



War and Ahimsa Gandhi on Kashmir

Introduced and Compiled by
Kannan T

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Gandhi on Kashmir

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Introduction

[This introduction to Gandhi's writings on Kashmir was written on 1st September 2019 and was published in Tamizhini magazine. The book was published in Tamil by Yaavarum Publishers in October, 2019. It has almost been one year since the ushering in of an unproclaimed emergency in Kashmir. Not much has changed during the last year. I am publishing this introduction, along with Gandhi's utterances on Kashmir, as an ebook in English without too many changes now, in the hope that this will help in bringing about a better understanding of the historical circumstances of accession of Kashmir to India, especially the role of Gandhi in it.

- Kannan T, 2-August-2020]

Jammu and Kashmir has faced many wars, terrorism and people's protests ever since India gained independence. Today, this land is encountering another major political challenge. A state, which was given special status, has lost its special status, and moreover, has lost the status of a state, being split into two Union Territories. The political leaders of Kashmir and a few thousand people have been imprisoned. More armed forces have been sent to Kashmir, which was already one of the most militarised zones in the world. Opposition leaders have been prevented from entering Kashmir. Most shops have been shut for almost two months. Mobile lines and the internet have been largely cut-off. Access to the media has been restricted. An unproclaimed state of emergency is underway since the first week of August, 2019.

The accession of Jammu and Kashmir to India was done under special circumstances, unlike any other Indian state. The Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir, Hari Singh, belonged to the Hindu Dogra community. But the majority of people in his kingdom were Muslims. The valley of Kashmir had been sold by the British in 1846, under the Treaty of Amritsar, to his great-grandfather, Gulab Singh, then the ruler of Jammu, a feudatory of Punjab, for helping the British to defeat the Sikh army. Eventually the Dogras came to rule over Jammu, Kashmir, Ladakh, Baltistan, and Gilgit. Jammu and Kashmir was one of the largest Muslim majority regions in the Indian subcontinent. There was a festering

resentment amongst the Muslims, since Rajputs from Jammu and other Hindus from outside the state were occupying positions of power. A ‘Kashmir for the Kashmiris’ movement was started, sponsored by the more educated Kashmiri Pandits. But when the Kashmiri Pandits also started improving their status in government service, ‘this aggravated the Muslims still further’. By the 1930s and 40s, Sheikh Abdullah had emerged as the most popular people’s leader in Kashmir. He had helped found All-Jammu Kashmir Muslim Conference in 1932 but later gave it a secular character, forming the National Conference, including the Sikhs and Hindus. He developed a close rapport with Jawaharlal Nehru and the Indian National Congress. Breaking with Abdullah, the Muslim Conference was revived by Ghulam Abbas, a Muslim from Jammu, but it could not match the popularity of the National Conference. Sheikh Abdullah developed a ‘New Kashmir’ manifesto, which was considered to be ‘one of the most advanced socialist programmes of its time’. The manifesto focussed on giving ‘land to the tiller’ and helped ‘the leadership to divert the minds of the majority of people from the communal issues to economic ones.’ Abdullah won the support of the Indian National Congress for the manifesto.

Later, the National Conference launched a ‘Quit Kashmir’ agitation against the Maharaja in 1946. The Prime Minister of Jammu and Kashmir, Ram Chandra Kak, imposed martial law. Sheikh Abdullah was imprisoned when he attempted to go to Delhi to meet Nehru. Nehru went to Kashmir in June, 1946, to defend Abdullah; he was barred from entering the State, and when he persisted by standing at the border for five hours, he was let in but was arrested and detained in a dak-bungalow. However, Maulana Azad, the then President of the Congress, and Gandhi asked Nehru to come back to India on account of important discussions on the Cabinet Mission plan, telling him he was free to go at a later date. Nehru later went to Kashmir again, in July 1946, to attend part of Abdullah’s trial but could not meet the Maharaja. He had promised to come back but could not return. On the eve of partition, it was felt that his visit would be seen as a political move to sway Kashmir to India. Gandhi offered to go in his place. Mountbatten also visited Kashmir. After a number of vacillating exchanges between Mountbatten, Nehru, Patel and Gandhi, an exasperated Nehru wrote to Gandhi, “As between visiting

Kashmir when my people need me there and being Prime Minister, I prefer the former." [July 28, 1947]. Gandhi finally went to Kashmir on 1st August, 1947. He agreed not to give any political speeches but was allowed to conduct public prayer.

Two days before he started for Kashmir, he said at a prayer meeting in Delhi, "The people of Kashmir should be asked whether they want to join Pakistan or India. Let them do as they want. The ruler is nothing. The people are everything. The ruler will be dead one of these days but the people will remain." [Jul 29, 1947]

On his first day at Srinagar, the city was illuminated to celebrate the restoration of Gilgit of Kashmir. Pyarelal writes, in *The Last Phase*, "What are these illuminations for?" Gandhiji asked. On being told the reason, he remarked: 'A great mistake. They should have taken this opportunity immediately to proclaim autonomy for Gilgit within Kashmir.' Almost hundred per cent Muslim in its population, Gilgit had thoroughly been saturated with the separatist tradition sedulously fostered under the Political Department's regime. In a flash Gandhiji saw the seeds of future trouble in an unqualified inclusion of Gilgit in Kashmir." Gandhi met the Maharaja, the wife of Sheikh Abdullah and other functionaries of the National Conference. 'A gathering of nearly 5,000 Kashmiri women had been waiting since 11 o'clock in the morning for Gandhiji. They insisted upon his darshan. This necessitated another difficult drive at 8 o'clock in the evening.' The next day he was driven down to Jammu. "India will be free on the 15th of August, what of Kashmir?" a deputation of workers asked him at Jammu. "That will depend on the people of Kashmir," Gandhiji replied. They all wanted to know whether Kashmir would join the Union or Pakistan. "That again," answered Gandhiji, "should be decided by the will of the Kashmiris."

Gandhi sent a note to Nehru and Patel, in which he said he had told the Prime Minister about his unpopularity among the people, and he had agreed to resign if the Maharaja wished him to. He added about his meeting with Maharaja and his heir:

"Both admitted that with the lapse of British Paramountcy the true Paramountcy of the people of Kashmir would commence. However much they might wish to join the Union,

they would have to make the choice in accordance with the wishes of the people. How they could be determined was not discussed at that interview...

Bakshi (Ghulam Mohammad) was most sanguine that the result of the free vote of the people, whether on the adult franchise or on the existing register, would be in favour of Kashmir joining the Union provided of course that Sheikh Abdullah and his co-prisoners were released, all bans were removed and the present Prime Minister was not in power. Probably he echoed the general sentiment. I studied the Amritsar treaty properly called ‘sale deed’. I presume it lapses on the 15th instant. To whom does the State revert? Does it not go to the people ?” [Aug 6, 1947]

While speaking at a refugee camp in Wah on his way back, he said, “common sense dictated that the will of the Kashmiris should decide the fate of Kashmir and Jammu. The sooner it was done the better. How the will of the people would be determined was a fair question. He hoped that the question would be decided between the two Dominions, the Maharaja Saheb and the Kashmiris. If the four could come to a joint decision, much trouble would be avoided. After all Kashmir was a big State; it had the greatest strategic value, perhaps in all India.” [Aug 5, 1947]

Gandhi was consistent in his advocacy of listening to the people’s will, and at the same time, wished to avoid the balkanisation of India. Earlier, on June 24th, 1947, he had spoken at a prayer meeting about the attempts by C.P.Ramaswamy Iyer, the Diwan of Travancore, to keep Travancore independent.

“Sir C. P. says that Gandhi and the Congress are all too willing to grant independence to N.W.F.P. but not to Travancore. How can a learned man like Sir. C. P. say such a silly thing? If Travancore becomes independent then Hyderabad, Kashmir, Indore and other States will also declare themselves independent and India will be Balkanized. [...] In N. W. F. P. it is the voice of the people. But in Travancore it is a Maharaja and his Prime Minister speaking on behalf of the Hindus. Sir C. P. cannot throw dust into people’s eyes by advancing the example of N.W.F.P. I would suggest to Sir C. P. that Travancore should come into the Constituent Assembly.”

Earlier, in an interview with Sir M.Derling in April, 1947, he had said presciently,

“It hurts me to talk about the partition of the country. What will be the plight of a body if it is dismembered? Similarly, dismemberment of a prosperous country like India will utterly ruin the people. Today it is the country which is being divided, tomorrow it may be Kashmir and the day after it may be the State of Junagadh in the remote corner of Kathiawar. How is it all possible? Let the whole of India be handed over to the League. I would not mind it. That is why I believe that if, after the exit of the British power, the people of India are not awakened, India will become the battle-ground for the Princes to fight among themselves and the big ones among them will try to gain sovereignty by swallowing up the smaller ones.” [Apr 8, 1947]. Handing over the rule to Muslim League was not a mere rhetoric. He had already made a similar proposal to Lord Mountbatten and the Congress leaders.

After the partition and independence of India, neither the Maharaja nor a majority of the Muslim population in Kashmir wanted to accede to Pakistan, and the Maharaja chose to be independent. But Pakistan considered this to be a serious loss. The Maharaja replaced Prime Minister Kak with M.C.Mahajan. Srinath Raghavan writes in his book, War and Peace in Modern India, “M.C. Mahajan, met Patel and Nehru, and informed them that the maharaja was willing to accede but wanted political reforms to be deferred. Nehru insisted that Sheikh Abdullah, who was incarcerated by the Kashmir authorities, should be released and that a popular government be immediately installed; only then should Kashmir declare accession to India. On 29 September Sheikh Abdullah was set free.”

With indirect support from Pakistan, Afridi tribesmen from the North West Frontier Province, invaded Kashmir. ‘On 22 October 1947 nearly 5000 tribesmen seized Muzaffarabad, then Domel, Uri; and the raiders surged towards Srinagar. Two days later a beleaguered maharaja formally offered to accede to India and requested Delhi for military assistance.’ The Kashmiris, since they had largely been dependent on the British army, did not have adequate military expertise or weapons. Margaret Bourke-White, the American photo-journalist, who travelled through that region during that time,

writes in her book, *Halfway to Freedom*, “With little but sticks and clubs and their bare hands, the volunteer People’s Army held their besieged capital...” The Maharaja of Kashmir signed the Instrument of Accession on 27th October, 1947. Special concessions were provided to Kashmir. These concessions were later incorporated into the Article 370 of the Indian Constitution. The Indian government was then inclined to accept the accession of Kashmir ‘subject to the proviso that the peoples’ wishes would be ascertained following the restoration of status quo ante.’ Sheikh Abdullah had also supported the accession and was shaping public opinion in favour of it. Indian forces were airlifted to Kashmir, and they arrived in time to defend Srinagar.

There were issues related to accession in Junagadh and Hyderabad too. These states were ruled by Muslim rulers, who did not want to accede to India, but the population was largely Hindu. When Mountbatten and Jinnah met at Lahore on 1 November, 1947, they spent over three hours discussing Junagadh, Hyderabad, and Kashmir. India wanted Pakistan to agree that ‘where the Ruler of a state does not belong to the community to which the majority of his subjects belong, and where the state has not acceded to that Dominion whose majority community is the same as the state’s, the question whether the state should finally accede to one or the other of the Dominions should in all cases be decided by an impartial reference to the will of the people.’ Nehru was willing to conduct a UN-supervised plebiscite ‘after complete law and order have been restored’. But Jinnah declined. Srinath Raghavan writes on the possible reasons for Jinnah’s stand, ‘First, Jinnah believed that despite India’s intervention the invasion might yet succeed; this explains his desire to send more tribesmen to Kashmir. [...] Second, Jinnah was not oblivious of the possibility that, owing to the havoc wrought by the tribesmen, Pakistan might lose a plebiscite.’

Outside Kashmir too, all along the border areas of India, there was enormous chaos, and large scale massacres were rampant. Muslims from India and Hindus and Sikhs from Pakistan were forced to migrate on a scale unprecedented in history. Many thousands of Hindu, Sikh and Muslim refugees, having lost their houses, wealth and relatives, were gathered in New Delhi.

In this complex political chaos, Gandhi moved to New Delhi after helping to bring a relative peace in Calcutta. He kept meeting the people, and, everyday, addressed large gatherings during his prayer meetings. He also spoke about Kashmir.

In this book, we have compiled, from the Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, his speeches and writings on Kashmir from the time of invasion in October 1947 till his death in January 1948. There are also some excerpts from his earlier pronouncements on Kashmir.

Gandhi felt a great darkness had enveloped him during his final years. He saw his ahimsa being put to its most stringent test. He also realized that while he considered ahimsa to be a creed, a way of life and the ultimate truth, his longtime associates had only used it only as a strategy and a tool to secure independence. Having won the freedom without swords and blood, the people were bathing their land in blood. The country was partitioned against his wishes. He did not hesitate to concede that the Indian Independence movement was not truly non-violent. Yet, amidst all this darkness, Gandhi did not lose hope in non-violence. Some of the most remarkable achievements were made through non-violence in Noakhali and Calcutta, when the region was being swept by a murderous rage and bigotry. Enormous losses, on the scale of the Western India, were averted to an extent.

But Gandhi did not protest when the Indian military forces were sent to protect Kashmir. Gandhi, who had once considered that independent India did not need an armed military, did not oppose vehemently when armed forces were sent to Kashmir. He sometimes expressed his helplessness. It needs to be explored if Gandhi, who had made some compromises to his creed of non-violence when he was involved in the South African wars and the First World War, again made compromises in his stance on Kashmir. We have to concede that Gandhi, who had prepared the Indians to non-violently oppose even Hitler and the Japanese forces during the second World War, slackened his strict insistence on non-violence, when Kashmir was under siege. Gandhi always held it was better to fight a powerful opponent with arms than to die like cowards without resisting. He emphasized that view again, now. He said, "Supposing an army of

a lakh of armed Afridis invaded the place and a handful of people offered armed resistance in order to protect the innocent children and women and died fighting, then they could be called non-violent in spite of their using arms.” While he was extremely averse to clandestine attacks on individuals to assassinate them, he did praise the valour of people like Subhas Chandra Bose who had waged an armed war against mighty opponents. And he claimed non-violence was far greater than armed resistance. But to see him terming this also ‘non-violent in spite of their using arms’ is surprising. He had written once, ‘It is not possible for a modern State based on force, non-violently to resist forces of disorder, whether external or internal. [...] It is claimed that a State can be based on non-violence, i. e., it can offer non-violent resistance against a world combination based on armed force.’ [May 2: 1946, Harijan]. He was also aware there was no one to listen to his call for pure non-violence when the country and the people were in such turmoil. We can see this as an instance when, instead of letting thousands of people die to uphold his creed, he decided to not place his creed as an impediment in the way of saving Kashmir.

The question was asked of Gandhi also if it was right for him, who had explored great heights of ahimsa, to support war? In an interview to Kingsley Martin, he quipped, he was not in charge of the Government and therefore could not guide their policies; nor did he think that the members of the present Government believed in non-violence. He added, “the truly non-violent man could never hold power himself. He derived power from the people whom he served. For such a man or such a government, a non-violent army would be a perfect possibility. The voters then would themselves say, ‘We do not want any military for our defence.’ A non-violent army would fight against all injustice or attack but with clean weapons. Non-violence did not signify that man must not fight against the enemy and by enemy was meant the evil which men did, not human beings themselves.” He went on to say that if he were the leader of Kashmir, like Sheikh Abdullah, he would have such an army but Sheikh Abdullah quite honestly and humbly thought otherwise.

If he had the opportunity to go to Kashmir again, which was not possible due to the prevailing conditions in Delhi, he might have taken a different approach. Pyarelal

mentions, "Even in the matter of Kashmir, though he had expressed his admiration for the courage of the fighters and the unity of purpose and cohesion shown by all sections of the population to stem the tide of invasion, he felt that a golden opportunity had been let slip. The Indian Government had a perfect right, as the world understands right, to send and it did what was just the right thing for it to do in the circumstances in sending troops to the defence of Kashmir at the request of the Maharaja backed by that of the National Conference. But that again was not his way. He would have liked to see the whole of India rally to the side of the defenders in non-violent defence of their soil against aggression. The aggression was so unprovoked, he felt, and the case of the defenders so manifestly just that if the people of Kashmir had resisted the invasion non-violently to the last, it would have won the admiration and sympathy of the whole world. 'I would like to go to Kashmir myself,' he once remarked to me while going to meet Lord Mountbatten towards the close of December. 'I am sure if the people followed my way, victory would be theirs.' With a sigh he added: 'If only the situation in Delhi would let me.'" Gandhi had told Pyarelal again [after the fast in January 1948], 'something about his going to Kashmir, if he was successful in Delhi, to see what non-violence of his conception could do there.'

Gandhi also sent his Parsi friends, Jehangir Patel and Dr.Dinshaw Mehta, as his personal emissaries to Pakistan to hold talks with Jinnah, Liaquat Ali Khan and others. They made considerable progress there. A tribunal consisting of the Prime Ministers of India and Pakistan to resolve all outstanding issues, including Kashmir, was mooted. If the formula was accepted, the United Nations Organization could be asked to suspend the discussions on Kashmir. A visit by Gandhi to Pakistan was planned. "Tentative dates for Gandhi's arrival were fixed - February 8th or 9th. In Delhi, Gandhi was visited by a Pakistani Muslim who painted an enthusiastic word-picture of 'a fifty-mile procession of Hindus returning to Pakistan with Gandhi himself at the head'. The idea delighted Gandhi. Better days, it seemed, were about to dawn," wrote Jehangir Patel and Marjorie Sykes. Gandhi also referred to this visit, in a letter, "I have sent Jehangir Patel and Dinshaw Mehta to have talks with Jinnah, Liaquat Ali and others. I am hoping that I shall get considerable help from Suhrawardy in my projected visit to Pakistan. But all this is

day- dreaming.” [January 24, 1948]. This ambitious plan, which rested on the moral influence of the Mahatma, was snuffed by three bullets of an assassin.

Gandhi’s speeches and interviews during this period show how while a war was raging outside, another war was raging inside him too, between his pragmatism and idealism. He told Vincent Sheen, two days before his assassination, “See what India is doing. See what is happening in Kashmir. I cannot deny that it is with my tacit consent. They would not lend ear to my counsel. Yet, if they were sick of it, I could today point them a way.”

Many of the pieces in this selection were speeches delivered in explosive circumstances, in front of people who were feeling forlorn and enraged. Gandhi spoke to give them solace and encouragement and hope, and to avoid violence and to share news. They were mostly delivered in colloquial Hindi and later translated into English. Hence they may lack the meticulousness and precision of his other writings. Yet, we can see his unique perspectives, sharp words, irrefutable logic and love for people gleaming at many places.

We can also observe some common threads emerging from these speeches.

Firstly, he emphasized that people’s opinion was paramount, be it in Kashmir or other territories, and neither India nor Pakistan should force them to accede. Gandhi supported the accession of the Muslim majority State of Kashmir to India, more because of Sheikh Abdullah than the Maharaja. He believed Sheikh Abdullah had the backing of all Kashmiris. “If it had been only the Maharaja who had wanted to accede to the Indian Union, I could never support such an act. The Union Government agreed to the accession for the time being because both the Maharaja and Sheikh Abdullah, who is the representative of the people of Jammu and Kashmir, wanted it. Sheikh Abdullah came forward because he claims to represent not only the Muslims but the entire masses in Kashmir.” [Nov 11, 1947]

When it came to listening to the will of the people, he thought it was essential and did not base his principle on time, place and gains.

“It makes no difference to me whether it is the question of Kashmir or Hyderabad or Junagadh. Let no one be forced into anything. Let there be no coercion. But I must respectfully submit that today Kashmir is not ruled by its Maharaja. In other States too there are no Princes as we used to know them. They were the creation of the British. Now the British have gone. They had installed them as rulers because they could rule through them and exercise power. Kashmir has still to establish popular rule in the State. The same is the case with other States like Hyderabad and Junagadh. In my view there is no difference between them. Real rulers of the States are its people. If the people of Kashmir are in favour of opting for Pakistan, no power on earth can stop them from doing so. But they should be left free to decide for themselves. The people cannot be attacked and forced by burning their villages. If the people of Kashmir, in spite of its Muslim majority, wish to accede to India no one can stop them.

The Pakistan Government should stop its people if they are going there to force the people of Kashmir. If it fails to do that, it will have to shoulder the entire blame. If the people of the Indian Union are going there to force the Kashmiris, they should be stopped, too, and they should stop by themselves. About this I have no doubt at all.” [Oct 26, 1947]

“...only the people of a particular State have a legal right to accede to one of the Unions. If the Provisional Government does not represent the people of Junagadh at any stage, it is merely a group of people who are unjustly occupying seats of power in the State and it should be driven out by both the Dominions. If any ruler joins any of the Unions in his personal capacity, the Dominion cannot stand before the world to justify his action. From this point of view, I think that the Nawab’s accession has been baseless from the very beginning till it is proved that the people of the State have given their consent to the accession by the Nawab. The dispute as to which Union Junagadh would finally accede to can be resolved only by taking public opinion, that is, by referendum. This task should be properly carried out and should not involve violence or show of violence. The stand taken by the Government of Pakistan and now also by the Prime Minister of Junagadh, has created a strange situation. Who was to decide whether Pakistan was in the right or the Union Government? One cannot even think that it can be decided by an

appeal to the sword. The only honourable way is to decide the matter through arbitration. We can find many impartial individuals in the country itself but, if the parties concerned cannot agree to arbitration by Indians, I for one will have no objection to any impartial person from any part of the world.

Whatever I have said about Junagadh equally applies to Kashmir and Hyderabad. Neither the Maharaja of Kashmir nor the Nizam of Hyderabad has any authority to accede to either Union without the consent of his people.” [Nov 11, 1947]

Secondly, Gandhi was greatly impressed by the unity displayed by the Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims in Kashmir. About an earlier Sultan of Kashmir, he had said, “In days gone by when, accompanied by Hindus, Jainuluddin set out on a pilgrimage to Kashi, he got repaired all derelict temples he passed on the way” [June 12, 1947]. He saw Kashmir as the place where the idea of partition will be proven wrong. He could have thought of the accession of Kashmir to India as a victory for secular thinking. “The poison which has spread amongst us should never have spread. Through Kashmir that poison might be removed from us. If they make such a sacrifice in Kashmir to remove that poison, then our eyes also would be opened,” he said. “It is my prayer that in the present darkness in the country Kashmir may become the star that provides light,” he hoped and prayed [Dec 29, 1947]. He was greatly distressed when the Hindus and Sikhs attacked Muslims in Jammu.

Thirdly, it is for this same reason, his admiration for its secularist nature, that he opposed any suggestion to partition Jammu and Kashmir. It is evident that he thought partitioning Jammu and Kashmir along religious lines tantamounts to India accepting the principle of partition. “...Jammu and Kashmir is one State. It cannot be partitioned. If we start the process of partitioning where is it going to end? It is enough and more than enough that India has been partitioned into two. If we partition Kashmir, why not other States?” he asked [Dec 25, 1947]. This was his strong position.

Fourthly, we can also observe the faith and admiration he had for one person, Sheikh Abdulla, influencing his position on Kashmir. Many Kashmiris were inspired by Abdulla

to fight and die bravely. History has forgotten the martyrdom of people like Mir Maqbool Sherwani. Gandhi records that history in his speeches. Margaret Bourke-White gives in her book, a more detailed narration of the fight of Maqbool and his crucification-like death. (Mulk Raj Anand's novel 'Death Of A Hero' was also based on Shewani's life.) Margaret was the last journalist to have interviewed Gandhi. She too had seen Sheikh Abdullah in action and wrote highly of him. She felt that the People's government of Sheikh Abdullah of that time was more progressive and secular than the Indian government and acted with speed on issues like land reforms. Therefore, it should not surprise us that Gandhi was attracted by Abdullah. But, in his last letter on Kashmir [Jan 28, 1948, addressee not given in CWMG], he hinted at the danger lurking in taking a position that banked too much on one person. "Sheikh Abdullah is a brave man. But one wonders whether he may not betray in the end. I hold that no man can betray another, for ultimately one is betrayed by oneself. Therefore on this account I have no worry."

Fifthly, Gandhi initially advocated using an impartial arbitrator from within India (or Pakistan) to resolve the disputes over states like Kashmir, and if no trusted person is found here, an impartial person from any part of the world could be brought in. But later, he was more strongly opposed to the idea of seeking the intervention of outsiders. He did not condemn the act of India taking the Kashmir issue to the United Nations. He accepted that India was running out of options. But he found it difficult to endorse it. "Will not the Governments of Pakistan and the Union come together and decide the issue with the help of impartial Indians? Is there no one in India who is impartial? I am sure we have not become bankrupt to that extent," he lamented. "About Kashmir I feel that there is no need for us to go to Lake Success [UNO]. Still we shall see what comes about," he wrote in a letter [Jan 27, 1948]. Pyarelal also observed, referring to an incident on the same day [Jan 27], "Gandhi was very disappointed with the way in which the Security Council of UNO was dealing with the Kashmir question. Instead of considering India's complaint and getting the aggression vacated, the stage was being set to ask India to withdraw her troops from Kashmir as preliminary to the holding of a plebiscite which would decide the future of Kashmir. It seemed to have become a packed body, where falsehood and prevarication enjoyed a high premium. 'Today they

are preparing to put Pandit Nehru's Government in the dock,' he remarked during his journey back from dargah. 'Unless we are extremely wary, we shall come out with our name tarnished.' "

I hope this selection of the thoughts of Gandhi will help us in getting a deeper understanding of Gandhi and the tumultuous period when Kashmir acceded to India.

Ramachandra Guha, wrote in the Telegraph [Aug 17,2019], "Had Gandhi been alive, he would perhaps have been most appalled by three events in the modern history of Kashmir: the arrest of Sheikh Abdullah by the Nehru government in 1953, the ethnic cleansing of the Pandits by Islamic jihadists in 1989-90, and the unilateral abrogation of Article 370 and the savage crackdown by the Narendra Modi government on Kashmiris in 2019."

We can make some more inferences from the views of Gandhi, not limited to what he could articulate during this period, and speculate on how Gandhi would have viewed some of the developments in Kashmir, since August 2019.

- i. Gandhi would have held Pakistan responsible for cross-border terrorism but never make that an excuse for India to subjugate its own people. He would have revolted against the arrest of the entire political leadership in Kashmir.
- ii. Gandhi could never have been able to approve the unilateral abrogation of Article 370. He could never have deemed the governor appointed by the Central Government as a substitute for a State Government elected by the people or the Constituent Assembly. Even if it passes legal muster, he would have considered it morally reprehensible.
- iii. The idealist Gandhi would have been extremely uncomfortable with the partition of Ladakh and Jammu and Kashmir. "I have heard people talking in whispers that Kashmir could be divided. Jammu would come to the Hindus and the Muslims would have Kashmir. I cannot even think of such divided loyalty and division of the Indian States into several parts," Gandhi had said [Nov 11, 1947]. But if he

- was convinced that it was the dominant will of the people of Ladakh, the pragmatic Gandhi may have come to terms with it.
- iv. Gandhi would have been repulsed by the conversion of a state into two Union Territories. If anything, he would have argued for more decentralisation and more powers to a region beset with internal problems.
 - v. He would have been extremely pained by the heavy militarization of both sides of Kashmir. He would have been appalled by the denial of civil rights to a whole people for such a long period. He summarized his idea on martial law, when he said, “It has been suggested that Punjab should be placed under martial law. I have seen Punjab once placed under martial law. I know what martial law means. It cannot change men’s hearts. I shall still say that if Muslims want to save Islam, Hindus Hinduism and the Sikhs their Gurudwaras, they must together resolve that they will not fight...” [June 24, 1947]
 - vi. Gandhi would have felt most let down by the forced exodus of Kashmiri Pandits from Kashmir. This was a big blow to his vision of an ideal secular society in Kashmir, which ‘may become the star that provides light.’ He would urge the civil society in Kashmir to welcome the Kashmiri Pandits back, reinstate them in their own localities and protect them against any insurgent attacks. At the same time, he would not allow what happened to Kashmiri Pandits thirty years ago to become a justification for what is unleashed on Kashmir now.
 - vii. A plebiscite in the whole of Jammu and Kashmir, after withdrawal of the Pakistani forces, as proposed in 1947-48 has become increasingly infeasible. Over the next few years, Nehru considered various ways in which a plebiscite could be held but none of them materialised, due to disagreements with Pakistan. Gandhi might have still advocated means to listen to the will of the people in the Indian Administered Kashmir, irrespective of the stance of Pakistan, and do everything possible to convince the people that it was best to remain with India.

Gandhi's ideas on Kashmir, though far removed in time, still have the power to lead us towards light, not only in Kashmir but on various other issues as well. His emphasis on truth, non-violence and compassion is timeless and universal.

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Part I

Before the Raids

(1)

I and all are of opinion that your presence here is essential above everything else. Remember that you are under an organisation which you have adorned so long. Its needs must be paramount for you and me. Remember also that your honour is ours and your obedience to the Congress call automatically transfers to it the duty of guarding your honour. The Committee is also solicitous equally with you about Sheikh Abdullah's case and the welfare of the Kashmir people. Therefore I expect you to return in answer to this. You will tell Maharaja Saheb that as soon as you are freed by the Congress you will return to Kashmir to retrieve your honour and fulfil your mission. ⁽¹⁾

Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. II, p. 346

1. Jawaharlal Nehru along with Asaf Ali had proceeded to Kashmir to arrange for the defence of Sheikh Abdullah, President, Kashmir National Conference and his colleagues, who had been arrested by the State Government for demanding a democratic set-up. At Kohala, on the border of Kashmir State, an order was served on Jawaharlal Nehru prohibiting his entry into the State. On his refusal to obey the order he was arrested and detained in a dak-bungalow. In response to Abul Kalam Azad's urgent summons to return to Delhi the addressee on June 21 replied : "In view of the grave courtesy offered to me...I am unable to return until full liberty of movement is accorded to me. I request the Working Committee to proceed without me." In reply to it Gandhiji drafted this on behalf of Abul Kalam Azad.

(DRAFT REPLY TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU, New Delhi, June 21, 1946)

(2)

Dr. Lohia is a learned man. I may not agree with his views but this does not mean that I can remain untouched by his case. You must all be as much pained as I am by the arrest of Dr. Lohia and the happenings in Goa. I carried on some correspondence with the authorities in Goa, but it was infructuous. To tell any Indian that he cannot enter Goa is as insulting as to tell me that I may not enter any particular part of India. Goa is as much a part of India as Kashmir or any other State. It is intolerable that Dr. Lohia should be treated as a foreigner and denied the right of entry into Goa.

(SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING, New Delhi, October 2, 1946)

(3)

It hurts me to talk about the partition of the country. What will be the plight of a body if it is dismembered? Similarly, dismemberment of a prosperous country like India will utterly ruin the people. Today it is the country which is being divided, tomorrow it may be Kashmir and the day after it may be the State of Junagadh in the remote corner of Kathiawar. How is it all possible? Let the whole of India be handed over to the League. I would not mind it. That is why I believe that if, after the exit of the British power, the people of India are not awakened, India will become the battle-ground for the Princes to fight among themselves and the big ones among them will try to gain sovereignty by swallowing up the smaller ones.

(INTERVIEW WITH SIR M. DERLING,
BHANGI COLONY, NEW DELHI, April 8, 1947)

(4)

The Congress wants to establish democratic rule. It will not act against the interests of the Princes either. But the Princes will be able to retain their position only when they

become the trustees of their subjects like the Raja of Oundh⁽¹⁾. A small principality like Oundh will be long remembered only because it bowed to the sovereignty of the people. As against this, the State of Kashmir, although it is worth millions, will be wiped out if it does not listen to the voice of its people. Hitherto these rulers may have behaved arrogantly with the support of the British authorities; but now they must realize that their authority issues from the people. I made a special mention of Kashmir because at the moment our eyes are fixed on it. But this applies to all the native State.

1. Appasaheb Pant

(SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING, New Delhi, June 7, 1947)

(5)

In days gone by when, accompanied by Hindus, Jainuluddin⁽¹⁾ set out on a pilgrimage to Kashi, he got repaired all derelict temples he passed on the way.

(SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING, New Delhi, June 12, 1947)

1. Sultan of Kashmir; contemporary of Rana Kumbha of Chittor, the great-grand-father of Rana Pratap

(6)

I shudder to see what is going on everywhere around me. With whom must I argue? We are looking up to the British. How long must we? After the fifteenth of August the British will have left. Whom shall we look up to then? It has been suggested that Punjab should be placed under martial law. I have seen Punjab once placed under martial law. I know what martial law means. It cannot change men's hearts. I shall still say that if Muslims want to save Islam, Hindus Hinduism and the Sikhs their Gurudwaras, they must

together resolve that they will not fight. If there is a dispute over division it should be settled not through resort to force but through arbitration.

Sir C. P. says that Gandhi and the Congress are all too willing to grant independence to N.W.F.P. but not to Travancore. How can a learned man like Sir. C. P. say such a silly thing? If Travancore becomes independent then Hyderabad, Kashmir, Indore and other States will also declare themselves independent and India will be Balkanized. Then Badshah Khan does not want to secede from India. He says that he will not join Pakistan. Must he then be a slave of the Hindus? It is said that the Congress has been bribing him. If the Congress had resorted to bribery to gain support of people it could not have survived. Badshah Khan tells us to frame our constitution first. In the meanwhile he will have come to some decision. But what Sir. C. P. says is something quite different. In N. W. F. P. it is the voice of the people. But in Travancore it is a Maharaja and his Prime Minister speaking on behalf of the Hindus. Sir C. P. cannot throw dust into people's eyes by advancing the example of N.W.F.P. I would suggest to Sir C. P. That Travancore should come into the Constituent Assembly.

(SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING, New Delhi, June 24, 1947)

1. C.P.Ramaswamy Iyer - Diwan of Travancore

(7)

DEAR FRIEND,

Panditji was with me at noon and I gave him the purport of the conversation about Kashmir and he immediately asked whether the letter you were kindly sending to the Maharaja Saheb was going by wire or post. I could not give him a satisfactory answer and I said it would probably be by post. He said the letter would take some days to reach there and the reply too might be delayed. I share his anxiety that the matter brooks no delay. For him it is one of personal honour.

I have simply undertaken to replace him to the best of my ability. I would like to free him from anxiety in this matter. I seek your aid.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. GANDHI

(LETTER TO LORD MOUNTBATTEN, NEW DELHI, June 27, 1947)

(8)

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

I have many important things to talk to you about today. I am told I should go to Kashmir. I am not particularly desirous of going there nor should I be. It is a beautiful place, hemmed in by Himalayan peaks. But there are many other beautiful places in the world and many other places of pilgrimage. I once did want to go to Kashmir.

The Maharaja of Kashmir had invited⁽¹⁾ me and Sir Gopalaswami Ayyangar was his Prime Minister. But I can go to Kashmir only when God wills it.

When some time ago Pandit Jawaharlal had been detained in Kashmir⁽²⁾ we needed him here. Maulana Azad was the President of the Congress. He wanted to have Jawaharlal back from Kashmir. Lord Wavell also felt the need of Jawaharlal's counsel and both Wavell and Maulana Saheb were worried. The Maulana then sent word to Jawaharlal that the mission he had undertaken was the mission of the Congress and as a matter of discipline he ought to return when the Congress wanted him to return. Jawaharlal agreed but he said that he would again be going to Kashmir. The Maulana said the matter could be taken up later and if necessary I could be sent there. I also told Jawaharlal that no one could prevent him from doing so later.

Now the Government has changed, the Viceroy has changed. I said I was prepared to go to Kashmir so that Jawaharlal might not be disturbed in what he was doing. But there

were several complications and I said I would go if the Viceroy advised me to go. The Viceroy told me that he himself was going to Kashmir and that I might postpone my visit. So I did not go. And now the situation is such that either Jawaharlal or I should go to Kashmir. He cannot go. There is too much work for him here. Of course the climate of Kashmir is very good and, if he went there, he would gain in health. But there are also lots of problems there. If the head of the Interim Government makes a journey to Kashmir, it can be interpreted as an attempt on his part to make Kashmir accede to India. Therefore, it seems that it would be better for me to go.

Kashmir has a Maharaja and also the subjects of the Maharaja. I am not going to suggest to the Maharaja to accede to India and not to Pakistan. This is not my intention. The real sovereign of the State are the people of the State. If the ruler is not a servant of the people then he is not the ruler. This is my belief and that is why I became a rebel because the British claimed to be the rulers of India and I refused to recognize them as rulers. Now they are about to leave India. Those who had come to rule have agreed to be servants. They now want to be servants in thought, word and deed. Mountbatten now will be Governor-General not because the King has so appointed him but because we, the Interim Government, want to make him the Governor-General. My idea was that a Harijan girl should be made the Governor-General. But I can see that under the present circumstances it is not possible because we have to negotiate with the Princes and attend to various other problems. Yes, when democratic rule is firmly established then it will be possible to do so.

So long the Maharaja of Kashmir could do as he liked under the protection of the Viceroy. Now the power belongs to the people. I do not want that the Maharaja should be inconvenienced. The pandits and mullahs in Kashmir know me at least by name. I have given a lot of money to Kashmiris. In Kashmir, shawl-making, embroidery, etc., are well developed handicrafts. The charkha also has done good work there. The poor people of Kashmir know me.

The people of Kashmir should be asked whether they want to join Pakistan or India. Let them do as they want. The ruler is nothing. The people are everything. The ruler will be

dead one of these days but the people will remain. Some people wonder why I cannot say all this through correspondence. But that way I can do even Noakhali work through correspondence. I do not want to do anything in public when I am in Kashmir. I do not want even a public prayer, though I may have it, for prayer is part of my life.

(Harijan, 24-8-1947, 'Kashmir and Refugees')

1 In 1938

2 It was in June 1946;

(SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING, NEW DELHI, July 29, 1947)

(9)

Gandhiji said that he was glad that he was able to visit the Refugee Camp at Wah and see the patients in the Camp hospital and other appointments in connection with it. He was glad too that he was able to pay what was his second visit to Punja Saheb. He had a talk with the representatives of the Camp.

Before, however, he dealt with matters arising out of these talks with the representatives of the refugees, he said that he would like to say a word about his visit to Kashmir. He had made up his mind not to hold any public meeting or address them but he was able see the workers. Begum Saheba (wife of Sheikh Abdulla) was constantly with him throughout the three days he was in Srinagar. He was able also to see the Maharaja⁽¹⁾ Saheb , the Maharani Saheb and Prime Minister Kak Saheb⁽²⁾. He was sorry that he was not able to see Sheikh Abdullah who was undoubtedly the leader of the Kashmiris. He had not gone there to see the Sheikh Saheb. He was able, however, to hold public prayers for two days in Kashmir and one day in Jammu. These were attended by thousands. He could say that on August 15, all being well, legally the State of Kashmir and Jammu would be independent. But he was sure that the State would not remain in that condition for long after August 15. It had to join either the union or Pakistan. It had a

predominantly Muslim population. But he saw that Sheikh Saheb had fired Kashmiris with local patriotism. British Paramountcy would terminate on the 15th instant. Real paramountcy would then commence. He referred to the paramountcy of the Kashmiris. They had one language, one culture and, so far as he could see, they were one people. He could not distinguish readily between a Kashmiri Hindu and a Kashmiri Mussalman. In the large deputation that he saw it was very difficult for him to know whether it was predominantly Muslim or Hindu. Whatever it was, he had no hesitation in saying that the will of the Kashmiris was the supreme law in Kashmir and Jammu. He was glad to say that the Maharaja Saheb and the Maharani Saheba readily acknowledged the fact. He had the good fortune to read what was euphemistically called the Treaty of Amritsar⁽³⁾ but which was in reality a deed of sale. He supposed that it would be dead on August 15. The seller⁽⁴⁾ was the then British Governor-General and Maharaja Gulab Singh was the buyer. The treaty going, would the State revert to the British and therefore, to England? If to India, to which part? He held that without going into the intricacies of law which he had no right to dilate upon, common sense dictated that the will of the Kashmiris should decide the fate of Kashmir and Jammu. The sooner it was done the better. How the will of the people would be determined was a fair question. He hoped that the question would be decided between the two Dominions, the Maharaja Saheb and the Kashmiris. If the four could come to a joint decision, much trouble would be avoided. After all Kashmir was a big State; it had the greatest strategic value, perhaps in all India. So much for Kashmir.

(Harijan, 24-8-1947)

1 Hari Singh

2 Ramchandra Kak

3 Of March 16, 1846, by which the State of Jammu and Kashmir was

4 Sir Henry Hardinge

(SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING, Wah, August 5, 1947)

(10)

No public prayer was held on the day of arrival but I appeared before them twice or thrice and said that I could not make any public speech, not because there was any prohibition but because I had promised to myself that if I was to make my visit devoid of political significance in so far as it was possible, I must not address public meetings. . . The Prime Minister . . . told me that he had no objection whatsoever to public prayers. . . . Consequently, public prayers were held during the two days following in Srinagar and the third in Jammu.

During the two interviews with the Prime Minister I told him about his unpopularity among the people...He wrote to the Maharaja...that on a sign from him he would gladly resign...The Maharaja had sent me a message...that the Maharaja and the Maharani were anxious to see me. I met them...The heir-apparent with his leg in plaster was also present...Both admitted that with the lapse of British Paramountcy the true Paramountcy of the people of Kashmir would commence. However much they might wish to join the Union, they would have to make the choice in accordance with the wishes of the people. How they could be determined was not discussed at that interview. . . .

Bakshi (Ghulam Mohammad) ⁽²⁾ was most sanguine that the result of the free vote of the people, whether on the adult franchise or on the existing register, would be in favour of Kashmir joining the Union provided of course that Sheikh Abdullah and his co-prisoners were released, all bans were removed and the present Prime Minister was not in power. Probably he echoed the general sentiment. I studied the Amritsar treaty properly called "sale deed". I presume it lapses on the 15th instant. To whom does the State revert? Does it not go to the people ?

(Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. II, pp. 357-8)

1 This was sent to Jawaharlal Nehru "to be shared with Vallabhbhai Patel"; vide the following item.

2 Acting President of the Kashmir National Conference; became Deputy Prime Minister of Kashmir after independence

(NOTE ON KASHMIR VISIT ⁽¹⁾, August 6, 1947)

Part 2

After the Raids

(1)

Now some of you can ask me whether, while I am talking of these things at such length, I am aware of what is happening in Kashmir. Yes, I am quite aware of it. But I know only what has appeared in the newspapers. If all those reports are correct it is really a bad situation. All I can say is that we can neither save our religion nor ourselves in this manner. It is reported that Pakistan is trying to coerce Kashmir to join Pakistan. This should not be so. It is not possible to take anything from anyone by force. I have no doubt about it at all. Today it is Kashmir. Tomorrow it can be Hyderabad. Next it may come to forcing Junagadh or some other State. I do not wish to sit in judgment on this issue. I only believe in the principle that nobody can force anyone.

It makes no difference to me whether it is the question of Kashmir or Hyderabad or Junagadh. Let no one be forced into anything. Let there be no coercion. But I must respectfully submit that today Kashmir is not ruled by its Maharaja. In other States too there are no Princes as we used to know them. They were the creation of the British. Now the British have gone. They had installed them as rulers because they could rule through them and exercise power. Kashmir has still to establish popular rule in the State. The same is the case with other States like Hyderabad and Junagadh. In my view there is no difference between them. Real rulers of the States are its people. If the people of Kashmir are in favour of opting for Pakistan, no power on earth can stop them from doing so. But they should be left free to decide for themselves. The people cannot be attacked and forced by burning their villages. If the people of Kashmir, in spite of its Muslim majority, wish to accede to India no one can stop them.

The Pakistan Government should stop its people if they are going there to force the people of Kashmir. If it fails to do that, it will have to shoulder the entire blame. If the

people of the Indian Union are going there to force the Kashmiris, they should be stopped, too, and they should stop by themselves. About this I have no doubt at all.

(*SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING, New Delhi, October 26, 1947*)

(2)

But today I wish to talk about what is happening in Kashmir. And I must talk about it. You already know what is appearing in the newspapers. It is an astounding story. It happened three days ago. Nobody knew anything about it. Even I did not know what was going to happen. But one might say what has happened has happened. At the moment it is being said that the Afridis, and others have infiltrated there carrying arms with them. Some people even say that it is a mischief done by the Pakistan Government. It may be so, but I am not concerned with it. I am observing what is happening there. On the one side the invaders have gone right up to Punjab and have further reached within 22 miles of Srinagar. From there it is a straight road with no obstructions for them.

When the Maharaja of Kashmir saw this he announced his decision to accede to the Indian Union. The Maharaja wrote a letter to Lord Mountbatten who welcomed his decision.⁽¹⁾ Now that he has taken refuge in the Indian Union he should be protected. But how could protection be given to him? Help could not be sent by road, but only by air. How many soldiers could be sent by plane? Only a few could be sent. Then they have to carry their arms, food supplies and clothes. And their clothes have got to be thick and heavy. Even an excess of one pound of weight becomes an extra burden. When the planes fly in the sky like birds, how many soldiers can go in them? About 1,000 or at the most 1,500 would have gone. On the one hand there are 1,500 soldiers and on the other a large number of men who have come from the North-West Frontier Province. Those men are also of a fighting stock and they are fighting. What can you or I think about it? After all, I have spent my life thinking over these things. I do not believe in armed fighting but I must know what it is. On the one hand are 1,500 Indian soldiers

and on the other all those Afridis and others. And there is Sheikh Abdullah. He is called the “Lion of Kashmir”. That is, he is like a tiger or a lion. He is a sturdy man. You must have seen his photograph. I know him and his Begum also. She is here these days. He is doing whatever a single individual can do. He is not a soldier. There are strong and sturdy Muslims in Kashmir and also strong and sturdy Hindus, Rajputs and Sikhs. So he has decided to do his utmost. He is a Muslim. Kashmir has a large Muslim population.

From here the soldiers have gone fully armed but what should the local Muslims do? Granted that we have all become barbarians— whether here or in Pakistan, no act of madness is left undone—should the people in Kashmir also turn barbarians and indulge in indiscriminate killing of women and children? Should Kashmir be reduced to such a terrible state? Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and his Cabinet came to the conclusion that something should be done and those soldiers were sent. What should they do? Let them fight to the end and die fighting. The job of armed soldiers is to march ahead and repel the attacking enemy. They die in fighting but never retreat. God alone knows what the outcome will be. As it is stated in the *bhajan*, our only wealth is Murari. Our wealth does not consist in money piled up in crores. Even the arms are not our wealth. Whatever is to be done is done only by God. But our duty is to make efforts. And that we should do. So these 1,500 soldiers have made an effort. But they will have really done their duty when all of them lay down their lives in saving Srinagar. And with Srinagar the whole of Kashmir would be saved. What would happen after that?

All that would happen would be that Kashmir would belong to the Kashmiris. I fully agree with Sheikh Abdullah who says that Kashmir belongs to the Kashmiris and not to the Maharaja. But the Maharaja has given all powers to Sheikh Abdullah, leaving it to the Sheikh’s discretion to do whatever should be done and save Kashmir if he can. After all, Kashmir cannot be saved by the Maharaja. If anyone can save Kashmir, it is only the Muslims, the Kashmiri Pandits, the Rajputs and the Sikhs who can do so. Sheikh Abdullah has affectionate and friendly relations with all of them. It is possible that while saving Kashmir, Sheikh Abdullah would have to sacrifice his life, his Begum and his daughter would have to die and all women of Kashmir would have to die. And, if that happens, I am not going to shed a single tear. If we are fated to have a war, there will be

a war. God alone knows, if it is going to be a war between the two only or others too would be involved. If the aggressors have no support or encouragement of Pakistan, I do not know how they can hold on. Maybe, there is no such encouragement. If the people of Kashmir die in the fighting, who would be left behind? Sheikh Abdullah would have gone, because his lion-heartedness consists in dying while fighting and saving Kashmir to his last breath. He would have saved the Muslims and also the Sikhs and the Hindus. The Sheikh is a devout Muslim. His wife also offers *Namaaz*. She had recited Auz-o-Billahi to me in her melodious voice. I have even gone to his house. He would not let the Hindus and the Sikhs there die before the Muslims. What if the Hindus and the Sikhs are in a minority there? If this is the attitude of the Sheikh and if he has influence on the Muslims, all is well with us. The poison which has spread amongst us should never have spread. Through Kashmir that poison might be removed from us. If they make such a sacrifice in Kashmir to remove that poison, then our eyes also would be opened. The tribesmen are only interested in killing. So they invaded Kashmir and even showed their strength. I know all who are with them. But the result would be that if all the Hindus and Muslims of Kashmir sacrificed their lives, that would open our eyes also. Then we would know that not all Muslims were insincere and bad, there were some good men also among them. Similarly it is not true that all Hindus and Sikhs are either good and saintly or worthless and kafirs. I believe that there are good people among all, Hindus and Muslims and Sikhs. And it is due to these good people that the world goes on—not due to the people carrying arms.

This is the substance of the melodious *bhajan* we have heard today. I shall dance with joy even if everybody in Kashmir has to die in defending his land. There would be no sorrow in my heart. The world would go on as usual. All this is the play of God. But we have always to make the effort and that consists in dying while doing the right thing.

- i. *Maharaja Hari Singh had signed the Instrument of Accession of Jammu and Kashmir State on October 27.*

(*SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING, New Delhi, October 29, 1947*)

(3)

(TALK WITH H. S. SUHRAWARDY [October 30, 1947])

Gandhiji told him that the only way for him to vindicate his good faith was sincerely and boldly to condemn the wrong policies and actions of Pakistan.⁽¹⁾ This he himself did not deny. There was, for instance, the invasion by tribesmen of Kashmir. Either Pakistan was behind it, as all circumstantial evidence went to show , or it was not. If Pakistan was involved in it, was it not his duty as an Indian national to proclaim his conviction? On the other hand, if even in the face of the organized forces in such strength in Kashmir, Shaheed maintained that Pakistan had no hand in it, was it not up to him to try to find out who was actually responsible for it?

I suggest to you that it is your duty to ascertain the truth. Nothing would please me more than to find that I was wrong and you were right.

- i. Suhrawardy had complained that nobody trusted him in the Indian Union.

(Pyarelal, Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. II, p. 484)

(4)

Some people say the war has started and they wonder what is going to happen in Kashmir. I say nothing is going to happen. The people of Kashmir are brave. The Hindus, Muslims and the Sikhs are living there in unity. The invaders should be told by the Kashmiris that they should go back to their homes. If they are going to attack, they will have to march on their dead bodies. They cannot win Srinagar so easily. Then nobody will touch our soldiers there. If they die, they will become immortal. Then we can dance with joy and sing. If such a situation arises there, I would ask Shri Dilip Kumar Roy to sing such a *bhajan* that people would start dancing—because those who would have died would become immortal and those surviving would be as good as dead. I

would not be pained at all about this. Of course, I would be pained if people here lost their senses and Pakistan also went mad. The Afridis are like our brothers and the North-West Frontier Province is our own. Then why should they indulge in such acts? We should know who is giving them help. I would only pray that God may dwell in their hearts and the temples of their hearts be illumined with the flame of love. Then the darkness around us will vanish and we will see light all round. This is my prayer. May you all join me in my prayer that such light should pervade both India and Pakistan that people live together in mutual love. Then we may concentrate our efforts to produce food and clothing which are scarce in the country today. Let us forget that there was ever any animosity among us, and become friends. I only wish that we may devote ourselves to this task.

- i. Maharaja Hari Singh had signed the Instrument of Accession of Jammu and Kashmir State on October 27.

(*SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING, NEW DELHI, October 31, 1947*)

(5)

On the one hand we are facing such a situation and on the other is the problem of Kashmir. From the number of planes going from here, I guess they are all carrying soldiers. ⁽¹⁾ Some cowards are running away from there. Why should they do so? And where will they go? Why should they not put up a brave fight and lay down their lives? At this rate even if the whole of Kashmir is razed to the ground I am not going to be affected. I would gladly ask you also to rejoice over it, but on the condition that everybody, young and old, should die there valiantly. If anyone asks why the children also should die there, I will say that the children cannot go anywhere. In any case they stay with their parents. Those people are all there in Kashmir, how can we provide them with arms? A person like me does not need arms. After all, if we are alive, we have to

sacrifice our lives. Then alone can we say that the soul is immortal. If we do not do this, it means that we confuse our soul with our body and worship the body. But the body has to die one day. If the child is on the mother's lap, when the mother dies he also dies. And when one has got to die, let him die willingly. Let them say that if the Afridis have come to destroy them they will prefer to perish of their own accord. Even the soldiers who have gone there would die with pleasure. They have gone there to die.

When can they remain alive? Only when they know that everything is safe and there is no invasion on Kashmir and peace is well-established. Now Kashmir is in the hands of Sheikh Abdullah. He regards the Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs as his brothers. He is a friend of all foreigners, including the Englishmen, who go and live in Kashmir. He invites everyone to enjoy the beauty of Kashmir and taste its fruits. Kashmiri crafts are wonderful. People weave beautiful cloth with their own hands and charge any price they want. Why should they not do so since Kashmir ultimately lives by its crafts? So, the Sheikh is now the ruler of Kashmir. The Maharaja is there of course. But the Sheikh is the ruler in the name of the Maharaja. The Maharaja himself has told him that he may do whatever he wants. If Kashmir is to remain it will remain and if it has to pass out of their hands it will pass out. [...]

Purity is the most powerful weapon. If we wish to free ourselves from such a misfortune, we must all follow what is said in the bhajan. If all the women and men who come to attend the prayer follow this, this transformation will spread throughout the country like the fragrance of the rose. Today we have all lost our senses. But with the coming of purity the present calamity will be swept away like dirt. I would only pray to God that we may all be good, that Kashmir may be free from the present trouble and all may be well with the people who have come here as refugees.

- i. Besides the Indian Air Force transport, a large number of civilian aircrafts were commandeered by the Government to fly soldiers and ammunition to Kashmir.

(*SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING, NEW DELHI, November 1, 1947*)

(6)

You must have read in the newspapers, but I also have some information about what is happening in Kashmir. It should be said that things are quite all right there now. By that I mean that Srinagar is still intact. ⁽¹⁾ The freebooters have not yet been able to take possession of the city. Later on it should become all the more difficult to do so. The plunderers are no fighters. The whole world is going to look down upon them because they have not gone there by right. With the passage of time terrorism is diminishing. Things are in favour of the army which has gone there and it is gaining time. We cannot send a very large army by air, for it involves a lot of trouble. But I gather that the Government is being helped in every way. [Private airlines] are all willingly helping and that is why troops are easily sent by planes. The planes do not belong to the Government. The private companies owning the planes have handed them over to the Government with the idea of helping in a worthwhile cause.

One thing more—we all praise Subhas Babu's intelligence and courage for mobilizing the Azad Hind Fauj. And he does deserve our praise, for while he was out of the country he felt it would be worth while to organize an army. He was not a soldier. He was an ordinary Indian like any lawyer or barrister. He had no military training. He might have learnt horse-riding as is usual with men in the Civil Service. But he must have studied military science later on. Now, I gather that two officers ⁽²⁾ of the army he had raised, and whom I had met while they were in prison and outside also, have joined the aggressors in Kashmir. This hurts me very much. They used to carry out special assignments under Subhas Babu and used to be always with him. Subhas Babu could not have kept anything secret from the army personnel because he had to work through them. It hurts me that those very persons are now going about as leaders of the freebooters. Through the newspapers, if they are getting any, or if they care to listen to me, I would ask them in my failing voice why they should involve themselves in this affair and bring down Subhas Babu's name. Why should they side either with the Hindus or the Muslims? They should not take a communal stand. That was not against the Harijans or anyone else. There was no communal distinction among the Indians in that army. Of course all of them adhered to their respective religions, none of them had

abandoned it. Subhas Babu had taken possession of their hearts, not of their bodies. It was not as if those who refused to join the Azad Hind Fauj were to be slain. He was not going to bring freedom to India by killing people like this. That is how he became great and earned fame. Why should these people now stoop so low and get involved in such mean things? If they really want to do something, let them do something for the whole of India. Let them restrain the Muslims and the Afridis from committing atrocities, plundering the people and burning the villages. Let them persuade them to write to the Maharaja and Sheikh Abdullah that they want to meet them. They must tell them that they have not gone there to plunder. If they do so I can understand their point that they have gone there to show that Islam is being crushed. Then they would be lending glory to Subhas Babu's name and would become true teachers of the Afridis. I do not know how the Afridis live and if there are any plunderers among them. But in my view even they are human beings. The same God resides in their hearts and hence they are my brethren. If I were to live among them I would ask them why they indulge in loot and plunder and show anger towards others. I would not ask them to give up their arms. I would ask them to keep their arms, but in order to protect the people who are scared, to protect the indigent, the women and children. What does it matter if they are Hindus or Muslims? I would tell those two officers, whose names I have already come to know, that they should remember Subhas Babu. He is dead but not his name and not his work.

Now my mind turns to Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah. I know him well. I used to go to his house. Once I had visited him 18 times. I consider it a penance. Even on a later occasion we two had put our signatures on a document ⁽³⁾ and had become responsible for it. I used to have cordial talks with him even then. That is the reason why I would ask him, Liaquat Ali and his Cabinet, what had prompted them to accuse a man like Jawaharlal of fraud.⁽⁴⁾ Where was the need for him and his Government to act fraudulently in this? I would tell them that Jawaharlal is not a man who will deceive anyone. He is true to his name. I also know the Sardar and other men in his Cabinet. They too are no cheats. If they want to negotiate with [the Maharaja of] Kashmir it does not mean that they are trying to misguide him. Jawaharlal had been having talks with him even earlier and

fighting single-handed with him for the sake of Sheikh Abdullah. Why then should he deceive? Can India or any country be saved by deceiving? Why then do they say such a thing? The Afridis who have infiltrated into Kashmir must be receiving some encouragement from Pakistan for indulging in their activities. How could they do it otherwise? If I had been in Pakistan I would have stopped them from indulging in such things. If Pakistan was disinterested, they could not resort to such things. But here Pakistan is not indifferent but very much involved.

- i. The tribesmen advancing on Srinagar, were repulsed by the Indian troops.
- ii. According to the Daily Express correspondent in Kashmir, one of them was Major Khurshid Anwar.
- iii. In April, 1947, vide "A Joint Appeal", 12-4-1947.
- iv. Refusing to accept Kashmir's accession to the Indian Union, the Government of Pakistan issued a Press communique on October 30 saying, "In the opinion of the Government of Pakistan the accession of Kashmir to the Indian Union is based on fraud and violence and as such cannot be recognized."

(SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING, New Delhi, November 2, 1947)

(7)

The third question is rather complicated. It is complicated and at the same time, it is not complicated. A Muslim friend writes that he and all Muslims will be happy if I answer the question. But, no matter who has asked, it is a question all right. It is worth asking and also not worth asking. The question is: "You advised even the British to follow the path of non-violence when they were facing defeat. You advised them to give up arms and become non-violent. You could show that much courage there; then why don't you ask the Government of the country to fight a non-violent battle?" I have already stated that I am a nobody and no one listens to me. People say that the Sardar is my man and Panditji also is but mine and Maulana too is my man. They are all mine and also not mine. I have never abandoned my non-violence. I have been training myself in non-

violence and it was acceptable till we attained independence. Now they wonder how they can rule with non-violence. And then there is the army and they have taken the help of the army. Now I am of no value at all. But why am I still with the people when I have lost my value? It is in the hope that they may perhaps listen to me. At least a few persons like you do come and quietly join me in the prayer. Others may follow your example and ultimately wisdom may dawn on everybody. Maybe my words will have some effect. It is only with that hope that I am continuing to be here and doing all these things. I do not know how long God wants me to work. He can stop me working this very day if He so wishes. I would die right here if He takes away my breath. Hence, I still stand by what I had conveyed to Hitler,¹ Mussolini,² Churchill³ and the people of Japan.⁴ I say the same thing to our Government. But in Kashmir Sheikh Abdullah is giving a brave fight—I have always admired bravery. It is true that he believes in violence but it requires courage and I do admire it. I admire even Subhas Babu not because I approved of his violence but because I could have never formed the Azad Hind Fauj. When I see something good and fail to give it due credit, I cannot be truly non-violent. I have no doubt that if Sheikh Abdullah fights it to the last and keeps the Hindus and the Sikhs with him, it is bound to have a great impact on the people here. However, if I could have my way of non-violence and everybody listened to me, we would not send our army as we are doing now. And if we did send, it would be a non-violent army. It would be a non-violent fight if our people went there and gladly met their death at the hands of the Afridis. It would be a non-violent war because they would be dying remaining non-violent. Sheikh Abdullah too would tell the Afridis that they could take Srinagar but only when all the fighters were dead. But they are all fighting with arms and fighting bravely. They too can become non-violent—though it would not be the true form of non-violence. Supposing an army of a lakh of armed Afridis invaded the place and a handful of people offered armed resistance in order to protect the innocent children and women and died fighting, then they could be called non-violent in spite of their using arms. But to whom can I say this? Today poison has spread on all sides and people kill each other in a barbarous manner. In this situation even I am not able to teach this simple lesson in non-violence. In his time Mr. Churchill could not say, but today, Sheikh Abdullah and the army which has gone there can tell me that my non-violence has

failed in Delhi where acts of barbarism are being committed and what they are doing is not barbaric. And I must admit that they have a right to say that. But they cannot tell me anything if I can convince all the Hindus, Muslims and the Sikhs of the Union about my non-violence. In that event, I could myself go with a non- violent army to Kashmir or Pakistan or any place, and then my work would become very easy. And then, the impact of non-violence would be so great that it would be worth seeing. But when can I hope for such an occasion? If you listen to my words and act in accordance with them, if my words have greater power and my heart greater strength, if my penance, however great it may be, becomes still greater and every word of mine becomes so powerful that it grips the whole of India, my task will be accomplished. But today I am helpless. If you also pray to God that He may put strength into my words and take me further than where He has taken me and get still more work out of my body, then India may have a greater impact on the world.

The delegates from Britain, China, the U. S. A. and Pakistan who came to attend the Asian Regional Conference ⁽⁵⁾ praised me for my work. But their praise hurts me. Today I have become bankrupt. I have no say with my people today. What I said in the past has no value. I will be worthy of praise only when I can influence people. But that is not the situation today. I am merely expressing my helplessness before you.

- i. Vide "Letter to Adolf Hitler", 23-7-1939 and "Letter to Adolf Hitler", 24-12-1940.
- ii. Ibid
- iii. Presumably the reference is to Gandhiji's appeal vide "To Every Briton", 2-7-1940.
- iv. Vide "To Every Japanese", 18-7-1942 .

(SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING, New Delhi, November 5, 1947)

(8)

Hence, only the people of a particular State have a legal right to accede to one of the Unions. If the Provisional Government does not represent the people of Junagadh at any stage, it is merely a group of people who are unjustly occupying seats of power in the State and it should be driven out by both the Dominions. If any ruler joins any of the Unions in his personal capacity, the Dominion cannot stand before the world to justify his action. From this point of view, I think that the Nawab's accession has been baseless from the very beginning till it is proved that the people of the State have given their consent to the accession by the Nawab. The dispute as to which Union Junagadh would finally accede to can be resolved only by taking public opinion, that is, by referendum. This task should be properly carried out and should not involve violence or show of violence. The stand taken by the Government of Pakistan and now also by the Prime Minister of Junagadh, has created a strange situation. Who was to decide whether Pakistan was in the right or the Union Government? One cannot even think that it can be decided by an appeal to the sword. The only honourable way is to decide the matter through arbitration. We can find many impartial individuals in the country itself but, if the parties concerned cannot agree to arbitration by Indians, I for one will have no objection to any impartial person from any part of the world.

Whatever I have said about Junagadh equally applies to Kashmir⁽¹⁾ and Hyderabad⁽²⁾. Neither the Maharaja of Kashmir nor the Nizam of Hyderabad has any authority to accede to either Union without the consent of his people. As far as I know, this point was clarified in the case of Kashmir.⁽³⁾ If it had been only the Maharaja who had wanted to accede to the Indian Union, I could never support such an act. The Union Government agreed to the accession for the time being because both the Maharaja and Sheikh Abdullah⁴, who is the representative of the people of Jammu and Kashmir, wanted it. Sheikh Abdullah came forward because he claims to represent not only the Muslims but the entire masses in Kashmir.

I have heard people talking in whispers that Kashmir could be divided. Jammu would come to the Hindus and the Muslims would have Kashmir. I cannot even think of such

divided loyalty and division of the Indian States into several parts. Hence, I hope that the whole of India would act sensibly and this ugly situation would be avoided soon at least for the sake of lakhs of Indians who have been compelled to become helpless refugees.

1. The Nawab of Junagadh after consenting to accede to India, had revoked his decision, fled to Pakistan and executed an Instrument of Accession on September 15 whereby the State was declared to have acceded to Pakistan. The Government of India refused to accept the accession of Junagadh to Pakistan in the circumstances in which it was made.
2. The Nizam wanted “Hyderabad to be an independent sovereign State” and refused to accede to the Dominion of India. After prolonged discussions between the Government of India and the Nizam, a delegation led by the Nawab of Chhatari arrived at a draft standstill agreement on October 22. The Nizam, however, against the advice of his Council, dissolved the delegation and appointed a new one on October 29. Vide also “Fragment of A Letter”, 26-11-1947.
3. The Government of India, while accepting the accession of Jammu and Kashmir to India, had “made it clear to the Maharaja that, as soon as the invaders have been driven from the soil of Kashmir, the people of the State should decide the question of accession”.

(SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING, New Delhi, November 11, 1947)

(9)

With what a sad heart has Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru returned after seeing wounded Kashmir! He was unable to attend the Working Committee meeting yesterday and also this afternoon. He has brought some flowers from Baramula ⁽¹⁾ for me. I always cherish such gifts of nature. But today loot, arson and bloodshed have spoiled the beauty of that lovely land. Jawaharlal had been to Jammu also. There too all is not well.

- i. After a brutal attack by the raiders the town was recaptured by the Indian troops.

(SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING, New Delhi, November 12, 1947)

(10)

I have just heard an eye-witness account of great valour which I am going to narrate to you.

Mir Maqbool Sherwani was a young brave leader of the National Conference at Baramula. He had just entered his thirtieth year. On learning that he was an important leader of the National Conference the invaders tied him to two poles near the Nishat Talkies. They first beat him up and then told him that he should give up the National Conference and its leader Sheikh Abdullah, the lion of Kashmir. They told Sherwani that he should swear loyalty to the Provisional Government of Azad Kashmir which had its headquarters at Palundry.

Sherwani refused to give up the National Conference under pressure. He made it clear to the assailants that the Sheikh was the head of the Kashmir Government, that the Indian army had already reached Kashmir and, before long, would repel the assailants.

On hearing this, the assailants were enraged and were in panic. They riddled his body with fourteen bullets. They cut his nose and disfigured his face and pasted a notice on his body: "This man is a traitor. His name is Sherwani. All traitors would be treated in the same way."

But within 48 hours of this ruthless murder and bloodshed, Sherwani's prophecy came true. The invaders fled from Baramula in panic and the Indian army chased them away.

Anybody, whether Hindu, Sikh, Muslim or anyone else, would be proud of such martyrdom.

(SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING, New Delhi, November 19, 1947)

(11)

You must have read in the papers that Sheikh Abdullah has also come here. The Kashmiris refer to him as Sher-e-Kashmir. And so he is. He has done a lot of work; but the remarkable thing is that he has won over all the Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs. There Muslims are in a majority, and the Hindus and the Sikhs are just a handful. None the less, he carries them all with him. He does nothing that would keep them discontented. Then we saw that while coming here he also went to Jammu. There have been considerable excesses by the Hindus there. This has not been fully reported in the newspapers. The Maharaja and his new Premier⁽¹⁾ also went there. I asked Sheikh Abdullah jokingly if there were two Premiers. He said he also was not aware of it but this much he could say, that he was looking after the affairs of the Government there, whether there were one or two Prime Ministers. So he too went to Jammu. I do not know if what happened in Jammu was at the instance of the Maharaja or his new Premier. But those things happened there and it is a matter of great shame for us. Still Sheikh Abdullah did not lose his balance and the Hindus in Jammu fully supported him. Where then was the need to tell him anything? But he has still to convince Kashmir and the entire India that the only way for Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs is to live together in amity and to trust one another. Then alone can Kashmir and India live together. His attempts are no doubt in that direction, but there is one obstruction. It is a mountain region which is at a height of 10,000 if not 14,000 feet. It snows heavily there. That is why movement from one place to another is not very easy. The movement would be easy only through Pakistan. But who could say that Pakistan would allow the movement? Apart from that, fighting is already going on with the Afridi invaders who may well be said to belong to Pakistan. Under these circumstances, how can the Kashmiris come via Pakistan? The Government of the Indian Union has already sent help to them and they can have a straight road only through India. There is not much of trade in Kashmir, but the people of Kashmir are industrious and skilled in handicrafts.

Kashmir is a huge fruit garden. But who would bring all those things from there and how? Everything cannot be brought by air. And how can those vendors travel by air? That is not possible. So, the only way is through Pathankot in East Punjab. It is a small road but at least there is one. But the Hindus of East Punjab have become so bad that no Muslim can cross that road. The Sheikh says that that is the greatest danger. He is a very big man but he says that even for him it is difficult to pass through that way. Not only the police guards but even ordinary people try to enquire from anyone passing that way who he is and would like to lift his turban to see if he wears a tuft and do similar things. If he happens to be a Hindu, or a Sikh, well and good, but if he is a Muslim then he is doomed. Such is the situation prevailing there.

So the Governor-General and these four have met. It would be well if they are able to do something. And they have done some little bit. But what is the use of their doing anything? If the people themselves are caught in a frenzy, then nothing can be done. I would tell the people of East Punjab that enough damage had been done, and now let us forget everything. Or, would things always be like this? I would say that that road should be absolutely clear. The Government also should fully carry out its responsibility. If the Government is not able to do this, what is the use of our having sent the army by air? Will it help in carrying on trade in Kashmir? If not, is the Indian Union going to feed the Kashmiris? That is not possible. If today our Government has come to possess millions of rupees, would it go on squandering that money? I hear that every officer in the Government is going to have a secretary. I just do not know what he would do or what monthly salary he would get. If we go on squandering money at this rate, we will perish in no time. Ours is not a land of millionaires. It is a poor country where people earn even a few copper coins with great difficulty. There are only a handful of millionaires or businessmen. And how much money do even these people have? If it is squandered like this, it will all be spent in no time. Then there is the whole country to be looked after. We cannot waste money like that. So the Government will have to see how that road can be made safe so that anybody can pass on safely. Kashmiris make beautiful clothes which can be brought by that road. Shawls and other handicrafts can also be brought. So also the Kashmir dry fruits. Today you can get a Kashmir apple with

great difficulty. Kashmir has acceded to the Indian Union, but how long can it remain with India in this way? If Kashmir does not find a safe thoroughfare, I do not know what would happen.

- i. Mehrchand Mahajan, Judge of the Punjab High Court, was appointed Prime Minister of Jammu and Kashmir in November

(SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING, New Delhi, November 27, 1947)

(12)

You see Sheikh Abdullah with me. I was disinclined to bring him with me, for I know there is a great gulf between the Hindus and the Sikhs on the one side and the Muslims on the other. But the Sheikh, known as the Lion of Kashmir, although a pucka Muslim, has won the hearts of both by making them forget that there is any difference between the three. He had not been embittered. Even though in Jammu recently the Muslims were killed by the Hindus and the Sikhs, he went to Jammu and invited the evil-doers to forget the past and repent over the evil they had done. The Hindus and the Sikhs of Jammu listened to him. Now the Muslims and the Hindus and the Sikhs of Kashmir and Jammu are fighting together to defend the beautiful valley of Kashmir. I am glad, therefore, that you are receiving the two of us with cordiality.

(SPEECH AT GURU NANAK BIRTHDAY FUNCTION, New Delhi, November 28, 1947)

(13)

Although I have done nothing from my side, my Sikh friends are angry with me today. Of course I have tried to push a bitter pill down their throat. But that is how things go on in the world. The Baba insisted on my going there all the same. He said there must be

thousands of Sikh men and women and—some of them must be really in distress—who are eager to hear me. I agreed and told him that he should take me with him at 11 o'clock. He came at 11 a.m. with Sheikh Abdullah. He was also to be taken there. I asked him how Sheikh Abdullah could come there since the Sikhs and the Muslims could not bear to look at one another. But he said that Sheikh Abdullah had done one great thing. He had kept the Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims united in Kashmir and created a situation in which they would wish to live and die together. So I thought that Sheikh Abdullah too should go with us, and we took him along. I was very glad about it. There were thousands of Sikh men and women. I spoke but little; but Sheikh Abdullah spoke fairly at length, and people heard him with attention. There was no trace of disapproval even in their eyes, then where was the question of their creating noise? After all, we had been invited there. And then the Sikhs are a brave community, so it all turned out well. I felt I should pass on this little information to you.

(*SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING, New Delhi, November 28, 1947*)

(14)

BROTHERS AND SISTERS, You all know something of what is happening in Kashmir. But I want to draw your attention to a proposal about Kashmir. It is being said and also reported in the newspapers that we should invite someone to arbitrate between the Indian Union and Pakistan in the dispute over Kashmir. How can this be? How long can this kind of thing go on? Instead of resulting in a settlement of the dispute, this will merely introduce into it a third party. Can we not settle the issue between ourselves? There is a large preponderance of Muslims in Kashmir. Maybe they are more than 95%. Jammu does not have very many Muslims. I do not know what is the percentage of Muslims in the population but Jammu and Kashmir is one State. It cannot be partitioned. If we start the process of partitioning where is it going to end? It is enough and more than enough that India has been partitioned into two. If we partition Kashmir, why not other States?

What is the nature of the dispute in Kashmir? It is said that the raiders are outsiders. They are aggressors and plunderers. But as time passes it looks as if it was not so. I get some Urdu newspapers. I can read Urdu a little myself and others also read them out to me. Today some bits from the *Zamindar* were read out to me. I know the editor⁽¹⁾ of the *Zamindar*. He has an unbridled tongue. He has issued an open invitation to all Muslims to muster for an assault on Kashmir. He has heaped abuse on the Dogras and the Sikhs. He calls the raid in Kashmir a jihad. But there is always restraint about a jihad. There is nothing of the kind here. Do they want that Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims should perpetually remain divided? What is our duty if Muslims start cutting up the Hindus and Sikhs? As I have been telling you every day Hindus and Sikhs must not retaliate.

The simple fact is that Pakistan has invaded Kashmir. Units of the Indian army have gone to Kashmir but not to invade Kashmir. They have been sent on the express invitation of the Maharaja and Sheikh Abdullah. Sheikh Abdullah is the real Maharaja of Kashmir. Muslims in their thousands are devoted to him. He is called the Lion of Kashmir.

One should always admit one's mistakes. The Hindus and Sikhs of Jammu or those who had gone there from outside killed Muslims there. The Maharaja of Kashmir is responsible for the happenings in his State. It was not Sheikh Abdullah who was behind these murders. He in fact went to Jammu and tried to reason with the Hindus and Sikhs. He tried to save the lives of Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs. The Maharaja of Kashmir is a Dogra Rajput. Abuses have been heaped on him. If he has been at fault he can be removed. One can understand that. But what have the Muslims of Kashmir done? Why is jihad being carried on against them?

I want to say to the Government of Pakistan in all humility that if their claim to being the greatest Islamic power in the world is true, they should make sure that every Hindu and every Sikh in Pakistan is justly treated. They should be protected. But Pakistan presents a different picture. I shall advise Pakistan and India to sit together and decide the matter. If the two are interested in the settlement of the dispute, where is the need for an arbitrator? The Maharaja can step aside and let India and Pakistan deliberate over the

matter. Sheikh Abdullah will of course be there. If they want an arbitrator they can appoint one from among themselves, but it should certainly not be a third power. They may, if they so desire, persuade the Maharaja to step down. After all he is a human being. A large number of Muslims have been killed there and Muslim women have been dishonoured. I met the Maharaja and his Prime Minister. And I told him what I had to say. The Maharaja should clearly say that he is no longer the Ruler, it is the Muslims of Kashmir who are the real rulers and they may do what they like. After the Maharaja and his Prime Minister withdraw themselves only Sheikh Abdullah remains. He can form an interim government and restore law and order. The armies can be withdrawn. If the two countries arrive at a settlement on these lines it will be good for both. It is not that India had invaded a Muslim State or had gone there to help the Maharaja. Our Government is for the people and it is in the interest of the people that we enter into negotiations with the Princes. The Congress Government can take no other course.

i. Maulana Zafar Ali Khan

(*SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING, New Delhi, December 25, 1947*)

(15)

What has happened in Kashmir? A large number of Muslims have been slaughtered. Women have been slaughtered and young girls have been abducted. If my voice can reach those guilty of this outrage, I shall ask them to return all those girls. I am told that several hundred Hindu and Sikh girls had similarly been carried away. I am also told that a certain *pir* is holding in his house a large number of Hindu and Sikh girls. Those who have abducted them are reported to have said that they do not mean to harm or dishonour these girls in any way but that they will not return them so long as the abducted Muslim girls are not returned. This will be a wicked bargain. We should not act in such a way. We should behave like decent men. We must return all the abducted girls without any preconditions. If we want to retain our freedom we must learn decency of conduct.

(SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING, New Delhi, December 26, 1947)

(16)

I have been severely reprimanded for what I said concerning Kashmir and its Maharaja . It seems to me that those who upbraid me have not really read attentively what I said. The advice I gave is the kind of advice the humblest man may give. Occasionally it becomes one's duty to offer such advice. If the Maharaja had acted on my advice he would have risen very high in his own eyes and in the eyes of the world. Today his own plight and the plight of his State are not enviable. Kashmir is a Hindu State, the majority of its people being Muslims. The raiders called their raids a jihad. They say that the Muslims of Kashmir are being ground down under the tyranny of Hindu raj and that they have come for their succour.

The Maharaja has invited Sheikh Abdullah at just the right time. The task is new for Sheikh Abdullah. But if the Maharaja thinks the Sheikh can shoulder the burden he should be encouraged in every way. It seems obvious to me, as it should seem obvious to others outside, that if Sheikh Abdullah cannot carry with him the minority as well as the majority, Kashmir cannot be saved by military might alone. Both the Maharaja and the Sheikh asked India for armed assistance.

My advice to the Maharaja is that he should be a constitutional sovereign like the King of England and run his government and use 1 the Dogra army according to the advice of Sheikh Abdullah and his Interim Cabinet. What is there so strange about this? The terms of the State's accession to the Union remain as before. They confer certain rights on the rulers. I have ventured to advise the Maharaja that he should voluntarily relinquish or limit these rights and play his constitutional role as a Hindu ruler.

If the reports I get are inaccurate they should be put right. If my views regarding Hinduism and the duties of a Hindu ruler are erroneous, there is no question of any weight being given to my advice. If the Sheikh as the Chief of the Emergency

Administration or as a true Muslim is found wanting in doing his duty he should remove himself from the scene and hand over the reins of administration to a better man. Today Hinduism and Islam are being tested on the soil of Kashmir. If the right thing is done and the right direction given to the process the chief actors will win fame. It is my prayer that in the present darkness in the country Kashmir may become the star that provides light.

So much for the Maharaja and Sheikh Saheb. Will not the Governments of Pakistan and the Union come together and decide the issue with the help of impartial Indians? Is there no one in India who is impartial? I am sure we have not become bankrupt to that extent.

(SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING, New Delhi, December 29, 1947)

(17)

Today there is talk of war everywhere. Everyone fears a war breaking out between the two countries. If that happens it will be a calamity both for India and for Pakistan. India has written to the U. N. because whenever there is a fear of conflict anywhere the U. N. is asked to promote a settlement and to stop fighting from breaking out. India therefore wrote to the U. N. O. ⁽¹⁾ However trivial the issue may appear to be, it could lead to a war between the two countries. It is a long memorandum and it has been cabled. Pakistan's Zafarullah Khan⁽²⁾ and Liaquat Ali Khan⁽³⁾ have since issued long statements. I would take leave to say that their argument does not appeal to me. You may ask if I approve of the Union Government approaching the U. N. O. I may say that I both approve and do not approve of what they did. I approve of it, because after all what else are they to do? They are convinced that what they are doing is right. If there are raids from outside the frontier of Kashmir, the obvious conclusion is that it must be with the connivance of Pakistan. Pakistan can deny it. But the denial does not settle the matter. Kashmir has acceded to India. And India has accepted the accession upon certain conditions. If Pakistan harasses Kashmir and if Sheikh Abdullah who is the leader of Kashmir asks the Indian Union for help, the latter is bound to send help. Such help

therefore was sent to Kashmir. At the same time Pakistan is being requested to get out of Kashmir and to arrive at a settlement with India over the question through bilateral negotiations. If no settlement can be reached in this way then a war is inevitable. It is to avoid the possibility of war that the Union Government has taken the step it did. Whether they are right in doing so or not God alone knows.

Whatever might have been the attitude of Pakistan, if I had my way I would have invited Pakistan's representatives to India and we could have met, discussed the matter and worked out some settlement. They keep saying that they want an amicable settlement but they do nothing to create the conditions for such a settlement. I shall therefore humbly say to the responsible leaders of Pakistan that though we are now two countries —which is a thing I never wanted—we should at least try to arrive at an agreement so that we could live as peaceful neighbours. Let us grant for the sake of argument that all Indians are bad, but Pakistan at least is a new-born nation which has moreover come into being in the name of religion and it should at least keep itself clean. But they themselves make no such claim. It is not their argument that Muslims have committed no atrocities in Pakistan. I shall therefore suggest that it is now their duty, as far as possible, to arrive at an amicable understanding with India and live in harmony with her. Mistakes were made on both sides. Of this I have no doubt. But this does not mean that we should persist in those mistakes, for then in the end we shall only destroy ourselves in a war and the whole of the sub-continent will pass into the hands of some third power. That will be the worst imaginable fate for us. I shudder to think of it. Therefore the two Dominions should come together with God as witness and find a settlement. The matter is now before the U. N. O. It cannot be withdrawn from there. But if India and Pakistan come to a settlement the big powers in the U.N.O. will have to endorse that settlement. They will not object to the settlement. They themselves can only say that they will do their best to see that the two countries arrive at an understanding through mutual discussions. Let us pray to God that He may spare us the threatened strife, but not at any price. All that we may pray to God is to grant that we may either learn to live in amity with each other or if we must fight to let us fight to the very end. That may be folly, but sooner or later it will purify us.

- i. On January 1, 1948, the Government of India submitted a formal complaint to the Security Council. *Vide Appendix “Letter from Indian Representatives to the Security Council”, 1-1-1948.*
- ii. At a Press conference at Karachi, on January 1, Mohammad Zafarullah Khan, Pakistan Foreign Minister, denying Pakistan's complicity in the attack on Kashmir had stated: "Kashmir on all sides was surrounded by predominantly Muslim areas and realizing that something was to be done to help the Kashmir Muslims in their plight, individual Muslims from the surrounding areas did whatever they could to bring help."
- iii. Denying the charges of aggression and looting, the Prime Minister of Pakistan had, among other things, stated on January 3: "There are some who are helping the forces of the Azad Kashmir Government, who have come from tribal areas because of the reports . . . of the general massacre of Muslims that had been going on in Kashmir by armed bands of Hindus, Sikhs and troops of the Maharaja." He claimed that "the conspiracy and plans for the occupation of Kashmir by Indian troops were laid well in advance and the excuse that India sent her troops because of the so-called invaders having entered Kashmir territory, was only intended to deceive the world." He further said that "we made it clear that we had no control over the forces of the Provisional Government of Kashmir or the tribesmen, engaged in the fight."

(SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING, NEW DELHI, January 4, 1948)

(18)

A number of people from Bahawalpur came to see me today. A few persons from Mirpur-Kashmir also came. They are obviously in great difficulty. While they were still talking Panditji dropped in. I asked him to hear what the visitors had to say. The representatives of Mirpur had a talk with Panditji and I hope something will be done. I do not say that all that they want will be done. Although it is not yet a formal war, it is

something very similar. In the circumstances it will be difficult to find a way of bringing over all the people marooned there. I am sure the Government will do what it can. But if there are still some people left there who cannot be helped, there is nothing much we can do about it. We do not have enough trains and buses. The Kashmir road is not yet fit for transporting millions of people. It is too narrow.

(*SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING, NEW DELHI, January 8, 1948*)

(19)

"I am going to Kashmir in a few days' time," the General said. Gandhiji replied:I hope you will succeed in solving the Kashmir problem non-violently. Come and see me after your return from Kashmir.

(*TALK WITH MAJ-GEN. K. M. CARIAPPA, NEW DELHI, January 18, 1948*)

(20)

I have a wire from Lahore, from the President of the Kashmir Freedom League. He says:

Highly appreciate your magnanimous gesture for Hindu-Muslim unity. Kashmir is the root cause of the present tension and a stumbling-block in the way of any rapprochement. Must receive top priority if peace is actually desired. Withdrawal of aggressive Indian troops from Kashmir and handing it over to whom it rightfully belongs to is the only satisfactory solution of the problem.

The wire distresses me. If there is no settlement over Kashmir, does it mean that things must continue in their present state? Must Muslims be enemies of Hindus and Sikhs and must Hindus and Sikhs be enemies of Muslims simply on account of Kashmir? Besides, I do not agree that the armed force our Government has dispatched to

Kashmir has committed aggression there. The armed force was sent in response to the appeals of Sheikh Abdullah, the Premier of Kashmir, and the Maharaja. It is true that Kashmir should go to whom it belongs. In that case all those who have gone there from outside, be they Afridis or any other, should get out of Kashmir. I cannot object to people in Poonch revolting but I object to their rebelling in order to grab the whole of Kashmir. I can understand it if every outsider leaves Kashmir and no one interferes from outside or sends help or complains. But I cannot understand it if they say that they themselves will remain in Kashmir but that others should get out. And to whom does Kashmir belong? Right now I shall say it belongs to the Maharaja because the Maharaja still exists. In the eyes of the Government the Maharaja is still the legitimate ruler. Of course if the Maharaja is a wicked man, if he does nothing for the people, I think it is for the Government to displace him. But so far no such eventuality has arisen. If the Muslims of Kashmir say that they do not want the Maharaja, that they want to accede either to India or to Pakistan, no one can complain. I have just emerged from a fast. I am enemy of none. So how can I be an enemy of Muslims? Let them come and convince me of my error.

(*SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING, New Delhi, January 20, 1948*)

(21)

About Kashmir I feel that there is no need for us to go to Lake Success ⁽¹⁾. Still we shall see what comes about.

i. The United Nations Organization

(*FRAGMENT OF A LETTER, January 27, 1948*)

(22)

(*INTERVIEW TO KINGSLEY MARTIN, NEW DELHI, January 27, 1948*)

Gandhiji explained how the freedom movement had not been a non-violent movement in the highest sense of the term. If it had been the non-violence of the strong no butchery such as had taken place recently could have come about. He discovered this while he was on his pilgrimage in Noakhali and ever since this discovery he had been impressing the fact on everyone. He felt that non-violence during the struggle for independence was an expedient, i. e., resistance to the white man was undertaken in a non-violent manner simply because we had no military strength with which to offer battle.

Gandhiji went on to relate how he had resisted a certain millionaire in South Africa who had introduced him at a public meeting as a mere passive resister and weak¹ because as an Indian there he was landless and without any rights. Gandhiji objected to this description and said that real passive resistance had been miscalled a weapon of the weak. After all Jesus Christ had been called the Prince of passive resisters. Could he, in any sense of the term, be called a weak man? People forget that soul-force, the only weapon of the truly non-violent man, was a weapon of the strong.

In reply to the correspondent's suggestion that many people looked upon non-violence as a good opposition weapon in politics and that they could not understand how it could, for example, be used as a positive weapon in Kashmir today or against a man like Hitler who just killed everybody and stamped out opposition in that manner, Gandhiji laughingly replied that he was not in charge of the Government and therefore could not guide their policies; nor did he think that the members of the present Government believed in non-violence. He recalled how Maulana Saheb had said, "When we gain power we shall not be able to hold it non-violently." Gandhiji said that he had laughed to himself at that time and related the moral of Tolstoy's story of Ivan the Fool which had always remained with him. Hindu scriptures, Gandhiji said, had scores of such stories but he quoted Ivan the Fool because the interviewer might have read the book. Ivan

remained non-violent even when he became king. Gandhiji pointed out how the truly non-violent man could never hold power himself. He derived power from the people whom he served. For such a man or such a government, a non-violent army would be a perfect possibility. The voters then would themselves say, 'We do not want any military for our defence.' A non-violent army would fight against all injustice or attack but with clean weapons. Non-violence did not signify that man must not fight against the enemy and by enemy was meant the evil which men did, not human beings themselves. He went on to say that if he were the leader of Kashmir like Sheikh Abdullah, he would have such an army but Sheikh Abdullah quite honestly and humbly thought otherwise.

On the correspondent suggesting a solution of the Kashmir issue on the basis of separation, e. g., a predominantly pro-Pakistan area like Poonch going to Pakistan and the Kashmir Valley remaining in India Gandhiji had no difficulty in giving a firm answer in the negative. He held firmly that India or any part of India could not be divided in this manner. It was an evil that must not be allowed to continue.

Take, for example, Hyderabad; will you separate the town of Hyderabad from the rest of the State? Such pockets exist all over India and separation would then become an endless process spelling the ruination of India.

The interviewer pleaded that the position of Hyderabad was not wholly analogous. Any state on a border area was surely different. But Gandhiji maintained that it was not possible for states even on the border to be either cut up or separated or . . . to call themselves independent. And when the correspondent mentioned Gilgit,

Gandhiji recalled that he was in Kashmir when the city of Srinagar was illuminated.
[From August 1 to 4, 1947]

On asking what the illuminations were for Gandhiji was told that they were celebrating the accession of Gilgit to Kashmir. He was sad when he heard the news because he wondered how long Kashmir would hold Gilgit. It had been a big bite even for Britain. Britain's policy of keeping on adding to her territories in India had not been either a wise or right policy. If Kashmir acceded to India, it would be because of the will of the people

as a whole and they would do so well knowing that Gilgit was no part of the Indian Union today. There were people who said they would reconquer Gilgit. All sorts of complications would then arise. Gandhiji said that Britain had made of India a political whole and India must continue as such.

In reply to a question as to what Pakistan could do with tribal people Gandhiji said:

I would accept a challenge of conquering the tribal areas but as a non-violent man. I would not bribe them, nor kill them; I would serve them. Have not missionaries allowed themselves to be eaten by cannibals?

The correspondent exclaimed, "Alas! there are no Gandhis in Palestine, in Russia or in the U. S. A.!", to which Gandhiji laughingly replied:

So much the worse for them.

In reply to a query as to why Poonch going over to Pakistan was not practicable and that a war between India and the Frontier would be unending, Gandhiji replied that it would be a very bad example to others. There were pockets everywhere, for example, Murshidabad in West Bengal. The vital difference between the policy of the Indian Union and that of Pakistan was that the former never believed in dismemberment while the Pakistan leaders did. Gandhiji quoted the example of Kathiawar. Pakistan wanted to vivisect Kathiawar by getting Junagadh to accede to that Dominion. Vivisection of Kathiawar which was indivisible was quite unthinkable. The whole basis of partition was, in his opinion, wrong. Gandhiji admitted that two distinguished persons had suggested the idea of partition of Kashmir to him but he had very firmly said "no" for reasons he had already explained.

In conclusion he asked the correspondent to study things deeply and not superficially. He himself was working for a heart-union between Hindus and Muslims not only in India but in Pakistan also and would continue his efforts in that direction.

(*Harjan*, 20-6-1948)

(23)

Finally I want to tell you about Mirpur. I have referred to the matter briefly earlier. Mirpur is in Kashmir. It has been occupied by the raiders. A number of women and children there have been abducted. They include not only young women but also some elderly ones. They are in the power of the raiders who, I have no doubt, have violated their honour. The food given to them is very bad. A few of them are within the border of Pakistan. Some of them may have been taken up to the Jhelum in the Gujrat district.

I must tell the raiders that they must exercise a modicum of restraint. What they are doing will bring about the downfall of Islam and yet they say that they are doing all this for a free Kashmir.

I can understand it if people indulge in plunder and rapine for food. But it is too much to assault innocent young girls and to deprive them of food and clothing. Is this what the Koran teaches? I must ask the Pakistan Government to recover all the abducted women and girls and let them go back to their homes.

The Mirpur people who came to me are quite strong and sturdy. But they feel disconsolate. They ask me why it is that such a powerful Government cannot do anything about this. I tried to explain matters to them. Jawaharlal himself has been deeply distressed and is trying to do what he can. But how does his grieving or his trying help? How can those who have lost their all, who have been ruined and separated from their nearest and dearest, be comforted? One of the men who came to see me has lost fifteen of his relatives. He asked me what was to happen to those still left there. I must ask the raiders and the Government of Pakistan, for the sake of humanity and for the sake of God, to return all the abducted women with due respect and without waiting to be asked. It is their duty. I have enough knowledge of Islam about which I have read a good deal. Nowhere does Islam bid people to carry away women and keep them in such a disreputable condition. It is irreligion, not religion. It is worship of Satan, not of God.

(*SPEECH AT PRAYER MEETING, New Delhi, January 27, 1948*)

(*The Hindustan Times*, 28-1-1948, and *Prarthana Pravachan*—II, pp. 344-7)

(24)

(*INTERVIEW TO VINCENT SHEEAN, January 27/28, 1948*)

The whole of the *Gita* was an argument in defence of a righteous war, Gandhiji's visitor argued. The last war was a "war in a righteous cause". Yet violence was more rampant as a result than it was ever before. Gandhiji agreed so far as the result of the last war was concerned. Even in India they had not been able to escape from its back-lash.

See what India is doing. See what is happening in Kashmir. I cannot deny that it is with my tacit consent. They would not lend ear to my counsel. Yet, if they were sick of it, I could today point them a way.

Again, see the exhibition that the United Nations Organization is making. Yet I have faith. If I live long enough. . . . they will see the futility of it all and come round to my way.

But he did not agree that the *Gita* was either in intention or in the sum total an argument in defence of a righteous war. Though the argument of the *Gita* was presented in a setting of physical warfare, the "righteous war" referred to in it was the eternal duel between right and wrong that is going on within us. There was at least one authority that supported his interpretation. The thesis of the *Gita* was neither violence nor non-violence but the gospel of selfless action—the duty of performing right action by right means only, in a spirit of detachment, leaving the fruits of action to the care of God.

(*Pyarelal, Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase*, Vol. II, pp. 677 and 763-5)

(25)

(*FRAGMENT OF A LETTER, January 28, 1948*)

Now that things here have somewhat settled down, there are disturbances in the N. W. F. P. I am still knocking about in a dark world. I do not intend to stay on here for too long. Whatever has to be decided will be decided in the next four days.

I have not the slightest doubt that if we show the least bit of slackness over Kashmir, Hyderabad and Junagadh are going to meet with the same fate. Sheikh Abdullah is a brave man. But one wonders whether he may not betray in the end. I hold that no man can betray another, for ultimately one is betrayed by oneself. Therefore on this account I have no worry. My health is satisfactory. I am still on a liquid diet. It suits me.

[From Gujarati] *Dilhiman Gandhiji*—II, pp. 397-8

About the Editor

Kannan T is a writer, a translator, an educator and a farmer. Inspired by Gandhi, he quit his corporate career and moved to a village near Coimbatore, with his wife, Nedya, and daughter, Mahirl Malar. They do farming and run a small learning centre for the village children there. His interview with the late Gandhian leader, Narayan Desai, was published as 'The Bridge to the Gandhian Times', in English and Tamil. He has written short biographies in Tamil on Nelson Mandela and Gandhi. His translation of the anthology of writings on Gandhi in Tamil, 'Gandhi in Tamil', is to be published shortly. He has been translating the Tamil classic Thirukkural into English.

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