. He thinks that such an invitation would be inconsistent with the true spirit of passive resistance, and that it would amount to buying opinion. May I ask you to favour me with your opinion on the subject of morality? And if you consider that there is nothing wrong in inviting contributions, I would ask you also to give me the names of those whom I should specially approach to write upon the subject.

There is one thing more, with reference to which I would trespass upon your time. A copy of your letter addressed to a Hindu on the present unrest in India has been placed in my hands by a friend. On the face of it, it appears to represent your views. It is the intention of my friend, at his own expense, to have 20,000 copies printed and distributed and to have it translated also. We have, however, not been able to secure the original, and we do not feel justified in printing it, unless we are sure of the accuracy of the copy and of

the fact that it is your letter. I venture to enclose herewith a copy of the copy, and should esteem it a favour if you kindly let me know whether it is your letter, whether it is an accurate copy and whether you approve of its publication in the above manner. If you will add anything further to the letter please do so. I would also venture to make a suggestion. In the concluding paragraph you seem to dissuade the reader from the belief in reincarnation. I do not know whether (if it is not impertinent on my part to mention this) you have specially studied the question. Reincarnation or transmigration is a cherished belief with millions in India, indeed in China also. With many one might almost say it is a matter of experience, no longer a matter of academic acceptance. It explains reasonably the many mysteries of life. With some of the passive resisters who have gone through the gaols of the Transvaal, it has been their solace. My object in writing this is not to convince you of the truth of the doctrine, but to ask you if you will please remove the word "reincarnation" from the other things you have dissuaded your reader from. In the letter in question you have quoted largely from *Krishna* and given reference to passages. I should thank you to give me the title of the book from which the quotations have been made.

I have wearied you with this letter. I am aware that those who honour you and endeavour to follow you have no right to trespass upon your time, but it is rather their duty to refrain from giving you trouble, so far as possible. I have, however, who am an utter stranger to you, taken the liberty of addressing this communication in the interests of truth, and in order to have your advice on problems, the solution of which you have made your life work.

*With respects, I remain,*

*Your obedient servant,*

M. K GANDHI

*Tolstoy & Gandhi, pp. 59-62*

#### 4A. FROM COUNT LEO TOLSTOY

*Yasnaya Polyana,*  
*Oct. 7, 1909*

M. K. GANDHI TRANSVAAL

Just now I have received your very interesting letter, which gives me great pleasure. May God help all your dear brothers and co-workers in the Transvaal. This fight between gentleness and brutality, between humility and love on one side, and conceit and violence on the other, makes itself ever more strongly felt here to us also—especially in the sharp conflicts between religious obligations and the laws of the State expressed by the conscientious objection to render military service. Such objections are taking place very frequently.

I have written *A letter to a Hindu* and am very pleased to have it translated (into English). The title of the book on *Krishna* will be communicated to you from Moscow. As regards rebirth I, for my part, shall leave out nothing; for, as it appears to me, the belief in a rebirth will never be able to strike such deep roots in and restrain mankind as the belief in the immortality of the soul and the faith in divine truth and love; of course I would accommodate you, if you so desire, to delete those passages in question. It will give me great pleasure to help your edition. Publication and circulation of my writings, translated into Indian dialects, can only be a matter of pleasure to me.

The question regarding monetary payment of Royalty should not at all be allowed to appear in religious undertakings.

I give my fraternal greetings and am glad to have come into personal contact with you.

LEO TOLSTOY

*Tolstoy & Gandhi*, p. 63

## 5. TO COUNT LEO TOLSTOY

*Westminster Palace Hotel,  
4, Victoria Street,  
London, W.C.,  
10-11-1909*

DEAR SIR,

I beg to tender my thanks for your registered letter in connection with the letter addressed to a Hindu, and with the matters that I dealt with in my letter to you.

Having heard about your failing health I refrained, in order to save you the trouble from sending an acknowledgement, knowing that a written expression of my thanks was a superfluous formality; but Mr Aylmer Maude whom I have now been able to meet reassured me that you are keeping good health indeed and that unfailingly and regularly you attend to your correspondence every morning. It was very gladsome news to me and it encourages me to write to you further about matters which are, I know, of the greatest importance according to your teaching.

I beg to send you herewith a copy of a book written by a friend—an Englishman—who is at present in South Africa, in connection with my life, in so far it has a bearing on the struggle with which I am so connected and to which my life is dedicated. As I am very anxious to engage your active interest and sympathy I thought that it would not be considered by you as out of the way for me to send you the book.

In my opinion, this struggle of the Indians in the Transvaal is the greatest of modern times, inasmuch as it has been idealized both as to the goal as also to the methods adopted to reach the goal. I am not aware of a struggle in which the participators are not to derive any personal advantage at the end of it and in which 50 per cent of the persons affected have undergone great suffering and trial for the sake of a principle. It has not been possible for me to advertise

the struggle as much as I should like. You command, possibly, the widest public today. If you are satisfied as to the facts you will find set forth in Mr. Doke's book, and if you consider that the conclusions I have arrived at are justified by the facts, may I ask you to use your influence in any manner you think fit to popularize the movement? If it succeeds, it will be not only as a triumph of religion, love and truth over irreligion, hatred, and falsehood but it is highly likely to serve as an example to the millions in India and to people in other parts of the world, who may be down-trodden and will certainly go a great way towards breaking up the party of violence, at least in India. If we hold out to the end, as I think we would, I entertain not the slightest doubt as to its ultimate success and your encouragement in the way suggested by you can only strengthen us in our resolve.

The negotiations that are going on for a settlement of the question have practically fallen through, and together with my colleagues I return to South Africa this week and invite imprisonment. I may add that my son has happily joined me in the struggle and is now undergoing imprisonment with hard labour for six months. This is his fourth imprisonment in the course of the struggle.

If you would be so good as to reply to this letter, may I ask you to address your reply to me at Johannesburg, S.A., Box 6522.

Hoping that this will find you in good health,

*I remain,*

*Your obedient servant,*

M. K. GANDHI

*Tolstoy & Gandhi*, pp. 64-66



## 6. TO LEO TOLSTOY

*Johannesburg*  
*4th April, 1910*

DEAR SIR,

You may remember that I have written to you from London where I stopped temporarily. As your devoted follower I send you herewith a brief booklet which I have written. I have translated my own writings from Gujarati (my own language). What is remarkable is that my original book was confiscated by the Government of India. Therefore I was in a hurry to publish this translation. I am afraid I am burdening you; but if your health permits and you have time to go through my booklet, then I need not express how greatly I shall value your criticism of it. I am sending also a few copies of your *A Letter to a Hindu* which you allowed me to publish. This letter will also be translated into an Indian dialect.

*Yours respectfully,*

M. K. GANDHI

*Tolstoy & Gandhi, p. 66*

## 6A. FROM COUNT LEO TOLSTOY

8th May, 1910

DEAR FRIEND,

Just now I have received your letter and your book, *Indian Home Rule*.

I have read your book with great interest, because I think the question you have therein dealt with is important not only for Indians, but for the whole of Mankind.

I cannot find your first letter, but by discovering your biography by Doke, I happen to know you through that biography which gripped me and it gave a chance to know and understand you better.

I am not very well at present. So I am unable to write to you on all the questions which are interconnected with your book and also with your activities in general, which I value much. But I shall write to you as soon as I recover.

*Your friend and brother,*

LEO TOLSTOY

*Tolstoy & Gandhi, p. 67*

## 7. TO LEO TOLSTOY

M. K. GANDHI,  
Attorney

21-24, Court Chambers,  
Johannesburg,  
15th August, 1910

To

COUNT LEO TOLSTOY

DEAR SIR,

I am much obliged to you for your encouraging and cordial letter of the 8th May last. I very much value your general approval of my booklet, *Indian Home Rule*. And if you have the time, I shall look forward to your detailed criticism of the work which you have been so good as to promise in your letter.

Mr Kallenbach has written to you about Tolstoy Farm. Mr Kallenbach and I have been friends for many years. I may state that he has gone through most of the experiences that you have so graphically described in your work *My Confession*. No writing has so deeply touched Mr Kallenbach as yours; and, as a spur to further effort in living up to the ideals held before the world by you, he has taken the liberty, after consultation with me, of naming his farm after you.

Of his generous action in giving the use of the farm for passive resisters, the numbers of *Indian Opinion* I am sending herewith will give you full information.

I should not have burdened you with these details but for the fact of your taking a personal interest in the passive resistance struggle that is going on in Transvaal.

*I remain,*  
*Your faithful servant,*  
M. K. GANDHI

*Tolstoy & Gandhi, p. 68*

## 7A. FROM COUNT LEO TOLSTOY<sup>1</sup>

To

M. K. GANDHI,

JOHANNESBURG,

TRANSVAAL, SOUTH AFRICA.

"KOTCHETY."

(Castle of the eldest daughter of Tolstoy).

7th September, 1910

I have received your Journal *Indian Opinion* and I am happy to know all that is written on non-resistance. I wish to communicate to you the thoughts which are aroused in me by the reading of those articles.

The more I live—and specially now that I am approaching death, the more I feel inclined to express to others the feelings which so strongly move my being, and which, according to my opinion, are of great importance. That is, what one calls non-resistance, is in reality nothing else but the discipline of love undeformed by false interpretation. Love is the aspiration for communion and solidarity with other souls, and that aspiration always liberates the source of noble activities. That love is the supreme and unique law of human life, which everyone feels in the depth of one's soul. We find it manifested most clearly in the soul of the infants. Man feels it so long as he is not blinded by the false doctrines of the world.

That law of love has been promulgated by all the philosophies—Indian, Chinese, Hebrew, Greek and Roman. I think that it had been most clearly expressed by Christ, who said that in that law is contained both the law and the Prophets. But he has done more; anticipating the deformation to which that law is exposed, he indicated directly the danger of such deformation which is natural to people who live only for worldly interests. The danger consists precisely in permitting one's self to defend those interests by violence; that is to say, as he has expressed, returning blow by blows, and taking back by force things that

have been taken from us, and so forth. Christ knew also, just as all reasonable human beings must know, that the employment of violence is incompatible with love, which is the fundamental law of life. He knew that, once violence is admitted, doesn't matter in even a single case, the law of love is thereby rendered futile. That is to say that the law of love ceases to exist. The whole Christian civilisation, so brilliant in .the exterior, has grown up on this misunderstanding and this flagrant and strange contradiction, sometimes conscious but mostly unconscious.

In reality as soon as resistance is admitted by the side of love, love no longer exists and cannot exist as the law of existence; and if the law of love cannot exist, there remains no other law except that of violence, that is the right of the mighty. It was thus that the Christian Society has lived during these nineteen centuries. It is a fact that all the time people were following only violence in the organisation of Society. But the difference between the ideals of Christian peoples and that of other nations lies only in this: that, in Christianity the law of love had been expressed so clearly and definitely as has never been expressed in any other religious doctrine; that the Christian world had solemnly accepted that law, although at the same time it had permitted the employment of violence and on that violence it had constructed their whole life. Consequently, the life of the Christian peoples is an absolute contradiction between their profession and the basis of their life, contradiction between love recognized as the law of life, and violence recognized as inevitable in different departments of life: like Governments, Tribunals, Army, etc. which are recognised and praised. That contradiction developed with the inner development of the Christian world and has attained its paroxysm in recent days.

At present the question poses itself evidently in the following manner: either it must be admitted that we do not recognise any discipline, religious or moral, and that we are guided in the organisation of life only by the law of force, or that all the taxes that we exact by force, the judicial and police organisations and above all the army must be abolished.

This spring in the religious examination of a secondary school of girls in Moscow, the Professor of Catechism as well as the Bishop had questioned the young girls on the Ten Commandments and above all on the sixth "Thou shalt not kill". When the examiner received good reply, the Bishop generally paused for another question: Is killing proscribed by the sacred Law always and in all cases? And the poor young girls perverted by their teachers must reply: No, not always; killing is permitted during war, and for the execution of criminals. However one of those unfortunate girls, (what I relate is not a fiction but a fact that has been transmitted to me by an eye-witness) having been asked the same question, "Is killing always a crime?" was moved deeply, blushed and replied with decision "Yes, always." To all the sophisticated questions habitual to the Bishop she replied with firm conviction: killing is always forbidden in the Old Testament as well as by Christ who not only forbids killing but all wickedness against our neighbours. In spite of all his oratorical talent and all his imposing grandeur, the Bishop was obliged to beat a retreat and the young girl came out victorious.

Yes, we can discuss in our journals the progress in aviation and such other discoveries, the complicated diplomatic relations, the different clubs and alliances, the so-called artistic creations, etc. and pass in silence what was affirmed by the young girl. But silence is futile in such cases, because every one of this Christian world is feeling the same, more or less vaguely, like that girl. Socialism, Communism, Anarchism, Salvation army, the growing criminalities, unemployment and absurd luxuries of the rich, augmented without limit, and the awful misery of the poor, the terrible increasing number of suicides—all these are the signs of that inner contradiction which must be there and which cannot be resolved; and without doubt, can only be resolved by acceptance of the law of Love and by the rejection of all sorts of violence. Consequently your work in Transvaal, which seems to be far away from the centre of our world, is yet the most fundamental and the most important to us supplying the most weighty practical proof in which the world can now share and with which must participate not only the Christians but all the peoples of the world.

I think that it would give you pleasure to know that with us in Russia, a similar movement is also developing rapidly under the form of the refusal of military services augmenting year after year. However small may be the number of your participators in non-resistance and the number of those in Russia who refuse military service, both the one and the other may assert with audacity that "God is with us" and that "God is more powerful than men".

Between the confession of Christianity, even under the perverted form in which it appears amongst us Christian peoples, and the simultaneous recognition of the necessity of armies and of the preparation for killing on an ever-increasing scale, there exists a contradiction so flagrant and crying that sooner or later, probably very soon, it must invariably manifest itself in utter nakedness; and it will lead us either to renounce the Christian religion, and to maintain the governmental power or to renounce the existence of the army and all the forms of violence which the state supports and which are more or less necessary to sustain its power. That contradiction is felt by all the governments, by your British Government as well as by our Russian Government; and therefore, by the spirit of conservatism natural to these governments, the opposition is persecuted, as we find in Russia as well as in the articles of your journal, more than any other anti- governmental activity. The governments know from which direction comes the principal danger and try to defend themselves with a great zeal in that trial not merely to preserve their interests but actually to fight for their very existence.

*With my perfect esteem,*

LEO TOLSTOY

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<sup>1</sup> The original letter is in Russian. This English version was prepared under Tolstoy's supervision.

## 8. TO MAGANLAL GANDHI<sup>1</sup>

[After March 14, 1915]

BHAISHRI M.,

You are right in what you think about non-violence. Its essentials are *daya*,<sup>2</sup> *akrodha*,<sup>3</sup> *aman*,<sup>4</sup> etc. Satyagraha is based on non-violence. We saw this clearly in Calcutta and came to the conclusion that we should include it among our vows. The thought led to the further conclusion that we must observe all the *yamas*<sup>5</sup> and that, if we do so by way of vows, we perceive the inner significance of non-violence. In my talks with hundreds of men here I place the various *yamas* above everything else.

सियराम प्रेमपीयूषपूरन होत जनमु न भरतको ।  
मुनिमनगम यमनियमसमदम विषमव्रत आचरतको ॥<sup>6</sup>

I remembered this verse in Calcutta on this occasion and pondered deeply over it. I am absolutely clear in my mind that India's deliverance and ours will be achieved through the observance of these vows.

In observing the vow of non-hoarding, the main thing to be borne in mind is not to store up anything which we do not require. For agriculture, we may keep bullocks, if we use them, and the equipment required for them. Where there is a recurring danger of famine, we shall no doubt store food grains. But we shall always ask ourselves whether bullocks and food grains are in fact needed. We are to observe all the *yamas* in thought as well, so that we shall grow more secure in them from day to day and come to think of fresh things to renounce. Renunciation has no limit to it. The more we renounce, the more shall we grow in the knowledge of the *atman*.<sup>7</sup> If the mind continues to move towards renunciation of the desire for hoarding and if in practice we give up hoarding as far as it is physically possible to do, we shall have kept the vow of non-hoarding.



The same is true about non-stealing. Non-hoarding refers to stocking of things not needed. Non-stealing refers to the use of such things. If I need only one shirt to cover myself with but use two, I am guilty of stealing one from another. For, a shirt which could have been of use to someone else does not belong to me. If five bananas are enough to keep me going, my eating a sixth one is a form of theft. Suppose we have a stock of 50 limes, thinking that among us all we would need them. I need only two, but take three because there are so many. This is theft.

Such unnecessary consumption is also a violation of the vow of non-violence. If, with the ideal of non-stealing in view, we reduce our consumption of things we would grow more generous. If we do so, actuated by the ideal of non-violence, we would grow more compassionate. In assuring, as it were, every animal or living thing that it need have no fear on our account, we entertain compassion—love—for it. A man who entertains such love will not find any living being inimical to him, not even in thought. That is the most emphatic conclusion of the Shastras and my experience as well.

The principle underlying all these vows is truth. By deceiving oneself, one may refuse to recognize an act of stealing or hoarding as such. Hence, by taking careful thought we can ensure at every step that truth prevails. Whenever we are in doubt whether a particular thing should be stored or not, the simple rule is not to store it. There is no violation of truth in renunciation. When in doubt about the wisdom of speaking, it is the duty of a man who has taken the vow of truth not to speak.

I want all of you to take only such vows as each one feels inclined to, of his own free will. I always feel that vows are necessary. But everyone may take them only when he himself feels the need and take only such as he wants to. Ramachandra may have been a man of great prowess, performed innumerable feats and killed hundreds of thousands of monsters, but no one would think of him today if he had not had such devoted men as Lakshmana and Bharata to follow him. The point is, if Ramchandra had had no more than extraordinary strength as a fighter, his greatness would have been forgotten after a while.

There have been many brave warriors who killed monsters as he did. There has been none among them whose fame and greatness are sung in every home. Ramchandra possessed power of some other kind which he could induce into Lakshmana and Bharata and in virtue of which the latter became great men of austerities. Singing in praise of their austerities, Tulsidasji asked, who else, if Bharata had not been born and practised austerities unattainable even by great sages, would have turned an ignorant man like him to Rama? This is as much as to say that Lakshmana and Bharata were the guardians of Rama's fame, that is, of his teaching. Moreover, austerities are not everything. For, if Lakshmana went without food or sleep for 14 years, so did Indrajit.<sup>8</sup> But the latter did not know the true significance of austerities which Lakshmana had learnt from Rama; on the contrary, he possessed a nature which inclined him to misuse the power earned through austerities and so came to be known merely as a monster and suffered defeat at the hands of Lakshmana, the man of self-mastery, a lover of God and seeker of deliverance. In the same way, however great the ideal of Gurudev,<sup>9</sup> if there is no one to implement that ideal, it will remain hidden in the profound darkness of the ages. Conversely, if there are any to put it into practice, it will spread its light multiplied many times over. The steps which one has to climb in order to practise an ideal constitute *tapas*.<sup>10</sup> One should realize, therefore, how very necessary it is to bring *tapas*— discipline— into the life of children.

*Blessings from, BAPU*

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XIII, pp. 37-39*

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1 Maganlal Gandhi — Gandhiji's cousin; assisted Gandhiji for about a decade in his work in South Africa; left Phoenix in August 1914 with a party of about 25 students and teachers for India and with them stayed for some time at Tagore's Santiniketan; Manager, Sabarmati Ashram; Member, All-India Khadi Board. Such was his devotion to Constructive Programme that Gandhiji felt widowed by his untimely death in 1928.

2 Compassion

3 Freedom from anger

4 Freedom from the desire to be respected

5 Any great moral or religious duty or observance

- 6 "If Bharata had not been born, imbued with the ambrosia of love for Sita and Rama, then who would have practised such self-control and strict observance, continence, restraint and rigorous vows as scarce enter the imagination of sages?" – *Ayodhya Kanda* (Second book) of Tulsidas' *Ramayana*. (Hill's translation).
- 7 The Self
- 8 Meghnad, son of Ravana, who had earned the name of Indrajit, by his victory over Indra, Chief of the Gods.
- 9 Rabindranath Tagore
- 10 Penance

## 9. TO MAGANLAL GANDHI

Navagam,  
Thursday [July 25, 1918]

CHI. MAGANLAL,

You have been frightened by Raojibhai as he was by me. He read too much into my words.

No, my ideals have not changed. Despite my bitter experiences in India, my conviction remains the same as ever, that we have but little to learn from the West. The evils I have seen here have made no change in my fundamental idea nor has this war. The old idea has developed into something purer. I have certainly not come to feel that we shall have to introduce Western civilization. Nor do I suppose that we shall have to take to drinking and meat-eating. To be sure, I have felt, in all seriousness, that Swaminarayana<sup>2</sup> and Vallabhacharya<sup>3</sup> have robbed us of our manliness. They made the people incapable of self-defence. It was all to the good, of course, that people gave up drinking, smoking, etc.; this, however, is not an end in itself, it is only a means. If a smoker happens to be a man of character his company is worth cultivating. If, on the contrary, a man who has never smoked in his life is an adulterer, he can be of little service. The love taught by Swaminarayana and Vallabh is all sentimentalism. It cannot make one a man of true love. Swaminarayana and Vallabh simply did not reflect over the true nature of non-violence. Non-violence consists in holding in check all impulses in the *chitta*.<sup>3</sup> It comes into play especially in men's relations with one another. There is not even a suggestion of this idea in their writings. Having been born in this degenerate age of ours, they could not remain unaffected by its atmosphere and had, in consequence, quite an undesirable effect on Gujarat. Tukaram and Ramdas had no such effect. The *Abhangas*<sup>4</sup> of the former and the *shlokas*<sup>5</sup> of the latter admit ample scope for manly striving. They, too, were Vaishnavas. Do not mix up the Vaishnava tradition with the teaching of Vallabh and Swaminarayana. Vaishnavism is an age-old truth. I have come to see, what I did not so clearly

before, that there is nonviolence in violence. This is the big change which has come about. I had not fully realized the duty of restraining a drunkard from doing evil, of killing a dog in agony or one infected with rabies. In all these instances, violence is in fact non-violence. Violence is a function of the body. *Brahmacharya*<sup>6</sup> consists in refraining from sexual indulgence, but we do not bring up our children to be impotent. They will have observed *brahmacharya* only if, though possessed of the highest virility, they can master the physical urge. In the same way, our offspring must be strong in physique. If they cannot completely renounce the urge to violence, we may permit them to commit violence, to use their strength to fight and thus make them non-violent. Non-violence was taught by a Kshatriya<sup>7</sup> to a Kshatriya.

The difference between the West and the East is what I have explained to be, and it is a great one. The civilization of the West is based on self-indulgence, ours on self-control. If we commit violence, it will be as a last resort and with a view to *lokasangraha*.<sup>8</sup> The West will indulge in violence in self-will. My taking part in (the movement for) a Parliament and similar activities is not a new development; it is quite an old thing and is only intended to ensure a check on these bodies. You will see this if you read my article on Mr Montagu's scheme. I simply cannot bring myself to take interest in the movement, but I can spread my ideals by working in it. When I saw that I could continue in it only by sacrificing my ideals, I decided to retire from the movement.

I think you have your reply in what I have said. I cannot explain much when I am there for a day and so I have set down the thing in writing. This will enable you to think and ask me questions, if fresh doubts occur to you.

I continue to be in Navagam. I wanted to leave from here today, but perhaps I may not be able to do so.

*Blessings from,*

BAPU

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XIV PP- 504-5*

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- 1 The Vishnava sect whose founder was Swami Sahaja- nand (1781-1833).
- 2 Vallabhacharya (1473-1531)—Religious Teacher, principally responsible for spreading the Bhakti cult in Gujarat.
- 3 Mind
- 4 Devotional metrical composition in Marathi Poetry
- 5 Devotional Metrical verse or composition
- 6 Continencc. Literally, conduct that leads one to God.
- 7 A member of the military or second caste among Hindus
- 8 That which promotes the conservation of society.

## 10. TO NARHAR SHAMBHURAO BHAVE <sup>1</sup>

[Ahmedabad, After June 7, 1916<sup>2</sup>]

Your son Vinoba<sup>3</sup> is with me. Your son has acquired at so tender an age such high-spiritedness and asceticism as took me years of patient labour to do.

[M. K. GANDHI]

*Life of Vinoba*, p. 8

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. XIII, p. 279



- 1 Acharya Vinoba's father, then at Baroda
- 2 Vinoba met Gandhiji at the Kochrab Ashram on June 7.
- 3 Vinoba Bhave (1895-1982)—A revered Sarvodaya leader known for his ascetic life and deep learning; Father of Bhoodan (Land-gift) Movement.

## 11. TO MR MAFFEY, PRIVATE SECRETARY TO VICEROY<sup>1</sup>

*Care District Magistrate,  
Motihari,  
April 16, 1917*

DEAR MR MAFFEY,

I have come to this district to learn for myself whether there is truth in the allegations of the ryots against the planters. I saw the Secretary of the Planters' Association and then the Commissioner of the Division, and sought their co-operation. Both politely rejected my advances and dissuaded me from my pursuit. I could not accept their advice, and have been proceeding with my work. The Magistrate has served upon me an order asking me to leave the District. The grounds for the order are such as I cannot subscribe to. I have therefore been reluctantly obliged to disobey the order and tell the Magistrate that I shall suffer the penalty for the breach.

My motive is national service and that, too, so long as it is consistent with humanitarian dictates. I understand, because my South African work was considered to be humanitarian that I was awarded the Kaisar-i- Hind Gold Medal. So long as my humanitarian motive is questioned, so long must I remain undeserving of holding the medal. I am therefore asking my people to return the medal to you, and I shall feel honoured to receive it back if it is returned to me when my motive is no longer questioned.

As to the question itself, so far as I have been able to examine the evidence, given to me, it shows that the planters have successfully used the Civil and Criminal Courts and illegal force to enrich themselves at the expense of the ryots, and that the ryots are living under a reign of terror and that their property, their persons, and their minds are all under the planters' heels. One man graphically said to me: "We belong to the planters, not to the Sircar.<sup>2</sup> Thana<sup>3</sup> is nowhere, the planters are everywhere. We take what they allow, and we keep what they permit." I had hoped that a deeper examination would have toned down the impression formed by me. Had I been left free, I would have



concluded my studies and placed the results at the disposal of the authorities. I wish that His Excellency would consider the matter serious enough to have an independent inquiry made.

The local administration admits that they are sitting upon a mine so dangerous that they cannot tolerate my presence. And yet they manage to be satisfied with the slow inquiry of a settlement officer. Everything will depend upon swiftness and the proper choice of the members of the Committee of Inquiry. This is the least that the ryots are entitled to. Will you please place this before the Viceroy and ask for his forgiveness for sending such a long letter in the midst of many imperative calls upon his time. The urgency of the matter is the sole excuse for this letter.

*I am, etc.,*  
M. K. GANDHI

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XIII, pp. 368-69*

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- 1 Lord Chelmsford
- 2 Government
- 3 The Police Office

## 12. TO W. B. HEYCOCK

*Bettiah, May 20, 1917*

DEAR MR. HEYCOCK,

I have hitherto refrained from bringing to your notice statements, which have continued to stream in, to the effect that the *raiya*ts are being prevented from coming in to me and that those who have come in have been subjected to all kinds of pinpricks by the *kothai amlas* and in some cases by the managers themselves. I have discounted some of the statements. I have taken down a few. But if what I have heard about the doing of the Belwa and the Dhokraha concerns is true, it is calculated to end on one side at least, the friendly spirit in which the inquiry has hitherto been carried on. I am most anxious to continue and to increase the friendly spirit. I am straining every [nerve] so far as in me lies, to so conduct my mission that nothing but good-will should be left behind, when its labours are finished. I send you the statements taken regarding the Belwa and the Dhokraha concerns. If the statements are true, they do not reflect any credit upon the concerns in question. I enclose, too, my letter to Mr Holttum which was written before I heard of the fire and which was despatched before I took the statements of the Dhokraha men last evening after 6-30 p.m.

I can understand and even appreciate the feelings which are bound to fill those who are called upon to contemplate the prospect of having to forgo huge incomes which they have hitherto been in the habit for a long time of receiving from their *raiya*ts. One cannot, therefore, mind any legitimate effort on their part to hold on to what they have considered as their rights. But what is reported to have happened at the Belwa and Dhokraha *dehats* does not in my opinion fall under such a category.

It is a known fact that the desire of the planters generally is, that my friends and I should not carry on our work. I can only say that nothing but physical force from the Government or an absolute guarantee that the admitted or provable wrongs of the *raiya*ts are to stop for ever, can possibly remove us

from the District. What I have seen of the conditions of the *raiya*ts is sufficient to convince me that if we withdrew at this stage, we would stand condemned before man and God and, what is most important of all, we would never be able to forgive ourselves.

But the mission is totally of peace. I cannot too often give the assurance that I bear no ill-will against the planters. I have been told that this is true of myself but that my friends are fired with an anti-English feeling and that for them this is an anti-English movement. I can only say that I do not know a body of men who have less of that feeling than my friends. I was not prepared for this pleasant revelation. I was prepared for some degree of ill-will. I would have held it excusable. I do not know that I have not been guilty of it myself under circumstances which have appeared to me most provoking. But if I found that any of my associates were, in the conduct of this mission, actuated by any ill-will at all, I should disassociate myself entirely from them and insist upon their leaving the mission. At the same time, the determination to secure a freedom for the *raiya*ts from the yoke that is wearing them down is inflexible.

Cannot the Government secure that freedom ? This is a natural exclamation. My answer is that they cannot, in cases like this, without such assistance as is afforded to them by my mission. The Government machinery is designedly slow. It moves, must move, along the line of least resistance. Reformers like myself, who have no other axe to grind but that of reform they are handling for the time being, specialize and create a force which the Government must reckon with. Reformers may go wrong by being over-zealous, indiscreet or indolent and ignorant. The Government may go wrong by being impatient of them or over-confident of their ability to do without them. I hope, in this case, neither catastrophe will take place and the grievances, which I have already submitted and which are mostly admitted, will be effectively redressed. Then the planters will have no cause to fear or suspect the mission of which I have the honour to be in-charge and they will gladly accept the assistance of volunteers who will carry on the work of education and sanitation among the villagers and act as links between them and the *raiya*ts.

Pray, excuse the length of this letter as also its argumentative character. I could not avoid it, if I was to place my true position before you. In bringing the two matters which have necessitated this communication, I have no desire to seek legal relief. But I ask you to use such administrative influence as you can to preserve the friendly spirit which has hitherto prevailed between the *kothis* and my friends and myself.

I do not wish to suggest that the *kothis* in question are responsible for the fire. That is the suspicion of some of the *raiyats*. I have talked to hundreds of them about the two fires. They say that the *raiyats* are not responsible for them, that they have no connection with the mission. I readily accept this repudiation because we are incessantly telling the *raiyats* that this is not a mission of violence or reprisals and that any such thing on their part can only delay relief. But if the *kothis* may not be held responsible for them, they may not seek to establish a connection between them and the mission. Fires have taken before now, and, mission or no mission, they will take place for ever. Neither party may blame the other without the clearest possible proofs.

There is talk, too, about the lives of the planters being in danger. Surely this cannot be serious talk. Any waj', the mission cannot render them less safe than they are. The character of the mission is wholly against any such activity. It is designed to seek relief by self-suffering, never by doing violence to the supposed or real wrong-doer. And this lesson has been inculcated among the *raiyats* in season and out of season.

Lastly, there is, I fear, ample proof of intimidation such as is described in the statements thereto attached. Intimidation can only mean more trouble all-round without meaning the slightest relief, to the planters in the shape of retention of the present system.

I seek such help as you can vouchsafe in the circumstances I have ventured to place before you. I am sending a copy to Mr Lewis.

Yours truly,  
M. K. GANDHI

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. XIII, pp. 404-06

### 13. TO SHANKARLAL<sup>1</sup> ON IDEAS ABOUT SATYAGRAHA'

[September 2, 1917]

BHAISHRI SHANKARLAL,

You want to know my ideas about Satyagraha. Here they are in brief :

The English phrase "passive resistance" does not suggest the power I wish to write about; "Satyagraha" is the right word. Satyagraha is soul-force, as opposed to armed strength. Since it is essentially an ethical weapon, only men inclined to the ethical way of life can use it wisely. Prahlad, Mirabai, and others were Satyagrahis. At the time of the Morocco fighting, the Arabs were under fire from French guns. The Arabs were fighting, as they believed, solely for their religion. Reckless of their lives, they advanced running towards the French guns with cries of "Ya Allah".<sup>2</sup> Here, there was no scope at all for fighting back to kill. The French gunners refused to fire on these Arabs and, throwing up their caps, ran to embrace these brave Arabs with shouts of joy. This is an example of Satyagraha and the success it can achieve. The Arabs were not Satyagrahis by deliberate choice. They got ready to face death under pressure of a strong impulse, and had no love in their hearts. A Satyagrahi bears no ill-will, does not lay down his life in anger, but refuses rather to submit to his "enemy" or oppressor because he has the strength himself to suffer. He should, therefore, have a courageous spirit and a forgiving and compassionate nature. Imam Hassan and Hussain<sup>3</sup> were merely two boys. They felt that an injustice had been done to them. When called upon to surrender, they refused. They knew at the time that this would mean death for them. If, however, they were to submit to injustice, they would disgrace their manhood and betray their religion. In these circumstances, they yielded to the embrace of death. The heads of these fine young men rolled on the battlefield. In my view, Islam did not attain its greatness by the power of the sword but entirely through the self-immolation of its fakirs. It is soldier-like to allow oneself to be cut down by a sword, not to use the sword on another. When he comes to realize that he is guilty of murder, the killer, if he has been in the wrong, will feel sorry

forever afterwards. The victim, however, will have gained nothing but victory even if he had acted wrongly in courting death. Satyagraha is the way of non-violence. It is, therefore, justified, indeed it is the right course, at all times and all places. The power of arms is violence and condemned as such in all religions. Even those who advocate the use of arms put various limits on it. There are no limits on Satyagraha, or rather, none except those placed by the Satyagrahi's capacity for *tapascharya*,<sup>4</sup> for voluntary suffering.

Obviously, it is irrelevant to raise issues about the legality of such Satyagraha. It is for the Satyagrahi to decide. Observers may judge Satyagraha after the event. The world's displeasure will not deter a Satyagrahi. Whether or not Satyagraha should be started is not decided by any mathematical rule. A man who believes that Satyagraha may be started only after weighing the chances of defeat and victory and assuring oneself of the certainty of victory, may be a shrewd enough politician or an intelligent man, but he is no Satyagrahi. A Satyagrahi acts spontaneously.

Satyagraha and arms have both been in use from time immemorial. We find them praised in the extant scriptures. They are the expressions, one of the *daivi sampad*<sup>5</sup> and the other of the *asuri sampad*,<sup>6</sup> We believe that in former times in India the *daivi sampad* was much the stronger of the two. Even today that is the ideal we cherish. Europe provides the most striking example of the predominance of the *asuri sampad*.

Both these forms of strength are preferable to weakness, to what we know by the rather plain but much after word 'cowardice'. Without either, Swaraj or genuine popular awakening is impossible. Swaraj achieved otherwise than through resort to one or the other will not be true Swaraj. Such Swaraj can have no effect on the people. Popular awakening cannot be brought about without strength, without manliness. Let the leaders say what they like and the Government strive its utmost, unless they and we, all of us, strengthen the forces of Satyagraha, the methods of violence are bound automatically to gain ascendancy. They are like weeds which grow wild in any soil. The crop of Satyagraha requires willingness to exert oneself or a venturesome spirit by way

of manure. Just as, moreover, the seedlings are likely to be lost among the weeds if the latter are not plucked out, so also will weeds of violence keep growing unless we keep the land free of them by *tapascharya* and, with compassion, pluck out those which have already grown. We can, with the help of Satyagraha win over those young men who have been driven to desperation and anger by what they think to be the tyranny of the Government and utilize their courage and their mettlesome spirit, their capacity for suffering, to strengthen the *daivi sampad* of Satyagraha. It is therefore very much to be desired that Satyagraha is propagated as quickly as it can be. This is in the interest both of the rulers and the ruled. The Satyagrahi desires to harass neither the Government nor anyone else. He takes no step without the fullest deliberation He is never arrogant. Consequently, he will keep away from 'boycott' but be always firm in the vow of Swadeshi as a matter of duty. He fears God alone, so that no other power can intimidate him. He will never, out of fear of punishment, leave a duty undone.

I need hardly say now that it is our duty to resort to Satyagraha to secure the release of the learned Annie Besant and her co-workers. Whether we approve of every or any action of hers is another question. I, for one, certainly do not approve of some of them; all the same, her incarceration by the Government is a great mistake and an act of injustice. I know, of course, that the Government does not think it a mistake. Maybe the people are wrong in desiring her release. The Government has acted according to its lights. What can the people do to express their outraged feelings? Petitions, etc., are good enough when one's suffering is bearable. When it is unbearable, there is no remedy but Satyagraha. Only when people find it unbearable will they, and only those who find it unbearable will, devote their all, body, mind and possessions, to securing the release of Annie Besant. This will be a powerful expression of popular feeling. It is my unshakable faith that before so great a self-sacrifice even the power of an emperor will give way. People may certainly restrain their feelings in view of the forthcoming visit of Mr Montague. That will be an expression of faith in his sense of justice. If she is not released, however, before his arrival, it will be our duty to resort to Satyagraha We do not want to

provoke the Government or put difficulties in its way. By resorting to Satyagraha, we reveal the intensity of our injured feelings and thereby serve the Government.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XIII, pp. 517-20*

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- 1 Shankarlal Ghelabhai Banker—A renowned Constructive Worker and Labour Leader of the Gandhian School of Thought; Gandhiji's associate for many years.
  - 2 Oh God!
  - 3 Sons of Ali by his wife Fatima, daughter of the Prophet. They refused to acknowledge the authority of Yazid (Caliph, 680-83). Hussain revolted against him, but was defeated and killed at Karbala.
  - 4 The practice of penance
  - 5 Godlike equipment
  - 6 Demoniac equipment
- 4,5 & 6 (vide *Bhagvad Gita, XVI, 3-4*)



#### 14. TO VINOBA BHAVE <sup>1</sup>

*[Sabarmati, After February 10, 1918]*

I do not know in what terms to praise you. Your love and your character fascinate me and so also your self-examination. I am not fit to measure your worth. I accept your own estimate and assume the position of a father to you. You seem almost to have met a long-felt wish of mine. In my view a father is, in fact, a father only when he has a son who surpasses him in virtue. A real son, likewise, is one who improves on what the father has done; if the father is truthful, firm of mind and compassionate, the son will be all this in a greater measure. This is what you have made yourself. I don't see that you owe your achievement to any effort of mine. Hence, I accept the role you offer to me as a gift of love. I shall strive to be worthy of it; and, if ever I become another Hiranyakashipu, oppose me respectfully as Prahlad, who loved God, disobeyed him.

It is true as you say that, though outside the Ashram, you have scrupulously observed its rules. I never doubted that you would return. Besides, I had your written messages, read out by Mama. May God grant you long life, and use you for the uplift of India.

I don't see any need for changes in your diet just yet. Do not give up milk for the present. On the contrary, increase the quantity, if necessary.

About the railways, no Satyagraha is required.

What is wanted is intelligent workers to carry on propaganda. In the issue in Kheda District, Satyagraha may possibly have to be offered. I am something of a tramp these days. In a day or two, I shall have to leave for Delhi.

More when you arrive. Everyone is looking forward to seeing you.<sup>2</sup>

*Blessings from,*

BAPU

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. XIV pp. 188-89

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- 1 On reading Vinoba Bhave's letter explaining why he had not returned to the Ashram for a whole year, Gandhiji remarked: "So Gorakha [the disciple] has gone one better than Machchindra [the master]. He is a Bhima indeed", and dictated this letter.
- 2 When he had finished dictating the letter, Mahadev Desai records Gandhiji as saying, "He is a great man. I have always felt that I am fortunate in my dealings with Maharashtrians and Madrasis. Of the latter, there is none now. But no Maharashtrian has ever disappointed me. And among them all, Vinoba is beyond praise!"

## 15. TO C. F. ANDREWS

[Nadiad,] July 6, 1918

MY DEAR CHARLIE,

I have your letters. I prize them. They give me only partial consolation. My difficulties are deeper than you have put them. All you raise I can answer. I must attempt in this letter to reduce my own to writing. They just now possess me to the exclusion of everything else. All the other things I seem to be doing purely mechanically. This hard thinking has told upon my physical system. I hardly want to talk to anybody. I do not want even to write anything, not even these thoughts of mine. I am therefore falling back upon dictation to see whether I can clearly express them. I have not yet reached the bottom of my difficulties, much less have I solved them. The solution is not likely to affect my immediate work. But of the failure I can now say nothing. If my life is spared I must reach the secret somehow.

You say: "Indians as a race did repudiate it, bloodlust, with full consciousness in days gone by and deliberately took their choice to stand on the side of humanity." Is this historically true? I see no sign of it either in the *Mahabharata* or the *Ramayana*, not even in my favourite Tulsidas which is much superior in spirituality to Valmiki.<sup>1</sup> I am not now thinking of these works in their spiritual meanings. The incarnations are described as certainly bloodthirsty, revengeful and merciless to the enemy. They have been credited with having resorted to tricks also for the sake of overcoming the enemy. The battles are described with no less zest than now, and the warriors are equipped with weapons of destruction such as could be possibly conceived by the human imagination. The finest hymn composed by Tulsidas in praise of Rama gives the first place to his ability to strike down the enemy... Then take the Mahomedan period. The Hindus were not less eager than the Mahomedans to fight. They were simply disorganized, physically weakened and torn by internal dissensions. The code of Manu prescribes no such renunciation that you impute to the race. Buddhism, conceived as a doctrine of universal forbearance, signally failed, and, if the

legends are true, the great Shankaracharya did not hesitate to use unspeakable cruelty in banishing Buddhism out of India. And he succeeded ! Then the English period. There has been compulsory renunciation of arms but not the desire to kill. Even among the Jains the doctrine has signally failed. They have a superstitious horror of blood (shed), but they have as little regard for the life of the enemy as a European. What I mean to say is that they would rejoice equally with anybody on earth over the destruction of the enemy. All then that can be said of India is that individuals have made serious attempts, with greater success than elsewhere, to popularize the doctrine. But there is no warrant for the belief that it has taken deep root among the people.

You say further: "My point is that it has become an unconscious instinct, which can be awakened any time as you yourself have shown." I wish it was true. But I see that I have shown nothing of the kind. When friends told me here that passive resistance was taken up by the people as a weapon of the weak, I laughed at the libel, as I called it then. But they were right and I was wrong. With me alone and a few other co-workers it came out of our strength and was described as Satyagraha, but with the majority it was purely and simply passive resistance what they resorted to, because they were too weak to undertake methods of violence. This discovery was forced on me repeatedly in Kaira. The people here being comparatively freer, talked to me without reserve, and told me plainly that they took up my remedy because they were not strong enough to take up the other, which they undoubtedly held to be far more manly than mine. I fear that the people whether in Champaran or in Kaira would not fearlessly walk to the gallows or stand a shower of bullets and yet say, in one case, 'we will not pay the revenue', and in the other, 'we will not work for you'. They have it not in them. And I contend that they will not regain the fearless spirit until they have received the training to defend themselves. Ahimsa was preached to man when he was in full vigour of life and able to look his adversaries straight in the face. It seems to me that full development of body-force is a *sine qua non* of full appreciation and assimilation of Ahimsa.

I do agree with you that India with her moral force could hold back from her shores any combination of armies from the West or the East or the North or the South. The question is, how can she cultivate this moral force? Will she have to be strong in body before she can understand even the first principles of this moral force? This is how millions blaspheme the Lord of the Universe every morning before sunrise.

"I am changeless Brahma,<sup>1</sup> not a collection of the five elements—earth, etc.—I am that Brahma whom I recall every morning as the Spirit residing in the innermost sanctuary of my heart, by whose grace the whole speech is adorned, and whom the Vedas have described as—'*Neti, neti*' ".<sup>2</sup>

I say we blaspheme the Lord of the Universe in reciting the above verse because it is a parrot recitation without any consideration of its grand significance. One Indian realizing in himself all that the verse means is enough to repel the mightiest army that can approach the shores of India. But it is not in us today and it will not come until there is an atmosphere of freedom and fearlessness on the soil. How to produce that atmosphere? Not without the majority of the inhabitants feeling that they are well able to protect themselves from the violence of man or beast. Now I think I can state my difficulty. It is clear that before I can give a child an idea of *moksha*,<sup>3</sup> I must let it grow into full manhood. I must allow it to a certain extent to be even attached to the body, and then when it has understood the body and so the world around it, may I easily demonstrate the transitory nature of the body and the world, and make it *feel* that the body is given not for the indulgence of self but for its liberation. Even so must I wait for instilling into any mind the doctrine of Ahimsa, i.e., perfect love, when it has grown to maturity by having its full play through a vigorous body. My difficulty now arises in the practical application of the idea. What is the meaning of having a vigorous body? How far should India have to go in for a training in arms-bearing? Must every individual go through the practice or is it enough that a free atmosphere is created and the people will, without having to bear arms, etc., imbibe the necessary personal courage from their surroundings? I believe that the last is the correct

view, and, therefore, I am absolutely right as things are in calling upon every Indian to join the army, always telling him at the same time that he is doing so not for the lust of blood, but for the sake of learning not to fear death. Look at this from Sir Henry Vane. I copy it from *Morley's Recollections* (Vol. II) :

Death holds a high place in the policy of great communities of the world.... It is the part of a valiant and generous mind to prefer some things before life, as things for which a man should not doubt, nor fear to die.... True natural wisdom pursueth the learning and practice of dying well, as the very end of life, and indeed he hath not spent his life ill that hath learnt to die well. It is the chiefest thing and duty of life. The knowledge of dying is the knowledge of liberty, the state of true freedom, the way to fear nothing, to live well, contentedly, and peaceable.... It is a good time to die when to live is rather a burden than a blessing, and there is more ill in life than good.

"When his hour came, Vane's actual carriage on Tower Hill was as noble and resolute as his words" is Morley's commentary. There is not a single recruiting speech in which I have not laid the greatest stress upon this part of a warrior's duty. There is no speech in which I have yet said, "Let us go to kill the Germans." My refrain is, "Let us go and die for the sake of India and the Empire", and I feel that, supposing that the response to my call is overwhelming and we all go to France and turn the scales against the Germans, India will then have a claim to be heard and she may then dictate a peace that will last. Suppose further that I have succeeded in raising an army of fearless men, they fill the trenches and with hearts of love lay down their guns and challenge the Germans to shoot them—their fellow men—I say that even the German heart will melt. I refuse to credit it with exclusive fiendishness. So it comes to this, that under exceptional circumstances, war may have to be resorted to as a necessary evil, even as the body is. If the motive is right, it may be turned to the profit of mankind and that an *ahimsaist* may not stand aside and look on with indifference but must make his choice and actively co-operate or actively resist.

Your fear about my being engrossed in the political strife and intrigues may be entirely set aside. I have no stomach for them, least at the present moment, had none even in South Africa. I was in the political life because there through lay my own liberation. Montagu said, "I am surprised to find you taking part in the Political life of the country!" Without a moment's thought I replied, "I am in it because without it I cannot do my religious and social work," and I think the reply will stand good to the end of my life.

You can't complain of my having given you only a scrap of a letter. Instead of a letter, I have inflicted upon you what may almost read like an essay. But it was necessary that you should know what is passing in my mind at the present moment. You may now pronounce your judgment and mercilessly tear my ideas to pieces where you find them to be wrong.

I hope you are getting better and stronger. I need hardly say that we shall all welcome you when you are quite able to undertake a journey.

With love,

MOHAN

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. XIV pp. 474-78

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- 1 The author of the original *Ramayana* in Sanskrit
  - 2 The Universal Soul, the Being of all creation
  - 3 Not this, not this
  - 4 Liberation

## 16. TO C. F. ANDREWS

[Nadiad,] July 29, 1918

MY DEAR CHARLIE,

I must indulge myself again. I begin to perceive a deep meaning behind the Japanese reluctance to listen to the message of a Prophet from a defeated nation.<sup>1</sup> War will be always with us. There seems to be no possibility of the whole human nature becoming transformed. *Moksha* and Ahimsa [are] for individuals to attain. Full practice of Ahimsa is inconsistent with possession of wealth, land or rearing of children. There is a real Ahimsa in defending my wife and children even at the risk of striking down the wrongdoer. It is perfect Ahimsa not to strike him but intervene to receive his blows. India did neither on the field on Plassey. We were a cowardly mob warring against one another, hungering for the Company's<sup>2</sup> silver and selling our souls for a mess of pottage. And so have we remained more or less—more rather than less—up to today. There was no Ahimsa in their miserable performance, notwithstanding examples of personal bravery and later corrections of the exaggerated accounts of those days. Yes, the Japanese reluctance was right. I do not know sufficiently what the fathers of old did. They suffered, I expect, not out of their weakness, but out of their strength. The *rishis*<sup>3</sup> of old stipulated that their religious practices were to be protected by the Kshatriyas. Rama protected Vishwa-mitra from the *rakshasas*<sup>4</sup> disturbing his meditations. He could later on dispense with this protection. I find great difficulties in recruiting but do you know that not one man has yet objected because he would not kill. They object because they fear to die. This unnatural fear of death is mining the nation. For the moment, I am simply thinking of the Hindus. Total disregard of death in a Mahomedan lad is a wonderful possession.

I have not written a coherent letter today but I have given you indications of my mental struggle.



Do you know that Sorabji is dead. He died in Johannesburg. A life full of promise has come to an abrupt end. The ways of God are inscrutable.

With deep love,

*Yours,*

MOHAN

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. Xiy pp. 509-10*

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- 1 The reference is to Rabindranath Tagore whose speech in Tokyo against Japan's imitating the West was greeted with unbecoming derision.
  - 2 East India Company
  - 3 Ascetics
  - 4 Demons

## 17. TO C. F. ANDREWS

MY DEAR CHARLIE,

You have written to me more or less regularly but owing to your wanderings, I have not known where to write. Your latest has given me a deliberate address. I hope therefore this will reach you safely wherever you may be.

I have read your article in the *New Republic*. I am not taking it in *Y.I.* It is therefore being sent to Brelvi as you have desired.

The events have moved fairly fast. I see as clearly as never before that the spirit of violence must be dealt with by non-violent action if the situation is to be at all saved. There is the growing violence of the Government expressing itself in a variety of ways—the subtle exploitation and the necessary prosecutions as a consequence of that exploitation for instance. You will note the extended meaning I have given to violence. Greed, pilfering, untruth, crooked diplomacy—all these are phases or signs or results of violent thought and action. The reaction of this violence upon the thinking educated people is remarkable and daily growing. I have therefore to deal with this double violence. To sit still at this juncture is stupid if not cowardly. I have made up my mind to run the boldest risks. I have arrived at this definite conclusion as a result of deep and prayerful thinking. Lahore revealed it all to me. The nature of the action is not yet clear to me. It has to be civil disobedience. How it is to be undertaken and by whom besides me I have not yet seen quite clearly. But the shiny cover that over-lays the truth is thinning day by day and will presently break.

I hardly wanted to write this when I begin this letter. But there you are.

Gurudev passed delightful two hours with me. He has aged considerably. We came nearer each other this time and I was so thankful. We had fully intended to meet again but Bomanji suddenly took him away to Baroda.

Manilal and his wife and baby are here. Ramdas has already. He is in Bardoli assisting Vallabhbhai's work. Mahadev is just now here.

We did not get your first volume from the publishers. I asked the *Young India* people to purchase a copy. It is on my desk at present. I have read the first chapter. It is a fair representation of my religious attitude.

Love,

SD. MOHAN

DATED 2-2-1930

*From the Photostat: S.N. 16424*

## 18. TO KASTURBA GANDHI

[Nadiad,] July 29, 1918

BELOVED KASTUR,

I know you are pining to stay with me. I feel, though, that we must go on with our tasks. At present, it is right that you remain where you are. If you but look upon all the children there as your own, quite soon you will cease to feel the absence of the latter. This is the least one can do as one gets older. As you come to love others and serve them, you will have a joy welling up from within. You should make it a point to visit early in the morning all those who may be sick, and nurse them. Special food should be prepared or kept apart for anyone who needs such food. You should visit the Maharashtrian ladies, amuse their children or take them out for a walk. You should make them feel that they are no strangers. Their health should improve.

You should converse with Nirmala on useful subjects, that is, on religious matters and the like. You may ask her to read out the *Bhagavat*<sup>1</sup> to you. She will even find the thing interesting. If you thus keep yourself busy in the service of others, believe me the mind will always be full of joy. And you must not omit to look after Punjabhai's meals and other requirements.

MOHANDAS

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. XIV p. 514

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1 One of the 18 Puranas

## 19. TO KISHORELAL MASHRUWALA<sup>1</sup>

[Nadiad,] July 29, 1918

DEAR KISHORELAL,

This letter is meant for you and Shri Narahari. To the extent that Shri Narayanarao's charge that distinctions are made between Maharashtrians and Gujaratis is justified, it is our duty to try to remove the causes. Here is a field for the exercise of non-violence. The first step to take is for you all to come together and examine how much of truth there is in the charge. The Gujarati ladies should try to mix freely with the Maharashtrian ladies. The most important thing is to see that the children make no such distinction. It is not necessary to give exaggerated importance to what I have said; just reflect over it for a moment and do all that may need to be done.

As for prayers, I place this before you for consideration. We should not take the plea of inability so far that, in the end, we find ourselves incapable of doing anything at all. We should do the teaching as well as we can and overcome our shortcomings by gradual effort. Do you think I would use the plea of inability if I was myself required to teach Sanskrit? I know that my Sanskrit is no Sanskrit. But I would certainly teach it if no other person was available and I would get over my deficiency day by day. It was in this way that Parnell topped them all in his knowledge of the rules of business in the House of Commons. You always think of your weakness and are afraid of doing anything. Would you not be happier if, using all your strength, you disposed of every task that fell to you?

In what manner should the children learn to use their strength? It is a difficult thing to teach them to defend themselves and yet not be overbearing. Till now, we used to teach them not to fight back if anyone beat them. Can we go on doing so now? What will be the effect of such teaching on a child? Will he, in his youth, be a forgiving or a timid man? My powers of thinking fail me. Use yours. This new aspect of non-violence which has revealed itself to me has enmeshed me in no end of problems. I have not found one master-key for all the riddles,

but it must be found. Shall we teach our boys to return two blows for one, or tolerate a blow from anyone weaker than themselves but to fight back, should a stronger one attack them, and take the beating that might follow ? What should one do if assaulted by a Government official? Should the boy submit to the beating at the moment and then come to us for advice, or should he do what might seem best in the circumstances and take the consequences? These are the problems which face us if we give up the royal road of turning the other cheek. Is the first course the right one because easier to take? Or is it that we shall come upon the right path only by treading through a dangerous one? The foot-tracks which go up the Himalayas lead in all directions, sometimes even away from the destination and yet an experienced guide will take us in the end to the summit. One cannot climb the Himalayas in a straight line. Can it be that, in like fashion, the path of non-violence, too, is difficult? May God protect us, may He indeed.

*Vandematram from*

MOHANDAS

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XIV PP- 515-16*

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- 1 Kishorelal G. Mashruwala (1890-1952)—Most authoritative interpreter of Gandhian thought; Gandhiji's life-long associate: Editor *Harijan* (48-52); Author of *Gandhi and Marx, Practical Non-violence*, etc

## 20. TO SAROJINI NAIDU

*November 18, 1918*

DEAR SISTER,

I appreciated your little note. I observe that you have survived the operation. I hope that it will be entirely successful, so that India may for many a year to come continue to hear your songs. For me I do not know when I shall be able to leave this sickbed of mine. Somehow or other, I cannot put on flesh and gain more strength than I have. I am making a mighty attack. The doctors of course despair in face of the self-imposed restrictions under which I am labouring. I assure you that they have been my greatest consolation during this protracted illness. I have no desire whatsoever to live upon condition of breaking those disciplinary and invigorating restrictions. For me, although they restrict the body somewhat, they free the soul and they give me a consciousness of it which I should not otherwise possess. "You can't serve God and Mammon" has a clearer and deeper meaning for me after those vows. I do not infer that they are necessary for all, but they are for me. If I broke them I feel that I should be perfectly worthless.

Do let me have an occasional line from you.

*Yours,*

M. K. GANDHI

*Collected, Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XV, pp. 64-65*

## 21. TO SRINIVAS SASTRI

*Bombay, 18th March, 1920*

DEAR MR. SASTRI,

As I took an active part in the Congress affairs last year I have been asked to interest myself still more actively to the extent of joining an organization. The demand has come from those with whom I have had the privilege of working although I was not connected with their organization. They have asked me to join the All- India Home Rule League.<sup>1</sup> I have told them that at my time of life and with views firmly formed on several matters I could only join an organization to affect its policy and not be affected by it. This does not mean that I would not keep or that I do not have an open mind to receive new light. I simply wish to emphasise the fact that any new light will have to be specially dazzling in order to entrance me. I placed before the friends the following points on which I hold decided views:

- 1 Highest honesty must be introduced in the political life of the country if we are to make our mark as a nation. This presupposes at the present moment a very firm and definite acceptance of the creed of Truth at any cost.
- 2 *Swadeshi must be our immediate goal. The future aspirants after membership of the council should be asked to pledge themselves to an out and out protection of the country's industries – specially cloth manufacture.*
- 3 Definite acceptance of Hindustani—a resultant of Hindi and Urdu as a National Language of intercourse in the immediate future. The would- be members will be therefore pledged so to work in the Imperial Councils as to introduce Hindustani and in the Local Councils the respective vernaculars at least as an optional medium for the time being till we are able to dispense with English for the conduct of National Affairs. They will also be pledged to introduce Hindustani as a compulsory second language



in our schools with Devanagari or Urdu as an optional script. English will be recognized as a language of imperial intercourse, diplomacy and international commerce.

- 4 Acceptance of the principles of redistribution of provinces so far as possible on a linguistic basis at the earliest opportunity.
- 5 Hindu-Mohamedan Unity in its essence and from a political and religious standpoint as an unalterable article of faith. This contemplates mutual help, mutual toleration and recognition of the sufferings of one section to be the sufferings of all. This will exclude, from the official programme of the League, the Unity propaganda by means of inter dining and intermarriage and will include vigorous cooperation on the Khilafat question. In my discussions amongst the friends I have also told them that I will not think of asking for official recognition of my creed of civil disobedience and that I do not belong to any party and would like to make the League a non-party organization helping all honest men if they are otherwise capable of doing justice to the service they may choose irrespective of party. The League, according to my opinion, cannot become an anti- Congress organization but it should work as it is now doing to further the interests of the Congress.

Do you advise me, knowing me as you do with my qualifications and limitations, to join the League ?

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

*Letters of Srinivasa Sastri, pp. 69-71*

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1 Organized by Mrs Besant

## 22. TO SRINIVAS SASTRI

20th March, 1920

DEAR FRIEND,

I hope you have read my proposal about the observance of what may be called the Satyagraha Week from the 6th to the 13th April. I am hoping that during the week there will be no difficulty about collecting ten lacs of rupees. If there are volunteers of known respectability and unquestionable honesty we need have no receipts but simple collection from all and sundry, moneyed men and women can go out and collect in the quarters best known to them. But it is not so much the manner as the matter which I wish to emphasize. I hope that there will be no difference of opinion as to the desirability of passing the week in the manner suggested by me or of having a memorial in connection with the massacre<sup>1</sup> of the 13th. In presenting the case to the people I would advise that the memory of the dead and not of the atrocity be treated as the impelling motive.

I trust that those who do not approve of the method of Satyagraha will not on that account refrain from participating in the collection. This should be a truly national memorial.

But there is fasting and prayer too on which I myself lay even greater stress than on the memorial; for if there is universal fasting and prayer I know that money and whatever we want will rain down from heaven without further effort. I wish to give you my experience in this direction as a specialist *par excellence*. I do not know any contemporary of mine who has reduced fasting and prayer to an exact science and who has reaped a harvest so abundant as I have. I wish that I could infect the nation with my experience and make it resort to fasting and prayer with intelligence, honesty and intensity We would thus, incredible as it may appear, do millions of things pertaining to the nation without elaborate organization and checks upon checks, but I know that fasting and prayer, to be as effective as I have found them to be in my own

experience, have to be not mechanical things but definite spiritual acts. Fasting then is crucifixion of the flesh with a corresponding freedom of the spirit and prayer is a definite conscious longing of the soul to be utterly pure,— the purity thus attained being dedicated to the realization of a particular object which is in itself pure. I hope therefore that if you believe in the ancient institution of fasting and prayer you will dedicate the 6th and the 13th to that purpose and induce your neighbours to do likewise.

Then there remain the three meetings which I doubt not you will organize and make them a thorough success.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

*Letters of Srinivasa Sastri, pp. 74-75*

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1 The reference is to Jalianwala Bagh Massacre.

### 23. TO RABINDRANATH TAGORE<sup>1</sup>

*[Bombay,] April 5, 1919*

DEAR GURUDEV,

This is an appeal to you against our mutual friend, Charlie Andrews. I have been pleading with him for a message from you for publication in the national struggle which, though in form it is only directed against a single piece of legislation, is in reality a struggle for liberty worthy of a self-respecting nation. I have waited long and patiently. Charlie's description of your illness made me hesitate to write to you personally. Your health is a national treasure and Charlie's devotion to you is superhuman. It is divine and I know that if he could help it he would not allow a single person, whether by writing or his presence, to disturb your quiet and rest. I have respected this lofty desire of his to protect you from all harm. But I find that you are lecturing in Benaras. I have, therefore, in the light of this fact corrected Charlie's description of your health which somewhat alarmed me and I venture to ask you for a message from you – a message of hope and inspiration for those who have to go through the fire. I do it because you were good enough to send me your blessings when I embarked upon the struggle. The forces arrayed against me are, as you know, enormous. I do not dread them, for I have an unquenchable belief that they are supporting untruth and that if we have sufficient faith in truth, it will enable us to overpower the former. But all forces work through human agency.

I am therefore anxious to gather round this mighty struggle the ennobling assistance of those who approve it. I will not be happy until I have received your considered opinion on this endeavour to purify the political life of the country. If you have seen anything to alter your first opinion of it, I hope you will not hesitate to make it known. I value even adverse opinions from friends, for though they may not make me change my course, they serve the purpose of so many lighthouses to give out warnings of dangers lying in the stormy paths of life. Charlie's friendship has been to me on this account an invaluable treasure, because he does not hesitate to share with me even his unconsidered notes of

dissent. This I count a great privilege. May I ask you to extend at this critical moment the same privilege that Charlie has?

I hope that you are keeping well and that you have thoroughly recuperated after your fatiguing journey through the Madras Presidency.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. G.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XV pp. 179-80*

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- 1 Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941)—Poet laureate and versatile author; was awarded Nobel Prize for Literature in 1913; Founded Shantiniketan later known as Vishva Bharati.

### 23A. FROM RABINDRANATH TAGORE

*Shanti Niketan, April 12, 1919*

DEAR MAHATMAJI

Power in all its forms is irrational,—it is like the horse that drags the carriage blindfolded. The moral element in it is only represented in the man who drives the horse. Passive resistance a force which is not necessarily moral in itself, it can be used against truth as well as for it. The danger inherent in all force grows stronger when it is likely to gain success, for then it becomes temptation.

I know your teaching is to fight against evil by the help of the good. But such a fight is for heroes and not for men led by impulses of the moment. Evil on one side naturally begets evil on the other, injustice leading to violence and insult to vengefulness. Unfortunately such a force has already been started, and either through panic or through wrath our authorities have shown us the claws whose sure effect is to drive some of us into the secret path of resentment and others into utter demoralization. In this crisis you, as a great leader of men, have stood among us to proclaim your faith in the ideal which you know to be that of India, the ideal which is both against the cowardliness of hidden revenge and the cowed submissiveness of the terror-stricken. You have said, as Lord Buddha has done in his time and for all time to come,—

*Akkodhena jine kodham, asadhun sadhuna jine,—* "Conquer anger by the power of non-anger and evil by the power of good."

This power of good must prove its truth and strength by its fearlessness, by its refusal to accept any imposition which depends for its success upon its power to produce frightfulness and is not ashamed to use its machines of destruction to terrorize a population completely disarmed. We must know that moral conquest does not consist in success, that failure does not deprive it of its dignity and worth. Those who believe in spiritual life know that to stand against

wrong which has overwhelming material power behind it is victory itself,—it is the victory of the active faith in the ideal in the teeth of evident defeat.

I have always felt, and said accordingly, that the great gift of freedom can never come to a people through charity. We must win it before we can own it. And India's opportunity for winning it will come to her when she can prove that she is morally superior to the people who rule her by their right of conquest. She must willingly accept her penance of suffering—the suffering which is the crown of the great. Armed with her utter faith in goodness she must stand unabashed before the arrogance that scoffs at the power of spirit.

And you have come to your motherland in the time of her need to remind her of her mission, to lead her in the true path of conquest, to purge her present day politics of its feebleness which imagines that it has gained its purpose when it struts in the borrowed feathers of diplomatic dishonesty.

This is why I pray most fervently that nothing that tends to weaken our spiritual freedom may intrude into your marching line, that martyrdom for the cause of truth may never degenerate into fanaticism for mere verbal forms, descending into the self-deception that hides itself behind sacred names.

With these few words for an introduction allow me to offer the following as a poet's contribution to your noble work:

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Let me hold my head high in this faith that thou art our shelter, that all fear is mean distrust of these.

Fear of man? But what man is there in this world, what king, King of kings, who is thy rival, who has hold of me for all time and in all time and in all truth?

What power is there in this world to rob me of my freedom? For do not thy arms reach the captive through the dungeon-walls, bringing unfettered release to the soul?

And must I cling to this body in fear of death, as a miser to his barren treasure? Has not this spirit of mine the eternal call to thy feast of everlasting life ?

Let me know that all pain and death are shadows of the moment; that the dark force which sweeps between me and thy truth is but the mist before the sunrise; that thou alone art mine for ever and greater than all pride of strength that dares to mock my manhood with its menace.

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Give me the supreme courage of love, this is my prayer,—the courage to speak, to do, to suffer at thy will, to leave all things or be left alone.

Give me the supreme faith of love, this is my prayer,—the faith of the life in death, of the victory in defeat, of the power hidden in the frailness of beauty, of the dignity of pain that accepts hurt, but disdains to return it.

*Very sincerely yours,*

RABINDRANATH TAGORE

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XV pp. 495-96*



## 24. TO RABINDRANATH TAGORE

*Yeravda Central Prison*

DEAR GURUDEV,

This is early morning 3 o'clock of Tuesday. I enter the fiery gate at noon. If you can bless the effort, I want it. You have been to me a true friend because you have been a candid friend often speaking your thoughts aloud. I had looked forward to a firm opinion from you one way or the other. But you have refused to criticise. Though it can now only be during my fast, I will yet prize your criticism, if your heart condemns my action. I am not too proud to make an open confession to my blunder, whatever the cost of the confession, if I find myself in error. If your heart approves of the action I want your blessing. It will sustain me. I hope I have made myself clear.

My love

M. K. GANDHI

Y.C.P.

20-9-'32

10-30 a.m.

Just as I was handing this to the Superintendent, I got your loving and magnificent wire. It will sustain me in the midst of the storm I am about to enter. I am sending you a wire.

Thank you.

M.K.G.

*From a photostat: S.N. 26400*

## 25. FROM RABINDRANATH TAGORE

*Calcutta,  
Sept. 30, 1932*

MAHATMAJI,

Our people are wonderstruck at the impossible being made possible in these few days and there is a universal feeling of immense relief at your being saved for us. Now is the opportune moment when a definite command from you will rouse the Hindu community to make a desperate effort to win over Mohamedans to our common cause. It is even more difficult of success than your fight against untouchability, for there is a deep rooted antipathy against the Muslims in most of our people and they also have not much love for ourselves. But you know how to move the hearts of those that are obdurate, and only you, I am sure, have the patient love that can conquer the hatred that has accumulated for ages. I do not know how to calculate political consequences but I believe that nothing can be too costly which would enable us to win their confidence and convince them that we understand their difficulties and their own point of view. However, it is not for me to advise you and I shall fully rely upon your own judgment as to the course that should be taken. Only one suggestion I must venture to make to you that you might ask the Hindu Maha Sabha to make a conciliatory gesture towards the other party.

I have no doubt that you are gaining strength and inspiring every moment strength and hope around you.

With reverent love,

*I am,  
Ever yours,  
RABINDRANATH TAGORE*

*From a Photostat: S.N. 18565*

## 25A. TO RABINDRANATH TAGORE

*Yervada Central Prison (Poona)*

DEAR GURUDEV,

I have your beautiful letter. I am daily seeking light. This unity between Hindus and Muslims is also life's mission. The restrictions too hamper me. But I know that when I have the light, it will pierce through the restrictions. Meanwhile I pray though I do not yet fast.

I hope you were none the worse for the strenuous work in Poona and equally fatiguing long journey.

Mahadev translated for us your beautiful sermon to the villagers on the 20th ultimo. With love,

*Yours,*

M. K. GANDHI

9-1 0-'32

Y.C.P.

*From a photostat: S.N. 23905*

## 26. FROM RABINDRANATH TAGORE

*Visva-Bharati,  
Santiniketan, Bengal,  
November 15, 1932*

DEAR MAHATMAJI,

I can realize the sanctity of the promise given by you to Kelappan, and certainly nobody from outside can presume to criticize any actions that you may decide upon guided by your own direct revelation of truth. What I fear is that following so close upon the tremendous impact made on our consciousness by the recent fast a repetition of it may psychologically be too much for us properly to evaluate and effectively to utilise for the uplift of humanity. The mighty liberating forces set in motion by your fast still continue to operate and spread from village to village, removing age-long iniquities, transforming the harshness of the callously superstitious to a new feeling of sympathy for the distressed. Were I convinced that the movement has suffered any abatement or in any way shows signs of lacunae, I would welcome even the highest sacrifice which humanity today is capable of making, the sacrifice of your life in penance for our sins. But all my experiences, of the activities of the villages around us here, as well as of other localities, convince me that the movement generated by your fast continue to gain in strength and conquer formidable obstacles. The testimony of my friends from all parts of India confirm this truth. It may be that there are reactionary elements but it seems to me that we should allow them time— the pressure of a growing public opinion is sure to win them over. Even as to the Guruvayyur temple if my information is correct, excepting a few misguided individuals, the majority of men is overwhelmingly on the side of reform. I pray and hope that the former will yet yield to sanity and constitutionally remove the legal barriers which seem to stand in the way of reform. Should we take too seriously the activities of some isolated groups of individuals and subject millions of our countrymen to the extremest form of

suffering while they themselves are unquestionably on the side of truth ? The influence which is at work may have a check if anything happens to you. Should we risk that possibility now that we have won? These are the thoughts which naturally rise in my mind and I was thinking of putting them before Mahadev when your letter arrived. I shall continue to follow events with my thoughts and prayers and fervently hope that those who now stand in the way of truth will be converted to it.

With reverent love,

*Yours,*

RABINDRANATH TAGORE

*From a photostat: S.N. 18622*

**26A. TO RABINDRANATH TAGORE**

DEAR GURUDEV,

Your previous letter comforts me. It is enough for me that you are watching and praying. With deep love,

*Yours,*

M. K. G.

24-11-'32 *From a photostat: S.N. 18622*

## 27. TO RABINDRANATH TAGORE

*Ahmedabad, July 27, 1933*

DEAR GURUDEV,

I have read your press message regarding the Yeravda Pact, in so far as it applied to Bengal. It caused me deep grief to find that you were misled by very deep affection for me and by your confidence in my judgment into approving of a Pact which was discovered to have done a grave injustice to Bengal. It is now no use my saying that affection for me should not have affected your judgment or that, confidence in my judgment ought not to have made you accept a Pact about which you had ample means for coming to an independent judgment. Knowing as I do your very generous nature, you could not have acted otherwise than you did and in spite of the discovery made by you that you have committed a grave error you would continue to repeat such errors if the occasions too were repeated.

But I am not at all convinced that there was any error made. As soon as the agitation for an amendment of the Pact arose I applied my mind to it, discussed, it with friends who ought to know and I was satisfied that there was no injustice done to Bengal. I corresponded with those who complained of injustice. But they too, including Ramanand Babu, could not convince me of any injustice. Of course our points of view were different. In my opinion, the approach to the question was also wrong.

A Pact arrived at by mutual arrangement cannot possibly be altered by the British Government except through the consent of the parties to the Pact. But no serious attempt seems to have been made to secure any such agreement. Your appearance, therefore, on the same platform as the complainants, I, for one, welcome, in the hope that it could lead to a mutual discussion, instead of a futile appeal to the British Government. If, therefore, you have, for your own part, studied the subject and have arrived at the opinion that you have now pronounced, I would like you to convene a meeting of the principal parties and

convince them that a grave injustice has been done to Bengal. If it can be proved, I have no doubt that the Pact will be reconsidered and amended so as to undo the wrong, said to have been done to Bengal. If I felt convinced that there was an error of judgment, so far as Bengal was concerned, I would strain every nerve to see that the error was rectified. You may know that up to now I have studiously refrained from saying anything in public, in defence of the Pact save by way of reiterating my opinion, accompanied by the statement that if injustice could be proved, redress would be given. I am, therefore, entirely at your service.

Just now, I am absorbed in disbanding the Ashram and devising means of saving as much as can be for public use. My service will, therefore, be available after I am imprisoned which event may take place any day after the end of this month. I hope you are keeping good health.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

DR. RABINDRANATH TAGORE

*From a photostat: S.N. 19127*



## 28. TO RABINDRANATH TAGORE

*Wardha,*

*15th November, 1934*

DEAR GURUDEV,

The All-India Village Industries Association which is being formed under the auspices of the Indian National Congress will need the assistance of expert advisers in the various matters that will engage its attention. It is not intended to trouble them to meet together or even the members of the Association but merely to advise the Association whenever reference is made to them in matters in which they possess special knowledge, e.g., in chemical analysis, food values, sanitation, distribution of village manufactures, improved methods of developing village industries, cooperation, disposal of village waste as manure, methods of village transport, education (adult and other), care of infants, and many other things too numerous to mention here.

Will you please allow your name to appear among such advisers of the All-India Village Industries Association? Naturally I approach you in the belief that the object of the Association and the method of approach to its task have your approval.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

*From a photostat: S.N. 26409*

## 29. TO RABINDRANATH TAGORE

*Segaon, Wardha,*

*19-2-'37*

DEAR GURUDEV,

I got your letter of the 10th inst. five days ago. Your trust in me and affection for me are there to be seen in every line but what about my amazing limitations? My shoulders are too weak to bear the burden you wish to impose upon me. My regard for you pulls me in one direction, my reason in the opposite and it would be folly on my part to surrender reason to emotion in a question like the one that faces me. I know that if I undertake the trust I would not need to go into details of administration but it does imply capacity for financing the Institution and what I heard two days ago has deepened my reluctance for I understand that in spite of your promise to me in Delhi you are about to go to Ahmedabad on a begging expedition. I was grieved and I would ask you on bended knee to forgo the expedition if it is really decided upon. And in any case I would beg of you to recall my appointment as one of the trustees. With love and reverence,

M. K. GANDHI

*From a photostat: S.N. 26412*

### 30. TO RABINDRANATH TAGORE

DEAR GURUDEV,

I have just received your letter of 5th inst. Had I not to go to Belgaum on the very date you will have the opening ceremony, I would most certainly have come not only for the ceremony but also to see you and Santiniketan which I have not seen now for years. As it is I shall be with you in spirit when Jawaharlal will be performing the ceremony. May the Chinese Hall be a symbol of living contact between China and India.

The letter you wrote to me over that momentary misunderstanding lies in my jacket as a treasure. It brought tears of joy to my eyes. It was so worthy of you. With love and respects,

*Yours, M. K. GANDHI*

SEGAON,

WARDHA,

9-4-'37

*From a photostat: S.N. 26413*

### 31. TO RABINDRANATH TAGORE

DEAR GURUDEV,

Your precious letter is before me. You have anticipated me. I wanted to write as soon as Sir Nilratan sent me his last reassuring wire. But my right hand needs rest. I did not want to dictate. The left hand works slow. This is merely to show you what love some of us bear towards you. I verily believe that the silent prayers from the hearts of your admirers have been heard and you are still with us. You are not a mere singer of the world. Your living word is a guide and an inspiration to thousands. May you be spared for many a long years yet to come. With deep love,

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

SEGAON, WARDHA,

23-9-'37

*From a photostat: S.N. 26415*

## 32. FROM RABINDRANATH TAGORE

*'Uttrayan'*

*Santiniketan, Bengal*

*19-2-'40*

DEAR MAHATMAJI,

You have just had a bird's-eye view this morning of our Visva-Bharati centre of activities. I do not know what estimate you have formed of its merit. You know that though this institution is national in its immediate aspect it is international in its spirit, offering according to the best of its means India's hospitality of culture to the rest of the world.

At one of its critical moments you have saved it from an utter breakdown and helped it to its legs. We are ever thankful to you for this act of friendliness.

And, now before you take your leave of Santiniketan I make my fervent appeal to you. Accept this institution under your protection, giving it an assurance of permanence if you consider it to be a national asset. Visva-Bharati is like a vessel which is carrying the cargo of my life's best treasure, and I hope it may claim special care from my countrymen for its preservation.

I hope we shall be able to keep close to a reticent expression of love and reverence in welcoming you into our Ashram and never allow it to overflow into any extravagant display of phrases. Homage to the great naturally seeks its manifestation in the language of simplicity, and we offer you these few words to let you know that we accept you as our own and as one who belongs to all humanity.

Just at this moment there are problems that darken our destiny. These, we know are crowding your path and none of us is free from their attack. Let us for a while pass beyond the bounds of this turmoil and make our meeting today a simple meeting of hearts whose memory will remain when all the moral

confusions of our distracted politics will be allayed and the eternal value of all our true endeavours will be revealed.

With love,

RABINDRANATH TAGORE

*From a photostat: S.N. 1536-37*

### 32A. TO RABINDRANATH TAGORE

*On the way to Calcutta, 19-2-'40*

DEAR GURUDEV,

The touching note that you put into my hands as we parted has gone straight into my heart. Of course Visva-Bharati is a national institution. It is undoubtedly also international. You may depend upon my doing all I can in the common endeavour to assure its permanence. I look to you to keep your promise to sleep religiously for about an hour during the day

Though I have always regarded Santiniketan as my second home, this visit has brought me nearer to it than ever before.

With reverence and love,

*Yours,*

M. K. GANDHI

*Truth Called Them Differently, p. 139*

### 33. FROM G. S. ARUNDALE <sup>1</sup>

*2nd Line Beach, Madras,  
July 26, 1919*

DEAR MR. GANDHI,

Now that you have temporarily suspended Civil Disobedience, may I venture to urge with all the earnestness at my command that you should devote some of your attention and power towards strengthening the efforts being made by so many of our most eminent leaders in London to secure for India a substantial measure of political freedom?

I am well aware of the fact that the removal of the Rowlatt Act from the Statute Book is your first duty. I entirely agree that continuous agitation against it is of vital importance. I would add that of equally vital importance is agitation against the Press Act. But now that you have for the moment given up the Civil Disobedience method of constitutional agitation, do you not think that we might all join in one great common movement having as its objective :

- 1 The improvement of the Indian Reform Bill.
- 2 The abolition of the Rowlatt Act and the Press Act.
- 3 The insistence on the safeguarding of the rights of the Indian citizen as set forth in the Declaration of Rights originally propounded at a Madras Provincial Conference, and adopted at the Bombay Special Sessions of the Indian National Congress and of the All-India Muslim League in August-September, 1918.

I do not suggest that the order in which I have placed the various aspects of this objective need necessarily be kept; but I would most earnestly urge that unity is India's need of needs, and that we are all bound to establish and maintain that unity by every means within our power.

At present, there are two roads of service—the road of Satyagrahis and the road of those who are concentrating their efforts on the Indian Reform Bill. Can we not join together for the time being, or at least for some common work?



I know well that some of your followers have no faith in any good coming out of the Indian Reform Bill. But is there not just a chance that it may be a useful stepping stone, and ought we not to support the many leaders in London who, representing India's National Assemblies and the movements, are striving hard to make the Bill worthy of the land it is intended to serve?

I am so eager in India's service, and so passionately anxious that even the smallest chance should not be overlooked, that I do not hesitate to place these considerations before you. How glorious a testimony of India's greatness were we able to make at this critical moment a united India working hard towards a common goal? I know it could be done with your help and guidance and inspiration. In a conversation the other day with Sir Sankaran Nair he told me of those essential improvements which would make the Indian Reform Bill really worth having, and which he thought could be gained. Mrs Besant, after a long interview with Mr. Montagu, wrote to me that the outlook was distinctly hopeful. Could we in India not give our strength in this direction also? Could we not join hands and work together? Could there not, at least for a few months, be one great movement, with yourself as one of its principal leaders?

As one of the rank and file, let me say that we look with sadness upon the fact that there is no little union among our leaders. We desire united action with all our hearts. Ought it not to be given to us for India's sake, and could it not come on the basis of a combined agitation in favour of the abolition of the two obnoxious Acts, of the modification of the Reform Bill, and of the Declaration of Rights? A noble and inspiring programme this, to which, I believe, there is not a single patriotic Indian who would not adhere. Your temporary suspension of Civil Disobedience should make it possible for us all to work together without the slightest reservation; and I beg you to consider whether we could not, at least for the time being, go forward together.

With all respect,

*Yours sincere admirer,*

GEORGE ARUNDALE

*Young India, 6-8-1919*

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- 1 G. S. Arundale—Theosophist; Editor, *New India*-, took active part in Annie Besant's Home Rule League.

### 33A. TO G. S. ARUNDALE

*Laburnum Road,*

*Bombay,*

*August 4, 1919*

DEAR MR. ARUNDALE,

I have read and re-read your kind letter for which I thank you. I am publishing the letter in *Young India* together with this reply.

Much as I should like to follow your advice, I feel that I am incompetent for the task set forth by you in your letter. I am fully aware of my limitations. My bent is not political but religious and I take part in politics because I feel that there is no department of life which can be divorced from religion and because politics touch the vital being of India almost at every point. It is therefore absolutely necessary that the political relations between Englishmen and ourselves should be put on a sound basis. I am endeavouring to the best of my ability to assist in the process. I do not take much interest in the reforms because they are in safe hands and because reforms *cum* Rowlatt legislation mean to my mind a stalemate. Rowlatt legislation represents a poisonous spirit. After all, the English civilians can, unless Indian opinion produces a healthy reaction upon them, reduce the reforms practically to a nullity. They distrust us and we distrust them. Each considers the other as his natural enemy. Hence the Rowlatt legislation. The Civil Service has devised the legislation to keep us down. In my opinion, that legislation is like the coil of the snake round the Indian body. The obstinacy of the Government in clinging to the hateful legislation in spite of the clearest possible demonstration they have had of public opinion against it makes me suspect the worst. With the views enunciated above, you will not wonder at my inability to interest myself in the reforms. Rowlatt legislation blocks the way. And my life is dedicated among other things to removing the block.

Let there be no mistake. Civil resistance has come to stay. It is an eternal doctrine of life which we follow consciously or unconsciously in many walks of life. It is the new and extended application of it which has caused misgivings and excitement. Its suspension is designed to demonstrate its true nature, and to throw the responsibility for the removal of the Rowlatt legislation on the Government as also the leaders (you among them) who have advised me to suspend it. But if within a reasonable time the legislation is not removed, civil resistance will follow as surely as day follows night. No weapon in the Government armoury can either overcome or destroy that eternal force. Indeed a time must come when civil resistance will be recognized as the most efficacious, if also the most harmless, remedy for securing redress of grievances.

You suggest the desirability of unity. I think unity of goal we have. But parties we shall always have and we may not find a common denominator for improvements. For some will want to go further than some others. I see no harm in a wholesome variety. What I would rid ourselves of is distrust of one another and imputation of motives. Our besetting sin is not our differences but our littleness. We wrangle over words, we fight often for shadow and lose the substance. As Mr. Gokhale used to say, our politics are a pastime of our leisure hours when they are not undertaken as a stepping stone to a carrier in life.

I would invite you and every editor to insist on introducing charity, seriousness and selflessness in our politics. And our disunion will not jar as it does today. It is not our differences that really matter. It is the meanness behind that is undoubtedly ugly.

The Punjab sentences are inextricably mixed up with the Rowlatt agitation. It is therefore as imperatively necessary to have them revised as it is to have the Act removed. I agree with you that the Press Act requires overhauling. The Government are actually promoting sedition by high-handed executive action. And I was sorry to learn that Lord Willingdon<sup>1</sup> is reported to have taken the sole responsibility for the— in my opinion unwarranted—action<sup>2</sup> against *The Hindu* and the *Swadesha Mitran*. By it, they have not lost in prestige or popularity. They have gained in both. Surely there are judges enough in the land who

would convict where a journalist has overstepped the bounds of legitimate criticism and uttered sedition. I am not enamoured of the Declaration of Rights business. When we have changed the spirit of the English civilian, we shall have made considerable headway with the Declaration of Rights. We must be honourable friends, or equally honourable enemies. We shall be neither, unless we are manly, fearless and independent. I would have us to treasure Lord Willingdon's advice and say "no" when we mean "no" without fear of consequences. This is unadulterated civil resistance. It is the way to friendliness and friendship. The other is the age-worn method of open violence on honourable lines in so far as violence can be allowed to be honourable. For me the roots of violence are in dishonour. I have therefore ventured to present to India the former, in its complete form called Satyagraha, whose roots are always in honour.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

*Young India*, 6-8-1919



- 1 Lord Willingdon (1866-1941)—Governor of Bombay; later Viceroy of India, 1931-36.
- 2 The Government had demanded a security of Rs. 2,000 each from these Madras dailies and banned *The Hindu* for Punjab and Burma.

### 34. TO EVERY ENGLISHMAN IN INDIA

DEAR FRIEND,

I wish that every Englishman will see this appeal and give thoughtful attention to it.

Let me introduce myself to you. In my humble opinion, no Indian has co-operated with the British Government more than I have for an unbroken period of twenty-nine years of public life in the face of circumstances that might well have turned any other man into a rebel. I ask you to believe me when I tell you that my co-operation was not based on the fear of the punishments provided by your laws or any other selfish motives. It was free and voluntary co-operation based on the belief that the sum total of the activity of the British Government was for the benefit of India. I put my life in peril four times for the sake of the Empire,—at the time of the Boer war when I was in charge of the Ambulance corps whose work was mentioned in General Buller's dispatches, at the time of the Zulu revolt in Natal when I was in charge of a similar corps, at the time of the commencement of the late War when I raised an Ambulance corps and as a result of strenuous training had a severe attack of pleurisy, and lastly, in fulfillment of my promise to Lord Chelmsford at the War Conference in Delhi, I threw myself in such an active recruiting campaign in Kaira District involving long and trying marches, that I had an attack of dysentery, which proved almost fatal. I did all this in the full belief that acts such as mine must gain for my country an equal status in the Empire. So late as last December I pleaded hard for a trustful cooperation. I fully believed that Mr Lloyd George would redeem his promise to the Mussalmans and that the revelations of the official atrocities in the Punjab would secure full reparation for the Punjabis. But the treachery of Mr Lloyd George and its appreciation by you, and the condonation of the Punjab atrocities have completely shattered my faith in the good intentions of the Government and the nation which is supporting it.

But though my faith in your good intentions is gone, I recognize your bravery, and I know that what you will not yield to justice and reason, you will gladly yield to bravery.

*See What This Empire Means to India:*

Exploitation of India's resources for the benefits of Great Britain, an ever-increasing military expenditure, and a civil service the most expensive in the world, extravagant working of every department in utter disregard of India's poverty, disarmament and consequent emasculation of a whole nation lest an armed nation might imperil the lives of a handful of you in our midst, traffic in intoxicating liquors and drugs for ' the purpose of sustaining a top-heavy administration, progressively repressive legislation in order to suppress an ever-growing agitation seeking to give expression to a nation's agony, degrading treatment of Indians residing in your dominions and you have shown total disregard of our feelings by glorifying the Punjab administration and flouting the Mussalman sentiment.

I know you would not mind if we could fight and wrest the sceptre from your hands. You know that we are powerless to do that, for you have ensured our incapacity to fight in open and honourable battle. Bravery on the battlefield is thus impossible for us. Bravery of the soul still remains open to us. I know you will respond to that also. I am engaged in evoking that bravery. Non-cooperation means nothing less than training in self-sacrifice. Why should we cooperate with you when we know that by your administration of this great country we are being daily enslaved in an increasing degree? This response of the people to my appeal is not due to my personality. I would like you to dismiss me, and for that matter the Ali Brothers too, from your consideration. My personality will fail to evoke any response to anti-Muslim cry if I were foolish enough to raise it, as the magic name of the Ali Brothers would fail to inspire the Mussalmans with enthusiasm if they were madly to raise an anti-Hindu cry. People flock in their thousands to listen to us because we today represent the voice of a nation groaning under your iron heels. The Ali Brothers were your friends as I was, and still am. My religion forbids me to bear any ill

will towards you. I would not raise my hand against you even if I had the power. I expect to conquer you only by my suffering. The Ali Brothers will certainly draw the sword, if they could, in defence of their religion and their country. But they and I have made common cause with the people of India in their attempt to voice their feelings and to find a remedy for their distress.

You are in search of a remedy to suppress this rising ebullition of national feeling. I venture to suggest to you that the only way to suppress it is to remove the causes. You have yet the power. You can repent of the wrongs done to Indians. You can compel Mr Lloyd George to redeem his promises. I assure you he has kept many escape-doors. You can compel the Viceroy to retire in favour of a better one, you can revise your ideas about Sir Michael O'Dwyer and General Dyer. You can compel the Government to summon a conference of the recognized leaders of the people, duly elected by them and representing all shades of opinion so as to revise means for granting Swaraj in accordance with the wishes of the people of India.

But this you cannot do unless you consider every Indian to be in reality your equal and brother. I ask for no patronage, I merely point out to you, as a friend, an honourable solution of a grave problem. The other solution, namely repression, is open to you. I prophesy that it will fail. It has begun already. The Government has already imprisoned two brave men of Panipat for holding and expressing their opinions freely. Another is on his trial in Lahore for having expressed similar opinions. One in the Oudh District is already imprisoned. Another awaits judgment. You should know what is going on in your midst. Our propaganda is being carried on in anticipation of repression. I invite you respectfully to choose the better way and make common cause with the people of India whose salt you are eating. To seek to thwart their aspirations is disloyalty to the country.

*I am,*  
*Your faithful friend,*  
M. K. GANDHI

*Young India, 27-10-1920*



### 35. TO VICEROY<sup>1</sup>

[Bardoli,

February 1, 1922]

To

His EXCELLENCY THE VICEROY,

DELHI

SIR,

Bardoli is a small *tahsil* in the Surat District in the Bombay Presidency, having a population of about 87,000 all told.

On the 29th *ultimo*, it decided under the presidency of Vithalbhai Patel to embark on mass Civil Disobedience, having proved its fitness for it in terms of the resolution of the All-India Congress Committee which met at Delhi during the first week of November last. But, as I am perhaps chiefly responsible for Bardoli's decision, I owe it to Your Excellency and the public to explain the situation under which the decision has been taken.

It was intended under the Resolution of the All- India Congress Committee before referred to, to make Bardoli the first unit for mass Civil Disobedience in order to mark the national revolt against the Government of India for its consistently criminal refusal to appreciate India's just resolve regarding the Khilafat, the Punjab and Swaraj.

Then followed the unfortunate and regrettable rioting in Bombay on the 17th November last, resulting in the postponement of the step contemplated by Bardoli.

Meanwhile, repression of virulent type has taken place with the concurrence of the Government of India in Bengal, Assam, the United Provinces, the Punjab, the Province of Delhi and, in a way, in Bihar and Orissa and elsewhere. I know that you have objected to the use of the word "repression" for describing the action of the authorities in those provinces. In my opinion, when action is taken

which is in excess of the requirements of a situation, it is undoubtedly repression. The looting of property, assaults on innocent people, the brutal treatment of prisoners in the jails including flogging can in no sense be described as legal, civilized or in any way necessary. This official lawlessness cannot be described by any other term but lawless repression. Intimidation by Non-co-operators or their sympathizers to a certain extent in connection with hartals and picketing may be admitted, but in no case can it be held to justify the wholesale suppression of peaceful volunteering or equally peaceful public meetings under a distorted use of an extraordinary law which was passed in order to deal with activities which were manifestly violent both in intention and action, nor is it possible to designate, as otherwise than repression, action taken against innocent people under what has appeared to many of us an illegal use of the ordinary law, nor again can the administrative interference with the liberty of the Press under a law that is under promise of repeal be regarded as anything but repression.

The immediate task before the country, therefore, is to rescue, from paralysis freedom of speech, freedom of association and freedom of the Press. In the present mood of the Government of India and in the present unprepared state of the country in respect of complete control of the forces of violence, Non-co-operators were unwilling to have anything to do with the Malaviya Conference whose object was to induce Your Excellency to convene a Round Table Conference. But as I was anxious to avoid all avoidable suffering, I had no hesitation in advising the Working Committee of the Congress to accept the recommendations of that Conference. Although in my opinion the terms were quite in keeping with your own requirements as I understood them through your Calcutta speech and otherwise, you have summarily rejected the proposal.

In the circumstances, there is nothing before the country but to adopt some non-violent method for the enforcement of its demands including the elementary rights of free speech, free association and free Press. In my humble opinion, the recent events are a clear departure from the civilized policy laid down by Your Excellency at the time of the generous, manly and unconditional

apology of the Ali brothers, viz., that the Government of India should not interfere with the activities of Non-co-operation so long as they remained non-violent in word and deed. Had the Government's policy remained neutral and allowed public opinion to ripen and have its full effect, it would have been possible to advise postponement of the adoption of civil disobedience of an aggressive type till the Congress had acquired fuller control over the forces of violence in the country and enforced greater discipline among the millions of its adherents. But this lawless repression (in a way unparalleled in the history of this unfortunate country) has made the immediate adoption of mass Civil Disobedience an imperative duty. The Working Committee of the Congress has restricted it to only certain areas to be selected by me from time to time, and at present it is confined only to Bardoli. I may, under the said authority, give my consent at once in respect of a group of hundred villages in Guntur in the Madras Presidency, provided they can strictly conform to the conditions of non-violence, unity among different classes, the adoption and manufacture of hand-spun Khadi and untouchability.

But before the people of Bardoli actually commence mass Civil Disobedience, I would respectfully urge you, as head of the Government of India, finally to revise your policy and set free all the non-co-operating prisoners who are convicted or under trial for non-violent activities, and to declare in clear terms a policy of absolute non-interference with all non-violent activities in the country whether they be regarding the redress of the Khilafat or the Punjab wrongs or Swaraj or any other purpose and even though they fall under the repressive sections of the Penal Code or the Criminal Procedure Code or other repressive laws subject always to the conditions of non-violence. I would further urge you to free the Press from all administrative control and to restore all the fines and forfeitures recently imposed. In thus urging I am asking Your Excellency to do what is being done today in every country which is deemed to be under civilized government. If you can see your way to make the necessary declaration within seven days of the date of publication of this manifesto, I shall be prepared to advise postponement of civil disobedience of an aggressive character, till the imprisoned workers have, after their discharge, reviewed the

whole situation and considered the position *de novo*. If the Government makes the requested declaration, I shall regard it as an honest desire on its part to give effect to public opinion and shall have no hesitation in advising the country to be engaged in further moulding public opinion without violent restraint from either side and trust to its working to secure the fulfillment of its unalterable demands. Aggressive civil disobedience in that case will be taken up only when the Government departs from its policy of strictest neutrality or refuses to yield to clearly expressed opinion of the vast majority of the people of India.

*I remain,*

*Your Excellency's faithful  
servant and friend,*

M. K. GANDHI

*Young India, 9-2-1922*



1. Lord Reading (1860-1935) – Viceroy and Governor General of India, 1921-26.

### 36. TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU<sup>1</sup>

*Bardoli, February 19, 1922*

MY DEAR JAWAHARLAL,

I see that all of you are terribly cut up over the resolutions of the Working Committee. I sympathize with you, and my heart goes out to Father. I can picture to myself the agony through which he must have passed, but I also feel that this letter is unnecessary because I know that the first shock must have been followed by a true understanding of the situation. Let us not be obsessed by Devidas's youthful indiscretions. It is quite possible that the poor boy has been swept off his feet and that he has lost his balance, but the brutal murder of the constables by an infuriated crowd which was in sympathy with Non-cooperation cannot be denied. Nor can it be denied that it was politically minded crowd. It would have been criminal not to have heeded such a clear warning.

I must tell you that this was the last straw. My letter to the Viceroy was not sent without misgivings as its language must make it clear to anyone. I was much disturbed by the Madras doings, but I drowned the warning voice. I received letters both from Hindus and Mohammedans from Calcutta, Allahabad and the Punjab, all these before the Gorakhpur incident, telling me that the wrong was not all on the Government side, that our people were becoming aggressive, defiant and threatening, that they were getting out of hand and were not non-violent in demeanour. Whilst the Ferozepur Jirka incident<sup>2</sup> is discreditable to the Government, we are not altogether without blame. Hakimji complained about Bareilly. I have bitter complaints about Jajjar. In Shahajanpur too there has been a forcible attempt to take possession of the Town Hall. From Kanouj to the Congress Secretary himself telegraphed saying that the volunteer boys had become unruly and were picketing a High School and preventing youngsters under 16 from going to the school. 36,000 volunteers were enlisted in Gorakhpur, not 100 of whom conformed to the Congress pledge. In Calcutta Jamnalalji tells me there is utter disorganization, the volunteers wearing foreign cloth and certainly not pledged to non-violence.

With all this news in my possession and much more from the South, the Chauri Chaura news came like a powerful match to ignite the gunpowder, and there was a blaze. I assure you that if the thing had not been suspended we would have been leading not a non-violent struggle but essentially a violent struggle. It is undoubtedly true that non-violence is spreading like the scent of the otto of roses throughout the length and breadth of the land, but the foetid smell of violence is still powerful, and it would be unwise to ignore or underrate it. The cause will prosper by this retreat. The movement had unconsciously drifted from the right path. We have come back to our moorings, and we can again go straight ahead. You are in as disadvantageous a position as I am advantageously placed for judging events in this due proportion.

May I give you my own experience of South Africa? We had all kinds of news brought to us in South Africa in our jails. For two or three days during my first experience I was glad enough to receive tit-bits, but I immediately realized the utter futility of interesting myself in this illegal gratification. I could do nothing, I could send no message profitably, and I simply vexed my soul uselessly. I felt that it was impossible for me to guide the movement from the Jail. I therefore simply waited till I could meet those who were outside and talk to them freely, and then too I want you to believe me when I tell you that I took only an academic interest because I felt it was not my province to judge anything, and I saw how unerringly right I was. I well remember how the thoughts I had up to the time of my discharge from the jail on every occasion were modified immediately after discharge and after getting first-hand information myself. Somehow or other the jail atmosphere does not allow you to have all the bearings in your mind. I would therefore like you to dismiss the outer world from your view altogether and ignore its existence. I know this is a most difficult task, but if you take up some serious study and some serious manual work you can do it. Above all, whatever you do, don't you be disgusted with the spinning wheel. You and I might have reason to get disgusted with ourselves for having done many things and having believed many things, but we shall never have the slightest cause for regret that we have pinned our faith to the spinning wheel or that we have spun so much good yarn per day in the

name of the motherland. You have the *Song Celestial* with you. I cannot give you the inimitable translation of Edwin Arnold, but this is the rendering of the Sanskrit text. "There is no waste of energy; there is no destruction in this. Even a little of this Dharma saves one from many a pitfall." "This Dharma" in the original refers to Karma Yoga, and the Karma Yoga of our age is the spinning wheel. I want a cheering letter from you after the freezing dose you have sent me through Pyarelal.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

*A Bunch of Old Letters, pp. 22-25*

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- 1 In December 1921, began the first mass jail going period in the Non-cooperation Movement in India. Tens of thousands of persons were sent to prison for some technical breach of the law. Most of us, including my father, were in prison when we heard that Mahatma Gandhi had suddenly ordered the withdrawal of this movement. The reason given was that an excited crowd of peasants at Chauri Chaura in Gorakhpur District of the U.E had attacked a police outpost, set fire to it and killed a few policemen who were there. All of us in prison were greatly distressed at this sudden withdrawal of a great movement because of the mis-behaviour of a group of people in a village. Mahatma Gandhi was at that time free, that is, not in prison. We managed to convey to him from prison our deep distress at the step he had taken. This letter was written by Gandhiji on that occasion. It was given to my sister (now Vijayalakshmi Pandit) to read out to us in prison during an interview.
  - 2 The shooting of December 23, 1921

### 37. TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

*The Ashram, Sabarmati,*

*January, 17, 1928*

MY DEAR JAWAHARLAL,

I must dictate and save time and give rest to my aching shoulder. I wrote to you on Sunday about Fenner Brockway. I hope you got that letter in due time.

Do you know that it was because you were the chief partner in the transactions referred to that I wrote the articles you have criticized, except of course about the so-called 'All India Exhibition' ? I felt a kind of safety that in view of the relations between you and me my writings would be taken in the spirit in which they were written. However I see that they were a misfire all round. I do not mind it. For, it is evident that the articles alone could deliver you from the self-suppression under which you have been labouring apparently for so many years. Though I was beginning to detect some differences in viewpoint between you and me, I had no notion whatsoever of the terrible extent of these differences. Whilst you were heroically suppressing yourself for the sake of the nation and in the belief that by working with and under me in spite of yourself, you would serve the nation and come out scatheless, you were chafing under the burden of this unnatural self-suppression. And, while you were in that state, you overlooked the very things which appear to you now as my serious blemishes. I could show you from the pages of *Young India* equally strong articles written by me, when I was actively guiding the C., with reference to the doings of the All India Congress Committee. I have spoken similarly at the All India Congress Committee meetings whenever there has been irresponsible and hasty talk or action. But whilst you were under stupefaction these things did not jar on you as they do now. And it seems to me therefore useless to show you the discrepancies in your letter. What I am now concerned with is future action.



If any freedom is required from me I give you all the freedom you may need from the humble, unquestioning allegiance that you have given to me for all these years and which I value all the more for the knowledge I have now gained of your state. I see quite clearly that you must carry on open warfare against me and my views. For, if I am wrong I am evidently doing irreparable harm to the country and it is your duty after having known it to rise in revolt against me. Or, if you have any doubt as to the correctness of your conclusions, I shall gladly discuss them with you personally. The differences between you and me appear to me to be so vast and radical that there seems to be no meeting ground between us. I can't conceal from you my grief that I should lose a comrade so valiant, so faithful, so able and so honest as you have always been; but in serving a cause, comradeships have got to be sacrificed. The cause must be held superior to all such considerations. But this dissolution of comradeship—if dissolution must come in no way affects our personal intimacy. We have long become members of the same family, and we remain such in spite of grave political differences. I have the good fortune to enjoy such relations with several people. To take Sastri for instance, he and I differ in the political outlook as poles asunder, but the bond between him and me that sprung up before we knew the political differences has persisted and survived the fiery ordeals it had to go through.

I suggest a dignified way of unfurling your banner. Write to me a letter for publication showing your differences. I will print it in *Young India* and write a brief reply. Your first letter I destroyed after reading and replying to it, the second I am keeping, and if you do not want to take the trouble of writing another letter, I am prepared to publish the letter that is before me. I am not aware of any offensive passage in it. But if I find any, you may depend upon my removing every such passage. I consider that letter to be a frank and honest document.

*With love,*

BAPU

*A Bunch of Old Letters*, pp. 58-60

### 38. TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

*Segaon, Wardha, July 29, 1939*

MY DEAR JAWAHARLAL,

Instead of guiding the Dhami people I have passed them on to you. I feel that you should discharge this burden without any interference from me. The idea in the States seems to be to isolate and ignore the Congress and hence the States' Conference. I have already suggested in *Harijan* that no State association or *mandal* should act on its own without reference to your committee. I should act, if at all, through you, i.e. when you refer to me, I should give my opinion as I do in respect of the W.C. I told the Gwalior people also likewise yesterday. You will have to reorganize your committee a bit, if it is to function properly.

After all I could not go to Kashmir. Sheikh Abdulla and his friends won't tolerate the idea of my being State guest. Banking on my past experience, I had accepted State offer in anticipation of Sheikh Abdulla's approval. But I saw that I was mistaken. I therefore cancelled the acceptance of the State hospitality and accepted the Sheikh's. This embarrassed the State. So I cancelled the visit altogether. I was guilty of double stupidity in daring to think of going there without you and in not getting Sheikh's permission before accepting the State offer. I had thought that I would serve the people by accepting the State offer. I must confess that I was not pleased with my contact [with] the Sheikh and his friends. They seemed to all of us to be most unreasonable. Khan Saheb reasoned with them. But it was to no purpose.

Your visit to Ceylon was glorious. I don't mind what the immediate outcome is. Saleh Tyabji asks me to send you to Burma and Andrews thinks of you in connection with S.A. As for Ceylon the idea of a Congress deputation came to me spontaneously, not so these two even after the promptings. But of these when we meet. I hope you are fresh and that Krishna is enjoying herself.

*Love, BAPU*

*A Bunch of Old Letters, pp. 387-88*

### 39. TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU \*

October 5, 1945

MY DEAR JAWAHARLAL,

I have been desirous of writing to you for many days but have not been able to do so before today. The question of whether I should write to you in English or Hindustani was also in my mind. I have at length preferred to write to you in Hindustani.

The first thing I want to write about is the difference of outlook between us. If the difference is fundamental then I feel the public should also be made aware of it. It would be detrimental to our work for Swaraj to keep them in the dark. I have said that I still stand by the system of Government envisaged in *Hind Swaraj*. These are not mere words. All the experience gained by me since 1908 when I wrote the booklet has confirmed the truth of my belief. Therefore if I am left alone in it I shall not mind, for I can only bear witness to the truth as I see it. I have not *Hind Swaraj* before me as I write. It is really better for me to draw the picture anew in my own words. And whether it is the same as I drew in *Hind Swaraj* or not is immaterial for both you and me. It is not necessary to prove the Tightness of what I said then. It is essential only to know what I feel today. I am convinced that if India is to attain true freedom and through India the world also, then sooner or later the fact must be recognized that people will have to live in villages, not in towns, in huts, not in palaces. Crores of people will never be able to live at peace with each other in towns and palaces. They will then have no recourse but to resort to both violence and untruth. I hold that without truth and non-violence there can be nothing but destruction for humanity. We can realize truth and non-violence only in the simplicity of village life and this simplicity can best be found in the Charkha and all that Charkha connotes. I must not fear if the world today is going the wrong way. It may be that India too will go that way and like the proverbial moth burn itself eventually in the flame round which it dances more and more furiously. But it is my bounden duty up to my last breath to try to protect India

and through India the entire world from such a doom. The essence of what I have said is that man should rest content with what are his real needs and become self-sufficient. If he does not have this control he cannot save himself. After all the world is made up of individuals just as it is the drops that constitute the ocean. I have said nothing new. This is a well-known truth.

But I do not think I have stated this in *Hind Swaraj*. While I admire modern science, I find that it is the old looked at in the true light of modern science which should be re-clothed and refashioned aright. You must not imagine that I am envisaging our village life as it is today. The village of my dreams is still in my mind. After all every man lives in the world of his dreams. My ideal village will contain intelligent human beings. They will not live in dirt and darkness as animals. Men and women will be free and able to hold their own against anyone in the world. There will be neither plague, nor cholera nor small pox; no one will be idle, no one will wallow in luxury. Everyone will have to contribute his quota of manual labour. I do not want to draw a large scale picture in detail. It is possible to envisage railways, post and telegraph offices, etc. For me it is material to obtain the real article and the rest will fit into the picture afterwards. If I let go the real thing, all else goes.

On the last day of the Working Committee it was decided that this matter should be fully discussed and the position clarified after a two or three days' session. I should like this. But whether the Working Committee sits or not I want our position vis-a-vis each other to be clearly understood by us for two reasons. Firstly, the bond that unites us is not only political work. It is immeasurably deeper and quite unbreakable. Therefore it is that I earnestly desire that in the political field also we should understand each other clearly. Secondly neither of us thinks himself useless. We both live for the cause of India's freedom and we would both gladly die for it. We are not in need of the world's praise. Whether we get praise or blame is immaterial to us. There is no room for praise in service. I want to live to 125 for the service of India but I must admit that I am now an old man. You are much younger in comparison and

I have therefore named you as my heir. I must, however, understand my heir and my heir should understand me. Then alone shall I be content.

One other thing. I asked you about joining the Kasturba Trust and the Hindustani Prachar Sabha. You said you would think over the matter and let me know. I find your name is already in the Hindustani Prachar Sabha. Nanavati reminded me that he had been to both you and Maulana Sahib in regard to this matter and obtained your signature in 1942. That, however, is past history. You know the present position of Hindustani. If you are still true to your then signature I want to take work from you in this Sabha. There won't be much work and you will not have to travel for it.

The Kasturba Fund work is another matter. If what I have written above does not and will not go down with you I fear you will not be happy in the Trust and I shall understand.

The last thing I want to say to you is in regard to the controversy that has flared up between you and Sarat Babu. It has pained me. I have not really grasped it. Is there anything more behind what you have said? If so you must tell me.

If you feel you should meet me to talk over what I have written we must arrange a meeting.

You are working hard. I hope you are well. I trust Indu too is fit.

*Blessings from,*  
BAPU

*A Bunch of Old Letters, pp. 505-07*

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\* Original in Hindi

#### 40. FROM JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

*Anand Bhavan, Allahabad,*

*October 9, 1945*

MY DEAR BAPU,

I have received today, on return from Lucknow, your letter of the 5th October. I am glad you have written to me fully and I shall try to reply at some length but I hope you will forgive me if there is some delay in this, as I am at present tied up with close-fitting engagements. I am only here now for a day and a half. It is really better to have informal talks but just at present I do not know when to fit this in. I shall try.

Briefly put, my view is that the question before us is not one of truth versus untruth or non-violence versus violence. One assumes as one must that true co-operation and peaceful methods must be aimed at and a society which encourages these must be our objective. The whole question is how to achieve this society and what its content should be. I do not understand why a village should necessarily embody truth and nonviolence. A village, normally speaking, is backward intellectually and culturally and no progress can be made from a backward environment. Narrow-minded people are much more likely to be untruthful and violent.

Then again we have to put down certain objectives like a sufficiency of food, clothing, housing, education, sanitation, etc. which should be the minimum requirements for the country and for everyone. It is with these objectives in view that we must find out specifically how to attain them speedily. Again it seems to me inevitable that modern means of transport as well <sup>as</sup> many other modern developments must continue and be developed. There is no way out of it except to have them. If that is so inevitably a measure of heavy industry exists. How far that will fit in with a purely village society? Personally I hope that heavy or light industries should all be decentralized as far as possible and this is feasible now because of the development of electric power. If two types

of economy exist in the country there should be either conflict between the two or one will overwhelm the other.

The question of independence and protection from foreign aggression, both political and economic, has also to be considered in this context. I do not think it is possible for India to be really independent unless she is a technically advanced country. I am not thinking for the moment in terms of just armies but rather of scientific growth. In the present context of the world we cannot even advance culturally without a strong- background of scientific research in every department. There is today in the world a tremendous acquisitive tendency both in individuals and groups and nations, which leads to conflicts and wars. Our entire society is based on this more or less. That basis must go and be transformed into one of co-operation, not of isolation which is impossible. If this is admitted and is found feasible then attempts should be made to realize it not in terms of an economy, which is cut off from the rest of the world, but rather one which co-operates. From the economic or political point of view an isolated India may well be a kind of vacuum which increases the acquisitive tendencies of others and thus creates conflicts.

There is no question of palaces for millions of people. But there seems to be no reason why millions should not have comfortable up-to-date homes where they can lead a cultured existence. Many of the present overgrown cities have developed evils which are deplorable. Probably we have to discourage this overgrowth and at the same time encourage the village to approximate more to the culture of the town.

It is many years ago since I read *Hind Swaraj* and I have only a vague picture in my mind. But even when I read it 20 or more years ago it seemed to me completely unreal. In your writings and speeches since then I have found much that seemed to me an advance on that old position and an appreciation of modern trends. I was therefore surprised when you told us that the old picture still remains intact in your mind. As you know, the Congress has never considered that picture, much less adopted it. You yourself have never asked it to adopt it except for certain relatively minor aspects of it. How far it is

desirable for the Congress to consider these fundamental questions, involving varying philosophies of life, it is for you to judge. I should imagine that a body like the Congress should not lose itself in arguments over such matters which can only produce great confusion in people's minds resulting in inability to act in the present. This may also result in creating barriers between the Congress and others in the country. Ultimately of course this and other questions will have to be decided by representatives of free India. I have a feeling that most of these questions are thought of and discussed in terms of long ago, ignoring the vast changes that have taken place all over the world during the last generation or more. It is 38 years since Hind Swaraj was written. The world has completely changed since then, possibly in a wrong direction. In any event any consideration of these questions must keep present facts, forces and the human material we have today in view, otherwise it will be divorced from reality. You are right in saying that the world, or a large part of it, appears to be bent on committing suicide. That may be an inevitable development of an evil seed in civilization that has grown. I think it is so. How to get rid of this evil, and yet how to keep the good in the present as in the past is our problem. Obviously there is good too in the present.

These are some random thoughts hurriedly written down and I fear they do injustice to the grave import of the questions raised. You will forgive me, I hope, for this jumbled presentation. Later I shall try to write more clearly on the subject.

About Hindustani Prachar Sabha and about Kasturba Fund, it is obvious that both of them have my sympathy and I think they are doing good work. But I am not quite sure about the manner of their working and I have a feeling that this is not always to my liking. I really do not know enough about them to be definite. But at present I have developed distaste for adding to my burden of responsibilities when I feel that I cannot probably undertake them for lack of time. These next few months and more are likely to be fevered ones for me and others. It seems hardly desirable to me, therefore, to join any responsible committee for form's sake only.



About Sarat Bose, I am completely in the dark; as to why he should grow so angry with me, unless it is some past grievance about my general attitude in regard to foreign relations. Whether I was right or wrong it does seem to me that Sarat has acted in a childish and irresponsible manner. You will remember perhaps that Subhash did not favour in the old days the Congress attitude towards Spain, Czechoslovakia, Munich and China. Perhaps this is a reflection of that old divergence of views. I know of nothing else that has happened.

I see that you are going to Bengal early in November, Perhaps I may visit Calcutta for three or four days just then. If so, I hope to meet you.

You may have seen in the papers an invitation by the President of the newly formed Indonesian Republic to me and some others to visit Java. In view of the special circumstances of the case I decided immediately to accept this invitation subject of course to my getting the necessary facilities for going there. It is extremely doubtful if I shall get the facilities, and so probably I shall not go. Java is just two days by air from India, or even one day from Calcutta. The Vice-President of this Indonesian Republic, Mohammad Hatta, is a very old friend of mine. I suppose you know that the Javanese population is almost entirely Muslim.

I hope you are keeping well and have completely recovered from the attack of influenza.

*Yours affectionately,*

JAWAHARLAL

MAHATMA GANDHI,  
NATURE CURE CLINIC, 6, TODIWALA ROAD, POONA

*A Bunch of Old Letters, pp. 507-11*

#### 41. TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU \*

*Poona,*

*November 13, 1945*

MY DEAR JAWAHARLAL,

Our talk of yesterday's made me glad. I am sorry it could not be longer. I feel it cannot be finished in a single sitting, but will necessitate frequent meetings between us. I am so constituted that, if only I were physically fit to run about, I would myself overtake you, wherever you might be, and return after a couple of days' heart-to-heart talk with you. I have done so before. It is necessary that we understand each other well and that others also should clearly understand where we stand. It would not matter if ultimately we might have to agree to differ so long as we remained one at heart as we are today. The impression that I have gathered from our yesterday's talk is that there is not much difference in our outlook. To test this I put down below the gist of what I have understood. Please correct me if there is any discrepancy.

- 1 The real question, according to you, is how to bring about man's highest intellectual, economic, political and moral development. I agree entirely.
- 2 In this there should be an equal right and opportunity for all.
- 3 In other words, there should be equality between the town-dwellers and the villagers in the standard of food and drink, clothing and other living conditions. In order to achieve this equality today people should be able to produce for themselves the necessaries of life, i.e. clothing, food-stuffs, dwelling and lighting and water.
- 4 Man is not born to live in isolation but is essentially a social animal independent and interdependent. No one can or should ride on another's back. If we try to work out the necessary conditions for such a life, we are forced to the conclusion that the unit of society should be a village, or call it a small and manageable group of people who would, in the ideal, be

self-sufficient (in the matter of their vital requirements) as a unit and bound together in bonds of mutual cooperation and inter-dependence.

If I find that so far I have understood you correctly, I shall take up consideration of the second part of the question in my next.

I had got Rajkumari to translate into English my first letter to you. It is still lying with me. I am enclosing for you an English translation of this. It will serve a double purpose. An English translation might enable me to explain myself more fully and clearly to you. Further, it will enable me to find out precisely if I have fully and correctly understood you.

Blessings for Indu.

*Blessings from,*

BAPU

*A Bunch of Old Letters, pp. 511-12*



\* Original in Hindi

## 42. TO KONDA VENKATAPPAYYA<sup>1</sup>

*Satyagraha Ashram,*

*Sabarmati,*

*March 4, 1922*

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I have kept your letter of the 19th February in order to be able to write to you at length.

Your first question is whether the requisite non-violent atmosphere can at all be attained and if so when. This is really a question as old as non-cooperation. It puzzled me to find some of the closest and most esteemed of co-workers putting the question as if the requirement was a new thing. I have not the shadow of a doubt that, if we can secure workers with an abiding faith in non-violence and in themselves we can ensure the non-violent atmosphere required for the working of civil disobedience. The discovery I have made during these few days is that very few understand the nature of non-violence. The meaning of the adjective "civil" before "disobedience" is of course "non-violent". Why should the people not be trained to refrain from participating in activities which are likely to throw them off their balance? I agree that it will be difficult to get 30 crores of people to be non-violent, but I refuse to believe that it is difficult, if we can get intelligent and honest workers, to make people who are not actively participating in the movement remain indoors. Now, at Chauri Chaura<sup>2</sup> the procession was deliberately formed by volunteers. It was wickedly taken in the direction of the Thana. In my opinion, the forming of the procession itself was easily avoidable. Having been formed, it was the easiest thing to avoid passing the Thana. Two or three hundred volunteers are reported to have been in the procession. I hold that it was equally easy for this large number of volunteers to have effectively prevented the atrocious murder of the constables or at least for every one of them to have perished in the flames lit by the mob which they were leading. I must not also omit to tell you that these

men knew that trouble was brewing, knew that the Sub-Inspector was there, knew that there was collision between him and the people on two former occasions. Was not the Chauri Chaura tragedy absolutely capable of being avoided? I admit that nobody plotted the murder, but the volunteers should have foreseen the consequence of what they were doing. Of the Bombay tragedy I was myself a witness. The workers neglected the duty of telling the people, whilst they were preparing them about boycott, to remain tolerant, as also of posting volunteers in areas visited by the labouring population. I myself neglected the duty of putting down every insolent laying of hands upon other people's turbans and caps. Finally take Madras. Not one single incident which happened in Madras was unavoidable. I hold the Congress Committee responsible for all that happened in Madras. With the experience of Bombay fresh in their minds they could, even if they were not fully confident, have avoided hartal. The fact is in every case all the workers did not understand the full purpose of non-violence nor its implications. They liked and loved excitement, and underneath these vast demonstrations was an idea unconsciously lurking in the breast that it was a kind of demonstration of force, the very negation of non-violence. To follow out non-violence as a policy surely does not require saints for its working, but it does require honest workers who understand what is expected of them.

You say that the people work under the spell of one year's limit. There is much truth in what you say, but there again, if the people worked slowly under that spell, they were certainly not working for Swaraj. I can understand some temporary excitement, but excitement must not be the whole thing, nor the main part of a great national activity. Swaraj after all is not a mango trick; it is a steady evolution, steady growing into strength such that a period must arrive when our strength has assumed such proportions as to tell upon the usurpers, but every moment of our activity we are gaining Swaraj.

Certainly a peaceful Tehsil at the foot of the Himalayas will be affected by a violent hamlet situated near the Cape Comorin if there is a vital connection between the two, as there must be if they are both integral parts of India and

your Swaraj flag is to dominate both. At the same time, for mass civil disobedience in Bardoli, I would certainly have thought nothing of anything happening in an out-of-the-way Tehsil which had not come under the influence of the Congress and which had not resorted to violence in connection with any Congress activity. You cannot predicate any such want of connection about Gorakhpur, Bombay or Madras. Violence broke out in connection with a national activity. You have the forcible illustration of Malabar. There it was organized and sustained violence offered by the Moplahs, and yet I did not allow Malabar to affect any of our plans, nor have I altered my views during all these months. I can still distinguish between Malabar and Gorakhpur. The Moplahs themselves had not been touched by the non-cooperation spirit. They are not like the other Indians nor even like the other Mussalmans. I am prepared to admit that the movement had an indirect effect upon them. The Moplah revolt was so different in kind that it did not affect the other parts of India, whereas Gorakhpur was typical, and therefore, if we had not taken energetic steps, the infection might easily have spread to the other parts of India.

You say that, individual civil disobedience being withdrawn, there will be no opportunity to test the temper of the people. We do not want to test the temper. On the contrary we want the people to become immersed in industries and constructive activities so that their temper is not exposed to the constant danger of being ruffled. A man wishing to gain self-control instead of exposing himself to temptations avoids them, though, at the same time, he is ready for them if they come to him unsought and in spite of his wanting to avoid them.

We certainly have not suspended any item of non-cooperation. This you will see clearly brought out in *Young India*. I am satisfied that our success depends upon our cultivating exemplary self-restraint and not disobeying even unseen orders of prohibition of meetings. We must learn to conduct our campaign in spite of prohibitions and without civil disobedience. If the people want excitement, we must refuse to give it to them even though we have to risk unpopularity and find ourselves in a hopeless minority. Even a few hundred chosen workers, scattered throughout the length and breadth of the country, solidly following

the programme will create a far more lasting impression than a haphazard mass movement undertaken in order to truckle to the multitude. I would like you therefore to become introspective and to find out for yourself the truth. If you still consider that there is a flaw in the reasoning I have put before you, I would like you to combat the position I have taken. I want us all to think originally and to arrive at independent conclusions. A drastic overhauling of ourselves and of the movement is absolutely necessary. I do not mind having finally to find out that non-violence is an impracticable dream. If such is our belief, it will be at least an honest belief. For me there is but one thing. I would love to contemplate the dreamland of non-violence in preference to the practicable reality of violence. I have burnt my boats, but that has nothing to do with any of my co-workers. The majority of them have come into the movement as a purely political movement. They do not share my religious beliefs, and I do not seek to thrust them upon them.

You must get better soon and, if necessary, you should come here to further discuss the matter.

*Yours sincerely,*

*From a photostat: S. N. 7977*



- 1 President, Andhra Provincial Congress Committee
- 2 A village in Gorakhpur district of Uttar Pradesh where on February 5, 1922, the mob set fire to the police station and 22 constables were burnt alive. Gandhiji was profoundly shocked by this and imposed on himself a five days' fast on February 12.

### 43. TO T. PRAKASAM<sup>1</sup>

*Satyagraha Ashram,*

*Sabarmati,*

*March 7, 1922*

MY DEAR PRAKASAM,

You ask me for my future programme. I have just sent you a telegram as follows:

"IN AHMEDABAD TILL SATURDAY SURAT SUNDAY MONDAY BARDOLI TUESDAY."

But that is Government willing, for I have persistent rumours being thrust upon me that my leave is now more than overdue, and I am also told that I shall be relieved of my burdens inside of 7 days. Subject, therefore, to that happy contingency you have the foregoing programme. If I am arrested, I look to you and all who are out to keep absolute peace. It will be the best honour that the country can do me. Nothing could pain me more, in whatever jail I may find myself, than to be informed by my custodians that a single head has been broken by or on behalf of non-co-operators, a single man had been insulted or a single building damaged. If the people or the workers have at all understood my message, they will keep exemplary peace. I would certainly be delighted if on the night following my arrest there was throughout the length and breadth of India a bonfire of all foreign cloth voluntarily surrendered by the people without the slightest compulsion having been exercised and a fixed determination to use nothing but Khaddar and, till then, in the glorious weather of India, to wear nothing but a piece of loin-cloth, and in the case of Mussalmans the minimum required by religious obligation. I would certainly love to be told that there was a phenomenal demand for spinning-wheels and that all workers who did not know hand-spinning had commenced it in right earnest. The more I think over our future programme and the more news I get about the spirit of violence that has silently but surely crept into our ranks, the more convinced I am that even individual civil disobedience would be wrong. It



would be much better to be forsaken by everybody and to be doing the right thing than to be doing the wrong thing for the sake of boasting a large following. Whether we are few or whether we are many, so long as we believe in the programme of non-violence, there is no absolution from the full constructive programme. Enforce it today, and the whole country is ready for mass civil disobedience tomorrow. Fail in the effort, and you are not ready even for individual civil disobedience. Nor is the matter difficult. If all the members of the All- India Congress Committee and Provincial Congress Committees are convinced of the correctness of the premises I have laid down, the same can be done. The pity of it is that they are not so convinced. A policy is a temporary creed liable to be changed, but while it holds good, it has got to be pursued with apostolic zeal.

*Yours sincerely,*

*From a photostat of the typewritten office copy: S. N. 7973*

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- 1 T. Prakasam (1876-1955)—Editor, *Swarajya*; known as "Andhra Kesari"—the Lion of Andhra, Chief Minister of Madras and later, of Andhra Pradesh.

#### 44. TO HAKIM AJMAL KHAN <sup>1</sup>

*Sabarmati Jail, March 12, 1922*

MY DEAR HAKIMJI,

Since my arrest, this is the first letter I have commenced to write after having ascertained that under the jail rules I am entitled to write as many letters as I like as an under-trial prisoner. Of course, you know that Mr Shankerlal Banker is with me. I am happy that he is with me. Everyone knows how near he has come to me—naturally, therefore, both of us are glad that we have been arrested together.

I write this to you in your capacity as Chairman of the Working Committee and, therefore, leader of both Hindus and Mussalmans or, better still, of all India.

I write to you also as one of the foremost leaders of Mussalmans, but, above all, I write this to you as an esteemed friend. I have had the privilege of knowing you since 1915. Our daily growing association has enabled me to prize your friendship as a treasure. A staunch Mussalman, you have shown in your own life what Hindu-Muslim unity means.

We all now realize as we have never before realized that without that unity, we cannot attain our freedom and I make bold to say that, without that unity, the Mussalmans of India cannot render the Khilafat all the aid they wish. Divided, we must ever remain slaves. This unity, therefore, cannot be a mere policy to be discarded when it does not suit us. We can discard it only when we are tired of Swaraj. Hindu-Muslim unity must be our creed to last for all time and under all circumstances. Nor must that unity be a menace to the minorities, the Parsis, the Christians, the Jews or the powerful Sikhs. If we seek to crush any of them, we shall someday want to fight each other.

I have been drawn so close to you chiefly because I know that you believe in Hindu-Muslim unity in the full sense of the term.

This unity, in my opinion, is unattainable without our adopting non-violence as a firm policy. I call it a policy because it is limited to the preservation of that unity. But it follows that thirty crores of Hindus and Mussalmans united not for a time but for all time can defy all the powers of the world and should consider it a cowardly act to resort to violence in their dealings with the English administrators. We have hitherto feared them and their guns in our simplicity. The moment we realize our combined strength, we shall consider it unmanly to fear them and, therefore, ever to think of striking them. Hence, am I anxious and impatient to persuade my countrymen to feel non-violent not out of our weakness but out of our strength. But you and I know that we have not yet evolved the nonviolence of the strong and we have not done so because the Hindu-Muslim union has not gone much beyond the stage of policy. There is still too much mutual distrust and consequent fear. I am not disappointed. The progress we have made in that direction is indeed phenomenal. We seem to have covered in eighteen months time the work of a generation. But infinitely more is necessary. Neither the classes nor the masses feel instinctively that our union is necessary as the breath of our nostrils.

For this consummation, we must, it seems to me, rely more upon quality than quantity. Given a sufficient number of Hindus and Mussalmans with almost a fanatical faith in everlasting friendship between the Hindus and the Mussalmans of India, we shall not be long before the unity permeates the masses. A few of us must first clearly understand that we can make no headway without accepting non-violence in thought, word and deed for the full realization of our political ambition. I would, therefore, beseech you and the members of the Working Committee and the A.I.C.C. to see that our ranks contain no workers who do not fully realize the essential truth I have endeavoured to place before you. A living faith cannot be manufactured by the rule of majority.

To me the visible symbol of all-India unity and, therefore, of the acceptance of non-violence as an indispensable means for the realization of our political ambition is undoubtedly the Charkha, i.e., khaddar. Only those who believe in *cultivating* a non-violent spirit and eternal friendship between Hindus and

Mussalmans will daily and religiously spin. Universal hand-spinning and the universal manufacture and use of hand-spun and hand-woven khaddar will be a substantial, if not absolute, proof of the real unity and non-violence, and it will be a recognition of a living kinship with the dumb masses. Nothing can possibly unify and revivify India as the acceptance by all India of the spinning-wheel as a daily sacrament and the khaddar wear as a privilege and a duty.

Whilst, therefore, I am anxious that more title-holders should give up their titles; lawyers, law courts; scholars, the Government schools or colleges; the Councilors, the Councils and the soldiers and the civilians, their posts, I would urge the nation to restrict its activity in this direction only to the consolidation of the results already achieved and to trust its strength to command further abstentions from association with a system we are seeking to mend or end.

Moreover, the workers are too few. I would not waste a single worker today on destructive work when we have such an enormous amount of constructive work. But perhaps the most conclusive argument against devoting further time to destructive propaganda is the fact that the spirit of intolerance, which is a form of violence, has never been so rampant as now. Co-operators are estranged from us. They fear us. They say that we are establishing a worse bureaucracy than the existing one. We must remove every cause for such anxiety. We must go out of our way to win them to our side. We must make Englishmen safe from all harm from our side. I should not have to labour the point if it was clear to everyone, as it is to you and to me, that our pledge of non-violence implies utter humility and towards our bitterest opponent. This necessary spirit will be automatically realized if only India will devote her sole attention to the work of construction suggested by me.

I flatter myself with the belief that my imprisonment is quite enough for a long time to come. I believe in all humility that I have no ill will against anyone. Some of my friends would not have to be as non-violent as I am. But we contemplated the imprisonment of the most innocent. If I may be allowed that claim, it is clear that I should not be followed to prison by anybody at all. We do want to paralyse the Government considered as a system—not however by

intimidation, but by the irresistible pressure of our innocence. In my opinion, it would be intimidation to fill the goals anyhow, and why should more innocent men seek imprisonment till one considered to be the most innocent has been found inadequate for the purpose?

My caution against further courting of imprisonment does not mean that we are now to shirk imprisonment. If the Government will take away every non-violent non-co-operator, I should welcome it. Only, it should not be because of our civil disobedience, defensive or aggressive. Nor, I hope, will the country fret over those who are in jail. It will do them and the country good to serve the full term of their imprisonment. They can be fitly discharged before their time only by an act of the Swaraj Parliament. And I entertain an absolute conviction that universal adoption of khaddar is Swaraj.

I have refrained from mentioning untouchability. I am sure every good Hindu believes that it has got to go. Its removal is as necessary as the realization of Hindu- Muslim unity.

I have placed before you a programme which is, in my opinion, the quickest and the best. No impatient Khilafatist can devise a better. May God give you health and wisdom to guide the country to her destined goal.

*I am,*

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XXIII, pp. 88-91*

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1 Hakim Ajmal Khan (1865-1927)—Physician and politician who took a leading part in the Khilafat Movement; President, Indian National Congress, 1921

## 45. TO JAMNALAL BAJAJ <sup>1</sup>

*Sabarmati Central Prison,*

*Thursday Night, 16th March, 1922*

CHI. JAMNALAL,

As I proceed in my search for truth it grows upon me that Truth comprehends everything. It is not in Ahimsa, but Ahimsa is in it. What is perceived by a pure heart and intellect is truth for that moment. Cling to it, and it enables one to reach pure truth. There is no question there of divided duty. But often enough it is difficult to decide what is Ahimsa. For instance, the use of disinfectants is Himsa, and yet we cannot do without it. We have to live a life of Ahimsa in the midst of a world of Himsa, and that is possible only if we cling to truth. That is how I deduce Ahimsa from truth. Out of truth emanate love, tenderness, humility. A votary of truth has to be humble as the dust. His humility increases with his observance of truth. I see this every moment of my life. I have a much vivid sense of Truth and of my own littleness than I had a year ago. The wonderful implication of the great truth '*Brahma Satyam Jaganmithya* (Brahma is real, all else unreal) grows on me from day to day. It teaches us patience. This will purge us of harshness and add to our tolerance. It will make us magnify the mole-hills of our errors into mountains and minimize the mountains of others' errors into mole-hills. The body persists because of egoism. The utter extinction of the body of egoism is *moksha*. He who has achieved this will be the very image of Truth, or one may call it Brahman. Therefore the loving name of God is *Dasanudasa* (Servant of Servants).

Wife, children, friends, possessions—all should be held subservient to Truth. Each one of these should be sacrificed in the search for truth. Only then can one be a Satyagrahi. I have thrown myself into this movement with a view to making the observance of this principle comparatively easy, and it is with the same object that I do not hesitate to plunge men like you in it. Its outward form is Hind Swaraj. This Swaraj is being delayed because there is yet to be

found a Satyagrahi of that type. This, however, need not dismay us. It should spur us on to greater effort.

You have made yourself my fifth son. But I am striving to be worthy. It is not an ordinary responsibility for an adopter. May God help me, and may I be worthy of it in this very life.

*Bapuna Ashirvad,*

*To A Gandhian Capitalist, pp. 49-50*

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- 1 Jamnalal Bajaj (1889-1942)—A prominent businessman and industrialist; a close associate of Gandhiji; identified with many of his activities; social worker and philanthropist; treasurer of the Indian National Congress for many years. He chose a life of simplicity despite his wealth; Gandhiji called him his 'fifth son'.

#### 46. TO MAHOMED ALI

*Sassoon Hospital, Poona,*

*February 7, 1924*

MY DEAR FRIEND AND BROTHER,

I send you as President of the Congress a few words which I know our countrymen expect from me on my sudden release. I am sorry that the Government have prematurely released me on account of my illness. Such a release can bring me no joy, for I hold that the illness of the prisoner affords no grounds for his release.

I would be guilty of ungratefulness if I did not tell you, and through you the whole public, that both the jail and the hospital authorities have been all attention during my illness. Col. Murray, the Superintendent of the Yeravda Prison, as soon as he suspected that my illness was at all serious, invited Col. Maddock to assist him and I am sure that the promptest measures were taken by him to secure for me the best treatment possible. I could not have been removed to the David and Sassoon Hospitals a moment earlier. Col. Maddock and his staff have treated me with the utmost attention and kindness. I may not omit the nurses who have surrounded me with sisterly care. Though it is now open to me to leave this hospital, knowing that I can get no better treatment anywhere else, with Col. Maddock's kind permission I have decided to remain under his care till the wound is healed and no further medical treatment is necessary.

The public will easily understand that for some time to come I shall be quite unfit for active work, and those who are interested in my speedy return to active life will hasten it by postponing their natural desire to see me. I am unfit and shall be so for some weeks perhaps to see a number of visitors. I shall better appreciate the affection of friends if they will devote greater time and attention to such national work as they may be engaged in and especially to hand-spinning.



My release has brought me no relief. Whereas before release I was free from responsibility save that of conforming, to jail discipline and trying to qualify myself for more efficient service, I am now overwhelmed with a sense of responsibility I am ill-fitted to discharge. Telegrams of congratulations have been pouring in upon me. They have but added to the many proofs I have received of the affection of our countrymen for me. It naturally pleases and comforts me. Many telegrams, however, betray hopes of results from my service which stagger me. The thought of my utter incapacity to cope with the work before me humbles my pride.

Though I know very little of the present situation in the country, I know sufficient to enable me to see that, perplexing as the national problems were at the time of the Bardoli resolutions, they are far more perplexing today. It is clear that, without unity between Hindus, Mahomedans, Sikhs, Parsis and Christians and other Indians, all talk of Swaraj is idle. This unity which I fondly believed, in 1922, had been nearly achieved has, so far as Hindus and Mussalmans are concerned, I observe, suffered a severe check. Mutual trust has given place to distrust. An indissoluble bond between the various communities must be established if we are to win freedom. Will the thanksgiving of the nation over my release be turned into a solid unity between the communities? That will restore me to health far quicker than any medical treatment or rest-cure. When I heard in the jail of the tension between Hindus and Mussalmans in certain places, my heart sank within me. The rest I am advised to have will be no rest with the burden of disunion preying upon me. I ask all those who cherish love towards me to utilize it in furtherance of the union we all desire. I know that the task is difficult. But nothing is difficult if we have a living faith in God. Let us realize our own weakness and approach Him and He will surely help. It is weakness which breeds fear and fear breeds distrust. Let us both shed our fear, but I know that even if *one* of us will cease to fear, we shall cease to quarrel. Nay, I say that your tenure of office will be judged solely by what you can do in the cause of union. I know that we love each other as brothers. I ask you, therefore, to share my anxiety and help me to go through the period of illness with a lighter heart.

If we could but visualize the growing pauperism of the land and realize that the spinning-wheel is the only remedy for the disease, the wheel will leave us little leisure for fighting. I had during the last two years ample time and solitude for hard thinking. It made me a firmer believer than ever in the efficacy of the Bardoli programme and, therefore, in the unity between the races, the Charkha, the removal of untouchability and the application of non-violence in thought, word and deed to our methods as indispensable for Swaraj. If we faithfully and fully carry out this programme, we need never resort to civil disobedience and I should hope that it will never be necessary. But I must state that my thinking prayerfully and in solitude has not weakened my belief in the efficiency and righteousness of civil disobedience. I hold it, as never before, to be a man's or a nation's right and duty when its vital being is in jeopardy. I am convinced that it is attended with less danger than war and, whilst the former, when successful, benefits both the resister and the wrong-doer, the latter harms both the victor and the vanquished.

You will not expect me to express any opinion on the vexed question of return by Congressmen to the Legislative Councils and Assembly. Though I have not in any way altered my opinion about the boycott of Councils, Law Courts and Government Schools, I have no data for coming to a judgment upon the alterations made at Delhi, and I do not propose to express any opinion until I have had the opportunity of discussing the question with our illustrious countrymen who have felt called upon, in the interest of the country, to advise removal of the boycott of legislative bodies.

In conclusion, may I, through you thank all the very numerous senders of congratulatory messages. It is not possible for me personally to acknowledge each message. It has gladdened my heart to see among the messages many from our Moderate friends. I have, and non-co-operators can have, no quarrel with them. They too are well-wishers of their country and serve to the best of their lights. If we consider them to be in the wrong we can hope to win them over only by friendliness and patient reasoning, never by abusing. Indeed, we want to regard Englishmen too as our friends and not misunderstand them by

treating them as our enemies. And if we are today engaged in a struggle against the British Government, it is against the system for which it stands and not against Englishmen who are administering the system. I know that many of us have failed to understand and always bear in mind the distinction and, in so far as we have failed, we have harmed our cause.

*I am,*

*Your sincere friend and brother,*

M. K. GANDHI

*Young India, 14-2-'24*

#### 47. 10 MOTILAL NEHRU<sup>1</sup>

*Bombay, September 2, [1924]*

DEAR MOTILALJI,

This is again early morning after prayer. I hope you received my long letter. I expect a wire from you. I was unable to revise it. I cannot now recall the exact wording of the personal part. After all, Mrs Naidu did not read it as the letter was posted before she could read it. But the business part, of which I have a copy, she and many others have read.

This letter like the former is meant to be a plea for Jawaharlal. He is one of the loneliest young men of my acquaintance in India. The idea of your mental desertion of him hurts me. Physical desertion I hold to be impossible. Needless to say Manzar Ali and I often talked of the Nehrus whilst we were together at Yeravda. He said once that if there was one thing for which you lived more than any other, it was for Jawahar. His remark seemed to be so true. I don't want to be the cause direct or indirect of the slightest breach in that wonderful affection.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XXV p. 65*

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1 Pandit Motilal Nehru (1863-1931)—Lawyer and Swarajist leader, twice President of Indian National Congress.

#### 48. TO MOTILAL NEHRU

*The Ashram, Sabarmati, 20-4-'28*

DEAR MOTILALJI,

I have your letter. I am daily making fresh discoveries which go to show that we may expect nothing from the mill-owners at the present stage. They will yield only to pressure and the pressure of the Government is more felt than that of the Congress. But we may not be impatient. We need not put boycott of Indian mill-made cloth in the same category as that of foreign cloth. A negative attitude about mill cloth will be quite enough to keep the mills under wholesome check. A positive boycott will only stir up bad blood without bringing us any nearer boycott of foreign cloth. We shall never, unless a sudden manifestation of mass energy comes into being, succeed in reaching the millions. In spite of all we may do, for the time being the latter will therefore be buying Indian mill cloth and, further, there will be keen competition between Lancashire mills and Japanese on the one hand and Indian mills on the other. We have therefore to concentrate our effort on changing the mentality of the townspeople and those few villagers whom we are controlling and bringing them round to the adoption of Khadi. If we set about doing this, the message of Khadi will percolate the masses. Then both our and foreign mills will feel the brunt. That will be the time for our mills to come in a line with us. The moment they do so we can complete boycott of foreign cloth inside of six months. The programme definitely therefore has to be this:

We leave Indian mills severely alone. We carry on a whirlwind campaign for boycott of foreign cloth through Khadi, asking people to count no sacrifice too great in adopting Khadi. We must have faith in ourselves and in our people and believe that they can make this which appears to me to be small sacrifice. But I confess that at the present moment I do not visualize the organization that is needed to carry on the boycott. The political who are in a possession of the platform do not mean to do any serious business. They will not concentrate on any constructive work. Jawahar in a letter truly describes the atmosphere,

when he says: "There is violence in the air." We read and hear so much about the boycott of British cloth in Bengal, but the letters I receive almost every week show that there is no real boycott. There is no organization behind it, there is no will working behind it. All things considered what will you advise me to do.

The expected letter from Romain Rolland is due next Tuesday at the latest. I must after that come to a decision quickly. Supposing that Romain Rolland predisposes me in favour of the European visit, what would you have me to do in view of the talk of the boycott. Would you want me for the sake of the boycott not to go to Europe? I shall accept your decision whatever it may be. I am not personally keen on the European visit, but if all is plain sailing in India and if Romain Rolland wants me to visit Europe, I should feel bound to accept the European invitations. Will you please wire your decision? Jawahar will be with you and probably you will know Doctor Ansari's mind.

*Yours sincerely,*

*From a photostat: S.N. 13197*

#### 49. TO C. RAJAGOPALACHARI<sup>1</sup>

*Sabarmati, August 24, 1924*

MY DEAR RAJGOPALACHARI,

Mahadev has shown me your letter to him. You must not despond. For Mrs Naidu to say that I am despondent is a libel. It is true that I am groping. There are things about which I give no clear-cut decisions. But that is to admit that we are voyaging in uncertain waters.

Remember we are Satyagrahis. Let me apply to the situation the law of the family. Assume that two brothers are quarrelling over the inheritance. Both want to use it for the good of the family. One at least knows he does not need it to serve the family. The majority of the clan would have him to cling to the inheritance. But is it not the duty of the Satyagrahi brother to forgo the inheritance and avoid a quarrel and consequent waste of time and energy? Is the case any different here? However, I am acting cautiously. All I am trying to do is to avoid an unseemly wrangle. I will take up the Presidentship,<sup>2</sup> if I find that it will serve the country. There is plenty of time to decide. The returns of spinning are proving most instructive. Is it much use my presiding if the returns remain as poor as they are? Will it not then be better to retire from the Congress and have a rigid programme and a membership that is honest and willing? Is it any use having a vote for the wheel from persons clad in foreign stuff? And think of the exploitation of the simple folk for capturing the Congress! Will the so-called No-changers remain strictly honest? Picture to yourself the whole working. If we cannot retain the Congress without this tug of war, we must willingly surrender it. I have thought deeply over your letters but feel sure that I must retire from any such contest. But for the present I am simply watching. Am waiting for Motilalji's answer.

Now for Malabar. I have applications from many sources. What would you have me to do? I was thinking of sending someone to make special report in collaboration with you. But as nothing has yet been done I would like your

suggestions. Plenty of clothing has been collected. Please guide me about its disposal too.

I have not been able to make much headway in Delhi. There is still some prospect of a settlement. But the thing is very delicate.

Yes, your guess is correct. The fair friend is Sarladevi.<sup>3</sup> She wants to bombard me with more stuff but I have refused to give further accommodation. There are some beautiful letters from Brahmins in repudiation. I have published one.

Yours,  
M. K. G.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XXV, pp. 36-37*

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- 1 C. Rajagopalachari (1879-1972)—Lawyer, journalist, author and statesman; Governor-General of India—1948-50.
  - 2 Of Belgam Congress
  - 3 Niece of Rabindranath Tagore, married to Rambhuj Dutt Chowdhari.



## 50. TO C. RAJAGOPALACHARI

July 16, 1925

MY DEAR C. R.,

Somehow or other I need your letter to feel that all is well with you. My position is this. My body and mind are living in a world by which I remain unaffected, but in which I am being tried. My soul is living in a world physically away from me and yet a world by which I am and want to be affected. You are a part of that world and perhaps the nearest to me. My innermost being wants your approbation of what I am doing and thinking. I may not always succeed in getting it, but it craves for your verdict.

Now you understand exactly why I want to hear from you apart from many other reasons. You must let me have if it is only a postcard every week. Mahadev, Devdas, Pyarelal<sup>1</sup> should keep you posted with what is going on.

And you must keep well.

Your *sadhana*<sup>2</sup> is the development of the place where you are and a scientific test of our theory of the value of hand-spinning. Even if it proves untrue in the end, neither we nor the world will have lost anything, for I know that we are true in the sense that we have full faith in the programme and, if it is intrinsically not immoral, our theory can be claimed to be true, when a fairly large number of villages sustain hand-spinning and Khadi without protection as the whole of India sustain home cookery without protection. Surely this is a long introduction to what I want to say. Here is Pitt's letter and the letters from Kelappan. I am simply saying that we must keep nominally a Satyagrahi at the Eastern gate unless the local men think otherwise. But you may come to other conclusion. You should write to Kelappan. He seems to be a nice, useful man.

With love,

Yours, BAPU

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. XXVII, pp. 384-85

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1 Pyarelal Nayar, Gandhiji's Secretary 1920-48, and biographer.

2 A persistent effort.

## 51. TO<sup>1</sup> KAKASAHEB KALELKAR<sup>2</sup>

*Kartik Vad 3 [November 14, 1924]*

BHAISHRI KARA,

After writing an article for the *Kelvani* issue I have started thinking more about children's education. Can't we try it on the Ashram children? That is, if the ideas stated their appeal to you. A child calls a pot a pot, but he does not draw a picture of it. Similarly he may read the alphabet but may not draw pictures of the letters. A child hears a new word before he reads it and he pronounces it or rather repeats it as he hears it. Why shouldn't we stop Lakshmi, Rasik and the other children from writing and teach them first to draw? Could we not give them a good many things orally? Just now they should use the hand for drawing only. For this the teacher should know the rudiments of drawing. I am going deeper into the subject and hence stop here. For the present just think over it. More when we meet.

*Blessings from,*

BAPU

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XXV p. 324*

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- 1 Original in Gujarati
- 2 Dattatreya Balkrishna Kalelkar (1885-1981)—Educationist, writer and constructive worker; a close associate of Tagore and Gandhiji; awarded Padma Vibhushan in 1964.

## 52. TO A FRIEND<sup>1</sup>

148, Russa Road, Calcutta, August 1, 1925

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter. A man who owns land which is haunted by wild beasts will be able to excuse himself for shooting them. It would be classed as inevitable Himsa. It will be justified on the ground of necessity, but there is no doubt that, if one has a full perception of Ahimsa, it would be well for him to let his land be overrun by wild beasts or be himself killed by them. Ahimsa is not a mechanical matter, it is personal to everyone. Moreover, possession of property against the whole world is inconsistent with Ahimsa. A man who will follow the principle of non-violence to its uttermost limit has nothing in this world he can call his own. He must merge himself into the whole, which includes snakes, scorpions, tigers, wolves, etc. There are instances on record of innocent men whose innocence even wild beasts have recognized. We must all strive to reach that Stage.

The same remark applies to your second question. It is Himsa to kill the germs and the insects, but even as we commit Himsa by taking vegetable food (for vegetables have life) but regard it as inevitable, so must we treat the germ life. You will recognize that the doctrine of necessity can be stretched so as to justify even man-eating.

A man who believes in Ahimsa carefully refrains from every act that leads to injury. [My] argument only applies to those who believe in Ahimsa. The necessity that I have in mind is a universal necessity, hence it is not permissible to take Ahimsa beyond a limit. That is why the Shastras of custom only permit Himsa in certain cases. It is not only lawful but obligatory upon everyone to make the least use possible of the permission and relaxation. It is unlawful to go beyond the limitation.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XXVIII, pp. 3-4*

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1 The identity of the addressee is not ascertainable.

### 53. FROM MADELEINE SLADE OR MIRABEN <sup>1</sup>

63, Bedford Gardens,  
Campden Hill,  
London, W. 8, Paris,  
May 29, 1925

MOST DEAR MASTER,

I thank you profoundly for having answered my first letter to you—I had never dared to hope such a thing! I have eagerly taken to heart all you said, and I now venture to write to you again, my year of self- imposed trial being more than half over.

The first impulse has never faded, but on the contrary my desire to serve you has grown ever more and more fervent. It is impossible to express in words the greatness of the inspiration which impels me but I pray God with all my heart that I may be able to give expression to my love in work—in acts. However humble they may be they will at least be utterly sincere.

And now I want to put before you my *most earnest request*:

May I come to your Ashram to study spinning and weaving, to learn to live your ideals and principles in daily life, and indeed to learn in what way I may hope to serve you in the future? In order to become a fit servant of your cause I feel the absolute necessity of that training and I will do my very best to be a not too unworthy pupil if you will accept me!

In the meantime I continue my preparations as best I can. I spin and weave (only with wool, nobody seeming to know about the management of cotton in France or England). With the aid of many kind Indian friends I perplex my head over long Hindustani exercises I read. What a revelation is that reading! The more I enter into Indian thought, the more I feel as if I were reaching at last, a long lost home.

In matters of daily life I simplify as much as is possible under present circumstances. I have given up the drinking of all wines, beers or spirits, and I no longer eat meat of any kind.

My being is filled with a great joy and a great anguish. The joy of giving all I have to you and to your people and the anguish of being able to give so little.

I pine for the day when I shall come to India. Alas, there are still five months to wait! I reach Bombay on November 6th, and if I am permitted to join the Ashram I will take the train that evening arriving at Ahmedabad the next morning.

Dear Master, may I come?

Please do not think of troubling to reply to this letter yourself, but perhaps you could send me a word of answer through someone else.

Ever your humble and most devoted servant,

MEDELEINE SLADE

PS. Enclosed are two little samples of wool which I have spun.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. XXVII, pp. 474-75

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- 1 Smt. Miraben, Miss Madeleine Slade (1892-1982) – Daughter of admiral Sir Edmond Slade. Her interest in music and devotion to Beethoven's works led her to Romain Rolland, which contact led her in turn to Gandhiji. Left Europe for India, and joined Gandhiji at Sabarmati in November 1925; accompanied Gandhiji to London in 1931; imprisoned 1932-33, 1942-44; established a small Ashram and Cattle Development Centre in the Rishikesh forest area in 1947, now known as Pashulok.

**53A. TO MADELEINE SLADE**

*148, Russa Road, Calcutta, July 24, 1925*

DEAR FRIEND,

I was pleased to receive your letter which has touched me deeply. The samples of wool you have sent are excellent.

You are welcome whenever you choose to come. If I have advice of the steamer that brings you, there will be someone receiving you at the steamer, and guiding you to the train that will take you to Sabarmati. Only please remember that the life at the Ashram is not all rosy. It is strenuous. Bodily labour is given by every inmate. The climate of this country is also not a small consideration. I mention these things not to frighten you, but merely to warn you.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

PS. As my right hand requires rest, I am dictating my correspondence.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XXVII, pp. 414-15*

## 54. TO ROMAIN ROLLAND <sup>1</sup>

*November 13, 1924<sup>2</sup>*

DEAR FRIEND,

I received your kind letter. Miss Slade arrived a little later. What a treasure you have sent me. I shall try to be worthy of such a great confidence. I shall do everything to help Miss Slade to become a little bridge between West and East. I am too imperfect to have a disciple. She will be my companion in my research (for truth) and as I am older and consequently more advanced in spiritual experience, I propose to share with you the honour of your paternity. Miss Slade shows a marvellous capacity for adaptation and we are already quite at ease with her. I leave Miss Slade to tell you the rest by asking her to speak to you of a French sister who has arrived at the Ashram just a few days before her.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XXV, p. 320*

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- 1 Romain Rolland (1866-1944)—Celebrated French writer, thinker and pacifist.
  - 2 Date is wrongly mentioned as November 13, 1924, because this letter was written after Miss Slade's arrival at Sabarmati on 7th November, 1925.

## 55. TO ROMAIN ROLLAND

*The Ashram, Sabarmati, February 15, 1928*

DEAR FRIEND,

Mira has translated your latest letter for me. My whole soul goes out to you in your grief especially because it comes over a letter which makes you suspect me of hardness of heart. I appreciate your desire to find me correct in all I do and think. I do indeed want to stand well with you, but I must be true to myself if I am to continue to deserve your warm friendship.

Let me first tell you that Mira's letter reflected her own views though they were found to coincide with mine. Neither Mira, so far as I know her, nor I had the remotest idea of judging those two good peasants.<sup>1</sup> Their action was undoubtedly one of heroism. What we had in our minds was the heroism of a war resister, and from the record sent by you and as it was interpreted to me by Mira, I missed that particular type of heroism which a war resister demonstrates in his own life. Joan of Arc was a heroine. So were Leonidas and Horatius. But the heroism in each case was of a different type, each noble and admirable in its sphere.

In the answers given by the peasants, I do not notice any definite repugnance to war as war and a determination to suffer to the uttermost in their resistance to war. These peasant friends, if my recollection serves me right, are heroes representing and defending the simple rustic life. These heroes are no less precious than those of a militant war resister type. We want to treasure all this heroism, but what I feel is that we will serve the heroes and the cause of truth better if we treated each type separately.

You have curiously raised the question of my participation in the late War.<sup>2</sup> It is a legitimate question. I had answered it in the last autobiographical chapter as if in anticipation of your question. Please read it carefully and tell me at your leisure what you think of the argument.<sup>3</sup> I shall treasure your opinion.



Lastly, I do want to reach perfection, but I recognize my limitations, and the recognition is becoming clearer day after day. Who knows in how many places I must be guilty of hardness of heart, and I should not be surprised if you have noticed want of charity in my writings in more places than one. I can only tell you that the lapses are there in spite of my prayerful effort to the contrary. I suppose it was not without reason that the early Christians considered Satan to be not merely an evil principle but evil incarnate. He seems to dominate us in every walk of life and man's mission is to overthrow him from power.

This letter of yours to Mira makes me more and more anxious to see you in the flesh, and there is just a distant hope of my being able to do so this year if I keep good health and if otherwise the inner voice guides me towards Europe. I am seriously considering two invitations, and the desire to meet you may precipitate my decision in favour of accepting those invitations.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

ROMAIN ROLLAND

*From a photostat: S.N. 14942*

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- 1 <sup>1</sup> Romain Rolland in his reply dated March 7 wrote: "... I understand what you say regarding those two devout peasants of Savoi. I bow before your reasons, though at the same time I believe that there are very few men and women— (at least in Europe)—with whom 'War-resistance' is not always mixed with other elements of thought, because almost every thought, be it ever so intense, is not in man, completely pure...."
  - 2 *Vide An Autobiography, Pt. IV, Ch. XXXVIII.*
  - 3 To this Romain Rolland replied: "Pardon me if I say to you that, in spite of all my desire to enter into your thoughts and to approve of them, I simply cannot do so...."

## 56. TO SHRI SHANKARAN

*Nandi Hills, 28-4-'27*

MY DEAR SHANKARAN,

Your letter is a tonic for me. You are realizing all my expectations. I am delighted that the kitchen is in a perfect state now. Who is your right-hand man? How is Giriraj doing? Are you keeping perfect health? Your kitchen must become a treasure store of health of mind, body and spirit. There must be all about it and for all times a sweetness, restfulness and peacefulness which should be capable of being detected by any passerby. Everything in its place, everything clean, no foreign smells of a multiplicity of condiments, only the natural smell of simple edibles and workers working harmoniously, contentedly and smilingly in their own persons showing perfect health. Do you know that the Rishis of old were poets, philosophers, cooks, scavengers all rolled into one? Nalaraja was a wise ruler, an ideal husband, and a finished cook. Every occupation may become disgraced by bad associations and every occupation can become a stepping-stone to salvation when it is undertaken by a wise man.

*Yours, BAPU*

*From a photostat: S.N. 14120*

## 57. TO HERMANN KALLENBACH <sup>1</sup>

*Nandi Hills, (Near Bangalore) 13th May, 1927*

As I lie in bed and look up old undisposed of correspondence and revive old and sacred memories, I chance upon your letter of 27th February sent with Andrews' letter from your home at Inanda, and I revive so many pleasant and sacred memories. Every letter that you have written during the last two years—and you have not written many, has been a despondent letter, distressful of yourself; but as long as I live I am not going to lose faith in you. I am hoping that some day as before you will have a fatigue of the exciting things that gives you momentary pleasure and that you will at least come to India to meet an old friend and renew many old acquaintances. You have made a provisional promise to do so next September or October. Do come if you can and then stay as long as you like or as little as you like.

I am glad you are having short spells of Andrews' company. I have not come across a humbler or more god-fearing man throughout my varied experience.

You don't want me to say anything about my illness; because I see you do get *Young India* and read it. I am at the present moment taking my cure on a little hill in the State of Mysore where an army of devoted volunteers and many of my closest co-workers are looking after me. Mrs. Gandhi and Devdas are with me. The names of others would mean nothing to you. So I do not give them. But when you do come, you will see them all and recognize them as having been with me on this hill.

This loss of strength came in the twinkling of an eye. Latterly I had put such terrific strain upon the brain that I was afraid of a crisis and it came just when I was arranging to have a lighter programme. But God seemed to say 'I shall demolish your pride before you recognize your mad method and show you that you were utterly wrong in rushing as you have been doing thinking that it was all well because it was for a good cause. You fool you thought that you would work wonders. Have your lesson now and learn whilst there is yet time that God

alone is to wonder work and He uses whom He pleases as His instrument.' I am taking the chastisement I hope in due humility and if He raises me from this sick bed, I am making Him promises that I shall reform my ways and shall seek still more strenuously to know His will unto it.

I hope you are keeping in touch with Manilal. He has got a girl with a strong character as his wife. She is the best girl I could possibly have found for him. Chance put her my way. She belongs to godly family. Remember you are one of the trustees for Phoenix and I look to you to discharge your trust.

Sastri will be in South Africa probably within a month of your receipt of this. I have had long chats with him about you and your associations with Gokhale. Do try to be closely to him and bring all our old companions in touch with him.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

*From a photostat: S.N. 12350*

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1 Hermann Kallenbach—A German associate of Gandhiji in South Africa

## 58. TO GULZARILAL NANDA

*Nandi Hills, 28th May, 1927*

MY DEAR GULZARILAL,

I was delighted to hear from you. Whilst lying on my bed, I have constantly thought of so many like you in whom I am deeply interested and from whom, I expect many large and big things if only God will give them the requisite health for the task before them.

Your description of a truly religious life is accurate. I have not a shadow of a doubt that this blessed state of inward joy and freedom from anxiety should last in the midst of the greatest trials conceivable. It admits of no exception whatsoever. Naturally, it is unattainable except by the very fewest. But that it is attainable by human beings, I have also no doubt. That we do not find in history evidence regarding the existence of any such person merely proves to me all the record that we have has been prepared by imperfect beings, and it is impossible for imperfect beings to give us a faithful record of perfect ones. The same may be said of our own experiences. We have to be very nearly perfect in order to meet perfect souls such as you have described. Nor need you think that I have laid down an absurd proposition inasmuch as it is incapable of being recorded, or being experienced by the average man. To raise such a doubt would be begging the question, for we are here picturing to ourselves extraordinary mortals, though mortals nevertheless, and surely extraordinary powers are required to find out these extraordinary mortals. This statement is true even of much lesser things, things almost ridiculous. And yet very difficult of accomplishment, such, for instance, as, the discoveries of Sir J. C. Bose or the finest paintings. Both these, we average beings will have to take on trust. It is only the privileged few who have got the special faculty for understanding and appreciating either those discoveries, or those paintings. These do not appear to us to be incredible and we are able to accept them on faith only because in favour of these we have the testimony of a larger number of witnesses than we can possibly have for the things of permanent value, such as human perfection of the utmost type. Therefore the limitation that you have

accepted is quite a workable thing for the time being. For, even inside the limitation, there is ample scope for widening the field for the progress of the state of being and remaining unruffled in the face of the onslaught of sorrows and trials, which before regeneration would have paralyzed us.

I am glad you have intensified your devotions. I do not know what you are reading at present. And I do not know whether I told you that we must arrive at a time when we do not need the solace of many books but that we make one book yield us all we want. In the last stage, of course, when life becomes one of perfect surrender and complete self-effacement, the support of even one book becomes unnecessary. At the present moment, though I am reading many things, Bhagavad Gita is becoming more and more the only infallible guide, the only dictionary of reference, in which I find all the sorrows, all the troubles, all the trials arranged in the alphabetical order with exquisite solutions. I think I did tell you that the *Song Celestial* was the best rendering I had come across of the Bhagavad Gita. But if you do not know Sanskrit, I know that a knowledge of Sanskrit to enable you to understand Bhagavad Gita is easily within your power. You can almost in a month's time know enough Sanskrit to understand the original text. For, though the English rendering is grand and though you might be able to get some Hindi or Urdu translation also, of course there is nothing like the original. The original will enable you to give your own meaning and gloss to the text. That book is not a historical record, but it is a record of the concrete experience of its author, whether it was really Vyas or not I am not concerned. And if it is a record of anybody's experience, it must not be beyond us to be able to test the truth of it by repeating the experience. I am testing the truth almost everyday in my life and find it never failing. This of course does not mean that I have reached the state described, for instance, at the end of the Second Chapter. But I know that the more we carry out the prescription given in it, the nearer do we answer the description given of the perfect state.

I hope you are keeping good health. I am of course making steady progress.

*Yours sincerely,*

*From a photostat: S.N. 14130*

## 59. TO DR. KAILAS NATH KATJU<sup>1</sup>

Gudiatham (South India),

September 1, 1927

DEAR FRIEND,

My weakness of body is my excuse for dictating this letter. But for that weakness I would have gladly written myself. I thank you for your letter and the first instalment of your contribution to Khadi. Your letter is so good and is likely to influence others. If you have no objection, I would like to publish that part of it which relates to Khadi. But please do not hesitate to refuse permission, if you would on any account not like the publication of the letter, whether with or without your name.

As for the black alpaca *chapkan* concerned, give me an order and I can have for you one made of very fine black Khadi. It looks as good as alpaca. You may not know that in Madras many advocates and Vakils wear Khaddar *chapkans* even when they do not use Khadi for other articles of dress and as it so happens, the Khaddar *chapkans*, the poor practitioners find to be suitable because of their comparative cheapness. In your case I may not think of cheapness at all. If you give the order, I am not going to secure for you the cheapest but the most expensive and the most elegant.

Now a word about personal spinning. I quite agree with you that love of Khaddar need not include personal spinning. But love of the starving millions does, for two reasons: First, because, personal spinning renews our daily bond with them. Secondly, by personally spinning each known member of society creates a spinning atmosphere which makes it easier for workers to induce the unwilling, because unbelieving, villagers to take to hand-spinning. I would like to add a third reason which I know you would not despise. Every yard of well-spun yarn adds to the wealth of the country, be the addition ever so infinitesimal. You know what the lawyers do, so often whilst awaiting their turn in the law courts. They either play with their pencils or with their paper-tape

or worse still open out their little penknives and fidget with the edges of the desks at which they are sitting. I wonder if I could induce you to take up the little *takli* which could be made of silver, gold or ivory if you like, and put in a delicate little cylinder. *Takli* - spinning is easily learnt. Will you take to it? It will be, I know, laughed at in the beginning; then it will cease to attract notice one way or the other and if you could go through the two stages and persist, it will be copied by others. I hope you do not resent my saying all this to you. You have given me an inch with hearty goodwill and you must not be surprised if I now ask for more.

Yes, indeed, I demanded great sacrifices from lawyers. But looking back to 1920 and 21, I feel that I asked for nothing very extraordinary and I feel that I had a right to demand the largest measure of sacrifice from those to whose profession I once belonged.

The little ones now consider themselves, to be too big to sit in my lap. Please, however, tell them that whenever I meet them again, I am going to make them pay for still remembering me.

I am passing your cheque for Rs. 100/- to the Treasurer of the All-India Spinners' Association.

*Yours sincerely,*

DR. KAILAS NATH KATJU,

9, EDMUNTON RD., ALLAHABAD

*From a photostat: S.N. 13275*

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1 Kailas Nath Katju—was Eminent Jurist and Congress Leader; Governor of Orissa, August 1947 to June 1948; Governor of West Bengal, 1948. Later on Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh.



## 60. TO DHAN GOPAL MUKHERJEE

*Satyagrahashram, Sabarmati, Dated 7-9-'28*

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter. I have never quoted Tolstoy or any other author without acknowledgment in any of my writings. And I do not remember having often quoted authors in my writings; not because I would not but because my reading is so poor and capacity for reproducing what I have read is still less.

The vow of celibacy was undoubtedly taken after I had acquired considerable acquaintance with Tolstoy's teachings. And, whilst it is as a general statement quite true that my life is based upon the teachings of the Gita, I would not be able to swear that Tolstoy's writings and teachings did not influence my decision about celibacy.

So much for your satisfaction. I hope at some date to deal with your vital question in the pages of *Young India*.

*Yours sincerely, M. K. GANDHI*

*From a photostat: S.N. 14378*

## 61. TO HENRY S. SALT

*Camp Hardoi, October 12th, 1929*

HENRY S. SALT, ESQ., 21, CLEVELAND ROAD, BRIGHTON (ENGLAND) DEAR FRIEND,

I was agreeably surprised to receive your letter. Yes, indeed your book which was the first English book I came across on vegetarianism was of immense help to me in steadying my faith in vegetarianism. My first introduction to Thoreau's writings was I think in 1907 or late when I was in the thick of passive resistance struggle. A friend sent me Thoreau's essay on civil disobedience. It left a deep impression upon me. I translated a portion of that essay for the readers of *Indian Opinion* in South Africa which I was then editing and I made copious extracts from that essay for that paper. That essay seemed to be so convincing and truthful that I felt the need of knowing more of Thoreau and I came across your life of him. His 'Walden' and other short essays all of which I read with great pleasure and equal profit.

*Yours sincerely, M. K. GANDHI*

*From a photostat: S.N. 15663*

## 62. TO THE VICEROY<sup>1</sup>

*Satyagraha Ashram, Sabarmati, March 2, 1930*

DEAR FRIEND,

Before embarking on civil disobedience, and taking the risk I have dreaded to take all these years, I would fain approach you and find a way out.

My personal faith is absolutely clear. I cannot intentionally hurt anything that lives, much less fellow human beings, even though they may do the greatest wrong to me and mine. Whilst, therefore, I hold the British rule to be a curse, I do not intend any harm to a single Englishman, or to any legitimate interest, he may have in India.

I must not be misunderstood. Though I hold the British rule in India to be a curse, I do not, therefore, consider Englishmen in general, to be worse than any other people on earth. I have the privilege of claiming many Englishmen as dearest friends. Indeed much that I have learnt of the evil of the British rule is due to the writings of frank and courageous Englishmen, who have not hesitated to tell the unpalatable truth about that rule.

And why do I regard the British rule as a curse?

It has impoverished the dumb millions by a system of progressive exploitation, and by a ruinously expensive military and civil administration which the country can never afford.

It has reduced us politically to serfdom. It has sapped the foundations of our culture. And, by the policy of cruel disarmament, it has degraded us spiritually.

Lacking the inward strength, we have been reduced, by all but universal disarmament, to a state bordering on cowardly helplessness.

In common with many of my countrymen, I had hugged the fond hope that the proposed Round Table Conference might furnish a solution. But when you said plainly that you could not give any assurance that you or the British Cabinet would pledge yourselves to support a scheme of full dominion status, the Round

Table Conference could not possibly furnish the solution for which vocal India is consciously, and the dumb millions are unconsciously, thirsting. Needless to say, there never was any question of Parliament's verdict being anticipated. Instances are not wanting of the British Cabinet, in anticipation of the parliamentary verdict, having itself pledged to a particular policy.

The Delhi interview having miscarried, there was no option for Pandit Motilal Nehru and me, but to take steps, to carry out the solemn resolution of the Congress arrived at in Calcutta at its session in 1928.

But the resolution of independence should cause no alarm, if the word dominion status mentioned in your announcement had been used in its accepted sense. For, has it not been admitted by the responsible British statesmen, that dominion status is virtual independence? What, however, I fear is that there never has been any intention of granting such dominion status to India, in the immediate future.

But this is past history. Since the announcement many events have happened which show unmistakably the trend of British policy.

It seems as clear as daylight that responsible British statesmen do not contemplate any alteration in British policy, that might adversely affect Britain's commerce with India, or require a close and impartial scrutiny of Britain's transactions with India. If nothing- is done to end the process of exploitation, India must be bled with an ever increasing speed. The Finance Member regards as a settled fact the ratio which by a stroke of the pen drains India of a few crores. And when a serious attempt is being made through a civil form of direct action, to unsettle this fact, among many others, even you cannot help appealing to the wealthy landed classes, to help you to crush that attempt, in the name of an order that grinds India to atoms.

Unless those who work in the name of the nation understand and keep before all concerned, the motive that lies behind this craving for independence, there is every danger of independence itself coming to us so charged as to be of no value to those toiling voiceless millions, for whom it is sought, and for whom it

is worth taking. It is for that reason, that I have been recently telling the public what independence should really mean.

Let me put before you some of the salient points.

The terrific pressure of land revenue, which furnishes a large part of the total, must undergo a considerable modification, in an independent India. Even the much vaunted permanent settlement benefits few rich zamindars, not the ryots. The ryot has remained as helpless as ever. He is a mere tenant at will. Not only, then, has land revenue to be considerably reduced, but the whole revenue system has to be so revised, as to make the ryot's good its primary concern. But the British system seems to be designed to crush the very life out of him. Even the salt he must use to live is so taxed as to make the burden fall heaviest on him, if only because of the heartless impartiality of its incidence. The tax shows itself more burdensome on the poor man; when it is remembered that salt is the one thing he must eat more than the rich, both individually and collectively. The drink and drug revenue, too, is derived from the poor. It saps the foundations both of their health and morals. It is defended under the false plea of individual freedom, but, in reality, is maintained for its own sake. The ingenuity of the authors of the reforms of 1919 transferred this revenue to the so-called responsible part of dyarchy, so as to throw the burden of prohibition on it, thus, from the very beginning, rendering it powerless for good. If the unhappy Minister wipes out this revenue he must starve education, since in the existing circumstances he has no new source of replacing that revenue. If the weight of taxation has crushed the poor from above, the destruction of the central supplementary industry, that is, hand-spinning, has undermined their capacity for producing wealth. The tale of India's ruination is not complete without reference to the liabilities incurred in her name. Sufficient has been recently said about these in the public press. It must be the duty of a free India to subject all the liabilities to the strictest investigation, and repudiate those that may be adjudged by an impartial tribunal to be unjust and unfair.

The iniquities sampled above are maintained in order to carry on a foreign administration, demonstrably the most expensive in the world. Take your own

salary. It is over Rs. 21,000 per month besides many other indirect additions. The British Prime Minister gets £ 5,000 per year, that is, Rs. 5,400/- per month, at the present rate of exchange. You are getting over Rs. 700 per day, against India's average income of less than two annas per day. The Prime Minister gets Rs. 180 per day, against Great Britain's average income of nearly Rs. 2 per day. Thus you are getting much over five thousand times India's average income. The British Prime Minister is getting only ninety times Britain's average income. On bended knee I ask you to ponder over this phenomenon. I have taken a personal illustration to drive home a painful truth. I have too great a regard for you as a man to wish to hurt your feelings. I know that you do not need the salary you get. But a system that provides for such an arrangement deserves to be summarily scrapped. What is true of the Viceregal salary is true generally of the whole administration.

A radical cutting down of the revenue, therefore, depends upon an equally radical reduction in the expenses of the administration. This means a transformation of the scheme of government. This transformation is impossible without independence. And hence the spontaneous demonstration of 26th January, in which hundreds of thousands of villagers instinctively participated. To them independence means deliverance from the killing weight.

Not one of the great British political parties, it seems to me, is prepared to give up the Indian spoils to which Great Britain helps herself from day to day, often, in spite of the unanimous opposition of Indian opinion.

Nevertheless, if India is to live as a nation, if the slow death by starvation of her people is to stop, some remedy must be found for immediate relief. The proposed conference is certainly not the remedy. It is not a matter of carrying conviction by argument. The matter resolves itself into one of matching forces. Conviction or no conviction, Great Britain would defend her Indian commerce and interests by all the forces at her command. India must consequently evolve force enough to free herself from that embrace of death.

It is common cause that, however disorganized, and, for the time being, insignificant, it may be, the party of violence is gaining ground and making

itself felt. Its end is the same as mine. But I am convinced that it cannot bring the desired relief to the dumb millions. The conviction is growing deeper and deeper in me that nothing but unadulterated non-violence can check the organized violence of the British Government. Many think that non-violence is not an active force. My experience, limited though it surely is, shows that non-violence can be an intensely active force. It is my purpose to set in motion that force as well against the organized violent force of the British rule, as the unorganized violent force of the growing party of violence. To sit still would be to give rein to both the forces above-mentioned. Having an unquestioning and immovable faith in the efficacy of non-violence, as I know it, it would be sinful on my part to wait any longer.

This non-violence will be expressed through civil disobedience, for the moment confined to the inmates of the Satyagraha Ashram, but ultimately designed to cover all those who choose to join the movement with its obvious limitations.

I know that in embarking on non-violence, I shall be running what might fairly be termed a mad risk. But the victories of truth have never been won without risks, often of the gravest character. Conversion of a nation that has consciously or unconsciously preyed upon another, far more numerous, far more ancient, and no less cultured than itself, is worth any amount of risk.

I have deliberately used the word conversion. For my ambition is no less than to convert the British people through non-violence, and thus to make them see the wrong they have done to India. I do not seek to harm your people. I want to serve them even as I want to serve my own. I believe that I have always served them.

I served them up to 1919, blindly. But when my eyes were opened and I conceived non-co-operation, the object still was to serve them. I employed the same weapon that I have, in all humility, successfully used against the dearest members of my family. If I have equal love for your people with mine, it will not long remain hidden. It will be acknowledged by them, even as the members of my family acknowledged, after they had tried me for several years. If the people join me, as I expect they will, the sufferings they will undergo, unless

the British nation sooner retraces its steps, will be enough to melt the stoniest hearts.

The plan through civil disobedience will be to combat such evils as I have sampled out. If we want to sever the British connection it is because of such evils. When they are removed, the path becomes easy. Then the way to friendly negotiation will be open. If the British commerce with India is purified of greed, you will have no difficulty in recognizing our independence. I invite you then to pave the way for immediate removal of those evils, and thus open a way for a real conference between equals, interested only in promoting the common good of mankind through voluntary fellowship and in arranging terms of mutual help and commerce equally suited to both. You have unnecessarily laid stress upon communal problems that unhappily affect this land. Important though they undoubtedly are for the consideration of any scheme of Government they have little bearing on the greater problems which are above communities and which affect them all equally. But if you cannot see your way to deal with these evils and my letter makes no appeal to your heart, on the eleventh day of this month, I shall proceed with such co-workers of the Ashram as I can take, to disregard the provisions of the salt laws. I regard this tax to be the most iniquitous of all from the poor man's standpoint. As the independence movement is essentially for the poorest in the land, the beginning will be made with this evil. The wonder is that we have submitted to the cruel monopoly for so long. It is, I know, open to you to frustrate my design by arresting me. I hope that there will be tens of thousands ready, in a disciplined manner, to take up the work after me, and, in the act of disobeying the Salt Act, to lay themselves open to the penalties of a law that should never have disfigured the statute book.

I have no desire to cause you unnecessary embarrassment, or any at all, so far as I can help. If you think that there is any substance in my letter, and if you will care to discuss matters with me, and if to that end you would like me to postpone publication of this letter, I shall gladly refrain on receipt of a telegram to that effect soon after this reaches you. You will, however, do me



the favour not to deflect me from my course, unless you can see your way to conform to the substance of this letter.

This letter is not in any way intended as a threat, but is a simple and sacred duty, peremptory on a civil resister. Therefore, I am having it specially delivered by a young English friend who believes in the Indian cause and is a full believer in non-violence and whom Providence seems to have sent to me, as it were, for the very purpose.

*I remain, Your sincere friend, M. K. GANDHI*

*Mahatma*, Vol. III, pp. 18-23

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1 Lord Irwin

### 63. TO LORD IRWIN<sup>1</sup>

DEAR FRIEND,

God willing, it is my intention ... to set out for Dharasana and reach there with my companions . . . and demand possession of the Salt Works. The public have been told that Dharasana is a private property. This is mere camouflage. It is as effectively under Government control as the Viceroy's house. Not a pinch of salt can be removed without the previous sanction of the authorities.

It is possible for you to prevent this raid, as it has been playfully and mischievously called, in three ways:

By removing the Salt Tax;

By arresting me and my party, unless the country can, as I hope it will, replace every one taken away;

By sheer *goondaism* unless every head broken is replaced, as I hope it will.

It is not without hesitation .that the step has been decided upon. I had hoped that the Government would fight the civil resisters in a civilized manner. I could have had nothing to say if, in dealing with the civil resisters, the Government has satisfied itself with applying the ordinary processes of law. Instead, whilst the known leaders have been dealt with more or less according to the legal formality, the rank and file has been often savagely and in some cases even indecently assaulted. Had there been isolated cases, they might have been overlooked. But accounts have come to me from Bengal, Bihar, Utkal, U.E, Delhi and Bombay confirming the experiences of Gujarat of which I have ample evidence at my disposal. In Karachi, Peshawar and Madras the firing would appear to have been unprovoked and unnecessary. Bones have been broken, private parts have been squeezed for the purpose of making volunteers give up, to the Government valueless, to the volunteers precious salt. At Muthra an Assistant Magistrate is said to have snatched the National Flag from a ten-year-old boy. The crowd demanding restoration of the Flag thus illegally seized is reported to have been mercilessly beaten back. That the Flag was

subsequently restored betrayed a guilty conscience. In Bengal there seem to have been only a few prosecutions and assaults about salt, but unthinkable cruelties are said to have been practised in the act of snatching flags from volunteers. Paddy fields are reported to have been burnt, eatables forcibly taken. A vegetable market in Gujarat has been raided, because the dealers would not sell vegetables to officials. These acts have taken place in front of crowds who, for the sake of Congress mandate, have submitted without retaliation. I ask you to believe the accounts given by men pledged to truth. Repudiation even by high officials has, as in the Bardoli case, often proved false. The officials I regret to have to say, have not hesitated to publish falsehoods to the people even during the last five weeks. I take the following samples from Government notices issued from Collectors' offices in Gujarat:

"1. Adults use five pounds of salt per year, therefore pay three annas per year as tax. If Government removed the monopoly, people will have to pay higher prices and in addition make good to the Government the loss sustained by the removal of the monopoly. The salt you take from the sea-shore is not eatable, therefore the Government destroys it."

"2. Mr. Gandhi says that Government has destroyed hand-spinning in this country, whereas everybody knows that this is not true, because throughout the country there is not a village where hand-spinning of cotton is not going on. Moreover in every province cotton spinners are shown superior methods and are provided with better instruments at less prices and are thus helped by Government."

"3. Out of every five rupees of the debt that the Government has incurred, rupees four have been beneficially spent."

I have taken these three sets of statements from three different leaflets. I venture to suggest that everyone of these statements is demonstrably false. The daily consumption of salt by an adult is three times the amount stated and therefore the poll tax and the salt tax undoubtedly is at least 9 as. per head per year. And this tax is levied from man, woman, child and domestic cattle irrespective of age and health.

It is a wicked falsehood to say that every village has a spinning wheel and that the spinning movement is in any shape or form encouraged or supported by the Government. Financiers can better dispose of the falsehood that four out of every five rupees of the public debt is used for benefit of the public. But those falsehoods are mere samples of what people know is going on in every day contact with the Government. Only the other day a Gujarati poet, a brave man, was convicted on prejudged official evidence in spite of his emphatic statement that at the time mentioned he was sleeping soundly in another Place.

Now for instances of official inactivities. Liquor dealers have assaulted pickets admitted by officials to have been peaceful and sold liquor in contravention of regulations. The officials have taken no notice either of the assaults or the illegal sales of liquor. As to the assaults, though they are known to everybody, they may take shelter under the plea that they have received no complaints.

And now you have sprung upon the country a Press Ordinance surpassing any hitherto known in India. You have found a short cut through the law's delay in the matter of the trial of Bhagat Singh and others by doing away with the ordinary procedure. Is it any wonder if I call all these official activities and inactivities a veiled form of Martial Law? Yet this is only the fifth week of the struggle.

Before then the reign of terrorism that has just begun overwhelms India, I feel that I must take a bolder step and if possible divert your wrath in a cleaner if more drastic channel. You may not know the things that I have described. You may not even now believe in them. I can but invite your serious attention to them.

Anyway I feel that it would be cowardly on my part not to invite you to disclose to the full the leonine paws of authority, so that the people who are suffering tortures and destruction of their property may not feel that I, who had perhaps been the chief party inspiring them to action that has brought to right light the Government in its true colours, had left any stone unturned to work out the Satyagraha programme as fully as it was possible under given circumstances.

According to the science of Satyagraha, the greater the repression and lawlessness on the part of authority, the greater should be the suffering courted by the victims. *Success is the certain result of suffering of the extremest character voluntarily undergone.*

I know the dangers attendant upon the methods adopted by me. But the country is not likely to mistake my meaning. I say what I mean and think. And I have been saying for the last fifteen years in India, and outside for twenty years more, and repeat now that the only way to conquer violence is through non-violence pure and undefiled. I have said also that every violent act, word and even thought interferes with the progress of nonviolent action. If in spite of such repeated warnings, people will resort to violence, I must own responsibility save such as inevitably attaches to every human being for the acts of every other human being. But the question of responsibility apart, I dare not postpone action on any cause whatsoever if non-violence is the force the seers of the world have claimed .it to be and if I am not to belie my own extensive experience of its working.

But I would fain avoid the further steps. I would therefore ask you to remove the tax which many of your illustrious countrymen have condemned in unmeasured terms and which, as you could not have failed to observe, has evoked universal protest and resentment expressed in civil disobedience. You may condemn civil disobedience as much as you like. Will you prefer violent revolt to civil disobedience? If you say, as you have said, that the civil disobedience must end in violence, history will pronounce the verdict that the British Government not bearing because not understanding non-violence, goaded human nature to violence, which it could understand and deal with. But in spite of the goading, I shall hope that God will give the people of India wisdom and strength to withstand every temptation and provocation to violence.

If, therefore, you cannot see your way to remove the Salt Tax and remove the prohibitions on private salt- making I must reluctantly commence the march adumbrated in the opening paragraph of my letter.

*I am,*  
*Your sincere friend,*  
M. K. GANDHI

*Famous Letters of Mahatma Gandhi, pp. 68-75*



1 Gandhiji had drafted this letter on the eve of his arrest on May 4, 1930.

## 64. TO REGINALD REYNOLDS

*Camp Delhi, February 23, 1931*

MY DEAR REGINALD,

I honour you for your long, frank and emphatic letter. It will help me to remain firm where firmness is required. Having said this let me tell you that I do not at all agree with you that I was wrong in suspending judgment or action pending the arrival of the three friends. Satyagraha can afford to wait. It can be gentle and should be gentle where gentleness is a duty. However mistaken their judgment may be found to be I regard these friends as equal lovers of their country with me. I have no business to judge them as I would not have them judge me and by waiting I assure you that the cause has not suffered a bit. It may be that the friends there who are whole hoggers may feel embarrassed to find me acting contrary to their expectation. But as time goes by you and they may discover many such shocks. I regard myself as a seasoned soldier in Satyagraha. I have acted before as I have acted now at similar critical junctures and I cannot recall a single occasion when the cause espoused had lost by waiting. On the contrary I can recall many an occasion when the waiting had proved fruitful. Let my assurance therefore be sufficient for you that so far as I am concerned there will be absolutely no surrender on principle, i.e., on the substantial part of the demand and I doubt not that there will be none on the part of the Congress. Remember too that Satyagraha is a method of carrying conviction and of converting by an appeal to reason and to the sympathetic chord in human beings. It relies upon the ultimate good in every human being, no matter how debased he may be for the time being. If this does not satisfy you do by all means strive with me. You are entitled to do so and demand satisfaction from me. I need not say a word about the brave manner in which you are fighting there. May God bless you and give you strength. Of the doing in Delhi I need say nothing because the talks are still going on and I have no doubt that the cablegrams are keeping you informed of the doings from day to day.

Anything therefore that I can say today would be out of date when this letter reaches you. What about your marriage?

With love,

*Your sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

REGINALD REYNOLDS, ESQ.,

8, FAIRDENE ROAD, BOULSDON, SURREY

*From a Photostat: S.N. 16948*



## 65. TO RICHARD B. GREGG<sup>1</sup>

*Sabarmati, April 29, 1931*

MY DEAR GOVIND,

I have your letter and I read your letter to Mira. I quite understand and appreciate all the anxiety shown by you in your letter to me. I do not know that I shall be going to London at all and I shall certainly not go if the way is not clear for me to deliver my message. That it is not likely to be accepted just now I have realized all along. But had the Congress not accepted the offer to discuss terms, the Congress would have put itself in the wrong. As it is we are safe either way. It will be great, good and grand if peace can be made permanent through negotiation. I shall therefore leave no stone unturned to reach that state but it will be equally good and grand if the negotiation proved fruitless. Then India will be put upon her mettle and will have to show her capacity for further suffering. There is no question of my being invited to parties, feted and lionized. I can eat nothing and thank God my loin cloth will protect me from being exhibited as a specimen ' in barmen's show. If therefore I go to London I go for solid business and to drinking the deep affection of chosen friends there. I refuse to speculate. I would go where the light leads me in the fullest faith that all will be well if I follow it.

Do not believe the rumours about my intended visit to America. Much as I should like to visit that great country I know that my time is not yet and I do not want to come as a nine days' wonder.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

R. B. GREGG, ESQ.,

543, BOYLSTON ST., BOSTON, MASS.

*From a photostat: S.N. 17023*

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<sup>1</sup> Richard B. Gregg—American friend and co-worker of Gandhiji. Stayed in India in 1925-27. Again visited in 1930 and afterwards.

## 66. TO SIR SAMUEL HOARE

*(Yeravda Central Prison) March 11, 1932*

DEAR SIR SAMUEL,

You will perhaps recollect that at the end of my speech at the Round Table Conference when the Minorities' claim was presented, I had said that I should resist with my life the grant of separate electorate to the depressed classes. This was not said in the heat of the moment nor by way of rhetoric. It was meant to be a religious statement.

In pursuance of that statement, I had hoped on my return to India to mobilize public opinion against separate electorate at any rate for the depressed classes. But it was not to be.

From the newspapers I am permitted to read, I observe that any moment His Majesty's Government may declare their decision. At first I had thought, if the decision was bound to create separate electorates for the depressed classes, I should take such steps as I might then consider necessary to give effect to my vow. But I feel it would be unfair to the British Government for me to act without giving previous notice. Naturally they could not attach the significance I gave to my statement.

I need hardly reiterate all the objections I have to the creation of separate electorates for the depressed classes. I feel as if I was one of them. Their case stands on a wholly different footing from that of others. I am not against their representation in the legislatures. I should favour every one of their adults, male and female, being registered as voters irrespective of education or property qualification, even though the franchise test may be stricter for others. But I hold that separate electorate is harmful for them and for Hinduism, whatever it may be from a purely political standpoint. To appreciate the harm that separate electorates would do them, one has to know how they are distributed amongst the so-called caste Hindus and how dependent they are on the latter. So far as Hinduism is concerned separate electorate would simply vivisect and disrupt it. For me the question of these classes is predominantly

moral and religious. The political aspect, important though it is, dwindles into insignificance compared with the moral and religious issue.

You will have to appreciate my feelings in this matter by remembering that I have been interested in the condition of these classes from my boyhood and have more than once staked my all for their sake. I say this not to pride myself in any way. I feel that no penance that the Hindus may do can in any way compensate for the calculated degradation to which they have consigned the depressed classes for centuries. But I know that separate electorate is neither a penance nor any remedy for the crushing degradation they have groaned under.

I, therefore, respectfully inform His Majesty's Government that in the event of their decision creating separate electorate for the depressed classes, I **MUST FAST UNTO DEATH.**

I am painfully conscious of the fact that such a step whilst I am a prisoner, must cause grave embarrassment to His Majesty's Government and that it will be regarded by many as highly improper on the part of one holding my position to introduce into the political field methods which they would describe as hysterical, if not much worse. All I can urge in defence is that for me the contemplated step is not a method, it is part of my being. It is the call of conscience which I dare not disobey even though it may cost whatever reputation for sanity I may possess. So far as I can see now, my discharge from imprisonment would not make the duty of fasting any the less imperative. I am hoping, however, that all my fears are wholly unjustified and the British Government have no intention whatever of creating separate electorate for the depressed classes.

It is, perhaps, as well for me to refer to another matter that is agitating me and which may also enforce a similar fast. It is the way that repression is going. I have no notion when I may receive a shock that would compel the sacrifice. Repression appears to me to be crossing what might be called legitimate bounds. A governmental terrorism is spreading through the land. English and Indian officials are being brutalized. The latter, high and low, are becoming demoralized by reason of Government regarding as meritorious, disloyalty to

the people and inhuman conduct towards their own kith and kin. The latter are becoming cowed down. Free speech has been stifled. *Goondaism* (hooliganism) is being practised in the name of law and order. Women, who have come out for public service, stand in fear of their honour being insulted.

And all this, as it seems to me, is being done in order to crush the spirit of freedom which the Congress represents. Repression is not confined to punishing civil breaches of common law. It goads people to break newly made orders of autocracy designed for the most part to humiliate them.

In all these doings, as I read them, I see no spirit of democracy. Indeed, my recent visit to England has confirmed my opinion that your democracy is a superficial circumscribed, thing. In the weightiest matters decisions are taken by individuals or groups without any reference to Parliament, and these have been ratified by Members having but a vague notion of what they were doing. Such was the case with Egypt, the War of 1914, and such is the case with India. My whole being rebels against the idea that in a system called democratic one man should have unfettered power of affecting the destiny of an ancient people numbering over three hundred millions and that his decisions can be enforced by mobilizing the most terrible forces of destruction. To me this is a negation of democracy.

And this repression cannot be prolonged without further embittering the already bitter relations between the two peoples. In so far as I am responsible and can help it, how am I to arrest the process ? Not by stopping Civil Disobedience. For me it is an article of faith. I regard myself by nature a democrat. The democracy of my conception is wholly inconsistent with the use of physical force for enforcing its will. Civil resistance, therefore, has been conceived to be a proper substitute for physical force to be used wherever generally the latter is held to be necessary or justifiable. It is a process of self-suffering, and part of the plan is that in given circumstances a civil resister must sacrifice himself even by fasting to a finish. That moment has not yet arrived for me. I have no undeniable call from within for such a step. But events happening outside are alarming enough to agitate my fundamental

being. Therefore, in writing to you about the possibility of a fast regarding the depressed classes, I felt I would be untrue to you if I did not tell you also that there was another possibility, not remote, of such a fast.

Needless to say, from my side absolute secrecy has been maintained about all the correspondence I have carried on with you. Of course Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and Mahadev Desai, who have just been sent to join us, know all about it. But you will no doubt make whatever use you wish of this letter.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

*The Diary of Mahadev Desai-I, pp. 323-26*

## 67. TO RAMSAY MACDONALD <sup>1</sup>

*Yeravda Prison, August 18, 1932*

DEAR FRIEND,

There can be no doubt that Sir Samuel Hoare has showed you and the Cabinet my letter to him of 11th March on the question of the representation of the depressed classes. That letter should be treated as part of this letter and be read together with this.

I have read the British Government's decision on the representation of the Minorities and have slept over it. In pursuance of my letter to Sir Samuel Hoare and my declaration at the meeting of the Minorities Committee of the Round Table Conference on the 13th November 1931, at St. James' Palace, I have to resist your decision with my life. The only way I can do so is by declaring a perpetual fast unto death from food of any kind, save water with or without salt and soda. This fast will cease if during its progress the British Government of its own motion or under the pressure of public opinion revise their decision and their schemes of communal electorates for the depressed classes, whose representatives should be elected by general electorate under common franchise no matter how wide it is.

The proposed fast will come into operation in the ordinary course from the noon of 20th September next unless the said decision is meanwhile revised in the manner suggested above.

I am asking the authorities here to cable the text of this letter to you so as to give you ample notice. But in any case I am leaving sufficient time for this letter to reach you in time by the slowest route.

I also ask that this letter and my letter to Sir Samuel Hoare, already referred to, be published, at the earliest possible moment. On my part I have scrupulously observed the rule of the jail and have communicated my desire or the contents of the two letters to no one save my two companions, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and Sjt. Mahadev Desai. But I want, if you make it possible

public opinion to be affected by my letters. Hence my request for their early publication.

I regret the decision that I have taken. But as a man of religion that I hold myself to be, I have no other course left open to me. As I have said in my letter to Sir Samuel Hoare, even if His Majesty's Government decided to release me in order to save themselves embarrassment, my fast will have to continue. For, I cannot now hope to resist the decision by any other means. And I have no desire whatsoever to compass my release by any means other than honourable.

It may be that my judgment is warped and that I am wholly in error in regarding separate electorates for the depressed classes as harmful to them or Hinduism. If so, I am not likely to be in the right with reference to other parts of my philosophy of life. In that case, my death by fasting will be at once a penance for my error and a lifting of a weight from off those numberless men and women who have a child-like faith in my wisdom. Whereas if my judgment is right, as I have little doubt it is, the contemplated step is but a due fulfilment of the scheme of life which I have tried for more than a quarter of a century apparently not without considerable success.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

*Famous Letters of Mahatma Gandhi, pp. 104-06*

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1 Macdonald, James Ramsay: (1866-1937)—British Politician; a leading Member of I.L.E (1893-1930); Secretary (1900-11) and leader (1911-14, 1922-30) of the Labour Party; Member of Parliament from 1906; Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary of the first Labour Government in Britain (Nov. 1924); In 1935-37 he was a Lord President under Mr. Baldwin.

## 68. TO PANDIT MALAVIYAJI

*Yeravda Central Prison, 24th February, 1933*

I had your telegram asking me whether you could release the correspondence for publication. As I had done so 48 hours before the receipt of your telegram I did not send a wire in reply, thinking that you must already have seen the notice of the publication.

Since then I had no time to dictate a reply to you, as *Harijan* takes up practically all my time up to Thursday evening.

I hope you are getting regularly your copy of the *Harijan*. I do not know whether you at all get the time to look at it. Now that the world knows the difference of outlook between you and me as to these Bills, I would like you to review the whole position in the light of what you yourself have suggested.

You say that it is possible by discussion between Sanatanists and reformers to arrive at a compromise without the aid of legislation. I taxed myself as to how this could be, even assuming that there was complete agreement between Sanatanists and reformers that public temples should be thrown open to Harijans. Even that agreement cannot supersede the law which lays down that Harijans cannot enter public temples.

I therefore cannot get away from the very real moral difficulty that unless we get the law altered, we are not in a position to keep the pledge given in the Bombay resolution. We cannot plead helplessness under cover of this law, of which I knew nothing at the time I drew up the resolution about temples. I suppose that you do know that the original draft was prepared by me. True, several changes were made after, but no change was made so as to alter the substance of my draft.

I wish therefore that for the sake of the very religion which you and I hold dearer than life itself, you will examine the moral difficulties I have presented here. And let me repeat, if it is at all necessary, what I have said in my article



in *Harijan* that this latest difference in viewpoint between you and me does not, in the slightest degree, diminish my regard or affection for you,

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

To

PANDIT MALAVIYAJI

*From a photostat: S.N. 20348*

**69. TO THE SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF BOMBAY,  
(HOME DEPARTMENT), POONA**

DEAR SIR,

My first constructive act on returning to India in 1915 was to found the Satyagraha Ashram for the purpose of serving Truth. The inmates are under the vows of truth, Ahimsa, celibacy, control of palate, poverty, fearlessness, removal of untouchability, Swadeshi with Khadi as the centre, equal respect for all religions and bread labour. The present site for the Ashram was bought in 1916. It conducts today certain activities mostly through the labour of inmates. But it does need to supplement that labour with ordinary paid labour. Its principal activities are:—Khadi production as a village industry without the aid of power-driven machinery, dairy, agriculture, scientific scavenging and literary education. The Ashram has 107 inmates at present (men 42, women 31, boys 12 and girls 22). This number excludes those who are in prison and those who are otherwise engaged outside. Up to now it has trained nearly 1,000 persons in the manufacture of Khadi. Most of these, so far as my knowledge goes, are doing useful constructive work and earning an honest livelihood.

The Ashram is a registered trust. The funds at its disposal are earmarked. Whilst the aim has been to make every department self-supporting, it has hitherto been obliged to receive donations from friends to meet all the obligations. Experience has shown that so long as it remains a predominantly educational service (using the term in the widest sense) and not only charges no fees but actually feeds and clothes the learners, it cannot be wholly self-supporting.

The Ashram owns immovable property estimated at about Rs. 3,60,000 and movables including cash estimated at over Rs. 3,00,000. The Ashram takes no part in politics so-called. But it does believe in non-co-operation and civil disobedience as indispensable, under certain circumstances, for the observance

of truth and non-violence. Hence, the Civil Disobedience campaign of 1930 was started by the march to Dandi of nearly eighty inmates of the Ashram.

Time has now arrived for the Ashram to make a greater sacrifice in the face of the existing situation— on the one hand the growing terrorism by the Government and on the other the equally growing demoralization among the people.

The statements that have come under my observation since the breaking of my fast show that;

1. Methods of torture have been adopted by the police in various parts of India in order to cow down individual civil resisters,
2. Women have been insulted,
3. Free movement of people has become almost impossible,
4. In many parts of India, village work by Congressmen has become all but impossible,
5. Civil Resistance prisoners have been subjected to humiliations and bodily injury in many lock-ups and prisons,
6. Unconscionably heavy fines have been imposed and gross irregularities committed for their recovery,
7. Peasants withholding revenue or rent have been punished in a manner out of all proportion to their offence, obviously with a view to terrifying them and their neighbours,
8. The public press has been gagged,
9. In short freedom with self-respect has become impossible throughout the length and breadth of the land.

I have no doubt that these statements will be denied or explained away in official circles. It may be that they are not free from exaggerations. But in common with many Congressmen I believe in them and therefore they are able to arouse us to action.

Hence, mere incarceration can bring a little satisfaction. Moreover, I quite clearly see that the vast constructive programme of the Ashram cannot be carried on with safety, unless the Ashram ceases entirely to have anything to do with the campaign. To accept such a position will be to deny the creed. Up to

now I have hoped that the existence of the Ashram side by side with the Civil Resistance of its individual members was possible and that there was bound to be an honourable peace between Government and the Congress in the near future even though the Congress goal might not be immediately realized. The unfortunate rejection by His Excellency the Viceroy of the honest advance of the Congress through me, in the interest of peace, shows clearly that the Government do not seek or desire peace, they want an abject surrender by the largest and the admittedly most, if not the only popular, political organization in the country. This is impossible so long as the Congress continues to repose confidence in its present advisers. The struggle therefore is bound to be prolonged and calls for much greater sacrifice than the people have hitherto undergone. It follows that the greatest measure of sacrifice is to be expected of me as the author of the movement. I can therefore only offer that which is nearest and dearest to me and for the building of which I and many other members of the Ashram have laboured with infinite patience and care all these eighteen years. Every head of cattle and every tree has its history and sacred associations. They are all members of a big family. What was once a barren plot of land has been turned by human endeavour into a fair-sized model garden colony. It will not be without a tear that we shall break up the family and its activities. I have had many and prayerful conversations with the inmates and they have, men and women, unanimously approved of the proposal to give up the present activities. Those who are at all able have decided to offer individual Civil Disobedience after the suspension period is over.

It may not be superfluous to mention that the Ashram has for the past two years refused to pay revenue dues and consequently goods of considerable value have been seized and sold in respect of them. I make no complaint of the procedure. But it cannot be a matter of pleasure or profit to carry on a great institution in such precarious circumstances. I fully realize that whether a State is just or unjust and whether it is under popular or foreign control, the citizen's possessions may at any time be forcibly taken away from him by the State if he comes in conflict with it. In the circumstances, it seems to me to be simple

prudence to anticipate the inevitable in a conflict which promises to be indefinitely prolonged.

But whilst it has been decided to break up the Ashram we want everything to be used for public purpose. Therefore, unless the Government for any reason desire to take charge of any or all of the movables including cash, I propose to hand them over to those friends who will take them and use them for public benefit and in accordance with the earmarking. Thus the Khadi stock and contents of the workshop and the weaving sheds will be handed over to the All-India Spinners' Association on whose behalf that activity has been carried on. The cows and other cattle will be handed to a representative of the Goseva Sangh on whose behalf the dairy has been conducted. The library will be handed, probably to an institution that will take care of it. The moneys and articles belonging to various parties will be returned to them or kept for them by friends who will care to take charge of them.

Then there remain the land, the buildings and the crops. I suggest that the Government take possession of these and do what they like with them. I would gladly have handed these also to friends but I cannot be party to their paying the revenue dues. And naturally I may not hand them to fellow resisters. All, therefore, I wish is that beneficial use be made of the land, buildings and the valuable trees and crops instead of being allowed to run to waste as I see has been done in many cases.

There is a plot of land with building occupied by Harijan families. They have hitherto paid no rent. I have no desire to invite them to take part in Civil Resistance. They will now pay the nominal rent of one rupee per year to the trustees of the Ashram and be responsible for the revenue due on that portion.

If for any reason, the Government decline to take possession of the property mentioned, the Ashram will still be vacated by the inmates as soon as may be after the expiry of the suspension period, viz., 31st instant unless the date is anticipated by the Government. I request a telegraphic reply to this letter, at least, in so far as the Government's wishes regarding the movables are

concerned so as to enable me to remove them in due time if I am to remove them at all.

*I am,  
Yours faithfully,*

M. K. GANDHI

AHMEDABAD, JULY 26, 1933

To

THE SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF BOMBAY, (HOME DEPARTMENT), POONA

*From a photostat: S.N. 21535*

## 70. TO SIR TEJ BAHADUR SAPRU <sup>1</sup>

*Satyagraha Ashram, Wardha, Sept. 30, 1933*

DEAR DR. SAPRU,

I was delighted to receive your letter. Of course, I knew why you were not writing to me. I could never be guilty of thinking that the absence of any letter from you was due to want of affection or courtesy.

I am still trying to regain my lost strength. It is slowly coming to me.

I am trying all I can to overtake the orthodox prejudices against Harijans. I quite agree with you that "our attitude towards them is the darkest blot on our character". I know that in this matter I can rely upon your wholehearted assistance, but in writing to me I don't like your confining yourself merely to the Harijan question. You may not take any active part in politics or political discussions, but, surely you will not debar friends from the benefit of your advice, guidance and ripe experience. Whatever may be the differences between us in our outlook, you know that I have very high regard for you and your opinions. I would, therefore, like you to give me briefly your London experiences and the opinion you have formed upon them.

Seth Jamnalalji joins me in sending you regards,

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

SIR TEJ BAHADUR SAPRU, 19 ALBERT ROAD, ALLAHABAD

*From a photostat: S.N. 29503*

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<sup>1</sup> Sir Tej Bhadur Sapru (1875-1949)—Eminent lawyer; constitutionalist and politician; Law Member in Viceroy's Council, 1920-22; President of Liberal Federation in 1923 and 1927.

## 71. TO CARL HEATH<sup>1</sup>

*Wardha (C.P.)*

*10th December, 1934*

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your letter of 19th November. I have not been able to understand it, in spite of the help I sought from Charlie Andrews.

I have no hesitation in agreeing with you that any solution of the present deadlock should be just and creative, and that it should be neither imposed nor extorted; in other words, it should be an agreed solution honourable to both the countries. I know too the suffering of India and the suffering of Lancashire. But if the juxtaposition of the two is meant to imply that the cause of the suffering of either is identical I would dissent from any such view. The suffering of India is imposed upon her; the suffering of Lancashire is due partly to world causes and partly to its own shortsightedness and selfishness. So far as it was possible for me to suggest an alleviation of the suffering of Lancashire through India's help I had made a definite offer when I was in England in 1931. But my offer proved to be of no avail. The offer was this: If there was a free settlement between England and India, a favoured-nation clause was quite possible, in so far as India might need any foreign cloth in order to supplement her output of cloth, whether through the village spinning wheel or through her mills. I do not know how far such treatment is possible today for, even during the short period that has elapsed since the meeting of the Round Table Conference, India has become better organized for the manufacture of all her clothing requirements, in spite of the fact that she is importing fine-count calico both from England and Japan. The chief point, however, is not how Lancashire can send its calico to India, but how the whole of England can benefit in every way by the benefit that India must derive from attainment of complete freedom, political and economic. The more I study the villages of India the more intensely do I realize that India has no need to be a pauper



country if she can get the chance to grow without the fetters that today prevent her natural growth.

Your last paragraph seems to imply that there is no longer any repression in India. I can only tell you that repression is there to be seen by anyone with the naked eye. I do not know of any single repressive law that has been repealed. The Press is effectively gagged, there is no such thing as freedom of movement in Bengal as also in the Frontier Province. If you hear nothing of imprisonments and lathi charges it is because civil disobedience is suspended and the Congress has resolved, in furtherance of the spirit of non-violence, to submit to repressive laws in so far as it is humanly possible to do so. On the top of all this comes the Parliamentary Committee's proposals for a new constitution. It is, as I read it, a bare-faced denial of freedom. I see in it no scope for expansion. I would any day prefer the existing state to the crushing burden that threatens to overwhelm India and tighten the British hold upon her. My own power of endurance is being tested beyond my capacity my way to the Frontier Province is blocked.

But, in spite of the blackness of the horizon, I have no sense of despair in me. I believe in the existence of a beneficent Power that overrides and upsets all human plans. It ever produces order out of chaos, and redresses wrongs in spite of the tyranny of tyrants.

India must come to her own one day. But she will do so chiefly if her own sons and daughters behave themselves and prove worthy of her freedom. We must exert our utmost to prove our worth, and you, friends of Conciliation Group, will, I know, do your level best according to your lights to help a just solution.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

CARL HEATH, ESQ.,

INDIAN CONCILIATION GROUP,

FRIENDS HOUSE, EUSTON ROAD,

LONDON, N.W.I

*From a photostat: S.N. 22641*

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1 Carl Heath (1869- )—One of the best-known Quakers, nationally and internationally; Secretary, Friends' Service Council, 1919-35; Chairman, Indian Conciliation Group.

## 72. TO CARL HEATH

*As at Wardha, 3rd January 1935*

DEAR FRIEND,

I thank you for your letter on 21st ultimo. Your previous letter was read by Miraben, Mahadev and later by Andrews. All of them put, independently of me, the same construction that I had. Of course, I unreservedly accept your correction. I simply want to say that it was after carefully reading your letter more than three times that I sent you the reply I did. Andrews also read my reply to you, and he had nothing to suggest by way of alteration.

Of course, you knew the existence of the repressive laws. But you did not know, nor do you know now, what their continuance meant or means to us here. A strange confirmation of this comes from Dr Maude Royden who is reported to have said at Karachi that the people in England knew nothing, through the daily press or otherwise, of the amazing things which she heard during the two or three days she found herself amongst the very sober women of India. Andrews will be able to give you first-hand testimony of what he saw and learnt in Bengal.

You seem to regard the possibility of withdrawal of the forthcoming Bill as a calamity. In my opinion, if the withdrawal comes even at the last moment, it will be a blessing both for England and India, for the simple reason that persistence in the measure in the face of an almost unanimous Indian opposition to it would mean an unbending attitude on the part of the British Parliament and utter contempt for Indian public opinion. I hope you have seen the bitter comment made by Rt. Hon. Sastri, who was at one time a *persona grata* at the India office whose complete confidence he enjoyed, and the equally bitter comment of Hon. C. Y. Chintamani, who has been regarded as a moderate among moderates and who has, in season and out of season, condemned the Congress attitude in unmeasured language.

Now for the briefest summary of my own personal objections to the J.P.G. Report. I read that Report and the White Paper as one document. Whatever new there is in the former is not regarded at this end as an improvement, but quite the contrary, and it is the last straw which has broken the back of the Liberals. They had cherished the fond hope that the Joint Memorandum signed under the leadership of the Aga Khan would receive the favourable consideration of the Joint Parliamentary Committee and that some, if not all, of its recommendations would be accepted by it. The contemptuous dismissal of that Memorandum, beyond a mere courteous reference to it, has extorted the following remark from Sastri: "No, Sir, it is impossible for the Liberal Party to give an atom of co-operation. Co-operation with friends that wish well of us will be worthwhile, but co-operation with those who have displayed the utmost distrust of us, who do not care for our views and demands, and who enact a constitution in utter disregard of our wishes, what is co-operation with them, I ask? I should call it a suicide."

#### SUMMARY

1. There is no suggestion in the J.P.C. Report that there should be a clause in the constitution providing for automatic advance to complete independence or whatever the selected representatives of India may decide to have.
2. The contemplated constitution saddles India with a greater financial burden than she is bearing today without any prospect of economic or political betterment.
3. At the centre, 80 per cent of the revenue is reserved out of any popular control.
4. There is no popular control over the military, whether as to policy or as to expenditure.
5. There is no popular control over the currency or the exchange of the country.
6. Even the control over the 20 per cent proposed to be left in the hands of the Finance Minister is subject to suspension by the Governor-General.

7. The provincial autonomy adumbrated in the Report is purely nominal, as the Governors of the provinces have such wide powers that they can, whenever they choose, make an end of responsibility. It would be utterly wrong for any Britisher to infer from Colonial precedents that these powers will be rarely, if ever, exercised. Indian past experience is quite the contrary.
8. Responsible Ministers have no right even to transfer any member, either of the All-India service or of the provincial service.
9. The so-called autonomous legislatures will have no right to amend the Police Acts or even Police Regulations.
10. British exploitation is made firmer than ever.

The overwhelming effect of all the foregoing objections considered together leaves an indelible impression upon the mind that, bad as the existing constitution is, the threatened new one will be infinitely worse. And what is more, if the threatened new constitution is passed, it would be most difficult for years to come to undo the mischief that will be done under it.

To clinch the whole of the objections it is well to remember that the constitution is sought to be imposed upon the people who are already groaning under repression, such as, perhaps, has not been equalled in British Indian history. I am making this statement with the full sense of my responsibility. I have a vivid memory of Jallianwala Bagh. I have read Kaye and Malleon's volumes on the Sepoy Revolt, as it has been called, of 1857. Both make gruesome reading. Then, it was the naked sword. The repression represents the gloved fist, but deadlier on that account.

You may make whatever private use you wish of this letter. Nobody else is responsible for the opinion I have expressed in this. It has been shown to no friend beyond Mahadev, Mira and the typist.

My writing may seem bitter; but I would like to warn you against putting any such interpretation upon it. The language represents the truth and nothing but the truth as I have seen and felt it. It does not represent the whole truth. If I

had the time and the capacity to give you the whole truth, the version would be even worse than it is.

In spite, however, of the black picture that I see in it, I have no bitterness in me against a single Englishman. I believe that the English Ministers are pursuing what they believe to be an honest policy to be adopted in the interest of India. It is their honest belief that British rule in India has been, on the whole, for her good. They honestly believe that under it India has advanced in economic progress and in political capacity, and that if India received the constitution that the vast number of the intelligentsia wish for, it would be bad day for her. It is difficult to combat an honest belief, however erroneous it may be, as, in my opinion, it is in this case. But it would also be wrong to be angry over an honest belief of any person. Whilst, therefore, I hold the strong opinion that I have expressed in the foregoing summary I would ask you to believe me implicitly when I give you my assurance that, God helping, I shall take no step in haste or in anger.

I have retired from the Congress because, among other reasons, I want to impose silence upon myself, so far as it is humanly possible, about the political measures of the Government. I want, in my voluntary isolation, to explore the yet hidden possibilities of nonviolence. Every action I am taking, no matter in what department of life, is being taken with that end in view. The only axe that I have to grind on this earth is to try to understand the ultimate truth of things which, at present, I seem to see only dimly. And after a laborious search I have come to the conclusion that if I am to see it in any fulness I can only do so by non-violence in thought, word and deed. What this search will lead me to, I really do not know myself, nor have I the slightest desire to see it before its time. For me, therefore, it is an incessant waiting upon God to show me the next step, and I shall be grateful if any of you, friends, can, with your full hearts, help me in that search.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

CARL HEATH, ESQ., LONDON *From a photostat: S.N. 22642*

### 73. TO CARL HEATH

*Sevagram, Wardha, 25-1-41*

DEAR FRIEND,

I have your very kind letter. In it there is no acknowledgement of my cable reply to your cable referred to in your letter. My reply cabled on 27th October, 1940 was as follows:

"ALL EFFORT FAILED. INDIAN CONDITION WHOLLY DIFFERENT AND UNIQUE. PRESS GAGGED. HAVE STOPPED HARIJAN WEEKLIES, RESTRICTING CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS OF NON-VIOLENCE."

Since then I have sent you the following cable in reply to yours of the last week of December:

"M.P.S. LETTER IGNORES FACTS, FRANK OPEN COMMUNICATION MADE IMPOSSIBLE. GOD BETWEEN US ALL."

I understand your argument. The Quaker attitude is individual. The Congress attitude has reference to a big organization. The Congress as an institution based on non-violence cannot distinguish between one species of violence and another. I do not think that the world will be any better if British arms are victorious over the German through the means employed by the latter. In the ultimate the question before the Congress is how to do away with the use of arms as between man and man or nation and nation for the vindication of justice. The universal proposition is implicit in India's fight for freedom through non-violence.

You have rightly detected the flaw in the Congress attitude as reflected in the Poona resolution. That was when and why I had ceased to guide the Congress or take part in its deliberations. I withdrew my opposition when the Congress retraced its steps through the later resolution at Bombay. In my opinion it reflects no discredit on the Congress that it could not abide by nonviolence in all circumstances. Its policy is truth and nonviolence. Above all else, therefore, it must be honest. When, therefore, it found the Poona demand flouted it came

round to its original position and invited me to lead the battle of Civil Disobedience. I had no hesitation in responding as I knew that the mass mind in India was by instinct non-violent. You seem also to have missed the fact that the Poona resolution would not have been passed at all but for my weakness of which I made ample confession in the pages of *Harijan*.

My experience is that the Congress has grown progressively, though slowly, in non-violence. And I would have proved an unworthy exponent of nonviolence, if I had failed at the right moment to express it through the Congress.

The Congress is as much anti-Nazism as anti- Imperialism. If the Government had not thoughtlessly forbidden the anti-war activity of the Congress and had not proclaimed it as pro-Nazi, they could easily have claimed the whole of India as anti-Nazi—both that part which followed the Congress non-violence and the other which believed in the use of violence. Had it not done so, much bitterness would have been avoided and the world would have profited by the lesson of tolerance and its moral opinion would have been on the side of Britain. It is never too late to mend one's error.

Whether, however, the error is admitted and mended or not, the course of the Congress is clear. The conviction being purely moral it should be pursued irrespective of the immediate result. A moral means is almost an end in itself. Is not virtue its own reward?

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

To

FRIEND CARL HEATH,

WHITEWINGS, MANOR WAY,

GUILDFORD-SURREY

*From a photostat: S.N. 22663*



#### 74. TO M. A. JINNAH

*Segaon, February 3, 1938*

DEAR MR. JINNAH,

Pandit Nehru told me yesterday that you were complaining to Maulana Sahib about the absence of any reply from me to your letter of the 5th November in reply to mine of the 19th October. The letter was received by me when I was pronounced by the Doctors to be seriously ill at Calcutta.

The letter was shown to me three days after its receipt. Had I thought it necessarily called for a reply even though I was ill I would have sent one. I read the letter and I still think there was nothing useful that I could have said in reply. But in a way I am glad you awaited a reply and here it is. Mr Kher told me definitely he had a private message from you. He delivered it to me when I was alone. I could have sent you a verbal message in reply but in order to give you a true picture of my mental state I sent you a short note. There was nothing to hide in it. But I did feel, as I still do, that the way in which you used it came upon me as a painful surprise.

Your complain of my silence. The reason for my silence is literally and truly in my note. Believe me, the moment I can do something that can bring the two communities together nothing in the world can prevent me from so doing. You seem to deny that your speech was declaration of war, but your later pronouncements too confirmed my first impression. How can I prove what is a matter of feeling? In your speech I miss the old Nationalist when in 1915 I returned from my self- imposed exile in South Africa. Everybody spoke of you as one of the staunchest nationalists and the hope of both the Hindus and Mussalmans. Are you still the same Mr Jinnah?

If you say you are, in spite of your speeches, I shall accept your word.

Lastly, you want me to come forward with some proposal. What proposal can I make except to ask you on bended knees to be what I thought you were ? But

the proposals to form the basis of unity between the two communities surely have got to come from you.

This again is not for publication but for your eyes; it is the one of a friend, not of an opponent.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

*Famous Letters of Mahatma Gandhi, pp. 108-09*

## 75. TO M. A. JINNAH

*September 22, 1944*

DEAR QAID-I-AZAM,

Your letter of yesterday (21st inst.) so disturbed me that I thought I would postpone my reply till after we had met at the usual time. Though I made no advance at our meeting, I think I see somewhat clearly what you are driving at. The more I think about the two nations theory the more alarming it appears to be. The book recommended by you gives me no help. It contains half-truths and its conclusions or inferences are unwarranted. I am unable to accept the proposition that the Muslims of India are a nation distinct from the rest of the inhabitants of India. Mere assertion is no proof. The consequences of accepting such a proposition are dangerous in the extreme. Once the principle is admitted there would be no limit to claims for cutting up India into numerous divisions which would spell India's ruin. I have therefore suggested a way out. Let it be a partition as between two brothers, if a division there must be.

You seem to be averse to a plebiscite. In spite of the admitted importance of the League, there must be clear proof that the people affected desire partition. In my opinion, all the people inhabiting the area ought to express their opinion specifically on this single issue of division. Adult suffrage is the best method, but I would accept any other equivalent.

You summarily reject the idea of common interest between the two arms. I can be no willing party to a division which does not provide for the simultaneous safeguarding of common interests such as defence, foreign affairs and the like. There will be no feeling of security by the people of India without a recognition of the natural and mutual obligations arising out of physical contiguity.

Your letter shows a wide divergence of opinion and outlook between us. Thus you adhere to the opinion often expressed by you that the August 1942 resolution is "inimical to the ideals and demands of Muslim India". There is no proof for this sweeping statement.

We seem to be moving in a circle. I have made a suggestion. If we are bent on agreeing, as I hope we are, let us call in a third party or parties to guide or even arbitrate between us.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

*Gandhi-Jinnah Talks, p. 22*

**76. TO M. A. JINNAH**

*September 23, 1944*

DEAR QAID-I-AZAM,

Last evening's talk has left a bad taste in the mouth. Our talks and our correspondence seem to run in parallel lines and never touch one another. We reached the breaking point last evening but, thank God, we were unwilling to part. We resumed discussion and suspended it in order to allow me to keep my time for the evening public prayer.

In order that all possible chance of making any mistake in a matter of this great importance may be removed, I would like you to give me in writing what precisely on your part you would want me to put my signature to.

I adhere to my suggestion that we may call in some outside assistance to help us at this stage.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

*Gandhi-Jinnah Talks, p. 25*

**76A. FROM M. A. JINNAH**

*September 23, 1944*

DEAR MR. GANDHI,

I am in receipt of your letter of September 23. May I refer you to my letter to today's date which I sent to you in reply to yours of September 22? I have nothing new or fresh to add, but I may say that it is not a case of your being asked to put your signature as representing anybody till you clothe yourself with representing capacity and are vested with authority. We stand by, as I have already said, the basic and fundamental principles embodied in the Lahore resolution of March 1940. I appeal to you once more to revise your policy and programme, as the future of this subcontinent and the welfare of the peoples of India demand that you should face realities.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. A. JINNAH

## 77. TO M. A. JINNAH

*September 24, 1944*

DEAR QAID-I-AZAM,

I have your two letters of September 23 in reply to my letters of the 22nd and 23rd.

With your assistance, I am exploring the possibilities of reaching an agreement, so that the claim embodied in the Muslim League resolution of Lahore may be reasonably satisfied. You must therefore have no apprehensions that the August resolution will stand in the way of our reaching an agreement. That resolution dealt with the question of India as against Britain and it cannot stand in the way of our settlement.

I proceed on the assumption that India is not to be regarded as two or more nations but as one family consisting of many members of whom the Muslims living in the north-west zones, i.e. Baluchistan, Sind, North- West Frontier Province and that part of the Punjab where they are in absolute majority over all the other elements and in parts of Bengal and Assam where they are in absolute majority, desire to live in separation from the rest of India.

Differing from you on the general basis, I can yet recommend to the Congress and the country the acceptance of the claim for separation contained in the Muslim League resolution of Lahore of 1940, on my basis and on the following terms:

The areas should be demarcated by a Commission approved by the Congress and the League. The wishes of the inhabitants of the areas demarcated should be ascertained through the votes of the adult population of the areas or through some equivalent method.

If the vote is in favour of separation it shall be agreed that these areas shall form a separate State as soon as possible after India is free from foreign

domination and can therefore be constituted into two sovereign independent States.

There shall be a treaty of separation which should also provide for the efficient and satisfactory administration of foreign affairs, defence, internal communications, customs, commerce and the like, which must necessarily continue to be matters of common interest between the contracting parties.

The treaty shall also contain terms for safeguarding the rights of minorities in the two States.

Immediately on the acceptance of this agreement by the Congress and the League the two shall decide upon a common course of action for the attainment of independence of India.

The League will however be free to remain out of any direct action to which the Congress may resort and in which the League may not be willing to participate.

If you do not agree to these terms, could you let me know in precise terms what you would have me to accept in terms of the Lahore resolution and bind myself to recommend to the Congress? If you could kindly do this, I shall be able to see, apart from the difference in approach, what definite terms I can agree to. In your letter of September 23, you refer to "the basic and fundamental principles embodied in the Lahore resolution" and ask me to accept them.

Surely this is unnecessary when, as I feel, I have accepted the concrete consequence that should follow from such acceptance.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI



## 78. FROM SUBHASH CHANDRA BOSE

*Jealgora, March 31, 1939*

MY DEAR MAHATMAJI,

... I shall be grateful if you could let me know your reaction to Pant's resolution. You are in this advantageous position that you can take a dispassionate view of things—provided, of course, you get to know the whole story of Tripuri. Judging from the papers most of the people who have seen you so far seem to belong to one school—namely, those who supported Pant's resolution. But that does not matter. You can easily assess things at their proper value, regardless of the persons who visit you.

You can easily imagine my own view of Pant's resolution. But my personal feelings do not matter so much. In public life we have often to subordinate personal feelings to public considerations. As I have said in a previous letter, whatever one may think of Pant's resolution from the purely constitutional point of view, since it has been passed by the Congress, I feel bound by it. Now do you regard that resolution as one of no-confidence in me and do you feel that I should resign in consequence thereof? Your view in this matter will influence me considerably.

\* \* \*

There is one other matter to which I shall refer in this letter—that is the question of our programme..... For months I have been telling friends that there would be a crisis in Europe in spring which would continue till summer. The international situation as well as our own position at home convinced me nearly 8 months ago that the time had come for us to force the issue of Purna Swaraj..... For these and other reasons we should lose no time in placing our National Demand before the British Government in the form of an ultimatum..... If you do so and prepare for the coming struggle simultaneously I am sure that we shall be able to win Purna Swaraj very soon. The British Government will either respond to our demand without a fight—or, if the

struggle does take place in our present circumstances it cannot be a long drawn one. I am so confident and so optimistic on this point that I feel that if we take courage in both hands and go ahead we shall have Swaraj inside of 18 months at the most.

I feel so strongly on this point that I am prepared to make any sacrifice in this connection. If you take up the struggle, I shall most gladly help you to the best of my ability. If you feel that the Congress will be able to fight better with another President I shall gladly step aside. If you feel that the Congress will be able to fight more effectively with a Working Committee of your choice, I shall gladly fall in line with your wishes. All that I want is that you and the Congress should in this critical hour stand up and resume the struggle for Swaraj. If self-effacement will further the national cause, I assure you most solemnly that I am prepared to efface myself completely. I think I love my country sufficiently to be able to do this.

Pardon me for saying that the way you have been recently conducting the States People's struggle does not appeal to me.

\* \* \*

I may say that many people like myself cannot enthuse over the terms of the Rajkot settlement. We, as well as the Nationalist Press have called it a great victory—but how much have we gained ? Sir Maurice Gwyer is neither our man nor is he an independent agent. He is a Government man. What point is there in making him the umpire? We are hoping that, his verdict will be in our favour. But supposing he declares against us, what will be our position? My letter has become too long, so I must stop here. If I have said anything which appears to you to be erroneous, I hope you will pardon me. I know you always like people to speak frankly and openly. That is what has emboldened me in writing this frank and long letter.

With respectful Pranams,

*Yours affectionately,*

SUBHASH

*Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose, pp. 60-62*

## 78A. TO SUBHASH CHANDRA BOSE

*Birla House, New Delhi, 2-4-1939*

MY DEAR SUBHASH,

I have yours of 31st March as also the previous one. You are quite frank and I like your letters for the clear enunciation of your views.

The views you express seem to me to be so diametrically opposed to those of the others and my own that I do not see any possibility of bridging them. I think that such school of thought should be able to put forth its views before the country without any mixture. And if this is honestly done, I do not see why there should be any bitterness ending in civil war.

What is wrong is not the differences between us but loss of mutual respect and trust. This will be remedied by time which is the best healer. If there is real non-violence in us, there can be no civil war much less bitterness.

Taking all things into consideration, I am of opinion that you should at once form your own Cabinet fully representing your views. Formulate your programme definitely and put it before the forthcoming A.I.C.C. If the Committee accepts the programme all will be plain-sailing and you should be enabled to prosecute it unhampered by the minority. If on the other hand your programme is not accepted you should resign and let the Committee choose its President. And you will be free to educate the country along your own lines. I tender this advice irrespective of Pandit Pant's resolution.

My prestige does not count. It has an independent value of its own. When my motive is suspected or my policy or programme rejected by the country, the prestige must go. India will rise and fall by the quality of the sum-total of her many millions. Individuals, however high they may be, are of no account except in so far as they represent the many millions. Therefore let us rule it out of consideration.

I wholly dissent from your view that the country has been never so non-violent as now. I smell violence in the air I breath. But the violence has put on a subtle form. Our mutual distrust is a bad form of violence. The widening gulf between Hindus and Mussalmans points to the same thing. I can give further illustrations.

We seem to differ as to the amount of corruption in the Congress. My impression is that it is on the increase. I have been pleading for the past many months for a thorough scrutiny.

In these circumstances I see no atmosphere of nonviolent mass action. An ultimatum without effective sanction is worse than useless.

But as I have told you I am an old man perhaps growing timid and over-cautious and you have youth before you and reckless optimism born of youth. I hope you are right. I am wrong. I have the firm belief that the Congress as it is today cannot deliver the goods, cannot offer civil disobedience worth the name. Therefore if your prognosis is right, I am a back number and played out as the generalissimo of Satyagraha.

I am glad you have mentioned the little Rajkot affair. It brings into prominent relief the different angles from which we look at things. I have nothing to repent of in the steps I have taken in connection with it. I feel that it has great national importance. I have not stopped civil disobedience in the other States for the sake of Rajkot. But Rajkot opened my eyes. It showed me the way. I am not in Delhi for my health. I am reluctantly in Delhi awaiting the Chief Justice's decision. I hold it to be my duty to be in Delhi till the steps to be taken in due fulfilment of the Viceroy's declaration in his last wire to me are finally taken. I may not run any risk. If I invited the Paramount Power to do its duty, I was bound to be in Delhi to see that the duty was fully performed. I saw nothing wrong in the Chief Justice being appointed the interpreter of the document whose meaning was put in doubt by the Thakor Sahib. By the way, Sir Maurice will examine the document not in his capacity as Chief Justice but as a trained jurist trusted by the Viceroy. By accepting the Viceroy's nominee as Judge, I fancy I have shown both wisdom and grace and what is more important I have increased the Viceregal responsibility in the matter.

Though we have discussed sharp differences of opinion between us, I-am quite sure that our private relations will not suffer in the least. If they are from the heart, as I believe they are, they will bear the strain of these differences.

*Love, BAPU*

*Netaji Subhash Chandra Rose, pp. 62-65*

## 79. TO HERR HITLER

*As at Wardha, C.P., India, 23-7-'39*

DEAR FRIEND,

Friends have been urging me to write to you for the sake of humanity. But I have resisted their request, because of the feeling that any letter from me would be an impertinence. Something tells me that I must not calculate and that I must make my appeal for whatever it may be worth.

It is quite clear that you are today the one person in the world who can prevent a war which may reduce humanity to the savage state. Must you pay that price for an object however worthy it may appear to you to be? Will you listen to the appeal of one who has deliberately shunned the method of war not without considerable success? Any way I anticipate your forgiveness, if I have erred in writing to you.

*I remain,*

*Your sincere friend,*

M. K. GANDHI

HERR HITLER,

BERLIN,

GERMANY

*From a photostat: S.N. 23126*

## 80. TO EVERY BRITON

(On July 3, 1940, Gandhiji issued his famous appeal)

To EVERY BRITON,

In 1896, I addressed an appeal to every Briton in South Africa on behalf of my countrymen who had gone there as labourers or traders and their assistants. It had its effect. However important it was from my viewpoint, the cause which I pleaded then was insignificant compared with the cause which prompts this appeal. I appeal to every Briton, wherever he may be now, to accept the method of non-violence instead of that of war for the adjustment of the relations between nations and other matters. Your statesmen have declared that this is a war on behalf of democracy. There are many other reasons given in justification. You know them all by heart. I suggest that at the end of the war, whichever way it ends, there will be no democracy left to represent democracy. This war has descended upon mankind as a curse and as a warning. It is a curse, inasmuch as it is brutalizing man on a scale hitherto unknown. All distinctions between combatants and non-combatants have been abolished. No one and nothing is to be spared. Lying has been reduced to an art. Britain was to defend small nationalities. One by one they have vanished, at least for the time being. It also is a warning. It is a warning that, if nobody reads the writing on the wall, man will be reduced to the state of the beast, whom he is shaming by his manners. I read the writing, when the hostilities broke out. But I had not the courage to say the word. God has given me the courage to say it before it is too late.

I appeal for the cessation of hostilities, not because you are too exhausted to fight, but because war is bad in essence. You want to kill Nazism. You will never kill it by its indifferent adoption. Your soldiers are doing the same work of destruction as the Germans. The only difference is that perhaps yours are not as thorough as that of the Germans. And if that be so, yours will soon acquire the same thoroughness as theirs, if not much greater. On no other condition can you win this war. In other words, you will have to be more

ruthless than the Nazis. No cause, however just, can warrant the indiscriminate slaughter that is going on minute by minute. I suggest that a cause that demands the inhumanities that are being perpetrated today cannot be called just.

I do not want Britain to be defeated, nor do I want her to be victorious in a trial of brute strength, whether expressed through the muscle or brain. Your muscular bravery is an established fact. Need you demonstrate that your brain is also as unrivalled in destructive power as your muscle ? I hope you do not wish to enter into such an undignified competition with the Nazis. I venture to present you with a nobler and braver way, worthy of the bravest soldier. I want you to fight Nazism without arms, or, if I am to retain the military terminology, with non-violent arms. I would like you to lay down the arms you have, as being useless for saving you or humanity. You will invite Herr Hitler and Signor Mussolini to take what they want of the countries you call your possessions. Let them take possession of your beautiful island, with your many beautiful buildings. You will give all these, but neither your souls, nor your minds. If these gentlemen choose to occupy your homes, you will vacate them. If they do not give you free passage out, you will allow yourself, man, woman and child, to be slaughtered, but you will refuse to owe allegiance to them.

This process or this method, which I have called non-violent non-co-operation, is not without considerable success in its use in India. Your representatives in India may deny my claim. If they do, I shall feel sorry for them. They may tell you that our non-co-operation was not wholly non-violent, that it was born of hatred. If they give that testimony, I will not deny it. Had it been wholly non-violent, if all non-co-operators had been filled with goodwill towards you, I make bold to say that you who are India's masters would have become her pupils and, with much greater skill than we have, perfected this matchless weapons and met the German and Italian friends' menace with it. Indeed the history of Europe during the past few months would then have been written differently and Europe would have been spared seas of innocent blood, the rape of so many small nations, and the orgy of hatred.



This is no appeal made by a man who does not know his business. I have been practising with scientific precision non-violence and its possibilities for an unbroken period of over fifty years. I have applied it in every walk of life, domestic and institutional, economic and political. I know of no single case in which it has failed. Where it has seemed sometimes to have failed, I have ascribed it to my imperfections. I claim no perfection for myself. But I do claim to be a passionate seeker after Truth, which is but another name for God. In the course of that search, discovery of non-violence came to me. Its spread is my life mission. I have no interest in living except for the prosecution of that mission.

I claim to have been a life-long and wholly disinterested friend of the British people. At one time I used to be also a lover of your empire. I thought that it was doing good to India. When I saw that in the nature of things it could do no good, I used, and am still using, the non-violent method to fight imperialism. Whatever the ultimate fate of my country, my love for you remains, and will remain, undiminished. My nonviolence demands universal love, and you are not a small part of it. It is that love which has prompted my appeal to you.

May God give power to every word of mine. In His name, I began to write this, and in His name I close it. May your statesmen have the wisdom and the courage to respond to my appeal. I am telling His Excellency the Viceroy that my services are at the disposal of His Majesty's Government should they consider them of any practical use in advancing the object of my appeal.

M. K. GANDHI

*Mahatma*, Vol. V PP- 364-66

## 81. TO EVERY BRITON

When I had just begun my public career in South Africa, I wrote "An Open Letter to Every Briton in South Africa". It had its effect. I feel that I should repeat the example at this critical juncture in the history of the world. This time my appeal must be to every Briton in the world. He may be nobody in the counsels of his nation. But in the empire of non-violence every true thought counts, every true voice has its full value. *Vox populi vox dei* is not a copy-book maxim. It is an expression of the solid experience of mankind. But it has one qualification. Its truth is confined to the field of non-violence. Violence can for the moment completely frustrate a people's voice. But since I work on the field of non-violence only, every true thought expressed or unexpressed counts for me.

I ask every Briton to support me in my appeal to the British at this very hour to retire from every Asiatic and African possession and at least from India. That step is essential for the safety of the world and for the destruction of Nazism and Fascism. In this I include Japan's 'ism' also. It is a good copy of the two. Acceptance of my appeal will confound all the military plans of all the Axis Powers and even of the military advisers of Great Britain.

If my appeal goes home, I am sure the cost of British interests in India and Africa would be nothing compared to the present ever-growing cost of the war to Britain. And when one puts morals in the scales, there is nothing but gain to Britain, India and the world.

Though I ask for their withdrawal from Asia and Africa, let me confine myself for the moment to India. British statesmen talk glibly of India's participation in the war. Now India was never even formally consulted on the declaration of war. Why should it be? India does not belong to Indians. It belongs to the British. It has been even called a British possession. The British practically do with it as they like. They make me—an all-war resister—pay a war tax in a variety of ways. Thus I pay two pice as war tax on every letter I post, one pice on every postcard, and two annas on every wire I send. This is the lightest side

of the dismal picture. But it shows British ingenuity. If I was a student of economics, I could produce startling figures as to what India has been made to pay towards the war apart from what are miscalled voluntary contributions. No contribution made to a conqueror can be truly described as voluntary. What a conqueror the Briton makes! He is well saddled in his seat. I do not exaggerate when I say that a whisper of his wish is promptly answered in India. Britain may, therefore, be said to be at perpetual war with India which she holds by right of conquest and through an army of occupation. How does India profit by this enforced participation in Britain's war? The bravery of Indian soldiers profits India nothing.

Before the Japanese menace overtakes India, India's homesteads are being occupied by British troops—Indian and non-Indian. The dwellers are summarily ejected and expected to shift for themselves. They are paid a paltry vacating expense which carries them nowhere. Their occupation is gone. They have to build their cottages and search for their livelihood. These people do not vacate out of a spirit of patriotism. When this incident was referred to me a few days ago, I wrote in these columns that the dispossessed people should be asked to bear their lot with resignation. But my co-workers protested and invited me to go to the evacuees and console them myself or send someone to perform the impossible task. They were right. These poor people should never have been treated as they were. They should have been lodged suitably at the same time that they were asked to vacate.

People in East Bengal may almost be regarded as amphibious. They live partly on land and partly on the waters of the rivers. They have light canoes which enable them to go from place to place. For fear of the Japanese using the canoes the people have been called upon to surrender them. For a Bengali to part with his canoe, is almost like parting with his life. So those who take away his canoe he regards as his enemy.

Great Britain has to win the war. Need she do so at India's expense? Should she do so?

But I have something more to add to this sad chapter. The falsity that envelops Indian life is suffocating. Almost every Indian you meet is discontented. But he will not own it publicly. The Government employees high and low are no exception. I am not giving hearsay evidence. Many British officials know this. But they have evolved the art of taking work from such elements. This all-pervading distrust and falsity make life worthless unless one resists it with one's whole soul.

You may refuse to believe all I say. Of course I shall be contradicted. I shall survive the contradictions.

I have stated what I believe to be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

My people may or may not approve of this loud thinking. I have consulted nobody. This appeal is being written during my silence day. I am just now concerned with Britain's action. When slavery was abolished in America many slaves protested, some even wept. But protests and tears notwithstanding, slavery was abolished in law. But the abolition was the result of a bloody war between the South and the North; and so though the Negro's lot is considerably better than before, he still remains the outcaste of high society. I am asking for something much higher. I ask for a bloodless end of an unnatural domination and for a new era, even though there may be protests and wailing from some of us.

M. K. GANDHI

BOMBAY, 11-5-'42

*Harijan*, 17-5-1942

## 82. TO GENERALISSIMO CHIANG KAI-SHEK.

*Sevagram, June, 14, 1942*

DEAR GENERALISSIMO

I can never forget the five hours' close contact I had with you and your noble wife in Calcutta. I had always felt drawn towards you in your fight for freedom, and that contact and our conversation brought China and her problems still nearer to me. Long ago, between 1905 and 1913, when I was in South Africa, I was in constant touch with the small Chinese colony in Johannesburg. I knew them first as clients and then as comrades in the Indian passive resistance struggle in South Africa. I came in touch with them in Mauritius also. I learnt then to admire their thrift, industry, resourcefulness and internal unity. Later in India I had a very fine Chinese friend living with me for a few years and we all learnt to like him.

I have thus felt greatly attracted towards your great country and, in common with my countrymen, our sympathy has gone out to you in your terrible struggle. Our mutual friend, Jawaharlal Nehru, whose love of China is only excelled, if at all by his love of his own country, has kept us in intimate touch with the developments of the Chinese struggle.

Because of this feeling I have towards China and my earnest desire that our two great countries should come closer to one another and co-operate to their mutual advantage, I am anxious to explain to you that my appeal to the British power to withdraw from India is not meant in any shape or form to weaken India's defence against the Japanese or embarrass you in your struggle. India must not submit to any aggressor or invader and must resist him. I would not be guilty of purchasing the freedom of my country at the cost of your country's freedom. That problem does not arise before me as I am clear that India cannot gain her freedom in this way, and a Japanese domination of either India or China would be equally injurious to the other country and to world peace.

That domination must therefore be prevented and I should like India to play her natural and rightful part in this.

I feel India cannot do so while she is in bondage. India has been a helpless witness of the withdrawals from Malaya, Singapore and Burma. We must learn the lesson from these tragic events and prevent by all means at our disposal a repetition of what befell these unfortunate countries. But unless we are free we can do nothing to prevent it, and the same process might well occur again, crippling India and China disastrously. I do not want a repetition of this tragic tale of woe.

Our proffered help has repeatedly been rejected by the British Government and the recent failure of the Cripps Mission has left a deep wound which is still running. Out of that anguish has come the cry for immediate withdrawal of British power so that India can look after herself and help China to the best of her ability.

I have told you of my faith in non-violence and of my belief in the effectiveness of this method if the whole nation could turn to it. That faith in it is as firm as ever. But I realize that India today as a whole has not that faith and belief, and the Government in free India would be formed from the various elements composing the nation.

Today the whole of India is impotent and feels frustrated. The Indian Army consists largely of people who have joined up because of economic pressure. They have no feeling of a cause to fight for, and in no sense are they a national army. Those of us who would fight for a cause, for India and China, with armed forces or with non-violence, cannot under the foreign heel, function as they want to. And yet our people know for certain that India free can play even a decisive part not only on her own behalf, but also on behalf of China and world peace. Many like me feel that it is not proper or manly to remain in this helpless state and allow events to overwhelm us when a way to effective action can be opened to us. They feel, therefore, that every possible effort should be made to ensure independence and that freedom of action which is so urgently

needed. This is the origin of my appeal to the British power to end immediately the unnatural connection between Britain and India.

Unless we make the effort there is grave danger of public feeling in India going into wrong and harmful channels. There is every likelihood of subterranean sympathy for Japan growing simply in order to weaken and oust British authority in India. This feeling may take the place of robust confidence in our ability never to look to outsiders for help in winning our freedom. We have to learn self-reliance and develop the strength to work out our own salvation. This is only possible if we make a determined effort to free ourselves from bondage. That freedom has become a present necessity to enable us to take our due place among the free nations of the world.

To make it perfectly clear that we want to prevent in every way Japanese aggression, I would personally agree that the Allied Powers might, under treaty with us, keep their armed forces in India and use the country as a base for operations against the threatened Japanese attack.

I need hardly give you my assurance that, as the author of the new move in India, I shall take no hasty action. And whatever action I may recommend will be governed by the consideration that it should not injure China, or encourage Japanese aggression in India or China. I am trying to enlist world opinion in favour of a proposition which to me appears self-proved and which must lead to the strengthening of India's and China's defence. I am also educating public opinion in India and conferring with my colleagues. Needless to say, any movement against the British Government with which I may be connected will be essentially non-violent. I am straining every nerve to avoid a conflict with British authority. But if in the vindication of the freedom which has become an immediate desideratum, this becomes inevitable, I shall not hesitate to run any risk however great.

Very soon you will have completed five years of war against Japanese aggression and invasion and all the sorrow and misery that these have brought to China. My heart goes out to the people of China in deep sympathy and in admiration for their heroic struggle and endless sacrifices in the cause of their

country's freedom and integrity against tremendous odds. I am convinced that this heroism and sacrifice cannot be in vain; they must bear fruit. To you, the Madame Chiang and to the great people of China, I send my earnest and sincere wishes for your success. I look forward to the day when a free India and free China will co-operate together in friendship and brotherhood for their own good and for the good of Asia and the world.

In anticipation of your permission, I am taking liberty of publishing<sup>1</sup> this letter in *Harijan*.

*Yours sincerely,* M. K. GANDHI

*Non-Violence in Peace & War, Vol. I, pp. 424-27*

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<sup>1</sup> Its publication v/m withheld at that time.



### 83. TO EVERY JAPANESE

I must confess at the outset that, though I have no ill-will against you, I intensely dislike your attack upon China. From your lofty height you have descended to imperial ambition. You will fail to realize that ambition and may become the authors of the dismemberment of Asia, thus unwittingly preventing world federation and brotherhood without which there can be no hope for humanity.

Ever since I was a lad of eighteen studying in London over fifty years ago, I learnt, through the writings of the late Sir Edwin Arnold, to prize the many excellent qualities of your nation. I was thrilled when in South Africa I learnt of your brilliant victory over Russian arms. After my return to India from South Africa in 1915, I came in close touch with Japanese monks who lived as members of our Ashram from time to time. One of them became a valuable member of the Ashram in Sevagram, and his application to duty, his dignified bearing, his unflinching devotion to daily worship, affability, unruffledness under varying circumstances, and his natural smile which was positive evidence of his inner peace had endeared him to all of us. And now that owing to your declaration of war against Great Britain he has been taken away from us, we miss him as a dear coworker. He has left behind him as a memory his daily prayer and his little drum, to the accompaniment of which we open our morning and evening prayers.

In the background of these pleasant recollections I grieve deeply as I contemplate what appears to me to be your unprovoked attack against China and, if reports are to be believed, your merciless devastation of that great and ancient land.

It was a worthy ambition of yours to take equal rank with the Great Powers of the world. Your aggression against China and your alliance with the Axis Powers was surely an unwarranted excess of that ambition.

I should have thought that you would be proud of the fact that that great and ancient people, whose old classical literature you have adopted as your own, are your neighbours. Your understanding of one another's history, tradition, literature should bind you as friends rather than make you the enemies you are today.

If I was a free man, and if you allowed me to come to your country, frail though I am, I would not mind risking my health, may be my life, to come to your country to plead with you to desist from the wrong you are doing to China and the world and therefore to yourself.

But I enjoy no such freedom. And we are in the unique position of having to resist imperialism that we detest no less than yours and Nazism. Our resistance to it does not mean harm to the British people. We seek to convert them. Ours is an unarmed revolt against British rule. An important party in the country is engaged in a deadly but friendly quarrel with the foreign rulers.

But in this they need no aid from foreign Powers. You have been gravely misinformed, as I know you are, that we have chosen this particular moment to embarrass the Allies when your attack against India is imminent. If we wanted to turn Britain's difficulty into our opportunity we should have done it as soon as the war broke out nearly three years ago.

Our movement demanding the withdrawal of the British Power from India should in no way be misunderstood. In fact, if we are to believe your reported anxiety for the independence of India, a recognition of that independence by Britain should leave you no excuse for any attack on India. Moreover, the reported profession sorts ill with your ruthless aggression against China.

I would ask you to make no mistake about the fact that you will be sadly disillusioned if you believe that you will receive a willing welcome from India. The end and aim of the movement for British withdrawal is to prepare India, by making her free for resisting all militarist and imperialist ambition, whether it is called British Imperialism, German Nazism, or your pattern. If we do not, we shall have been ignoble spectators of the militarization of the world in spite of your belief that in non-violence we have the only solvent of the militarist spirit

and ambition. Personally I fear that without declaring the independence of India the Allied Powers will not be able to beat the Axis combination which has raised violence to the dignity of a religion. The Allies cannot beat you and your partners unless they beat you in your ruthless and skilled warfare. If they copy it their declaration that they will save the world for democracy and individual freedom must come to naught. I feel that they can only gain strength to avoid copying your ruthlessness by declaring and recognizing now the freedom of India, and turning sullen India's forced cooperation into freed India's voluntary co-operation.

To Britain and the Allies we have appealed in the name of justice, in proof of their professions, and in their own self-interest. To you I appeal in the name of humanity. It is a marvel to me that you do not see that ruthless warfare is nobody's monopoly. If not the Allies some other Power will certainly improve upon your method and beat you with your own weapon. Even if you win you will leave no legacy to your people of which they would feel proud. They cannot take pride in a recital of cruel deeds however skillfully achieved.

Even if you win it will not prove that you were in the right, it will only prove that your power of destruction was greater. This applies obviously to the Allies too, unless they perform now the just and righteous act of freeing India as an earnest and promise of similarly freeing all other subject peoples in Asia and Africa.

Our appeal to Britain is coupled with the offer of Free India's willingness to let the Allies retain their troops in India. The offer is made in order to prove that we do not in any way mean to harm the Allied cause, and in order to prevent you from being misled into feeling that you have but to step into the country that Britain has vacated. Needless to repeat that if you cherish any such idea and will carry it out, we will not fail in resisting you with all the might that our country can muster. I address this appeal to you in the hope that our movement may even influence you and your partners in the right direction and deflect you and them from the course which is bound to end in your moral ruin and the reduction of human beings to robots.

The hope of your response to my appeal is much fainter than that of response from Britain. I know that the British are not devoid of a sense of justice and they know me. I do not know you enough to be able to judge. All I have read tells me that you listen to no appeal but to the sword. How I wish that you are cruelly misrepresented and that I shall touch the right chord in your heart! Any way I have an undying faith in the responsiveness of human nature. On the strength of that faith I have conceived the impending movement in India, and it is that faith which has prompted this appeal to you.

Sevagram,  
18-7-1942

*I am,*  
*Your friend and well-wisher,*  
M. K. GANDHI

*Harijan, 26-7-1942*

## 84. TO AMERICAN FRIENDS

DEAR FRIENDS,

As I am supposed to be the spirit behind the much discussed and equally well abused resolution of the Working Committee of the Indian National Congress on Independence, it has become necessary for me to explain my position. For I am not unknown to you. I have in America perhaps the largest number of friends in the West—not even excepting Great Britain. British friends knowing me personally are more discerning than the American. In America I suffer from the well-known malady called hero worship. Good Dr Holmes, until recently of the Unity Church of New York, without knowing me personally became my advertising agent. Some of the nice things he said about me I never knew myself. So I receive often embarrassing letters from America expecting me to perform miracles. Dr Holmes was followed much later by the late Bishop Fisher who knew me personally in India. He very nearly dragged me to America but fate had ordained otherwise and I could not visit your vast and great country with its wonderful people.

Moreover, you have given me a teacher in Thoreau, who furnished me through his essay on the "Duty of Civil Disobedience" scientific confirmation of what I was doing in South Africa. Great Britain gave me Ruskin, whose *Unto This Last* transformed me overnight from a lawyer and city-dweller into a rustic living away from Durban on a farm, three miles from the nearest railway station; and Russia gave me in Tolstoy a teacher who furnished a reasoned basis for my non-violence. He blessed my movement in South Africa when it was still in its infancy and of whose wonderful possibilities I had yet to learn. It was he who had prophesied in his letter to me that I was leading a movement which was destined to bring a message of hope to the down-trodden people of the earth. So you will see that I have not approached the present task in any spirit of enmity to Great Britain and the West. After having imbibed and assimilated the message of *Unto This Last*, I could not be guilty of approving of Fascism or Nazism, whose cult is suppression of the individual and his liberty.

I invite you to read my formula of withdrawal or as it has been popularly called 'Quit India' with this background. You may not read into it more than the context warrants.

I claim to be a votary of truth from my childhood. It was the most natural thing to me. My prayerful search gave me the revealing maxim 'Truth is God' instead of the usual one 'God is Truth'. That maxim enables me to see God face to face as it were. I feel Him pervade every fibre of my being. With this Truth as witness between you and me, I assert that I would not have asked my country to invite Great Britain to withdraw her rule over India, irrespective of any demand to the contrary, if I had not seen at once that, for the sake of Great Britain and the Allied cause, it was necessary for Britain boldly to perform the duty of freeing India from bondage. Without this essential act of tardy justice, Britain could not justify her position before the unmurmuring World Conscience, which is their nevertheless. Singapore, Malaya and Burma taught me that the disaster must not be repeated in India. I make bold to say that it cannot be averted unless Britain trusts the people of India to use their liberty in favour of the Allied cause. By that supreme act of justice Britain would have taken away all cause for the seething discontent of India. She will turn the growing ill-will into active goodwill. I submit that it is worth all the battleships and airships that your wonderworking engineers and financial resources can produce.

I know that interested propaganda has filled your ears and eyes with distorted versions of the Congress position. I have been painted as a hypocrite and enemy of Britain under disguise. My demonstrable spirit of accommodation has been described as my inconsistency, proving me to be an utterly unreliable man. I am not going to burden this letter with proof in support of my assertions. If the credit I have enjoyed in America will not stand me in good stead, nothing I may argue in self-defence will carry conviction against the formidable but false propaganda that has poisoned American ears.

You have made common cause with Great Britain. You cannot therefore disown responsibility for anything that her representatives do in India. You will do a

grievous wrong to the Allied cause, if you do not sift the truth from the chaff whilst there is yet time. Just think of it. Is there anything wrong in the Congress demanding unconditional recognition of India's independence? It is being said, 'But this is not the time.' We say, 'This is the psychological moment for that recognition.' For them and then only can there be irresistible opposition to Japanese aggression. It is of immense value to the Allied cause if it is also of equal value to India. The Congress has anticipated and provided for every possible difficulty in the way of recognition. I want you to look upon the immediate recognition of India's independence as a war measure of first class magnitude.

*I am,*  
*Your friend,*  
M. K. GANDHI

On the way to Bombay, 3-8-'42 *Harijan*, 9-8-1942

## 85. TO LORD LINLITHGOW<sup>1</sup>

*The Aga Khan's Palace, Yeravda, 14-8-1942*

DEAR LORD LINLITHGOW,

The Government of India were wrong in precipitating the crisis. The Government resolution justifying the step is full of distortions and misrepresentations. That you have the approval of your Indian 'colleagues' can have no significance, except this that in India you can always command such services. That co-operation is an additional justification for the demand of withdrawal irrespective of what people and parties may say.

The Government of India should have waited at least till the time I inaugurated mass action. I have publicly stated that I fully contemplated sending you a letter before taking concrete action. It was to be an appeal to you for an impartial examination of the Congress case. As you know the Congress has readily filled in every omission that has been discovered in the conception of its demand. So would I have dealt with every deficiency if you had given me the opportunity. The precipitate action of the Government leads one to think that they were afraid that the extreme caution and gradualness with which the Congress was moving towards direct action, might make world opinion ever round to the Congress as it had already begun doing, and expose the hollowness of the grounds for the Government's rejection of the Congress demand. They should surely have waited for an authentic report of my speeches on Friday and on Saturday night after the passing of the resolution by the All-India Congress Committee. You would have found in them that I would not hastily begin action. You would have taken advantage of the interval foreshadowed in them and explored every possibility of satisfying the Congress demand.

The resolution says, "The Government of India have waited patiently in the hope that wiser counsels might prevail. They have been disappointed in that hope." I suppose 'wiser counsels' here means abandonment of its demand by the Congress. Why should the abandonment of a demand legitimate at all times be hoped for by a Government pledged to guarantee independence to India? Is it a



challenge that could only be met by immediate repression instead of patient reasoning with the demanding party? I venture to suggest that it is a long draft upon the credulity of mankind to say that the acceptance of the demand "would plunge India into confusion". Any way the summary rejection of the demand has plunged the nation and the Government into confusion. The Congress was making every effort to identify India with the Allied cause.

The Government resolution says: "The Governor- General in Council has been aware, too, for some time past, of dangerous preparations by the Congress party for unlawful and in some cases violent activities, directed among other things to the interruption of communications and public utility services, the organization of strikes, tampering with the loyalty of Government servants and interference with defence measures including recruitment." This is a gross distortion of the reality. Violence was never contemplated at any stage. A definition of what could be included in non-violent action has been interpreted in a sinister and subtle manner as if the Congress was preparing for violent action. Everything was openly discussed among Congress circles, for nothing was to be done secretly. And why is it tampering with your loyalty if I ask you to give up a job that is harming the British people? Instead of publishing behind the backs of principal Congressmen the misleading paragraph, the Government of India, immediately they came to know of the 'preparations', should have brought to book the parties concerned with the preparations. That would have been the appropriate course. By their unsupported allegations in the resolution, they have laid themselves open to the charge of unfair dealing.

The whole Congress movement was intended to evoke in the people the measure of sacrifice sufficient to compel attention. It was intended to demonstrate what measure of popular support it had. Was it wise at this time of the day to seek to suppress a popular Government avowedly non-violent?

The Government resolution further says: "The Congress is not India's mouthpiece. Yet in the interest of securing their own dominance and in pursuit of their own totalitarian policy its leaders have consistently impeded the efforts made to bring India to full nationhood." It is a gross libel thus to accuse

the oldest national organization of India. This language lies ill in the mouth of a Government which has, as can be proved from public records, consistently thwarted every national effort for attaining freedom, and sought to suppress the Congress by hook or by crook.

The Government of India have not condescended to consider the Congress offer that if simultaneously with the declaration of Independence of India, they could not trust the Congress to form a stable provisional Government, they should ask the Muslim League to do so and that any National Government formed by the League would be loyally accepted by the Congress. Such an offer is hardly consistent with the charge of totalitarianism against the Congress.

Let me examine the Government offer. "It is that, as soon as hostilities cease, India shall devise for herself, with full freedom of decision and on a basis embracing all and not only a single party, the form of Government which she regards as most suited to her conditions." Has this offer any reality about it? All parties have not agreed now. Will it be any more possible after the war? And if the parties have to act before Independence is in their hands? Parties grow up like mushrooms, for without proving their representative character, the Government will welcome them as they have done in the past, if the parties oppose the Congress and its activities, though they may do lip-homage to Independence, frustration is inherent in the Government offer. Hence the logical cry of withdrawal first. Only after the end of British power and fundamental change in the political status of India from bondage to freedom, will the formation of a truly representative government, whether provisional or permanent, be possible. The living burial of the authors of the demand has not resolved the deadlock. It has aggravated.

Then the resolution proceeds: "The suggestion put forward by the Congress party that the millions of India, uncertain as to the future are ready, despite the sad lessons of so many martyr countries, to throw themselves into the arms of the invaders is one that the Government of India cannot accept as a true representation of the feeling of the people of this great country." I do not know about the millions. But I can give my own evidence in support of the Congress

statement. It is open to the Government not to believe the Congress evidence. No imperial power likes to be told that it is in peril. It is because the Congress is anxious for Great Britain to avoid the fate that has overtaken other imperial powers that it asks her to shed imperialism voluntarily by declaring India independent. The Congress has not approached the movement with any but the friendliest motive. The Congress seeks to kill imperialism as much for the sake of the British people and humanity as for India. Notwithstanding assertions to the contrary, I maintain that the Congress has no interests of its own apart from that of the whole of India and the world.

The following passage from the peroration in the resolution is interesting. "But on them (the Government) there lies the task of defending India, of maintaining India's capacity to wage war, of safeguarding India's interests, of holding the balance between the different sections of her people without fear or favour."

All I can say is that it is a mockery of truth after the experience in Malaya, Singapore and Burma. It is sad to find the Government of India claiming to hold the 'balance' between the parties for whose creation and existence it is itself demonstrably responsible.

One thing more. The declared cause is common between the Government of India and us. To put it in the most concrete terms, it is the protection of the freedom of China and Russia. The Government of India think that freedom of India is not necessary for winning the cause. I think exactly the opposite. I have taken Jawaharlal Nehru as my measuring rod. His personal contacts make him feel much more the misery of the impending ruin of China and Russia than I can, and may I say than even you can. In that misery he tried to forget his old quarrel with Imperialism. He dreads much more than I do the success of Fascism and Nazism. I argued with him for days together. He fought against my position with a passion which I have no words to describe. But the logic of facts overwhelmed him. He yielded when he saw clearly that without the freedom of India that of the other two was in great jeopardy. Surely you are wrong in having imprisoned such a powerful friend and ally.

If not withstanding the common cause, the Government's answer to the Congress demand is hasty repression, they will not wonder if I draw the inference that it was not so much the Allied cause that weighed with the British Government, as the unexpressed determination to cling to the possession of India as an indispensable part of imperial policy. The determination led to the rejection of the Congress demand and precipitated repression.

The present mutual slaughter on a scale never before known to history is suffocating enough. But the slaughter of truth accompanying the butchery and enforced by the falsity of which the resolution is reeking adds strength to the Congress position.

It causes me deep pain to have to send you this long letter. But however much I dislike your action, I remain the same friend you have known me. I would still plead for reconsideration of the Government of India's whole policy. Do not disregard the pleading of one who claims to be a sincere friend of the British people. Heaven guide you!

*I am,*  
*Yours sincerely,*  
M. K. GANDHI

*Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government—1942-'44, pp. 12-16*

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1 During the course of the political upheavals of August, 1942 in India, Mahatma Gandhi wrote some letters to the then Viceroy of India, Lord Linlithgow. The Government in their propaganda campaigns within as well as outside the country laid the entire responsibility for August Disturbances upon Congress Leaders, whereas the National circles were unanimous in declaring that the crisis was precipitated by the repressive policy of the Government. The entire country from one end to the other was aflame with unprecedented mob fury, and it appeared as if the Indian action had once for all decided to 'do or die'. The Government on their part were bent upon crushing the movement by hook or by crook. It was in such a sorry state of affairs that Gandhiji addressed the above letter to Lord Linlithgow, wherein he criticized the Government resolution on Congress struggle point by point. While the disturbances were deplored as an unfortunate lapse from the tradition of non-violence set for the country by the Congress there was no disposition to regard them as having been planned by the Congress Leaders.

## 86. TO LORD LINLITHGOW

*Detention Camp, New Year's Eve 1942*

DEAR LORD LINLITHGOW,

This is a very personal letter. Contrary to the biblical injunction I have allowed many suns to set on a quarrel I have harboured against you. But I must not allow the old year to expire without disburdening myself of what is rankling in my breast against you. I have thought we were friends and should still love to think so. However what has happened since August 9 last makes me wonder whether you still regard me as a friend. I have perhaps not come in such close touch with any occupant of your *gadi* as with you.

Your arrest of me, the communique you issued thereafter, your reply to Rajaji and the reasons given therefore, Mr. Amery's attack on me, and much else I can catalogue go to show that at some stage or other you must have suspected my bona fides. Mention of other Congressmen in the same connection is by the way. I seem to be the *fons et origo* of all the evil imputed to the Congress. If I have not ceased to be your friend why did you not, before taking drastic action, send for me, tell me of your suspicions and make yourself sure of your facts? I am quite capable of seeing myself as others see me. But in this case I have failed hopelessly. I find that all the statements made about me in Government quarters in this connection contain palpable departures from truth. I have so much fallen from grace that I could not establish contact with a dying friend. I mean Prof. Bhansali who is fasting in regard to the Chimur affair!!!

And I am expected to condemn the so-called violence of some people reputed to be Congressmen, although I have no data for such condemnation save the heavily censored reports of newspapers. I must own that I thoroughly distrust those reports. I could write much more, but I must not lengthen my tale of woe. I am sure, what I have said is enough to enable you to fill in details.

You know I returned to India from South Africa at the end of 1914 with a mission which came to me in 1906, namely, to spread truth and non-violence

among mankind in the place of violence and falsehood in all walks of life. The law of Satyagraha knows no defeat. Prison is one of the many ways of spreading the message. But it has its limits. You have placed me in a palace where every reasonable creature comfort is ensured. I have freely partaken of the latter purely as a matter of duty, never as a pleasure, in the hope that someday those who have the power will realize that they have wronged innocent men. I had given myself six months. The period is drawing to a close. So is my patience. The law of Satyagraha as I know it prescribes a remedy in such moments of trial. In a sentence, it is, 'Crucify the flesh by fasting'. That same law forbids its use except as a last resort. I do not want to use it if I can avoid it.

This is the way to avoid it, convince me of my error or errors, and I shall make ample amends. You can send for me or send someone who knows your mind and can carry conviction. There are many other ways if you have the will. May I expect an early reply ? May the New Year bring peace to us all !

*I am, Your sincere friend,*

M. K. GANDHI

*Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government—1942-'44, pp. 18-19*

## 86A. FROM LORD LINLITHGOW

*The Viceroy's House, New Delhi, 13th Jan., 1943*

DEAR MR. GANDHI,

Thank you for your personal letter of December 31st, which I have just received. I fully accept its personal character, and I welcome its frankness. And my reply will be, as you would wish it to be, as frank and as entirely personal as your letter itself.

I was glad to have your letter, for, to be as open with you as our previous relations justify, I have been profoundly depressed during recent months first by the policy that was adopted by the Congress in August; secondly, because while that policy gave rise, as it was obvious it must, throughout the country to violence and crime (I say nothing of the risks to India from outside aggression) no word of condemnation for that violence and crime should have come from you, or from the Working Committee. When you were first at Poona I knew that you were not receiving newspapers, and I accepted that as explaining your silence. When arrangements were made that you and the Working Committee should have such newspapers as you desired I felt certain that the details those newspapers contained of what was happening would shock and distress you as much as it has us all, and that you would be anxious to make your condemnation of it categorical and widely known. But that was not the case; and it has been a real disappointment to me, all the more when I think of these murders, the burning alive of police officials, the wrecking of trains, the destruction of property, the misleading of these young students, which has done so much harm to India's good name, and to the Congress Party. You may take it from me that the newspaper accounts you mention are well founded—I only wish they were not, for the story is a bad one. I well know the immense weight of your great authority in the Congress movement and with the Party and those who follow its lead, and I wish I could feel, again speaking very frankly, that a heavy responsibility did not rest on you. (And unhappily, while the initial responsibility rests with the leaders, others have to bear the

consequences, whether as law breakers, with the results that that involves, or as the victims.)

But if I am right in reading your letter to mean that in the light of what has happened you wish now to retrace your steps and dissociate yourself from the policy of last summer, you have only to let me know and I will at once consider the matter further. And if I have failed to understand your object, you must not hesitate to let me know without delay in what respect I have done so, and tell me what positive suggestion you wish to put to me. You know me well enough after these many years to believe that I shall be only too concerned to read with the same close attention as ever any message which I receive from you, to give it the fullest weight and approach it with the deepest anxiety to understand your feelings and your motives.

*Yours sincerely,*

LINLITHGOW

*Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government—1942-'44, pp. 19-20*



## 87. TO LORD LINLITHGOW

*Detention Camp, 19-1-1943*

DEAR LORD LINLITHGOW,

I received your kind letter of the 13th instant yesterday at 2.30 p.m. I had almost despaired of ever hearing from you. Please excuse my impatience.

Your letter gladdens me to find that I have not lost caste with you.

My letter of 31st December was a growl against you. Yours is a counter-growl. It means that you maintain that you were right in arresting me and you were sorry for the omissions of which, in your opinion, I was guilty.

The inference you draw from my letter is, I am afraid, not correct. I have re-read my letter in the light of your interpretation, but have failed to find your meaning in it. I wanted to fast and should still want to if nothing comes out of our correspondence and I have to be a helpless witness to what is going on in the country including the privations of the millions owing to the universal scarcity stalking the land.

If I do not accept your interpretation of my letter, you want me to make a positive suggestion. This, I might, be able to do, only if you put me among the members of the Working Committee of the Congress.

If I could be convinced of my error or worse, of which you are evidently, I should need to consult nobody, so far as my own action is concerned, to make a full and open confession and make ample amends. But I have not any conviction of error. I wonder if you saw my letter to the Secretary to the Government of India (H.D.) of September 23, 1942. I adhere to what I have said in it and in my letter to you of August 14, 1942.

Of course I deplore the happenings that have taken place since 9th August last. But have I not laid the whole blame for them at the door of the Government of India? Moreover, I could not express any opinion on events which I cannot influence or control and of which I have but a one-sided account. You are

bound *prima facie* to accept the accuracy of reports that may be placed before you by your departmental heads. But you will not expect me to do so. Such reports have, before now, often proved fallible. It was that reason that in my letter of 31st December I pleaded with you to convince me of the correctness of the information on which your conviction was based. You will perhaps appreciate my fundamental difficulty in making the statement you have expected me to make.

This however, I can say from the house-top, that I am as confirmed a believer in non-violence as I have ever been. You may not know that any violence on the part of Congress workers, I have condemned openly and unequivocally. I have even done public penance more than once. I must not weary you with examples. The point I wish to make is that on every such occasion I was a free man.

This time, the retracing, as I have submitted, lies with the Government. You will forgive me for expressing an opinion challenging yours. I am certain that nothing but good would have resulted if you had stayed your hand and granted me the interview which I had announced, on the night of August 8, I was to seek. But that was not to be.

Here, may I remind you that the Government of India have before now owned their mistakes, as for instance, in the Punjab when the late General Dyer was condemned, in the United Provinces when a corner of a mosque in Cawnpore was restored and in Bengal when the Partition was annulled. All these things were done in spite of great and previous mob violence.

To sum up:

1. If you want me to act singly, convince me that I was wrong and I will make ample amends.
2. If you want me to make any proposal on behalf of the Congress you should put me among the Congress Working Committee members.

I do plead with you to make up your mind to end the impasse.

If I am obscure or have not answered your letter fully, please point out the omissions and I shall make an attempt to give you satisfaction.

I have no mental reservation.

I find that my letters to you are sent through the Government of Bombay. This procedure must involve some loss of time. As time is of the essence in this matter, perhaps you will issue instructions that my letters to you may be sent directly by the Superintendent of this camp.

*I am,*

*Your sincere friend,*

M. K. GANDHI

*Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government,—1942-44, pp. 21-22*

## 87A. FROM LORD LINLITHGOW

*The Viceroy's House,*

*New Delhi,*

*25th January 1943*

DEAR MR. GANDHI,

Many thanks for your personal letter of the 19th January, which I have just received, and which I need not say I have read with close care and attention. But I am still, I fear, rather in the dark. I made clear to you in my last letter that, however reluctantly, the course of events, and my familiarity with what has been taking place, has left me no choice but to regard the Congress movement, and you as its authorized and fully empowered spokesman at the time of the decision of last August, as responsible for the sad campaign of violence and crime, and revolutionary activity which has done so much harm, and so much injury to India's credit, since last August. I note what you say about non-violence. I am very glad to read your unequivocal condemnation of violence, and I am well aware of the importance which you have given to that article of your creed in the past. But the events of these last months, and even the events that are happening today, show that it has not met with the full support of certain at any rate of your followers, and the mere fact that they may have fallen short of an ideal which you have advocated is no answer to the relations of those who have lost their lives, and to those themselves who have lost their property or suffered severe injury as a result of violent activities on the part of Congress and its supporters. And I cannot I fear accept as an answer your suggestion that "the whole blame" has been laid by you yourself at the door of the Government of India. We are dealing with facts in this matter, and they have to be faced. And while, as I made clear in my last letter, I am very anxious to have from you anything that you may have to say or any specific proposition that you may have to make, the position remains that it is not the

Government of India, but Congress and yourself that are on their justification in this matter.

If therefore you are anxious to inform me that you repudiate or dissociate yourself from the resolution of the 9th August and the policy which that resolution represents, and if you can give me appropriate assurances as regards the future, I shall, I need not say, be very ready to consider the matter further. It is of course very necessary to be clear on that point and you will not, I know, take it amiss that should make that clear in the plainest possible words.

I will ask the Governor of Bombay to arrange that any communication from you should be sent through him, which will I trust reduce delay in its transmission.

*Yours sincerely,*

LINLITHGOW

M. K. GANDHI, ESQ.

*Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government—1942-'44, pp. 23-24*

## 88. TO LORD LINLITHGOW

*Detention Camp, January 29, 1943*

DEAR LORD LINLITHGOW,

I must thank you warmly for your prompt reply to my letter of the 19th instant.

I wish I could agree with you that your letter is clear. I am sure you do not wish to imply by clearness simply that you hold a particular opinion strongly. I have pleaded and would continue to plead till the last breath that you should at least make an attempt to convince me of the validity of the opinion you hold, that the August resolution of the Congress is responsible for the popular violence that broke out on the 9th August last and after, even though it broke out after the wholesale arrest of principal Congress workers. Was not the drastic and unwarranted action of the Government responsible for the reported violence ? You have not even said what part of the August resolution is bad or offensive in your opinion. That resolution is in no way a retraction by the Congress of its policy of non-violence. It is definitely against Fascism in every shape or form. It tenders co-operation in war effort under circumstances which alone can make effective and nationwide co-operation possible.

The Government have evidently ignored or overlooked the very material fact that the Congress, by its August resolution, asked nothing for itself. All its demands were for the whole people. As you should be aware, the Congress was willing and prepared for the Government inviting Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah to form a national government subject to such agreed adjustments as may be necessary for the duration of the war, such government being responsible to a duly elected assembly.

Being isolated from the Working Committee, except Shrimati Sarojini Devi, I do not know its present mind. But the Committee is not likely to have changed its mind.

Is all this open to reproach?

Objection may be raised to that clause of the resolution which contemplated civil disobedience. But that by itself cannot constitute an objection since the principle of civil disobedience is impliedly conceded in what is known as the 'Gandhi-Irwin Pact'. Even that civil disobedience was not to be started before knowing the result of the meeting for which I was to seek from you an appointment.

Then, take the unproved and in my opinion unprovable charges hurled against the Congress and me by so responsible a Minister as the Secretary of State for India.

Surely I can say with safety that it is for the Government to justify their action by solid evidence, not by mere *ipse dixit*.

But you throw in my face the facts of murders by persons reputed to be Congressmen. I see the fact of the murders as clearly, I hope, as you do. My answer is that the Government goaded the people to the point of madness. They started leonine violence in the shape of the arrests already referred to. That violence is not any the less so, because it is organized on a scale so gigantic that it displaces the Mosaic Law of tooth for tooth by that of ten thousand for one—not to mention the corollary of the Mosaic Law, i.e., of non-resistance as enunciated by Jesus Christ. I cannot interpret in any other manner the repressive measures of the all- powerful Government of India.

Add to this tale of woe the privations of the poor millions due to India-wide scarcity which I cannot help thinking might have been largely mitigated, if not altogether prevented, had there been a bona fide National Government responsible to a popularly elected Assembly.

If then I cannot get soothing balm for my. pain, I must resort to the law prescribed for Satyagrahis, namely, a fast according to capacity. I must commence after the early morning breakfast of the 9th February, a fast for 21 days ending on the morning of the 2nd March. Usually during my fasts, I take water with the addition of salts. But nowadays, my system refuses water. This time therefore I propose to add juices of citrus fruits to make water drinkable.

For, my wish is not to fast unto death, but to survive the ordeal, if God so wills.  
The fast can be ended sooner by the Government giving the needed relief.

I am not marking this letter personal, as I did the two previous ones. They were in no way confidential. They were a mere personal appeal.

*I am,*

*Your sincere friend,*

M. K. GANDHI

*Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government—1942-'44, pp. 24-25*



## 88A. FROM LORD LINLITHGOW

*The Viceroy's House,*

*New Delhi,*

*5th February 1943*

DEAR MR. GANDHI,

Many thanks for your letter of 29th January which I have just received. I have read it, as always, with great care and with every anxiety to follow your mind and to do full justice to your argument. But I fear that my view of the responsibility of Congress and of yourself personally for the lamentable disorders of last autumn remains unchanged.

In my last letter I said that my knowledge of the facts left me no choice but to regard the Congress movement, and you as its authorized and fully empowered leader at the time of the decision of last August, as responsible for the campaign of violence and crime that subsequently broke out. In reply you have reiterated your request that I should attempt to convince you that my opinion is correct. I would readily have responded earlier to that request were it not that your letters gave no indication, such as I should have been entitled to expect, that you sought the information with an open mind. In each of them you have expressed profound distrust of the published reports of the recent happenings, although in your last letter, on the basis of the same information, you have not hesitated to lay the whole blame for them on the Government of India. In the same letter you have stated that I cannot expect you to accept the accuracy of the official reports on which I rely. It is not therefore clear to me how you expect or even desire me to convince you of anything. But in fact, the Government of India have never made any secret of their reasons for holding the Congress and its leaders responsible for the deplorable acts of violence, sabotage and terrorism that have occurred since the Congress resolution of the 8th August declared a "mass struggle" in support of its demands, appointed you as its leader and authorized all Congressmen to act for themselves in the event

of interference with the leadership of the movement. A body which passes a resolution in such terms is hardly entitled to disclaim responsibility for any events that follow it. There is evidence that you and your friends expected this policy to lead to violence; and that you were prepared to condone it; and that the violence that ensued formed part of concerted plan, conceived long before the arrest of Congress leaders. The general nature of the case against the Congress has been publicly stated by the Home Member in his speech in the Central Legislative Assembly on the 15th September last, and if you need further information I would refer you to it. I enclose a complete copy in case the press versions that you must have seen were not sufficient. I need only add that all the mass of evidence that has come to light has confirmed the conclusions then reached. I have ample information that the campaign of sabotage has been conducted under secret instructions, circulated in the name of the A.I.C.C; that well-known Congressmen have organized and freely taken part in acts of violence and murder; and that even now an underground Congress organization exists in which, among others, the wife of a member of the Congress Working Committee plays a prominent part, and which is actively engaged in planning the bomb outrages and other acts of terrorism that have disgusted the whole country. If we do not act on all this information or make it publicly known it is because the time is not yet ripe; but you may rest assured that the charges against the Congress will have to be met sooner or later and it will then be for you and your colleagues to clear yourselves before the world if you can. And if in the meanwhile you yourself, by any action such as you now appear to be contemplating, attempt to find an easy way out, the judgment will go against you by default.

I have read with surprise your statement that the principle of civil disobedience is implicitly conceded in the Delhi settlement of the 5th March 1931 which you refer to as the 'Gandhi-Irwin Pact'. I have again looked at the document. Its basis was that civil disobedience would be "effectively discontinued" and that certain 'reciprocal action' would be taken by Government. It was inherent in such a document that it should take notice of the existence of civil disobedience. But I can find nothing in it to suggest that civil disobedience was

recognized as being in any circumstances legitimate. And I cannot make it too plain that it is not so regarded by my Government.

To accept the point of view which you put forward would be to concede that the authorized Government of the country, on which lies the responsibility for maintaining peace and good order, should allow subversive and revolutionary movements described by you yourself as open rebellion, to take place unchallenged; that they should allow preparations for violence, for the interruptions of communications, for attacks on innocent persons, for the murder of police officers and others to proceed unchecked. My Government and I are open indeed to the charge that we should have taken drastic action at an earlier stage against you and against the Congress leaders. But my anxiety and that of my Government has throughout been to give you, and to give the Congress organization, every possible opportunity to withdraw from the position which you have decided to take up. Your statements of last June and July, the original resolution of the Working Committee of the 14th July, and your declaration on the same day that there was no room left for negotiation, and that after all it was an open rebellion are all of them grave and significant, even without your final exhortation to 'do or die'. But with a patience that was perhaps misplaced, it was decided to wait until the resolution of the All-India Congress Committee made it clear that there could be no further toleration of the Congress attitude if Government was to discharge its responsibility to the people of India.

Let me in conclusion say how greatly I regret, having regard to your health and age, the decision that you tell me that you now have in your mind to take. I hope and pray that wiser counsels may yet prevail with you. But the decision whether or not to undertake a fast with its attendant risks is clearly one that must be taken by you alone and the responsibility for which and for its consequences must rest on you alone. I trust sincerely that in the light of what I have said you may think better of your resolution and I would welcome a decision on your part to think better of it, not only because of my own natural reluctance to see you willfully risk your life, but because I regard the use of a

fast for political purposes as a form of political blackmail (*himsa*) for which there can be no moral justification, and understood from your own previous writings that this was also your view.

*Yours sincerely,*

LINLITHGOW

M. K. GANDHI ESQ.

*Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government—1942-'44, pp. 26-28*

## 89. TO LORD LINLITHGOW<sup>1</sup>

*Detention Camp, 7-2-1943*

DEAR LORD LINLITHGOW,

I have to thank you for your long reply dated 5th instant to my letter of 29th January last. I would take your last point first, namely, the contemplated fast which begins on 9th instant. Your letter, from a Satyagrahi's standpoint, is an invitation to fast. No doubt the responsibility for the step and its consequences will be solely mine. You have allowed an expression to slip from your pen for which I was unprepared. In the concluding sentence of the second paragraph you described the step as an attempt "to find an easy way out". That you, as a friend, can impute such a base and cowardly motive to me passes comprehension. You have also described it as "a form of political blackmail", and you quote my previous writings on the subject against me. I abide by my writings. I hold that there is nothing inconsistent in them with the contemplated step. I wonder whether you have yourself read those writings.

I do claim that I approached you with an open mind when I asked you to convince me of my error. A "profound distrust" of the published reports is in no way inconsistent with my having an open mind.

You say that there is evidence that I (I leave my friends out for the moment) "expected this policy to lead to violence", that I was "prepared to condone it", and that "the violence that ensued formed part of a concerted plan conceived long before the arrest of Congress leaders". I have seen no evidence in support of such a serious charge. You admit that part of the evidence has yet to be published. The speech of the Home Member, of which you have favoured me with a copy, may be taken as the opening speech of the prosecution counsel and nothing more. It contains unsupported imputations against Congressmen. Of course he has described the violent outburst in graphic language. But he has not said why it took place when it did. I have suggested why it did. You have condemned men and women before trying them and hearing their defence.

Surely, there was nothing wrong in my asking you to show me the evidence on which you hold them guilty. What you say in your letter carries no conviction. Proof should correspond to the canons of English Jurisprudence.

If the wife of a member of the Working Committee is actively engaged in "planning the bomb outrages and other acts of terrorism" she should be tried before a court of law and punished if found guilty. The lady you refer to could only have done the things attributed to her after the wholesale arrests of 9th August last, which I have dared to describe as leonine violence.

You say that the time is not yet ripe to publish the charge against the Congress. Have you ever thought of the possibility of their being found baseless when they are put before an impartial tribunal, or that some of the condemned persons might have died in the meanwhile, or that some of the evidence that the living can produce might become unavailable?

I reiterate the statement that the principle of civil disobedience is implicitly conceded in the settlement of 5th March 1931, arrived at between the then Viceroy on behalf of the Government of India and myself on behalf of the Congress. I hope you know that the principal Congressmen were discharged before that settlement was even thought of. Certain reparations were made to Congressmen under that settlement. Civil disobedience was discontinued only on conditions being fulfilled by the Government. That by itself was, in my opinion, an acknowledgement of its legitimacy, of course under given circumstances. It therefore seems somewhat strange to find you maintain that civil disobedience "cannot be recognized as being in any circumstances legitimate by your Government". You ignore the practice of the British Government which has recognised its legitimacy under the name of "passive resistance".

Lastly you read into my letters a meaning which is wholly inconsistent with my declaration, in one of them, of adherence to unadulterated non-violence. For, you say in your letter under reply, that "acceptance of my point of view would be to concede that the authorized Government of the country on which lies the responsibility for maintaining peace and good order, should allow movements

to take place, that would admit preparations for violence, interruptions of communications, for attacks on innocent persons, for murders of police officers and others, to proceed unchecked". I must be a strange friend of yours whom you believe to be capable of asking for recognition of such things as lawful.

I have not attempted an exhaustive reply to the views and statements attributed to me. This is not the place nor the time for such reply. I have only picked out those things which in my opinion demanded an immediate answer. You have left me no loophole for escaping the ordeal I have set before for myself. I begin it on the 9th instant with the clearest possible conscience. Despite your description of it as "a form of political blackmail", it is on my part meant to be an appeal to the Highest Tribunal for justice which I have failed to secure from you. If I do not survive the ordeal I shall go to the Judgment Seat with the fullest faith in my innocence. Posterity will judge between you as representative of an all-powerful Government and me as a humble man who has tried to serve his country and humanity through it.

My last letter was written against time, and therefore a material paragraph<sup>2</sup> went in as postscript. I now send herewith a fair copy typed by Pyarelal who has taken Mahadev Desai's place. You will find the postscript paragraph restored to the place where it should have been.

*I am,*

*Your sincere friend,*

M. K. GANDHI

*Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government—1942-'44, pp. 30-32*

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1. The reply from the Viceroy to Gandhiji's intimation on fast was not only not responsive but also threatening. He went to the length of describing Gandhiji's decision to fast as political blackmail. Gandhiji addressed the above last letter to the then Viceroy'.
  - 2 This has been restored to its proper place as paragraph 3 in letter 88.

## 90. TO AGATHA HARRISON <sup>1</sup>

*Dilkusha,.*

*Panchgani, 13th July 1944*

MY DEAR AGATHA,

I have your letter of 14th June. Everything I do turns to dust. It must be so, so long as I am 'untrustworthy'. If I could plead guilty, I would at once mend my way. On the contrary I know I have done nothing to forfeit the confidence I used at one time to enjoy among the official circles.

You know the attempt I made to see the members of the Working Committee and, failing that permission, to see the Viceroy. Perhaps the chief difficulty is the opinion reported to have been held by Mr Churchill about me. You know the oftquoted passages attributed to him. He is said to want to "crush" me "the naked fakir". The body can be crushed, never the spirit. But if the report is true—and it has never been denied—it gives the clue to all my so-called failures.

I can give you the assurance that nothing dismays or disappoints me. If I represent the truth and if I do as God bids me, I know that the wall of distortion and suspicion will topple. Only be patient with me. I feel for you and friends like you.

Recently I had, sent to me, a letter<sup>2</sup> written by Henry [Polak] to the Press whilst he was in America. Tell him if you see him that it distressed me deeply. I never could have thought that he could believe lies about me without verification from me.

Ere this reaches you, you will have known from the Press about the attempt I made to solve the communal tangle in collaboration with Rajaji who has been with me these few days.

My love to all the friends. I sent a letter to Muriel.

*Yours, BAPU*



MISS AGATHA HARRISON,

2 CRANBOURNE COURT,

ALBERT BRIDGE ROAD, LONDON, S.W. 11

*Mahatma Gandhi—Correspondence with the Government— 1944-'47*, pp. 33-34

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1 Miss Agatha Harrison—During World War I, went into social work in factories; in 1921-24 went to China and while there served on the Child Labour Commission of Shanghai; in 1925-28 worked in America on Industrial and International questions; in 1929 came to India with the Royal Commission on Labour; since 1931, worked with C. F. Andrews; and under Gandhiji's advice, helped in disseminating correct information on Indian affairs in Britain; visited India several times then.

2 In the letter in question Henry Polak had made certain remarks about Gandhiji's attitude in regard to the war and his role in "Quit India" struggle at a time when Britain was in distress which Gandhiji considered to be highly damaging.

## 91. TO WINSTON CHURCHILL

*DILKUSHA, PANCHAGANI, 17th JULY 1944*

DEAR PRIME MINISTER,

You are reported to have the desire to crush the 'naked fakir', as you are said to have described me. I have been long trying to be a fakir and that, naked—a more difficult task. I therefore regard the expression as a compliment though unintended. I approach you then as such and ask you to trust and use me for the sake of your people and mine and through them those of the world.

*Your sincere friend,*

M. K. GANDHI

MR. WINSTON CHURCHILL

*Mahatma Gandhi—Correspondence with the Government— 1944-'47, p. 11*

## 92. TO SHRIMAN NARAYAN

*On the train to Calcutta, 1-12-1945*

BHAI SHRIMAN,

I am sending today your manuscript<sup>1</sup> and my Foreword.<sup>2</sup>

I finished all this work last night at 9.30 p.m. During the period I could snatch some time only for meals and spinning. Please let me know if any alterations are required in my Foreword.

I have made two changes in the manuscript. If you do not approve of them, please discuss with me.

You will notice that I have left the Taluka and District Panchayats unspecified. They should be only advisory. Why should we give them a definite place in our constitutional system. I am doubtful about their need. When the villages really become active and alive, the need for advisory bodies should automatically diminish. The Provincial Panchayats could discharge these responsibilities, and whenever necessary, enlist the co-operation of the Taluka and District units. If there is any error in this idea, please let me know. I have been able to go through the manuscript rather hurriedly.

It is for consideration whether Pakistan and the Princely States can have any place in my conception. Remember that a Gandhian Constitution could be feasible only if we reach that stage through nonviolence.

*Bapu ke Ashirvad*

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1 Manuscript of Shriman Narayanji's treatise entitled *The Gandhian Constitution for Free India* (Published by Kitabistan, Allahabad, 1946).

2 See Appendix III on page 275.

### 93. TO LORD PETHICK LAWERNCE

*Valmiki Mandir,  
Reading Road, New Delhi,  
2nd April, 1946*

DEAR LORD LAWERENCE,

Our mutual friend Sudhir Ghosh tells me that you would like me to reduce to writing the points I told him to discuss informally with you and Sir Stafford.

One is universal among all independence-minded people as distinguished from the dumb millions, whether Congressmen or other. It is the immediate release of *political* prisoners irrespective of the charge of violence or non-violence. They cannot be a danger to the State now that the necessity for independence has become common cause. It seems to be ridiculous to keep, say Shri Jayaprakash Narayan and Dr. Lohia, both learned and cultured men of whom any society would be proud, nor is there any occasion for beating any person as an underground worker. To leave the question of discharge for disposal by the incoming national Government would be a step no one will understand or appreciate. Independence will lose its grace.

The other affects the masses. I refer to the salt tax. As a means of raising revenue, it is insignificant. As a means of harassing the masses, it is a measure of which the mischief is indescribable. The masses will hardly appreciate independence if the burden of the salt monopoly continues to afflict them. I must not weary you with argument. I mention the two measures as a preparation of the Indian mind for independence. They will produce a psychological effect.

I may mention that I discussed both the measures in a different setting with Mr Casey and I am now in correspondence with the present Governor of Bengal. I may add that I have today heard from Mr Abell in regard to the salt tax that "the Government do not find themselves able to accept the suggestion".

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

THE RT. HON'BLE LORD PETHICK LAWRENCE,  
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA, NEW DELHI.

*Mahatma Gandhi—Correspondence with the Government— 1944-'47, pp. 156-57*

#### 94. TO SARDAR VALLABHBHAI PATEL

*Shrirampur, December 25, 1946*

CHI. VALLABHBHAI,

Your letter to Pyarelal reached me direct yesterday. Pyarelal and all the rest are engrossed in their own work and are staking their lives.... So Pyarelal does not know about this letter. He comes to see me occasionally and will read it when he comes here next.

I am dictating this at 3 a.m. I shall have a wash at 4 a.m. and prayers after that. This is the present routine. I shall carry on only if such is God's will. However there is nothing in my health which should make you anxious. The body responds to the demands made upon it, but it is a real ordeal for me. My truth and non-violence are being weighed in a balance which is much more accurate than any a pearl merchant ever used. It is so sensitive as to register the difference of even the hundredth fraction of a hair. They in themselves can never be found wanting. If anything is to be found wanting, it may be I who have constituted myself their representative; if so, I at least hope that God will take me away and work through some other worthier agent. I am sorry that I cannot myself do the work which Pyarelal used to do for me and I have not yet been able to prepare the two men who are with me to do it. But both are intelligent. I therefore hope to be able to arrange it. In this your letter will afford me encouragement. Jaisukhlal left Manu at her own wish three or four days ago. I allowed her to come, as she was prepared to stay and die with me if necessary. And now I am dictating this to her, lying down with my eyes closed so as to reduce my exertion to the minimum. Sucheta [Kripalani] is also in this room. She is still asleep....

The telegram you sent me is fit only to be thrown into the waste-paper basket. There is no limit to exaggeration here. Not that the people exaggerate intentionally; they simply do not know what exaggeration means. The imagination of the people runs riot like the local vegetation which presses in on

all sides. All around us I find huge coconut and betelnut palms, and a large variety of greens grow in their shade. The rivers are all like the Sindhu, the Ganga, the Yamuna and the Brahmaputra. These empty their waters in the Bay of Bengal. My advice is that if you have not replied to him already you should ask the man who sent the telegram to you to furnish proof for his statements so that "the Central Government may try to do something about it, though they have no power to interfere in terms of the Constitution". And add: "Gandhi is there in your midst and it is impossible that he would not hear you. But he is an apostle of truth and non-violence and therefore there is a possibility of his disappointing you. But if he disappoints you, how can we, who were trained under him, hope to satisfy you? But we shall do what we can." Don't tell anyone that since Gandhi is there, he need not bring his problems to you. Let him write to you as well, and it would be your duty to afford relief to him even by going against me, for that is what I have taught you. The situation is difficult. Truth is nowhere to be found. Violence masquerades as non-violence, irreligion as religion. But truth and non-violence can be tested only in such conditions, I know; that is why I am here. Do not call me away. If I ran away in fear, that would be my own misfortune; but India is certainly not so unlucky. I am here to do or die. News came over the radio yesterday that Jawaharlal, Kripalani and Deo were coming to have consultations with me. That is enough.

What is the use of my meeting every one? However, if any one among you wants to ask me anything, he can.

What I wrote about Assam was not meant for immediate publication. But rest assured that I am right on that point.

You will have seen the report of the Bihar [Muslim] League. I wrote to Rajendrababu about it and have asked him to acquaint all of you with my views. I have also written to the Bihar Chief Minister. Even if half of what the report says is correct, it is bad business. I have no doubt that an impartial commission of inquiry with which no one can find any fault ought to be set up without a single day's delay. Whatever is correct in the allegations must be admitted straightaway and the rest should be referred to the commission. You

should also discuss this with your Muslim League colleagues in the Cabinet. I am still in correspondence with Suhrawardy. When it is completed I shall send it all to you. Jawaharlal will see what has passed between us so far.

If you are not doing it already, please read the summary of my post-prayer speeches which is sent to the newspapers. Or go through the cuttings which Mani could give you. I know the high pressure under which you are working, but some things have to be done in spite of this pressure. To keep abreast of what I am saying is one of them.

I do not think I can hope that your health is excellent, but trust that it is good enough for you to work. I think it can be very much improved. I would still ask you to call Dinshah [Mehta] in for treatment. I have no doubt that he is a good and sincere man with a benevolent outlook on life. What if he is not so efficient? You ask about Sushila. I cannot say she is in good health. She is at her post in inhospitable villages and is doing good work. Even a quack is a rarity in these parts; so naturally the people make much of someone like her. Therefore do not be anxious about any of us here. And when every one of them is here to die, their falling ill should not be of great concern. If they die, it would be a master for congratulation. For this they have to die in purity.

*Blessing, BAPU*

SARDAR VALLABHBHAI PATEL,

AURANGZEB ROAD, NEW DELHI

*Letters to Sardar Vallobhbhai Patel, pp. 201-204*



## 95. TO THE VICEROY<sup>1</sup>

*On the train to Patna, 8th May 1947*

DEAR FRIEND,

It strikes me that I should summarize what I said and wanted to say and left unfinished for want of time, at our last Sunday's meeting.

I

1 Whatever may be said to the contrary, it would be a blunder of first magnitude for the British to be party in any way whatsoever to the division of India. If it has to come, let it come after the British withdrawal, as a result of understanding between the parties or [of] an armed conflict which according to Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah is taboo. Protection of minorities can be guaranteed by establishing a court of arbitration in the event of difference of opinion among contending parties.

2 Meanwhile the Interim Government should be composed either of Congressmen or those whose names the Congress chooses or of Muslim League men or those whom the League chooses. The dual control of today, lacking team work and team spirit, is harmful for the country. The parties exhaust themselves in the effort to retain their seat and to placate you. Want of team spirit demoralizes the Government and imperils the integrity of the services so essential for good and efficient government.

3 Referendum at the stage in the Frontier (or any province for that matter) is a dangerous thing in itself. You have to deal with the material that faces you. In any case nothing should or can be done over Dr Khan Sahib's head as Premier. Note that this paragraph is relevant only if division is at all to be countenanced.

4 I feel sure that partition of the Punjab and Bengal is wrong in every case and a needless irritant for the League. This as well as all innovations can come after the British withdrawal not before, except always for mutual agreement. Whilst the British Power is functioning in India, it must be held principally responsible

for the preservation of peace in the country. That machine seems to be cracking under the existing strain which is caused by the raising of various hopes that cannot or must not be fulfilled. These have no place during the remaining thirteen months. This period can be most profitably shortened if the minds of all were focused on the sole task of withdrawal. You and you alone can do it to the exclusion of all other activity so far as the British occupation is concerned.

5 Your task as undisputed master of naval warfare, great as it was, was nothing compared to what you are called to do now. The singlemindedness and clarity that gave you success are much more required in this work.

6 If you are not to leave a legacy of chaos behind, you have to make your choice and leave the government of the whole of India including the States to one party. The Constituent Assembly has to provide for the governance even of that part of India which is not represented by the Muslim League or some States.

7 Non-partition of the Punjab and Bengal does not mean that the minorities in these Provinces are to be neglected. In both the Provinces they are large and powerful enough to arrest and demand attention. If the popular Governments cannot placate them the Governors should during the interregnum actively interfere.

8 The intransmissibility of paramountcy is a vicious doctrine, if it means that they [the States] can become sovereign and a menace for Independent India. All the power wherever exercised by the British in India must automatically descend to its successor. Thus the people of the States become as much part of Independent India as the people of British India. The present Princes are puppets created or tolerated for the upkeep and prestige of the British power. The unchecked powers exercised by them over their people is probably the worst blot on the British Crown. The Princes under the new regime can exercise only such powers as trustees can and as can be given to them by the Constituent Assembly. It follows that they cannot maintain private armies or arms factories. Such ability and statecraft as they possess must be at the

disposal of the Republic and must be used for the good of their people and the people as a whole. I have merely stated what should be done with the States. It is not for me to show in this letter how this can be done.

9 Similarly difficult but not so baffling is the question of the Civil Service. Its members should be taught from now to accommodate themselves to the new regime. They may not be partisans taking sides. The slightest trace of communalism among them should be severely dealt with. The English element in it should know that they owe loyalty to the new regime rather than to the old and therefore to Great Britain. The habit of regarding themselves as rulers and therefore superiors must give place to the spirit of true service of the people.

||

10 I had a very pleasant two hours and three quarters with Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah on Tuesday last. We talked about the joint statement on non-violence. He was agreeably emphatic over his belief in non-violence. He has reiterated it in the Press statement which was drafted by him.

11 We did talk about Pakistan-cum-partition. I told him that my opposition to Pakistan persisted as before and suggested that in view of his declaration of faith in non-violence he should try to convert his opponents by reasoning with them and not by show of force. He was, however, quite firm that the question of Pakistan was not open to discussion. Logically, for a believer in nonviolence, nothing, not even the existence of God could be outside its scope.

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur saw the first eight paragraphs, the purport of which she was to give to Pandit Nehru with whom I was to send you this letter. But, I could not finish it in New Delhi, I finished it on the train.

I hope you and Her Excellency are enjoying your hard-earned rest.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

To

H. E. THE VICEROY, SIMLA

*Mahatma Gandhi—Correspondence with the Government— 1944-'47, pp. 247-50*

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1 Lord Mountbatten

## 96. TO THE VICEROY

*New Delhi, 10/11th June 1947*

DEAR FRIEND,

The Rajkumari has given me the purport of your conversation with her.

Though you have been good enough to tell me that J could see you at any time I wanted to, I must not avail myself of the kindness. I would like, however, to reduce to writing some of the things I hold to be necessary for the proper and swift working of the scheme.

2. As to the referendum in the Frontier Province I must confess that my idea does not commend itself to Pandit Nehru and his colleagues. As I told you, if my proposal did not commend itself to them, I would not have the heart to go any further with it.
3. This, however, does not in any way affect my proposal that before proceeding with the referendum, you should invite Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah to proceed to the Frontier Province and to woo the Ministers including Badshah Khan and his Khudai Khidmatgars who have made the Province what it is—better or worse. Before he goes, no doubt, he should be assured of a courteous hearing from them.
4. Whether he favours the idea or not Quaid-i-Azam should be asked to give a fair picture of the Pakistan scheme before the simple Pathan mind is asked to make its choice of Hindustan or Pakistan. I fancy that the Pathan knows his position in Hindustan. If he does not, the Congress or the Constituent Assembly now at work should be called upon to complete the picture. It will be unfair, I apprehend, to choose between Hindustan or Pakistan without knowing what each is. He should at least know where his entity will be fully protected.
5. There is as yet no peace in the Frontier Province. Can there be a true referendum when strife has not completely abated? Minds are too heated to think coherently. Neither the Congress nor the League can disown

- liability for disturbances by their followers. If peace does not reign in the land, the whole superstructure will come to pieces and you will, in spite of division, leave behind legacy of which you will not be proud.
6. The sooner you have homogeneous ministry the better. In no case can the League nominees work independently of the whole Cabinet. It is a vicious thing that there is no joint responsibility for every act of individual members.
  7. The only way to keep the wonderful time table made by you is to anticipate the future and ask your special staff to work out all the items presented by you without reference to the Cabinet and then when the time comes, the report should be presented to the respective parties for acceptance, amendment or rejection
  8. The more I see things the more firmly I believe that the States problem presents a variety of difficulties which demand very serious and fearless treatment on your part.
  9. The problem of the civil and military services, though in a way not equally difficult, demands the same firm handling as the States. Gurgaon strife is an instance in point. So far as I know one single officer is responsible for the continuance of the mischief.
  10. Lastly may I suggest that the attempt to please all parties is a fruitless and thankless task. In the course of our conversation I suggested that equal praise bestowed on both the parties was not meant. No praise would have been the right thing. "Duty will be merit when debt becomes a donation." It is not too late to mend. Your undoubted skill as a warrior was never more in demand than today. Fancy a sailor without his fleet, save his mother wit!
  11. I have tried to be as succinct as possible. I could not be briefer. If any of the points raised herein demand a personal talk, you have but to appoint the suitable time. Please do not think of calling me for the sake of courtesy.
  12. I received your kind note of 10th instant whilst I had almost finished this note. It does not call for a separate reply.

This was finished at 9.25 p.m. It will be typed tomorrow.

*Yours sincerely,*

M. K. GANDHI

H. E. THE VICEROY, NEW DELHI

*Mahatma Gandhi—Correspondence with the Government— 1944-'47, pp. 256-58*

**96A. FROM LORD MOUNTBATTEN**

*The Viceroy's House, New Delhi,*

*12th June 1947*

DEAR MR. GANDHI,

Thank you for your letter of 10/11th June. I am grateful to you for your comments on current affairs, and I will certainly bear them in mind.

I doubt whether it would be practicable to make my special staff work out all the details of the splitting up of the Departments of the Government of India and a complete allotment of India's assets and liabilities, but they will do everything in their power to help. It is a tremendous task and only a fraction of it can be done before the transfer of power. It is essentially a matter in which there must be negotiation between the parties concerned.

I am so grateful for your unfailing advice and support and kindness, which have done so much to sustain me in this difficult task.

*Yours sincerely,*

MOUNTBATTEN OF BURMA

MR. GANDHI

*Mahatma Gandhi—Correspondence with the Government— 1944-'47, pp. 258-59*



## 97. TO ABDUL GHAFFAR KHAN

*Bhangi Colony, New [Delhi, 5th July 1947]*

DEAR BADSHAH,

Khudai Khidmatgar Alam Khkn saw me before 12 o'clock and he said that he was leaving for Peshawar tonight. I did not send any letter through him. But I told him that there should be no demonstration against the Muslim League, that it should be enough that in the present state of tension and misrepresentation Khudai Khidmatgars should not vote at all one way or the other, that they were entitled so far as internal affairs were concerned to claim and to have complete autonomy without any interference from Pakistan or the Union, and that they could come to a decision as to the choice between the Union or Pakistan when the constitutions of the two were promulgated and when the Frontier Province had fashioned its own autonomous constitution. Above all, every occasion for clash with the Muslim League members was to be avoided. Real Pathan bravery was now on its trial. It was to be shown by cheerfully meeting blows or even meeting death at the hands of the opponents without the slightest sort of retaliation. Boycott would certainly result in a legal victory for Pakistanis, but it would be a moral defeat, if without the slightest fear of violence from your side, the bulk of Pathans refrained in a dignified manner from participating in the referendum. There should be no fuss, no procession, and no disobedience of any orders from the authority.

I had acted promptly on receipt of your letter. I wrote a long letter to His Excellency on which he took action. You must have seen also how I had dealt with the question of the Frontier Province in one of my post-prayer speeches. I send you herewith a copy of my letter to the Viceroy and of my post-prayer speech. This letter is also in answer to a complaint received by the Viceroy that it was reported that there was fear of disturbance to be caused by the Khudai Khidmatgars.

I hope the strain under which you are working is not telling upon your health.<sup>1</sup>

Love, BAPU

*Abdul Ghaffar Khan*, p. 445

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1 Two days later, Gandhi again wrote to him:

"No news from you. I hope you had my long letter and that you have acted up to it. Your and my honour is involved in strict adherence to non-violence on our part in thought, word and deed. No news up to now (9-30) in the papers."

## 97A. FROM ABDUL GHAFFAR KHAN

*July 12, 1947*

I and my workers have been going about from village to village asking the people to remain absolutely non-violent even under' provocation on the part of the Muslim Leaguers. The Muslim Leaguers are daily taking out processions, raising highly objectionable slogans. They call us kafirs and resort to abusive language. I have been personally hooted. I feel that there is organized conspiracy between the Muslim Leaguers, the officials and the officers in the charge of the referendum. Presiding officers have actively encouraged the passing of hundreds of bogus votes. In some places eighty to ninety per cent votes have been polled, a thing unheard of in any election, and more so on the basis of an electoral roll which was prepared about two years ago.

We have been working under very difficult and trying circumstances but have adhered to non-violence in thought, word and deed. How long a state of affairs like this can last, it is not easy for me to say. In a nutshell, the Muslim Leaguers backed by officials are out to create disturbances. We have done everything humanly possible to avoid a clash.

Another matter which is causing serious concern to us is the presence in our province of a large number of Punjabis who openly incite people to violence. Not only that, but they have also gone to the length of suggesting in public meetings that the top leaders of the Red Shirts should be done away with. They also proclaim openly that after Pakistan has been established, there will be a trial on the lines of the Nuremberg trial and all of them who are called as traitors will be hanged. Mr. Jalal-ud-din, M.L.A., (Hazara), stated in a public meeting that if any of the Muslim ministers visited Hazara, he would be killed.

*Yours,*

*Abdul Gaffar Khan, pp. 445-46*

## 98. TO A FRIEND<sup>1</sup>

*Bhangi Colony, New Delhi, July 26, 1947*

DEAR FRIEND,

I was much touched by your letter of 19th instant. I wholly agree with you that the number of years a person lives in this world is of no consequence whether to him or to the world but even a day spent in true service of mankind is of supreme and only importance. I further agree with you that hope and faith are as often as not synonymous terms. Of course good is eternal, evil transitory.

I must abide by my statement. There can be no place for a man of peace in a society full of strife. Please do not look at my bad imperfect English but consider the heart of my meaning. I am sure you will agree with me that a man of peace is out of place in a society full of strife. He must know this fact and yet work and act in that society. I wonder if I have at all made my meaning clear. There is no such thing as surrender in me to the spirit of evil.

I do hope that your physical illness is under control. Love to you all,

*Yours,*

*From a photostat: S.N. 22666*

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1 Probably Carl Heath

## 99. TO MADAME EDMOND PRIVAT <sup>1</sup>

*Birla House, New Delhi, November 29, 1947*

DEAR BHAKTI,

I was glad to receive your argued letter of 27th August. I see that you have grasped the fundamental difference between Passive Resistance and Non-violent Resistance. Resistance both forms are, but you have to pay a very heavy price when your resistance is passive, in the sense of the weakness of the resister. Europe mistook the bold and brave resistance full of wisdom by Jesus of Nazareth for passive resistance, as if it was of the weak. As I read the New Testament for the first time I detected no passivity, no weakness about Jesus as depicted in the four gospels and the meaning became clearer to me when I read Tolstoy's *Harmony of the Gospels* and his other kindred writings. Has not the West paid heavily in regarding Jesus as a Passive Resister? Christendom has been responsible for the wars which put to shame even those described in the Old Testament and other records, historical or semi- historical. I know that I speak under correction for I can but claim very superficial knowledge of history—modern or ancient.

Coming to my own personal experience, whilst we undoubtedly got through passive resistance our political freedom, over which lovers of peace like you and your good husband of the West are enthusiastic, we are daily paying the heavy price for the unconscious mistake we made or better still, I made in mistaking passive resistance for non-violent resistance. Had I not made the mistake, we would have been spared the humiliating spectacle of weak brother killing his weak brother thoughtlessly and inhumanly.

I am only hoping and praying and I want all the friends here and in other parts of the world to hope and pray with me that this blood-bath will soon end and out of that, perhaps, inevitable butchery, will rise a new and robust India—not warlike, basely imitating the West in all its hideousness, but a new India

learning the best that the West has to give and becoming the hope not only of Asia and Africa, but the whole of the aching world.

I must confess that this is hoping against hope, for, we are today swearing by the military and all that naked physical force implies. Our statesmen have for over two generations declaimed against the heavy expenditure on armaments under the British regime, but now that freedom from political serfdom has come, our military expenditure has increased and still threatens to increase and of this we are proud! There is not a voice raised against it in our legislative chambers. In spite, however, of the madness and the vain imitation of the tinsel of the West, the hope lingers in me and many others that India shall survive this death dance and occupy the moral height that should belong to her after the training, however imperfect in non-violence for an unbroken period of 32 years since 1915.

As to the last paragraph of your letter, I must confess my ignorance of psycho-analysis. Richard Gregg of U.S.A. has put the problem in a more concrete form than you have. You must have seen his letter and my reply in the columns of *Harijan*.<sup>1</sup>

I hope this will find you both in the same vigour in which you used to be during those happy days that you passed with me in India. I wonder if you will ever again come to India and see it, not in her madness, but wisdom, inspiring every department of life.

Love to you both,

BAPU

MADAME EDMOND PRIVAT, 1 AVENUE DE LA GARE, NEUCHATEL, SWITZERLAND

*From a photostat: S.N. 23961*

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- 1 Madame Edmond Privat—Wife of Dr Edmond Privat, Professor, University of Neuchatel, Switzerland.
- 2 *Vide* Appendix II, pp. 272-275

## 100. TO THE PEOPLE OF GUJARAT

To

THE MEN AND WOMEN OF GUJARAT,

I am dictating this from my bed early on Wednesday morning. It is the second day of the fast though twenty- four hours have not been completed since the fast commenced. It is the last day of posting for this week's *Harijan*. Hence, I have decided to address a few words in Gujarati to the people of Gujarat.

I do not regard this fast as an ordinary fast. I have undertaken it after deep thought and yet it has sprung not from reasoning but God's will that rules men's reason. It is addressed to no particular section or individual and yet it is addressed equally to all. There is no trace of anger of any kind behind it nor the slightest tinge of impatience. But behind it is the realization that there is a time for everything and an opportunity, once missed never returns. Therefore, the only thing that now remains is for every Indian to think as to what his or her duty in the present hour is. Gujaratis are Indians. So, whatever I write in Gujarati is addressed equally to all the people of India.

Delhi is the Metropolis of India. If, therefore, we really in our hearts do not subscribe to the two nation theory, in other words, if we do not regard the Hindus and the Muslims as constituting two distinct nations, we shall have to admit that the picture that Delhi presents today is not what we have envisaged always of the capital of India. Delhi is the Eternal City, as the ruins of its fore-runners—Indraprastha and Hastinapur testify. It is the heart of India. Only a nit-wit can regard it as belonging to the Hindus or the Sikhs only. It may sound harsh but it is the literal truth. From Kanya Kumari to Kashmir and from Karachi to Dibrugarh in Assam, all Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Parsis, Christians and Jews who people this vast sub-continent and have adopted it as their dear motherland, have an equal right to it. No one has a right to say that it belongs to the majority community only and that the minority community can only remain there as the underdog. Whoever serves it with the purest devotion must

have the first claim. Therefore, anyone who wants to drive out of Delhi all Musalmans as such must be set down as its enemy No. 1 and therefore, enemy No. 1 of India. We are rushing towards that catastrophe. It is the bounden duty of every son and daughter of India to take his or her full share in averting it.

What should we do then? If we would see our dream of *Panchayat Raj*, i.e. true democracy realized, we would regard the humblest and lowest Indian as being equally the ruler of India with the tallest in the land. This presupposes that all are pure or will become pure if they are not. And purity must go hand-in-hand with wisdom. No one would then harbour any distinction between community and community, caste and out-caste. Everybody would regard all as equal with oneself and hold them together in the silken net of love. No one would regard another as untouchable. We would hold as equal the toiling labourer and the rich capitalist. Everybody would know how to earn an honest living by the sweat of one's brow and make no distinction between intellectual and physical labour. To hasten this consummation, we would voluntarily turn ourselves into scavengers. No one who has wisdom will ever touch opium, liquor or any intoxicants. Everybody would observe Swadeshi as the rule of life and regard every woman, not being his wife, as his mother, sister or daughter according to her age, never lust after her in his heart. He would be ready to lay down his life when occasion demands it, never want to take another's life. If he is a Sikh in terms of the commandment of the Gurus he would have the heroic courage to stand single-handed and alone—without yielding an inch of ground—against the "one lakh and a quarter" enjoined by them. Needless to say, such a son of India will not want to be told what his duty in the present hour is.

*Yours, etc.,*

M. K. GANDHI

NEW DELHI,

MAKAR SANKRANTI, 14-1-'48

*Hanjan*, 18-1-'48, p. 517



## APPENDIX I

### WHO SHOULD BE PROVINCIAL GOVERNORS ?

The following is a free translation of Principal Shriman Narain Agarwal's letter in Hindustani from Wardha:

"In the Constitution that is being framed by the Constituent Assembly, there is to be provision for the election of provincial Governors *by* the majority of voters under the adult franchise system. From this one is entitled to infer that as a rule, the nominees of the Congress Parliamentary Board will be elected. The Chief Minister of the province will also be of the Congress Party. Commonsense dictates that the provincial Governor must be above the party politics of the province concerned, or above being unduly influenced by the Chief Minister or above friction between himself and his Chief Minister.

"In my opinion there is no necessity for a Governor. The Chief Minister should be able to take his place and people's money to the tune of Rs. 5,500 per month for the sinecure of the Governor will be saved. Nevertheless, no provincial Governor should belong to his own province.

"Moreover, in this way the expense and worry of an election by the majority of the adult population will be saved. Will it not be proper and better for the President of the Union to select Governors satisfying the reasonable test above suggested ? Such Governors will surely raise the tone of the public life of the provinces governed by them. It is worthy of note that the present Governors have been appointed by the Central Cabinet of the Union on the above basis and, therefore, their influence on their provinces has been wholesome. I fear that if the Governors are elected as threatened under the forthcoming Constitution, their influence is likely to be unwholesome.

"Further, the Constitution as foreshadowed makes no mention of the village *panchayats* being the foundation of the progressive decentralization in the place of the old hunger for centralization. There are other such defects which one can profitably point out, but I have no right or desire to enter into an

elaborate criticism of our seasoned leaders. I have but ventured to draw your attention to the defects which have appeared to me and demand your guidance."

There is much to be said in favour of the argument advanced by Principal Agarwal about the appointment of provincial Governors. I must confess that I have not been able to follow the proceedings of the Constituent Assembly. I do not know the context in which the proposal under discussion has been made. But, examined in isolation, the criticism appears irresistible, with the exception that much as I would like to spare every piece of the public treasury, it would be bad economy to do away with provincial Governors and regard Chief Ministers as a perfect equivalent. Whilst I would resent much power of interference to be given to Governors, I do not think that they should be mere figure-heads.

They should have enough power enabling them to influence ministerial policy for the better. In their detached position they would be able to see things in their proper perspective and thus prevent mistakes by their Cabinets. Theirs must be an all-pervasive moral influence in their provinces.

Principal Agarwal says that there is no mention or direction about village *panchayats* and decentralization in the foreshadowed Constitution. It is certainly an omission calling for immediate attention if our independence is to reflect the people's voice. The greater the power of the *panchayats*, the better for the people. Moreover, *panchayats* to be effective and efficient, the level of people's education has to be considerably raised. I do not conceive the increase in the power of the people in military, but in moral terms. Naturally, I swear by *Nayee Talim* in this connection.

*Hanjan, 21-12-'47, p. 473*

## APPENDIX II

### A PSYCHOLOGICAL EXPLANATION

The following is from Mr. Richard B. Gregg, whom many readers of the *Harijan* know as an American friend who used to live in Shanti niketan as also with me in Sabarmati years ago:

"Though because of my ignorance I am hesitant, yet I venture to send you an idea that seems to me not only to explain with perhaps less moral blame a part of the recent communal violence in India but also to offer hope for the future.

"It seems to me probable that much of this violence is an expression not so much of inter-communal suspicion and hatred, but rather, and more deeply and originally, of the long pent-up resentments of the masses because of their oppression. The oppression was not only by foreign political rule but by foreign modern, social, economic and financial ways which are contrary to the ancient habits of *dharma* which were a very part of the nature of the masses. By foreign ways I mean such things as the English land-holding system, usurious money lending, heavy taxes payable not in kind but in money, and other interferences with long established village life common to all Indian communities.

"Psychological studies have shown clearly that severe frustrations suffered during the childhood of an individual generate resentments which are suppressed, and remain suppressed long after the person who caused the original frustration has died, but later some occasion pulls a trigger, as it were, and releases the pent-up energy of the old resentment which then pours forth in violence upon some perfectly innocent person. This explains many crimes of violence, and perhaps some of the cruelties against the Jews in Europe. In India the establishment of religious electorates created a channel into which it was easy for this energy to flow, but I believe the fearful energy of the explosion of wrath comes from the older cause I have mentioned. Such an idea as this would help explain why in all countries all through history a major change of political

power results in more or less violence and disorder. The masses always suffer some oppression and, therefore, have resentments which flare up upon a shift of control or may be exploited by selfish leaders.

"If this surmise is true, it suggests that the suspicion and hatred of one community towards another is not so deep as now appears. It also means that as soon as the masses can be guided back into their ancient ways of life with the chief emphasis on religion and small organizations village *panchayats* and communal family systems the energy of the people will be turned from violence into creative channels. I would expect that Khadi work among the refugees might help start such a diversion of energy into sound channels. In such a development I see hope.

"Forgive me if this seems to be presumptuous. I write it only in the hope that an humble outsider, just because he is outside, may see a gleam of encouragement that is not so easy to see in the dust and distraction of the struggle. Anyhow, I love you and India."

Though many psychologists have recommended a study of psychology, I am sorry, I have not been able, for want of time, to study the subject. Mr Gregg's letter does not mend matters for me. It does not fill me with any impelling enthusiasm for undertaking the study. Mr Gregg gives an explanation which mystifies the mind instead of clearing it. "Hope for the future" I have never lost and never will, because it is embedded in my undying faith in non-violence. What has, however, clearly happened in my case is the discovery that in all probability there is a vital defect in my technique of the working of non-violence. There was no real appreciation of non-violence in the thirty years' struggle against British *Raj*. Therefore, the peace, the masses maintained during that struggle of a generation with exemplary patience, had not come from within. The pent-up fury found an outlet when British *Raj* was gone. It naturally vented itself in communal violence which was never fully absent and which was kept under suppression by the British bayonet. This explanation seems to me to be all-sufficing and convincing. In it there is no room for failure of any hope. Failure of my technique of non-violence causes no loss of faith in

non-violence itself. On the contrary, that faith is, if possible, strengthened by the discovery of a possible flaw in the technique.

*Harijan, 23-11-'47*

### APPENDIX III

#### FOREWORD TO "THE GANDHIAN CONSTITUTION FOR FREE INDIA"

Perhaps the expression 'Gandhian Constitution' is not a fitting title for Principal Agarwal's pages. It may be acceptable as a convenient and compact title. The framework is really Principal Agarwal's, based on his study of my writings. He has been interpreting them for a number of years. And as he is anxious not to misinterpret them in any way he would publish nothing without my seeing it. This is both an advantage and a disadvantage. The advantage is obvious. The disadvantage lies in the reader mistaking the particular writing being my view in every detail. Let me then warn him against making any such mistake. If I were to commit myself to every word appearing in these pages, I might as well write the thing myself. Though I have endeavoured to read the constitution twice, with as much attention as I was able to bestow on it during my other engagements, I could not undertake to check every thought and every word of it. Nor would my sense of propriety and individual freedom permit me to commit any such atrocity. All therefore I am able to say is that the brochure contains ample evidence of the care bestowed upon it by the author to make it as accurate as he could. There is nothing in it which has jarred on me as inconsistent with what I would like to stand for.

The author was good enough to make such alterations as I thought necessary.

The word "constitution" must not mislead the reader into thinking that the author has made any profession to give him a complete constitution. He has made it perfectly clear in the beginning pages that he has only laid down broad lines to indicate what a constitution of my conception would be. I regard Principal Agarwal's to be a thoughtful contribution to the many attempts at presenting India with Constitutions. The merit of his attempt consists in the fact that he has done what for want of time I have failed to do.

M. K. GANDHI

On the train to Calcutta, 30th November, 1945

**SELECTED LETTERS**

**SECTION TWO**

**EXTRACTS FROM THE LETTERS**

## 1. FAITH IN GOD

This world is transient. If, therefore, I leave this world, why should one be worried on that account? It should be enough to wish that nothing improper is done by me as long as I live. We should of course be careful that we do nothing improper even by mistake. True, I have not yet reached the stage when I can attain liberation but I do believe that if I leave this body while treading the path along which my thoughts are nowadays running, I shall be reborn and speedily attain to *moksha*<sup>1</sup> at the end of that life.

*The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi—Vol. VIII, p. 254, 21-5-1908*

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The body should not be dearer than the soul. He who knows the soul, and also knows that it is different from the body, will not try to protect his body by committing violence. All this is very difficult indeed; but he who has imbibed very noble ideas easily understands it and acts accordingly. The belief that the soul can do good or evil only when it is encased in a body is quite mistaken and terrible sins have been and are being committed owing to it. There is no such law that the soul can be known only at an advanced age. Many old men pass away without knowing the soul, while persons like the late Raichandbhai have been able to realize the self even at the age of 8. Mistakes are made and sins committed despite such knowledge; but these can be eliminated after very careful thought. The body has been gi<sub>ven</sub> to us for curbing it.

*The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi—Vol. IX, p. 418, 17-9-1908*

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To ask how there can be *moksha* if there is no God is to fail to understand *moksha*. We can grasp only a part of the meaning of *moksha*; the rest must be experienced; it cannot be put into words. We have no organs with which to describe it. In so far as we can understand, it means deliverance from having to assume an endless succession of various bodies, and from the resultant



suffering. There is no need, however, to deny the existence of God. We may try to define God in accordance with the limits of our knowledge.

At any rate, God is no dispenser of rewards and punishments, nor is He an active agent. But, if one *atman*<sup>2</sup> can be conceived after the embodied *atmans* have become free; it is God. He is no material thing but pure consciousness. This is also the view of the *advaitavadins*.<sup>3</sup> At no time and in no circumstances we need a kinglike God. By thinking that we do, we put a limit to the power of the *atman*, which is infinite.

*The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi—Vol. XII, p. 92, 30-5-1913*

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We are to concern ourselves only with activities that tend to spiritual welfare. Everything else—even health— is subordinate to that. Certain it is that he who strives to realize the Self will have everything else given to him.

*The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi—Vol. XII, p. 125, 2-7-1913*

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God exists, and yet does not. He does not, in any literal sense. The *atmah* that has attained *moksha* is God and therefore omniscient. The true meaning of *bhakti*<sup>4</sup> is search for the *atman*. When the *atman* realizes itself, *bhakti* is transformed into *jnana*.<sup>5</sup>

Narsimha (Mehta)<sup>6</sup> and others gave themselves to such devoted search of the *atman*.

Krishna, Rama and others were divine incarnations, but we, too, can be like them when immense *punya*<sup>7</sup> has accrued to us. The *atmans* about to attain *moksha* are so many divine incarnations. We need not believe in their perfection while yet alive.

*The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi—Vol. XII, p. 126, 2- 7-1913*

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It is difficult to say who was the greatest among Krishna, Rama, the Buddha, Jesus, etc. Their achievements differed, because they lived in different times

and under different circumstances. In point of character alone, possibly the Buddha was the greatest. But who can say ? They have been described by their devotees according to their own inclinations. *Vaishnavas*<sup>8</sup> attribute perfection to Krishna. One has to, of course. Otherwise single-minded *bhakti* would be impossible. Christians do the same to Jesus. In India, Krishna being the last (of the incarnations), his figure is invested with especial greatness.

*The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi—Vol XII, p. 126, 2-7-1913*

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Those who deny the existence of God will end up on the wrong path, for they will be obliged to deny the existence of the *atman*. *Avatar*<sup>9</sup> is, and will always remain, a necessity. It is only when people are in utter despair and immorality is widespread that a belief in *avatar* comes to prevail. A small number following normal morality in the midst of a wicked majority looks for support. In a situation of this kind, a man of great moral strength who has no fear of the wicked but of whom the wicked stand in fear, is looked upon as an avatar after his death, or even during his lifetime. It is not probable, in most cases, that such a person regards himself as an *avatar* right from the beginning.

*The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi—Vol. XII, p. 126, 2- 7-1913*

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Besides *tamas*, there are the qualities of *rajas* and *sattva*<sup>10</sup>. The first keeps a man blind, ignorant and lethargic. The second makes him rash, daring and energetic in worldly pursuits. The quality of *rajas* predominates among the nations of Europe. Most of our activities are also of a like nature. Those endowed with the quality of *sattva* are tranquil, self-collected and discriminating. They do not bother themselves with the affairs of the world, but keep their minds fixed on God. This *sattvic* disposition has been rightly described as "soothfastness". "Soothfast" means calm. With "ness", the word becomes a noun and means peace. Only when the mind is peaceful one can realize God, and the state of mind in which such realization becomes possible is the *sattvic* state. God, as transcending the three qualities has no activity, good or otherwise, but (through) *mava*<sup>11</sup> He exists as *chaitanya*.<sup>12</sup> He is beyond the

three qualities. When, however, He does engage Himself in some activity, such as instructing Arjuna, the impulse behind it is a *sattvic* one and, since activity as such is a mode of qualification, He (Krishna) is described as (God) in his *sattva*-qualified aspect.

*The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi—Vol. XII, pp. 188-89, 17-9-1913*

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The body is sure to fall, and that, on the appointed day. Remedies occur to us accordingly. The *atman*, besides, is immortal and, though we seem to be concerned only with the body, our real concern should be for the *atman*. For a truth, we don't preserve the body for any length of time after the soul has left it.

*The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi—Vol. XII, p. 373, 5-3-1914*

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There is no God but Truth. One's virtues are no dead matter but are all life.

*The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi—Vol. XIV, p. 385, 1-5-1918*

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God's ways are inscrutable. Karma can never be undone. All action bears fruit, good or bad, and what we call an accident is not one in fact. It but seems so to us. No one dies before his time. Death, besides, is only the final transformation of the same entity, it is not a total annihilation. The *atman* is immortal. Even the transformation is only of the body. The state changes, not the *atman*.

*The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi—Vol. XIV p. 502, 24-7-1918*

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Just as we are happy changing from an old house to a new one, we have no cause, surely, to mourn when an *atman*-friend gives up a worn-out body and assumes a new one. This would be true, whether the person died young or old. When exactly a body ceases to be serviceable, its Creator alone knows. We may not aspire to know it.

*The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi—Vol. XV, p. 313, 19-5-1919*

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I have no axes to grind, no worldly ambition to serve. The only purpose of life is to see God face to face, and the more I see of life and its experiences, the more I feel that everyone does not receive the light in the same way even as, though the sun is the same, we see it differently from the equatorial regions, from the temperate zone and from the frigid zone.

*The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi—Vol. XXIII, p. 267, 18-3-1924*

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In my opinion, God's name and God's work go hand to hand. There is no question of preference because the two are indivisible. A parrot-like repetition of the name is worse than useless, and service or action without the consciousness that it is done in God's name and for God's sake is also valueless, and if we sometimes pass our time in merely repeating the name of the deity as we have to, it is simply a course of preparation for self- dedication, that is, service for the sake of and in the name of God, and when we are thoroughly attuned, continued service in that spirit is itself equal to the repetition of the name of the deity. In the vast majority of cases, however, the setting apart a part of our time for prayer is a vital necessity. So far as I am aware, all scriptures and, certainly, the Indian scriptures, hold a *guru*<sup>13</sup> to be absolutely indispensable, but if we cannot get a real *guru*, a sham substitute is not only useless but injurious. That is one of the reasons why I suppose the tenth *guru* established the Granth Sahib as the last *Guru*.

I have no spiritual *guru*, but believing in the institution, I have been in search of one for the last thirty years. The very search is the greatest consolation to me.

*The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi—Vol. XXIII, p. 289, 1-3-1924*

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Why should one fear who knows that God is the Protector of all? By saying that God is the Protector of all I do not mean that none would be able to rob us or

that no animal will attack us. It is no slur on God's protection if such things happen to us; it is only due to our lack of faith in Him. The river is for ever ready to give water to all. But if one does not go near it with a pot to get water, or avoids it thinking its water poisonous, how can that be the fault of the river ? All fear is a sign of lack of faith. But faith cannot be developed by means of reasoning. It comes gradually through quiet thinking, contemplation and practice. To develop such faith, we pray to God, read good books, seek the company of the good and take to sacrificial spinning at the wheel. He who has no faith will not even touch the spinning-wheel.

*Bapu's Letters to Ashram Sisters, p. 28, 16-5-1927*

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Truth is that God saves me so long as He wants me in this body. The moment His wants are satisfied, no precautions on my part will save me.

*Bapu's Letters to Mira, p. 91, 8-4-1929*

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Those who believe in God's guidance just do the best they can and never worry. The sun has never been known to suffer from overstrain and yet who slaves with such unexampled' regularity as he! And why should we think that the sun is inanimate ? The difference between him and us may be that he has no choice, we have a margin, no matter how precarious it may be. But no more speculation of this sort. Suffice it for us that we have his brilliant example in the matter of tireless energy. If we completely surrender ourselves to His will and really become ciphers, we too voluntarily give up the right of choice and then we need no wear and tear.

*Bapu's Letters to Mira, p. 171, 11-2-1932*

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If we have trust in God, we should not worry even as we would not when we have a trustworthy doorkeeper or guard. And who can be a better doorkeeper or guard than God the never-failing. It is not enough that we sing about such things or have a mere intellectual grasp. It is necessary to feel the thing within.

Feeling is exactly like feeling pain or pleasure. It admits of or needs no argument. Who can argue us out of our experience? I write this, because I want you to be absolutely free from all care and anxiety.

*My Dear Child*, p. 89, 13-4-1932

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There cannot be any proof for the existence of God which is acceptable to human reason, for, God is beyond reason. We land ourselves in great difficulty if we think that reason is everything and that there is nothing beyond it. The human soul herself is beyond reason. People have tried to reason out her existence as well as the existence of God. But he who knows the soul and God by his intellect knows nothing. Intellect at times is useful in the acquisition of knowledge, but man who depends upon it, alone can never know the self, just as someone who knows the advantages of eating food- grains by his intellect cannot derive the benefits which accrue from actual eating. The soul and God are not objects of knowledge. They are knowers themselves and therefore cannot be apprehended by the intellect. There are two stages in the knowledge of God, (1) faith and (2) experience arising from faith. The great teachers of mankind have borne witness to the existence of God by their experience. And those whom the world would dismiss as fools have borne witness by their faith. If we share their faith, we shall have actual experience in God's good time. A man sees another with his eyes, but being deaf hears nothing. If then he says the other man cannot be heard he would be wrong of course. In the same way to say that God cannot be recognized by reason is to betray our ignorance. We cannot perceive God by the senses or apprehend Him by the intellect, just as we cannot hear with the eyes. A different faculty is needed to realize God and that faculty is unshakable faith. The intellect can be misled every moment as we know to our cost. But real faith can never be led astray.

*Selected Letters—II*, pp. 11-12, 5-5-1932

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Though death and life are the faces of the same coin and though we should die as cheerfully as we live, it is necessary while there is life to give the body its

due. It is a charge given to us by God. And we have to take all reasonable care about it.

*The Diary of Mahadev Desai—V61. I, p. 124, 22-5-1932*

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I was at first lacking in faith, but, I acquired it by contemplation and study of religions. It grows stronger from day to day, as I have an increasing realization of the fact that God abides with me in my heart. . . . But . . . one man's experience in this line is of no use to another. Faith can be strengthened only by constant effort informed by faith.

*The Diary of Mahadev Dcsai—Vol. I, p. 125, 23-5-1932*

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God means Truth. For the last few years I have been saying that Truth is God instead of 'God is Truth'. The former statement is more consonant with facts, for in this world there is nothing besides Truth. Truth here should be understood in a wide sense. It is full of intelligence. God as Truth and His Law are not different but one and the same; therefore it also is full of intelligence. Indeed it is all the same whether we say that the universe is a function of Truth or that it is a function of Law. This Truth is charged with infinite power. In the language of the Gita, (Chapter 10), the universe is sustained by a fraction of it. Therefore if you replace the word God by the word Truth wherever it occurs, you will have some idea of what I mean.

If God is, it is our duty to worship Him even if we recognize him as Truth. We tend to become what we worship. That is the whole and comprehensive meaning of prayer. Truth abides in the human heart. But we realize it indifferently or not at all. Sincere prayer is the key to such realization.

*The Diary of Mahadev Desai—Vol. I, p. 160, 13-6-1932*

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The purpose of life is undoubtedly to know oneself! We cannot do it unless we learn to identify ourselves with all that lives. The sum-total of that life is God.

Hence the necessity of realizing God living within every one of us. The instrument of this knowledge is boundless selfless service.

*The Diary of Mahadev Desai—Vol. I, p. 184, 21-6-1932*

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The inner voice defies description. But sometimes we do feel that we receive an inspiration from within....

*The Diary of Mahadev Desai—Vol. I, p. 275, 7-8-1932*

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My spiritual growth has been unnoticed like the growth of hair on our heads.

*The Diary of Mahadev Desai—Vol I, p. 275, 7-8-1932*

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Sorrows of God's servants are their joys. They are the fires through which God tries and purifies them. Unmixed joys of the earth will stink in our nostrils and we should die for want of the oxygen of sorrows.

*Selected Letters—II, p. 34, 9-10-1932*

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When God is the care-taker for us all, why need we carry the burden? Ours is but to do the task that falls to our lot.

*Selected Letters—II, p. 35, 22-10-1932*

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If we exist, God exists as well; for the totality of life is God even as the totality of solar rays is the sun. In order to have faith in this God, you must have faith in yourself. Faith in oneself can be won by the selfless service of humanity. Or else we may believe in God because all the world besides believes in Him.

*Selected Letters—II, p. 32, 19-12-1932*

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Objects of senses are eradicated only by seeing God face to face, in other words by faith in God. To have complete faith in God is to see Him. Nor is the matter any better by assuming the existence of the fourth dimension. It



ultimately points to the same thing. "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and all else will be added unto you." When we meet Him we will dance in the joy of His Presence and there will be neither fear of snakes, nor of the death of dear ones. For there is no death and no snake bite in His Presence. The fact is that the most living faith too falls short of the perfect. Hence there is no such thing as complete absence of fear for the embodied, i.e. imprisoned soul. The possession of the body is a limitation. It is a wall of separation. We can therefore but try to shed our fear, i.e. increase our faith.

*Bapu's Letters to Mira, p. 231, 22-12-1932*

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We are the Universe. We are in it and it is in us. God also is within us. Our eyes do not see the air that fills our bodies, but we have the faculty to perceive it. It is possible to develop the faculty of perceiving God and if we do succeed in doing so, we can even recognize God.

*To Gandhian Capitalist, p. 150, 11-1-1933*

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If you have a living faith in a living God, you would feel His never-failing presence protecting you. Till that state is reached even faith in an individual clothed in flesh and bone is not of any avail. It is relying on a broken reed. You should first think this out clearly and then get the heart to co-operate with the intellect.

*Bapu's Letters to Mira, p. 260, 4-5-1933*

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When we know that God Himself is the mystery of mysteries, why should anything that He does perplex us? If He acted as we would have Him do or if He acted exactly like us, we would not be His creatures and He our Creator. The impenetrable darkness that surrounds us is not a curse but a blessing. He has given us power to see the steps in front of us and it would be enough if Heavenly Light reveals that step to us. We can then sing with Newman 'One step enough for me'. And we may be sure from our past experience that then

next step will always be in view. In other words the impenetrable darkness is nothing so impenetrable as we may imagine. But it seems impenetrable when in our impatience we want to look beyond that one step. And since God is love, we can say definitely that even the physical catastrophies that He sends now and then must be a blessing in disguise and they can be so only to those who regard them as a warning for introspection and self-purification.

*My Dear Child*, pp. 104-05, 31-3-1934

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God watches us all not with a view to punish but to chasten.

*Selected Letters—I*, p. 17

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The power that moves us is God. Just as a watch stops when its wound up spring has run out, so also when our spring is done, our cart comes to a dead halt. While it is still on the move, we feel that a certain freedom of action is granted to us. Let us use that freedom to learn and do the will of the great Carpenter.

*Selected Letters—I*, p. 23

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I have known God only as Truth. There was a time when I had doubts about the existence of God, but I never doubted the existence of Truth. This Truth is not something material but pure intelligence. It rules over the universe; therefore it is *Ishvara* (The Lord). . . . This is for me almost a matter of experience.

*Selected Letters—I*, p. 38

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Perfect realization of the Supreme is impossible so long as one is subject to the limitations of life. He might reach the door but cannot enter as he still bears his body like chains.

*Selected Letters—I*, p. 39

I say that Truth is God not because God is without form and so is Truth, but because Truth is the only comprehensive attribute of God. Other attributes are only partial expressions of the reality that is God.

*Selected Letters—I, p. 55*

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By looking upon Truth as God we steer clear of quite a number of dangers. We lose all interest in seeing or hearing about miracles. Seeing God is difficult to understand; but seeing Truth presents no such difficulty. Seeing Truth is indeed a hard task, but as we approach nearer and nearer to truth, we catch a glimpse of the God of Truth, so that we hope to have a full view in His good time and our faith also burns brighter and brighter.

*Selected Letters—I, p. 56*

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We may have any number of co-workers but God alone can be our friend. Friendship with men comes in the way of our friendship with God, as I have found from experience.

*Selected Letters—I, p. 43*

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A man realizes the Supreme by becoming absolutely free from likes and dislikes and never otherwise. I hold that he who says that he has attained realization is far, far away from his destination. Realization is a matter of experience but does not lend itself to description in language.

I can live only in virtue of my faith in God. In my view there is no God different from Truth. Truth is God.

*Selected Letters—I, p. 51*

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We must believe in the existence of God, inasmuch as we believe in our own. Living beings exist and so does God who is the sum-total of all life.

By a disbelief in God we injure ourselves in the same way as if we disbelieved in ourselves. That is to say, not to believe in God is something like suicide. But it is one thing to believe in God, and quite another thing to conduct ourselves as if we had such a living faith. As a matter of fact there is no atheist in the world; atheism is a mere presence.

*Selected Letters—I, p. 51*

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- 1 Freedom from birth
  - 2 The Self, not identifiable with any aspect of human individuality
  - 3 Those who hold the view that the atman, the Self in man, is not distinct from the Brahman, the Absolute.
  - 4 Devotion
  - 5 Knowledge
  - 6 Poet-Saint of Gujarat
  - 7 Accumulated merit
  - 8 A Hindu sect worshipping Vishnu—the second deity of sacred Triad (Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh)
  - 9 Incarnation
  - 10 Mental propensities derived from one's physiological equipment (*Vide* Bhagwad Gita, XIV, 5-8)
  - 11 A Vedantic concept, seeking to explain phenomenal existence
  - 12 Principle of life and consciousness
  - 13 Spiritual Guide

## 2. RELIGION AND SCRIPTURES

Throughout the *Bhagwadgita*,<sup>1</sup> I can see no warrant for holding that a man who can only control "the organs of action" but cannot help "dwelling in his mind on the objects of the senses" had better use the organs of action until the mind, too, is under control. In ordinary practices, we call such use an indulgence, and we know, too, that, if we can control the flesh even while the spirit is weak, always wishing that the, spirit were equally strong, we will certainly arrive at a right correspondence.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. X, p. 248, 10-5-1910*

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Personally, I think the world as a whole will never have, and need not have, a single religion.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XII, p. 94, 30-5-1913*

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Comparison of religions is uncalled for. One must gain a mature understanding of one's own religion and then study others. For purposes of comparison in a general way, the criterion is compassion as a rule of life. The greater the scope for compassion in a way of life, the more of religion it has. "The ethical way has its roots in compassion" that is the first principle to be taught to everyone; and the second, "*Brahman* is the Reality; the Phenomenal world is unreal." No single principle may appeal to all, but it would seem that one who is in quest of the *atman* will have the right principle spring to his lips at the right time.

In fact, there are as many paths as there are human beings. So long as men differ (in temperament), their paths are bound to differ. He who sees the identity of his *atman* with the *atmans* of others will also see unity in the religions.

When the *atman* is free from bondage to the body, it is said to have attained *moksha*. The nature of that state is not to be described. It can only be

experienced. Ghosts, etc., are an evil order of beings. Those guilty of wicked deeds are born in that order.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XII, p. 127, 2-7-1913*

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David's Psalm has a meaning which is worth understanding. He desires in it the destruction of the wicked; the significance of this is that he cannot bear evil. The same idea appears in the *Ramayana*.<sup>2</sup> Gods and men both pray for the destruction of *rakshasas*.<sup>3</sup>

The prayer *Jaya Rama Rama*<sup>4</sup> is inspired by the same sentiment. The spiritual significance of the Psalm is that David (Arjuna—denoting god ward attributes) desires destruction of Duryodhana and others (denoting satanic attributes). This is the *sattvic* impulse. It comes into play when one is in a state of *bhakti*. When one attains to the state of *jnana*<sup>5</sup>, both the impulses subside and all that remains is pure consciousness—Knowledge Absolute. You will not probably find this state described in the Bible. Though David was imperfect, he was a *bhakta*.<sup>6</sup> His sentiments have found expression in the Psalm in simple language and, though a great man, he makes himself humble before God, looking upon himself as a mere blade of grass.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XII, p. 407, 12-4-1914*

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Our scriptures place parents on a level with God. It is not always that parents in this world are fit to carry such responsibility. Being but earthly, they pass on the legacy to their children and so from generation to generation mere embodiments of selfishness come into this world.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XIV P- 221, 27-2-1918*

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The true end of all effort in life is to gain control over the impulses of one's nature; that is Dharma.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XIV p. 385, 1-5-1918*

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My bent is not political but religious and I take part

Politics because I feel that there is no department of life which can be divorced from religion and because politics touch the vital being of India almost at every point.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XIV p. 5, 4-8-1919*

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I consider myself a Hindu of Hindus. I believe that I have a fine perception of the truth of Hinduism and the priceless lesson I have learnt from it is that I should not wish that others may become Hindus but that they become best specimens in their own faith.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XVI, p. 477, 13-1-1920*

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Reciting *Gayatri*<sup>7</sup>, daily or occasionally, without a fixed rule can never bring the same reward as reciting it with a devout heart at a fixed hour every day. Progress in life is possible only if one regulates one's life according to rules.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XVII, p. 526, 13-2-1920*

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Holy men of *tapascharya*<sup>8</sup> have told us that those who study the *Vedas*<sup>9</sup> but do not follow *Dharma*<sup>10</sup> in conduct are mere pedants; that they neither swim across themselves, nor help others to do so. So it is that I am never impressed by those who have the Vedas on their lips or have got the commentaries by heart and, instead of marvelling at their learning, cherish my little knowledge as of greater value.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XIX, p. 98, (on or after) 11-12-1920*

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True religion being the greatest thing in life and in the world, it has been exploited the most. And those who have seen the exploiters and the exploitation and missed the reality naturally get disgusted with thing itself. But religion is after all a matter for each individual and then too a matter of the

heart, call it then by whatever name you like, that which gives one the greatest solace in the midst of the severest fire is God.

*A Bunch of Old Letters*, p. 43, 25-4-1925

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Religion declares that so long as man harbours evil he is impure and unfit to stand before God. So the first duty of any of you who has such thoughts is to confess about it and thus purge yourselves of the evil.

*Bapu's Letters to Ashram Sisters*, p. 47, 26-9-1927

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We should not kill others for what we regard as True and Pure. We should prepare to die for that Truth and, when the call comes, give our life for it and put the seal of our blood on our Truth. In my view this is the essence of all religions.

*Letters to Rajkumari Amrit Kaur*, p. 223

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What you say about rebirth is sound. It is nature's kindness that we do not remember past births. Where is the good either of knowing in detail the numberless births we have gone through? Life would be a burden if we carried such a tremendous load of memories. A wise man deliberately forgets many things, even as a lawyer forgets the cases and their details as soon as they are disposed of. Yes, "death is but a sleep and a forgetting".

*Bapu's Letters to Mira*, p. 154, 25-1-1931

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*Pinda* is our body, and *Brahmanda* is the universe. Now everything found in the body is found in the universe also; and if anything is not there in the former it is absent from the latter too. Our body is of the earth earthy. There are five elements on the earth (earth, water, fire, air, ether) as well as in the body. There is a variety of living beings on the earth and of living cells in the body. The body dies and is reborn; so the earth also undergoes transformation. And so on. From this we may infer that if we have true knowledge of the body, we



shall have knowledge of the universe too, and need not go far a field in search of it. The body is at hand, and if we get to know it, we shall have attained our object. If we try to know the universe this knowledge must always remain incomplete. Therefore wise men have told us that there is nothing in the universe which is not in the body too, and therefore if we know the self, this knowledge embraces all knowledge whatever. But in the act of knowing the self we get to know something about other objects, and we have the right to derive what enjoyment we can from this external knowledge, as it is part of self-knowledge.

We should not mix up the historic Krishna with the Krishna of the Gita who was not discussing the question of violence and non-violence. Arjuna was not averse to killing in general, but only to killing his own relatives. Therefore Krishna suggested that in doing one's duty one may not treat one's relations differently from other people. In the age of the Gita the question whether one should or should not wage war was not raised by any important person. Indeed it appears to have been raised only in recent times. All Hindus in those days believed Ahimsa (non-violence), but what amounted to and what did not amount to violence was a question debated then as it is debated now. Many things which we look upon as non-violent will perhaps be considered violent by future generations. For we destroy life when we use milk or cereals as food. Therefore it is quite possible that posterity will give up milk production and the cultivation of food grains. Just as we consider ourselves as non-violent in spite of our consumption of milk and food grains, so also in the age of the Gita fighting was such a common thing that no one thought it was contrary to Ahimsa. Therefore I do not see anything wrong in the Gita having used warfare as an illustration. But if we study the whole of the Gita and examine its descriptions of *sthitaprajana*,<sup>11</sup> *brahma- bhuta*,<sup>12</sup> *bhakta*<sup>13</sup> and *yogi*<sup>14</sup> we can reach only this conclusion that the Krishna of the Gita was the very incarnation of Ahimsa and his exhortation to Arjuna to fight does not detract from his greatness. On the other hand if he had given him different advice, his knowledge would have been proved inadequate, and he would not have been

entitled to be called *Yogeshuara* (the prince of *Yogis*) and *Puma Avatara* (the perfect incarnation).

*The Diary of Mahadev Desai*, Vol. I, pp. 93-94, 28-4-1932

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Tulsidas holds that the name of Rama is more powerful than Rama himself and suggests that there is no relation between the word Rama and its meaning. The meaning will be filled in later by the devotee in accordance with the nature of his devotion. That is the beauty of this repetition (*japa*). Otherwise it would be impossible to prove that it will make a new man even of a simpleton. The devotee must fulfil only a single condition. The name should not be repeated for show or with a view to deceiving others, but with determination and faith. If a man perseveres with such repetition, I have not the shadow of a doubt that it will be for a universal provider. Everyone who has the requisite patience can realize this in his own case. For days and sometimes for years, the mind wanders and becomes restless; the body craves for sleep when one is engaged in repeating the name. Indeed even still more painful symptoms intervene. Still if the seeker perseveres with the repetition, it is bound to bear fruit. Spinning is a gross material accomplishment and yet it can be acquired only after our patience is sorely tried. Things more difficult than spinning demand a greater effort on our part. Therefore he who is out to attain the Supreme must undergo the necessary discipline for a long, long time and never be downhearted.

*The Diary of Mahadev Desai*, Vol. I, pp. 120-21, 20-5-1932

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As the sixth chapter assures us, the least little *sadhana* (spiritual effort) is not wasted. The seeker will proceed further in his next birth, starting from it as a base. Similarly if a person has the will but not the ability to make spiritual progress, his environment in his subsequent birth will be such as to strengthen that will. But this fact must not be made an excuse for relaxation now. If it is so made, it means that the will is only intellectual and not heart-felt. Intellectual willing serves no useful purpose, as it does not persist after death. If the will is heart-felt, it must manifest itself in effort. But it is quite possible

that physical weakness as well as the environment may come in its way. Even so, when the soul leaves the body, it carries its goodwill with it. which fructifies into deed in the subsequent birth when circumstances are more favourable. Thus one who does good is sure to make steady progress.

Jnaneshvar<sup>15</sup> may have meditated on Nivritti<sup>16</sup> during the latter's life-time. But we must not follow his example. One on whom we meditate must be a perfect individual. To ascribe such perfection to a living person is improper and unnecessary. Again it is possible that Jnaneshvar meditated on Nivritti not as he actually was but as he had imagined him to be. Such refinement is not however for people like ourselves. When we raise the question of meditating on living person, there is no room for a mental image of him. If the question is answered with such an image in view, it can only throw the questioner into mental confusion.

All the names given in the first chapter of the Gita are in my opinion not so much proper nouns as names of qualities. In describing the eternal warfare between the heavenly and the devilish natures, the poet has personified them as the characters in the Mahabharat. This does not imply a refusal to believe that an actual battle took place at Hastinapur between the Pandavas and the Kauravas. I hold that the poet took some such actual event as the thread upon which to hang his discourse. But I may be wrong. Again if all the names given are the names of real historical characters, the poet has done nothing improper in giving the list at the historical beginning. And as the first chapter is an essential part of the subject-matter of the Gita, it too should be recited as part of *Gita-patha*,<sup>17</sup>

*The Diary of Mahadev Desai, Vol. I, pp. 171-72, 18-6-1932*

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*Nama-japa*<sup>18</sup> helps one to conquer sin. One who repeats the Name with a pure heart is full of faith that the repetition is bound to help him in this conquest. To conquer sin in other words means self-purification. One who repeats the Name in faith will never tire of it, so that the Name which is at first on the tongue enters the heart and purifies it. This is the universal experience without

any exceptions. Even psychologists hold that as a man thinks, so he becomes. This principle applies to Ramanama. I have the fullest faith in *Nama-japa*. Its discoverer was a man of experience, and I am firmly of opinion that his discovery is extremely important. Purification should be possible even for the illiterate. And here *Nama-japa* comes in (Gita, IX, 22; X, 10). Telling the beads of a rosary is a help in achieving mental concentration.

*The Diary of Mahadev Desai*, Vol. I, p. 275, 7-8-1932

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Silence is looked upon as a very important thing among our people. *Samadhi* means silence. *Muni* (sage) and *mauna* (sage-hood, silence) are both derived from the same root. It is true that when we practise silence at first, many thoughts enter our minds and we even begin to doze. Silence is intended to remedy these defects. We are accustomed to talk much and hear loud sounds. Silence, therefore, seems difficult. A little practice however enables us to like it, and when we like it, it gives us a sense ineffable peace. We are seekers of truth. We must therefore understand what silence means and observe it accordingly. We can certainly take Ramanama during silence. The fact is that we should prepare the mind for it. We shall realize its value if we bestow a little thought on it.

*The Diary of Mahadev Desai*, Vol. I, p. 313, 28-8-1932

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You have asked me for my opinion about occult sciences. I am not in love with them. The book of life is open to the simplest minds and it should be so. There is nothing occult in God's plan. Anyway the mysterious and the occult have never made any appeal to me. Truth has no secrets, and truth is God.

*Selected Letters—II*, p. 27, 30-10-1932

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Because I do not find a particular thing helpful for me, I may not be indifferent about others and not take the trouble of knowing whether it is helpful for them. I know that that particular form of idolatry is helpful for millions, not

because they are less developed than I am, but because they are differently constituted. What must not be forgotten about me is that not only do I not consider idol worship to be a sin, but I know that in some form or other it is a condition of our being. The difference between one form of worship and another is a difference in degree and not in kind. Mosque-going or church-going is a form of idol worship. Veneration of the Bible, the Kuran, the Gita and the like is idol worship, and even if you do not use a book or a building, but draw a picture of divinity in your imagination and attribute to it certain qualities, it is again idol worship. And I refuse to call the worship of the one who has a stone image a grosser form of worship. Learned judges have been known to have such images in their own homes. A philosopher like Pandit Malaviyaji will not eat his meal without offering worship to the household deity. It would be both arrogant and ignorant to look down upon such worship as superstition. Again in the imagination of the worshipper, God is in consecrated stone and not in the other stones lying about him. Even so the sanctuary in a church is more sacred than any other place in it. You can multiply for yourself instances of this character. All this is a plea not for laxity in thought or worship, but it is a plea for a definite recognition of the fact that all forms of honest worship are equally good and equally efficient for the respective worshippers. Time is gone for the exclusive possession of the right by an individual or group. God is no respecter of forms or words, for He is able to penetrate our actions and our speech and understand our thoughts even when we do not understand them ourselves, and it is just our thoughts that matter to Him.

*Selected Letters—II*, pp. 29-30, 29-11-1932

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*Nirvan* is utter extinction of all egoism, self. Its positive aspect is capable of being experienced but incapable of being described. But we know from inference that it is something vastly superior to any bliss that we can possibly experience on this earth.

*Bapu's Letters to Mira*, p. 233, (probably) 29-12-1932

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There is nothing so bad in all the world. And yet I cannot leave religion and therefore Hinduism. My life would be a burden to me, if Hinduism failed me. I love Christianity, Islam and many other faiths through Hinduism. Take it away and nothing remains for me. But then I cannot tolerate it with untouchability—the high-and-low belief. Fortunately Hinduism contains a sovereign remedy for the evil. I have applied the remedy.

*A Bunch of Old Letters*, p. 113, 2-5-1933

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The *Mahabharata* is poetry not history. The poet tries to show that if a man resorts to violence, untruth too is sure to come in, and even people like Krishna cannot escape it. A wrong is a wrong, no matter who the wrongdoer is.

*Selected Letters—I*, p. 41

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- 1 Literally, the Divine Song. It is the epitome of Hindu religion and philosophy as expounded by Lord Krishna to Arjuna on the battlefield of Kurukshetra.
- 2 The national epic of which Rama is the divine hero.
- 3 Demons
- 4 Victory to Rama
- 5 Enlightenment
- 6 Devotee
- 7 Most potential Vedic Mantra to eliminate evil
- 8 Penance, austerity
- 9 Most profound and highly lyrical works of the Aryans from which sprang the religious beliefs or practices and their social structure, etc.
- 10 Religion or religious duty
- 11 One whose understanding is steadfast.
- 12 Absorbed into the Supreme Spirit
- 13 Devotee

- 14 One who practises Yoga, the process of inner and bodily purification through the inhaling and exhaling process of breathing.
- 15 Medieval saint of Maharashtra who at 16 composed most illumining treatise on *Bhagwadgita*, known as *Dnaneshwari*.
- 16 His eldest brother and initiator into the knowledge of Him.
- 17 Recitation of Gita
- 18 Repeating God's name

### 3. VALUE OF PRAYER

One cannot pray to God for help in a spirit of pride but only if one confesses oneself as helpless. As I lie in bed, every day I realize how insignificant we are, how very full of attachments and aversions, and what evil desires sway us. Often I am filled with shame by unworthiness of my mind. Many a time I fall into despair because of the attention my body craves and wishes that it should perish. From my condition, I can very well judge that of others.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. Xy p. 65, 26-11-1918*

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Do you read something or other regularly? Do you pray as you get up from bed? If you don't, allow me to remind you about it, for I am certain that prayer does us a world of good. You will realize its value in times of trouble, and even from day to day if you offer it thoughtfully. Prayer is food for the soul. As the body languishes for want of nourishment, even so does the soul wither away without her appropriate food.

*Selected Letters—II. p. 19, 2-6-1919*

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Do attend the prayer meetings even if your mind is inclined to wander. We offer prayers to concentrate our minds on the one thing needful. One who has achieved this concentration may or may not attend prayer meetings; it is all the same to him. All that we can do is not deliberately to allow the mind to wander. Striving in this way we may hope one day to be conscious at all times of the presence of God even as the poet-saint Tulsidas was.

*Selected Letters—II, p. 9*

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Those of you who have promised to attend the prayer daily should make it a point to be present except in circumstances beyond your control.

*Selected Letters—I, p. 4, 6-12-1926*

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We may miss many things in life but not prayer, which implies our co-operation with God and with one another. Prayer should be bath of purification for the spirit of man. Physical health suffers if we do not wash our bodies; similarly the spirit becomes unclean if the heart is not washed with prayer. Please therefore never be negligent in prayer.

*Selected Letters—I, p. 5, 31-12-1926*

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Devotion to duty is itself prayer. We go and pray in order to be qualified for doing actual service. But when one is engaged in actual practice of duty, prayer is merged with the execution of duty. If someone who is engaged in deeper prayer, hears the cry of another who is stung by a scorpion, she is bound to leave the prayer and run to help him. Prayer finds fulfilment in the service of the distressed.

*Bapu's Letters to Ashram Sisters, p. 79, 23-9-1929*

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And now here is the first verse of the morning prayer:

"Early in the morning, I call to mind that Being which is felt in the heart, which is *sat* (the eternal), *chit* (knowledge), *sukham* (bliss), which is the state reached by perfect men and which is the superstate. I am that immaculate Brahma which ever notes the states of dream, wakefulness and deep sleep, not this body, the compound made of the elements (earth, water, space, light and air)!" You will be interested to know that the first verse was commenced on the 6th last.

I am sorry that the very first verse needed correcting. The more I think, the more clearly I see the meaning. And then I do not mind how often I cut about the translation. Formerly I used to shudder to utter this verse thinking that the claim made therein was arrogant. But when I saw the meaning more clearly, I perceived at once that it was the very best thought with which to commence the day. It is a solemn declaration that we are not the changeful bodies which require sleep, etc., but deep down, we are the Being, the witness pervading

the countless bodies. The first part is the recalling to mind the presence of the vital principle and the second part is the affirmation that we are that vital principle. The description of the Being, the Brahma is also quite apposite. It is, nothing else *is {sat}*, it is all knowledge or light (*chit*), and naturally, therefore, it is all bliss (*sukham*) or the word generally used is (*anand*).

*Bapu's Letters to Mira*, p. 143, 20-12-1930

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"In the early morning I worship Him who is beyond the reach of thought and speech and yet by whose grace „ all speech is possible, I worship Him whom the Vedas describe as *neti neti* (not this, not this). Him they (the sages) have called God of gods, the unborn, the unfallen, the source of all."

*Bapu's Letters to Mira*, p. 145, 30-12-1930

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"In the early morning I bow to him who is beyond darkness, who is like the sun, who is perfect, ancient, called *Purushottam!* (the best among man) and in whom (through the veil of darkness) we fancy the whole universe as appearing even as (in darkness) we imagine a rope to be a snake."

The idea is that the universe is not real in the sense of being permanent, it is neither a thing to be hankered after nor feared because it is supposed to be God's creation. As a matter of fact, it is a creation of our imagination even as the snake in the rope is. The real universe like the real rope is there. We perceive either when the veil is lifted and darkness is gone—compare, "And with the morn, those angel faces smile which I have loved long since and lost a while." The three verses go together and I think are Shankar's composition.

*Bapu's Letters to Mira*, p. 146, 3-1-1931

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"O Goddess Earth, with the ocean for thy garment, mountains for thy breasts, thou consort of Vishnu (Preserver) I bow to thee; forgive the touch of my feet."

Bowing to the earth we learn or ought to learn to be humble even as the earth is humble. She supports the beings that tread upon her. She is therefore rightly

the consort of Vishnu. This conception, in my opinion, does no violence to truth. On the contrary, it is beautiful and is wholly consistent with the idea that God is everywhere. There is nothing inanimate for Him. We are of the earth earthy. If earth is not, we are not. I feel nearer God by feeling Him through the Earth. In bowing to the Earth, I at once realize my indebtedness to Him and if I am a worthy child of that Mother, I shall at once reduce myself to dust and rejoice in establishing kinship with not only the lowliest of human beings, but also with lowest forms of creation whose fate—reduction to dust—I have to share with them. And if considered as mere life without the earthy tabernacle, I regard myself as imperishable; the lowest form of creation is just as imperishable as my soul is.

*Bapu's Letters to Mira, p. 147, 12-1-1931*

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"May the Goddess Saraswati (of learning), the Destroyer completely of black ignorance, protect me, she who is white as the *mogra* flower, the moon, and a garland of snow, who has worn white robes, whose hands are adorned with the beautiful bamboo of her *veena* (a kind of violin), who is seated on a white lotus and who is always adored by Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva and other gods."

To me the thought here is very beautiful. Learning of course means wisdom. The emphasis on threefold whiteness—that of snow, moon, flower and the white dress and white seat is intended to show that uttermost purity is an indispensable part of wisdom or learning. As you explore the deeper meaning of these and kindred verses, you will find every virtue personified and made a living reality instead of a dead dictionary word. These imaginary gods are most real than the so-called real things we perceive with our five senses. When I recite this verse, for instance, I never think that I am addressing an imaginary picture. The recitation is a mystical act. That when I analyse the act intellectually, I know that the goddess is an imaginary being, does not in any way affect the value of this recitation at prayer time.

*Bapu's Letters to Mira, p, 151, 14-1-1931*

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"Guru (teacher) is Brahma, he is Vishnu, he is Mahadeo, he is the great *Brahman* itself. I bow to that *guru*"

This refers of course to the spiritual teacher; this is not a mechanical or artificial relationship. The teacher is not all this in reality, but he is all that to the disciple who finds his full satisfaction in him and imputes perfection to him, who gave him a living faith in a living God. Such a *guru* is a rarity at least nowadays. The best thing, therefore, is to think of God Himself as one's *guru* or await the Light in faith.

*Bapu's Letters to Mira*, p. 153, 25-1-1931

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There is really only one prayer that we may offer: "Thy will be done." Someone will ask where is the sense in offering such a prayer. The answer is: Prayer should not be understood in a gross sense. We are aware of the presence of God in our heart, and in order to shake off attachment, we for the moment think of God as different from ourselves and pray to Him. That is to say, we do not wish to go where our wayward will may lead us but, where the Lord takes us. We do not know whether it is good to live or to die. Therefore we should not take delight in living, nor should we tremble at the thought of death. We should be equiminded towards both. This is the ideal. It may be long before we reach it, and only a few of us can attain it. Even then we must keep it constantly in view, and the more difficult it seems of attainment, the greater should be the effort we put forth.

*The Diary of Mahadeu Desai*, Vol. I, pp. 118-19, 19-5-1932

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I do not forbid the use of images in prayer. I only prefer the worship of the Formless. This preference is perhaps improper. One thing suits one man; another thing will suit another man, and no comparison can fairly be made between the two. You are not right about Shankara and Ramanuja. Spiritual experience has greater influence than environment. The seeker of truth should not be affected by his surroundings but rise above them. Views based on the environment are often found to be wrong. For instance take the case of body

and soul. The soul being at present in close contact with the body, we cannot at once realize her as distinct from her physical vesture. Therefore it was a very great man indeed who rose above his environment and said, "It (the soul) is not this (the body)." The language of saints like Tukaram should not be taken in literal sense. I suggest that you read his *abhang—kela maticha pashupati*,<sup>1</sup> etc. The moral is that we must realize the idea which underlies the words of holy men. It is quite possible that they worshipped the Formless even while they pictured God in a particular form. This is impossible for ordinary mortals like ourselves, and therefore we would be in a sorry plight if we did not penetrate a little deeper into the implications of their statements.

*The Diary of Mahadev Desai, Vol. I, pp. 168-69, 17-6-1932*

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There can be no manner of doubt that this universe of sentient being is governed by a Law. If you can think of Law without its Giver, I would say that the Law is the Law-giver, that is God. When we pray to the Law we simply yearn after knowing the Law and obeying it. We become what we yearn after. Hence the necessity for prayer. Though our present life is governed by our past, our future must by that very Law of cause and effect be affected by what we do now. To the extent therefore that we feel the choice between two or more courses we must make that choice.

*The Diary of Mahadev Desai, Vol. I, p. 227, 13-7-1932*

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A person must shed all spiritual dirt at prayer time. As he is ashamed of doing anything immoral while other people are looking on, so should he be in the presence, of God. But God knows our every act and every thought. There is not a single moment when we can think any thought or do any act unknown to Him. He who thus prays from the bottom of his heart will in time be filled with the spirit of God and become sinless.

*The Diary of Mahadev Desai, Vol. I, p. 232, 17-7-1932*

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A prayer can be offered in connection with some person or thing, and may even be granted. But if it is offered without any such specific end in view, it will confer a greater benefit on the world as well as ourselves. Prayer exerts an influence over ourselves; our soul becomes more vigilant, and the greater its vigilance, the wider the sphere of its influence. Prayer is a function of the heart. We speak aloud in order to wake it up. The Power that pervades the universe is also present in the human heart. The body does not offer it any obstruction. The obstruction is something of our own making, and is removed by prayer. We can never know if a prayer has or has not yielded the desired result.... Prayer is never fruitless, but we cannot know that the fruit of it. Nor should we imagine that it is a good thing if it yields the desired result. Here too the Gita doctrine has to be practised. We may pray for something and yet remain free from attachment. We may pray for some one's *mukti* (salvation) but should not worry whether he gets or does not get what we want for him. Even if the result is just the opposite of what we had asked for, that is no reason for the conclusion that the prayer has been fruitless.

*Diary of Mahadev Desai, Vol. I, p. 233 17-7-1932*

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Absence of food is an indispensable but not the largest part of it. The largest part is the prayer- communion with God. It more than adequately replaces physical food.

*Bapu's Letters to Mira, p. 263, 8-5-1933*

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1 The image of God is made of clay.

#### 4. TRUTH AND NON-VIOLENCE

Untruth does not become truth because of purity of motive. Just as a moneyed man is said to have but one eye for watching things, there is only one path of truth. Likewise, there are many paths of untruth, in the same way that a thief has as many as four eyes, as the saying goes. A person lost in this mazy network of paths is ruined and, if he happens to be a guardian or trustee, he also ruins the person whose interests he is appointed to protect.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XV p. 23, 17-9-1918*

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Ignorance is also a kind of darkness, a species of untruth. It cannot, therefore, withstand knowledge or truth.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XVI, p., 87, 3-9-1918*

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My desire is to close this life searching for truth, acting truth and thinking truth and that alone, and I request the blessings of the nation that that desire of mine may be fulfilled.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XVI, p. 175, 28-9-1919*

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Truth has no form. Therefore everyone will form such an idea or image of truth as appeals to him, and there will be as many images of truth as there are men. These will all be true as long as they last. For they enable a man to obtain everything he wants. As a matter of fact names such as Brahma, Vishnu, Ishvara, Bhagavan are either meaningless or at least not significant enough, whereas *Satya* (Truth) is the perfect name for God. If one says he will die for God's sake, he cannot make plain to others what he means, and people who hear him say so will hardly understand it. On the other hand one who says he will die for truth knows what he means, and his words will be generally understood by those who hear him.

*The Diary of Mahadev Desai*, Vol. I, p. 120, 20-5-1932

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I feel that whilst we should spare evil-doers, we dare not be sparing in our condemnation of evil. Perfect gentleness is not inconsistent with clearest possible denunciation of what one knows to be evil, so long as that knowledge persists; and there would need to be no cause for regret later if our knowledge of the past was found to be a great error of judgment. In our endeavour to approach absolute truth we shall always have to be content with relative truth from time to time, the relative at each stage being for us as good as the absolute. It can be easily demonstrated that there would be no progress if there was no such confidence in oneself. Of course our language would be one of caution and hesitation if we had any doubt about the correctness of our position.

*The Diary of Mahadev Desai*, Vol. I, p. 129, 25-5-1932

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One who resorts to untruth with any end in view whatsoever and is full of likes and dislikes can never attain the Supreme.

*The Diary of Mahadev Desai*, Vol. I, p. 250, 24-7-1932

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To tread the path of truth implies an active life in the world of men. In the absence of such activity, there is no occasion for either pursuing or swerving from truth. The Gita has made it clear that a man cannot remain inactive even for a single moment. The difference between one who is a devotee of God and another who is not is that the former is active in the service of others, never gives up truth in the midst of activity and gradually overcomes his likes and dislikes, while the other is active for selfish reasons, and has no scruples whatever as regards the means he employs in order to achieve his selfish ends. This world is not something evil in itself, for only an active life in the world can help us to attain the goal of God-realization. This activity must be directed to the good of others. Selfish activity is fit only to be condemned and should be given up.



*The Diary of Mahadev Desai, Vol. I p. 251, 24-7-1932*

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The truth, where it is relevant, must be told at any cost.

*Selected Letters—I, p. 45*

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A lover of truth entertains only righteous wishes which are bound to be fulfilled. Our prayers bear fruit for the world to the extent that our soul is grounded in Truth. The universe is not different from us, and we are not different from the universe.

*Selected Letters—I, p. 55*

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Non-violence and truth are convertible terms. This seems to be the idea behind the saying, "One must speak truth, truth that is agreeable." That is genuine truth which causes no pain, for that alone is non-violent. Truth may sound harsh but it can never result in suffering. Our employment of truth may offend the other person, but his conscience will tell him that what was said about him was true and was said with the best of motives. We are here interpreting truth in its widest connotation. Truth does not mean merely being truthful in speech; the term "truth" means exactly the same thing as it does in the *sutra* about *Brahma* alone being true. The English word "truth" also carries the same meaning.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XIV p. 97, 22-11-1917*

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Truth and non-violence are the same thing. The one includes the other. If anyone vowed to non-violence speaks or acts untruth, he will be violating his vow. If a man dedicated to truth commits violence, he will sacrifice truth. Even if a man refuses to reply, out of fear, he will be violating the vow of non-violence.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XIV, p. 157, 17-2-1918*

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You cannot teach Ahimsa to a man who cannot kill. You cannot make a dumb man appreciate the beauty and the merit of silence. Although I know that silence is most excellent, I do not hesitate to take means that would enable the dumb man to regain his speech. I do not believe in any Government,—but Parliamentary Government is perhaps better than capricious rule.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XIV P- 444, 22-6-1918*

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It is my practice of Ahimsa and failure to get our people even to understand the first principles of Ahimsa that have led to the discovery that all killing is not *himsa*, that, sometimes, practice of Ahimsa may even necessitate killing and that we as a nation have lost the true power of killing. It is clear that he who has lost the power to kill cannot practise non-killing. Ahimsa is a renunciation of the highest type. A weak and an effeminate nation cannot perform this grand act of renunciation, even as a mouse cannot be properly said to renounce the power of killing a cat. It may look terrible but it is true that we must by well-sustained, conscious effort, regain this power, and, then, if we can only do so, deliver the world from its travail of *himsa* by a continuous abdication of this power. I cannot describe to you in sufficiently telling language the grief I often used to feel as I watched my failure to carry conviction about Ahimsa even to the members of the Ashram. Not that they were unwilling listeners, but I could perceive, as I now think plainly, that they had not the capacity for apprehending the truth. It was like singing the finest music to ears untuned to any music. But today practically everyone at the Ashram understands it, and is aglow with the expectation that Ahimsa is a renunciation out of strength and not out of weakness. It is not possible to make any distinction between organized warfare and individual fighting. There must be an organized opposition and therefore even organized bloodshed, say, in the case of bandits. The noblest warrior is he who stands fearless in the face of immense odds. He then feels not the power to kill, but he is supremely triumphant in the knowledge that he has the willingness to die when by taking to his heels he

might easily have saved his life. I do believe that we shall have to teach our children the art of self-defence.

*Collected, Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XIV P- 485, 17-7-1918*

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I am more and more becoming convinced of the correctness of the non-violence doctrine. The greater the possession of brute force, the greater coward does the possessor become.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XVI, p. 58, 22-8-1919*

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We should remain non-violent, unmindful of whether we succeed or fail in our undertaking. This is the only natural way of demonstrating the principle of non-violence. It would be more correct to say that the result of Ahimsa is always good. Such being our firm faith, we are not concerned whether our efforts are crowned with success today or years later.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XXIV p. 273, 21-6-1924*

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It is one's duty to say only that which, after a painstaking inquiry, one has come to regard as the truth, even if the world considers it to be an error. In no other way can one become fearless. I cannot consider anything dearer to me than *moksha*. Yet even that *moksha* I would renounce if it were to conflict with truth and non-violence.

*Collected Works Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XXV P- 127, 2-8-1924*

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The only way to conquer violence is through nonviolence pure and undefiled. I have said also that every violent act, word and even thought interferes with the progress of non-violent action. If in spite of such repeated warnings, people will resort to violence, I must own responsibility save such as inevitably attaches to every human being for the acts of every other human being. But the question of responsibility apart, I dare not postpone action on any cause whatsoever if non-

violence is the force the seers of the world have claimed it to be and if I am not to belie my own extensive experience of its working.

*Famous Letters of Mahatma Gandhi, p. 74*

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There is nothing wrong in an ordinary man wanting God to punish the wrongdoer. Non-violence is a new thing. It would be wrong for a non-violent man to call down the wrath of Gods or man. But a non-violent man must not see anything wrong in a persecuted man retaliating and seeking the assistance of others.

*Letters to Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, p. 247*

## 5. THE SCIENCE OF SATYAGRAHA

We hold that our movement of passive resistance merits the approval of all religious men, of all true patriots, of all men of commonsense and integrity. It is a movement so potent as to compel the respect of our adversaries by virtue of our very non-resistance, of our willingness to suffer; and we are the more firm in our determination to offer this opposition, because we consider that our example, on a small scale in this Colony, whether successful or unsuccessful may well be adopted by every oppressed people, by every oppressed individual, as being a more reliable and more honourable instrument for securing the redress of wrongs than any which has heretofore been adopted.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. VII, pp. 333-34, 4- 11-1907*

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Who, then, should be regarded as true Satyagrahis? Of course, they who possess virtues like compassion, etc.

Nowhere has it been said that suffering may not have to be undergone. And what does suffering after all mean? It is the mind, says the *Gita*, which is the cause of our bondage as well as of our freedom. Sudhanva was thrown into boiling oil. The person who got him thrown into it thought that he was inflicting suffering on Sudhanva; but for the latter it was a grand opportunity to show the intensity of his devotion.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. X, p. 206, 2-4-1910*

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The function of violence is to obtain reform by external means; the function of passive resistance, that is, soul-force, is to obtain it by growth from within; which, in its turn, is obtained by self-suffering, self-purification. Violence ever fails; passive resistance is ever successful. The fight of a passive resister is none the less spiritual because he fights to win. Indeed, he is obliged to fight to win, that is, to obtain the mastery of self. Passive resistance is always moral, never

cruel; and any activity, mental or otherwise which fails in this test is undoubtedly not passive resistance.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. X, p. 248, 10-5-1910*

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Passive resistance seeks to rejoin politics and religion and to test every one of our actions in the light of ethical principles. That Jesus refused to use soul-force to turn stones into bread only supports my argument. Modern civilization is at present engaged in attempting that impossible feat. The use of soul-force for turning stones into bread would have been considered, as it is still considered, as black magic.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. X, p. 248, 10-5-1910*

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An ignorant mother may, from the purest motives, administer a dose of opium to her child. Her motives will not cure her of her ignorance, nor, in the moral world purge her of the offence of killing her child. A passive resister, recognizing this principle and knowing that, in spite of the purity of his motives, his action may be utterly wrong, leaves judgment to the Supreme Being, and, in attempting to resist what he holds to be wrong, suffers only in his own person.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. X, p. 248, 10-5-1910*

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A pure passive resister cannot allow himself to be regarded as a martyr nor can he complain of the hardships of prison or any other hardships, nor may he make political capital out of what may appear to be injustice or ill-treatment, much less may he allow any matter of passive resistance to be advertised.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. X, p. 249, 10-5-1910*

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The Gujarati for passive resistance is truth force. I have variously defined it as truth force, love force or soul force. But truly there is nothing in words. What one has to do is to live a life of love in the midst of the hate we see

everywhere. And we cannot do it without unconquerable faith in its absolute efficacy. A great queen named Mirabai lived two or three hundred years ago. She forsook her husband and everything and lived a life of absolute love. Her husband at last became her devotee.

*My Dear Child*, p. 13, 11-6-1917

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I have presented to the youths and to Indians in general in my humble way a better and more effective method and that is the method of soul force or truth force or love force which for want of a better term I have described as passive resistance. And I am asking the leaders to adopt this method fully and boldly at this critical juncture. It involves self-suffering and that alone throughout. No government in the world can afford continually to imprison or molest innocent men; the British Government cannot afford it. It is its great secret and character that even when it does wrong, it seeks to justify it before the world on moral grounds.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. XIII, p. 465, 7-7-1917

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Satyagraha means fighting injustice by voluntarily submitting oneself to suffering.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. XIV p. 172, 22-1-1918

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The purpose of Satyagraha is not to save our face but to instill courage into the people and make them independent in spirit. If, because of fear, or distrust of us, people lose heart and pay up, they but deserve to pay (compulsorily). We, on our part, should exert ourselves still more to be worthy of their trust. This is the royal road of Satyagraha.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. XIV, p. 179, 31-1-1918

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Repression answers only so long as you can overawe people. But even cowards have been known to exhibit extraordinary courage under equally extraordinary

stress. In offering the remedy of self-suffering which is one meaning of Satyagraha, I follow the spirit of our civilization and present the young portion with a remedy of which he need never despair.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XV, p. 106, 25-2-1919*

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Passive resistance poorly expresses the meaning conveyed by the Satyagraha.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XV p. 96, 23-2-1919*

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Satyagraha in the political field is an extension of the law that governs the members of a family.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XV p. 176, 3-4-1919*

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It is certainly the *Bhagwadgita's* intention that one should go on working without attachment to the fruits of work. I deduce the principle of Satyagraha from this. He who is free from such attachment will not kill the enemy but rather sacrifice himself. Killing any enemy proceeds from impatience and impatience proceeds from attachment.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XV, p. 312, 19-5-1919*

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As far back as 1889, when I had my first contact with the *Gita*, it gave me a hint of Satyagraha and, as I read it more and more, the hint developed into a full revelation of Satyagraha. That a man of Krishna's intelligence should indulge in all this wisdom of the *Gita* for the benefit of an Arjuna in flesh and blood, would be like killing the buffalo for a leather-strap. To believe he did so is to tarnish his name, if it is true that he was the Supreme God, and to do injustice to Arjuna if he was a warrior of experience and judgment.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XV p. 313, 19-5-1919*

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Satyagraha, once started, ends only when it has achieved its aim. At times it does seem to have ended, but in fact it has not. When Satyagraha is likely to be confused with *duragraha*,<sup>1</sup> suspending it will be a way of launching true Satyagraha. It is such a subtle thing that only through experience and constant reflection do we come to understand a little of it.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XV, p. 314, 20-5-1919*

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A Satyagrahi is ever his own master....

It is quite true that, when an organization offers Satyagraha, individuals should submit themselves to its discipline. But, once a person has become a Satyagrahi, he will always find opportunities for offering Satyagraha....

To be a Satyagrahi is like walking on the blade of a sword.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XV, p. 315, 20-5-1919*

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I have often said, "One real Satyagrahi is enough for victory." This is becoming clear to me day by day. Even as a true coin fetches its full value, so does a true Satyagrahi fetch his full value, i.e., attain the intended result. And even as false coins or coins of lesser value mixing with the true may diminish for the time being the value of the true coin, it seems to me that a Satyagraha Sangh (Sabha) being a mixture is a weakness from the pure Satyagraha standpoint.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XV, p. 389, 25-6-1919*

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Civil resistance has come to stay. It is an eternal doctrine of life which we follow consciously or unconsciously in many walks of life.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XVI, p. 6, 4-8-1919*

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No weapon in the Government armoury can either overcome or destroy that eternal force. Indeed a time must come when civil resistance will be

recognized as the most efficacious, if also the most harmless, remedy for securing redress of grievances.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XVI, p. 6, 4-8-1919*

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We must be honourable friends, or equally honourable enemies. We shall be neither, unless we are manly, fearless and independent. . . to. . . say 'no' when we mean 'no' without fear of consequences. This is unadulterated civil resistance. It is the way to friendliness and friendship. The other is the age-worn method of open violence on honourable lines in so far as violence can be allowed to be honourable. For me the roots of violence are in dishonour. I have therefore ventured to present to India the former, in its complete form called Satyagraha, whose roots are always in honour.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XVI, p. 7, 4-8-1919*

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Satyagraha has presented the rising generation with a new hope, an open road and an infallible remedy for most ills of life. It has armed that generation with an indestructible and matchless force which anyone may wield with impunity. Satyagraha tells the youth of India, self-suffering is the only sure road to salvation— economic, political and spiritual.

For the most part, Satyagraha is "evil resistance" and "civil assistance". But sometimes 'it has to be "civil resistance"'.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XVI, p. 50, 20-8-1919*

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Thoreau in his immortal essay shows that civil disobedience, not violence, is the true remedy. In civil disobedience, the resister suffers the consequences of disobedience. This was what Danial did when he disobeyed the law of the Medes and Persians. That is what John Bunyan did and that is what the *raiya*ts have done in India from time immemorial. It is the law of our beings. Violence is the law of the beast in us. Self- suffering, i.e. civil resistance, is the law of the man in us. It is rarely that the occasion for civil resistance arises in a well-

ordered State. But when it does, it becomes a duty that cannot be shirked by one who counts his honour, i.e., conscience, above everything.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XVI, p. 51, 20-8-1919*

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My truthfulness, I feel, is peculiarly my own. My Ahimsa is an intense feeling and the Satyagraha born of a blending of the two is indeed indescribable.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XVI, p. 147, 15-9-1919*

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A Satyagrahi is the strongest when he appears to the outsider to have weakened.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XVI, p. 249, 20-10-1919*

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I have drawn the distinction between passive resistance as understood and practised in the West and Satyagraha before I had evolved the doctrine of the latter to its full logical and spiritual extent. I often used passive resistance and Satyagraha as synonymous terms, but as the doctrine of Satyagraha developed, the expression passive resistance ceases even to be synonymous, as passive resistance has admitted of violence as in the case of suffragettes and has been universally acknowledged to be a weapon of the weak. Moreover passive resistance does not necessarily involve complete adherence to truth under every circumstance. Therefore it is different from Satyagraha in three essentials: Satyagraha is a weapon of the strong; it admits of no violence under any circumstance whatever; and it ever insists upon truth. I think I have now made the distinction perfectly clear.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XVI, p. 509, 25-1-1920*

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If we can organize non-co-operation without indulging in violence, we have every right to do so; it is in fact our duty to do so.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XVII, p. 368-69, 1-5-1920*

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Violence dies when it ceases to evoke response from its object. Non-violence is the corner-stone of the edifice of non-co-operation.

*Famous Letters of Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 42, Jan. 1921

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Intolerance is a species of violence and therefore against our creed. Non-violent non-co-operation is an object lesson in democracy. The moment we are able to ensure non-violence, even under circumstances the most provoking that moment we have achieved our end, because that is the moment when we can offer complete non-co-operation.

*Famous Letters of Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 42, Jan. 1921

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The civil disobedience of Bardoli can make no impression upon the country when disobedience of a criminal character goes on in other parts of the country, both for the same end. The whole conception of civil disobedience is based upon the assumption that it works in and through its completely non-violent character. I may be a bad student of human nature to believe that such an atmosphere can ever be brought about in a vast country like India, but that would be an argument for condemning my capacity for sound judgment, not for continuing a movement which is in that case bound to be unsuccessful. I personally can never be party to a movement half violent and half non-violent, even though it may result in the attainment of so-called Swaraj, for it will not be real Swaraj as I have conceived it.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. XXII, pp. 350-51, 8-2-1922

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There is such a close connection between the means and the end that it is difficult to say which of the two is more important. Or we may say that the means is the body and the end is the soul. The end is invisible, the means is visible. Now we shall have the pleasure of demonstrating this great truth.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. XXIII, p. 69, 9-3-1922

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There is no such thing as a settled fact in Satyagraha. If you find that you have erred at any stage, it is never too late to retrace your step. If, in Travancore, public opinion is not in favour, you may not overawe the public by a demonstration from outside. You must patiently wait and suffer. Reduce yourselves to the position of the suppressed classes. Live with them and suffer their humiliation. You are the first person to tell me that the public in Travancore are not with you.

If you are fighting as an enlightened Hindu against the bigoted Hindu, it is your bounden duty not only not to seek but respectfully to reject all support from non- Hindus. Surely, I do not need to prove the truth of such a simple proposition. I think I have traversed all the points raised by you in your manuscript. I have placed before you, in all humility, the view of Satyagraha as I know it; and since I am the author of the word, you must let me give its meaning, and if you do not accept the meaning, the proper thing is to find another word that will bear your own meaning. But, of course, this is a technical point. Even the author cannot claim any exclusive control over words he may coin or the meanings he may give to them. Once they escape his lips or pen, they are no longer his property.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XXIII, pp. 544-45. 6-5-1924*

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Satyagraha is taken up by one who feels that truth is being trampled under foot. He fights against error with only God as his support. He is never in search for any other support. It comes in time, and if it is legitimate, he accepts it. A Satyagrahi is pledged to fight single-handed in the face of starvation and worse.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XXIII, pp. 544-45, 6-5-1924*

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My belief in Satyagraha and non-violence is as green as ever.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XXVI, p. 208, 28-2-1925*

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1 Insistence upon evil

## 6. FASTING IN SATYAGRAHA

I do not know any contemporary of mine who has reduced fasting and prayer to an exact science and who reaped a harvest so abundant as I have. I wish that I could infect the nation with my experience and make it resort to fasting and prayer with intelligence, honesty and intensity. We would thus, incredible as it may appear, do millions of things pertaining to the nation without elaborate organization and checks upon checks, but I know that fasting and prayer, to be as effective as I have found them to be in my own experience, have to be not mechanical things but definite spiritual acts. Fasting then is crucifixion of the flesh with a corresponding freedom of the spirit and prayer is a definite conscious longing of the soul to the utterly pure—the purity thus attained being dedicated to the realization of a particular object which is in itself pure.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XVII, p. 104, 20-3-1920*

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Fasting in Satyagraha has well-defined limits. You cannot fast against a tyrant, for it will be as a piece of violence done to him. You invite penalty from him for disobedience of his orders, but you cannot inflict on yourself penalties when he refuses to punish and renders it impossible for you to disobey his orders so as to compel infliction of penalty. Fasting can only be resorted to against a lover, not to extort rights but to reform him, as when a son fasts for a parent who drinks. My fast at Bombay, and then at Bardoli, was of that character. I fasted to reform those who loved me. But I will not fast to reform, say, General Dyer who not only does not love me, but who regards himself as my enemy.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XVIII, p. 420, 12-4-1924*

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What you say about fasting is quite true. It has no absolute value and it certainly does not produce the slightest spiritual effect if the motive behind it is not really spiritual. Fasting with a mixed motive ends with purely material results. But fasting for the sake of unfoldment of the spirit is a discipline I hold

to be absolutely necessary at some stage or other in the evolution of an individual. I always considered Protestantism to be deficient in this particular. Every other religion of any importance appreciates the spiritual value of fasting. Crucifixion of the flesh is a meaningless term unless one goes voluntarily through pangs of hunger. For one thing, identification with the starving poor is a meaningless term without the experience behind. But I quite agree that even an eighty days' fast may fail to rid a person of pride, selfishness, ambition and the like. Fasting is merely a prop. But as a prop to a tottering structure is of inestimable value, so is the prop of fasting of inestimable value for a struggling soul.

*My Dear Child*, p. 85, 20-8-1926

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Fasting should be inspired by perfect truth and perfect non-violence. The call for it should come from within and it should not be imitative. It should never be undertaken for a selfish purpose, but for the benefit of others only. A fast is out of the question in a case where there is hatred for anybody. But what is the inner voice? Is every one capable of hearing it? These are big questions. The inner voice is there in every one of us, but one whose ears are not open for it cannot hear it, just as a deaf person is unable to hear the sweetest of songs. Self-restraint is essential in order to make our ears fit to hear the voice of God.

*Selected Letters—II*, pp. 46-47, 30-10-1932

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The fast has become the normal course of my life. It is the spiritual medicine applied from time to time for diseases that yield to that particular treatment. Not everyone can gain the capacity for it all of a sudden. I have gained it, if I have, after a very long course of training.

*Bapu's Letters to Mira*, p. 228, 8-12-1932

## 7. 'UNTO THIS LAST'

I have such a vivid experience of India's deep poverty that whenever money is uselessly spent, it seems to me that so much has been taken away from the poor. If all the money that has been spent over sending me telegrams had been devoted towards purchasing Swadeshi Khadi and therewith clothing the deserving naked or towards feeding the helpless, would not they have blessed the donors? The curse of the poor has destroyed nations, has deprived kings of their crowns and the rich of their riches. Retributive justice is inexorable. The blessings of the poor have made kingdoms flourish.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XVI, p. 174, 28-9-1919*

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If I have a duty at all towards fellow-creatures, I must think what it is in the face of those who are simply skin and bone. Is there such a thing as the quality of mercy and pity and love, and if there is, am I to say these men and women who are dying of slow starvation and who are almost naked, are, after all, reaping the fruit of their past *karma* and I have no duty by them? Each for his own is the message for man. As I write these words in cold blood, I feel staggered, and if such was the implication of the law of *karma*, I should become a rebel against it. Fortunately it teaches me a different lesson. On the one hand it insists on patience, and on the other it peremptorily commands me to undo the past by rearranging the present.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XXIII, p. 422, 12-4-1924*

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I am glad you realize that poverty is the common lot of millions. The real way to pray to Lord Krishna is to do in His name some little service to those who are less fortunate than ourselves; and when we show the spirit of service in daily life, unbelieving neighbours will begin to believe in God.

*Selected Letters—II, p. 25, 14-11-1932*



## 8. KHADI AND VILLAGE INDUSTRY

Swadeshi as conceived by me consists in producing cloth enough for the wants of India and in distributing it; and for the purpose of stimulating home production, it consists in inducing people to pledge themselves to the use of Swadeshi cloth only, the right being retained where necessary to continue the use of foreign cloth at present in possession of the pledge / votary. The Swadeshi is conceived only as a religious and an economic necessity; and although it is fraught with political consequences of a lofty, moral type in order that all may take part in it, the Swadeshi propaganda is restricted to the religious and economic aspects only.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XVI, p. 60, 25-8-1919*

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A hundred years ago, the majority of the women of India spun yarn either for profit or for pleasure and thousands upon thousands of professional weavers wove cloth enough for home consumption. Whether the same can be done today or not, it is unnecessary to inquire. It is beyond question that if these millions of peasants can be induced to take to spinning and weaving, it will materially decrease the economic drain and enable them to supplement their earnings.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XVI, pp. 60-61, 25-8-1919*

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The work among the poor will be profitless and devoid of religion without the spinning-wheel. We must help the poor to feed and clothe themselves. We can never succeed unless we reintroduced spinning wheel. No other industry can solve the problem of the mass poverty in India.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XIX, p. 395, 2-3-1920*

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Two hundred years ago, the women of India spun not only for home demand but also for foreign lands. They spun not merely coarse counts but the finest that

the world has ever spun. No machine has yet reached the fineness of the yarn spun by our ancestors.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XX, p. 496, 11-8-1921*

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We must be prepared to be satisfied with such cloth as India can produce, even as we are thankfully content with such children as God gives us. I have not known a mother throwing away her baby even though it may appear ugly to an outsider. So should it be with the patriotic women of India about Indian manufactures.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XX, p. 496, 11-8-1921*

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To me it seems utterly degrading to throw foreign cloth in the face of the poor because we have no longer any use for it, that cloth which has brought pauperism to the land and reduced thousands of women to a life of shame. Not even the poor will understand a sudden manifestation of pity for them in the shape of silk kerchiefs, flimsy saris and flimsier shirts, not to speak of thousands of stinking caps. The central point in burning is to create an utter disgust with ourselves that we have thoughtlessly decked ourselves at the expense of the poor. Yes, I see nothing wrong in making it a sin to wear cloth that has meant India's degradation and slavery. What I am trying to do just now is to perform a surgical operation with a hand that must not shake.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XX, p. 499, 13-8-1921*

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India does not need to be industrialized in the modern sense of the term. It has 7,50,000 villages scattered over a vast area 1,900 miles long, 1,500 broad. The people are rooted to the soil, and the vast majority are living a hand-to-mouth life. Whatever may be said to the contrary, having travelled throughout the length and breadth of the land with eyes open and having mixed with millions, there can be no doubt that pauperism is growing. There is no doubt also that the millions are living in enforced idleness for at least 4 months in the year.

Agriculture does not need revolutionary changes. The Indian peasant requires a supplementary industry. The most natural is the introduction of the spinning-wheel, not the handloom. The latter cannot be introduced in every home, whereas the former can, and it used to be so even a century ago. It was driven out not by economic pressure, but by force deliberately used as can be proved from authentic records. The restoration, therefore, of the spinning-wheel solves the economic problems of India at a stroke.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XXII, p. 401, 15-2-1922*

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Of all my outward activities, I do believe that the spinning-wheel is the most permanent and the most beneficial. I have abundant proof now to support my statement that the spinning-wheel will solve the problem of the economic distress in millions of India's homes, and it constitutes an effective insurance against famines.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XXII, p. 401, 15-2-1922*

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I have nothing to say against the development of any other industry in India by means of machinery, but I do say that to supply India with cloth manufactured either outside or inside through gigantic mills is an economic blunder of the first magnitude, just as it would be to supply cheap bread through huge bakeries established in the chief centres in India and to destroy the family stove.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XXII, pp. 401-2, 15-2-1922*

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I would like you to see the truth of the spinning-wheel. It and it alone is the visible outward expression of the inner feeling for humanity. If we feel for the starving masses of India, we must introduce the spinning-wheel into their homes. We must, therefore, become experts and, in order to make them realize the necessity of it, we must spin daily as a sacrament. If you have understood the secret of the spinning-wheel, if you realize that it is a symbol

of love of mankind, you will engage in no other outward activity. If many people do not follow you, you have more leisure for spinning, carding or weaving.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XXIII, p. 99, 17-3-1922*

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Speaking purely from an economic point of view, I venture to say that unless the merchants, dealing in foreign yarn and cloth give up their trade, and the people get rid of their infatuation for foreign cloth, the greatest disease of the country, viz., starvation, can never be cured. I hope all the merchants will make the fullest contribution to the propagation of Khadi and the spinning-wheel.

*To A Gandhian Capitalist, p. 50, 18-3-1922*

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This spinning is growing on me. I seem daily to be coming nearer to the poorest of the poor and to that extent to God. I regard the four hours to be the most profitable part of the day. The fruit of my labour is visible before me. Not an impure thought enters my mind during the four hours. The mind wanders whilst I read the Gita, the Kuran, the Ramayana. But the mind is fixed whilst I am turning the wheel, or working the bow. I know that it may not and cannot mean all this to everyone. I have so identified the spinning-wheel with the economic salvation of pauper India that it has for me a fascination all its own. There is a serious competition going on in my mind between spinning and carding on the one hand and literary pursuits on the other.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XXIII, p. 134, 14-4-1922*

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To remove the curse of untouchability is to do penance for the sin committed by the Hindus of degrading a fifth of their own religionists. To remove the curse of intoxicating drinks and drugs not only purifies the nation, but it also deprives an immoral system of Government of an immoral source of revenue to the extent of nearly 25 crores of rupees. To revive hand- spinning and hand-

weaving brings back to millions of cottages of India their supplementary industry, revives the old Indian art, removes the degrading pauperism and provides an automatic insurance against famine. At the same time, it deprives Great Britain of the strongest incentive for Indian exploitation, for if India can cloth herself without importing foreign cloth and foreign machinery, the relations between Great Britain and India become natural and almost idealistic. They take the form then of a voluntary partnership resulting in mutual benefit and, probably, benefit to mankind in general. Unity between the different religionists of India prevents Great Britain from pursuing the immoral policy of Divide and Rule, and the practice of nonviolence in resisting exploitation and degradation, if it becomes successful is likely to serve as an example for the whole world to copy.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XXIII, p. 244, 14-3-1924*

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No machinery in the world can compete with these villagers who need no other machine than their own willing hands and feet, and a few simple wooden instruments which they can devise themselves.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XXIII, p. 327, 28-3-1924*

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I believe in Khadi, I believe in the spinning-wheel. It has two aspects—terrible and benign.

In its terrible aspect it is calculated to bring about the only boycott we need for independent national existence, viz., that of foreign cloth....

In its benign aspect, it gives a new life and hope to the villager. It can fill millions of hungry mouths. It alone can bring us in touch and in tune with the villagers. It is the very best popular education that is needed for the millions. It is life giving.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XXIV p. 286, 26-6-1924*

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In our times, God resides in the spinning-wheel. Starvation stalks the country like a forest fire. I do not see any other help against it except through the spinning-wheel. God always reveals Himself to us in some visible form. Therefore, we sing in our hymn about Draupadi<sup>1</sup> for whom 'God took the form of raiment'. Anyone who desires to see God today may see Him in the form of the spinning-wheel.

*Bapu's Letters to Ashram Sisters, p. 7, 20-12-1926*

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In the course of my travels I realize every moment the country's need of a large number of spinning teachers from among women of character.

*Letters to Manibehn Patel, p. 31, 6-2-1927*

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It will take me many incarnations to become disillusioned with the slowness of the Charkha. The slowness of the Charkha is perhaps its most appealing part for me. But it has so many attractions for me that I can never get tired of it. It has a perennial interest for me. Its implications are growing on me and I make discoveries of its beauties almost from day to day.

*The Diary of Mahatma Desai, Vol. I, p. 154, 8-6-1932*

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My study of books on economics has strengthened my belief that the remedies they propound in order to eradicate poverty in India are fruitless. The right remedy lies in so organizing production and consumption that they go on simultaneously of their own accord, that is to say in the revival of village industries.

*The Diary of Mahadev Desai, Vol. I, p. 214, 5-7-1932*

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All useful work ranks the same with us and may be done by us. Tanning, carpentry, cleaning lavatories, agriculture, weaving, cooking, cow-keeping and such other work are all of equal value, and if I could bring the people round to

my view, the literate and the illiterate, the teacher and the scavenger would be paid the same remuneration for their work.

*The Diary of Mahadev Desai*, Vol. I, p. 277, 4-8-1932

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There is no cause for worry over the fact that you<sup>2</sup> are not using village-made paper there. It requires a certain amount of fervour on your part, as also an intense spirit of sympathy for the poor. When these become part of your nature, you will take to the use of such things of your own accord. What you do spontaneously and in response to your own inner urge will alone be genuine, and that alone will prove fruitful for you.

While you are there you will do well not to discriminate between articles of British and non-British manufacture.

*To A Gandhian Capitalist*, p. 142, 4-9-1935

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Your calling Khadi 'livery of freedom' will live as long as we speak the English language in India. It needs a first class poet to translate into Hindi the whole of the thought behind that enchanting phrase. For me it is not merely poetry but it enunciates a great truth whose full significance we have yet to grasp.

*A Bunch of Old Letters*, p. 245, 30-7-1937

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Let me make one thing clear about clothing. You are free to give up the insistence on Khadi there, if you cannot maintain it out of your own free will. It is open to you to put on whatever dress you find to be convenient and to have it made of any cloth that seems suitable for the purpose. I think this contains an answer to all your questions.

This means that you can, if you like, put an overcoat, socks and a banian made of foreign or Indian mill-cloth. It will not be improper if you make an effort to have all these things made of hand-spun and hand-woven cloth; at the same time an omission to do so will not amount to a sin.

*To A Gandhian Capitalist, p. 143, 4-9-1935*

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A hundred and fifty years ago we manufactured all our cloth. Our women spun fine yarn in their own cottages and supplemented the earnings of their husbands. The village weavers wove that yarn. It was an indispensable part of national economy in a vast agricultural country like ours. It enabled us in most natural manner to utilize our leisure. Today our women have lost the cunning of their hands and the enforced idleness of millions has impoverished the land. Many weavers have become sweepers. Some have taken to the profession of hired soldiers. Half the race of artistic weavers has died out, and the other half is weaving imported foreign yarn for want of finer hand-spun yarn.

*Famous Letters of Mahatma Gandhi, p. 36*

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I have ventured utterly to condemn modern civilization because I hold that the spirit of it is evil. It is possible to show that some of its incidents are good, but I have examined its tendency in the scale of ethics. I distinguish between the ideals of individuals who have risen superior to their environment, as also between Christianity and modern civilization. Its activity is by no means confined to Europe.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. X, p. 247, 10-5-1910*

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We who are engulfed in this civilization may avail ourselves of postal and other facilities as long as we are engulfed. If we make use of these things with knowledge and understanding we shall not go crazy over them, and instead of increasing our preoccupation we shall gradually reduce them. He who will understand this will not be tempted to take the post or the railway to the villages which do not have these. You and I should not remain passive and increase the use of steamers and other evil means for fear that these things cannot be abolished forthwith and that all the people will not give them up. Even if one man reduces or stops their use, others will learn to do. He who



believes that it is good to do so will go on doing so irrespective of others. This is the only way of spreading the truth; there is no other in the world.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. X, p. 204, 2-4-1910*

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The total effect of European activity has not been for the good of India. The general body of Europeans who have come to India have succumbed to the vices of the East instead of imposing their own virtues on the East. It could not well be otherwise. Religion has not made a lasting impression on them as we see demonstrated even by the present way. My theory is that modern civilization is decidedly anti-Christian. And what Europeans have brought to India is that civilization, not the life of Jesus. You and a handful of others are striving to represent that life. It is bound to leave its mark upon the soil. But it must take time. "The mills of God grind slowly." You and people like you are not affected by the evil that stares you in the face. You get behind it, discover the good lying underneath and add it to your own stock, thus producing a perfect blend. What I want is reciprocity of that method. And so I welcomed your visit to the Ashram as I welcome that of many European friends who are true to their best traditions and are broad-minded enough to take in the best that this land has to give.

*My Dear Child, pp. 11-12, 9-6-1917*

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My message to the businessmen of America is: Understand the inner meaning of the message of the spinning-wheel and you will probably find the solution for the World Peace which I know so many Americans sincerely desire.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XXIII, p. 382, 5-4-1924*

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My own motive is to put forth all my energy in an attempt to save Indian, that is, ancient culture, from impending destruction by modern, that is, Western culture being imposed upon India. The essence of ancient culture is based upon the practice of the utmost non-violence. Its motto is the good of all including

every living thing, whereas Western culture is frankly based upon violence. It, therefore, does not respect all life and, in its progress onward, it has not hesitated to resort to wholesale destruction of even human life. Its motto is: Might is Right, and it is essentially individualistic. This does not mean that there is nothing for India to learn from the West, for in spite of the acceptance by the West of the Doctrine of Might is Right, the human touch has not altogether disappeared in the West. The relentless pursuit of a false ideal conceived as truth has opened the eyes of numerous men in the West to the falsity of that ideal. I would like India to copy that spirit of search for the truth in the place of being satisfied with tradition without question, but India can safely copy nothing before she has come to her own and realized that her culture has a very important place in the universe and it must be defended at all costs. The importation of Western culture by the British in India has meant exploitation of her resources for the supposed benefit of Great Britain. It has brought millions of people to the verge of starvation, and it has almost emasculated a whole nation.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XXIII, pp. 243-44, 14-3-1924*

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The West has always commanded my admiration for its surgical inventions and all-round progress in that direction.

*Bapu's Letters to Mira, p. 112, 7-7-1930*

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- 1 In the Mahabharata, Draupadi was a woman of great purity and devotion. She was protected by Lord Krishna by supplying garments while her garments were removed forcibly in the assembly of Duryodhan.
- 2 Addressed to Kamalnayan Bajaj who was in England at the time

## 10. HINDU-MUSLIM UNITY

I consider that God has not created lower forms of animal life for man to use them as he will. Man realizes his highest station not by indulging but by abstinence. I have no right to destroy animal life if I can subsist healthily on vegetable life. I have no right to slaughter all animal life because I find it necessary to slaughter some animal life. Therefore if I can live well on goats, fish and fowl (surely enough in all conscience) it is sin for me to destroy cows for my sustenance. And it was some such argument that decided the *rishis* of old in regarding the cow as sacred, especially when they found that the cow was the greatest economic asset in national life. And I see nothing wrong, immoral or sinful in offering worship to an animal so serviceable as the cow so long as my worship does not put her on a level with her Creator. I immensely appreciate the idea (so emphasized by Islam that special worship must be reserved for the Creator of us all. But I must not mix up cow-worship and cow-slaughter....

Cow-slaughter is indefensible on moral grounds.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. XVI, pp. 508-9, 25-1-1920

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Personally, after deep thought, I have come to the conclusion that, if there is anything that can serve an effective and visible symbol of the Hindu-Muslim unity, it is the adoption of Charkha and pure Khaddar dress prepared from hand-spun yarn by the rank and file of both the communities. Only universal acceptance of this cult can supply us with a common idea and afford a common basis of action.

The use of Khaddar cannot become universal until both the communities take to it. The universal adoption of Charkha and Khaddar, therefore, would awaken India. It will also be a proof of our capacity to satisfy all our needs. Ever since the commencement of our present struggle, we have been feeling the necessity of boycotting foreign cloth. I venture to suggest that, when Khaddar comes

universally in use, the boycott of foreign cloth will automatically follow. Speaking for myself, Charkha and Khaddar have a special religious significance to me because they are a symbol of kinship between the members of both the communities and hunger and disease-stricken poor. It is by virtue of the fact that our movement can today be described as moral and economic as well as political. So long as we cannot achieve this little thing, I feel certain success is impossible. Again, the Khaddar movement can succeed only when we recognize non-violence as an essential condition for the attainment of Swaraj and Khilafat both. Therefore, the Khaddar programme is the only effective and successful programme that I can place before the country at present.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XXIII, p. 92, 12-3-1922*

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Cow-protection to me is infinitely more than mere protection of the cow. The cow is merely a type for all that lives. Cow protection means protection of the weak, the helpless, the dumb and the deaf. Man becomes then not the lord and master of all creation but he is its servant. The cow to me is a sermon on pity. As yet we are merely playing at cow protection. But we shall soon have to grapple with the reality.

*A Bunch of Old Letters, p. 43, 25-4-1925*

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Hindus and Muslims are going more and more away from each other. But this thing does not disturb me. Somehow or other, I feel that the separation is growing in order only to bring them all closer later on.

*A Bunch of Old Letters, p. 47, 23-4-1926*

## 11. UPLIFTMENT OF WOMEN

Women are the very incarnation of service, but at present they minister only to their own families. Why should they not extend the field of their ministry so as to embrace the whole of India? A truly religious person becomes a citizen of the world, but the service of one's own country is stepping-stone to the service of humanity. And where service is rendered to the country consistently with the welfare of the world, it finally leads to self-realization (*moksha*).

*Selected Letters—I*, p. 6, 13-12-1926

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Many women are inactive. Who will make them industrious? Mothers spoil their children from birth. Who will prevent them? They load their children with ornaments and clothes of different kinds. They get their girls married quite young. They give them in marriage to old men. When I look at these ornaments on women I feel nothing but distress. Who will explain to them that real beauty lies in the heart and not in these ornaments? I might go on writing about such matters. But how can all this be set right? It can be done only when a Draupadi of dazzling lustre rises from among women.

*Bapu's Letters to Ashram Sisters*, p. 19, 28-2-1927

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Man has kept woman in state of helplessness and dependence; so it continues to be his duty to protect her.

*Bapu's Letters to Ashram Sisters*, p. 27, 9-5.1927

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So long as we retain even a subconscious attraction for fineries, it is useless to give them up or making changes by seeing what others are doing. But if our infatuation for fineries passes off, and still the mind is drawn towards them, then we would make the necessary outward changes whether through a sense of guilt or by way of limitation of others, and ultimately root out this craving. Infatuation and such like, are our enemies; they harass us so much that we

should protect ourselves from them with whatever help which might be secured from any appropriate quarter. I am writing all this for those who are honest and sincere.

*Bapu's Letters to Ashram Sisters, p. 59, 19-12-1927*

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Our women do not let male doctors to examine their bodies or to operate upon them. This is a false sense of modesty which has its root in sex-obsession. In this matter I prefer the practice of the West. I do know that at times undesirable consequences have resulted from it. When unscrupulous doctors and women who are easily duped or roused to passion come together, it has led to immoral acts. But that kind of thing happens in this world practically under any other set of circumstances, and there is no reason why on that account necessary and good activities should be put to a stop. We must have confidence in ourselves.

*Bapu's Letters to Ashram Sisters, p. 88, 9-12-1929*

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It is the lust of men which has often degraded women and taught them ways of dressing and behaving, whereby women might tempt and excite them. The woman did not see this in the sense of her own enslavement and degradation. She also harboured lust, and so she bored her nose, bored her ears and put on shackles (in the form of ornaments) on her feet and became a slave. An unscrupulous man can easily tempt a woman with a nose-ring or earring. I have never been able to understand why women put on these things which lead to their disablement. Real beauty lies in the heart.

*Bapu's Letters to Ashram Sisters, p. 90, 9-12-1929*

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Men must cease to be beasts if women of ill-fame are to be rehabilitated. So long as there are beasts in man's shape there must be beasts in woman's shape too. If such women give up their vile occupation and turn over a new leaf,

respectable men would certainly marry them. Once a prostitute, always a prostitute—is not a sound proposition.

*The Diary of Mahadev Desai*, Vol. 1, p. 315, 28-3-1932

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A craving for things of beauty is perfectly natural. Only there is no absolute standard of beauty. I have therefore come to think that the craving is not to be satisfied, but that from the craving for things outside of us, we must learn to see beauty from within. And when we do that, a whole vista of beauty is open out to us and the love of appropriation vanishes.

*The Diary of Mahadev Desai*, Vol. I, p. 184, 21-6-1932

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If a woman who is in danger of being molested has the right to commit suicide, so has a trustee who is being robbed of the property in his charge. But he himself should have thought out what is the right thing for him to do. If a woman prefers not to kill herself in order to save herself from rape, we have no right to say that she has done something wrong. On the other hand if a trustee gives up his life in the defence of trust property, we cannot assume that he did the right thing. It all depends upon the individual's state of mind at the time. Still I believe that a woman, if she has the requisite courage, will be ready to give up her life rather than her virtue. I therefore would certainly encourage such attitude in my talks with women, and make it clear that it is an easy thing to give up life if we will. For many women are under the wrong impression that they can do nothing but yield to the wrongdoer if there is no man to depend upon or if they do not learn to use dagger or a revolver. I would certainly tell them that they need not depend upon the weapon in defender's hand. Their virtue will be its own defence. But if such is not the case, they can resort to suicide instead of using a dagger and the like. There is no need for them to look upon themselves as weak (*abala*).

*The Diary of Mahadev Desai*, Vol. I, p. 210, 3-7-1932

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You tell me how desolate B's house looked for want of the woman's touch. I have always considered this as a result of our false notions of division of work between men and women. Division there must be. But this utter helplessness on the man's part when it comes to keeping a household in good order and woman's helplessness when it comes to be a matter of looking after herself more here than in the West are due to erroneous upbringing. Why should man be so lazy as not to keep his house neat, if there is no women looking after it or why should a woman feel that she always needs a man protector? This anomaly seems to me to be due to the habit of regarding woman as fit primarily for housekeeping and of thinking that she must live so soft as to feel weak and be always in need of protection. We are trying to create a different atmosphere at the Ashram. It is difficult work. But it seems to be worth doing.

*My Dear Child*, p. 92, 18-7-1932

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If you women would only realize your dignity and privilege, and make full use of it for mankind, you will make it much better than it is. But man has delighted in enslaving you and you have proved willing slaves till the slaves and the slave-holders have become one in the crime of degrading humanity. My special function from childhood, you might say, has been to make woman realize her dignity. I was once slave-holder myself but Ba proved an unwilling slave and thus opened my eyes to my mission. Her task was finished. Now I am in search of a woman who would realize her mission. Are you that woman, will you be one?

*Letters to Rajkumari Amrit Kaur*, p. 100, 21-10-1936

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I began work among women when I was not even thirty years old. There is not a woman in South Africa who does not know me. But my work was among the poorest. The intellectuals I could not draw. My appeals have always been from heart to heart. I have felt like fish out of water in the company of intellectuals. Hence you are wrong in laying down the sweeping proposition you have. You can't blame me for not having organized the intellectuals among women. I have



not the gift. And then my method of organizing is out of the ordinary, not necessarily superior. All I mean is that I have nothing to show on paper. But just as I never fear coldness on the part of the poor when I approach them, I never fear it when I approach poor women. There is an invisible bond between them and me. And why do you miss the agony I am passing through? Is it not for womankind? I am wringing my soul for adequate purity to enable me to render greater service to them and through them to the whole humanity. Ahimsa, which is my sheet-anchor, demands all this.

*Letters to Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, p. 146, 8-7-1938*

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Whoever works according to her capacity has fulfilled her mission. But in your work you must cultivate that attitude of mind which is inculcated in the Gita. That is to do everything with a view to serve or as an offering to God, and if your action is an offering to God, you will never have the feeling "I am doing this." You will not then have ill-will for anybody and you will be generous to others. You should always ask yourselves whether your smallest action is guided by these principles.

*Selected Letters—I, p. 16*

## 12. THE GOOD OF ALL

Please do not carry unnecessarily on your head the burden of emancipating India. Emancipate your own self. Even that burden is very great. Apply everything to yourself. Nobility of soul consists in realizing that you are yourself India. In your emancipation is the emancipation of India. All else is make-believe. If you feel interested, do persevere. You and I need not worry about others. If we bother about others, we shall forget our own task and lose everything. Please ponder over this from the point of view of altruism, not of selfishness.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. X, p. 206, 2-4-1910*

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True public service can be rendered only if fearlessness can be achieved as regards (the loss of) prestige, money, caste, wife, family and even life. Then only will *moksha* (liberation), the ultimate end of life, be attained.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. X, p. 350, 11-11-1910*

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It is our duty to help every class of workers. I have no doubt about this. I have little faith in what goes under the name of 'co-operation'. I think our first task is to make a careful survey of the condition of the working-class. What does the worker earn? Where does he live? In what condition? How much does he spend? How much does he save? What debts does he incur? How many children has he? How does he bring them up? What was he previously? What brought about the change in his life? What is his present condition? It does not seem proper at all to start a co-operative society straightway, without finding answers to all these questions. It is necessary that we go into the midst of the working-class. If we do, we can solve a number of problems in a very short time.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XIV P- 147, 3-1-1918*

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I am opposed to advertisements because they are so untrue. Every decent paper should, free of charge, advertise books which it considers the public should read. It is, in my opinion, one of the necessary functions of a Newspaper. I feel too that we should have a general advertising agency which for a payment will advertise all useful things. But I abhor the idea of a newspaper making money out of advertisements. It is a fraud on the public.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XVI, p. 250, 22-10-1919*

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Making people give up their habits with the help of law does not by itself constitute brute force or violence—to stop the sale of liquor by law and thereby force the addicts to give up the habit of drinking is not violence. If it were suggested that those given to drinking should be whipped, that would certainly be brute force. Selling liquor is no duty of the State.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XXIV p. 274, 21-6-1924*

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Stick to truth alone. We should act non-violently in everything we do. For the sake of the country and for our own sake, we should ply the Charkha, wear Khadi; Hindus and Muslims should live amicably, Hindus should give up untouchability, considering the untouchables to be our brothers; drunkards should give up drinking, addicts should give up their bad habits. This is the duty of us all.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XXV P- 256, 22-10-1924*

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Do we not recite –आत्मवत् सर्वभूतेषु—that we are to regard all creatures as our own selves? If we think and feel in this way, when we see somebody's children dirty, we would feel as if our own children are dirty and would feel ashamed, on finding someone else miserable, we would feel ourselves miserable and begin to look for a way of removing the misery.

*Bapu's Letters to Ashram Sisters, p. 13, 17-1-1927*

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A ruler can issue orders only if he has acquired the highest qualification for service. His orders should be intended not to advance his own interests but the welfare of society. Rulers nowadays have lost sight of their duty, so that instead of setting an example of selflessness and devotion they give themselves up to pleasures and use their powers as an instrument of self-indulgence.

*Selected Letters—I*, p. 8, Jan. 1927

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We have to develop in ourselves the quality which enables us to look upon all as equals as laid down in the Gita.

*Bapu's Letters to Ashram Sisters*, p. 42, 22-8-1927

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Even if there are differences of opinion, annoyances and irritation, whatever work has to be done must be done. We should certainly not do less than what others do.

*Bapu's Letters to Ashram Sisters*, p. 52, 31-10-1927

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There will always be some thieves in this world. There are three ways of guarding against them: (1) We should not keep anything with us. This ideal is hardly feasible. (2) If we keep anything with us, to that extent we should be vigilant. (3) We should frighten away the thief by fear of punishment by law, and we too should join in punishing him. We have turned away from this last course of remedy. The first method is to be our ideal. The second one we have already been putting into practice—accumulating as little as possible, and being extremely vigilant about that what it is absolutely necessary to keep with us.

*Bapu's Letters to Ashram Sisters*, p. 85, 11-11-1929

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As we acquire more skill, we are able to put in more work with less strain on our physical and mental resources.

*Selected Letters—II*, p. 13, 8-5-1932

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The doctrine of the greatest good of the greatest number. . . means in its nakedness that in order to achieve the supposed good of 51 per cent the interest of 49 per cent may be, or rather, should be sacrificed. It is a heartless doctrine and has done harm to humanity. The only real, dignified, human doctrine is the greatest good of all, and this can only be achieved by uttermost self-sacrifice.

*The Diary of Mahadev Desai, Vol. I, p. 149, 4-6-1932*

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I do not believe in the "greatest good of the greatest number", nor can I agree that might is right. For human beings the object in view should be the good of all, with the weak being served first. We are two-legged men, but have still to cast away the nature of four-footed beasts.

*The Diary of Mahadev Desai, Vol. I, p. 221, 10-7-1932*

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A prison should be a house of correction and not punishment. If that is so, why should a forger have fetters on his legs in prison ? The fetters will not improve his character. To my mind it is intolerable that anyone should be fettered if there is no likelihood of his trying to escape or becoming unmanageable.

*The Diary of Mahadev Desai, Vol. I, p. 170, 17-6-1932*

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Good results do not justify violence and they not nullify the evil that violence works. It is not always possible to lay one's hands on the evil that violence works. Thus it is not possible to weigh the evil wrought by hanging a murderer, though we may have a sigh of relief when he is put out. Faith would be meaningless, if we were able always to account for everything

*Letters to Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, p. 116, 2-6-1937*

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It is God's grace that there are undistressed persons even in the areas of distress. When all are in distress, who can serve the nurses? So we must fend for

ourselves when we go out to serve. We must not rely on others, but should be thankful to them for such- help as they can afford to give.

*Selected Letters—1, p. 22*

### 13. INDIA'S FREEDOM

It is very difficult to get rid of our fondness for Parliament. It was no doubt barbarious when people tore off the skin, burned persons alive and cut off their ears or nose; but the tyranny of Parliament is much greater than that of Chengiz Khan, Tamerlane and others.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. X, p. 204, 2-4-1910*

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Swaraj is for those who understand it. You and I can enjoy it even today. All the others will have to learn to do likewise. What is secured for us by others is not Swaraj but *pararaj*, i.e. foreign rule, whether they be Indians or Englishmen.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. X, p. 205, 2-4-1910*

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The more experience I gain, the more I realize that machinery will keep us in permanent slavery, and I find that what I said about it in Hind Swaraj is literally true. About Satyagraha, too, I have been discovering new truths. I see that, for the weak as for the strongest, it is a weapon of the utmost purity.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XV p. 340, 1-6-1919*

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[The] highest honesty must be introduced in the political life of the country if we are to make our mark as a nation. This presupposes at the present moment a very firm and definite acceptance of the creed of Truth at any cost.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XVII, p. 97, 18-3-1920*

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My belief is that the instant India is purified India becomes free and not a moment earlier.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XIX, p. 15, 23-9-1920*

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I am gathering together all the forces of hate and directing them in a proper channel. Hatred is a sign of weakness as contempt of insolent power. If I could but show our countrymen that we need not fear the English, we will cease to hate them. A brave man or woman never hates. Hatred is essentially the vice of cowards. N [on-] C [o-] o [peration] is self-purification. Even as the dirt comes to the surface when you are purifying sugar, so does our weakness come to the surface whilst we are purifying ourselves.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XIX p. 137, 17-12-1920*

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Let the students understand that Swaraj is not to be obtained by learning but by an exhibition in their own lives of the qualities necessary for Swaraj, viz., openness, truthfulness, courage, cohesion, fellowship and self-sacrifice. If they have these qualities, they must take them to their villages and spread them.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XIX, p. 292, 29-1-1921*

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The economic and the moral salvation of India... rests mainly with you. The future of India lies on your knees, for you will nurture the future generation. You can bring up the children of India to become simple, god-fearing and brave men and women, or you can coddle them to be weaklings unfit to brave the storms of life and used to foreign finery which they would find it difficult in after life to discard.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XX, p. 497, 11-8-1921*

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My goal is to attain self-government for India. The means adopted to attain the end are Non-violence and Truth. Therefore, Indian self-government not only means no menace to the world, but will be of the greatest benefit to humanity if she attains her end through those means and those means alone. The spinning-wheel is the external symbol of internal reform, and its universal re-adoption in India ensures her economic salvation and frees millions of Indian peasants from growing pauperism.



*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. XXIII, p. 361, 5-4-1924

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It would be the nicest thing to achieve and run Swaraj if everyone sincerely felt that he was nothing and that the cause was everything.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. XXIII, p. 330, 28-3-1924

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Salutation of the national flag is in my opinion unobjectionable. I see nothing inherently wrong about it. A national spirit is necessary for national existence. A flag is a material aid to the development of such a spirit.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. XXVI, p. 544, 25-4-1925

## 14. EDUCATION

Education does not mean knowledge of letters but it means character-building, it means knowledge of duty. Our own word literally means 'training'.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. IX, p. 208, 25-3-1919*

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Why should every lad have to know English? Is it not enough if some men are specially trained in English in each province so that they may diffuse among the nation through the vernaculars knowledge of new discoveries and researches? So doing, our boys and girls will become saturated with the new knowledge and we may expect rejuvenation such as we have never witnessed during the past sixty years. I feel more and more that, if our boys are to assimilate facts of different sciences, they will only do so if they receive their training through the vernaculars. No half measures will bring about this much needed reform. Until we attain this state of things, I fear that we shall have to let the Englishmen think for us and we must continue slavishly to imitate them. No scheme of self-government can avert the catastrophe if it does not involve this much needed change.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XIV P- 153, 16-1-1918*

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I have faith enough in the patriotism, selflessness and the sagacity of the people of the Madras Presidency to know that those, who at all want to render national service to come in touch with the other Provinces, will undergo the sacrifice, if it is one, of learning Hindi. I suggest that they should consider it a privilege to be able to learn a language that will enable them to enter into the hearts of millions of their countrymen.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XTV, p. 301, 31-3-1918*

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A student means one who is hungry for learning. Learning is knowledge of what is worth knowing about. The only thing worth knowing about is the *atman*. True

knowledge is thus knowledge of the self. But in order to attain this knowledge, one has to know literature, history, geography, mathematics, etc. All these are by way of means. Knowledge of letters is considered essential in order that one might acquire knowledge of these subjects. It is not as if men of knowledge without this equipment do not exist within our experience. One who knows this would not go mad after knowledge of letters or of literature and other subjects; he would become mad only after knowledge of the self. He will give up anything which proves an obstacle in the pursuit of this knowledge and dedicate himself only to that which helps him in that pursuit. The student-life of one who realizes this never ends and, whether eating, drinking, sleeping, playing, digging, weaving, spinning or doing any other work, he is all the time growing in this knowledge. For this purpose, one has to develop one's faculty of observation. One would not, then, always need a multitude of teachers or, rather, would look upon the whole world as one's teacher and accept everything in it which is good.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XXVI, p. 362*

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My opinion is that Devanagari is the most scientific and perfect script in the world and is therefore from that standpoint the most suitable national script. But I see no way out of the difficulty of Musalmans in accepting it at the present moment. I, therefore, feel that the educated classes should know either script equally well. That which has greater vitality and is easier will then become the national script, especially when Hindus and Mussulmans as well as the (other) classes have ceased altogether to distrust one another and have learnt to decide non-religious questions on purely national lines.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XIX, p. 1, 19-1-1920*

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Literary education is intended only to quicken our spirit of service. Now that you have the opportunity to render service, pour your soul into it and learn to enjoy it thoroughly. When you serve, do not give yourself up to spiritual pride and say, "I do it". The service of the proud is nothing worth. The Gita is there to

teach us that we do nothing, that we can do nothing. We are only the instruments of God's will.

*The Selected Letters—1, p. 23*

## 15. CASTE SYSTEM AND UNTOUCHABILITY

... I think we are committing a great sin in treating a whole class of people as untouchables and it is owing to the existence of this class that we have still some revolting practices among us. Not to eat in company with a particular person and not to touch him are two very different things. No one is an untouchable now. If we don't mind contact with a Christian or a Muslim, why should we mind it with one belonging to our own religion? No defence of untouchability is possible now, either from the point of view of justice or that of practical common sense.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XIII, p. 120, 26-7-1915*

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It has been a passion of my life to serve the untouchables because I have felt that I could not remain a Hindu if it was true that untouchability was a part of Hinduism.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XIX p. 289, 29-1-1921*

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The crime against the untouchables I feel, the exploitation of the dumb millions I feel, but I realize still more clearly our duty to the lower animal world. When Buddha carried that lamb on his back and chastised the Brahmins, he showed the highest measure of love. The worship of the cow in Hinduism typifies that love.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XIX, p. 395, 2-3-1921*

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The caste has every right to excommunicate a person who commits a breach of its regulations. There is nothing however, in all that you have done so far for which you need feel ashamed or repentant. No doubt your influence on the caste will suffer a setback, and your capacity to collect funds will decrease; that, however, does not worry me in the least. It should not be a matter for sorrow or regret even if you have to be a pauper as a result of this

development. Pauperism, if it comes in consequence of an adherence to principles that are dear to us, deserves to be welcomed. When ultimately the caste recognizes your firmness as also your courtesy, it will relent and be humble. Castes will necessarily have to undergo reform; and it is likely that this even will pave the way for it.

*To A Gandhian Capitalist, p. 64, 16 7 1926*

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Untouchability is a soul-destroying sin. Caste is a social evil. . .

*Selected Letters—II, p. 34, 10-10-1932*

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Purity is of the mind. It ought to be in all men as a matter of course. In this age of enlightenment, if a woman wants to preserve her *dharma*, she will have to serve *Daridranarayan*, and should educate herself. Service of *Daridranarayan* means propagation of Khadi, spinning, etc. And Harijan-service means to remove the blot of untouchability. These two things are God's own work. Education can never go side by side with the observance of *purdah*.

*To A Gandhian Capitalist, p. 139, 25-10-1933*

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In these days of self-purification, Harijans ought to know that they are to avoid all the bad customs of caste- Hindus. They should therefore avoid child marriages. But reformers may not be impatient. Sarda Act is, in my opinion, a wise step. But it may not be strictly enforced against Harijans when it is very laxly enforced against caste-Hindus. There should be effective enlightened propaganda by Harijans among fellow Harijans on the evil of child marriages and the bearing of the Sarda Act on them. And then when it is made certain that people willfully ignore that Act a few prosecutions may be undertaken. But even then, they must be the sole concern of Harijans. They may not ask for or receive even financial assistance in this matter from caste- Hindus. In any case at least one year should be given to concentrated propaganda.

*Letters to Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, p. 11, 2-2-1935*

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Castes are innumerable and in their present condition they are a drag upon Hinduism....

*Varna* stands on a different footing, and it means profession. It has nothing to do with inter-dining and inter-marriage. People belonging to the four professions used formerly to inter-dine and even to intermarry and by so doing they naturally could not and did not leave their *varna*. This is absolutely clear from the definitions of the different *varnas* in the *Bhagavadgita*. A man falls from his *varna* when he abandons his hereditary profession. Today however *varnashram* is a lost treasure and there is utter confusion.

*Selected Letters—II, p. 40*

## 16. BRAHMACHARYA

The vow of *Brahmacharya* and other vows are holy and bring happiness only when they are taken as a spiritual discipline. If resorted to by a demon, they only add to misery.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. IX, p. 117, 28-12-1908*

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When we have any doubt concerning problems of morality, we may disregard the orders of other elders; nay, it would be our duty to disobey them. But when there is no doubt about the morality of a question, even parents' orders can be disregarded; nay, it will be our duty to do so. If my father asks me to steal, I must not. If I want to observe *Brahmacharya* and my parents' orders are to the contrary, I must politely disobey them.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. X, p. 406, 8-2-1911*

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To indulge in the pleasures of the senses and then assert that one does nothing, that the senses just go their way, that one is a mere observer; all this is vain chatter. He alone may argue thus who has achieved complete mastery over his senses and whose senses function only to keep the body going. By the same token, there is not one among us who is fit enough to speak these words and there will be none till we have achieved true poverty. There is no reason to believe that kings are kings in virtue of their *punya*. All that can be said is that they are kings because of their deeds. But to say that these were necessarily good deeds seems entirely wrong, considering the nature of the *atman*.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XI, p. 150, 23-8-1911*

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The desire must be suppressed with the utmost effort. Improper desires will always occur. By suppressing them every time, we grow firmer in mind and gain in spiritual strength.



*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XII, p. 389, 17-3-1914*

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Everything is transient, except the *atman*. Not only should we keep reminding ourselves of this but we should work on accordingly. The more I reflect, the more insistently I feel the supreme importance of Truth and *Brahmacharya*. The latter, together with all other rules of morality, is comprehended in truth. I cannot help thinking; however, the *Brahmacharya* is important enough to share the place of honour with truth. It is my unshakable faith that these two can conquer any obstacle whatever. The real obstacles are the evil desires of the mind. If, for our happiness, we depend in no way on our outward relations with others, we would always think of what we ought to do rather than of what people might say.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XII, p. 396, 22-3-1914*

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Truthfulness, *Brahmacharya*, non-violence, non-stealing and non-hoarding, these five rules of life are obligatory on all aspirants. Everyone should be an aspirant. A man's character, therefore, is to be built on the foundation of these disciplines. Beyond doubt, they are to be observed by everyone in the world. Though a businessman, one must never utter or practice untruth; though married, one must remain celibate; though keeping oneself alive, one can practise non-violence. It is difficult to be of the world and yet not to steal (to observe the rule of non-stealing and not to hoard wealth or any other thing. One must, nevertheless, keep that as an ideal to be attained and have some limit in these respects; when the mind has begun to turn away from these things, one may even embrace the supreme renunciation.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XIII, pp. 17-18, 7-22-1915*

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It is my conviction that one cannot build one's character without the help of vows. They are to a man what anchor is to a ship. A ship without an anchor is tossed to and fro and finally broken on the rocks; without vows, human beings meet a similar fate. The vow of truth includes all others. How would a man who

respects truth violate *Brahmacharya* or steal anything? "*Brahma* alone is real; all else is non-existent." If this *sutra* is true, knowledge of *Brahma* is implied in the observance of truth.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. XIV p. 97, 22-11-1917

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There is no temptation so difficult to overcome as that of the palate and it is because it is so difficult that we think so little about it. In my opinion, mastery of the palate means mastery of everything.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. XV p. 34, 29-8-1918

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In order to observe *Brahmacharya* the following things are absolutely necessary: (1) solitude; (2) moderation in eating; (3) good books; (4) regular meditation; (5) plenty of physical and mental labour; (6) abstaining from spicy and intoxicating food or drinks; (7) abstaining from shows and other things having a sex appeal; (8) giving up the desire for sexual intercourse; (9) avoiding being alone with a woman; (10) repeating *Ramanama* or some other *mantra* (formula).

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. XXV PP- 133-34, 13-9-1924

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*Brahmacharya* is such only if it persists under all conditions and in the face of every possible temptation. If a beautiful woman approaches the marble statue of a man, it will not be affected in the least. A *Brahmachari* is one who reacts in a similar case in the same way as marble does. But just as the marble statue refrains from using its eyes or ears, even so a man should avoid every occasion of sin.

*The Diary of Mahadev Desai*, Vol. I, p. 80, 19-4-1932

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*Brahmacharya* hardly deserves the name if it can be observed only by avoiding the company of women even when such company is kept with a view to serve. It amounts to physical renunciation unbacked by the essential mental

detachment, and lets us down in critical times. The Gita is right in saying (II: 59) that one's yearning for the pleasures of the world withers away only when he has had the beautiful vision. But the converse of this statement is equally true: one must not hope for realization so long as he yearns after the fleshpots of Egypt. That is to say, the two things go hand to hand. The yearning departs when one beholds the Supreme. Although the objects of sense have disappeared, the yearning for them has not been thoroughly uprooted. Therefore there is a possibility of desire raising its head so long as one has not seen God. After a man has seen Him desire becomes an impossibility; indeed he ceases to be masculine and becomes sexless. He is no longer a significant figure but is reduced to zero. In other words his personality melts away in that of God. The idea becomes clearer if in place of the words *param*, God, *Brahma*, we used the word *satya* or truth. There is no room here for self-deception. If there is any one in the Ashram who talks of taking the whole world for his family but harbours evil thoughts in his mind, he is a *mithyachari* (hypocrite) in the language of the Gita (III: 6) while we are all along thinking of a *satyachari* (truthful person) and how he should behave.

*The Diary of Mahadev Desai*, Vol. I, pp. 80-81, 19-4-1932

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It is a sin to believe that any one else is inferior or superior to ourselves. We are all equal. It is the touch of sin that pollutes us, and never that of a human being. None are high and none are low for one who would devote his life to service. The distinction between high and low is a blot on Hinduism, which we must obliterate.

*The Diary of Mahadev Desai*, Vol. 1, pp. 286-87, 14-8-1932

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Wandering thoughts can never be a stage in spiritual development. They do trouble most of us; hence the usual emphasis laid on mental concentration. What we have to bear in mind is this. We think a multitude of thoughts which involve a waste of mental energy even as sensuality results in the waste of vital energy. Just as physical debility affects the mind, so also mental debility

affects the body. Therefore, I understand *Brahmacharya* in a comprehensive sense and look upon aimless thinking as a breach of it. We have made *Brahmacharya* difficult to achieve by understanding it in a narrow sense. But if we accept the broader definition and try to restrain all the eleven organs of sense, the control of animal passion becomes comparatively very much easier.

*The Diary of Mahadev Desai, Vol. I, p. 305, 23-8-1932*

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Remember my definition of *Brahmacharya*. It means not suppression of one or more senses but complete mastery over them all. The two states are fundamentally different. I can suppress all my senses today but it may take aeons to conquer them. Conquest means using them as my willing slaves. I can prick the ear drum and suppress the sense of hearing by simple, painless operation. This is worthless. I must train the ear so that it refuses to hear gossip, lewd talk, blasphemy, but it is open to the celestial music, it will hear the most distant cry for succour from thousands of miles.

*Bapu's Letters to Mira, p. 257, 27-4-1933*

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*Brahmacharya* is a mental state. It is undoubtedly helped by abstemiousness in all respects. But diet plays the least part in giving one the necessary mental state. Not that wrong diet will not hinder progress. What I want to say is that the right diet taken in moderation is not the only thing in the observance of *Brahmacharya* though it is undoubtedly one of the necessary things. Indulgence of the palate will be the surest sign of a weak mental state which is repugnant to *Brahmacharya*. The sovereign remedy for the observance of *Brahmacharya* is realization that the soul is a part of the Divine and that the Divine resides within us. A heart grasp of this fact induces mental purity and strength.

*Selected Letters—II, p. 3*

## 17. FEARLESNESS

All fear is of the nature of a moral weakness and, so long as we are subject to it, we shall always have to face such misfortunes.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XII, p. 93, 30-5-1913*

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Death should make us think of our duty and fill us with contempt for the body, but inspire no fear. It seems that a man does not suffer excessively even when he is burnt to death. When the pain becomes unbearable, he loses consciousness. Those who cling to the body so very tenaciously only suffer the more. One who knows the truth about the *atman* will have no fear of death.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XII, pp. 365-66, 1-3-1914*

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I have not got rid of the fear of death, despite much thinking. But I feel no impatience. I keep on trying and I am sure I shall get rid off it one day. We should not let go a single occasion when we may try. That is our duty. It is for God to produce or will the result. Why worry then? When feeding her baby, the mother has no thought of the result. The result does follow, though. To get rid of the fear of death and to drive away desire, make the effort and keep cheerful; and they will disappear. Otherwise, it will be the same with you as with the man who, resolving not to think about a monkey, kept on thinking of one.

We are born in sin, and we are enslaved in the body, because of our sinful deeds; how can you hope to cleanse yourself of all the impurity just in a minute? You may live as you like, Realize God anyhow.

This is the teaching of Akha Bhagat<sup>1</sup>.

Tulsidasji says:

Whether in adversity or no, repeat over again the name of Rama and you will achieve all there is to be achieved.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XII, pp. 375, 7-3-1914*

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No man can hasten or delay my death even by a minute. The best way of saving oneself from death is to go seeking it. It is no doubt our duty to take care of our life in a general way. More than this we need not do. We should rather welcome death whenever it comes.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XII, p. 386, 14-3-1914*

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Death should cause no fear in us, if we have lived in the fear of God and have done nothing in violation of the voice of our conscience. Then, indeed, is death but a change for the better and, therefore, a welcome change which need not evoke any sorrow.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XII, p. 390, 18-3-1914*

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The man who knows in his heart of hearts that this mortal frame is liable to perish any moment will be ever ready to meet death. That he might be so, the householder will limit his external activities and expand the inner and live accordingly.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XIII, p. 30, 27-2-1915*

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The more I observe and study things, the more convinced I become that sorrow over separation and death is perhaps the greatest delusion. To realize that it is a delusion is to become free. There is no death, no separation of the substance. And yet the tragedy of it is that though we love friends for the substance we recognize in them, we deplore the destruction of the insubstantial that covers the substance for the time being. Whereas real friendship should be used to reach the whole through the fragment. You seem to have got the truth for the moment. Let it abide forever.

*Bapu's Letters to Mira, p. 41, 27-4-1927*

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To wish to see the dearest ones as long as possible in the flesh is a selfish desire and it comes out of weakness or want of faith in the survival of the soul after the dissolution of the body. The form ever changes, ever perishes, the informing spirit neither changes nor perishes. True love consists in transferring itself from the body to the dweller within and then necessarily realizing the oneness of all life inhabiting numberless bodies.

*Bapu's Letters to Mira*, p. 156, 6-7-1931

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Death as such leaves little impression on me; I only feel for the bereaved relatives. There can be no greater ignorance than to mourn over death.

*The Diary of Mahadev Desai*, Vol. I, p. 213, 5-7-1932

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So long as we wear this vesture of clay, let us keep it clean, pure and healthy, and when we have to cast it off, let us discard it without any regret. It was given to us for use. Let the Giver take it away when He pleases. We have to use it for service only, and not for enjoyment.

*The Diary of Mahadev Desai*, Vol. I, p. 276, 7-8-1932

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The human body is less durable even than a glass bangle, which, if we preserved, may continue to exist for hundreds of years. But our bodies, no matter how carefully preserved, cannot last beyond a certain period, and may be destroyed at any time during that period. We may not put our trust in them.

*The Diary of Mahadev Desai*, Vol. I, pp. 276-77, 7-8-1932

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The spirit which you love is always with you. The body through which you learned to love the spirit is no longer necessary for sustaining that love. It is well that it lasts whilst there is use for it. It is equally well that it perishes when there is no use for it. And since we don't know when it will outlast its use, we conclude that death through whatever cause means that there was no longer any use of it.

*Bapu's Letters to Mira, p. 210, 20-9-1932*

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I have personally ceased for years to grieve over death at all. The shock is felt when a comrade is torn away from me, but that is purely due to personal attachment which in other words is selfishness. But I immediately recover and realize that death is a deliverance and has to be welcomed, even as a friend is welcomed, and that it means dissolution of the body, not of the indwelling spirit.

*Selected Letters-II, p. 28, 24-11-1932*

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We are born only to die and we die only to be born again. This is all old argument. Yet it needs to be driven home. Somehow or other we refuse to welcome death as we welcome birth. We refuse to believe even the evidence of our senses, that we could not possibly have any attachment for the body without the soul and that we have no evidence whatsoever that the soul perishes with the body.

*Bapu's Letters to Mira, p. 260, 4-5-1933*

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The frank admission of one's proved helplessness does not make one a coward but may be the beginning of bravery.

*Letters to Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, p. 29, 19-6-1935*

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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.

*Letters to Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, p. 99, 16-10-1936*

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We die to live once more, even as we live only to die at last. Life therefore is not an occasion for joy nor death an occasion for sorrow. But there is one thing



needful. We must ascertain our duty in life and continue to discharge it till we die.

*Selected Letters—I, p. 18*

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To be afraid of death is like being afraid of discarding an old and worn out garment. I have often thought of death and have the intellectual conviction that it is sheer ignorance which makes us afraid of death.

*Selected Letters—I, p. 24*

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I am engaged in my present activities as I look upon them as essential to life. If I have to face death while thus engaged, I shall face it with equanimity. I am now a stranger to fear.

*Selected Letters—I, p. 32*

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"Death is but a sleep and a forgetting." This is such a sweet sleep that the body has not to awake again, and the dead load of memory is thrown overboard.

*Selected Letters—II, p. 5*

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Death is an event to be celebrated and much more so than birth. For birth is preceded by nine months of life in a solitary cell and is also followed by much unhappiness. But death for some of us spells the attainment of the end of life. To qualify for such a death one should devote one's life to work done in a spirit of detachment.

*Selected Letters—II p. 49*

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1 A mystic Gujarati poet of the 17th century known for his satire; a devotee and *vedantist*.

## 18. HEALTH AND HYGIENE

What service will an army of doctors render to the country ? What great things are they going to achieve by dissecting dead bodies, by killing animals, and by cramming worthless dicta for five or seven years? What will the country gain by the ability to cure physical diseases? That will simply increase our attachment to the body. We can formulate a plan for preventing the growth of disease even without the knowledge of medical science. This does not mean that there should be no doctors or physicians at all. They will always be with us. The point is that many a young man who gives an undue importance to this profession and wastes hundreds of rupees and several years qualifying for it, ought not to do so. We must know that we are not, nor are we going to be, benefited in the least by allopathic doctors.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. X, p. 206, 2-4-1910*

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Milk ... is but another form of meat and man has no right to take it. [To argue] that because a baby sucks the mother's milk, man should take cow's milk is the very limit of ignorance.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XII, p. 127, 2-7-1913*

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One should make do with the fewest possible articles [of food] and in the smallest possible quantity, no more than what is absolutely necessary to pay the body its hire. It will be best to frame the rules of our diet bearing this principle in mind.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XII, p. 387, 17-3-1914*

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It grieves me whenever I find that a medical man is weak or ailing. It is a perpetual reminder to us that medicine is such an incomplete, such an unreliable, and such an empirical science. If we think about it with sufficient detachment, we would at once realize its inherent weakness by understanding

that there is no such thing as an absolute cure. The most potent drugs admit of innumerable exceptions. The most successful operation leaves literally and in the spirit a scar behind.

*My Dear Child*, p. 84, 20-8-1926

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It is . . . enough for us to realise that every illness is but a breach of some unknown law of nature and to strive to know the laws and pray for power to obey. Heart prayer, therefore, whilst we are ill, is both work and medicine.

*Bapu's Letters to Mira*, p. 58, 9-7-1927

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If we like tasty food, why hide that fact? Having a taste for good food is no sin. The sin lies in our hiding the craving, and then in secretly indulging in it. Every one, man or woman, is free to eat whatever he or she desires.... Any one may satisfy his taste for food, the only limitation being that the good food prepared should be within the rules of the common kitchen. None should cook dishes to satisfy special tastes whether secretly or openly, in one's quarters. One may go out and eat at a friend's place, there is nothing to hide in this and no restriction about what one might eat. One may also keep eatables such as dried fruits, etc. in one's room. It is better if such freedom is not availed of, but it is in no way binding. My earnest request to you is this: always seem what you are. Whatever you do, do it openly. Never allow yourself to be unduly influenced by another. But if ever you promise to do a thing even out of shame, never act contrary to it subsequently.

*Bapu's Letters to Ashram Sisters*, p. 64, 10-12-1928

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For the child's cold, give it a sun-bath. This will act as hot fomentation, harden the skin and cure the cold.

*Selected Letters—II*, p. 21, 28-11-1930

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Every sickness leaves behind it a legacy of weakness unless the system is allowed full rest and the mind relieved of tension. I suppose the mental control is the most difficult. For this the sovereign remedy is the application of the Gita. Each time mind suffers a shock, there is failure in application. Let good news as well as bad pass over you like water over a duck's back. When we hear any, our duty is merely to find out whether any action is necessary and if it is so, to do it as an instrument in the hands of Nature without being affected by or attached to the result. This detachment appears a scientific necessity when we remember that in bringing about a result more than one instrument is employed. Who shall dare say "I have done it"? . . . Any truth received by the brain must immediately be sent down to the heart. When it is not, it suffers abortion and then it lies on the brain as much poisonous matter. What poisons the brain poisons the whole system. Hence the necessity of using the brain as it should be merely as transmitting station. Whatever is there received is either transmitted to the heart for immediate action or it is rejected there and then as being unfit for transmission. Failure of the brain to perform this function properly is the cause of almost all the ills that flesh is heir to as also for mental exhaustion. If the brain simply performed its function, there need never be any brain-fag. So whenever we suffer from illness generally . . . there is not only a dietetic error but there is also failure on the part of the brain to function properly. The author of the Gita evidently saw this and gave the world the sovereign remedy in the clearest possible language.

*Bapu's Letters to Mira, p. 139, 13-12-1930*

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It is my firm belief that in the vegetable kingdom there is undoubtedly something which can serve as an effective substitute for milk and is yet free from the drawbacks of milk. But the physicians who possess the qualifications necessary for such research never give thought to this subject.

*To A Gandhian Capitalist, p. 75, 9-4-1932*

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You should cease to think the body as yours. It is God's, but God has given it to you for the time being to keep it clean and healthy and use it for His service. You are therefore the trustee, not the owner. An owner may abuse or misuse his property, but a trustee or keeper has to be very careful and make the best use of the property left under his care. So whilst you must not be anxious about the body, you have to take every care you can of it. God will take it away when He wishes.

*Selected Letters—II, p. 27, 5-11-1932*

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More people are weak through over-feeding or wrong-feeding than through under-feeding. It is wonderful, if we chose the right diet, what an extraordinarily small quantity would suffice!

*Bapu's Letters to Mira, p. 254, 13-3-1933*

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Green vegetables, bread or *chapati*, milk and a little fruit is perfect food. When one gets milk, pulse is a harmful superfluity. One gets all the protein needed in milk.

*Selected Letters—II, p. 24, 21-3-1933*

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As a confirmed believer in the natural mode of living, I think that we can rebuild shattered bodies by conforming to the laws of nature. Very often I have known persons who have succeeded in getting better where medical assistance has failed. This is no reflection on the doctor brother.

*Letters to Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, p. 10, 17-1-1935*

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Physical suffering can be and should be transmitted into spiritual joy. It is difficult process but it has to be gone through, if one is to be truly rich. This forced illness should be used for enriching one's thoughts.

*Letters to Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, p. 232, 21-10-1946*

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Take food as you would take medicine, and not in order to gratify the palate. Keep mind and body fully engaged in acts of service. Meditate on God as Truth.

*Selected Letters—I, p. 37*

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I have learnt from childhood, and experience has confirmed the soundness of teaching, that spiritual gifts should not be used for the purpose of healing bodily ailments. I do however believe in abstention from use of drugs and the like. But this is purely on physical, hygienic grounds. I do also believe in utter reliance upon God, but then not in the hope that He will heal me, but in order to submit entirely to His will, and to share the fate of millions who, even though they wished to, can have no scientific medical help.

*Selected Letters—I, p. 45*

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Give the poor and the afflicted the benefit of your medical knowledge free of charge.

*Selected Letters—II, p. 31*

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Take great care of the body as a trustee of God's property. Do not pamper or spoil it, fill it with dirt or overload it.

*Selected Letters—II, p. 33*

## 19. SELF-RESTRAINT

There is no need to be sorry for what is past and over, but it is important that one should learn something from it.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XII, pp. 420-21, 28-5-1914*

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All good actions, by whatever feelings prompted, yield some fruit. The man who follows truth or exercises self-restraint out of fear or shame will yet reap the outward benefit of doing so; such is the power of good action.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XVII, p. 369, 1-5-1920*

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Not to dine with a fellow-being out of repugnance is a sin. Not to dine with him by way of self-restraint is a virtue.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XVII, p. 500, 20-6-1920*

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

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XXVI, p. 45, 25-1-1925*

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The Gita says somewhere that those who practise self-control outwardly, but crave for pleasures of the senses in their thoughts, are foolish and deceitful. This statement was particularly made for hypocrites. About those who are honest and sincere, the same Gita says that they should constantly control the instincts that agitate them.

*Bapu's Letters to Ashram Sisters, p. 59, 19-12-1927*

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Those who are afraid of getting excited by a mere touch should admit the fact candidly and they must remain within their limits. Such a passionate nature is a

kind of disease, and persons of this type should avoid the touch of another man or woman. The disease is likely to disappear in course of time.

*Bapu's Letters to Ashram Sisters, p. 89, 9-12-1929*

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There are men who can be excited by merely touching a woman. There are women who become so likewise by a mere touch from a man. It is necessary that such persons should avoid all human contact even if it means a certain coercion or even illness.

*Bapu's letters to Ashram Sisters, p. 89, 9-12-1929*

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Self-control is the best thing for a prisoner and his friends and dear ones. But self-control to be self-control must brace one up. It becomes mechanical or superimposed when it unnerves or saddens one.

*Bapu's Letters to Mira, p. 170, 4-2-1932*

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Man's span of life may be a hundred and even more. But no matter how long he lives, his life is hardly one millionth part of a drop in the ocean that is eternity. All attachment for it and all calculations about it hardly make sense. Our calculations are bound to be uncertain. We can only make a guess at the maximum years a man may live. For the rest we see even healthy children succumb to death. And we cannot assert that a man given to the pleasures of life will not live long. All we can say is that a man who lives a life of simplicity and chastity will probably live long. But to exercise self-control in order to live long is like a mountain in labour bringing forth a mouse. The passions must be subdued in order that we may attain self-realization. If in the course of that discipline we find that life is being shortened instead of being lengthened, we need not bother about it. Health and longevity are a very insignificant fruit of self-control.

*The Diary of Mahadev Desai, Vol. I, p. 119, 19-5-1932*

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Our life should become daily simpler and not more complex. We should be progressively more self-restrained.

*Bapu's Letters to Mira*, p. 257, 27-4-1933

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Self-control. . . comes only by definite realization that God is with us and looks after us as if He had no other care besides. How this happens I do not know. That it does happen I do know. Those who have faith have all their cares lifted from off their shoulders.

*Bapu's Letters to Mira*, p. 267, 5-6-1933

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Voluntary obedience always carries its own conviction.

*Letters to Rajkumari Amrit Kaur*, p. 85, 30-8-1936

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In working our plans of self-restraint, attention must not for a moment be withdrawn from the fact that we are all sparks of the divine and therefore partake of its nature, and since there can be no such thing as self-indulgence with divine, it must of necessity be foreign to human nature.

*Selected Letters—7*, p. 35

## 20. SELF-DEVELOPMENT

Our ultimate capital is not the money we have, but our courage, our faith, our truthfulness and our ability.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. VI, p. 302, 28-1-1907*

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There is only one simple way of winning divine grace – that of practising truth and other virtues, gradually and deliberately, and of concentrating on one attachment or devotion to the Supreme! to the exclusion of all others.

Eat the whole body, O crow !

Peck away at my flesh;

But pray consume not the two eyes, I still hope to see my beloved.

This is said of a lover and his beloved; but in truth it shows the yearning of the soul to see the beloved in the form of God. He does not care if the body is lost. If the crow of passion does not eat away the eye of knowledge, he is bound to meet the beloved.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. X, p. 311, 31-8-1910*

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It is our duty to obey our elders so long as their orders do not conflict with our moral life. Therein lies our ultimate good.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. X, p. 406, 8-2-1911*

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We should have compassion on ourselves as on all creatures, looking on them as one, and draw back in alarm from destruction of life for any purpose of ours.

We should cherish no fond attachment for the body and have no fear whatever of death.

We should strive for *moksha* right now, knowing that the body is all too apt to let us down.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XII, p. 366, 1-3-1914*

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If the heart is pure, the grosser impulses of the body will have no scope. But what do we mean by the heart? And when may we believe the heart to be pure? The heart is nothing else but the *atman* or the seat of the *atman*. To imagine that it is pure is to imply perfect realization of the *atman* and, in the presence of such realization, the cravings of the senses are inconceivable. But ordinarily we attribute purity to the heart when we are but striving after such purity.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XII, p. 376, 7-3-1914*

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If I have unceasing love, I should be perfectly enlightened man, which, indeed, I am not. Anyone for whom I have true love will not misunderstand my intentions or words, nor will such a one bear ill-will to me. It follows from this that, when anyone looks upon us as his enemy, the fault is primarily ours. This is also true of our relations with the whites. Perfect purity of heart, therefore, is the final stage. Before we have reached that stage, as we advance towards greater and greater purity, the cravings of the senses will subside in corresponding measure. These cravings do not originate in the senses.

The mind alone is the cause of man's being bound or free.

The senses are the points at which impulses in the mind become manifest. Through them we come to recognize the impulses as such.

And so, by destroying the senses, we do not do away with the impulses in the mind, Eunuchs, as we observe, are full of desires. Those who are such by birth are so full of them that they have been known to be guilty of unnatural acts. I am deficient in the sense of smell; even so, I feel the desire to enjoy fragrance, so much so that, when I find anyone talking about the fragrance of the rose or other flowers, the mind, like the donkey, immediately runs after it and is held back with the greatest difficulty.

We have heard of men who, passionate in their convictions, cut off their organs when they found it impossible to control their minds. It may possibly be one's

duty to do so in such circumstances. Supposing my mind becomes a prey to desire and I cast an evil eye on my sister; I am burning with lust but have not been totally blinded by it. In such a situation, I think, cutting off one's organ would be a sacred duty if there is no other remedy. This will not happen to a man who advances gradually. It may perhaps happen to one who has suddenly lost all desire but whose past life was none too good. To want an instantaneously effective method of ensuring freedom from desire and the urgency of the senses is much the same as asking for a son of a barren woman. Such a result can be achieved only with the utmost patience. A mango tree created by magic is only meant for the eye; much the same is true of mental purity brought about with complete suddenness. Yes, it may happen sometimes, that the mind is ready for purification and is merely looking for association with holy men which is a kind of a philosopher's stone. On getting this it becomes instantly aware of its purity and the absence of it earlier becomes a dream. Surely, this [change] is no instantaneous occurrence, but the simple and the shortest and, to that extent, the quickest method is:

Withdrawal into solitude, seeking association with holy men, singing the names of God and telling sacred stories, reading edifying books, unremitting mortification of the body, a spare diet, living on fruits, minimum of sleep, giving up of pleasures; anyone who can practise these things will find control of the mind quite easy as the '*amalak*' in the hand.<sup>1</sup> Practise these and meditate over the rest. Whenever the mind is disturbed with desire, one should turn to observances such as fasting.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XII, pp. 376-77, 7-3-1914*

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One who rises early should make no exception on Sundays. If we do, we shall anxiously await the coming of a Sunday.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XII, p. 409, 17-4-1914*

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That a sound body carries a sound mind is after all a truism, but it is to be interpreted with many qualifications. Take the celebrated Sandow. His is, as

you would consider, one of the soundest bodies. I am not sure that he necessarily carries a sound mind with it. To me a sound body means one which bends itself to the spirit and is always a ready instrument at its service. Such bodies are not made, in my opinion, on the football field. They are made on cornfields and farms.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XIII, p. 49, 17-4-1915*

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The first and the last thing we have to attend to is to reform ourselves. In trying to reform, we seem to be judging.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XIII, p. 452*

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Don't hide your ignorance out of false shame.

*Selected Letters—II, p. 18, 2-6-1919*

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Never mind if you are mistaken for a fool, but don't take the risk of going wrong as a result of your ignorance.

*Selected Letters—II, p. 19, 2-6-1919*

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To express purest love is like walking on the edge of a sword. "None of self and all of Thee", is easier sung than practised. We never know when we are not selfish even when we fancy we are all love. The more I think of it, the more I feel the Truth of what I have often said. Love and truth are two faces of the same coin and both most difficult to practise and the only things worth living for. A person cannot be true, if he does not love all God's creatures; truth and love are therefore the complete sacrifice. I shall therefore pray that both you and I may realize this to the fullest measure.

*My Dear Child, pp. 53-54, 1920*

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If the body is the temple of the Holy, it requires the utmost care—certainly not pampering but equally certainly not disregard or even indifference.

*My Dear Child, p. 57*

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A disciplined conscience is one to obey. It is the voice of God. And undisciplined conscience leads to perdition, for the devil speaks through it.

*My Dear Child, p. 56*

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Self-surrender does not mean giving up one's judgment. Sincere self-surrender is not inertia, it is energy; knowing that there is someone to whom to turn ultimately, the person undertakes, with due regard for his limitations, a thousand experiments one after another. But they are all undertaken with humility, knowledge and discrimination.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XX, pp. 500-1, 13-8-1921*

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Self-confidence is that which remains unshaken even amidst disappointment. If I have faith in truth and non-violence, I will stick to them even in adversity.

*Letters to Manibehn Patel, p. 11, 11-5-1924*

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Arrogance and firmness are generally found together. The former will gradually take a secondary place, if we go on promoting the *sattvic* tendencies in us. The best way of overcoming arrogance is to try and refrain from reacting to opposition.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XXIV P- 87, 20-5-1924*

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Purity and restraint are virtues to be treasured.

*Letters to Manibehn Patel, p. 12, 20-5-1924*

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The mind itself is our enemy as well as our friend. It is our duty to keep it under control. No medicine from a doctor is required for this.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. XXIV p. 284, 23-6-1924

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True strength is that of the heart. The intellect seems to be insignificant. If the intellect says, "I love you," but the heart refuses to do so, what good is the intellect's saying that it does?

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. XXV P- 257, 22-10-1924

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We acquire certain habits and then we are unable to do anything different. This is a virtue so far as good habits are concerned. One who is sincerely devoted to non-violence becomes in the end incapable of violence. And this not only in deed but also in thought. Thought is father of action. When thought goes, action automatically goes with it.

*Letters to Manibehn Patel*, p. 25, 1926

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Devotion means faith—faith in God and in one's self. Such faith will lead one to make all sacrifices. Sacrifice for the sake of sacrifice is difficult, but if it is made in the service of others, it is easy. No mother would want to sleep in the wet for its own sake. But she would gladly do so if she can thereby find her child a dry place to sleep.

*Bapu's Letters to Ashram Sisters*, p. 14, 24-1-1927

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We must entertain the same regard for others as we have for ourselves. And if we did, we would be ashamed to find other people's children dirty as we would be if they were our own. So also if we found others in distress, we would make that distress our own and try to relieve it.

*Selected Letters—7*, p. 7, Jan., 1927

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We should make up our minds that we will never commit suicide. The kind of people who commit suicide either worry too much about worldly affairs, or try to hide their shortcomings from the world. We should never try to appear what we are not, or try to do what is clearly beyond us.

*Bapu's Letters to Ashram Sisters, p. 39, 1-8-1927*

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The first step in purifying oneself is the admission and eradication of whatever bad feelings one might have about others. As long as we harbour ill-will or suspicion against our neighbours and do not strive to get rid of it, we cannot learn ever the first lessons of having genuine love for them.

*Bapu's Letters to Ashram Sisters, p. 48, 3-10-1927*

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We do not want to deceive ourselves, others, or the world. So whatever is working in our hearts must be brought out into the open. Once the heart is purified, it will take long for it to become impure again. But if any impurity is allowed to remain in the heart, even good thoughts will get sullied, just as water poured into a dirty vessel gets sullied. If we begin by having a suspicion about someone once, we often end by suspecting everything about him.

*Bapu's Letters to Ashram Sisters, p. 49, 10-10-1927*

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To be generous is having no anger against those whom we consider to be at fault, and loving and serving them. It is not the quality of generosity or love, if we have goodwill for others only as long as they are united with us in thought and action. That might be called merely friendship or mutual affection. The use of the word 'love' is wrong in such cases. 'Love' means friendly feeling for the enemy.

*Bapu's Letters to Ashram Sisters, p. 50, 17-10-1927*

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There can never be truth where there is no courage. To do a wrong thing is sin; but to hide the wrong is a greater sin. He who admits his misdeed with a pure



heart has his sin washed off, and he can travel once again by the right path. But he who hides his misdeed out of a false sense of shame falls into a deeper pit. We have seen this to be true every time, and hence I request all of you to avoid a false sense of shame. If you have done wrong, whether knowingly or unknowingly, make it known at once and make a resolution not to do it again.

*Bapu's Letters to Ashram Sisters, p. 71, 84-1929*

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The optimist is he who continues to hope in the face of a multitude of disappointments. And he is credulous who reposes truth in the sweet words of anybody whom he happens to meet. This credulity is not a desirable quality.

Optimism depends upon the inner voice while credulity builds its castles on outward circumstances as the basis.

*The Diary of Mahadev Desai, Vol. I, p. 133, 27-5-1932*

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Feeling is of the heart. It may easily lead us astray unless we would keep the heart pure. It is like keeping house and everything in it clean. The heart is the source from which knowledge of God springs. If the source is contaminated, every other remedy is useless. And if its purity is assured nothing else is needed.

*My Dear Child, p. 91, 29-5-1932*

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You must not lose self-confidence. Evil thoughts may enter the mind; but just as the house from which the refuse is removed from time to time is clean, so is the mind which rejects the evil thoughts just as they enter it, and victory is bound to attend its effort at self-purification. One who is thus vigilant cannot be considered a hypocrite. The golden rule for salvation from hypocrisy is this: Do not conceal the evil thoughts but make a public confession of them. This need not be made with the beat of drum. But the fault must be revealed to a friend. And it should not matter if everyone else also comes to know about it.

*The Diary of Mahadev Desai, Vol. I, pp. 169-70, 17-6-1932*

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A fault is a bad thing; therefore we should be ashamed of it. But to admit and ask pardon for a fault is a good thing; therefore we should not feel shame in doing so. To ask pardon for a fault implies a determination not to default any more. Is such determination something to be ashamed of? There can be no comparison between truth and non-violence. But if such comparison must be instituted, I would say .that truth is superior even to non-violence. For untruth is tantamount to violence. The lover of truth is bound to make a discovery of non-violence sooner or later.

*The Diary of Mahadev Desai, Vol. I, p. 177, 19-6-1932*

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Self-confidence means an unflinching faith in one's work. Once this faith is acquired, there is no need to be anxious about the numerous errors we are unconsciously bound to commit from time to time. We must not permit ourselves to be paralyzed by the fear that we are perhaps on the wrong path.

*The Diary of Mahadev Desai, Vol. I, p. 178, 19-6-1932*

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We must not make an individual the object of our affection which should be reserved only for his virtues. Every person's virtues result in some concrete act or other. If we admire his virtues, we should promote the activities which constitute their outward expression,

*The Diary of Mahadev Desai, Vol. I, p. 262, 31-7-1932*

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Learning should be acquired only with a view to service. But service is full of inexhaustible joy. Therefore we may say that learning is an aid to blessedness. Mere learning without service has never been known to lead to eternal bliss.

*The Diary of Mahadev Desai, Vol. I, p. 276, 7-8-1932*

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Instead of thinking of improving the world, let us concentrate our attention on self-improvement. We can scarcely find out if the world is on the right or the wrong path. But if we take the straight and narrow path, we shall find all taking it too or discover the method of inducing them to take it. To know oneself is to forget the body or to reduce oneself to zero.

*The Diary of Mahadev Desai, Vol. I, p. 276, 7-8-1932*

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I had adversaries before, and have them now. However I have never been angry with them. Even in a dream I have never been ill-disposed towards them, with the result that many adversaries have become friends. No opposition to me has been successful to this very day. I am still here, three attacks on my person notwithstanding. That is not to say that the adversary will never succeed in attaining his object. He may or may not succeed, and I have nothing to do with it. My duty consists in wishing him well and serving him on a suitable occasion. I have practised this doctrine to the best of my ability. I believe that it is an integral part of my mental constitution. I am worried when thousands of people revere me. I have never come to believe that I am fit for this reverence which leaves me utterly cold. On the other hand I have been aware of my unfitness. I do not remember that I had at any time a craving for honour. But I have always yearned to work. I have tried to turn those who would honour me into co-workers. When they have resisted this transformation, I have rejected their advances. I would be happy as a bird if I reached my goal, but that is only an aspiration at present.

*The Diary of Mahadev Desai, Vol. I, p. 284, 12-8-1932*

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One need not cultivate haughtiness or incivility in order to stand up against the world. Jesus faced the world and so did Buddha, and Prahlad. But they were all the very picture of humility. The essential requisites are self-confidence and faith in God. Those who opposed the world in their pride have collapsed at last.

*The Diary of Mahadev Desai, Vol. I, p. 284, 12-8-1932*

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You must not think you are wrong so long as your heart does not say so. After all that is our only standard of judgment. We therefore try to keep our hearts pure. The sinner thinks sin is a meritorious thing, because his heart is impure. In any case he will persist in his error so long as he has not acquired knowledge. Therefore none else can point out what is good for you. I can only say that we have to tread the path of truth and nonviolence, and keep the observances to that end.

*The Diary of Mahadev Desai, Vol. I, p. 286, 14-8-1932*

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What to do in order that one never gets angry? For this he has to be generous to all and to have a heart grasp of the idea that we are in all beings, and all beings are in us. Every drop and yet they all combine to make the ocean. The same is the case as regards the ocean that is this universe. Where then is the occasion for anyone to be angry with someone else?

*The Diary of Mahadev Desai, Vol. I, p. 286, 14-8-1932*

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Without mental purity external action cannot be performed in a selfless spirit. Therefore mental purity can be measured in terms of the purity of external action. One who tries to attain mental purity without purifying external action runs the risk of going astray.

*The Diary of Mahadev Desai, Vol. I, p. 305, 23-8-1932*

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Do not seek to prove how thoughts work. Enough for you to believe that they do work and produce mighty results. Therefore always cultivating purity of heart, you should be perfectly at peace, whether you are well in body or not.

*Selected Letters—II, p. 26, 20-10-1932*

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Cleanest air, cleanest water, simplest food and cleanest thinking which really means communion with God are the four laws, the first three flowing from the fourth. Hence your English saying, plain, that is, simple living and high thinking.

I would like to simplify that saying into—clean thinking and clean living. Boils are a symptom of unclean living in my sense of the expression.

*Selected Letters—II*, p. 25, 13-11-1932

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Pure devotion must lead to detachment (*anasakti*) and wisdom (*Jnana*). If it doesn't, it is not devotion, but mere emotionalism. Wisdom means the power of distinguishing right from wrong. If literary studies fail to invest a person with this power, they are nothing but pedantry.

*Selected Letters—II*, p. 52, 6-12-1932

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Do not imagine causes but wait patiently for the knowledge if it is to come and in any case never imagine the worst. Since God is a God of Mercy, if we must imagine it is best to imagine the best. Of course a votary of Gita never imagines anything. Good and bad are after all relative terms. He takes note of things as they happen and reacts naturally to them, fulfilling his part as if propelled by the great Mechanic, even as a piece of machine in good order responds automatically to the call of the mechanist. It is the most difficult thing for an *intelligent* being to be like a machine. And yet, if one is to become a zero, that is precisely what one desiring perfection has to become. The vital difference between the machine and the man is that the machine is inert, the man is all life and consciously becomes like a machine in the hands of the Master Mechanic.

*Bapu's Letters to Mira*, p. 238, 19-1-1933

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Well, you have to rejoice in your suffering both mental and physical. You must now do what satisfied your own inner voice. And the end will be all right. But we are all in God's hands. Not a blade moves but by His command. If we had all our own ways, the world will go to pieces. It is perhaps as well that our wishes are often frustrated. It is the test of our loyalty to God that we believe in Him

even when He refuses to fulfill our wishes. I want you therefore to enjoy perfect peace even while things seem to you to be all going wrong.

*My Dear Child*, p. 102, 15-12-1933

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Very recently I happened to read 'a thought for the day' in English which in effect means that man should brood over his virtues and not his faults, because man becomes what he broods over. This does not mean that one should not see one's own faults. They must be seen. But one should not become mad by constantly thinking of them. A similar dictum can be found in our scriptures also. You should, therefore, have self-confidence and feel assured that only good deeds are going to be performed by you.

*To A Gandhian Capitalist*, p. 105, 26-12-1938

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Faith cannot be acquired by force of intellect. It comes but slowly after deep meditation and continuous practice. We pray, sing hymns, read books, seek the association of men of God, and perform the spinning sacrifice in order to attain that faith.

*Selected Letters - II*, p. 22

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Contentment is the best of riches.

*Selected Letters - I*, p. 42

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Vanity is emptiness: self-respect is substance. No one's self-respect is ever hurt except by self, vanity is always hurt from outside.

*Selected Letters—I*, p. 42

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Hypocrisy comes easy to those alone who are wedded to untruth. I do not know of anything so injurious as hypocrisy.

*Selected Letters—I, p. 46*

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We are all members one of another, and influence one another by our actions. Actions here include thoughts, so that not a single thought is without its effect. Therefore we must cultivate the habit of always thinking good thoughts.

*Selected Letters—I, p. 55*

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Grace is the diction of poetry. Devotion (*bhakti*) is itself poetry. But poetry is no improper or inferior or unnecessary thing. On the contrary it is badly needed. Science would tell us that water is a chemical compound of hydrogen and oxygen, but in the language of poetry water is the gift of God. Understanding such poetry is an essential element of life, while ignorance of the chemical composition of water does not matter in the least. It is perfectly logical to say that whatever happens is the fruit of action. But 'impenetrable is the secret of action' (Gita IV, 17). We mortals are so constituted that we cannot know all the causative factors of even a very ordinary event. We are therefore perfectly right in saying that nothing happens except by the will and the grace of God. Again the body is a prison for the soul, who is like the air enclosed by a jar. The air in the jar is ineffective so long as it thinks itself to be different from the atmosphere. In the same way the soul imprisoned in the body will be unable to draw upon the Reservoir of Power that is God so long as she imagines herself to be a doer. Therefore to say that whatever happens by the will of God is to state a matter of fact, and such humility befits a seeker of truth.

*Selected Letters—I, p. 54*

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We should not worry over anything, no matter how important it is or how profoundly it touches us personally, if it has not been assigned to us. This is the teaching of religion in general and the Gita in particular. We must train ourselves to consider nothing as personal or to look upon everything as personal or to be absorbed in the allotted task as the only thing personal.

*Selected Letters—I, p. 20*

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You should make a fixed resolution to be good. Always pray to God to make you good and you will be good.

*Selected Letters—II, p. 31*

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Rest assured that if we are good ourselves, so is all the world besides. You find that very few people are bad, and that is a fact. None is bad by nature. Many appear bad because we have not the eye in order to discern the good in them.

*Selected Letters—II, p. 33*

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Yes, there is no calm without a storm, there is no peace without strife. Strife is inherent in peace. We should not know it without. Life is a perpetual struggle against strife whether within or without. Hence the necessity of realizing peace in the midst of strife.

*My Dear Child, p. 90*

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<sup>1</sup> A traditional phrase meaning 'as easy as a myrobalan in the grip of hand'.



## 21. SELFLESS SERVICE

Truly is it said that without *yajna* this world would perish. But *yajna* is not merely kindling wood and pouring *ghee* and other things into it. This may purify the air, but surely it will not purify the spirit. When we offer up our bones to burn like wood, pouring out our blood like *ghee* in order that they may burn, and sacrifice our flesh to the flames, that alone will be true *yajna*, and by such sacrifice will the earth be sustained.

Without such *yajna*, such sacrifice of self, it cannot be sustained.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XII, p. 319, 5-1-1914*

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Work is prayer but it can also be madness.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XXV P- 38, 25-8-1924*

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To put forth effort is in our hands but not to command success. We should rest content after we have exerted ourselves to the best of our capacity, and never acknowledge defeat.

*Letters to Manibehn Patel, p. 23, 11-1-1926*

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We really live through and in our work. We perish through our perishable bodies, if instead of using them as temporary instruments, we identify ourselves with them.

*Bapu's Letters to Mira, p. 41, 27-4-1927*

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Who knows whether we gain more by serving what we have or by losing. It may be that what has been saved has really been lost and what has been lost has really been saved. But everyone likes to be saved, and we are thankful to God, when we are saved. Actually, however, one should thank God for everything that transpires. That is what is meant by the state of equanimity.

*Bapu's Letters to Ashram Sisters, p. 39, 1-8-1927*

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He alone who is always absorbed in the performance of his duties can be allowed to be indifferent, about other matters. The stone may be indifferent, but it is inanimate, as compared with it, we are animate. So only if we remain indifferent to other things because of our complete absorption in our immediate duties, may be held to have lived successfully. Such steadiness of mind does not come about suddenly.

*Bapu's Letters to Ashram Sisters, p. 40, 8-8-1927*

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One who works to his full capacity does all that can be expected. But in our work we should develop the Gita attitude which we desire to have. That attitude is that whatever we do, we do it selflessly in a spirit of service. Spirit of service means in a spirit of dedication to God. Such a person no longer thinks in terms like, "It is I who am doing this." He feels no ill-will towards anybody.

On the contrary he is generous to others. Even about the smallest bit of service you render, you should keep asking yourselves whether you fulfill these ideals.

*Bapu's Letters to Ashram Sisters, p. 46, 19-9-1927*

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Success lies in the effort itself. God has promised that effort for the good never goes fruitless and all of us have had experience of this fact to some extent.

*Bapu's Letters to Ashram Sisters, p. 52, 31-9-1927*

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Our joy must lie in our devotion to duty, and not in the success of our efforts or in the circumstances. Narasinh Mehta has said: "If Man had the power to do everything, no one would be unhappy, for he would destroy his enemies and allow only friends to live." But Man is a lowly creature. He can be great only when he gives up pride and becomes one with God. A drop of water in the ocean, by itself can serve no useful purpose; but remaining in the ocean, it can share in bearing the heavy burden of this huge ship. In the same way, if we

learn to merge our identity with the Ashram, and thereby with the world and with God, we may be said to be bearing the burden of the world. But in such a state, the 'I' or 'Thou' is abandoned, and only 'He' remains.

*Bapu's Letters to Ashram Sisters, p. 53, 7-11-1927*

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People who sing Gita verses about being steadfast in wisdom must form the habit of working quietly. When we are rolling *chapatis* or cleaning rice, why cannot we withdraw into ourselves completely and remain fully absorbed in our work.

*Bapu's Letters to Ashram Sisters, p. 60, 6-8-1928*

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Whatever work you once undertake, carry it out fully, never give up merely when you did not feel like it. If at any time you have to be absent, you must make some arrangement for your work to be done; and if no arrangement can be made, one should never omit doing it oneself.

*Bapu's Letters to Ashram Sisters, p. 61, 26-11-1928*

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We might not undertake a piece of work at all, but, once having undertaken it, we must stick to it to the last. God always helps those who work steadfastly in this spirit.

*Bapu's Letters to Ashram Sisters, p. 85, 11-11-1929*

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Those who think of their own selves and interests will surely suffer a fall. Those who are devoted to their duties will have no time even to fall. I have always found that it is only those who are or who become averse to Truth that fall. A sinful act needs secrecy. It is generally done in secret. We do find persons who have abandoned all sense of shame and act sinfully in the open. There are others who regard vice as virtue. We are not thinking of such persons at present. Most of our activities have fallen back because of the regard for oneself referred to above. In this selfishness lies the danger of our fall and the

fall of society also. Think deeply over this, and let each of you examine your own life from this standpoint.

*Bapu's Letters to Ashram Sisters, p. 92, 23-12-1929*

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Had I learnt to use the body merely as an instrument of service and His temple, old age would have been like a beautiful ripe fruit with all the qualities of its species at their highest. It would be a stroke of good fortune if I escape merely with such disability.

*Bapu's Letters to Mira, p. 177, 8-4-1932*

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Chivalry is made of sterner stuff. Chivalrous knight is he who is exquisitely correct in his conduct towards perfect strangers who are in need of help but who can make no return to him and who are unable even to utter a few words of thanks.

*The Diary of Mahadev Desai, Vol. I, p. 102, 6-5-1932*

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There is a general impression that I am able to make men work as hard as they can. If this is a fact, the reason is that I never suspect anyone of theft, and I am satisfied with what effort each of them puts forth. Some even say that people are able to deceive me as they can deceive no one else. If they are right, I am not sorry for it. It is enough if I get a testimonial that I deceive none. If others are not prepared to issue such a certificate to me, I will issue it myself. Untruth hurts me as nothing else does.

*The Diary of Mahadev Desai, Vol. I, pp. 220-21, 10-6-1932*

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Where people work in the family spirit and where each has the same sense of personal responsibility as the others, it is impossible to fix the maximum period applicable to all and may even be improper. How can we frame a rule that one who is physically fit and mentally ready and who has no other service to perform shall not work overtime if he wishes? The long and short of it is that if

there is discrimination and the right spirit in work and no bustle, no one would feel it to be burden. Things are felt as a burden only if they are imposed upon us from outside. Work done spontaneously and joyfully is never oppressive. But he who works in a demoniacal spirit will subject himself to considerable burden from selfishness and suffer a breakdown afterwards. He does not enjoy mental tranquility and we can never take him for our model.

*The Diary of Mahadev Desai, Vol. I, pp. 166-67, 16-6-1932*

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There is nothing like finding one's full satisfaction from one's daily task however humble it may be. To those that wait and watch and pray, God always brings greater tasks and responsibilities.

*The Diary of Mahadev Desai, Vol. I, p. 167, 11-6-1932*

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The man who loves God does not measure his work by the eight-hour system. He works at all hours and is never off duty. As he has opportunity he does good. Everywhere, at all times, and in all places, he finds opportunity to work for God. He carries fragrance with him wherever he goes.

*The Diary of Mahadev Desai, Vol. I, p. 169. 17-6-1932*

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If a man is absorbed in his work, he will not feel the burden of it; it will not therefore wear him down. But if he takes no delight in it, even a little work will be too much for him. For a man in prison a day is as long as a year; for the sensualist a year is as a day. I was soon tired of European music when I heard it before, but now I understand and appreciate something of it.

*The Diary of Mahadev Desai, Vol. I, p. 169, 17-6-1932*

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A scientific experimenter has profound confidence in himself and is therefore never down-hearted. At the same time he is so humble that he is never satisfied with his own work, and is not guilty of drawing hasty conclusions. On the other hand, he measures his progress off and on and declares emphatically

that the result of X can be Y only. Our workers are generally lacking in this humility of the real man of science.

*The Diary of Mahadev Desai, Vol, I, p. 178, 19-6-1932*

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A detached worker is capable of working very much harder than one who is attached. It seems as if he has nothing to do, and he is the last to be attacked by fatigue. As a matter of fact he should be above fatigue, but that is only the ideal.

*The Diary of Mahadev Desai, Vol. I, p. 189, 22-6-1932*

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All our philosophy is dry as dust if it is not immediately translated into some act of loving service.

*The Diary of Mahadev Desai, Vol. I, p. 261, 31-6-1932*

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This is enough for the man who is true to himself: "Do not undertake anything beyond your capacity, and at the same time do not harbour the wish to do less than you can." One who takes up tasks beyond his powers is proud and attached; on the other hand one who does less than he can is a thief. If we keep a time-table, we can save ourselves from this last mentioned sin indulged in even unconsciously. I do not say 'save' but only 'can save', for if the time-table is not cheerfully and intelligently adhered to, it does not yield the maximum results.

*The Diary of Mahadev Desai, Vol. I, p. 221, 10-7-1932*

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I am definitely going to live. Who will say that I am dead, so long as a single sister is doing my work? We may leave aside, if we like, the philosophy of the Gita about the immortality of the soul. The immortality to which I refer here, however, is visible to the physical eye. Therefore you are not to be unhinged or disturbed. I do hope you will give a good account of yourself, and thus bring

credit to yourself as also to others around you. Be and remain at peace with yourself by laying at the feet of God body, mind and wealth.

*To A Gandhian Capitalist, p. 137, 19-9-1932*

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And why do you think that we can serve only with the body? The mind is far more powerful instrument of service. They serve best who have perfect purity of heart. Indeed we serve so as to attain perfect purity. Thoughts of the pure in heart can do what bodies with corrupt hearts can never do.

*Selected Letters—II, p. 26*

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Keep up the habit of writing, and always try to improve your hand. But all these things are not an end in themselves; they are only means to an end. The end is performance of one's allotted duty. The whole duty of man is to wish well and to do good to others. And as the first step towards discharging it, you should learn to love one another as your own blood sisters, and share one another's sorrows as well as joys.

*Selected Letters— I, p. 5*

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Let us do good for its own sake, and not in order to win a reward.

*Selected Letters—II, p. 56*

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The Gita first of all points out the *summum bonum* of life and secondly tells us how we should live so as to make continuous progress towards it. Its teaching may be thus summarized: "Discharge fully whatever duty comes your way as you march to your goal, but be detached from the fruits of your actions." This is the principle we apply in solving the problems which face the Ashram. As for thieves, we would certainly invite them to join the Ashram if we could, but as we have not still acquainted the capacity to assimilate such refractory material, we deal with them as we think fit in view of our spiritual poverty. As regards stray cattle and insects which damage our crops, we have not still been

able to devise non-violent methods of dealing with them. We therefore do some violence to them out of sheer helplessness. To drive out stray cattle by shouting at or beating them, to frighten birds away by throwing or pretending to throw stones at them, to destroy insects in course of ploughing operations or otherwise, to catch hold of snakes and carry them out of harm's way or to permit people to kill if that is impossible,—all these things are, I am aware, a negation of the Ashram ideal. But the Ashram and its members are far from perfect. Therefore they take such action, although it is wrong. Thus alone can they find out the way to the Eternal City. I have not the shadow of a doubt that to give up all activity is very much worse than to act as we are doing. The author of the Gita says: "All action is clouded by defects as fire by smoke" (XVIII, 48). Therefore, we should be humble, do our allotted duty in a spirit of service and realize that we are mere tools in the hands of the 'Great Carpenter'.

*Selected Letters—II, pp. 16.17*

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To strive is the whole duty of man. And if the enemy floors us while we continue the struggle to the best of our ability, let us not be down-hearted in the least. We must be on our legs again and resume the struggle. There is no reason to be ashamed so long as we have not contributed to our defeat, for it is not a defeat at all.

*Selected Letters—II, p. 32*

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Faith is either derived or revealed from within. You should derive it from the testimony without exception of all the teachers and seers of all climes, countries and times. A true prayer is not a mere lip expression. Selfless service is prayer.

*Selected Letters—II, p. 33*



## 22. VOLUNTARY POVERTY

Remember please that henceforth our lot is poverty. The more I think of it, the more I feel that it is more blessed to be poor than to be rich. The uses of poverty are far sweeter than those of riches.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. IX, p. 206, 25-3-1919*

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It will never happen that all are equally rich or equally poor at the same time. But if we consider the good and evil aspects [of the various professions] it seems that the world is sustained by farmers. Farmers are of course poor. If a lawyer would boast of his altruism or spirituality, let him earn his livelihood through physical labour and carry on his legal practice without charging anything for it.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. X, p. 206, 2-4-1910*

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Good men have no desire for worldly pursuits. They desire withdrawal from them, that is, *moksha*.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XIII, p. 34, 4-3-1915*

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A person who has embraced poverty in the cause of the country and has dedicated himself to service of others can never lose his mother by death, because all women, old enough to be so, are his mothers. The father also does not die because every eider is like a father to him. Service is his wife; can she ever know death? The rest of the world is like brothers and sisters to him. To go on a mourning visit on the death of one's mother is only a formality. Should money be wasted to follow it out of deference to the world?

*Collected Work, of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XIV PP- 466-67, 2-7-1918*

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Spinning for me is an emblem of fellowship with the poorest of the land and its daily practice is a renewal of the bond between them and ourselves. Thus considered, it is for me a thing of beauty and joy forever. I would prefer to go without a meal than without the wheel and I would like you to understand this great implication of the wheel.

*My Dear Child, p. 79, 10-2-1926*

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The ideal of voluntary poverty is most attractive. We have made progress, but my utter inability to realize it fully in my own life has made it difficult at the Ashram for the others to do much. They have the will but no finished object lesson.

*Bapu's Letters to Mira, p. 182, 6-5-1932*

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From day to day I realize the fact that nature produces every moment the amount needed at that moment and no more. We fail to take count of this fact consciously or unconsciously. This failure is responsible for the universal spectacle of men suffering from surfeit here and from want there. We are devising a corrective for the present situation in which there is starvation on the one hand and the burning of so-called surplus wheat by producers in the U.S.A. on the other. Perfect obedience to nature's law is indeed impossible at present, but that need not worry us.

*The Diary of Mahadev Desai, Vol. I, p. 168, 17-6-1932*

## GLOSSARY

*Abhanga* : devotional metrical poetry in Marathi

*Advaita* : Vedantic concept for Monism

*Aduaitavadins* : believers in Advaita

*Aman* : freedom from desire of respect

*Ashram* : one of the four stages of the Hindu way of life; a place for renunciation; a place for disciplined community life

*Asuri Sampat* : mind's propensities leading to evil darkness

*Avatar* : incarnation

*Bhagawadgita* : The celestial poem containing cream of the deepest Hindu thought—specially highlighting the doctrine of Karma—selfless action

*Bhagawat* : mythological work of divine glory

*Bhakta* : a devotee

*Bhakti* : devotion

*Brahma* : The Supreme

*Brahmabhuta* : one immersed in the spirit of Brahma

*Brahmacharya* : chastity, continence; literally conduct to God-realization

*Chitta* : enlivened mind

*Charvaka* : materialistic school of thought known by the name of its preacher

*Daivi Sampad* : divine-higher propensities of mind leading to man's upliftment

*Daya* : compassion

*Dharma* : one's path of duty; religion

*Dwadasha Mantra* : the sacred verse of 12 syllables dedicated to Lord Krishna

*Gayatri* : consecrated Vedic mantra of immense potency

*Guru* : a spiritual guide; teacher

*Gurudev* : a reverential term for *guru*, *guru* hailed as god

*Jay Rama* : Glory to Rama

*Khadi, Khaddar* : hand-spun & hand-woven cloth-in

*Kshatriya* : a warrior; one belonging to the second division of the pristine Hindu society

*Lok-sangraha* : that leading to conservation of society

*Mantra* : a sacred and pithy verse

*Maya* : denoting illusive nature of the transient world

*Moksha* : salvation; liberation from birth & death

*Muni* : a recluse; one keeping silence to meditate on the Divine

*Mauna* : silence

*Punya* : accrued merit from service & devotion, etc.

*Rakshasas* : demons; evil-doers

*Ramanama* : the name of Rama; recitation of His name

*Ramayana* : the Epic of Rama by Valmiki

*Rishis* : those given to deep austerity & penance to explore Eternity; men of wide vision

*Sadhana* : spiritual practice

*Sattvic* : denoting the divine qualities of mind

*Satyagraha* : clinging to truth; soul-force; Gandhi's weapon of non-violent resistance

*Satyagrahi* : one wedded to Satyagraha doctrine

*Shastras* : scriptures

*Shloka* : metrical verse of devotion

*Sirkar* : Governmental or local authority

*Sthitaprajna* : man of steady mind; one risen above dualities

*Tamas & Rajas* : mind's propensities leading to darkness and self activity respectively

*Tapas* : penance; austerity

*Tapascharya* : one given to practising penance *Thana* : police station

*Vaishnavas* : devotees of Vishnu—the Divine Dispenser

*Vedas* : the Earliest Hindu scriptures in lyrical form emanating perennial wisdom. They are Rigveda, Samveda, Yajurveda and Atharvaveda

*Yajna* : a ritual at the altar of God; sacrifice

*Yamas* : injunctions for religious life

*Yoga* : practice of body, mind & soul for realization *Yogi* : one practising Yoga

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<i>Nos.</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Nos.</i>	<i>Date</i>
1536-37	19-2-'40	14378	7-9-'28
7973	4-3-'22	14942	15-2-'28
7977	4-3-'22	15663	12-10-'29
12350	13-5-'27	16424	2-2-'30
13197	20-4-'28	16948	23-2-'31
13275	1-9-'27	17023	29-4-'31
14120	28-4-'27	18565	30-9-'32

14130	28-5-'27	18622	15-11-'32
18622	24-11-'32	23905	9-10-'32
19127	24-11-'32	23961	29-11-'47
20348	24-2-'33	26400	20-9-'32
21535	26-7-'33	26409	15-11-'34
22641	10-12-'34	26412	19-2-'37
21642	3-1-'35	26413	9-4-'37
22663	25-1-'41	26415	23-9-'37
22666	26-7-'47	29503	30-9-'33
23126	23-7-'39		

1. Gandhi Nidhi Nos.
2. Sabarmati (Ashram)