

Anecdotes of Gandhi

Abridged from the book, **'This Was Bapu'**

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A special debt of gratitude is due from me to the Navajivan Trust, on whose two journals, Young India and Harijan, I have freely drawn for the sources of a good many of the anecdotes of the Father of the Indian Nation related in this book.

R. K. Prabhu

FOREWORD

Shri Prabhu is an old and dear friend of mine. It is more than forty years since we have known each other. A common friend, who introduced me to the poetry of the stars, also introduced me to Ramachandra Krishna Prabhu as a kindred spirit. Prabhu was then working on Lokamanya Tilak's theory of 'the Arctic Home of the Aryans in the Vedas'. My patriotic interest in the history of ancient Indian culture was greatly flattered when I found that another scholar like Prabhu held the same view, that the Vedas were thousands of years old and that we all migrated from the Polar Regions to India which has been the home of the Aryan culture from prehistoric times. The common interest in the life, work and teachings of Shri Aurobindo Ghose was yet another bond that brought us nearer.

Being a lover of books Prabhu was then taking his training in Library Science under Borden whom Sayajirao Gaekwad of Baroda had imported from America to organize and develop the Central Library in his capital. Prabhu gradually reverted to journalism and made it his life-work. He had the good fortune of working with veteran journalists like Horniman and Belvi. During all these years he made a deep study of Mahatma Gandhi's life and teachings. He has in his possession a vast collection of cuttings and extracts from Gandhiji's writings, all assorted under various heads. This will fill many volumes. His one book, *The Mind of Mahatma Gandhi*¹, has done more to present a succinct but comprehensive idea of Gandhiji's teachings than the host of similar books which have appeared in recent times. The *Conquest of Self* was the first of a series which Prabhu planned for giving an exhaustive survey of Gandhiji's thoughts and conclusions on various contemporary Indian and world problems. I wish he would find time to complete the series. I need not mention the other books he has published on Gandhiji. I only wanted to show how eminently fitted Prabhu is to give us a collection of anecdotes about Mahatmaji.

Of all the prophets of humanity, Gandhiji seems to have been the most fortunate. No other succeeded in his life time as Gandhiji did, in spreading his ideas and working them out on a vast canvas. No prophet succeeded so well as he did in choosing the fields of politics, nationalism and internationalism for the practical application of his

spiritual message. Starting his career in the benighted continent of Africa, he sensed the racial character of the world- situation and its conflicts. He was led to form thereby the spiritual concept of human brotherhood', and the necessity of cultivating soul-force to oppose the might of empires based on racialism and armed with the powers of science, economics and worldwide organization. Gandhiji returned to India from South Africa at a juncture when Europe was locked in a gigantic struggle of arms and India was groping in darkness arising out of a lack of leadership and a sense of frustration. Gandhiji, the inheritor of the achievements of saintly India, the interpreter of India's synthetic culture of ages, and the prophet of a new humanism that embraced and appealed to the whole world, assumed the leadership of the country and gradually collected all the scattered forces, spiritual, intellectual, economic and cultural, to guide them into a great national movement for the rediscovery and reassertion of the soul of India. He unified India as no one else had done before, and gave a determined fight to the powerful British Empire through non-violent means. He saw the world in travail in two global wars, and by freeing India he liberated a soul-force that is gradually influencing world-politics and world-aspirations.

Many persons started writing about the life and times of the Mahatma. The Christian minister Doke and Henry S. L. Polak made the first attempts at portraying his unique spiritual life. Friends like Pranjivan Mehta and Mrs Avantika Gokhale collected what they could of his writings. G. A. Natesan of Madras published an excellent volume of his selected speeches and writings. Mahatmaji himself found time, during his jail life in 1924, to write his autobiography and a detailed history of the Satyagraha movement in South Africa. Since then writers throughout the world have started writing about him from various angles. Romain Rolland, the gifted genius of French letters, and Louis Fischer, the famous American journalist, have given illuminating pictures of Mahatmaji. Tendulkar has brought out a long and exhaustive biography in eight big and sumptuous volumes, while Pyarelal, who had the rare fortune of working as one of Mahatmaji's private secretaries, is concentrating on what he loves to call a "full-dress biography", documented with authentic letters and inside knowledge of events.²

Mahatmaji was essentially a man of action. He had no time to read and produce books. Yet his mission forced him to write from time to time, and continuously from week to week expressing himself on the various topics concerning India and the world. He can also be said to have been 'a man of letters' in the literal sense of the words. The number of letters that he wrote to friends, near and distant, and correspondents from all parts of the world on various matters is legion. They are being gradually collected, edited, translated into and published in various languages.

We have thus vast material dealing with Gandhiji's life and times. It is just beginning to come to light. The Westerners, always alert to new forces in the world, have given hasty, and sometimes imperfect and irrelevant descriptions of Gandhiji and his message, and publishers have found it profitable to popularize them. It is not possible to give an adequate idea of the vast literature that is being produced, both in India and abroad, about Gandhiji. Friends, colleagues and intimate Coworkers of Gandhiji have concentrated their attention on his life as they intimately knew it. It is too early for them to write the political and cultural history of India during the Gandhian Era. In fact, the Gandhian Era has just begun showing its working on the canvas of all the continents of the world. And yet, it is not too early for our people to record the events and cultural forces at work during the past one hundred years that may be said to belong to, as the precursor of, the Gandhian Era. It is a mistake to suppose that the Era began with the birth of Gandhiji. It started a little before 1857, and we should be able to interpret the history of the past 100 years as being one of pregnant preparation for the renaissance which expressed itself through the life and work of Mahatma Gandhi.

Anecdotes about Gandhiji will occupy a small but favourite corner in this vast literature about him, for it has its value in understanding his composite and complex personality. An English philosopher has pithily said that "trifles make perfection and perfection is not a trifle." The same idea, in relation to Gandhiji, was expressed by Jairamdas Doulatram in the following words:

"The true greatness of a person lies more in small deeds than in big achievements. It is the small things that count most in a man's life and show the stuff he is made of. Thus, if anyone wants to know and understand Gandhiji, his life and

teachings, he must try to study and find out what true humanity is and how it worked in Gandhiji's everyday life and teachings."

Chandrashankar Shukla, one of the young set of Mahatmaji's private secretaries, has laid the world under a debt by collecting incidents from the life of the Mahatma. His four volumes, published by Vora & Co., are a treat both for their human interest and as historical documents supplementing the various biographies of Gandhiji. G. Ramachandran was perhaps the first in the field with his sheaf of anecdotes about Mahatmaji. What he has given is interesting and significant, but one feels unsatisfied at the paucity of material that makes up the sheaf. My own little collection, *Stray Glimpses of Bapu*³ was the result of after-lunch talks given to friends in the Seoni Jail, which came to an abrupt close with my unexpected release. I have had no time since then to write down further similar incidents.

And now my friend Prabhu has come out with his brilliant collection of about 150 anecdotes. Most of these are not to be found in any of the previous ones. The criticism that Horace Alexander levelled at my collection may apply equally to the present one of Prabhu. The stray glimpses which I presented in the little booklet are "like lost sheep", says Horace Alexander. "They are not arranged chronologically; neither are they classified into any appropriate headings." I could, with some effort, rearrange my glimpses into a chronological order; but I do not feel that it is necessary. Neither do I feel that Prabhu's anecdotes would improve by a similar treatment. He has followed the principle of the Buddhist work, *Anguttaranikaya*. Starting with very short anecdotes, he has gradually led up to incidents that cover long chapters. I think that psychologically this is a good arrangement. One is gradually led on and on with increasing interest till one does not grudge the time required for finishing the entire book.

Not anything and everything that is written about a great man can pass muster as art anecdote or incident, but Prabhu has given the suggestive caption to his collection: *This Was Bapu*. Any incident or anecdote, to be worth the name ought to be significant. It must haunt your mind long after you have read it. Most of those collected here are strikingly significant. They are arresting and of sustained interest. They throw a flood of light, even of searchlight, on the character of Mahatma Gandhi.

There are, however half-a- dozen ones which are neither significant nor striking. Fastidious literary critics might wish that these were dropped. Devotees of Gandhiji, however, would be grateful to Prabhu for having subordinated his sense of literary aesthetics to the responsibility or dharma of the chronicler in not dropping these incidents.

Lives of great men have a knack of "growing" with the passage of time. Anecdotes grow and grow in number and in variety till it becomes difficult to distinguish between those which are true and those which are spurious. This happens even during the life time of the person about whom the anecdotes are written. Human nature, specially in heroworship, is prone to paint occasions according to its mood or taste. Take, for instance, the anecdote 146 in this collection. It describes the little revolution brought about by Mahatmaji during his first appearance in Shantiniketan in January, 1915. I was an honorary teacher there at the time and I had my own share in the little revolution, which I have described in my Stray Glimpses. In the anecdote, as stated in the present book, S. K. Roy has put the description, as from the mouth of the poet Tagore, that does not tally with the facts.

"In the meantime, Gandhiji asked the scavengers not to do any work for a few days. The high-caste boys could never think of doing the work of untouchable scavengers. Life in the school became almost impossible with the odour of night-soil. Then Gandhiji himself carried the pots on his own head . . . and buried the contents underground. This super-human act was contagious. Soon the boys of the highest castes and rich families were vying with one another to have the honour of doing the work of the outcaste scavengers."

This description is apocryphal and one of pure imagination. Gandhiji did not ask the scavengers to give up their work, nor was there a single day when the latrines were not cleaned. We, some of the teachers and students, in our impatience did demolish a permanent latrine because Gandhiji happened to remark that the structure was old-fashioned, insanitary and hopeless. He had neither the time nor the occasion to carry pots of the night-soil on his head. I do not mean to say that he would not have done it. He had done it on many occasions in jails in South Africa. He did it along with us, inmates of the ashram, for long periods, but we never carried the pots on our heads.

We had better methods.

In the anecdote 25, the following sentence is attributed to Gandhiji:

"Whether it is my Gurudev or anybody, my eating goes on." I think it unlikely that Gandhiji could have referred to Tagore as "my Gurudev". In Shantiniketan we all referred to the Poet as "Gurudev". Gandhiji loyally followed the practice and always referred to the Poet as "the Gurudev", just as the latter referred to him as "the Mahatma". "My Gurudev", just does not represent the natural attitude of Mahatma Gandhi. There is an element of irreverent familiarity and possessiveness in the word "my" which was foreign to it.

A friend from Bengal pointed out the inaccuracy of facts that had crept into one of the incidents recorded in my Stray Glimpses. One can, therefore, be never sure whether the incidents actually happened, however scrupulously exact the writer may be in recording the version of it as given to him. But the common mind loves a good story and does not hesitate to invent one, if necessary, to magnify the greatness of the object of one's worship though sufficiently great in itself it may be !

One is, therefore, filled with admiration and gratitude at the extreme care with which the followers of the Prophet of Islam collected the anecdotes about him and tested rigorously the veracity of each one of them. The best thing to adopt about the anecdotes regarding Mahatma Gandhi would be for his contemporaries to write down all that they know of him as authentic; authors and publishers to verify whatever comes to them; and some time limit to be laid down for the collection of the anecdotes. Any appearing after that ought to be accepted with caution, the burden of proving their authenticity being thrown on those who produce them.

I know a friend from Singapore, a great admirer and devotee of Dr. Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, is collecting typical anecdotes about Mahatma Gandhi which reflect the sense of humour as evinced by Mahatmaji throughout his life, specially in his contacts with non-Indians. For instance, take the anecdote 35, here, in which Gandhiji is said to have answered the question regarding the secret of his power. It is not in consonance with the characteristic nature of Gandhiji as I knew him. It is just possible that he might have written some such thing in his early days. Somebody must trace out this anecdote to its original source. I do not mean to imply that what is written there

is not the secret of Gandhiji's power. What I doubt is whether he would have explained it in that fashion.

Some of the anecdotes collected in this book are simply superb. Take, for instance, 33, about the postman whom Gandhiji describes as a "man of letters" and Ramsay Macdonald as "one of the statesmen true to his class, always waiting till circumstances force them to move"; 46, where he describes the loin-cloth as "minus fours", which has become classic; 43 is more about the poet Iqbal than about Gandhiji, but as an anecdote it must be classed A1; 59 is specially important today (the whole of Japan as also the rest of the world being uneasy at the effects of the atom bomb—and the latest is the H bomb— Gandhiji suggests that the power of the soul working through prayer is mightier than that of any atom bomb; and 125 shows the power of Gandhiji in death as in life).

Biographers of Gandhiji will do well to study and utilize these anecdotes, because they express the various aspects of his life much more than long dissertations. I have no doubt that some of the anecdotes recorded here will find a place in school text-books, and in anthologies of world's great apophthegms and of anecdotes about its great personalities.

Let me thank again Shri R. K. Prabhu for serving the reading public with such a delicious repast prepared with deep devotion and hard labour of love.

KAKA KALELKAR

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1. It should be stated here that this book as well as The Conquest of Self mentioned in line 5 from bottom, were jointly compiled by R. K. Prabhu and U. R. Rao.
 2. Under this, Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase Vol. I & II have been published. Pub. Navajivan; price each vol. Rs. 20.
 3. Published by Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad, price Rs. 2, postage etc. 81 P.

THIS WAS BAPU

A DREAM OF DEATH

"I do not know if the sacrifice of Mr. Ganesh j Shankar Vidyarthi has gone in vain. His spirit always inspired me. I envy his sacrifice. Is it not shocking that this country has not produced another Ganesh Shankar? None after him came to fill the gap. Ganesh Shankar's Ahimsa was perfect Ahimsa. My Ahimsa will also be perfect if I could die similarly peacefully with axe blows on my head. I have always been dreaming of such a death, and I wish to treasure this dream. How noble that death will be,—a dagger attack on me from one side; an axe blow from another; a lathi wound administered from yet another direction and kicks and abuses from all sides and if in the midst of these I could rise to the occasion and remain non-violent and peaceful and could ask others to act and behave likewise, and finally I could die with cheer on my face and smile on my lips, then and then alone my Ahimsa will be perfect and true. I am hankering after such an opportunity and also wish Congressmen to remain in search of such an opportunity."

— Message sent by Mahatma Gandhi on the occasion of the celebration of the anniversary of the martyrdom of Shri Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi, who was killed in the Hindu-Muslim riot at Kanpur in 1931.

01. THE SALT OF LIFE

"Do you think a sense of humour is necessary in life?" was a question put to Gandhiji by a visitor and his reply was: "If I had no sense of humour, I should long ago have committed suicide."

02. A BIRTHDAY MESSAGE

Gandhiji sent the following reply to the organizers of the World Fellowship of Faiths who had requested him to send them a 'message' on the occasion of his birthday (2nd October, 1933):

"What message can I send through the pen, if I am not sending any through the life I am living?"

03. IS THE WORLD GETTING BETTER?

"Is the world getting better or worse?" queried an interviewer.

"So long as I believe in a benevolent God," replied Gandhiji, "I must believe that the world is getting better even though I see evidence to the contrary."

04. MAHATMA AND THE CAPITALIST

A big financier, a captain of business, put this question to Gandhiji once: "Do you want me or my money to the Nation's cause?"

"You," was the straight reply.

"What task would you assign me if I left off business and joined you?"

"The Spinning Wheel," replied Gandhiji as he plied the Charkha.

05. IN BUCKINGHAM PALACE

"The climax of Gandhiji's freedom from convention in the matter of dress was reached when I saw him mounting the carpeted stairs of Buckingham Palace to greet the King and Queen, with his blanket round his shoulders, at the Royal Party in honour of the Round Table Conference delegates and other visitors. I do not think the Palace had seen a visitor in that costume before, nor is it easy to conceive that anyone else would have been allowed the same freedom." Sir Abdul Qadir

06. THE POWER OF PRAYER

When, during Mahatmaji's 21 days' fast undertaken in September 1924 for bringing about Hindu-Muslim unity, the doctor, noticing the extreme weakness of Gandhiji at the end of twelve days of the fast, spoke to the latter about the perishing of the body, Gandhiji, with a smile gleaming in his eyes like sunshine, answered simply, "You have forgotten the power of prayer."

The power of prayer did, indeed, prevail, for Gandhiji survived the ordeal, as the world knows.

07. VIOLENCE PREFERRED TO COWARDICE

Gandhiji always made it clear that his creed of nonviolence was of the brave. But where the choice was between cowardice and violence, he was definite that he would prefer violence to cowardice. "Thus, when my eldest son asked me what he should have done, had he been present when I was almost fatally assaulted in 1908, whether he should have run away and seen me killed or whether he should have used his physical force which he could and wanted to use and defended me, I told him that it was his duty to defend me even by using violence," wrote Gandhiji in Young India.

08. "PRICE OF FREEDOM IS DEATH"

"The price of freedom is death" – this almost prophetic observation was contained in one of the letters written by Gandhiji not long before his death to Dr. Gope Gurbux of Bikaner. Dr. and Mrs. Gope Gurbux were inmates of Gandhiji's Ashram at Sevagram for a fairly long time and Gandhiji had been personally instructing and guiding them in spinning, latrine cleaning, cooking, etc. When leaving the Ashram they had received the following parting message from him : "Follow whatever commends itself to you in my life."

09. "BANDE MATARAM"

During his stay in Calcutta in August 1947, in his post-prayer speeches Gandhiji referred to Band Mataram which was sung just before prayers by a lady. As the song started, the vast gathering stood up and reverently kept standing.

Mahatma Gandhi was alone seated because, as he remarked later, he had learnt that their culture did not require standing as a mark of respect when any national song or Bhajan was sung. It was an unnecessary importation from the West, he thought. After all, it was the mental attitude that mattered, not the superficial appearance.

10. LIKE THE TRUE YOGI

During his Konkan tour Gandhiji happened to reach the village of Lange at midnight. The villagers had been anxiously awaiting his arrival for hours. In his address to them Gandhiji said, "I do not know whether I should pity you or myself for keeping you waiting until this hour. But we have done what the Yogi of the Gita does: 'The night of sleep of the ordinary mortals is a day of wakefulness for the Yogi.' I congratulate you on your Yoga, but you will better deserve my congratulations if you show that you are

true Yogis by contributing for the poor and by purchasing our Khadi." There was pleased laughter at these witty remarks of Gandhiji.

11. POSTMAN BEFORE PREMIER

According to Mr. S. Winsten, author of Days with Bernard Shaw, who had become acquainted with Gandhiji during the latter's visit to London in 1931, once Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, the then British Premier, arrived for an urgent consultation with Gandhiji, but a postman had walked all the way from Bow to Knightsbridge because he wanted to pay his respects to the great Indian leader. "I'll see the man of letters first," said Gandhiji decisively and then he explained to Mr. Winsten: "You see, a statesman can wait, for that is his job; he is always waiting till circumstances force him to move."

12. ORIGIN OF 'GANDHI CAP'

Mr. H. S. L. Polak, who was closely associated with Gandhiji in his South African campaign, explained some years ago the "origin" of the "Gandhi Cap" in a letter in The Manchester Guardian. He wrote:

"There are surprisingly few people, even among Indian Nationalists, who recall the origin of the so called 'Gandhi Cap'. It formed part of the uniform which Mr. Gandhi, as a non-White political prisoner, wore during the South African Indian passive resistance struggle of 1907 to 1914. He later used it when, on his return to India, he further developed his technique of non-violent Civil Disobedience."

13. HARIJAN SEVA

Shrimati Rameshwari Nehru, writing in the Thakkar Bapa Jayanti Commemoration Volume, relates that Gandhiji was once addressing in Wardha the members of the

Harijan Sevak Sangh on how he expected them to discharge their duties by the Harijans. One of the Brahmana members of the Sangh, highly respected for his excellent services to the Harijans, asked the question what Gandhiji expected them to do besides what they were doing already. Prompt came the counter-question, 'Are you married?' On the member's replying in the affirmative, "Gandhiji's face brightened up," says Shrimati Nehru, "and with great force he declared, 'Well then, you should get your son married to a Harijan girl. Do you now understand what more I expect you to do?'"

14. IQBAL'S TRIBUTE

Iqbal, the illustrious Muslim poet, was an admirer of Gandhiji, although he did not agree with him on certain issues. He used to say that future generations of Hindus would worship Gandhiji as an Incarnation of Divinity.

In 1921-22 when the Civil Disobedience and Khilafat movements were surging ahead, John Bull, an English paper, published a cartoon ridiculing Gandhiji. A beautiful woman was shown, blindfolded, following Gandhiji on a rock, beyond which was a stormy sea. She was called "Mother India" whom Gandhiji was shown to be leading to inevitable death.

When Iqbal saw this cartoon he wrote under it four lines in Persian and changed the entire meaning of the cartoon. The meaning of these lines was: "Do not linger on the shores of the sea, for there The song of life is soft and slow:

Plunge into the ocean and fight the waves Eternal life is achieved through struggle."

15. POWER OF SILENCE

During his visit to Gandhiji at Sevagram in December 1938 Dr. John Mott, the great Christian evangelist, asked Gandhiji if he had continued to find silence necessary in his spiritual quest.

Answering the question Gandhiji said, "Only a little while ago I remained completely

silent nearly two months and the spell of that silence has not yet been broken. I broke it today when you came. Nowadays I go into silence at prayer time every evening and break it for visitors at 2 o'clock. I broke it today when you came. It has now become both a physical and spiritual necessity for me. Originally it was taken to relieve the sense of pressure. Then I wanted time for writing. After, however, I had practised it for some time I saw the spiritual value of it. It suddenly flashed across my mind that that was the time when I could best hold communion with God. And now I feel as though I was naturally built for silence. Of course, I may tell you that from my childhood I have been noted for silence. I was silent at school, and in my London days I was taken for a silent drone by friends."

16. A HUMILIATING SPECTACLE

During the historical Dandi March in March 1930, Gandhiji delivered an introspective speech at Bhatgam (Dt. Surat), confessing the lapses to which some of the pilgrims of the March had fallen. In the course of the speech Gandhiji made a touching reference to a labourer who was made to carry a Kitson burner for the night marches :

"We may not consider anybody as low. I observed that you had provided for the night journey a heavy Kitson burner mounted on a stool which the poor labourer carried on his head. This was a humiliating sight. This man was being goaded to walk fast. I could not bear the sight. I, therefore, put on speed and outraced the whole company. But it was no use. The man was made to run after me. The humiliation was complete. If the weight had to be carried, I should have loved to see someone among ourselves carrying it. We would then soon dispense both with the stool and the burner. No labourer would carry such a load on his head. We rightly object to beggar (forced labour). But what was this if it was not beggar? If then we do not quickly mend our ways, there is no Swaraj such as you and I have put before the people.

17. "NOTHING TOO SMALL FOR HIM"

Acharya Kaka Kalelkar, who was with Gandhiji in Bombay at the time of the Congress Session there in 1915 relates the following story revealing how great the latter could be even in small things:

One day I noticed him searching furiously for something in an agitated mood.

I asked him, "Bapu, what are you searching for?" "A small pencil," he answered.

I took one out of my attache case to give him.

"No, no. I want the small pencil I am searching for," Bapuji said.

"Use this for the moment, Bapuji, and I shall search for yours later," I replied.

"You do not understand, Kaka," he said, "I should not lose that pencil. It was given to me in Madras by the young son of G. A. Natesan. And with what affection he ran and gave it to me; and how can I afford to lose it?"

We both searched the rogue of a pencil and Bapuji felt at ease only after it was found.

The pencil was hardly one inch long!

18. PRAYERS AGAINST ATOM BOMBS

One of the last foreign press correspondents to interview Gandhiji before his death was Miss Margaret Bourke White of U.S.A. One of the questions she put to him was:

"Americans are filled with foreboding, particularly about atomic bombs.

How could you use non-violence against atomic bombs?"

Gandhiji answered: "How shall I answer that query? Atomic bombs could be met by prayerful action."

Question: "Would you pray while planes are overhead?"

Answer: "I would come out in the open and let the pilot see that I have not the face of evil against him. The pilot, of course, cannot see my face at such a height, but that

longing in my heart that he should not come to harm would reach up to him and his eyes would be opened. If those who were done to death in Hiroshima by the atom bomb had died with that prayerful action and died openly with prayer in their hearts without uttering a groan, the war would not have ended as disgracefully as it has. It is a question now whether the victors are really victors or victims. The world is not at peace. It is still more dreadful."

19. "MORE BEAUTIFUL THAN ALL ORNAMENTS"

During his tour of Southern India in connection with the anti-untouchability movement, an incident took place in Badagara in Malabar which visibly moved Gandhiji. In response to his appeal at the public meeting there a girl named Kaumudi came forward and gave up her bangles. Although Gandhiji was satisfied with it the girl was not. She then took out her gold chain from her neck and gave it to him. Gandhiji thought that the presentation would end there. But the girl was not to be stopped. Her hands almost unconsciously travelled to her ears and a pair of beautiful jewelled ear-rings were passed on to him.

This incident, said the Mahatma later, touched his heart and gave him fresh inspiration. He had tried to conceal his emotion, but he could not say how far he succeeded. Gandhiji asked if the girl had her parents' consent for this presentation. Her father was only pleased. All the girl asked for in return for the ornaments was an autograph, but Gandhiji was prepared to give her much more than that. He wrote on a piece of paper in Hindi a sentence to the effect that more beautiful than all ornaments she had given up was her willingness for sacrifice, and signed under it. The girl was very much pleased and she promised not to replace the ornaments.

A Little Girl's Sacrifice

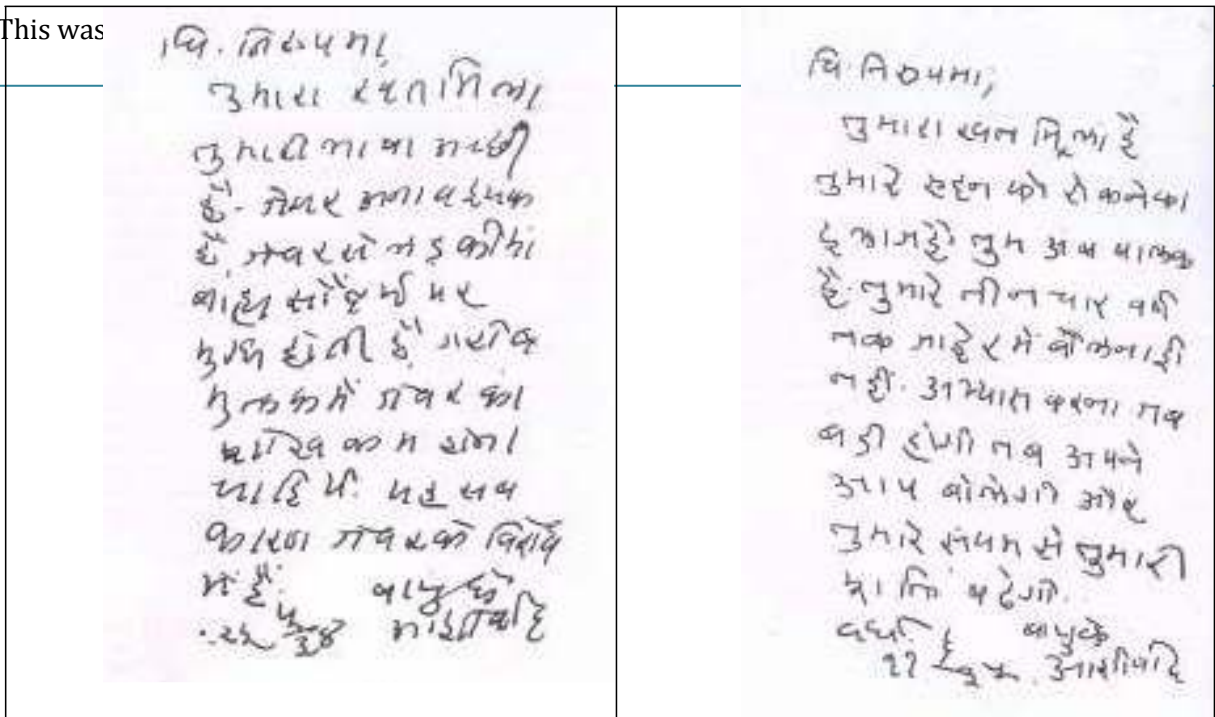
When towards the close of his tour Gandhiji arrived at Udipi, in South Kanara, an address in Hindi on behalf of the local Hindi Prachar Sabha was presented to him along with other public addresses. This Hindi address was read by a nine-year old girl

named Nirupama, daughter of a couple who were devoted Congress workers. She had been taught by her parents from her childhood to speak, read and write in Hindi. When she had finished reading the address and was presenting the same to Gandhiji, she was asked by the latter whether she would give him the ornaments she was wearing along with the address. On this she removed the gold chain from her neck and handed it over to him. "What about this thing?" Gandhiji asked her, pointing to the bangles on her wrists. She extended her hands for him to remove them, but while he began to do so he noticed tears on her cheeks. He returned the bangles to her, giving a gentle tap on her cheeks and saying, "I see you are weeping. I cannot accept your gift with tears on."

The girl's parents were not present on the occasion, being busy looking after the arrangements for Gandhiji's stay in the town. When she, along with Gandhiji and others, arrived later at his residence, her mother, on hearing of the incident, asked her daughter to give away the ornaments. Nirupama then gladly removed the bangles from her hands and presented them to Gandhiji. She next started removing her earrings, but Gandhiji stopped her saying, "Keep it, that is for you. This is enough." He expressed his great pleasure at her sacrifice and asked her whether she would promise him that she would not wear any ornaments on her person in future. She readily gave him that promise.

It is full two decades since the incident took place. Nirupama is now a practising doctor (M.B.B.S.). She has kept her word given to Bapu. You will not find a single trinket on her person. Bapu kept up correspondence with her for a while and two of his letters to her read as follows :

This was



An English translation of the Hindi letters is given below : "Chiranjeevi Nirupama,

I have received your letter. Your language is good. Ornaments are unnecessary. They create in the girls a fascination for outward beauty. In this land of poverty there should be a little (less, attraction for ornaments. That is why I am opposed to ornaments.

23-5-'34

Bapu's blessings."

" Chiranjeevi Nirupama,

I got your letter. Against your tendency to cry there is a remedy. You are still a child. For three or four years more you should not speak in public. During this period you should practise speaking. When you have grown bigger, you will learn to speak automatically. This practice of control will increase your ability.

Wardha, 11-6-'35

Bapu's blessings."

20. THE GANDHI "TALISMAN"

To a friend, who was tormented by doubts, Gandhiji wrote a letter. The letter was mislaid, but on a later occasion the words were recalled to memory and transcribed. The following is the text of the letter:

"I will give you a talisman. Whenever you are in doubt, or when the self becomes too much with you, try the following expedient:

"Recall the face of the poorest and the most helpless man whom you may have seen and ask yourself, if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him. Will he be able to gain anything by it? Will it restore him to a control over his own life and destiny? In other words, will it lead to Swaraj or self-rule for the hungry and also spiritually starved millions of our countrymen?

"Then you will find your doubts and yourself melting away.

– M. K. Gandhi"

21. A REBUKE TO STUDENTS

At Sukkur the students presented Gandhiji with an address. Gandhiji was asked to give his opinion on some ethical questions that did not seem to be in keeping with the atmosphere. Upon cross-examination the students admitted that they had not been consulted about the address before or after it was drafted. The unreality of the whole business hurt Gandhiji. He described it as an unconscious untruth.

"You have presented me with an address," he told them, "whose contents you do not know. You have praised Khadi in your address but you have come dressed in foreign cloth. You have asked me questions which appear to be a mere pose. You wasted your good time which you could have much better utilized by sweeping clean the street of Shikarpur or doing some other piece of honest labour and giving the earning to the Lalaji Memorial Fund. Knowledge can be imparted to the jijnasu only. But seeing that you never knew the contents of the address, you could have no desire to know the answers. I must therefore decline to take them seriously. If the framer wishes to have the answers he must seek another opportunity."

22. "LIARS ALL"

In the course of his Bengal tour in 1925, Gandhiji happened to visit Nawabganj. It had rained heavily all night, and the school boys (of Haripad Bapu's National School), whom, Gandhiji wanted to meet early morning before leaving, could not keep their time and were late. Not more than five minutes could, therefore, be given them. "You all spin and wear Khaddar," said Gandhiji to them, "but tell me how many of you always speak the truth and never lie?" A few boys raised their hands. "Well, now tell me how many of you occasionally happen to lie?" Two boys immediately raised their hands, then three, then four and finally, almost all!

"Thank you," said Gandhiji, bidding them good-bye, "there will be always hope for those of you who know and own that they occasionally lie. The path of those who think they never lie is difficult. I wish both success."

23. GANDHI AND THOREAU

The view prevalent in some quarters that Mahatma Gandhi derived his idea of Civil Disobedience from the writings of Thoreau was declared by Gandhiji himself to be baseless. In reply to an enquiry he wrote a letter dated 10th September, 1935 to Shri P. Kodanda Rao, of the Servants of India Society, who was then in America, in the course of which he said:

"The statement in that I had derived my idea of Civil Disobedience from the writings of Thoreau is wrong. The resistance to authority in South Africa was well advanced before I got the essay by Thoreau on Civil Disobedience. But the movement was then known as Passive Resistance. As it was incomplete I had coined the word Satyagraha for the Gujarati readers. When I saw the title of Thoreau's great essay, I began the use of his phrase to explain our struggle to the English readers. But I found that even Civil Disobedience failed to convey the full meaning of the struggle. I, therefore, adopted the phrase Civil Resistance. Non-violence was always an integral part of our struggle."

24. AN OBJECT-LESSON IN AHIMSA

During his memorable walking tour of Noakhali District early in 1947 Gandhiji halted for a few minutes at the house of a Muslim villager, Asghar Bhuyan, at Dharampur. Gandhiji was given a warm reception and was garlanded by the Muslim villagers. Children of the house gathered around Gandhiji, who patted them and said: "You are all my friends."

Asghar Bhuyan showed Gandhiji one branch of a tree and said: "You see, Gandhiji, this branch has two kinds of leaves. Is it not strange?" he asked.

Gandhiji gave a laughter and said: "There is nothing strange about it. It is all God's creation. These two different kinds of leaves of one tree are like Hindus and Muslims of the same soil. But see how they are flourishing side by side in the same tree. They tell us that we should live as brothers in the same soil as these two leaves are living in the same tree."

The Muslim villagers were very much impressed at Gandhiji's answer and said that what Gandhiji said was perfectly right. Hindus and Muslims should live like brothers of the same soil.

25. AN INVITATION TO COMMIT HAKIRI

An English correspondent sent Gandhiji a cutting of an article headed 'Cheer Up', printed in Britannia, (15-2-'29). The article contained detailed figures of Britain's conquered people, mercantile marine, her exports, and boasted, "Ours, the greatest mercantile marine ever known, carries more than a million pounds worth of machinery annually to India, from which country British shareholders, creditors and officials draw some thirty million pounds a year!

The correspondent had written the following footnotes :

"If Mr. Blinking Gandhi saw this lot, he'd probably cut his throat on one of his own

spinning wheels."

On this letter this was Gandhiji's comment:

"I have decided not to cut my throat yet for a while. I want to see the spinning wheel produce the whole of the billion yards of cloth that 'the greatest mercantile marine the world has ever known' carries to India from England. Only India has to wake from her torpor."

26. WHO ARE THE "UNCLEAN"?

Mahatma Gandhi wrote the following letter in reply to the 'open letter' sent to him by Shri Tathachariar, son-in-law of the Ex-President of the Indian National Congress, Shri C. Vijayaraghavachariar of Salem. In this 'open letter' Shri Tathachariar had stressed the need for the 'purification' of the Harijans before they could be granted entry into the temples:

"Dear Friend,

What you have marked as an 'open letter' has been duly received by me. I confess that your argument does not appeal to me. I hold strongly the view that it is the caste Hindus who have to undergo purification and do penance and not the Harijans, as even for their outward cleanliness the caste Hindus are responsible. Internally, we do not know who is unclean, but we can infer from our past experience that the privileged and powerful are more unclean at heart than the down trodden and despised.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. Gandhi"

27. GANDHIJI AND THE COMMUNISTS

The Communists not only did not see eye to eye with Gandhiji's creed, but also gave a good deal of trouble at Congress meetings in the third decade of this century. But as

Gandhiji did not have any ill-will against them, he always tried to win them over. While at Meerut in 1929 he expressed his strong desire to see the Communist prisoners lodged in the local jail undergoing trial in connection with the famous Meerut Conspiracy case.

And when he visited the jail, the prisoners were surprised to see a visitor whom they expected the least. They greeted Gandhiji with the words, "We frankly did not expect you to visit us."

Gandhiji replied, "Of course, you did not. You do not know me. I may have my differences with you. You may even cause me trouble at Congress meetings, but my creed teaches me to go out of my way to show regard to my opponents and thus demonstrate to them that I can mean no ill to them."

28. "NON-VIOLENT" HONEY

Once when Gandhiji made a reference to "innocent honey," which he was fond of advertising among his friends, one of them asked him what he meant by the expression. Gandhiji's answer was as follows:

"Honey scientifically drawn by scientific bee-keepers. They keep the bees and make them collect honey without killing them. That is why I call it innocent or non-violent honey. That is an industry which admits of great expansion."

But can you call it absolutely non-violent? You deprive the bee of its honey, as you deprive the calf of its milk," demurred the friend.

"You are right," remarked Gandhiji, "but the world is not governed entirely by logic. Life itself involves some kind of violence, and we have to choose the path of least violence. There is violence even in vegetarianism, is there not? Similarly, if I must have honey, I must be friendly to the bee and get it to yield as much honey as it will. Moreover, in the scientific bee-culture" the bee is never deprived of its honey altogether."

29. ORIGIN OF HIS LOIN CLOTH

How Gandhiji came to discard his full dress which he was till then wearing and took to wearing the loin cloth only was related by him in the course of an interview. He said:

"In 1921 Maulana Mahomed Ali was arrested at Waltair whilst he and I were going on a tour to the South. He was torn from Begum Mahomed Ali who was travelling with us. I was deeply moved. She bore the separation bravely and attended meetings in Madras. I left her at Madras and went as far as Madura. On the way I saw in our compartment crowds that were wholly unconcerned with what had happened. Almost without exception they were bedecked in foreign fineries. I entered into conversation with some of them and pleaded for Khadi. For I had no other way open to me to secure the release of the Ali Brothers save through Khadi. They shook their heads as they said, 'We are too poor to buy Khadi and it is so dear.' I realized the substratum of truth behind the remark. I had my vest, cap and full Dhoti on. When these uttered only partial truth, the millions of compulsorily naked men, save for their langoti four inches wide and nearly as many feet long, gave through their limbs the naked truth. What effective answer could I give them, if it was not to divest myself of every inch of clothing I decently could and thus to a still greater extent bring myself in a line with ill-clad masses? And this I did the very next morning after the Madura meeting."

30. "THEY DESERVE THE CROWN"

Replying to an address of welcome presented to him and Kasturba in Madras in April 1915 soon after his return to India from South Africa, Gandhiji said:

"Sir, if one-tenth of the language that has been used in this address is deserved by me and my wife, what languages do you propose for those who have lost their lives, and therefore finished their work on behalf of your suffering countrymen in South Africa? What language do you propose to use for Nagappan and Narayanswamy, lads of seventeen or eighteen years, who braved in simple faith all the trials, all the sufferings, and all the indignity for the sake of the honour of the Motherland? What

language do you propose to use with reference to Valliamma, that sweet girl of seventeen years who was discharged from Maritzburg prison skin and bone, suffering from fever to which she succumbed after about a month's time? It is a misfortune that I and my wife have been obliged to work in the limelight and you have magnified out of all proportions this work we have been able to do. They deserve the crown which you would seek to impose upon us."

He continued: "These young men deserve all the adjectives that you have so affectionately, but blindly lavished upon us. It was not only the Hindus who struggled, but there were Mahomedans, Parsis and Christians, and almost every part of India was represented in the struggle. They realized the common danger, and they realized also what their destiny was as Indians, and it was they, and they alone who matched the soul force against the physical force."

31. DUEL WITH A DOCTOR

During his incarceration in the Aga Khan Palace Gandhiji had contracted malarial fever, but the Delhi authorities would not grant the request of the Bombay Government to place Gandhiji under the treatment of Dr. B. C. Roy, the noted physician of Calcutta (and now Premier of Bengal) who happened to be in Bombay at the time. After a great deal of correspondence, permission was obtained for Dr. Roy to see Gandhiji at the Palace.

Dr. Roy: "But, Mahatmaji, whom do you think I have come to treat? I have come to treat not Mohandas K. Gandhi, but the person who represents to me the 400 million. Because I feel that, if he dies, the 400 million die; and if he lives the 400 million live."

No reply was forthcoming. Gandhiji had no other alternative but to give in, and after a pause he said, "All right, Dr. Bidhan, you have won; so I have to place myself at your mercy. Give me whatever medicines you like, and I will take them. But I wonder why did you not study law instead of medicine. You possess such a wonderful legal acumen."

Dr. Roy proudly said, "God has made me a medical man because He knew that a day

would come when it would be my privilege to treat His most beloved son, our Mahatma Gandhi."

"Nevertheless, you are arguing like a lawyer," Gandhiji said.

32. BAPU THE MISER

"In the dining-shed in the Ashram at Sevagram there hangs a board with this exhortation in Bapu's name: 'I hope all will regard the property of the Ashram as belonging to themselves and to the poorest of the poor. Even salt should not be allowed to be served in excess of one's needs. Water too may not be wasted.' I have been witness to this thrift ever since I joined Gandhiji for the first time in June 1919 at Mani Bhavan in Bombay. One of my duties then was to write letters as dictated or directed by him. Once after receiving his directions I took up note-paper and was about to begin a letter. But Bapu, who had been observing my movements, promptly reprimanded me with, 'Will not a card do?' And so it did.

"Even before the war began, while paper was neither dear nor scarce, Bapu would not allow paper written on only one side to be thrown into the waste- paper basket. All such pastis are carefully sifted out from his voluminous incoming correspondence. He utilizes the backside for writing out drafts and other purposes. He cuts up one note-paper into half a dozen tiny pieces and writes out as many separate personal letters to the several Ashramites, dispatching them all in one cover.

"Indeed, the Bapu, not only of the Ashramites but of the famished millions of India, the votary of Daridranarayan, can ill afford to waste even a particle of food or a drop of water," observes Shri Appasaheb Patwardhan, narrating the above-mentioned incident.

33. A NAMASHUDRA'S FAITH

At Dacca an old Namashudra (an 'untouchable'), aged about 70, was brought before Gandhiji during the latter's East Bengal tour in 1925. He was wearing Gandhiji's photograph in his neck and as soon as he saw Gandhiji, he fell at his feet and crying profusely uttered his thanks over and over again for being cured of chronic paralysis. He said that when all other remedies had failed he took to uttering Gandhiji's name and one day found himself entirely cured.

"It is not I, but God who has made you whole," said Gandhiji. But, how could he believe? To him God had appeared in Gandhiji's photograph. It was vain to argue with him. "But, my dear man," said Gandhiji, "will you not oblige me by taking that photograph off your neck?" That he readily did, and quietly walked away with the name of God on his lips and probably convinced that the man who had refused to take any responsibility for having cured him could certainly not be 'The Gandhi Maharaj' who had cured him!

34. A PATAUDI STORY

On the last occasion when the Nawab of Pataudi went to pay' his respects to Gandhiji, the latter, says the Nawab, "wanting a change from discussions on general topics of the day, suddenly decided to pull my leg by telling me that he had made up his mind to challenge me at a single wicket cricket match. Would I accept the challenge? I replied that I would on condition that when the match was over he would allow me to challenge him in Politics. My proposal having been accepted, I proceeded to tell him with a serious face that whereas I was certain he would beat me at cricket, I was equally certain I would beat him in Politics. Gandhiji laughed like a happy child and thumping me affectionately on the back said, 'Nawab Sahib, apne to abhi se mujhe bowled ker dia' ('Nawab Sahib, you have bowled me out already'). What a great man! We shall not see his like again."

35. HE WOULDN'T COPY

When Mahatma Gandhi was at the high school in the first year, an incident occurred at the time of examination which is worth recording. Mr. Giles, the Educational Inspector, had come on a visit of inspection. He had set them five words to write as a spelling exercise. One of the words was "Kettle".

Mohandas had miss pelt it. The teacher tried to prompt him with the point of his boot, but he would not be prompted. It was beyond him to see that the teacher wanted him to copy the spelling from his neighbour's slate, for he thought that the teacher was there to supervise them against copying.

The result was that all the boys, except him, were found to have spelt every word correctly. Only he had been stupid. The teacher tried later on to bring this stupidity home to him, but without effect. He could never learn that art of "copying".

36. THE TROUBLESOME TOOTH

When Gandhiji was staying in London towards the close of 1906 pleading with British statesmen the cause of his countrymen in South Africa, he developed a toothache. He was busy with his South African Committee when his vegetarian friend Dr. Joshia Oldfield called on him. Coming out from the Committee Gandhiji asked the doctor if he could take out the tooth that was worrying him. What followed had better be told by the doctor himself:

"I examined his mouth and found a very painful jaw, and a tooth difficult to extract.

'Go to a dentist,' I said.

'I haven't time,' he replied, 'if you will take it out for me here and now, I'll be very grateful, for it disturbs my power of concentration.'

I went out, borrowed a pair of forceps and returned. He asked the Committee to excuse him a minute, came into his bedroom and, without a sigh or a murmur, or an indrawn breath, bore the extraction of as difficult a tooth as I have ever taken out.

For myself I wouldn't have had it out without an anesthetic upon any consideration. He sat still for a few minutes, thanked me gently and earnestly, and went back to his Committee...."

37. A BRITISH NURSE'S TAUNT

Recounting the life in the Yeravda Jail after his release in 1924, Gandhiji gave to the outside world several interesting little known facts about the happenings behind the prison bars. He wrote :

My very efficient English nurse, whom I loved to call 'Tyrant', because she insisted in all loving ways on my taking more food and more sleep than I did, with a smile curling round her lips and insidious twinkle in her eyes, gently remarked after I was safely removed to a private ward escorted by the house surgeon, and herself : "As I was shading you with my umbrella I could not help smiling, that you, a fierce boycotter of everything British, probably owed your life to the skill of a British surgeon handling British surgical instruments, administering British drugs, and to the ministrations of a British nurse. Do you know that as we brought you here, the umbrella that shaded you was of a British make ?"

The gentle nurse as she finished her last triumphant' sentence evidently expected my complete collapse under her loving sermon. But happily I was able to confound her self-assurance by saying, "When will you people begin to know things as they are? Do you know that I do not boycott anything because it is British ? I simply boycott all foreign cloth because the dumping down of foreign cloth in India has reduced millions of my people to pauperism."

I was even able to interest her in the Khaddar movement. Probably she became a convert to it.

38. BAPU APOLOGIZES

When Shri Rajagopalachari and Shri Shankarlal Banker were discussing the possibility of Gandhiji's being examined by doctors prior to the commencement of his 21 days' fast for purification, (which was to begin on 8th May 1933), Gandhiji said : "I cannot agree to any medical examination, as it would be tantamount to lack of faith on my part."

"Then," said C. R., "you are conceding nothing and claiming infallibility."

This irritated Gandhiji, who flared up saying, "You shall not thus undermine my conviction and my faith. I am confident that I am going to survive the ordeal. That should be enough for me, and you as my friends ought not to try to weaken my faith. I cannot agree to any examination of me by doctors before the commencement of the fast."

The friends then left. Both of them were sorry that they should have irritated Gandhiji's soul.

In the evening, while taking our usual walk, Gandhiji as in a flash realized his mistake and said that he had done a great wrong to two dear friends. "What a frail erring creature is man !" said he, "even on the eve of a purificatory fast, I gave way to anger against my dear friends. I will tender an apology to them."

Next morning, accordingly, he sent the following letter to C. R. : "My dear C. R. You are dearer to me than life itself. I wounded you and Shankarlal deeply yesterday. It is no use my saying 'forgive me'. Your forgiveness I have, before asking. But I will do the very thing that I resisted like an ass. I will submit to an examination now and at any time you like; by any doctor, provided, of course, Government permit it. I feel that the result of such an examination should not be published, for fear of political use being made of it. I must say, too, that medical examination, if it comes, is not likely to affect the commencement of the fast. More when we meet. This is just to relieve my soul of the impurity that crept in yesterday. Love to you and Shankarlal. Bapu."

Next day, however, C. R. came laughing and said, "There was no occasion for apology. The irritation was more on our side than on yours and we have now decided to have no

examination."

- M. D. in Harijan

39. WITH THE LEPERS

A Baptist Missionary in England on furlough from India told a Daily News representative of an invitation he extended to Mahatma Gandhi to visit a leper colony in Orissa. Gandhiji came in a cab and a loin cloth. He addressed the lepers, and then at the end of his speech asked: "Why should I call those my brothers if I do not mix with them ?" And he insisted that each of the poor stricken lepers should be brought to him. Disregarding the signs and marks of this most loathsome of moral diseases, he shook each by the hand, patted their heads, and spoke words of comfort to them. "How many men, great or obscure, would do that ?" the missionary asked.

The late Shri Mahadev Desai too in his pen-pictures of the Mahatma's life at Sevagram has left the following on record :

"Among the patients in the Ashram at Sevagram there is a leper. He was a political jail-bird with us in Yeravda and got leprosy there, or had it diagnosed there, I forget which. He is a profound Sanskrit scholar and talks with you in Sanskrit, making you feel as though it was as easy as your mother tongue. After having wandered for years as a castaway, having even gone on an indefinite fast out of loathing for the fell disease which is now in a considerably advanced stage, he rolled in here one fine morning, saying he wanted to lay his bones here, that he knew he would have shelter here and would not go even if he was turned out.

'How can I say "no" to you?' said Gandhiji. 'If I harbor a son-in-law suffering from tuberculosis, why should I not harbour you ? There is Ba to look after him. Of Valji Desai everyone is fond and I am sure he would be taken care of. But who will look after you if I don't ? I shall build you a hut right near my hut, and you may make the place your abode. Even if no one remains here you at least shall stay.' "

40. THE FALLEN SISTERS

The chastity of women was always held by Gandhiji as a very sacred thing. It was in Cocanada in 1921 that he came face to face with the fallen sisters. Thereafter his thoughts consistently turned on the ways and means of ameliorating their lot and raising them from the social degradation to which the brute in man had reduced them.

Describing his experiences in Andhra Gandhiji wrote :

"At Cocanada, just after the great public meeting, on my return to my bungalow at about 9 p.m. I had a visit from some women and girls. The light was very dim when I entered. There was something uncanny about their movements and their looks. Somehow or other the usual greeting, 'Do you spin ? What will you give me for the Tilak Swaraj Fund ?' would not come to my lips. On the contrary I asked my hosts who the ladies were. He did not know. He enquired and after some hesitation the reply came, 'We are dancing girls.' I felt like sinking into the bowels of the earth. My host soothed me by saying that there was a ceremony attached before the commencement of life. It made matters worse for me. It gave the damnable thing an air of respectability. I cross-examined. They said in the politest of tones they had come to have darshan. 'Will you take up some other occupation?' 'Yes, if it gave us our livelihood.' I had not the heart to close with them there and then. I felt ashamed of my sex. I spoke straight the next morning at Rajahmundry, the next halting places. It was one of the most painful experiences in Andhra. I suppose the sin is common enough in one shape or another in the rest of India. All I can say is that, if we will have Swaraj through self-purification, we may not make women a prey to our lust. The law of protection of the weak applies here with particular force. To me the meaning of cow protection includes the protection of the chastity of our women. We will not have a regenerate India, unless we learn to respect our women as we respect our mothers, sisters and daughters. Let us cleanse ourselves of the sins that kill the man in us and make us brutes."

41. "I AM STILL A STUDENT"

"Mahatma Gandhi, you are here to address a unique gathering representing a variety of races and nationalities – people representing 57 countries...; a gathering of 200 individuals with 200 opinions full of reactions and incalculable absurdity," said the chairman of the meeting at the International Students' Movement House while introducing Gandhiji to a thoroughly international gathering of men and women students of London on 16th October, 1931.

Mahatmaji was cheered in respectful adoration as he addressed the gathering in an affectionate manner as "Fellow Students". He requested them to forgive him for his desire to pass time that evening in answering questions instead of inflicting upon them a set speech. He said:

"I have addressed you as 'Fellow Students'. It is not a formula. I regard myself essentially as a student and if you are wise, as I am, (laughter) in afterlife you regard yourselves as students."

"Throughout my varied experiences of life," continued Gandhiji, "I have come to the conclusion that our student life commences after we leave our Colleges and Universities and Law Chambers where we are supposed to be studying tied down to our studies with the key to our knowledge and when we leave these premises we practically forget all that we have learnt.

"It is really in afterlife that we have to unlearn many things. The so-called student life is merely a preparation for the real life of a student. When you are in College or anywhere else you have got set subjects. Even in the optional subjects you have to learn them in particular fashion because you are definitely hidebound. But after that stage is over you are free like a bird with wings to soar high and the higher you soar the stronger you become. So I am still a student who has not graduated in the world, (cheers).

"When you are buffeted about and thrown on your resources it becomes a tough job. If you give yourselves to study, if you dedicate yourselves to study, to eternal research, there is no limit to joy, there is no limit to pleasure that you derive from

that study. My study consistently has been the search after Truth. During the early days of my study and search I could not consistently find Truth unless I invited injury against myself and not against others. I could find Truth only when I eschewed all feeling of causing injury to others, but when necessary, inflicting it on myself. Because, as you must be knowing, Truth and Violence are opposed to each other. Violence hides Truth and if you try to find Truth by Violence you will betray the horrible ignorance in the search of Truth and, therefore, Non-violence without any exception whatsoever, I have come to realize, is the essence of life, that is, Ahimsa'."

42. A TRAGEDY

Though mighty crowds, hardly controllable, surged round Gandhiji wherever he travelled, he was spared the sight of any serious accident. Perhaps the only exception was during his tour of Almora District in U.P. in June 1929. This is how he narrated the accident:

"Throughout a life of continuous bustle lived among crowds for nearly thirty years I cannot recall a serious accident though I can many narrow escapes. But in Almora on the day of my entry i.e., 18th instant, and after a crowded meeting, as I was returning to my host's house, a villager named Padamsingh who came rushing, as villagers do, to the car for darshan, met with what proved to be a fatal accident. He could not dodge the car in time, he fell and the car ran over him. He was quickly carried by kind bystanders to the hospital where he received the utmost attention and hope was entertained that he would survive. He was strongly built and brave. He lived for two days, his pulse was good, he was taking nourishment. But the heart suddenly stopped on the 20th instant at 3-15. Padamsingh died leaving an orphan boy 12 years old.

"Death or lesser accidents generally do not give me more than a momentary shock, but even at the time of writing this I have not recovered from the shock. I suppose it is because I feel guilty of being party to Padamsingh's death. I have found chauffeurs to be almost without exception hot-tempered, easily excitable and impatient, as inflammable as the petrol with which they have to come in daily contact. The

chauffeur of my car had more than a fair share of all these shortcomings. For the crowd through which the car was struggling to pass he was driving rashly. I should have either insisted on walking, or the car proceeding only at a walking pace till we had been clear of the crowd. But constant motor ridings have evidently coarsened me, and freedom from serious accidents produces an unconscious but unforgivable indifference to the safety of pedestrians. This sense of the wrong is probably responsible for the shock. It is well with Padamsingh. Pandit Govind Vallabh Pant has assured me that the son will be well looked after. Padamsingh received attention at the hospital which moneyed men might have envied. He was himself resigned and at peace. But his death is a lesson to me as, I hope, it would be to motorists. Although I may be twitted about my in- consistency, I must repeat my belief that motoring in spite of all its advantages is an unnatural form of locomotion. It therefore behoves those who use it to restrain their drivers and to realize that speed is not the summum bonum of life and may even be no gain in the long run. I have never been clear in my mind that my mad rush through India has been all to the good. Anyway Padamsingh's death has set me thinking furiously."

43. EXPERIMENTS WITH UNCOOKED FOOD

Gandhiji believed in Nature Cure. Dietetics also interested him. There was no suggestion that he would throw it away as useless unless it was tried fully and gave unfavourable results. He would conduct the experiment on himself so that he could get first-hand information about the pros and cons of the experiment. Here is what he described in Young India (13-6-'29) as his experiments with uncooked food :

"I have been known as a crank, faddist, madman. Evidently the reputation is well deserved. For, wherever I go, I draw to myself cranks, faddists, and madmen. Andhra has a fair share of these. They often find their way to Sabarmati. No wonder then that I found these specimens in abundance during my Andhra tour. But I propose to introduce to the reader only the fellow crank who by his living faith in his mission compelled my admiration and induced me to plunge into a dietetic experiment which I had left unfinished at the age of twenty when I was a student in London. This is

Sundaram Gopalrav of Rajahmundry. The ground was prepared for him by a survey superintendent whom I met in Vizagapatam and who told me that he was living practically on raw food. Gopalrav has a Nature Cure establishment in Rajahmundry, to which he devotes all his time. He said to me, 'The hipbaths and kindred appliances are good so far as they go. But they are artificial. To be rid of disease it is necessary to do away with fire in the preparation of foods. We must take everything in its vital state even as animals do.'

'Would you advise me to adopt entirely raw diet?' I asked.

'Certainly, why not? I have cured cases of chronic dyspepsia in old men and women through a balanced diet containing germinated seeds,' was Gopalrav's reply.

'But surely there should be a transition stage,' I gently remonstrated.

'No such stage is necessary,' rejoined Gopalrav. 'Uncooked food including uncooked starch and protein are any day more digestible than cooked. Try it and you will feel all the better for it.'

'Do you take the risk? If the cremation ceremony takes place in Andhra, the people will cremate your body with mine,' I said.

'I take the risk,' said Gopalrav.

'Then send me your soaked wheat. I commence from today,' I said.

Poor Gopalrav sent the soaked wheat. Kasturba not knowing that it could possibly be meant for me gave it to the volunteers who finished it. So I had to commence the experiment the next day."

Gandhiji subsequently gave up the experiment as it had unfavourable effect on his health.

44. ORIGIN OF MASS PRAYERS

The significance and gradual development of the system of mass prayers evolved by him was explained by Mahatmaji in one of his speeches at Sodepur Ashram in

December 1945. He said that in 1936 about a dozen Japanese monks paid him a visit when he was staying at Maganvadi (Wardha). The leading monk suggested to him that he intended to send one or two of his disciples to the Ashram, a proposal which he approved. First came one and later on another. Of the two, one was staying with him till the war with Japan broke out and as a result he was taken into custody. This Buddhist monk used to do all the tasks he used to be given punctually and methodically. In between his work he used to spend the time at his disposal in singing religious songs in the Japanese language, all the time beating a drum. This he did while taking his rounds. This was a Buddhist religious song in praise of the Infinite. Gandhiji said that he incorporated the song in his prayer. This was the first item of the prayer.

The second item of the prayer was a Sanskrit Shloka (verse) and was, according to him, universal in its appeal. This was an invocation to Mother Earth, sustainer of man. If there was any objection to it on any score he would plead that he was helpless. To him all faiths were welcome. He believed in all faiths but he saw no reason to give up his own faith. Possibly, said Gandhiji, this Sanskrit Shloka was symbolic but, according to him, many noble thoughts and ideas were couched in symbolic language.

Thirdly, there was the prayer quoted from the Koran. It was incorporated at the instance of the daughter of Abbas Tyabji, the well-known Congress leader. She possessed a gifted voice. When on a visit to the Ashram she expressed the desire to propagate the teaching of the Koran to the Ashramites, Gandhiji said, he readily agreed. She suggested a verse from the Koran for inclusion in the prayer and it was done.

The fourth item of the prayer was taken from the Zend Avesta written in the Pahlavi language. When he was fasting in the Aga Khan Palace, Dr. Gilder was there as were also Dr. Bidhan Roy and some other medical men. Dr. Gilder was a Parsi and from him the verse from the Zend Avesta was taken and included.

So far as the Bhajan songs were concerned, said Gandhiji, there was no hard and fast rule. It all depended upon the time and place of the prayer.

45. MAHATMA GANDHI'S COURTESY

Bapu was always the soul of courtesy towards young and old, rich and poor. An incident illustrative of this side of his character was described by Giralda Forbes in the Catholic World of Calcutta. She had never met Gandhiji before. She had arrived in Bombay from England and learned that she was to proceed to Lahore by the next train. The following afternoon she went to the station to board the train. A porter carried her roll of bedding and luggage. There had been some delay on the way and she arrived to find the train pulling out. As is well known trains in India have separate coaches for men and women. There was a single women's second class coach in the train, but all the five berths were occupied. She hurried frantically up and down the platform looking for room; there was none. Her eyes fell on an empty coach. It was marked first class, but she decided to pay the difference and looked around for the guard to make the arrangement. She did not notice in her hurry that a large placard hung from the door at the other end of the coach showing that it was 'Reserved'.

The narrative proceeds: "A knot of Hindu gentlemen were standing talking in front of the door, and they turned to look at her. One of them stopped her on her flight and asked if she was in need of help. He was little, very unprepossessing, and had a toothless mouth that made his smile look ghastly. The train gave a warning shriek. The little man turned abruptly and made a gesture of authority, and the guard, who was about to wave the flag, blew his whistle instead. The harassed missionary explained her predicament, and the knot of Hindu gentlemen crowded around and showed signs of consternation. The little man fumbled in the folds of cloth around his waist and produced a ticket. He pressed it into her hand, and asked for hers. Instantly howls of protest rose on every side. The little man hushed them, and a crowd collected. The station master came running to see what was the matter. The little man explained and motioned to the coolie to put the luggage of the new occupant in the coach, and take his out.

'You see,' he said to her, 'I did not want to travel first class; but my friends bought this accommodation without telling me. I am delighted to make the exchange. I am going to Lahore, and you are going to Lahore, so it is all right.'

Too dazed to make any protest the missionary accepted the situation and the toothless one led the way chuckling to the rear of the train, utterly indifferent to the furious protests of his friends, while the crowd shouted and laughed, and the station master pleaded frantically that he must start the train."

46. IN THE LION'S DEN

When in 1917 Gandhiji stepped into Champaran (Bihar) to enquire into the condition of the agriculturists there and understand their grievances against the indigo planters, there was a hue and cry raised against him by the latter fully backed up by the Anglo-Indian Press. The planters demanded his instantaneous removal from the district and even hinted that they would take the law into their own hands if the authorities did not arrest his further progress. It is now a matter of history how the authorities, succumbing to the agitation, served a notice on him to quit the district immediately, how he refused to oblige them, how he was then put under arrest and asked to stand his trial, how finally realizing the serious consequences that would follow his conviction, the Viceroy intervened and had the case against Gandhiji withdrawn.

The chagrin of the planters at such a turn of events could well be imagined, and some of them began to hold out threats of direct action. A day before the interview which Gandhiji was to have with the Governor of the Province, the Pioneer published a lengthy letter from a leading planter, Mr. W. S. Irwin, Manager of the Motihari Factory, in which he wrote as follows :

"Mr. Gandhi, I believe, is a well-intentioned philanthropist, but he is a crank and a fanatic and is too utterly obsessed with his partial success in South Africa and his belief that he has been ordained by Providence to be a righter of wrongs to be able to realize that he is being made a cat's paw of by pleaders and Mukhtears etc...Mahajans and moneylenders...and by Home Rule politicians... For the protection of the property of the Champaran planters, one and probably only one step is essentially necessary and that is the removal of Mr. Gandhi from the district. The extreme forbearance of the planters has so far prevented the outbreak of any serious disturbance, but unless

Government can see its way to protecting them they will unavoidably be forced into taking, the steps necessary for their own protection."

The European planters' threats were, however, unavailing as Gandhiji refused to be cowed down and ultimately the Bihar Government felt obliged to appoint a commission of enquiry into the grievances of the agriculturists.

47. "THE PRINCE OF BEGGARS"

During his travels, Gandhiji played the role of an accomplished beggar. He was welcomed by crowds almost at every station. People flocked towards his compartment to catch a fleeting glimpse of the Mahatma. How could the distinguished National Beggar let such golden opportunities slip by in passively acknowledging the devotional greetings of the crowd? He must charge the 'price' for his darshan and so his begging hand was immediately stretched out of the window. "One pice for the Harijan!" called out Gandhiji, and the people experienced glow of joy and satisfaction in placing copper coins in his palm. When one hand was full, the other was extended, and Gandhiji smartly collected a decent amount at every station, even during nights. A clever and experienced beggar as he was Gandhiji took special care to learn at least the word for 'pice' in every language. He did not fret or fume at the crowds if they woke him up with vociferous cries of 'Mahatma Gandhiki Jai!' The beggar of a poor nation could not afford to lie sleeping while there were people clamouring to give him 'alms'. And so quietly he got up, opened the window if it was closed, and commenced his work of collection.

I have witnessed scenes when, sometimes being unusually tired, Gandhiji did not wake up at a certain station. A few persons entered his compartment and shook him up despite protests from the members of his party, and after placing some coins in his hands walked away with "Mahatma Gandhiki Jai!" Gandhiji smiled, again lay down on the berth and fell into deep sleep.

When an ordinary beggar receives any coin he feels delighted; but in the case of this strange Prince of Beggars, people feel obliged in placing coins in his hands. Sometimes

an old, decrepit woman in torn and tattered garments would with great difficulty make her way through the crowd, put a pice in Gandhiji's palm, look at him intently with devotion for a while and thread her way back.

It was, perhaps, early in 1937 when the Congress was still wavering between office-acceptance and non-cooperation, that a journalist enquired with curiosity: "Bapuji, will the Congress accept office?" "Why, do you wish to become a minister?" asked Gandhiji with a good-humoured chuckle. The poor correspondent was nonplussed and began to recede into the background. But Gandhiji would not let him off so easily. "Will you please let me use your hat as my begging bowl?" he asked. Of course, the hat was immediately surrendered and Gandhiji instantaneously stretched it before the owner himself to begin with. And the would-be minister had to surrender amid laughter a few silver coins too. What a queer and extraordinary beggar this half-naked Fakir was !

It is said that beggars cannot be choosers. But this rule did not apply to Gandhiji. With him, in fact, it was just the reverse. If you were wealthy, he would demand gold and silver; if poor, an honest penny; if you could spare no coins, he would ask you to pay in hand-spun yarn; if you could not do even that you have to fast and save and pay. Gandhiji was an inexorable beggar, a hard taskmaster. And yet so sweet, so loving, so forgiving.

- Gandhiji, by Shri D. G. Tendulkar and Vithalbhai K. Jhaveri, 1944

48. AN EARLY EXAMPLE OF BAPU'S AHIMSA

Mahatma Gandhi set a shining example of Ahimsa to the public world when in 1897 he refused, to prosecute his assailants among the whites of South Africa who had mobbed him and brutally assaulted him in Durban. The story of the assault has been narrated by himself in the following manner:

"A mob followed us. With every step we advanced, it grew larger and larger. The gathering was enormous when we reached West Street. A man of powerful build took hold of Mr. Laughton and tore him away from me. He was not therefore in a position

to come up with me. The crowd began to abuse me and shower upon me stones and whatever else they could lay their hands on. They threw down my turban. Meanwhile a burly fellow came up to me, slapped me in the face and then kicked me. I was about to fall down unconscious when I held on to the railings of a house nearby. I took breath for a while and when the fainting was over proceeded on my way. I had almost given up the hope of reaching home alive. But I remember well that even then my heart did not arraign my assailants...."

On Mr. Escombe, Attorney-General with the Government of Natal, telling Gandhiji, "We desire that the offenders should be brought to book. Can you identify any of your assailants?" Gandhiji replied: "I might perhaps be able to identify one or two of them. But I must say at once before this conversation proceeds that I have already made up my mind not to prosecute my assailants. I cannot see that they are at fault. What information they had they had obtained from their leaders. It is too much to expect them to judge whether it was correct or otherwise. If all that they heard about me was true, it was natural for them to be excited and do something wrong in a fit of indignation. I would not blame them for it. Excited crowds have always tried to deal out justice in that manner. If anyone is to blame it is the Committee of Whites, you yourself and, therefore, the Government of Natal. Reuter might have cabled any distorted account. But when you knew that I was coming to Natal, it was your duty and the duty of the Committee to question me about the suspicions you entertained with regard to my activities in India, to hear what I had to say and then do what might appear proper in the circumstances. Now I cannot prosecute you or the Committee for the assault. And even if I could, I would not seek redress in a court of law. You took such steps as seemed advisable to you for safeguarding the interests of the whites of Natal. That is a political matter, and it remains for me to fight with you in the political field to convince you and the whites that the Indians who constitute a large proportion of the population of the British Empire wish to preserve their self-respect and safeguard their rights without injuring the whites in the least."

49. AN IDEAL PRISONER

Acharya Kaka Kalelkar, who was Gandhiji's companion in Yeravda Jail in 1930, thus describes their daily routine:

We get up early morning at four when the stars are shining in all their glory. By 4-20 our morning prayer begins. After prayer comes the Gita recitation. The recitation finished, I would go for my morning walk and Gandhiji would spend half an hour in reading and writing and then join me. The Gita, the Ashram ideal, food problem, the wheel, my laxity, such are the usual topics during the walk. Exactly at 6 we would sit for our breakfast. His breakfast consists of curds (when he took it) and dates soaked in water. By the time we finished breakfast, the goats would come to be milked. Gandhiji always enjoys the sight of the kiddies, greedily sucking the milk and bleating now and then, by way of comma and semi-colon. A gentle kick from the mother would bring the full stop. Without a moment's delay Gandhiji sits at the spinning wheel, and the wheel begins to recount the tragic tale of India's woes, and the sure hope of deliverance. Have you ever heard the pensive notes of a perfect spinning wheel? Verse by verse the epic goes on and it grows upon you.

With the wheel humming by your side you never feel solitary. With one or two necessary breaks the things go on till half past ten. At about seven he takes a cup of hot water with lime juice and salt. At half past ten you can see him going for his bath. I forget to tell you that every morning he spends some time with the carding bow with its rhythmic twang. Half an hour's work gives him more slivers than he can consume during the day. Sardar Vallabhbhai once ran short of slivers and he sent for some through the Superintendent. My stock used to be rather poor. Gandhiji doubled his time at the bow with the joy of a mother cooking for her dear children.

At about 11 we used to take the midday meal. Again it used to be curds mixed with a pinch of soda-bicarb, dates or raisins and boiled vegetables. The newspapers came about the same time. I would read out the latest news about the lathi charges and the ladies of Bombay hoisting the national flags aloft. We rarely used to discuss the news. That was reserved for the evening walk. Dietetics and nature cure, used to be the main topics at dinner time, because Gandhiji has read deeply and experimented

diligently in this field. The wheel must follow the meal immediately; after it the newspapers and then the midday siesta. At half past one he takes a cupful of water, with the sour juice of lemon, neutralized with soda-bicarb. Then comes the reading or writing of letters. Hymns from the Ashram prayer book must be translated into English for the benefit of Mirabai. At four you will see him with the takli – a thing of his own manufacture out of a broken tile and a bamboo stick – walking in the sun and pulling the milk-white yarn.

At the stroke of five would begin our evening meal - curds, dates and some vegetables. Again the goats would come and the kids wagging their tiny tails. Meals over, I would wash the utensils and Gandhiji would prepare the dates for the next day and soak them in water. Then the evening walk. The colours of the evening sky, the glory of the setting sun and the weird shapes of the fat gray clouds are peculiar attraction for Gandhiji. Sometimes he would call me hurriedly to see some peculiar beauty of the skies before my work at the waterpipe was finished. I have rarely seen him inviting anybody in this way to steal a few moments from the appointed task...

At 7 we would begin our evening prayer. During the rains it was timed at 7.30 p.m., but with the setting in of winter the Ashram changed the time to 7 p.m. We also changed our time so that we may have the satisfaction of saying our prayers in company with the Ashram boys and girls, although separated by hundreds of miles. Only those who know the brotherhood of prayer can appreciate the change we made.

50. THE "HALF-NAKED", "SEDITIONOUS FAKIR"

Arch-imperialist Mr (now, Sir) Winston Churchill, who firmly believed that "the loss of India would mark and consummate the downfall of the British Empire" and that "that great organism would pass at a stroke out of life into history", and who had declared, "We have no intention of casting away that most truly bright and precious jewel in the crown of the King, which more than all our other Dominions and Dependencies constitutes the glory and strength of the British Empire," could not contain himself when he saw the Viceroy of India, Lord Irwin, carrying on negotiations with Mahatma

Gandhi for a political truce after the latter had launched a countrywide campaign of civil disobedience. He vented his spleen against the Mahatma as well as the Viceroy in these terms in an address to the Council of the West Essex Unionist Association on February 23, 1931: "It is alarming and also nauseating to see Mr. Gandhi, an Inner Temple lawyer, now become a seditious fakir of a type well known in the East, striding half-naked up the steps of the Viceregal Palace, while he is still organizing and conducting a defiant campaign of civil disobedience, to parley on equal terms with the representative of the King-Emperor."

He had also thundered: "I am against these conversations and agreements between Lord Irwin and Mr. Gandhi. . . The truth is that Gandhi-ism and all it stands for will have to be grappled with and finally crushed." It was no wonder that Churchill should have refused to meet Gandhiji when the latter had gone to England towards the end of the same year as a delegate to the Second Round Table Conference.

An echo of Churchill's thunder against Gandhiji was heard thirteen years after the latter's release from detention from the Aga Khan's Palace in May 1944. Gandhiji, who was recouping his health at Panchgani, wrote the following letter to Churchill, who was then Prime Minister of Great Britain:

" 'Dilkhush' (Panchgani) July 17, 1944

Dear Prime Minister,

You are reported to have a desire to crush the simple 'Naked Fakir' as you are said to have described me. I have been long trying to be a 'Fakir' and that naked – a more difficult task. I, therefore, regard the expression as a compliment though unintended. I approach you then as such and ask you to trust and use me for the sake of your people and mine and through them those of the world.

Your sincere friend, M. K. Gandhi"

How this letter came to be miscarried and delayed in seeing the light of day was related by Gandhiji in a statement issued by him on June 18, 1945 from Panchgani. According to Gandhiji the letter was written in the small hours of the night of July 17, at the same time that he wrote his Gujarati note to Quid-e-Azam Jinnah and duly posted to be sent through the Viceroy. Unfortunately, the letter miscarried. Having

waited for a long time, on September 10, 1944, Gandhiji sent a letter of enquiry out of curiosity, "for the psychological moment had passed." To his surprise, the Private Secretary to the Viceroy wrote in return on September 13 that the letter in question had not been received by him. As Gandhiji attached importance to the letter he sent a copy of the missing letter, repeating the request that it might be sent to the Prime Minister. "My letter of July 17 to Mr. Churchill in my estimation was of a sacred character not meant for the public eye," said Gandhiji, "but I could contemplate an occasion or time when it might call, for publication without losing the sacred character. I, therefore, requested the Viceroy on December 13, 1944, to enquire from the Prime Minister whether I had his permission to publish it in case of need. He replied through his Secretary that the Prime Minister agreed to the publication of my letter subject to the fact that it was duly acknowledged."

51. ALL OVER BEEF TEA AND SALT

When the Zulu 'rebellion' of 1906 had been quelled and Gandhiji's duties in connection with the ambulance corps raised by him came to an end, he prepared to settle down with his family at Phoenix. But before he actually removed himself there Kasturba fell seriously ill at Durban.

Her condition grew worse day by day and Gandhiji consented to an operation after Kasturba had agreed. She was very weak and the doctor had to perform the operation without chloroform. While she was convalescing, Gandhiji, who was at Johannesburg, received a telephone call from the doctor telling him that his wife's condition was getting worse. The doctor told Gandhiji that unless she received some beef tea, she might die and asked Gandhiji's permission to give her the beef diet. Gandhiji refused to give such permission, but told the doctor that if Kasturba consented to take it, then he had no objection. The doctor, however, told Gandhiji that he refused to consult the patient, having regard to her condition. He asked Gandhiji to come over to Durban at once.

When Gandhiji arrived at Durban he was told by the doctor that he had already given

Kasturba the beef tea.

"Now, doctor, I call this a fraud," exclaimed Gandhiji, deeply pained.

"The question of fraud does not arise," the doctor replied. "In fact we doctors consider it a virtue to deceive patients or their relatives, if thereby we can save our patients."

Gandhiji was deeply pained, but kept cool. He knew that the doctor meant well, besides being his personal friend, but he was not prepared to put up with his medical morals. Thus, after consultation with his son and Kasturba he removed her to Phoenix, where, by the simple expedience of a prescription by Gandhiji himself, she was finally cured.

After a brief respite since her removal to Phoenix, Kasturba began to suffer again from haemorrhage. Gandhiji remembered reading in some books on vegetarianism that salt was not a necessary article of diet for man, that on the contrary saltless diet was better for health. So, he suggested to his wife that she went on saltless diet. She would not agree to this and when Gandhiji persisted, she challenged him, saying that even he could not give up salt as an ingredient in his diet although he was advising her to do so.

Gandhiji's reaction to this challenge may best be described in his own words:

"I was pained and delighted at the same time – delighted in that I got an opportunity to shower my love on her. I said to her, 'You are mistaken. Were I ailing and advised to give up salt or any other article, I would unhesitatingly do so. But there, without any advice, medical or otherwise, I give up salt and pulses for one year, whether you do so or not.' "

Kasturba was shocked at this and begged forgiveness of him. She knew that her husband always meant what he said. She begged him to take back his vow and promised to abstain from salt, explaining, 'This is too hard on me.'

Gandhiji was not annoyed with her and consoled her. He told her that his abstaining would assist her and would strengthen him. On this Kasturba broke down in tears, knowing that Gandhiji would not retreat.

And believe it or not, Kasturba began to pick up in health. The haemorrhage

stopped completely and soon she regained her usual robust health and, as Gandhiji humorously observed, he added somewhat to his reputation as a 'Quack'.

52. GANDHI-ROMAIN ROLLAND MEETING

To an American friend the great French Savant Romain Rolland wrote as follows about the visit of Mahatma Gandhi to his home at Villeneuve, Switzerland, in December 1931:

How I should have liked to have you here during the visit of the Indians! They stayed five days—from the 5th to 11th December at the Villa Vionette. The little man bespectacled and toothless, was wrapped in his white burnouse, but his legs, thin as a heron's stilts, were bare. His shaven head with its few coarse hairs was uncovered and wet with rain. He came to me with a dry laugh, his mouth open like a good dog panting, and flinging an arm round me leaned his cheek against my shoulder. I felt his grizzled head against my cheek. It was, I amuse myself thinking, the kiss of Saint Dominie and Saint Francis.

Then came Mira (Miss Slade), proud of figure and with the stately bearing of a Demeter, and finally three Indians, one a young son of Gandhi, Devadas, with a round and happy face. He is gentle, but little aware of the grandeur of his name. The others were secretaries – disciples— two young men of rare qualities of heart and mind: Mahadev Desai and Pyarelal.

As I had contrived shortly beforehand to get a severe cold on my chest, it was to my house and to the chamber on the second floor where I sleep at Villa Olga – you will remember it – that Gandhi came each morning for long conversations. My sister interpreted, with the assistance of Mira, and I had also a Russian friend and secretary, Miss Kondacheff, who took notes on our discussions. Some good photographs by Schlemmer, our neighbour from Montreux, recorded the aspect of our interview.

Evenings, at seven o'clock, prayers were held in the first-floor salon. With lights lowered, the Indian seated on the carpet, and the little assembly of the faithful grouped about, there was a suite of three beautiful chants – the first an extract from

the Gita, the second an ancient hymn on the Sanskrit texts which Gandhi has translated, and the third canticle of Rama and Sita, intoned by the warm, grave voice of Mira.

Gandhi held other prayers at three o'clock in the morning, for which, in London, he used to wake his harassed staff, although he had not retired until one. This little man, so frail in appearance, is tireless, and fatigue is a word which does not exist in his vocabulary. He could calmly answer for hours the heckling of a crowd, as he did at Lausanne and Geneva, without a muscle of his face twitching. Seated on a table, motionless, his voice always clear and calm, he replied to his adversaries open or masked – and they were not lacking at Geneva – giving them rude truths which left them silenced and Suffocated.

The Roman bourgeoisie, and nationalists, who had at first received him with crafty looks, quivered with rage when he left. I believe that if his stay had lasted any longer, the public meetings would have been forbidden. He pronounced himself as unequivocally as possible on the double questions of national armaments and the conflict between capital and labour. I was largely responsible for steering him on this latter course.

His mind proceeds through successive experiments into action and he follows a straight line, but he never stops, and one would risk error in attempting to judge him by what he said ten years ago, because his thought is in constant revolution. I will give you a little example of it that is characteristic.

He was asked at Lausanne to define what he understood by God. He explained how among the noblest attributes which the Hindu scriptures ascribed to God, he had in his youth chosen the word 'truth' as most truly defining the essential element. He had then said, 'God is Truth.' "But," he added, "two years ago I advanced another step. I now say 'Truth is God'. For, even the atheists do not doubt the necessity for the power of truth. In their passion for discovering the truth, the atheists have not hesitated to deny the existence of God, and from their point of view, they are right." You will understand from this single trait the boldness and independence of this religious spirit from the Orient. I noted in him traits similar to Vivekananda.

And yet not a single political ruse catches him unprepared. And his own politics are to

say everything that he thinks to everybody, not concealing a thing.

On the last evening, after the prayers, Gandhi asked me to play him a little of Beethoven. He does not know Beethoven, but he knows that Beethoven has been the intermediary between Mira and me, and consequently between Mira and himself, and that, in the final count, it is to Beethoven that the gratitude of us all must go. I played him the Andante of the Fifth Symphony. To that I added, "Les Champs Elysees" of Gluck – the page for the orchestra and the air for the flute.

He is very sensitive to the religious chants of his country which somewhat resemble the most beautiful of our Gregorian melodies, and he has worked to assemble them. We also exchanged our ideas on art, from which he does not separate his conception of truth, nor from his conception of truth that of joy, which he thinks truth should bring. But it follows of itself that for this heroic nature joy does not come without effort, not even life itself without hardship.

'The seeker after truth hath a heart tender as the lotus, and hard as granite.'

Here, my dear friend, are a few hints of those days of ours together on which I have taken much more detailed notes. What I do not dwell on to you is the hurricane of intruders, loiterer, and half-wits which this visit loosed on our two villas. No, the telephone never ceased ringing, photographers in ambuscades let fly their fusillades from behind every bush. The milkmen's syndicate at Lemman informed me that during all the time of this sojourn with me of the 'King of India' they intended to assume complete responsibility for his 'victualling'. We received letters from 'Sons of God'. Some Italians wrote to the Mahatma beseeching him to indicate for them the ten lucky numbers for the next drawing of his weekly national lottery!

My sister, having survived has gone to take ten days* rest at a cure in Zurich. She returns shortly. For my part I have entirely lost the gift of sleep. If you find it, send it to me by registered mail!

The Nation, New York.

53. "STABBING TRUTH"

The following from the pen of Shri Mahadev Desai appeared in the issue of Harijan of 16th January 1937:

During our stay at Faizpur a student secretary of a Conference came to Gandhiji asking for a message. Gandhiji laughed and said: "What new message can I give you at the age of 68? And where is the use of my giving you a message, if you pass a resolution there of assassinating me or burning my effigy? Assassinating the body of course does not matter, for out of my ashes a thousand Gandhis will arise. But if you assassinate or burn the principles I have lived for?"

These words were uttered a day before that great speech on the cult of the Charkha, and those who can see the fire that burns there would surely understand the pain hidden in the laughter when he said the words I have just quoted, or the poignancy underlying the heading at the top.

These two words were uttered in Lady Thakersey's cottage — Parnakuti — at Poona soon after our arrival there. The occasion was a seemingly trivial one. Gandhiji, who usually has a fair supply of slivers with him, found in the evening of his arrival in Poona that his stock had almost run out, and he asked Pyarelal if he had any more slivers. He had none. He turned to me: "You have usually your supply of slivers. Haven't you got them?" I was ashamed. I said: "I had them at Faizpur." "You thought you would get time there, but not here?" There was no reply, there could be none. I am a lover of spinning, and during my several years in jail I do not remember having missed my spinning on a single day. Outside I find I cannot keep it up regularly, and that is why I had no slivers. "But could not we get slivers in Poona? Dev spins, Premabehn spins, there are others who spin regularly, and tomorrow we are sure to get them." Inquiries were made at all the likely places, but in vain.

"But what about Chandrashankar?" inquired Gandhiji. He had none. "That, Mahadev, was a cruel blow indeed," he said, to me soon after the morning prayer the next day. "Chandrashankar and his wife, I expected, would be spinning. But if he goes into raptures over my speech on the cult of the Charkha and will not spin, what are his

raptures worth to me? If salt loseth its savour, wherewith shall it be salted? I tell you it has been a great blow. And no slivers in the city of Poona. But if Ghandrashankar has none why should others have them? Dev said, without a blush, that everything could be had at Saswad, 20 miles from here, but not here. And yet we wonder why we have no Swaraj."

I could see that he was boiling as he said this. I quietly retired and told Shankarlal everything. He said he too *had his share of the whipping. "How am I to help it?" he said. "Because I am the secretary of the Spinners' Association Bapu thinks I must see that slivers are available everywhere. I quite see his grief, but I hope he will see mine. I have been trying to get all the workers in the A. I. S. A. offices in India to spin regularly, but I have yet to succeed. But I must get the slivers at once from Bombay." He rang up a friend there who sent the slivers and all the carding tackle from Navajivan Sangh. In the afternoon some indifferent stuff came from the Poona Khadi Bhandar, and in the evening Shri Haribhau Phatak and Balukaka Kanitkar turned up. Both of these friends are supposed to be believers in the Charkha and so Gandhiji said: "I have not yet recovered from my shock. Balukaka has been a severe disappointment. You who swore by the Charkha, is this your faith in the Charkha?"

"But did I not tell you," said Balukaka, "that the council programme was sure to kill the constructive programme?"

"That is irrelevant. What has that got to do with your faith in Khadi and spinning which you have repeated times without number? Convictions are there to be lived for and to die for and certainly to be worked for. But this conviction, without anything to do with it, is meaningless. It is stabbing truth."

The words were not misunderstood. Shri Haribhau said: "We deserve the cuts you have given us, and we have decided to turn a new leaf from tomorrow."

"But you do not know," said Gandhiji, "the cuts I have given myself over this tragedy. How can we have Swaraj if we care so little for our convictions? And now you say you are going to mend. It is something. To err is human, and to mend is also human. But to know that you err and still not to mend it is less than human. For brutes don't err. But 'less than human' is not the word. To err is human, not to err is divine. To try to mend is human, but not to try to mend is devilish. That is the proper word. Well, if

you will mend it will be all right.

But do nothing without conviction. The conviction should be yours and not borrowed from me."

'Stabbing truth' – these words went like a stab of fire in our hearts. "I do not ask for slivers from those who do not believe in Khadi or Charkha. I never even mention the word Charkha to the Rt. Hon. Srinivasa Sastri, though we are bosom friends. For he does not believe in it. I honour those people who do not believe in it and denounce it. But you believe in it, and every day of your lives you live a lie. That is stabbing truth – than which there is no greater sin."

54. LESSONS IN JOURNALISTIC ETHICS

(By R. K. Prabhu)

A combination of unforeseen circumstances had placed me, towards the close of the year 1918, in editorial charge of Young India – the weekly journal, which soon after and for years to come was destined to exercise the profoundest influence on the course of Indian history. Jamnadas Dwarkadas, who was the declared editor of the journal, then being printed at the Bombay Chronicle Press, had proposed to me that I should look after the editorial affairs of the journal and I had consented. Hardly had three months passed since I took charge of the journal when Horniman, editor of the Bombay Chronicle, was suddenly whisked away to England from his sick-bed in Bombay and the Bombay Chronicle and its Press were placed under official censorship. In consequence, the board of directors of Young India were obliged to suspend the publication of the journal.

This was in February 1919. When, a couple of weeks later, the censorship was ended and the Chronicle Press began to function again in a normal manner, offers were made to Gandhiji by the directors of both the Bombay Chronicle and Young India to place the journals in his hands. Gandhiji declined the offer of the Chronicle but accepted that of Young India, provided he was free to change the venue of the publication of the journal from Bombay to Ahmedabad. When the negotiations for the transfer

of the control of Young India were completed, I was asked to see Gandhiji with a view to handing over my charge and giving him whatever information he might need regarding the editorial conduct of the journal.

At this time, Gandhiji was putting up at Mani Bhavan, Gamdevi, as the guest of Revashankarbai Jhaveri, and I proceeded there, accompanied by a journalist colleague of mine who was a regular contributor to the columns of Young India. I had always a feeling that this colleague of mine had a better command of the English vocabulary and idiom than I could claim and I had envied his gift. Arriving at Mani Bhavan, we introduced ourselves to Gandhiji. Scanning the editorial columns of the last issue of Young India, of which I handed over to him a copy, Gandhiji wanted to know who the writer of a particular article in it was. It was, I recollect, some sharp criticism of one of Lloyd George's dubious utterances about India. I told Gandhiji - that I had written the article. Pointing his finger to another article, Gandhiji asked who had written it. "I wrote it," said my colleague.

After a brief pause, Gandhiji remarked: "I like this first article, whereas I "don't at all like the second. In the first, you have said all that you wanted to say in a direct manner, while the writer of the second article indulges in all sorts of innuendos and says things which he does not really mean. "For instance, you write," said Gandhiji, looking at my colleague, "we are afraid. . . ." and so on. I don't like the phrase at all. Here, you don't really want the reader to believe that you are afraid you mean just the contrary, don't you? When you want to say a thing, don't beat about the bush, don't indulge in euphemisms and pin-pricks but tell it in a straightforward way."

These might not be the very words uttered by Gandhiji but they were to that effect as far as my memory goes. Of course, both my colleague and myself held our peace while this brief homily on the ethics of journalism was delivered to us. My colleague having left shortly after, Gandhiji, looking at the page of Young India which was made up of news in brief, asked me who gathered those news items. Being told that I was responsible for them, he asked me whence I culled the news. I said I made the clippings from the latest issues of the various Indian journals which were received in exchange for Young India and the Bombay Chronicle.

"How much time do you spend in gathering these items?" he asked.

I replied that it took me hardly more than half an hour to clip and paste the news items required to make up the page.

"You spend only half an hour over them," he remarked in surprise. "Do you know," he added, "when I edited Indian Opinion in South Africa, we received some 200 papers in exchange and I used to go through all of them carefully throughout the week and I culled each news item only after I was fully satisfied that it would be of real service to the readers. When one takes up the responsibility of editorship, one must discharge it with a full sense of one's duty. That is the only way journalism should be practised – don't you agree with me?"

Shamefacedly I said, "I do." I went on to explain to Gandhiji that having a very busy time throughout the week as a member of the editorial staff of the Chronicle, I had to do things hurriedly for Young India. Practically the major portion of my work for the journal, including the writing of editorials, did not occupy me more than an afternoon.

"And how much are you paid for all this?" he next asked, somewhat abruptly.

I replied that I was paid at the rate of ten rupees per column – a column, by the way, which was hardly a dozen inches long and that too in fat 10-point type! and that my earnings from Young India varied between one hundred and one hundred fifty rupees a month.

"How much are you paid as a member of the Chronicle staff?" was the question next shot at me by the inexorable inquisitor.

"Four hundred rupees per month," I answered.

After a brief pause, which appeared to me like eternity, Gandhiji remarked: "Do you think you are justified in taking from Young India the amount that is paid to you? You know the journal is not a mercenary concern. It is a patriotic undertaking and I don't think it is even self-supporting. Are you justified in adding to the burden of its conductors?"

I replied that I did not compel the proprietors of the journal to pay me what they did. Jamnadas Dwarkadas, I said, paid all contributors to Young India on a generous scale as he did to me. It was all voluntary on his part. I made no stipulation whatsoever regarding my remuneration.

"Still, if I were in your position, I would not take a pie from Young India," put in Gandhiji, and added, "You are handsomely paid at the Chronicle office for your full-time work and what you do for Young India is in your leisure hours. A person who gets paid adequately for his full-time work should not expect payment for what he does elsewhere during the same period. Don't you think so?"

Though he uttered these pointed remarks gently and half smilingly, I could see that he made them in all seriousness. I was somewhat dazed by the new lesson in ethics which he sought to drive home to me. I could respond to his query only by a nod of humble acquiescence.

— Courtesy : Gandhiji

55. SOME TYPICAL LETTERS OF GANDHIJI To Ashram Children

Little Birds,

Ordinary birds cannot fly without wings. With wings, of course, all can fly. But if you, without wings, will learn how to fly, then all your troubles will indeed be at an end And I will teach you that.

See I have no wings, yet I come flying to you every day in thought. Look, here is Vimala, here is Hari and here Dharmakumar. And you also can come flying to me in thought.

There is no need of a teacher for those who know how to think. The teacher may guide us, but he cannot give us the power of thinking. That is latent in us. Those who are wise get wise thoughts.

Tell me who, amongst you, are not praying properly in Prabhubhai's evening prayer.

Send me a letter signed by all, and those who do not know how to sign may make a cross.

Bapu's Blessings

To the Father of an Ailing Child

Dear Friend,

What can I possibly prescribe for a six months old baby suffering from paralysis? There is no prescription but prayer to God. Any medicine is for me unthinkable. You may gently massage the affected parts, put the baby in the sun and give him nothing but milk and fruit juices. And if God wishes, he will recover. If he does not you should courageously resign yourself to the separation.

He who gives, may also take away.

Yours sincerely, M. K. Gandhi

Duty of the Living to the Dead

[To Dr. Jal Pavry and Miss Bapsy Pavry, condoling them on the death of their father, Dastur Cursetji Pavry, the late Pars! High Priest]

"One must not grieve excessively over the one who is gone to the great beyond, for the departed one lives in spirit forever, but we who are left behind must live to die in the service of humanity.

"The only way to cause rejoicing to the soul of the departed one is to fulfill his most cherished dream in which the spirit of the departed, that is ever present with us, definitely gives strength to the living, and only when they fulfill that dream of the departed, then and then only they prove themselves worthy of the sacred heritage, and then and then only will the soul of the departed rejoice."

(The last of these letters ends with the words in Gujarati, "M. K. Gandhi's blessings".)

TO ADOLF HITLER

Dear Friend,

That I address you as a friend is no formality. I own no foes. My business in life has been for the past thirty- three years to enlist the friendship of the whole humanity by befriending mankind, irrespective of race, colour or creed.

I hope you will have the time and desire to know how a good portion of humanity who have been living under the influence of that doctrine of universal friendship view your actions. We have no doubt about your bravery or devotion to your fatherland, nor do we believe that you are the monster described by your opponents. But your own writings and pronouncements and those of your friends and admirers leave no room for doubt that many of your acts are monstrous and unbecoming of human dignity, especially in the estimation of men like me who believe in universal friendliness. Such are your humiliation of Czechoslovakia, the rape of Poland and the swallowing of Denmark. I am aware that your view of life regards such spoliations as virtuous acts. But we have been taught from childhood to regard them as acts degrading humanity. Hence we cannot possibly wish success to your arms. But ours is a unique position. We resist British Imperialism no less than Nazism. If there is a difference, it is in degree. One-fifth of the human race has been brought under the British heel by means that will not bear scrutiny. Our resistance to it does not mean harm to the British people. We will convert them, not defeat them on the battlefield. Ours is an unarmed revolt against the British rule. But whether we convert them or not we are determined to make their rule impossible by non-violent non-co-operation. It is a method in its nature undefeatable. It is based on the knowledge that no spoliator can compass his end without a certain degree of co-operation, willing or compulsory, of the victim. Our rulers can have our land and bodies, but not our souls. They can have the former only by destruction of every Indian, man, woman, and child. That all may not rise to that degree of heroism and that a fair amount of frightfulness can bend the back of the revolt is true, but the argument would be beside the point. For, if a fair number of men and women can be found in India who would be prepared without any ill- will against the spoliators to lay down their lives rather than bend the knee to them, they

would have shown the way to freedom from the tyranny of violence. I ask you to believe me when I say that you will find an unexpected number of such men and women in India. They have been having that training for the past twenty years.

We have been trying for the past half a century to throw off the British rule. The movement of independence has been never so strong as now. The most powerful political organization, I mean the Indian National Congress, is trying to achieve this end.

We have attained a very fair measure of success through non-violent effort. We are groping for the right means to combat the most organized violence in the world, which the British power represents. You have challenged it. It remains to be seen which is the better organized, the German or the British.

We know what the British heel means for us and the non-European races of the world. But we would never wish to end British rule with German aid. We have found in non-violence a force which, if organized, can without doubt match itself against a combination of all the most violent forces in the world. In non-violent technique, as I have said, there is no such thing as defeat. It is all "do or die" without killing or hurting. It can be used practically without money and obviously without the aid of the science of destruction, which you have brought to such perfection.

It is a marvel to me that you do not see it is nobody's monopoly. If not the British, some other power will certainly improve upon your method and beat you with your own weapon. You are leaving no legacy to your people of which they would feel proud. They cannot take pride in a recital of cruel deeds, however skilfully planned.

I, therefore, appeal to you in the name of humanity to stop the war. You will lose nothing by referring all the matters of dispute between you and Great Britain to an International Tribunal of your joint choice. If you attain success in the war, it will not prove that you were in the right. It will only prove that your power of destruction was greater, whereas an award, by an imperial tribunal, will show as far as it is humanly possible, which party was in the right.

You know that not long ago I made an appeal to every Briton to accept my method of non-violent resistance. I did it because the British know me as a friend, though a

rebel. I am a stranger to you and your people. I have not the courage to make to you the appeal I made to every Briton. Not that it would not apply to you with the same force as to the British. But my present proposal is much simpler because it is much more practical and familiar.

During this season when the hearts of the peoples of Europe yearn for peace, we have suspended even our peaceful struggle. Is it too much to ask you to make an effort for peace during a time which may mean nothing to you personally, but must mean much to the millions of Europeans, whose dumb cry for peace I hear, for my ears are attuned to hearing the dumb millions? I had the privilege of meeting Signor Mussolini when I was in Rome during my visit to England as a delegate to the Round Table Conference. I hope he will take this as addressed to him also with the necessary changes.

I am Your sincere friend, M. K. Gandhi

(The letter reproduced above was written by Gandhiji in the Christmas week of 1941, but the Government of India would not allow it to be transmitted to the Nazi dictator.)

56. GANDHIJI'S FAVOURITE HYMNS

[The following were among the favourite hymns of Gandhiji and they were usually sung at his prayer-gatherings.]

The True Vaishnava

He is a real Vaishnava, who "feels the suffering of others as his own suffering. He is ever ready to serve, and is never guilty of overweening pride. He bows before everyone despises none, preserves purity in thought, word and deed. Blessed is the mother of such a son: in every woman he reveres his mother. He preserves equanimity and never stains his mouth with falsehood, nor touches the riches of another. The bonds of desire cannot hold him. Ever in harmony with Ramanama, his body in itself possesses all the places of pilgrimage. He knows neither desire nor disappointment,

neither passion nor wrath.

– Narasimh Mehta

The Path of Love

"The way of the Lord is open only to heroes, to cowards it is fast shut.

"Give up thy life and all that thou hast, so thou mayst assume the name of the Lord.

"Only he who leaves his son, his wife, his riches, and his life, shall drink from the vessel of God.

"For in truth, he that would fish for pearls must drive into the deepest depths of the sea and take his life in his hands.

"Death affrights him not: he forgets all the misery of body and soul. "He who stands hesitating on the bank and fears to dive, gains nought. "But the path of love is trial by fire. The coward shrinks back from it. "He who dares the leap into the fire, attains to everlasting bliss."

- Pritama

My Heartfelt Prayer

"Lord, preserve me from looking on things which arouse evil thoughts. It were better for me to be blind.

"Lord, preserve me from soiling my lips with impure words. It were better for me to be dumb.

"Lord, preserve me from hearing any word of slander and insult. It were better for me to be deaf.

"Lord, preserve me from looking with desire on any of those who should be my sisters. It were better for me to be dead."

- Tukaram

Lead Kindly Light

Lead, kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom,

Lead Thou me on;

The night is dark, and I am far from home;

Lead Thou me on.

Keep Thou my feet; I do not ask to see

The distant scene; one step enough for me.

I was not ever thus, nor pray'd that Thou

Shouldst lead me on;

I loved to choose, and see my path; but now

Lead Thou me on.

I loved the garish day, and, spite of fears,

Pride ruled my will: remember not past years.

So long Thy power hath blest me, sure it still

Will lead me on,

O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent, till

The night is gone;

And with the morn those Angel faces smile,

Which I have loved long since, and lost awhile.

- Cardinal Newman

The Wondrous Cross

When I survey the wondrous Cross
 On which the Prince of Glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
 And pour contempt on all my pride.
Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast
 Save in the Cross of Christ, my God;
All the vain things that charm me most,
 I sacrifice them to His Blood.
See from His Head, His Hands, His Feet,
 Sorrow and love flow mingling down;
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
 Or thorns compose so rich a crown ?
Were the whole realm of nature mine,
 That were an offering far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
 Demands my soul, my life, my all.
To Christ, Who won for sinners grace
 By bitter grief and anguish sore,
Be praise from all the ransom'd race,
 Forever and ever more.

- I. Watts

Rock of Ages

Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee;
Let 'the Water and the Blood,
From Thy riven Side which flow'd,
Be of sin the double cure,
Cleanse me from its guilt and power.

Not the labours of my hands
Can fulfill Thy law's demands;
Could my zeal no respite know,
Could my tears for ever flow,
All for sin could not atone;
Thou must save, and Thou alone.

Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to Thy Cross I cling;
Naked, come to Thee for dress;
Helpless, look to Thee for grace;
Foul, I to the Fountain fly;
Wash me, Saviour, or I die.

While I draw this fleeting breath,
When my eyelids close in death,

When I soar through tracts unknown,
See Thee on Thy Judgment Throne;
Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee.

— A. M. Toplady

The Sermon on the Mount

Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.

Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.

- Gospel of Mathew