



Day-to-Day with Gandhi

[SECRETARY'S DIARY]

Volume IV

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-Narayan M. Desai

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Publishers' Note

It is a matter of privilege for Sarva Seva Sangh to have the opportunity of publishing Mahadev Desai's Diary in Hindi as well as in English.

The relation between Gandhiji and Mahadev Desai is well known to all. Both names are immortal in the history of our national freedom movement. Mahadev Desai joined Gandhiji in 1917 and remained with him till 1942 when Mahadevbhai breathed his last in the lap of Gandhiji in Agakhan palace while in detention. It is amazing to note that Mahadevbhai regularly wrote his day-to-day diary despite his busiest routine with Gandhiji.

Gandhiji and Mahadev Desai had such an inseparable relation that they were like two bodies with one soul. Hence, Mahadev Desai's Diary means Diary of Gandhiji's activities.

While reading this Diary one feels like actually witnessing the various incidents with Gandhiji. There are authentic records of important interviews of Gandhiji with national and international leaders. Side by side with excerpts from Gandhiji's most important historical as well as epic speeches, we also find here Gandhiji's typical crackling of jokes with small children.

There is no other Diary in history of this kind except that of Bosswel, the learned English writer, who has noted the events of Dr. Johnson's life in his diary. But the difference between these two diaries lies in the difference of the life of Gandhiji and that of Dr. Johnson.

Mahadev Desai had a knack of snatching some time out of his overcrowded daily routine for some extra reading. He had enriched his diary by jotting down some references out of that study. Mahadevbhai was a voracious reader and a deep thinker. As we find in his diary glimpses of a critical study of his reading, there are sprinkling of a lucid description of some new places he had visited or a running life-sketch of some new personalities he had met. In all these writings Mahadevbhai's supreme literary genius is amply revealed.

The period between 1917 and 1942 was a glorious chapter of India's non-violent struggle for Independence. We get a peep into Gandhiji's innermost thoughts through Mahadevbhai's diary. This period was packed with Gandhiji's most important



interviews, correspondence, and whirlwind tours all over the country. A vivid picture of the social, political and spiritual atmosphere of our country in those days is graphically drawn by Mahadevbhai in this diary.

It would not be an exaggeration to say that such a publication is definitely an enriching addition to the world's literature. It is an irony of fate that Mahadevbhai could not live long to edit his diary himself. True to his devotion he died in harness. Late Shri Naraharibhai Parikh, Mahadevbhai's dearest and nearest friend, shouldered the responsibility of editing this diary as a labour of love for a departed friend. Naraharibhai himself was suffering from a serious disease. But he persevered relentlessly and completed the editing of about 3000 pages when he succumbed to the disease. It was a tremendous task to edit the voluminous matter which would run into about 20 volumes of about 400 pages each. The remaining volumes are being edited by Shri Chandulal Bhagubhai Dalal.

The original diaries are in Gujarati. First three volumes in Hindi, covering the period of 1932-33, were published by Navajivan Trust. The publication work of these diaries was interrupted due to some dispute over the right of publication. Finally Shri Narayan Desai, son of Mahadev Desai, got the right of publication and he generously entrusted the publication of Hindi and English editions of the Gujarati Diary to Sarva Seva Sangh without claiming any royalty. Sarva Seva Sangh is deeply grateful to Shri Narayan Desai for this generous offer.

Sarva Seva Sangh has already brought out 7 volumes of Hindi edition chronologically right from 1917.

The English translation of Mahadev Desai's Diary is being done by Shri Hemantkumar Nilkanth. We have published uptill now 3 volumes of English edition. We are happy to have been able to bring out this 4th volume on 19th of March, 1969, new years' day of Vikram era 2026.

We propose to bring out the fifth volume nearabout 15th August 1969.



Preface

This volume begins when Gandhiji is still a prisoner but a patient in the Sassoon Hospital, Poona. Telegrams and letters of sympathy and prayers for his recovery and release as well as the rush of V. I. P.s (non-official of course) show clearly what place he held in the heart of the nation, even after his withdrawal of civil disobedience (in 1922) which had offended a large number of political leaders and laymen.

There is no wonder that the news of his unconditional release on dt. 5-2-1924 was hailed with historical delight by the whole country. Nobody can give a more faithful idea of this surge of feelings than Sri Mahadevbhai's articles, 'Bapu's Darshan' (page: 34) and others. But perhaps Mahadevbhai surpasses even himself when he writes of 'That Memorable Day' (page: 41) and other articles following Gandhiji's release.

That release was, in fact, the most important event since the political recession begun in 1922. What high expectations were aroused in the hope of, and at, his release are best expressed by Lala Lajpatrai — 'The Lion of the Punjab', who was himself one of India's tallest leaders: "What shall I say? Come out quickly. We are building upon the hope of your coming out and leading us once again. We have been like children without a Master in your absence. We have been little babies fighting amongst one another." (Day-To-Day with Gandhi Vol.: III, p. 305).

But Gandhiji, as was his wont, would not give any opinion, much less any political lead, before knowing at first-hand the reasons that had prompted the Swarajists to break away from the boycotts of councils etc. of 1921.

Though his views regarding these boycotts had remained unchanged during his jail-period, he had to face a *fait accompli*, inasmuch as the Swarajists had already secured at the Cocanada Congress in 1923 a firm foothold for their programme.

His parleys with the Swarajist leaders, Motilal Nehru and C. R. Das, gave him no new light, but he saw that it was unwise, if not impossible, in the then prevailing darkness and gloom to take up arms against the Swarajists and make the Congress revert to its pristine boycotts. Gandhiji and the other two leaders issued separate statements in which they agreed to differ. But he did pour oil on the waters by asking his No-changer followers to give up their hostile attitude and concentrate on the constructive programme.



All the same the rift in the Congress only widened; this came out at the Ahmedabad meeting of the All-India Congress Committee held on June 27, 28 and 29th. Gandhiji proposed a punitive clause (in his spinning franchise resolution) for a Congressman elected to any office who failed to contribute 2000 yards of yarn. The clause created a sharp reaction by the Swarajists who walked out in protest. Gandhiji took the novel step of rescinding the clause on the ground that those who had walked out would have voted against it.

But the worst was yet to come. His resolution condemning Gopinath Saha for murdering an Englishman, while appreciating his 'misguided love', was stoutly opposed by C. R. Das. "Not that he (Das) did not swear by non-violence, but he would change the emphasis on different clauses considerably. Gandhi was disappointed to find some of his dearest and closest followers voting against the resolution" ("History of the Congress" by Dr. B. P. Sitaramayya, p. 464).

He broke down in public (one of the rarest occasions of his life) and then gave vent to his anguish in two articles, "Defeated and Humbled" (App. I-2) and "The All India Congress Committee" (App. I-3).

But after that event, (though it may not be because of it) Gandhiji saw like a flash the real need of the times, viz., unity even at the cost of his beloved non-co-operation programme.

Cardinal faith in non-violence or love was probably the hidden source of this new light. What was 'fundamental' at the Juhu parley was sacrificed for the sake of this greater principle. He saw that there was far more non-co-operation among ourselves than against the Government.

Hence, his offer of the olive branch to the Swarajists. He 'wooed' the Swarajist leaders: Pandit Motilal Nehru and Das: at Calcutta and signs forthwith even against the pleadings of his Bengali No-changer friends— "The Joint Statement" issued by the three leaders. (App. V-1). All the boycotts except that of foreign cloth are thereby suspended. The Swarajists thus become full-fledged Congress representatives in the legislatures, in return for which all Congressmen—pro-changers and No-changers—are required to wear only Khadi on public occasions and contribute for Congress membership 2000 yards of yarn. This spinning franchise was in way a 'revolutionary change', but the Swarajists agreed to it in view of their gain of the support of the Congress and Gandhiji.



Gandhiji now concentrates on unity all around—not only in the Congress ranks but between all political parties. He appeals to the Moderates, to Mrs. Besant's party, and to all others to come on a 'common platform' to work out his triple programme of Hindu-Muslim Unity, removal of untouchability by Hindus, and spread of spinning and Khadi. This book ends before the period which can show how far he succeeded in this last move. His two articles, 'The Law of Love' (App. V - 2) and 'The Realities' (App. II-1) show this new attitude very clearly. He states in the latter, "Non-violence is more important than non-co-operation and the latter without the former is a sin."

This cardinal principle of non-violence probably explains as nothing else does his attitude towards the Muslims. Let him explain it himself. In his talk with Sri Rajagopalachariar, he says, "That question (of H. M. unity) is by its very nature such as does not admit of 'responsive co-operation.' All matters of love are unilateral contracts. If one of the parties fulfils all the conditions, it is sufficient. There is no spirit of bargaining." (p. 18).

That this was not a casual expression is borne out by his following talk with Sri Mathuradas Trikamji regarding Muslim opposition to the implementation of a resolution, already passed with Muslim support, in the Bombay Municipal Corporation which banned the slaughter of cows and buffaloes under 8 years of age. Gandhiji tells Sri. Mathuradas, "We must drop the idea if the Muslims do not approve of it, but that step should be taken with a clear consciousness of doing the right thing and not out of weakness. And if we are men of understanding and wisdom, they (Muslims) will at last be amenable and see reason, even if, in the beginning, they go on winning one victory after another over us. They themselves will wonder at last, 'What is this! How is it that Hindus do not resist us at all.' So you need not have any fear of their bullying us." (Day-To-Day With Gandhi, Vol. III, p. 319).

As he happened to be a Hindu by birth and as he agreed with the propriety of the nick-name 'the mild Hindoo' (though the expression was used by the rulers perhaps in contempt) he wanted the Hindus to follow his principle of unilateral and total surrender re. the loaves and fishes of office to the Muslims. But he himself admits that he fails to convince the Hindus of the wisdom of his solution of the problem. Let it be admitted that if the Hindus could not be convinced, they need not be blamed in view of the mounting tension of the riots that broke out one after another and culminated so far as the period covered by this volume is concerned—in the most gruesome of them at Kohat.



But Gandhiji would not be Gandhiji, if he did not leave a stone unturned to achieve, by his method, his dearly beloved object of communal unity. Hence, his long fast of 21 days during his stay with M. Mohammad Ali as his guest. The fast was, to him, nothing but the most fervent prayer of his lacerated heart. His talk with, Mahadevbhai throws a flood of light on the reason that prompted him to fast in expiation of a sin which he thinks he has committed. He says, "I may be charged with having committed a breach of faith with the Hindus. I asked them to befriend Muslims Even today I am asking them to practise *ahimsa* (non-violence), to settle quarrels by dying, but not by killing. And what do I find to be the result? How many temples have been desecrated? How many sisters have come to me with complaints? And yet I must ask the Hindus even today to die and not to kill. I can only do so by laying down my own life" (p. 195). By the way, Gandhiji's article 'All about the Fast' (App. IV-1) is a document of eternal value (though he often refers to the passing events of the day) to those who wish to reform themselves. His article 'Hindu Muslim Unity' (App. III-2) clarifies his attitude still further.

The fast startled India and shocked the leaders into holding a 'Unity Conference', the while it lasted. What was the outcome? Mahadevbhai's pen best describes it in "The 'Unity' Conference at Delhi" App. III-3. The fast did produce a soothing atmosphere, but if it could not achieve more than what it did, it was because of the existence of 'The third party', which was in possession of such absolute power to incite one community against the other, to favour one community with rewards and visit the other with punishment, that it was extremely difficult, if not impossible, to re-unite them, when once there was the slightest crack. The Muslims, moreover, were eager for national unity (and for their own reasons) only twice during the freedom fight. Once in 1916, when it was feared that the Ottoman Empire (the hereditary Sultan was the hereditary Khalif, it should be recalled here) would be disrupted after the First World War, and in 1919, during the Khilafat agitation. But the edge of that eagerness was blunted at this time (1924) by Mustafa Kamal Pasha, when he drove out the Khalif and made Turkey a Republic in 1923. The wind was thus taken out of the sails of the Indian Khilafat movement and this coolness of Muslim ardour for unity only made Gandhiji's task all the more difficult.

Whatever may be the tangible effects of the fast, however, it was of great importance for the science of psychology and medicine and physiology. That a man on a fast loses his vitality under any physical exertion is a fact of the science of physiology



and a patient is, therefore, invariably warned against doing it. Gandhiji's doctors, naturally, advised him complete rest. But, strange to say, Gandhiji's daily exertion of half-an hour's spinning and the occasional one of writing important letters, instead of bringing down his vitality, gave a fillip to it! This is not fiction but a proved fact, as the reader will find it out for himself. But there was a more wonderful demonstration of the repudiation of that physiological law during the fast. Poisonous substances were found to abound in an alarming quantity in his urine one day. The doctors pleaded with him—and even pestered him with the request—to let them give him at least an injection, if not an oral dose, so that his fast could be kept and they could save his life from that serious danger. But all to no purpose. He, in turn, appealed to them to wait till the next day. And lo and behold! The next day found his urine safe from those noxious substances without the administration of any medicine whatsoever. As Dr. Abdurrehman had already admitted even before this 'miracle' happened, "You have defeated even 'science.' All our medical laws have proved untrue." This proved phenomenon deserves wider publicity and inquiry by scientists than it has hitherto received. But it supports, if it does not totally prove, Gandhiji's contention that soul-force is mightier than body-force, that the spirit is capable of conquering the most powerful urges of the flesh.

His letters, as usual, reveal his many-sided personality. Scattered among them are gems of thought. Two specimens will suffice by way of illustration:

"To assert our principle is to surrender office, not principle. The latter has to be lived. Though it has a political consequence, the conception of Satyagraha is purely spiritual. Humanity is its essence. It is never polemical. It grows on your opponent unperceived, if your conduct is correct. If you surrender, you will do so, so as to do more and better work. The way is so totally different from the ordinary!" (p. 181).

And then this one:

"Somehow or other I *feel* the absolute correctness of the step, even though I cannot demonstrate it to your satisfaction." (p. 183). This sentence is the key to his noble deeds and great achievements. At critical times he is prompted by the intuition proceeding from the Heart and not by deep thinking which goes on in the brain (though a churning process in the brain may, but not necessarily, precede the sudden flash).



There are very interesting dialogues also in this book. But perhaps the best of them are those with Messrs. Dilip Kumar Roy and G. Ramachandran—specially as they deal with Gandhiji's views on Art and machinery (p. 27; p. 286 and p. 246).]

Hemantkumar Nilkanth.



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28-1-1924

Narhari, Jugatram and Chhaganlal Joshi came from Bardoli. Col. Maddock called me in the morning and talked about the question of visitors, his recommendation to send Bapu to a health-resort and Bapu's politics. He said the Englishmen loved him as he was 'a man of action'. He touched non-violence also. History, he said, did not provide a single instance of a civilisation based on non-violence, but it was also true that the modern civilisation was an 'appalling failure'. He declared that he, for one, would wish that Bapu was released, but nothing could be said about the Government's attitude. He also told me among other things that he had not seen the Governor and never intended to see him, and that he was to retire in March.

Mohammad Ali with some others came in the afternoon. He talked about the Angora Deputation, Hindu-Muslim quarrels. etc. Bapu made some inquiries from me regarding that Angora Deputation. As I could not give him satisfactory information, he asked me to see the people concerned and understand the matter thoroughly. Bapu then talked about mutual distrust (between Hindus and Muslims), about Jairamdas' attitude, about Shaukat Ali's distrust of Jairamdas etc. He further spoke to me of what Lala Lajpatrai had said to him about the manifesto of Abdul Bari as well about Hasan Nizami.¹

Bapu then observed: "What is the way out of this (discord between Hindus and Muslims)? Can Shaukat Ali and Mohammad Ali bring it to an end? Should they go on exposing the falsity of any and every such canard? If things continue like that, how can the quarrel ever end? And what crime have Shaukat and Mohammad committed that they should bear the whole brunt themselves? And suppose they do nothing to improve the relations. What is to be done? Should we wash our hands of the matter? In order to make you see this question in the right light let me tell you that we need never concern ourselves as to what they (Muslims) do. Let them do anything. What we must see is only one thing: 'Whether *our own* action is right or not'. If they say, 'We are bent upon killing cows', we should tell them, 'Yes, you may'. If they insist, 'There shall be no music before our mosques', we should tell them, 'Agreed! We will never play music anywhere near a mosque'. Neither India nor Hinduism will stand to lose anything, if a few Hindus are slaughtered or they die (sacrifice themselves), but if you are able to follow this line of action for a year, I tell you, the whole question (of Hindu-Muslim unity) is certain to be solved. To me, for one, the very essence of Hinduism lies in self-sacrifice and non-violence. And so long as you (Hindus) do not accept this point



without a shred of doubt, you are sure to stumble again and again. But we (believers in non-violence) should leave the place where people (Hindus) are not prepared to listen to us. Do you think I don't feel anything for the goat that is slaughtered before the Kali temple? To me the life of a goat is no less inviolable than that of a cow. But I am speaking about the cow, because the Hindu has a great reverence for it. If I succeed in saving the cow today, I shall be able to save the goat tomorrow".

Just then Rajaji (C. Rajagopalachariar) and Shankarlal came up. He began to tell him (Rajaji) in English: "I was just now telling Mahadev that that question (of Hindu-Muslim unity) is by its very nature such as does not admit of 'responsive co-operation'. All matters of love are unilateral contracts. If one of the parties fulfils all the conditions, it is sufficient. There is no spirit of bargaining. I do not love you because you agree to love me. I love you because I feel it my duty to love you. When I met M. Abdul Bari he put me a question as to what the Hindus would expect from the Mussulmans in return for their co-operation. I said, 'nothing'. They will do what they may feel bound in honour to do. But there can be no bargaining. A similar question was raised at Gaya. Abul Kalam Azad put me the question, "What would you do if the Mussulmans failed to give you any help, or say, refused to fulfil your expectations?" I said, 'nothing'.

"Whilst I say that I do not want any bargaining and say that I do not want any return, I mean to say that I do not want any return from the Mussulmans. But I will surely have my return from God. I will die for my principle with the fullest confidence that God will repay my labours and my sacrifice. And then M. Abul Kalam Azad got up and expounded the Muslim position in terms exactly identical with those in which I described the Hindu question.

"The essence of my religion is that if one does me injury, I do not retaliate but invite even further injury, and I maintain this in spite of Lalaji (Lajpatrai), Shraddhanandji and Pandit Malaviyaji. They today are the greatest stumbling blocks in the way of Hindu-Muslim unity. But if I feel that people in their parts will not listen to me I will not go to them. In fact, I should try to persuade them to my view as much as I can. We should not seek a different platform in their parts. You might be knowing that I did not even visit the Punjab, so long as I had not converted Lalaji to my views and you know that the Punjab would have listened to me, the Punjab where I had a name, where they could not have the Congress without me. But I bided my time. You say Lalaji is uncompromising. He is, I agree. But you cannot be certain about him. He would change the next day. He is an impulsive, honest man. Yesterday he said things I



never expected him to say. He said, 'It is all a chaos, we simply cannot do without you; you come out and all will be well'. It is not that their (Lalaji's etc.) reason sees the truth and their passion leads them astray. No. Their reason is blurred. I have definite and decisive views in the matter and I am putting them before you without pretending that I am boxed up in Yeravda Jail and cannot send out a message. It is a matter of life and death to me. I have been living for it. You say they (Muslims) have made it a matter of figures: 'We want so many per cent'. They will. I tell you, you say to them that you will have zero. So far as these things are concerned, you simply give your pen to them. We have failed and we will fail because of a lack of moral perception and want of faith in the eternal triumph of truth and non-violence. You simply be sure of yourself and leave the rest to them. I am giving this to you because I have found it by experience. My signal success in South Africa and the little wave of Hindu-Muslim unity that we did have here was due to a recognition of the principle. All the talk of getting as strong as the Mussulmans, having *akhadas* (gymnasiums) and Civic Guards is absurd. These are all make-shifts. 'Get stronger than the Mussulmans', they say. 'The Mussulmans will league with their co-religionists out of India', is the reply. 'We shall then enter into a treaty with Japan and China and other Asiatic countries. And so on.' Admit the use of force and you will make the country an armed camp in no time. If you cannot defend yourself, hire goondas; the next step is to seek the help of the police, then the help of outside nations and so on *ad infinitum*! From childhood I have detested being party to such things. In school we had parties. The weak always sought protection of the *badmashes* (hooligans). But I lived alone. Stealthily I would go to school and, immediately the school was closed, I would run back home. It has now become the law of my being. You simply give whatever they want and you will lose nothing. If they say we want to kill the cows, allow them to do so. You surely won't kill them because they will persist in killing the cows. You surely do not want to convert them to your religion. I know you will find difficulty in getting this doctrine accepted. I had a friend who was very learned in scriptures, who had even studied yoga, and for some time lived in a *parnakuti* (a cottage) erected in front of his bungalow. After all these religious practices he came to the conclusion that *ahimsa* was not *paramodharmah* (the highest religion), but *paramo adharmah* (irreligion) and he wrote to me to say that it could not be otherwise. But that does not matter. You make up your mind and determine that you will not swerve an inch from your faith. My principle is for all time. But if they do not listen to me, what is to me? Buddha's teaching has not borne fruit. But who can say it has failed? It is but a space of 2600 years. Christianity has practically rejected



Christ's teaching. And so also is Mohammad's which today is nothing but a tomfoolery of defiance. The Mussulmans have not the self-sacrifice, the simplicity, the reliance in God of Mohammad and his four successors. Nor do I think that Mohammad's message was final and for all time. It was good enough for the country and the times in which it was delivered. But it was incomplete and adulterated. I also refuse to believe that Mohammad was the last Prophet".

1. He had started a campaign to convert Hindus into Islam.



29-1-1924

to

1-2-1924

The meeting with Hakimji, Mohammad Ali and Shaukat Ali was also as touching as that with Shaukat Ali alone. Mohammad Ali also kissed Bapu's feet, but with the covering kept intact. Bapu himself was the first to greet Hakimji with joined palms and then they shook hands. Hakimji asked Bapu, "You must have undergone a lot of suffering?" "O, it was a torture". "What brought about this disease?" "I must have committed an offence", replied Bapu, "God is giving me the fruit". Mohammad Ali was simply sitting silent. Tears were streaming down his cheeks in profusion.

As they were leaving, Shaukat Ali said, "Take plenty of food now. Don't you starve yourself". "But if I grow fat with plenty of food, how will you find it convenient to thrust me into your pocket?" returned Bapu. Mohammad Ali said, "Can we not ask Col. Maddock to slit a slice from Shaukat and graft it upon you?" Bapu said, "But the sight of Shaukat's body has so frightened the poor Colonel!"

Many subjects were touched and during one of them Mohammad Ali said, "Bapu, I want your permission for one thing—not for carrying on propaganda in foreign countries, but counteracting the malicious lies spread there." Bapu told the same thing to him as he had to Bomanji. "Who am I to give you permission? I don't want to establish Gandhiraj" etc. But Mohammad Ali persisted. So Bapu said, "You are certain to decide anything after weighing all the *pros and cons* and I am not going to blame you in future. My personal view, however, stands that there is no need for foreign propaganda".

Jawaharlal asked for clarifications on 3 points:

(1) About the Angora Deputation. Bapu was surprised to learn that Hindus also were members of the Deputation. "What concern have we in the matter? Are we ever going to send a Deputation to Poland if it gets Swaraj? It would be another thing if we were free, but, in the present circumstances, it looks 'out of the place' for the Hindus to join it". Bapu wanted to use the right word, but could not find any. The word 'inappropriate' struck him, but that was not the right word. Jawaharlal suggested 'uncalled for', but Bapu said that he did not mean that phrase. At last he said, "It did not become us". I suggested it would look 'like strutting in borrowed plumes'. Bapu



said, "Yes, something like that." Then he said to Jawaharlal, "Don't narrate this talk to anybody as a message from me, but you may tell it to your father".

Jawaharlal had sounded Mohammad Ali on this matter (the impropriety of Hindus joining the Angora Deputation), but was a little disappointed. Jawaharlal felt that he (Mohammad Ali) wanted to use Hindus simply as pawns. (2) About Sikhs also Jawaharlal had a great deal to say. After hearing it all Bapu observed, "All that we can do is to give them moral support, nothing more". (3) He asked if he should continue as the Chairman of the (Allahabad) Municipality. Bapu said, "Both the positions, of the General Secretary of the Congress and of the Chairman, are worth holding. In no case should you give up the Municipal work. It is a great responsibility and it is of prime importance to do all that you can for the country by continuing in that office. The General Secretaryship also can't be relinquished. You may have two or three assistants for that work, but you must never think of giving up the Municipal work".



2-2-1924

Mr. Andrews' visit in the morning. He embraced Bapu who could only sit up on his bed. He had just returned from Kenya and was full of talk about the place. He said that the Indian Government's sympathy was a mere pose and then asked, "Do you think I should go to Delhi?" "What's the use?" said Bapu. "You won't gain anything." Andrews then talked of the new Labour Government in Britain. Bapu remarked, "They may perhaps turn out to be even worse than the Liberals. They have only one concern—how to serve labour interests. In all other matters their policy will be that of agreement with the other parties". "True" said Andrews. Then he gave the news that he was appointed a telegraphic reporter of *The Manchester Guardian*. "Scott is the Editor and I will send him most of the news myself. The paper will, therefore, get truthful accounts". Then he spoke about the views the people in England hold about Bapu. "Even the Archbishop of Canterbury believes that you were arrested because you gave up non-violent resistance and took to violence." I told him pointblank, "If you forsake Christianity, Gandhi would forsake non-violence." Bapu corrected him, "Then too it would not be certain. It would only be *possible*." Then Andrews gave news about Romain Rolland. His sister looks after the house-keeping. She helps him in another way also, she knows English and Rolland does not. The talk then turned upon Rabindranath Tagore. Andrews remarked "Gurudev's (respectful term for Guru) tour was a brilliant success. He got a lakh of rupees from Kathiawar". "From Kathiawar?" Bapu wondered. "Yes" said Andrews. "No", rejoined Bapu, "not from Kathiawar, but from the Princes of Kathiawar. When I heard of it from Indulal, I received the news with pleasure and pain. Pleasure that Gurudev got such a big sum, but pain because it was a favour from Government, inasmuch as every contribution from the Princes must have behind it the sanction of the Political Agent. Jamnadas, thereupon, gave the information that the fund was, in fact, opened by the Political Agent himself with his contribution of 50 rupees, which started the list. I (Mahadevbhai) said, "The Political Agent had helped a good deal. It was according to his instructions that all the contributions were given.' Bapu then went on: "You do not know how these Princes dread such 'contributions'. I went to them for the Gokhale Memorial, and I used to find that I was taken as a nuisance. And when I was told that the Prince of Jamnagar topped the list, I could see through the whole thing."

Andrews sat dumb like a statue all through this talk, did not utter a word in reply.

* * * *



Sri Dilipkumar Roy, son of the well-known dramatist of Bengal, the late Dwijendralal Roy, visited Bapu in the evening. He has earned abroad the reputation of a distinguished Indian singer. He had come in the morning and promised to return in the evening to sing some hymns to Bapu. It must be about 8 p. m. when he came. Sri Dilipkumar had brought his *sitar*. A fairly good number of listeners had collected in the room. Sitting on a sofa opposite to Gandhiji's bed he began:

“दिनदयाल गोपाल हरि वृन्दावन मोय बुला तो सही,
रो लूं चरण पखार पलक टुक प्रेम प्रसाद चखा तो सही |
तोर छोड़ के कोनकी आस करूं, तेरे नगर में नित्य निवास करूं,
दिन-रात यही अरदास करूं, मोये बंसी की टेर सुना तो सही |
ब्रजदेश में तू परदेश में मैं, एक जोगी वियोगी के भेष में हूँ,
उपदेश में हूँ कलेश हूँ मोये झाँकी विशाल करा तो सही |
बिरहावश नयन सुखाय रहे, रो-रो के समुद्र बहाय रहे,
दिन जाये रहे, अकुलाय रहे, अय नाथ मोर प्राण बचा तो सही |
मैं तो बन फल खाय के बैठ रहूँ, तोसे भूक-पियास कछू न कहूँ,
तेरे प्रेम के जल में सदा मैं बहूँ, मेरे दुःख को आन मिटा तो सही |
ब्रज की बुहारि दिया हि करूं, ते सेवा व पूजा किया ही करूं,
तेरे धो-धो के चरण पिया ही करूं, मेरे नाव को पार लगा तो सही |

"O Lord! O Hari! Gopal! my Love!
Call me I pray to Thee above.
My tears of love shall wash Thy feet;
Give me a sip of Thy love so sweet.
Who else could be my hope but Thou?
Let me but live in Thy home enow;
By day, by night, I yearn, I pine
For the flute's enthralling music divine.
You there in Vraja—the charming land—
And I in this, an alien strand!
A Yogi merged in Self you live,
A soul forlorn, in sorrows I heave.



So woe—begone! So sore-distressed!
Give me a glimpse of Thy form so blessed!
See! Tears stream down from swollen eyes
In torrents that would fill the skies.
I'm rent from Thee, I fain would die
O save my life! I pray, I cry.
Of hunger, thirst, I won't complain
Content with fruit I will remain.
To wash Thy feet and drink that drink,
In that Sea of Bliss I wish to sink,
To serve and pray and worship Thee
Is all I seek, grant that to me;
My life's adrift, a helpless bark,
Save it, Won't you my wailings hark?¹

The moving sentiment in the hymn, the charming voice of the singer and the listeners' receptive mood filled the place for a while with the earnest loving entreaty made in the song. Everyone was, as it were, wafted to that blissful place and humming the following lines:

“मैं तो बनफल खाय के बैठ रहूँ, तोसे भूक-पियास कछू न कहूँ,
तेरे प्रेम के जल में सदा मैं बहूँ, मेरे दुःख को आन मिटा तो सही ।”
..... मेरे नाव को पार लगा तो सही ।”

“Of hunger, thirst, I won't complain
Content with fruit I will remain” .

But even before the vibrations of that son had died in our ears, the friend began the well-known song of Mirabai, *Chakar rakhoji*, which thrills with the same ethereal air:

म्हांने चाकर राखो जी |
गिरिधारी लला ! चाकर राखो जी ||
चाकर रहसूं बाग लगासूं, नित उठ दरसन पासूं |
वृन्दावन की कुंज गलिन में, गोविन्द-लीला गासूं ||



चाकरी में दरसन पाऊं सुमिरन पाऊं खरची |
भाव-भगति जागीरी पाऊं, तीनों बातां सरसी ||
मोर मुकुट, पीताम्बर सोहे, गल बैजंती माला |
वृन्दावन में धेनु चरावे, मोहन मुरलीवाला ||
उंचे-उंचे महल बनाऊं, बिच-बिच राखूं बारी |
साँवरिया के दरसन पाऊं, पहिर कुसुम्बी सारी ||
जोगी आया जोग करन कूं तप करने संन्यासी |
हरी-भजन कूं साधू आये, वृन्दावन के वासी |
मीरां के प्रभु गहिर गंभीरा, हृदे रहे जो धीरा |
आधी रात प्रभु दरसन दीन्हों, प्रेम नदी के तीरा ||

"Make me Thy servant—the last stain efface
Of selfhood; be my life an offering
In song's own bliss and bloom's own loveliness.
For beauty holds a mirror to Thee, O King,
Of Beauty's ultimate home—Thy Brindaban—
Whose glory in her bowers will I sing.
And accost Thee daily in Thy golden dawn
In every flower, every purlingst ream
In changing forms deciphering the One.
Here, in Thy happy haunt, where dreamers dream
And Yogis strive through Yoga Thee to meet
And all who visit hail Thy summit gleam,
Thy Mira treads but one way Thee to greet:
She prays: "Besiege my heart at midnight hush
And on banks of Love's blue rill Thy dance repeat."

All of us felt as if we ourselves were 'dancing on Love's blue rill' -that was the effect the performance produced. Profound silence prevailed for a while. Sri Dilipkumar then touched a topic and raised a dialogue whose report he has himself given verbatim (a few extracts from which I reproduce):



"I feel, Mahatmaji", he said, "that our beautiful music has been sadly neglected in our schools and colleges."

"It has—unfortunately", Bapu agreed, "I have always said so."

"I am very glad to hear this, Mahatmaji, because, to be frank, I was under the impression that art has no place in the gospel of your austere life. I had often pictured you as a dread saint who was positively against music."

"Against music— I"! exclaimed Mahatmaji, as though stung. "Well, I know, I know, "he added resignedly, "there are so many superstitious rife about me that it has now become almost impossible for me to overtake those who have been spreading them. As a result, my friends' only reaction is almost invariably a smile when I claim I am an artist myself."

"I feel so relieved, Mahatmaji" I laughed, "but may not your asceticism be somewhat responsible for such popular misconceptions? The people would find it difficult to reconcile asceticism with art".

"But I do maintain that asceticism is the greatest of all arts. And to think that I should be dubbed an enemy to an art like music because I favour asceticism! I, who cannot even conceive of the evolution of India's religious life without her music! But, indeed, I fail to see anything in much that passes for art in these days. What is needed for the appreciation of any art is to have the heart for it, not any intimate knowledge of technique or training. Why must my walls be overlaid with pictures, for instance, when they are meant only for sheltering us? I do not need pictures. Nature suffices for my inspiration. Have I not gazed and gazed at the marvellous mystery of the starry vault, hardly ever tiring of that great panorama? Could one conceive of any painting comparable in inspiration to that of the star-studded sky, the majestic sea, the noble mountains? Beside God's handiwork does not man's fade into insignificance?"

Dilipbabu agreed: "Yes, what man in his senses will claim that the artist's handiwork is even greater than life's?"

Bapu then rushed on and changing the Gita's aphorism: **योगः कर्मसु कौशलम्** (Yoga is skill in action)—he said in effect that skill in action was itself the highest art:

"Life must immensely exceed all the arts put together. To me the greatest artist is surely he who lives the finest life. For what is this hot-house art-plant of yours without the life-soul and background of a steady worthy life? What after all does that



art amount to which all the time stultifies life instead of elevating it? No. Art has a place in life, but art is not life. Life, on the contrary, is Art. Art should be subservient to life. It should act as its handmaid, not master. It should be alive to life and the universe".

[All the foregoing pages have been translated from the manuscript diary of Mahadevbhai. He had, besides, written some articles in Navajivan, describing, Bapu's life as he lay in the Sassoon Hospital, Poona. They are translated below. Repetition is avoided as far as possible, but naturally, some of it does creep in.]

1. Sri Dilip Kumar Roy has given his own translation for this poem also, in his book 'Among the Great' from which the next poem and the dialogue that follows have been reproduced with his and the Publishers' kind permission—, but I have ventured to substitute this piece because his rendering of the Hindi poem is rather free and concise.—Translator.



Bapu's Darshan

(*Navajivan*, d. 27-1-1924)

Fortune favoured me with Bapu's *darshan* last week, though not to the extent of being able to serve him. An English and two Anglo-Indian nurses of the hospital are tending him at present.

Eight days ago, when I accompanied Vallabhbhai (Sardar), I had my first *darshan* of Bapu after an interval of 26 months. (I had seen him previously only during the riots in Bombay).¹ On that day, at least, he looked dangerously weak. To see him 'Speaking, rather straining himself in order to let the words come out, was an alarming, painful sight. Covered as he was with a sheet all over his body, only his face peeped out. The rest of the body had grown so thin that it could hardly be made out from the covering sheet. It was cruelty to make him or let him speak. But how could the tide of his love be stopped by us? Our very sight made it rush towards us and he burst out into a laugh and then immediately plunged into a talk about his condition. He narrated in great detail from the very start the chain of events that brought him into the Hospital. He must be sure that we might have learnt how it all happened,—from the accounts given us by other people—never the less his uncontainable love made it impossible for him to refrain from repeating the talk from his own mouth. Shall I congratulate Vallabhbhai and myself for being the recipients of that love? Not at all. Everyone can bask in the sun, as its rays fall on the earth equally in all directions and on every nook and corner of it. But I must admit, we were fortunate in having an experience of that love on that day.

The reason is that when we started from Ahmedabad our hopes of being able to see Bapu were next to nil. Doubts persistently assailed us as to whether the Government would give us the necessary permission and, if it did, whether the Hospital authorities would let us see him. But all our doubts were dissolved like mist, the moment we came here. The doctors have put no restrictions as regards Bapu's visitors.

Since that day till now, I have had the piece of good fortune to be a door-keeper outside Bapu's room and I am inevitably reminded of his illness three years ago, when I used to keep a similar watch.

[*What follows now in Gujarati is best given in Sri Mahadevbhai's own language.*]



1. Sri Mahadevbhai was sent by Bapu to Allahabad, where he was sentenced on 23-12-1921 to one year's imprisonment. He was, therefore, in jail though Bapu was out till March 1922, when he too was sentenced to 6 years' imprisonment.

(*Young India* 29-1-1924)

"If anyone had asked me to write anything about Bapu that day I would not have had the heart to do it. He was so emaciated, so shrivelled up, that you could not bring yourself to be composed enough to say or to write anything about his condition. But, thank God, he began picking up unexpectedly fast, and I am happy to say that I feel now able to say something about what is happening in this, the greatest of our places of pilgrimage today.

These have been days which will live in our annals. The nation had the good fortune to see its revered leader at work, to see him mould heroes out of clay whilst at work. It had yet to see his gospel go forth from his sick-bed and see it translated into act before his eyes. It had done so during the past fortnight. It is a living atmosphere of love of which you begin to feel the effects, as you approach the room which happens to possess today the light that transcends the bounds of time and space.

I have had the privilege, as unmerited probably as the one I had two years ago, of being with him these ten days, though not the privilege of serving him. That privilege is being entirely monopolized by the hospital nurses. One of them is an Englishwoman of long experience. He cannot help smiling as she quietly approaches him. One day she comes talking about her pet dogs and draws Bapu in a conversation about the different varieties of dogs and their usefulness. Another day she talks about her experience in English and African Hospitals, and tells him how she has lived throughout her life the lesson that her doctors taught her of never trying to be popular. A third day she decorates the room with the finest flowers and asks Bapu to admire her work. There was another nurse much younger, but equally fond of Bapu, who prided herself on having Mr. Gandhi as her first 'private' patient after passing out as a trained nurse. 'Nursing is not always a joy, at times, it is a task', she used to say, 'but it has been a pure joy and a privilege to nurse Mr. Gandhi.' The doctor comes and tells me, "You did not use to print your reports like this ever before" and I tell him straightway, "Nor had I such a patient before."



And another day she told me "My friends were chaffing me for getting fond of Mr. Gandhi; I told them they would do the same if they had the privilege of serving him."

And the surgeon's love for him is as undisguised as the nurses'. The civil surgeon has had letters and telegrams pouring on him to congratulate him for the way in which he was serving Mahatmaji, and it is not without a blush that he says, "How am I to reply to all of them? Shall I do it through the press?"

I do not know if anyone attending Bapu has the slightest consciousness that he is serving a state prisoner. A compelling love chokes all other consciousness.

But why, even he who has to look upon him as a prisoner, seemed scarcely different in his manner from the rest. Col. Murray, the Yeravda Prison Superintendent, came to see Bapu the other day. "Do you think, Mr. Gandhi, I have neglected you? No, I thought I should not disturb you. And as I see you now after some days, I find you very much better. The Colonel assures me you are quickly improving. Your friends always remember you. Mr. Gani especially asked me to tell you that he still gets up at four in the morning. Everyone of them is happy and misses you. I hope that they do so permanently." His sweetness was touching. "Thank you, Col. Murray," said Bapu, "but I assure you that nothing will please me better than to be up and doing and be under your very kind care once again at Yeravda. " You never could tell, if you did not know him, that a prison superintendent was speaking to one of his prisoners, and you could almost visualize the atmosphere of love created by Bapu in his prison cell at Yeravda.

But I must say something about Bapu's health, rather than go on talking about his alchemy of love. He looks still emaciated, but he is better than he might have been as he told Rajagopalachariar, the other day, rating him for his ill-health, and adding 'and you are worse than you ought to be'. His weight which at its best was 112 lbs. in jail cannot be now very much over a maund (82 lbs.), though it is difficult to be precise, as he is still in bed and cannot be moved out of it. There is no doubt however that he is getting stronger everyday. There is a chain hanging down from the top of his bed, of which he gets a hold to enable him to sit up or turn in his bed. 'That's for my gymnastics', he said to a friend the other day. The fingers are still shaky, but not so much as before. His nourishment is nearly half his usual quantity, and consists of about two pounds of milk, a couple of oranges and grapes. The bowels open without the help of the enema, though a mild purgative is at times necessary. Above all, he gets most restful sleep of the kind he never had during the last few years. For even the days in



jail were 'toil unsevered from tranquility'. From my talks with the surgeon I can say that there is now no cause for anxiety, though the convalescence will certainly be prolonged and even indefinite.

And need I say anything about the torrents of love that have taken their course to Poona from all parts of India? Devdas, who should be privileged to be with his father for all the time has to content himself with serving him by attending to the numerous letters and telegrams coming day and night inquiring after Bapu's health. But the telegrams and letters do not exhaust the affections. One day, the residents of the far-off Tanjore write to say that they did their *archanas* (special prayers) and *abhishekams* (holy bath given to the deity) in a particular *mandir* (temple), and send on the sacred ashes and *kum kum* (vermilion) for Mahatmaji, another day comes a letter from Kashi (Benares) telling Devdas that special *Japas* (chants) were performed in the temple of Mrityunjaya Mahadev, the Conqueror of Death, that hundreds of Brahmins will be continuing their *anushthanams* (sacred ceremonies) until Mahatmaji gets better, and they do not omit to send the sacred water of the Ganges and the sacred ashes also. The Hindus from Shiyali (Tirupur) and Dindigul vie in their love with their Mussalman brethren of Nagore who send special *tabarruk*. (prasadam, an article symbolising favour) of some *aulia* (Muslim mystic). A Parsi sister writes offering her blood if the surgeons thought it necessary to put in blood in Mahatmaji, while an English lady writes detailed instructions about his diet, and Mrs. Gokhale from Bombay writes to say that she will spin an extra couple of hours. every day, now that Mahatmaji cannot spin.

One of the constant visitors at the hospital—and of these there is no end, my duty there being only that of standing at the gate to keep them away—is an Englishman, an old military pensioner, who makes it a point to come every other day with a bouquet of flowers, and gets into Bapu's room unobstructed by any one. It is simply impossible to stop him. Impatiently he rushes to Bapu, shakes his hand, and delivers his message of cheer in a few seconds and walks away. 'Cheer up, old man. I see that you are very much better than yesterday. I know you must get better. How old are you?' 'Fifty-five'. 'Oh, it is nothing. I am eightytwo. Get better, Please do'. One day he stopped and inquired, 'Can I do anything for you, Mr. Gandhi?' 'No', said Bapu, 'please pray for me'. 'That I will, but tell me if I can do anything for you. Believe me to be your brother'. To which Bapu replies with a smile, 'Believe me I have amongst my friends a number of Englishmen whom I regard as 'more than my brothers'. The man



is deeply touched, moves out assuring us that he prays thrice everyday that Mr. Gandhi may live up to his age, and also telling us that many Englishmen pray for him, and many officers inquire after him.

The picture will be incomplete if I do not say a word about the illustrious leaders who are now flocking to Poona to see their leader. They did not come until now, as they knew it would not be well to disturb him. A man like Mr. Jayakar says, 'I will now come, but will only have his *darshan* from a distance; and Jawaharlal assures Devdas that he would come last of all. The Big Brother (Shaukat Ali) comes and insists that Mahatmaji should not talk to him, fumbles about on Mahatmaji's bed for his legs, which he finds with some difficulty, opens out the covering, and kisses them. Shankarlal and others like him are choked with tears and Pandit Motilal has no heart to get away without bidding him good-bye a second time, and deliberately misses a train. Lalaji comes eager to have a talk with him, but stands aside, almost in spite of himself, so that he may not draw him into a talk with him. He visits him again before leaving Poona. There is something in him which is struggling to find expression. Probably it checks the tears, or the tears check it. But ultimately it succeeds and bursts out. But Bapu with his inimitable smile says, 'Lalaji, the joke is too big for my stomach. I would have a hearty laugh, but for the wound and the stitches'. So Lalaji who would have gone otherwise with a heavy heart, goes away with a much lighter heart, not without assuring others also that we may not be sad now, but rejoice that God in His infinite mercy has blessed us.

That Glorious Event

(*Navajivan*, d. 3-2-1924)

In the last issue I gave the reader an idea of the scenes that were being enacted in the Sassoon Hospital owing to Bapu's presence there. I am not writing this letter today, as I sit by his side or as I have the gratification of his *darshan* by often going into his room from my adjoining post of duty. Circumstances have compelled me to leave Poona, but I am not yet free from the inebriation of my stay with Bapu. How is it possible for me to come down immediately from that ethereal madness? That power of alchemic transmutation, which neither old age nor stone walls nor a deadly disease can decline, snaps all gross shackles of matter and everyone is metamorphosed by it



Once that alchemy of love begins to work, nobody has the power to release himself from it or stop its ever-increasing potency.

By now nearly all have had Bapu's *darshan* and there was none among them whose heart did not shed tears at the sight of Bapu laid low with a disease. And yet everyone believed that it was God who, under the guise of Bapu's disease, gave him the chance to have his *darshan*. It was God, everyone feels, who created this opportunity in order that all of us, who were sunk in the slough of despond, could brace ourselves up with fresh life and vigour. I believe that the sterling qualities of Gandhiji exhibited even during the crisis of his illness must have affected the people in various ways. At the sight of his inborn sweetness of temper, even in his sick-bed those of us who may have grown hard hearted must have resolved, on leaving Poona, to be soft at heart; at the demonstration of his keen sense of duty in practice and precept, those of us who may have become negligent in their duties must have decided to be more devoted; and at Gandhiji's exhortation of heart unity, those who may have grown alienated from their brothers must have determined to be reunited with them.

And what a large number of visitors there were! The surgeon has received orders from the Government that Bapu should be allowed to see whomever he wanted to among his friends and relatives. Not in the beginning but during the last three or four days, the surgeon seemed to be a little vexed. He must have wondered, 'May Gandhiji have so many personal friends!' Gandhiji's revered elder sister came from the Ashram in company with several other ladies. That scene is difficult to put down in words. After how many long years the sister saw her brother! She was too moved to be able to utter a word, but Gandhiji himself broke the stunning stillness: "Sorry, I am in no condition today to get up and bow down to you. I am so glad you came!" When she began to leave the room, that ever-cheering nurse asked Bapu: 'Is this your sister?' 'Yes', said Bapu. 'And this?' 'She too', said Bapu again. 'And that other one?' 'She also', replied Bapu. 'All these your sisters! Am I then your sister?' 'Definitely, if you like to be one.' She burst into a loud laugh. The light began to dawn on that nurse that her patient was a generous-hearted man to whom the whole world was kith and kin. The surgeons also saw what Bapu was, but when will the Government understand him?

Pandit Motilalji did not hope that he would be able to see Bapu. He had sent two or three telegrams to inquire if he could and at last he came on the 26th. It was a heavy shower of love that he poured on Bapu. Bapu inquired about little Indu (now



the Prime Minister of the Indian Republic!)—Jawaharlal's daughter. "I did not bring her as I was not sure if all of us would be allowed to see you, but she, her parents and all in the family meet together every morning and evening and pray for you." Talking of Jawaharlal, Panditji (Motilalji) gave an account of his latest exploits. Bapu laughed outright as he heard of Jawaharlal's civil resistance against the Government ban by scaling the high wooden fence and jumping into the forbidden portion of the holy confluence of the rivers (at Allahabad). His hilarity reached its climax when Panditji ended the description by saying, "I said to Indu one day, Indu, your father has turned into a monkey!" After his visit of Bapu in the morning, he was to leave Poona by the 3 p. m. train. But he returned to the hospital to have a parting visit. Bapu was asleep. He waited for quarter of an hour, but in vain. He waited and waited till it came to nearly half an hour, but as Bapu was still asleep and as it was very near the departure time, he left for the station at last. Mr. Bomanji who had accompanied him was already in the compartment and the luggage was all taken inside, but Panditji felt ill at ease. 'I am giving him the slip! When is the next train starting?' he said to himself; 'if there is a train for Delhi after an hour and a half, I can dispense with my visit to Bombay. Let the things to be done there take care of themselves. I will catch the train for Delhi from Kalyan, but it is impossible for me to go away without bidding adieu to Mahatmaj'. Mr. Bomanji was asked to get down, the luggage was hastily taken out and back raced Panditji to the Sassoon Hospital. When he reached there, Bapu was awake.

Everyone was wondering what would happen when Shaukat Ali visited Bapu. The story of his visit spread from one end of the hospital to the other and even patients having crutches under their armpits and those who used wheel-chairs began to rush towards the adjacent room in which we stayed till it was filled with patients. Shaukat Ali shook hands with all of them. The right to talk first of all with Bapu went naturally to Bi Amma (Shaukat Ali's mother). It was with difficulty that Shaukat Ali could restrain the upsurge of his emotions till she finished blessing Bapu. My account would be incomplete, if I simply said that Shaukat Ali then made Bapu laugh many times by recounting humorous stories of his tour-experiences, telling Bapu that he had become a Khadi 'drum' (reference to his corpulence) and making many such lively remarks. They say laughter increases the quantity of blood in our body. Taking in view the big size of Shaukat Ali's body, it was indeed in a way his duty to increase the quantity of blood in the body of his colleague, Gandhiji. And he has a knack for it. He hardly lets you speak. He himself will talk away the whole time. And Bapu lay in his bed, a patient. Why should he utter a word? So this was the first day after the operation when there



was nothing for Bapu to say and everything for him to laugh about. The Bara Bhai (Big Brother) can legitimately claim to have added something to the blood content of Bapu's body by making him laugh more than anybody else before him. But even a common jester can make people laugh; that is not the end of the story of Shaukat Ali's meeting with Bapu. It was Bapu who, during Lala Lajpatrai's visit, had taken upon himself the work of bringing lightness in the atmosphere charged with dejection by Lalaji. Here it was Shaukat Ali who, after making Bapu and all others laugh heartily, made them sink into gravity. As he was leaving, he began to grope for Bapu's feet: "Mahatmaji! You have grown so thin and weak that your feet cannot even be discerned!" And really, covered, and reduced to skin and bone, as they were, it was difficult to find out the location of his feet. When he found them, he took off all the covering, bared Bapu's feet and, with eyes dripping with love and sympathy, imprinted a kiss on them!

Then came Rajagopalachariar, Jamnalalji, Shankarlal Banker, one after another. If I begin forthwith to give vivid pictures of the meetings of all these love-mad people, I would cease to be a human being and become a heartless lover of 'art for arts sake'. There are things of the heart too sacred for disclosure. Since, however, just a peep into the hallowed meeting between Rajagopalachariar and Bapu does not seem to me a piece of profanity, I refer to a little incident: Bapu began to inquire after Rajagopalachariar's health. The latter's frequent attacks of cough were themselves an answer to Bapu's question. Bapu then began to put more and more searching questions, as Rajagopalachariar tried to explain the attacks away. At last to turn away Bapu's thoughts Rajagopalachariar put a diverting question; "Bapu, when are you going to increase your food!" "That means," replied Bapu, "that you want to change the trend of our talk. Quite true. It does not become the pot to call the kettle black." "No, no", returned Rajagopalachariar. "But you have become half yourself! I had hoped to find you better." "Admitted", said Bapu, "but perhaps I would have been worse than I am, while you *are* worse than you should be."

The man who thus silenced Rajagopalachariar's tongue behaved quite differently with Hakimji. The latter came with Mohammad Ali and the Big Brother also seized the chance to join them. Hakimji himself had grown very weak. Bapu inquired after his health. Hakimji remarked, "Your suffering must have been terrible." Bapu: "Yes. it's best left unsaid." "Could you find out the reason?" Hakimji pursued. "I must have committed a serious crime against God. He is punishing me for it," said Bapu.



Mohammad Ali, who was sitting still and silent, became more so and began to wipe off his tears. Everyone sank into gloomy silence at the reply and put himself a question somewhat like this: 'If God punishes so severely even that man whom all consider to be free from blemish, if even such a man stumbles into sin, how difficult the matter is for ordinary humans?' Some other topics were also touched, but the same heavy air hung around them. Who would break the spell that the gloom had cast? All the three of them—the Big Brother, the Young Brother and Bapu—joined in breaking it. As he was departing, Shaukat Ali said, "Maharaj, have plenty of food now. We will manage to do without you somehow, but you must first of all regain your health. You are taking very little food. Please have more of it." Bapu: "Yes. I will. But if I grow big, how will you be able to carry me in your pocket?" Mohammad Ali added, "Bapu, why not ask Colonel Maddock to take off some slices from Shaukat and graft them on to you?" Bapu laughed and said, "Excellent. But would not the very sight of Shaukat give him the creeps?"

Bapu is thus relieving everybody's anxiety for him by making him laugh. But it will yet take much time for us to laugh with him for his complete recovery. Bapu is still actually bed-ridden. The wound is much healed, but not closed up wholly. It is still half an inch deep. That part on which there were stitches is healed up, but the doctor will not allow Bapu to get up, till the wound is completely filled up. Even still he cannot do without catching the chain hanging above his head to enable him to sit up. The quantity of his food should have increased by now, but it has not. He had some constipation and had to take some medicine for clearing his bowels. And his vow of taking only five articles of food continues all the while. If he takes cascara (sagrada) and paraffin, he would insist on having only 3 articles! The poor surgeon was complaining, "How can we give him a sufficiently nutritive diet, when he has bound himself down with rigorous restrictions? It will take a long time for him to recover completely and that, too, only if a competent doctor is always by his side." He is thus taking even a little less food than before. But he feels that there is a slight and regular improvement in his vitality.

As I am dealing with his health, shall I refer to one thing different but relevant? Many people may be wondering as to how Bapu, who wears only a Khadi loin-cloth, is tackling the question of the use of cloth during this his serious illness I must satisfy them. In the jail Bapu was indeed allowed to wear Khadi loin-cloth and use Khadi sheet etc. But what could be done in a hospital? Any demand of Khadi there was simply out



of the question. Even in the jail he himself had never asked for the use of Khadi. If the Government did not supply him with goat's milk, it was physically impossible for him to do without it, but the use of Khadi was not so indispensable. If the Government was prepared to give him cow's milk, it could be informed of the vow and asked to supply goat's milk instead. But an insistence that the Government must give him Khadi in jail was definitely improper and, in a hospital, that insistence would put the surgeons and doctors in a fix, even make any treatment impossible. And in how many articles could he ask for the use of Khadi? Should he ask for Khadi bandages and gauzes to dress his wound? For Khadi sheets and Khadi coverings for Khadi mattress? But Bapu put the surgeons and nurses at ease. He wore the hospital clothes, covered himself with the hospital sheet and accepted whatever could be given him in the hospital. He takes goat's milk and is given foreign sugar with it. For a long time past Bapu has abjured the use of foreign sugar, but how can he ask for *swadeshi* sugar in the hospital? So he takes his milk without sugar altogether. Giving thus an experience of his innate amiability, Bapu is making everybody around happy and blessed. When, before departing for Delhi, Sri Shastriar saw Bapu, he gave an opposite description of what others feel about Bapu in one charming sentence: "The whole country is blessed and I in particular."

But I think everybody can say the same thing as Shastriji did in the latter half of his sentence. I am tempted, as I say so, to give here only one out of the numerous anecdotes in the hospital which have made me feel blessed. One night soft music was coming out of Bapu's room. When I went near him, I found Bapu singing and suggesting missing couplets to the person who was singing the hymn:

‘अब की टेक हमारी, लाज राखो गिरधारी !’

('Save our honour! O Girdhari!')

This was the first occasion when I heard Bapu himself singing, though I have been with him for a long time past.

Bapu who prays to Girdhari (Lord Krishna) for saving 'our' honour, is praying to Him really for the preservation of the country's honour .

* * * *

Is it any common grace of God that we, who had felt ourselves at sea and become derelict in our duties during the period Bapu was in jail, have been given his *darshan* again? That *darshan* itself is a great event. While a few of us may have tarried



for a while to get some message from Bapu, most of us got an incentive from the *darshan* only, revived their spirits and went their way. As he came out of Bapu's room, Mr. Jayakar remarked to me, "Is it an ordinary event in my life that I had Bapu's *darshan*?" What a bliss to be born and living during his times! Why, India can free herself from only that event, if only she wills.

That Memorable Day

(*Navajivan*, d. 10-2-1924)

Bapu released! The event took place at 8 a.m. on the 5th of February 1924. This day, too, will be as memorable as of the 18th March 1922. The latter was a day of grave injustice, while the former may be said to be that of tardy reparation but behind the act there was no intention to do justice and where the intention is lacking, how could there be any grace in the act? Gandhiji and I were charged in March 1919 with contempt of court for an article in *Young India*. On the day preceding the conduct of the case in the High Court of Bombay, noteworthy things had happened at Gamdevi, Laburnum Road, where we were staying. Many friends had come to Gandhiji and pleaded with him, "Gandhiji! Please do offer an apology. If you don't, we shall not be able to defend you in this case. You have assuredly committed an offence in the eye of the law and the court will be compelled to punish you. For exactly similar cases even Members of Parliament have been given six month's (imprisonment). On what possible basis can the Government exonerate you? And if the Government does not, we, who know the law, cannot blame it". I am reproducing this plea as advanced by Mr. Jinnah himself who was one of the friendly visitors. But the answer Gandhiji gave him was equally clear-cut: "You are right, but whatever happens, any apology is out of the question for me. And if you believe me, the Government won't be able to do me anything." The reply amazed Mr. Jinnah. He quoted reports of relevant cases and said, "Gandhiji, your insistence is misplaced." But Gandhiji remained adamant and it was Gandhiji who proved right in the end, while the anxiety of the friends who worried about him turned out to be uncalled for. The Government could do him no harm then. This time, whenever I was asked whether Gandhiji would be released, I used to say : "Reason doesn't say that Government will release him; but the voice comes out from within that he will be set free, because Bapu says: The Government dare not send me back to jail". And Bapu proved true once again. He was as unperturbed when the cloud of incarceration was hovering over him (in 1922), as he was when that case was



already over and it was found after two days that Government had done nothing to mitigate the rigour of the sentence.² This time also, on that 5th February morning, 1924, (the date of his release) he was as composed as he was on the 18th March 1922 (the date of the sentence)—with perhaps the only difference that his spirits were a little higher on the day he was whisked away into jail.

I could not stay on in Poona so as to enable me to describe the scene of the release. I had to pack off only a few hours earlier. But, fortunately, I have got a witness who can describe the scene better than I myself. Right on Wednesday, brother Andrews came here with Bapu's message and he has given me a graphic account of the moment when the order of release was delivered.

It was 7.30 in the morning. Andrews, who did not care to wait for his tea was already by Bapu's side. He said to Bapu, "See, what self-restraint I am observing! I have come here without even my tea!" "But why?" Bapu inquired. "So that I could be with you a little earlier," explained Andrews. "Nice! You gave up one desire—but only by cherishing another", was Bapu's loving retort. The repartee provoked Andrews to a loud laugh.

Referring then to an article of Andrews, Bapu said, "I agree with most of the views expressed therein. Where can you get a better example of a most happy married life than ours?" and then he plunged into a panegyric of revered Ba (his wife). But even at the end of that adoration, Bapu remarked, "But our happiness began to increase ever since we observed a life of *brahmacharya* (strict continence) and it has reached its acme now." Andrews saw that the last sentence of Bapu was his comment upon married life.

When conversation was going on in this free and gay manner, a most unexpected thing happened. Col. Maddock approaching Bapu so early as at 7.30! His time to come for dressing the wound was 9! How was it that he was coming up at this early hour? But he did. There was an envelope in his hand a large red-sealed one—and it seemed he was highly excited. 'Let me introduce two good Englishmen to each other', thought Bapu. So he said "Col. Maddock! This is my dear friend, Mr. Charlie Andrews!" But almost before Bapu could finish, the surgeon broke out impatiently, "Yes, yes, but I have not come here so early, as your doctor. I am the bearer of good news. Government has released you *unconditionally*." He laid special emphasis on 'unconditionally.' "Now you are free to go wherever you like." Bapu was silent for a moment, and then with just a smile he said, "I thank you. But I do hope I can continue



to stay here as your patient and guest for a few days more." The surgeon laughed in return and said, 'Most certainly. With great pleasure. But on one condition. You will continue to obey my orders as your doctor, exactly as you have been doing till now. You are no longer a prisoner, but you haven't ceased to be my patient!' Bapu also burst into a broad laugh. (After the surgeon's departure, Andrews said to Bapu, "The surgeon was more than a match for you in his volley of answers.") After some more chat, the surgeon observed as he was leaving, "I had the luck to be the first to give you this message, and I hope I shall be equally lucky in having to send you away from the hospital safe and sound."

Who can describe the sense of relief that spread after this news? Andrews told me: "Immediately they heard the news, they all flocked into the room. And there was revelry all around. Everybody was mad with joy and I the maddest. But Bapu sat still, the same unruffled figure of quiet repose and charm. As I saw him in that mood I thought he must be thinking with an indulgent smile, "These butterflies! How they flutter! And for what?"

But I was to be treated by Andrews with still more charming scenes. There was nothing to wonder at, if men around Bapu danced with joy. But the news had begun to spread in the hospital also. There were four patients who were Bapu's neighbours. They used to remember Bapu even in the midst of their physical pain, as they lay groaning in their beds. Hardly, till then, might they have stepped out. Imbued as Andrews is with an earnest spirit of service, he had already made friends with these patients. To their room he hied immediately and broke the good news. "Khuda's grace!" they exclaimed. Up they rose from their beds and rushed towards Bapu's room. Andrews carried them, they touched his feet and began at once to hie to their beds with all possible speed. Fearing that if the nurse saw them out of their beds she would scold them severely. Andrews escorted them quickly back to their places. If the eyes of a man of Andrews' sympathies were moist at this sight, is there anything surprising about it?

The surgeon came again at 9 a.m.—this time to dress the wound. When he finished it, he said to Andrews, "My friend! It is now that the greatest precaution and care have to be taken. It was we who took them so far, but now it is your turn. There will soon be a terrible rush of visitors and Gandhiji is not yet in a condition to stand the strain. He must be given complete, undisturbed rest and quiet till the wound is healed up altogether. For that it is very necessary that his vitality be conserved fully. If a large



number of men meet him and engage him in conversation so as to tire him, there will be a slackening in the pace at which he has been recovering so far." Andrews has decided to follow the doctor's instruction in letter and spirit and he, therefore, left for Poona on the very next day. i.e. Thursday. "Poor Devdas is never free from his correspondence work. I must run down to Poona to keep a strict guard,"—that was what he remarked to me.

After his release Bapu was taken down from the first floor and carried to a small bungalow outside. As its interior part is open to the sky, there is plenty of light and sunshine inside. Bapu can bask under the sun, whenever he likes to. There is an interlacing of horizontal and vertical wooden strips all round the verandah. This bungalow is supposed to be a quiet place safe from outsiders, but I am afraid that it is more vulnerable to the invasions of the people than his room on the first floor was. Any man can peep through the wooden net and the idle curiosity of our people is so irrepressible that one can imagine how difficult it must be for Devdas to stop the crowds from making inroads.

Let me give here in his own words the appeal which Andrews has issued to the people:

"Mahatmaji is extremely weak. We must stop from doing anything that would retard his recovery. Every quiet day of the coming fortnight is going to prove as valuable to him as worth its weight in gold. All I can, therefore, say is that for God's sake, for mercy's sake, if for nothing else, those who are really worried over Mahatmaji's health must help all they can in the strict obedience of the doctor's injunctions. I may also tell the press representatives that Mahatmaji is in no condition to meet them. They need not trouble him." (re-translated).

And what can I add to this? Only one thing: The Government has released Bapu and done its part. The responsibility of maintaining his health has shifted from the Government on to us.

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1. Mr. M.A. Jinnah, the proponent of 'the two-nation theory' and consequent founder of Pakistan was formerly a staunch nationalist and believer in Hindu-Muslim Unity.
 2. On the charge of sedition for his 3 articles in *Young India*, Gandhiji was sentenced to 2 years' simple imprisonment on each count, the sentences to run consecutively, i. e., two years' simple imprisonment. The Government did not commute the punishment into 2 years' by letting the sentences run concurrently.



The Charm of the Place

(*Navajivan* d. 10-2-1924)

For the last two issues I have been writing on Bapu's life in the hospital. This is the third article, but neither am I tired of writing on the same subject nor afraid that the readers will be bored. And why should I have such a constraint at all? If it is not blasphemy to compare a lamp with the sun, I may say that I would be as easily tired of writing about Bapu or worried whether readers might enjoy my article or not as would Tulsidas of writing the Ramayana or concerned whether anybody would care to read it. This series of articles is no new thing besides. During Bapu's tours (in 1921) I used to give in *Navajivan* every week a description of his tour experiences. To our good fortune, a situation similar in some respects has arisen today.

It is five days since I left Poona. But not for a moment does that pithy Sanskrit expression, 'तेहि नो दिवसा गताः ।' (Alas! Those happy days of ours are gone!) fail to resound in my ears. Countless times my memory harks back to the time when Bapu might be doing a particular thing, when he might be having his rest, when perhaps the visitors might be troubling him, or when he might be indulging in pleasant chats with that old English nurse. I sometimes picture her envying the sight of Bapu surrounded by all his attendants, save myself, and remarking, "So, Mr. Gandhi, you are hemmed in by numerous nurses!" But Bapu is not the man to put up with even this kind of crazy love for him. One day he said, "I see that everybody is caught in the spell this place casts. But I tell them all, "Take care! You must never lapse from your duty and be carried away by the charm of this place. I tell Anasuyabehn (a labour leader) "You are not here with me, I take it, because you have forgotten your mill-workers?" But what a practically impossible demand that is! The fascinated would leave the Place, only if the charm it throws is lost. But I had to leave the Place; I had to tear myself away from it, willy-nilly. And so the task, a little less captivation than of being at the Place itself—that of sharing with the readers the charm of it—has fallen to my lot.

To that enthralling spot, to that holy place of pilgrimage, numberless pilgrims and travellers have wended their way so far. From all provinces they came, to all political parties they belonged, and all creeds and all classes and all races they represented. Only those desisted from coming who loved their work with an inordinate passion and literally obeyed Bapu's word not to leave their respective posts of duty. They refused to be caught in the magician's spell and thus cast a spell over the



magician himself! I have already described how those who came to Bapu were affected by their visit. It is no exaggeration to say that everyone of them returned with the conviction that they had a personal experience of the feeling expressed in this well-known couplet of Nanak:

**‘बिसर गयी सब तात पराई |
जब ते साधु संगत हम पाई ॥’**

'Beings all became one whole,
Since we saw the saintly soul.'

If, after going out of Place, they lost the sense of oneness and again felt 'otherness' towards some humans, there is nothing to be wondered at. All that is required to make an immediate effect on the mind turn into a permanent trait of one's character is not a mere few moments' contact with a saint. A thousand other things are needed for that consummation.

Let me give here a very moving incident: Mr. K. V. Rangaswamy Iyengar a big Zemindar in Madras Presidency, and a member of the Council of State, who only 2 or 3 days ago had roundly condemned those who had worked hard to procure the "Nobel Prize" for peace for H. H. the Aga Khan, came to see Bapu one morning before proceeding to Delhi. He is a very young man with a heart of gold. As he is very short of hearing, Bapu said loudly, "Please forget any idea of a conversation with you. I cannot speak so loudly". The poor man stood stock-still. Then he began to stroke Bapu's body and gently massaged his feet. His face seemed to say but one thing, "How reduced your body is!" But he could not stand for long near Bapu even in that state. He moved away and stood at a distance. Despite his brave effort his eyes refused to obey him. He began to search his pockets for a handkerchief and, as he could not get one, he wiped his eyes with a sleeve of his coat! In order to distract his mind, somebody asked him, "When are you going to Delhi?" Sorrow pictured on his face, he said, "What is there to be done in Delhi that I might be eager to go there?" Then again he fell into a moody silence for a while and saying, "I will come here again this evening with my mother," he went away. When he returned he was in a hurry to leave for Delhi and had just peeped in to bid Gandhiji good-bye and let his mother meet him. As he came out of the room, his voice was as choked with emotion as in the morning and he departed with the words, "If he (Bapu) is released, I will follow in his footsteps."



And there were some funny interviewers also. I have said above that there were, among his visitors, 'people from all provinces'. I should have said, 'people from various countries'. One day two American women chanced to come up. Unfortunately, they struck into that old English nurse's path, who crossed them at the very entrance door. The visitors might have felt that as the nurse also had a white skin, she would be certain to take them to Gandhiji. But the short and crisp dialogue that took place is given here in full:

Q. Whom do you want to see?

A. Mr. Gandhi.

Q. Is he your relative?

A. No.

Q. He is your friend then?

A. No.

Q. Does Gandhi know you and wish to see you?

A. No, but we want to have a snapshot of Gandhi. We are press-representatives and would like to have his photograph.

That was enough to rouse her. She burst out: "This is a hospital. Gandhi is a patient here. It is not a museum, nor is Gandhi a specimen. Get away. If you want permission, you may have it from the surgeon."

The women scampered off as best they could.

Let me give another anecdote: A French press-reporter came with his wife one day. Devdas' dissuasion succeeded for once. But then they brought with them a friend too intimate to be warded off by Devdas. As they happened to avoid the English nurse's brushing up with them, they succeeded in seeing Gandhiji. What they said to Gandhiji would surprise any body. Poor souls, they had come only to give an assurance to Gandhiji: "Every Frenchman hates the Englishman as heartily as you!" Devdas sorely regretted their admission to Gandhiji's presence. Bapu, however, simply smiled. But how was it possible to explain to the Frenchman in a few minutes the fact that Bapu or India never shared, and never wanted to share, France's hatred of England?

Visitors were often a source of great trouble to Bapu's guards. Devdas' position today, I am afraid, must be very unenviable, as he is left alone there. Mrs. Avantikabai Gokhale came to see Bapu once. She saw all this and suggested partly in jest, "Only



those must be allowed to see you, who spin for two hours daily.” The suggestion astounded many hearers. Not that she was pressing for this condition, because she had earned the right to see Bapu even under it. But she felt that that was the only way to turn back the rush of Bapu's visitors. But who could impose that condition? If the intending visitor himself makes that a condition for his fitness to see Bapu, there is not that one only, but a hundred others which he should observe before regarding himself qualified for having Bapu's *darshan*. If anyone with an itch for *darshan* asks himself whether he is fit enough for it, he would himself drop the idea. So the gate-keepers have to face a very difficult situation. While a good humoured gate-keeper sends back the *darshan*-lover with soft and pleasing words, another like that old English nurse repulses them with a convincing slap. But sometimes one has to enter into deep waters in one's attempt to drive out the visitor with gentle persuasion. One or two of them were told, "How can a meeting with you be a pleasure to Gandhiji, when you don't wear even Khadi?" These words were uttered in the most polite manner, but back came the retort, "Does Mr. Shastri wear Khadi?" The counter-question puzzled me for a while. Then I said, "Mr. Shastri never needed my approval for his visit. It was Gandhiji himself who wanted to see Mr. Shastri. I would definitely let you in, if Gandhiji wanted to see you." One of them then made another point. "I at least have worn Khadi. Why don't you let me in?" Arguments which would highly interest a logician were thus being bandied back and forth, when there came a reproach from another quarter, "It is you alone who come in the way. Mahatmaji himself is so kind that he would let everyone see him." "True", I had to answer him back, "were I as compassionate as he, I too would have been a Mahatma and you would have felt gratified at only my *darshan*. But there is only one Mahatma and that is Gandhiji. I am but a door-keeper."

This by way of a little light talk. Let us now be more serious. One or two incidents reveal what Gandhiji's attitude was as regards his release. What concerned him was only the intensification of the movement. On the very first day in the hospital, he accosted Vallabhbhai as the "King of Borsad" and not by his name. Bapu's delight rose high at the sight of Vallabhbhai and then of his lieutenant, the "Sardar of Borsad." He even expressed that exultation by saying that Gujarat was proving its mettle, and had scored an unprecedented victory. "If Borsad completes the work of self-purification it has begun, the whole of Gujarat will be electrified and become well-equipped for the fight", he added.

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Without worrying a jot over the question of his release, he would be in his element whenever he discussed ordinary subjects. His presence of mind, his decisiveness, his penetrating arguments and his insistence on essentials as well as his sparkling sallies of innocent wit and humour would always creep into the subject, whether he would be discussing various breeds of dogs and their service as faithful companions, whether he would be dealing with the scientific method of massaging the legs or with the question of the efficacy of a certain medicine prescribed for Rajaji, whether he would be advising a certain colleague who had asked him if he should continue his Municipal service or indulging in a dialogue on music and fine arts, or whether he would be giving a discourse on the Bhagwadgita and non-violence to Mr. Andrews.



7-2-1924

It was from the hospital itself that Bapu wrote on the 7th February his first letter after release. The letter was addressed to M. Mohammad Ali, the Congress President:

*My dear friend and brother,

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

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

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

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



of results from my service which stagger me. The thought of my utter incapacity to cope with the work before me humbles my pride.

Though I know very little of the present situation in the country I know sufficient to enable me to see that, perplexing as the national problems were at the time of the Bardoli resolutions, they are far more perplexing today. It is clear that without unity between Hindus, Mohammedans, Sikhs, Parsis and Christians and other Indians, all talk of Swaraj is idle. This unity, which, I fondly believed in 1922, had been nearly achieved has, so far as Hindus and Mussulmans are concerned, I observe, suffered a severe check. Mutual trust has given place to distrust. An indissoluble bond between the various communities must be established if we are to win freedom. Will the thanksgiving of the nation over my release be turned into a solid unity between the communities? That will restore me to health far quicker than any medical treatment or rest cure. When I heard in the jail of the tension between Hindus and Mussulmans in certain places my heart sank within me. The rest that I am advised to have will be rest with the burden of disunion preying upon me. I ask all those who cherish love towards me to utilise it in furtherance of the union we all desire. I know that the task is difficult. But nothing is difficult if we have a living faith in God. Let us realise our own weakness and approach Him and He will surely help. It is weakness which breeds fear and fear breeds distrust. Let us both shed our fear, but I know that even if ONE of us will cease to fear we shall cease to quarrel. May, I say that your tenure of office will be judged solely by what you can do in the cause of the union. I know that we love each other as brothers. I ask you, therefore, to share my anxiety and help me to go through the period of illness with a lighter heart.

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



convinced that it is attended with less danger than war and whilst the former, when successful, benefits both the resister and the wrongdoer, the latter harms both the victor and the vanquished.

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

In conclusion may I, through you, thank all the very numerous senders of congratulatory messages? It is not possible for me personally to acknowledge each message. It has gladdened my heart to see among the messages many from our Moderate friends. I have, and non-co-operators can have, no quarrel with them. They too are well-wishers of their country and serve to the best of their lights. If we consider them to be in the wrong we can hope to win them over only by friendliness and patient reasoning, never by abusing. Indeed, we want to regard Englishmen too as our friends and not misunderstand them by treating them as our enemies. And if we are today engaged in a struggle against the British Government, it is against the system for which it stands and not against Englishmen who are administering the system. I know that many of us have failed to understand, and always bear in mind, the distinction and in so far as we have failed we have harmed our cause.

I am,

Your sincere friend and brother,

M. K. Gandhi



8-2-1924

The following letter which Bapu wrote to Lala Lajpatrai today deals with the same subject of communal unity.

Sassoon Hospital, Poona,

d. 8-2-1924.

Dear Lalaji,

I have not been able so far to keep my promise to write to you. My hand is still weak. I wanted to dictate, but when I was ready, I had not my assistants with me.

I do not know if I ever talked to Sri Prakasham that you should come to Poona to meet me. But I wish to see you as early as possible and have long talks with you on such questions as Hindu-Muslim unity, Hindu-Sikh unity, Councils, *antyajas* etc. But that could happen only when you are completely cured and I am able to stand the strain of long talks. How can I ever think of requesting you to take the trouble of coming over here, if your health is not all right and you are likely to have a relapse from the fatigue of a long journey? And I would wish that you should stay here for full three days whenever you come. Perhaps we may have to talk by bits. I may perhaps be fit enough for talks by Wednesday next, but God knows whether there are any stitches or any extraneous matter lurking in the wound still.

Yours,

M. K. Gandhi¹

The above letter shows that Bapu has already begun to study the question of the day. Bhai Devdas writes:

"He has now resolved to resume, soon or late, his work for *Young India* and *Navajivan*. He had decided to write something even from now, but yesterday he found that he was still unable to bear the strain of any serious work. He will, therefore, not write anything for some days more."



(*Navajivan*, 17-2-1924)

After my talk with Andrews, I had written a letter to Col. Maddock last week about Bapu and his new stay. Here is his reply dated the 8th instant:

"You need not worry about the new place where Gandhiji has been shifted. It is more comfortable in every way and it can be turned into a completely private, semi-private, or public place according as Gandhiji wishes. There is a wooden lattice surrounding the verandah on all the four sides and all the doors can be closed securely from inside.

"I assure you, I regard it as my personal business to cure my friend (Gandhiji) as early as possible, so that he can resort to a sea-shore, have complete quiet and regain his health fully."

After this there was a letter from Poona to the effect that the stitches have begun to cause ulcers. Then there was a letter from Devdas dated the 10th:

"The stitches in Bapu's wound have caused ulcers inside. He had 99 degrees' fever also as a result."

1. Retranslated, as the original could not be traced.



24-2-1924

It is now quite well-known how very lovingly Col. Maddock is treating Bapu. He has also kept me informed of Bapu's health of and on. His letter of 15th throws a good light on the trouble about the stitches:

"There is no cause for worrying over the stitches. This (ulceration) is a very common malady in such cases. But the sources of the pain, the septic stitches—they were about four—have been removed and today there is not a trace of pain from any remaining stitch.

"The opening gets narrower and cleaner every day and there is not the slightest doubt that the Mahatma has gained in strength and looks healthier. Only on the 9th evening, he had 99 degrees of fever, but that too, I think, was the result of the fatigue caused by the visits of an excessive number of men, or, may be, of one stitch taken out on Monday.

"My one anxiety is how to save him from exhaustion due to over-exertion; all of us are always on the alert in this matter. And you will understand how difficult it is to take such particular care for a man with a brain like the Mahatma's. I assure you that, to the best of my knowledge, there is absolutely no cause for worry."

When this letter reached Ahmedabad, I had already left for Poona to see Gandhiji. I met him on the 18th. He looks healthier, though he cannot move about in the room as he used to do, because the gap of the wound has been sewn up with a new stitch. That has been done in order to let new skin grow and heal up the wound as early as possible. When it is healed, he will again be moving quite freely. On the day I visited him he had some pain from this new stitch, but he immediately engrossed his mind in the work which had taken me there and then he gave me two important letters which he had written in his own hand. Is it ever possible that his mind would not be drawn to work? Col. Maddock has pointed out that fact very clearly. The long article he dictated on "The Class Areas' Bill" of South Africa corroborates this point. In Devdas' letter written two days before the new stitch was sewn, there is a happy description of Bapu's increasing vitality:

"For the last two days Bapu has been keeping excellent health. As Pyarelal could not open the entrance-door, he got up, walked the distance and opened it himself."



There is no doubt that after the wound is completely healed up, Bapu will regain his old energy. In the meanwhile, he will have to spend a fortnight in the hospital. Let me, through *Navajivan*, draw here the attention of the Gujarati reader to one thing which Devdas points out:

"The heap of his correspondence is growing ever more heavy, but we are taking every possible care. I gave to Bapu only a single letter from all those you wrote to me. Among other letters also, he is shown only the really important ones. His instructions are taken about the rest."

A friend has asked me how letters to Gandhiji are dealt with. It is for such as he that the above portion of Devdas' letter is given. Letter-writers should have pity on Gandhiji and his attendants. If a letter is not replied to, I hope the people will be good enough to excuse the omission.

The latest telegram indicates that some other stitches have become septic and the one that closed the mouth of the wound has had to be cut off. It is, therefore, difficult to say what time it will take for the wound to be healed up completely. Under these circumstances the appeal to have a pity for Gandhiji and spare him has to be made with all the greater earnestness.



(*Navajivan*, 2-3-1924)

The latest news from Poona are more reassuring. Gandhiji now moves about in the courtyard slowly and reads newspapers regularly. There are no stitches now on the wound and for the first time simply iodine has been applied at the place.

Devdas writes:

"There is now every chance for the wound to be healed up rapidly. It should be a matter of no astonishment to you, if we decamp in a few days. Whatever is decided upon will be done with the greatest secrecy. Even you will not be informed."

(*Navajivan*, 9-3-1924)

Gandhiji is picking up very fast. He paces up and down the courtyard for an hour in the evening after it gets dark. From the pen-strokes in his handwriting, one can safely say that his wrist has gained a little in strength. In a few days his stay in Poona will end.

(*Navajivan*, 16-3-1924)

Instead of going away stealthily, Gandhiji thought it advisable to leave Poona after previous intimation to the public. Students of the medical college in Poona gave him an address (on 10-3-1924). He made them take the vow to wear Khadi, and then, leaving Poona on the 10th night, reached Dadar (a station in Bombay) on the 11th morning. The people did not harass him anywhere either on the route or on the alighting station; the journey turned out to be extremely happy and he was quietly carried to Juhu from Dadar by a car. The superb quiet of this place becomes all the more entrancing by the charming music of the sea. The reason Gandhiji gave for his preference of this site to that of Karachi was this: 'Being centrally situated, the place would be more convenient for visitors.' How topsyturvy! Is it Gandhiji who must think of our convenience or we of him? But if we saw to Gandhiji's convenience, Gandhiji would cease to be 'Gandhi' and we to be 'we.' In a letter which the Poet Tagore had written to Gandhiji, he had stated, "I am glad that you are released, but sorry at the same time that our countrymen too have now got the freedom to harass you." And already there are long shadows of the coming event—the situation that makes us



almost regret his coming out. There is a letter from Juhu today stating that hordes of *darshan-hunters* are invading the precincts. The letter clearly reveals what a troublesome business it is for the writer to turn off these hordes. The whole letter cannot be given here; let me however quote the relevant portion:

“A gentleman came from as far away as Navasari. He arrived before it was even 9 in the morning, was requested to go away, but would he listen? "I will never return without having the *darshan*", he affirmed and refused to leave. Devdas pleaded, "Does it behove you to keep waiting here right till 4 p. m.? What a persecution of Bapu it would be, if hundreds invade the bungalow, as you do, and hang around him for hours and hours? But the gentleman stuck to the place like a leach. Devdas then changed his tactics. "If you stay on till 4 p. m., it would mean we must wait upon you and treat you with a meal: how else can you procure any provision here in this jungle? And, I am sure, you would never wish that we must conduct a regular guest-house?" The visitor retorted, "How often will you make me go ahunting from place to place? I went first from Navasari to Poona, from there to Versova and, after that fruitless errand, I came over here. How can I bear a repulse even from here—after all this trouble?" "Then, my dear sir, you should have dropped at least a post card. Would it not have been better if you had taken that little trouble, before walking all this distance under the sun?" Nothing daunted, however, the gentleman continued to wait till the evening. Is there not an innate joy even in *tapasya* (austerity)? But the tide began to rise after 2 p. m. A veritable troop of students from Dadar as well as Santa Cruz came up. No entreaty could succeed in inducing them also to leave the place. They were all taken to Bapu at 4 p. m. He was even at that time very busy. But what else could be done? How I wish I could give faithfully every word that Bapu uttered during the meeting. What a good thing it would be if these words of his reached every ear throughout the country and everyone listened to them! I will, of course, try to reproduce every word, but you may take it as my own failure, if you find in it, anything defective. Every one fell down at Bapu's feet. Bapu also bowed and began the 'interview' himself:

'Well, young man, have you any business with me?

'No, sir.'

'(addressing another) And you?' 'No, sir'

'(addressing a third student) Have you anything to say to me?"

Silence.



'So nobody is on business. You have come only to see me?'

'Yes, sir'.

'Well, since you don't want anything from me, let me find out some business with you. I want to say a few words. May I?' All were silent. That friend from Navasari said:

'I have been here since the morning.' (And dare you say that the 'business' of having *darshan* is a trifling one?)

"So it is you who have come from Navasari?" Bapu asked.

"Yes, sir."

'Well, then, I want to tell you one thing. It is a sin to come to see me without any business on hand. Neither you nor I gain anything from this 'seeing'. If you have not grasped what I have been saying all these many years, how can you understand it now from my mere sight or how can I impress it upon you in a moment? I can understand those coming to me to whom I have to say something or who have to ask me something. But is it ever possible to bear with it, if you people waste hours and hours for having my *darshan* merely? If you thoroughly understand the idea that neither I nor you have any claim over our life, which really belongs to the country, you would offer every single moment of it at the altar of national service. As for me, my time would not be wasted much, for, when you come, I would tell you at once, 'Go away, I am busy', but for you it is a different story. You would have to walk all this distance to and fro, and go on waiting till you get the chance to see me. Just think, how much yarn everyone of you can produce, if you spend all that time after spinning! And multiply that length by thirty-three crores. If you do that much (spinning), there would be no need left for doing anything else, and definitely none to see me.'

* * * *



Indulal's Visit

Indulalbai, a 'sirdar' every inch, visited Bapu. Both his gait and bearing cry out even now his old soldier-spirit. He had called for his favourite vehicle his bicycle—even at the jail gate and from the Satyagrahashram onwards he biked the distance to Ahmedabad. Like a true soldier who sees to it that his stomach is full before he starts on his march, he too had filled it at his last breakfast in jail. And it was a troop of cyclists which was waiting outside the jail to give him a reception. He looks pulled down all the same. He has lost 25 lbs. in weight, his face has lost its lustre and he looks clearly thinner. But with his spirit unconquered, he declared that in jail he was entirely free of any worry, had no difficulty to contend with and was carolling like a bird. Was jail food then not agreeable? Not even that. He had no complaint whatever to make about his jail life. It is possible, therefore, that he was so much reduced because he had no chance in jail to march from place to place, as he used to do outside. As the work now awaiting him is as plentiful and strenuous as he had to do before going to jail, we can give him the hope that his body will pick up its old form, now that he is out.

There is a children's magazine, *The Treasure Chest*, conducted from Bangalore by an Englishwoman, a Miss Ruth Robinson. A note in it on Gandhiji's release, shows how the White attitude towards him is changing:

'Outsiders have begun to appreciate Gandhi's activities better than before during the last two years. Those who were holding him responsible for the riots and disturbances of four years ago, now see that that was all the machination of persons who were opposed to his teaching and that, but for his restraining influence, rioting would have grown far worse. Even the Government has accepted this view in its report for 1921, which says that it is owing specially to Gandhi's efforts that there were no crimes during the year. At a moment of serious crisis, he turned the whole Swaraj movement into the path of non-violence. Those who appraise the value of events from the spiritual angle must feel that this was indeed a great achievement.

'And what is the key to this enormous power of Gandhi? If that question strikes us, a partial answer can be found in a book recently published about Italy: 'Like all other founders of religions, St. Francis of Assissie held a very high opinion of human nature'. The same can be said of Gandhi. He expected from his countrymen a practically impossible achievement. He based his hope of gaining his political goal along the path of self-restraint and peace alone. That was a very abnormal and exacting demand indeed. But the response he got was far greater than ever given



anywhere else in the world. If, therefore, people of all classes and all religions have hailed his release, it is not simply because of his high character, but also for the work he has achieved for India'. (re-translated.)

The above extract gives justice to India also. There is not in it the usual attitude of praising Gandhi on the one hand and condemning his followers on the other, but an honest attempt to appraise the situation correctly. In an excellent speech he delivered at Calcutta, a well-known American, Dr. Mainley Hall, approached the subject from a different standpoint. He spoke as a preacher and not as a judge, but there is the same friendly attitude in his speech as is evidenced in the above note:

'Mahatma Gandhi is a great man who will indeed lead you rightly but, if the led do not know how they are led, what good will it do to him? If you do not understand the essence of his activities how will he, or you even, gain anything? It is not stone-walls but ignorance that makes a prison. Nothing can keep enchained the man who has seen the truth. And there is no freedom for those who do not, or will not, see it. If, for the achievement of the highest ideal he has placed before you, you want to serve Mahatma Gandhi you must become, in your own way, editions of Mahatma Gandhi. You must strive intelligently for the great work he has undertaken for your good, otherwise his work will not succeed. Can you ever serve two masters? Can you gain anything with one eye for the pleasures of the world and the other for truth? You have but to offer sacrifices for the cause of truth. Mahatma Gandhi is burdened not with one, but many worries. One of the greatest of them is as to what response the people will give him. He is absolutely sure on his own ground, knows fully well what he is going to do. But what really troubles him is what others will do. He is always ill at ease lest some thoughtless person undoes in a moment his work of a life-time. It may take time for his message to spread, but that it will is certain. He is worried about the behaviour of those who do not know him, do not understand his activity. If the people of India know him and back him up, he can feel at ease and his work is certain to be crowned with success'. (re-translated).

The papers publish a letter from Poona dated 4th inst. which Gandhiji had written to Gangadharrao Deshpande. About four months ago Sri Majli went to jail. That was his second imprisonment. He has been released on account of a sudden attack of lunacy. Gandhiji felt very much grieved at the affliction and he has declared in that letter to Gangadharrao that Sri Majli might be sent to him when he went to Juhu for his convalescence and that he would personally nurse him. There is no cause for



astonishment if Gandhiji's treatment brings him back to sanity because his doting upon Gandhiji is well-known. Referring to his case Gandhiji writes 'Such troubles are a part and parcel of the sacrifices we have to offer for achieving our goal. Even appendicitis or, worse than that, lunacy, need not frighten us out of seeking jail. Are not some of us attacked with lunacy or appendicitis, without their going to jail?'

The Karnatak Provincial Congress Committee has resolved to hold the session of the next Congress at Belgaum. Sri Gangadharrao has issued a long statement in which he has warned the people of the difficulties they must overcome in order to make the Congress session a success. Gandhiji has rushed to his help and, by his message to the people of Karnatak, braced them up all the more. In the letter already referred to Gandhiji writes in substance:

'Your difficulties are great. My mind is all drawn towards you, but I have the faith that God will endow you with sufficient strength to cross the hurdles in your path. From the point of view of Khadi, Karnatak is the most promising province in India. India cannot gain her freedom so long as the boycott of foreign cloth is not carried out and so long as one's eyes do not meet with Khadi as the universal wear in the country.

'It is, therefore, an excellent thing that the session of the coming Congress is to be held in Karnatak. The Provincial Congress Committee could have hardly selected a better venue than Belgaum. It is certainly inconvenient at the present time for all the provinces of North India, but Bijapore or Mangalore would have been worse.

'What a fine thing is it that there is not even a trace of Hindu-Muslim problem in your parts? If now there were no Brahmin vs. Non-Brahmin and Lingayat (a special non-Brahmin religious sect) quarrels and not even a faint stench of untouchability, there would remain nothing else to wish for. Your province will only then be able to carry out successfully each and every item of the constructive programme of the Congress, when all local differences are made up and every worker is immersed, quietly and enthusiastically, in the work entrusted to him'.

Here is a very touching portion of a letter, dated 10th February, which Gandhiji has received from a gentleman, Sri Barkatram Thapar of Lahore:

"I enclose herewith a hundred rupee note in pursuance of the desire of my deceased daughter Saraladevi who died on the 6th instant at the tender age of 16. The news of your release just before her death had delighted her immensely. Before she, poor dear, went to Simla in April last year, her health was tolerably good. She used to



go out for a walk with me, was always very cheerful and walked briskly. She was gifted with a keen intelligence and knew her duty quite clearly towards her family and her beloved country. She took a vow to wear nothing but Khadi in August 1921 and had kept at that time her mother and her elder sister as witnesses to the solemn oath. Her mother was, at first, opposed to the vow, because she feared that if a virgin like her took it, she might not be able to keep it after she got married. But Sarala laughed out the fear. Unfortunately, the elder sister died on 30th July 1922 and Sarala also, poor dear girl, became an invalid since 17th August last. We had already lost two sons in their blooming youth as well as the eldest daughter and the events had already lacerated my wife's heart. On the top of them came this fresh calamity of the younger girl's illness. But on her death-bed the girl said to her mother, "What a happy thing it was that my vow could be kept up to the last! And now give away my clothes to some helpless and indigent girls." Then turning to me, with a voice broken with emotion she asked me to send Rs. 100/- to you for the Swaraj Fund. The darling used to cherish a burning aspiration that her motherland might regain her freedom and her pristine glory. May God fulfil the longing!"

This tragic story furnishes an excellent attestation of the fact that Khadi work is going on silently apace at every nook and corner of the country. The letter also shows that a new age is dawning over the land and boys and girls are now imbued with a new form of longing. How clearly justified was the mother's fear, but how humble and firm about Khadi the little girl was! While any other girl might remember her own unfulfilled longings and unharvested worldly hopes at the moment of her death, this girl was chanting the *mantra* of Swaraj and yearning for the early advent of the day when her country's chains might be snapped! What devotion and self-dedication for Khadi and Swaraj! What a consummation to be devoutly wished for that the whole country catches the contagion of the spirit that moved the deceased Saraladevi!



(*Navajivan*, 23-3-1924)

We get Gandhiji's news of and on. It is not yet possible to set a definite time-limit within which Gandhiji will be said to have recovered completely, but one can safely state that the quietude at Juhu and his morning and evening walks for half an hour each along the beach of the sea that mirrors the expanse of Gandhiji's heart are factors which tend to his recovery. Col. Maddock hopes Gandhiji will be able to recapture his normal health within three months. Dr Dalal, who knows Gandhiji's constitution since long, has examined him. He is afraid that Gandhiji is very anaemic and he will resume the same injections as he used to give Gandhiji after the operation he had performed on him in 1919.

Let me give, in brief, Gandhiji's daily routine: He wakes up at 4 a.m. Then prayer and hymn followed with some rest. At about 7 a. m. his morning walk with the aid of a stick in hand along the sea-shore for half an hour, when Mr. Andrews accompanies him. Two or three hours' interviews on important business after his breakfast. Morning meal at 11 a. m. Then from 12 noon to 4 p. m. dictation of letters, articles etc. interviews again from 4 to 5 p. m. Half an hour's walk in the evening. After the evening prayer he would keep awake for about an hour if there is something important to discuss and then to bed at 9.30 p.m. He has resumed his Monday slience.

A representative of *The Times of India* had sought an interview with Gandhiji and has given an interesting account. It does not state much beyond what has been given above as regards Gandhiji's day-to-day living but there is this latest news: 'I will immediately begin to spin as soon as I am able to sit up for a while without getting exhausted.'¹

Asked for his views on the newly-formed Labour Government (in Britain) Gandhiji declared:

'How long will that Government last? It rests on the sufferance of the other parties and should gratify its voters in order to keep itself going. It has, besides, to solve its domestic problems. In order to do this last as well as to retain other parties' support, it will frame the British policy about India and Indians in South Africa and Kenya only in conformity with the views of other parties. Its position is inherently so weak that I should not be surprised if the Labour Government turns out to be even worse for India than its predecessors. I am, however, unconcerned as to what it does. India is resolved to stand on her own legs. The British Cabinet, no matter what party it



represents, cannot help bowing down to India's wishes, once she becomes perfectly strong and self-reliant.'

Gandhiji was asked about his views on Council-entry also, but he stated that he would not say anything without first meeting his friends of the Swaraj Party.

Speaking about the Kenya Committee he said: 'My views as a non-co-operator apart, I may say that even if I accept the idea (of the appointment of an Inquiry Committee over the grievances of Indians Overseas), I would definitely distrust this particular Committee's findings since it does not contain as members such students of the question as Sri Srinivasa Shastri, Sir Tejbahadur Sapru and Mr. C. F. Andrews.'

As regards South Africa its Government has decided not to apply the *Class Areas' Bill* to Cape Colony. Gandhiji's view about it was: 'This is a specimen of the selfishness of the Dutch people there. The domestic servants in their houses are all Malayan women and if the law is enforced in Cape Colony who else could help the White housewives? So in order to retain these, Malayan maids—simply for the self-interest of many Whites themselves—they did not drive out the small population of only ten thousand Indians and thus did not gratify their ego (of racial superiority).'

In the last issue I had given a portion of Gandhiji's talk with some students who had gone to see him. I am now reproducing the rest of the interview in substance:

About a half of these students did not understand Gujarati and they requested Bapu to speak in English! To those South Indian and Madrasi students Bapu said in English:

'Have you understood my *mantra* of Khadi?'

As all the students were attired in full foreign dress, the question perturbed them. 'You need not feel uneasy. All I want to know is whether your heart has assimilated the spirit of the spinning-wheel. If you have, my next question will be 'Why have you not worn Khadi?' But first of all the only thing I want to know from you is whether you have fully understood beyond any doubt, what I have been saying about Khadi. If you have, I am in a position to help you in putting your conviction into practice, because I am on good terms with your college professor. Just a short time before my arrest we had a long talk.'

'Yes, sir. We have understood your view, but we have not sufficient tenacity of will.'



'Does it mean you are forbidden to wear Khadi in college?'

'No, the college permits it. We used to wear it, but gave it up later on. We have come to you to imbibe that firmness.'

'So my sight will instil firmness into you?'

'We have come here, to receive inspiration from you.'

'Well, if you can get inspiration that way and are ready to wear Khadi, you can certainly come to me. And now take a vow (to wear Khadi) and then go. When I fully recover I hope to see you clad in Khadi and I take it that you go from here with a vow to spin also.'

'Yes, sir, we will try.'

'At first, it was difficult to wear Khadi in colleges and other places, but that difficulty has entirely disappeared... You will be glad to know that students of the medical college attached to the Sassoon Hospital in Poona, numbering from a hundred and fifty to two hundred, promised me in the presence of Col. Maddock to wear Khadi and spin; most of them are certain to keep the promise.'

Either in greater astonishment at the news or in pursuance of the habit of sophistication, which modern education has inculcated in us, somebody asked, 'Has Col. Maddock also taken the vow?'

'No. He hasn't. But if I had stayed longer in Poona, he would have begun to use Khadi largely in his home. But that is not *our* business. I have full faith that if I can induce all my countrymen to wear Khadi, I can make them (Europeans in India) do the same within the twinkling of an eye.'

The students then took their leave.

These students belonged to government or semi-government colleges. But even the students of a national college are not ashamed to go to Gandhiji without having Khadi on them. When he was at Poona some Bombay students of this type had gone there to see him. Most of them had worn mill-made clothes. Gandhiji had to give them the go-by with a single sentence: 'If you don't wear Khadi, the college had better have vacant rooms and empty benches.'

Some glimpses of the day of Gandhiji's release have been already given from accounts obtained from Mr. Andrews. But one thing that happened on that day came



to my knowledge only just now. Detailed descriptions of the conversation after his release between Gandhiji and the doctor, of his unruffled equanimity at that news, and such other things have been already published, but that one thing I did not know till now. The first thing that Gandhiji did after his release was to discard the hospital clothing, which he was wearing till then—a fact that has already been noted in passing—and to put on Khadi clothes. In my articles on Gandhiji's life in the hospital, I have stated as a by-the-way information that Gandhiji had accepted jail clothes for his wear during his prison term. Immediately on release his *dharma* changed. He is as keenly conscious of his *dharma* as of the need for its immediate practice.

Mr. Andrews is rendering service to Gandhiji in numberless ways, as he sits by his bed. He is attending on Gandhiji with all the fondness of a loving mother. But, over and above that, he has been acquainting Gandhiji with some events of the last two years and, reminding him of the accusations made against him, he draws out Gandhiji's views on many matters. An instance of this is Gandhiji's article on the Indian Government's opium policy. The article also refutes Mr. Campbell's charge against Gandhiji. *Navajivan* readers may be remembering that in its last year's special issue dated 12th July, there was an article by Mr. Andrews entitled 'Mr. Shastri's Company.' With many examples he had exposed therein the Indian Government's pretences with regard to its opium policy and at the end of the article, Mr. Andrews had stated that the Government had not only hoodwinked Mr. Shastri, but made a false accusation against Gandhiji during his absence in Jail.

1. The interview is re-translated.



(*Navajivan*, 30-3-1924)

An attempt has been made to give some pictures of Gandhiji's life in hospital in the previous issues. After his release I saw him in Poona only once and that too for only two hours. Since then I saw him in Juhu only now. The first and the most delightful news I got was the fact that he had resolved to take in his own hands the charge of both *Young India* and *Navajivan* from the next week. "You ask me to put your name as the editor," I said, "Does it mean you will resume the sole responsibility of the papers or write, as one editor, on the most important matters only?" "No", he replied, "Put my single name as the editor. It is impossible for me to sit still any longer. New and newer questions go on cropping up and they will continue to do so. I cannot afford any delay now. But that work (editorial) is not difficult, if only the people give me sufficient quiet." Thinking of the thousands and thousands, who have been feeling helpless and at sea and longing for Gandhiji's guidance, and of my personal relief, I felt happy at the news. When Gandhiji went to jail, 23,142 and 21,500 persons used to buy *Navajivan* and *Young India* respectively, but of them 15,955 of the first and 18,500 of the second category felt tired at last and have cut off their connection with the papers. The thought that they too will now have the chance to revive their contact pleased me, but what delighted me most was the feeling that now at last it will be possible for me to quietly get out of the unnatural position I had presumed to take for myself. None but the man in-charge knows how in conducting a paper one has to commit conscious and unconscious breaches of truth and non-violence. I am, therefore, as pleased now as I was when I was being taken to the jail in Allahabad. But the thought of Gandhiji makes me tremble. I hope the people will respond in letter and spirit to the appeal Gandhiji has issued to them and will leave him in sufficient peace to enable him to conduct the papers. It is usually a painful affair—this one of giving or taking a farewell—but the circumstances under which I depart are so pleasant that my readers are as happy in bidding me adieu as I am in taking it. Let us thank God that that moment comes so soon!

Unlike many others, some friends from Vile Parle fixed an appointment and they saw Gandhiji. The untouchability question has created some trouble in their school. It is a very big and well-conducted institution but recently the parents of the Vaishnava children are agitated over the question, raised by the teachers, of admitting untouchable children in the school. Some members of the Managing Committee are in favour, but there are some who are opposed. All these brothers came to Gandhiji



for the settlement of the question. There were some ladies also among them. Gandhiji touched at first the question of sanitation of Vile Parle. I will try to give a substance of the whole interview:

'Such an excellent place! No dearth of houses to live in, plenty of light and fresh air, a resort to which you hie to avoid the squalor and congestion of Bombay! How is it possible for cases of pneumonia to occur there? Illness and epidemic there of all places! The thing passes my comprehension. But rather than rebuke you for the illness, let me first confess I am invalid myself. And if I try to impress upon you the need for being awake in this matter, it is only because we are ourselves responsible for this state. These disease carriers—mosquitoes, flies, fleas etc.—are I think, the Nature's scourges to punish us. Did they not exist, what else would alert us? Since I am staying here, I can increase the uncleanliness of this place as much I like. I can also breed any number of flies, fleas, mosquitoes etc., but you see that there is nothing of the nuisance here. On the very day I came here, I said positively we did not want a Bhangi (scavenger). And the Bhangi though continues to be here, half the rubbish is removed and the place kept clean by the three children, Devdas, Pyarelal and Krishnadas. If you see any defect in cleanliness, it is due to the inadvertence that may have crept into their work. But if I allowed the place to grow filthy, the beauty and joy which nature affords here would be lost. That you can understand easily. Let us now see what close connection Swaraj has with our doing away with uncleanliness. Suppose we got Swaraj. If, even afterwards, we remained slothful, negligent over our hygiene and sanitation, there is no doubt that Englishmen will again kick us out of our freedom. And co-related immediately with all this is the question of untouchability. If we harass the scheduled castes, treat them with contempt, regard them as beneath even our physical touch, how can we have the face to demand equal treatment from Englishmen? This thing must be clearly realized before we indulge in loud talks about equality of status.

And now what shall I say of the injunctions of our religion? I for one, am convinced that whatever may be written in our religious books, whatever the stray sentences of Yagnavalkya and other sages may say, they are not, one and all, immortal—of eternal verity. There is a world of difference between their age and ours. Were it not so, shall we in our day call that woman a *sati* (chaste and holy woman) who marries five husbands at a time—as did Draupadi whose hallowed name we remember every morning? And regard all her husbands, the five Pandavas, as worthy



of adoration? It is because of their great deeds that we worship them. We should be able to absorb in ourselves only the virtues of others and we have treasured their memory because they possessed some extraordinarily excellent qualities. There is no book closer to my heart than the *Ramayana*, and yet can I regard some of the statements Tulsidas has made therein as unexceptionable? Then, again, *Manusmriti* has gained the authenticity of a book that lays down the law of righteous conduct. But the book clearly approves of flesh-eating. Will you, therefore, take flesh? If I suggest that you should, you will be simply amazed! There may be some among us who take flesh but they do it stealthily and that is a different thing. But *Manusmriti* (Manu's Code) does not speak of taking flesh as a thing to be ashamed of, but as one to be done openly, without any compunction. All the same we all regard it as a thing we must shun. So what is banned in *Kaliyuga* (Iron Age) is permitted freely in *Satyayuga* (Golden Age)! Does it not look incongruous and absurd that what is prohibited in *Kaliyuga* as an unclean food could be freely indulged in during *Satyayuga*? The fact is, the thing of prime importance is your angle of vision towards *dharma*. There are two things to be borne in mind there. The first is that religious subjects must be viewed and discussed from the light that our heart throws on them, not our intellect. The other is that we should never propagate *adharma* (irreligion) in the name of *dharma*. You may know that even *Gitaji* (Bhagwadgita) can be abused by misinterpretation. If there is anybody who says that members of the same family may rightly regard one another as enemies and kill them, since Bheema smashed Duryodhana by his mace, I would tell him, 'You do not know how to read the Gita'. That subject (spirituality) belongs by its very nature to the domain of the heart. My *dharma* does not sustain itself on intellectual acumen, but on the promptings of the heart only and I may appeal to you to search your heart in this matter of untouchability.'

Gandhiji then invited discussion on the subject from those present. For a time none was willing to break the ice. Gandhiji then said, "A little baby even may speak out in my presence; you need not feel constrained at all. It would mean to me the extinction of my *dharma* of *ahimsa* (Non-violence), if even a single person felt afraid of me." That brought out a gentleman. He was a Brahmin, with a Khadi coat and photos of Gandhiji on its buttons. He tried to put his difficulties.

"I respect all religions. I respect Gandhi also. But I say, such things should be decided on a unanimous vote. I do not say that the depressed classes should not be given any education. I say, separate schools be opened for them and the teachers who



go to these schools should not attend ours. That is what I, for one, want. There had been a very long discussion in the market and I am only telling you what many of them said. There were also many who were even hinting about money."

Gandhiji intervened: "No, money is no consideration here, Money, the people may stop from contributing. But should that deter us from teaching depressed class children?"

The friend now agreed with Gandhiji, but from quite a different angle. "No, it's not a question of money. There are many who argue, 'If you do not admit depressed class children, the Congress Committee will stop its aid'. I say, "Let it. Money we will procure from anywhere."

Gandhiji smiled. He asked, "Well, I suppose you believe in the Congress? If you don't admit the depressed class children in the school, you are flouting the Congress resolution."

"No, I don't believe in that resolution of the Congress. You may have passed the resolution unanimously there, but who cares for unanimity here before doing things? There is a large number here opposed to the step and yet if you insist on it, I, for one, will withdraw my son from the school."

Gandhiji: "That matters little. I believe that my *dharma* lies in teaching *antyaaja* children more than your son. For your son can easily join some other school, but where else can the *antyaaja* children go for their education?"

"When did I say that *antyaaja* children must not be taught? But when you mix them up with us, we lose caste and there is a commotion in society. I am for gratifying both you and my castemen. You are going to spoil the whole thing—make a mess."

Gandhiji: "But, dear friend, one of the two parties is certain to find things spoiled."

"It is disunion, my good Sir, that stops the advent of Swaraj. Is it ever possible to win Swaraj by pushing on with some work without unanimous support at its back? Union alone can bring Swaraj."

The argument provoked the listeners to break into a loud laugh. But Gandhiji was not the man to dismiss a dissenter's plea by ridicule. Gandhiji: "Do not differences exist between father and son?"



"That is exactly why things have come to such a sorry pass."

Gandhiji: "There has been a difference between me and my son. But does it mean there is a quarrel—a disunion—among us? Is a difference in view a quarrel?" ‘

"But is there not in it an inevitable infliction of pain on others?"

Gandhiji: "No, we should never make others unhappy; but if I point out the truth to my son and he feels pained, I need not mind it. I must speak out the truth."

"Truth can never give pain to anybody, unless there is an element of untruth in it." Narrating then an incident of the last *navaratra* (nine nights' celebration in honour of the Mother of the Universe) he said, "On that occasion everything passed off smoothly. Till then everyone had kept quiet and nobody had opened this untouchability question."

Gandhiji: "But why was everything quiet then? Was it not because others (reformers) had discarded their dharma? Can peace ever be gained by giving up one's *dharma*?"

Just then one of interviewers told Gandhiji: "Let me tell you what kind of peace and quiet it was. There were some Marwari women in the *garba* (round dance). A large number of spectators suspected them to be *antyajas*, but everyone connived at it and nobody said anything. But there was an uproar from the people in the rear. It was at last found that they were only Marwari women. It is thus difficult even to make out *antyaja* sisters from others."

Gandhiji commented: "True, but all women without the Gujarati dress and with features not like those of Gujarati women are *antyajas* in the eyes of this friend." The comment raised a loud laugh.

Gandhiji then changed the line of his arguments. "Well, I suppose you know Vasanthram Shastri (a Sanatani Pandit). He also will tell you that your insistence in this matter is *duragraha* (insistence on untruth). And don't you regard Malaviyaji as a Sanatani Hindu of the deepest dye? But he not only touches *antyajas*, but took them to a well and let them draw water out of it, which they all drank." This news stunned that brother. He felt a little puzzled and then burst out:

"Yes, yes. I know everything is going to be muddled up shortly in Hindu society."



That again raised a titter all around. In order, therefore, to soothe him, Gandhiji again changed the topic: "Which place do you belong to?"

"Very near Porebunder (Gandhiji's birth-place) itself," he replied. The answer again made it impossible for the listeners to suppress a giggle.

Gandhiji: "All right. You may continue your son in the school, but give him a bath on his return home."

That friend: "Oh! All sanctity will come to nought. What's the earthly use of having a bath? To touch the *antyaja* and uplift him is as absurd as trying to wash out the black colour of coal."

The friend believed in Gokulnathji Maharaj, (a Vaishnava religious head) and mentioned him frequently in his utterances.

Gandhiji: "All right. If you tell even your Gokulnathji—in whom you have such faith—that you will send your boy to school and give him a bath on return home, he will not forbid you."

The friend: "If Gokulnath *bawa* asks me to do something, that I would like to do." But immediately, as if he had given away a great concession, he checked himself and added: "But I am certain he would never say so." Burst of laughter again.

Gandhiji: "Well then, is there anybody whose guidance and control you accept?"

The friend: "I would accept his—if it is right guidance. But how ever would Gokulnathji give that advice?"

Gandhiji: "Agreed. But suppose he does. You would then give him a bath (and retain him in the school)?"

The friend: (A little perplexed) "But how often can I make him bathe? The boy would fall ill with many baths".

Gandhiji: "O, that's nothing. When we were kids, we loved onions; Mother happened to be a strict Vaishnava; she, poor dear, would boil them outside the (sacred) cooking precincts and serve us from a distance so as to avoid touching us. But we would tease her, harass her, touch her and she would take a bath. Since then I learnt from my mother non-co-operation saturated with love. But this is a talk of thirty-five years ago. A whole generation has passed since then. We used to have a bath the



moment we touched an *antyaaja* at that time also. Mother insisted and made us bathe very often. Is it then any more difficult now?"

That friend: "All right. I may do that—if Gokulnathji says so." Gandhiji: "*Please do.*"

But why give the whole dialogue? If the Hindu society sees its own sorry picture given in a nutshell in this much portion, it would wake up even then. It would not fail immediately to clearly see how ridiculous, how wicked, the situation is. After all this, there was nothing much left to talk about and before the interviewers had finished, Sri Keshavrao Deshpande entered the room, singing with his students of the *Sadhak-ashram*. Gandhiji made them sit down and began to close up the above chapter. Another Brahmin gentleman came up. He was wearing a perfectly Kathiawari style upper wear made of pure hand-spun Khadi and had a long streak of saffron-paste laid horizontally across his forehead. It looked as if the gentleman would prove himself an out and out champion of Hindu orthodoxy. On the contrary, at the very start he frankly declared: "I am a Brahmin, but untouchability appears to me a thing against my conscience." Nothing was left for Gandhiji to say after this avowal. The gentleman's only objection was: "Why kick up a row by raising the question of principle, when in fact *antyajajas* are not eager to learn?" That made one of the interviewers state that many scavengers were crying for education for their children. Then came a third gentleman. His attitude supported the phrase 'the (sorry) picture of Hindu Society' I have used. "I have nothing more to say beyond what the maharaj has already said. Whatsoever Gokulnathji says is all O. K. for me." The fourth gentleman raised a practical objection. "There is no objection if higher class Hindu children sit in a line with *antyajajas*, but if at the noonday repast they all sit together, how can caste-distinctions be maintained? We, sir, believe in touching the *antyajajas*, but why extend the matter to education? And our *ghatis* (Maharashtrian domestic servants) had gone on a strike once - immediately they heard of this matter."

At last Gandhiji gave a compromise solution. "You may, for the present, open a separate school." Immediately that maharaj (first speaker) spoke out. "But the teachers must be different."

Gandhiji: "Never. Teachers at least will never be different. Yes, but there is a way out still. You may be their (untouchables') teacher. Will you?"



That friend: "No. no. Is that ever possible? The question is solved if you appoint a Christian or Muslim teacher."

Gandhiji: "That is the height of injustice. I wish you withdraw it."

The *maharaj* had personally nothing to lose in agreeing to withdraw his proposal. In the same non-chalant spirit in which he had said, "All right. I may do that— if Gokulnathji, says," he declared, "Well then I withdraw it. But let me tell you I am opposed even to touching an *antyaja*" and then he stood up to depart.

It was 9 or 9. 30 a. m already. Nobody ever felt that he had his fill of the talk with Gandhiji and every new-comer was eagerly awaiting for his turn. After the departure of the Vile Parle people Sri Keshavrao Deshpande introduced every student of the Sadhak-ashram individually and gave its daily routine. 'No other talk except that of Khadi ever interests me', says Gandhiji to everybody and with these brothers also he discussed Khadi. He talked at length about Sri Karandikar who is doing this same Khadi work at Talegaon and added that he would like the man who devotes himself to that work. Sri Karandikar was once an inmate of the Satyagrahashram. He has collected about two hundred women for spinning yarn and gets it woven also. But his work is not all summed up in that little statement. The women demand high wages for spinning, but even at the rate of 15 annas (16 annas=1 Rupee) per seer (two pounds), he engages them because he is an excellent weaver himself and he and his colleagues have reduced their weaving charge by 10 annas per seer to compensate for the high spinning expenses.

The brothers and sisters of the Sadhak-ashram had brought their meals with them. When the day grew hot, they dispersed after singing the national song. Gandhiji had taken his second meal even while he was engaged in these talks. But even before he could, after finishing these two batches, go upstairs for rest, some new visitors had been sitting down in the room and waiting for their turn. No matter what number of appeals Gandhiji issues, they do not reach one and all; and there would be quite a number among the visitors whom Gandhiji himself would be loathe to refuse a meeting, once they came up. Hence, there are always many who would thus arrive at odd times and without previous intimation. The hour must have gone up to 11.30, when he could finish all these interviewers. After going up he saw his patients and inquired after their health. Gandhiji's patients! How so? The fact is, he is fond of collecting patients around him. 'If I enjoy, alone by myself, fresh sea-breezes here, I should necessarily worry over my invalid colleagues if they are far from me. I would



rather have them near myself, render them what service I could and share with them the advantages of this health-resort, for that is my *dharma*,' that is how he argues. And as tending the sick has become the very part of his nature, he does not feel any extra strain in doing so. He enjoys it rather, one may say. When three years ago he had gone to Sinhagarh I was one of such patients of his. Service of the sick is an activity which he relishes and which, may be, he is even a little proud of, because Gandhiji considers himself a greater adept in observing, and making others observe, nature's laws of health, than in taking political moves. Among these patients is one Sri Majli, who, even though he has not yet entered Gandhiji's hospital, is already on the road to recovery from the treatment of the loving letters he has been receiving from him. After bestowing this inquiry and care on his patients, Gandhiji has his bath. Soon after he finishes it, his meal is brought to him. He would at that time have a dip into the newspapers or Andrews who is in the next room would come to him and give him some news. His attention to newspapers is thus confined only to the meal-period or an extra quarter of an hour before it, whenever he gets a free interval. After the meal he has a short nap.

It would be by then 1 p. m. On the day about which I have been writing this letter, he called for a spinning wheel for the first time. Some time passed before it could be put in order. It was *Jivan Charkha* (a special kind of spinning-wheel). Hardly was that work finished when the old type spinning-wheel with its big round wheel was put before him. He resumed his daily spinning, by using this wheel. He advises silence during the spinning period, and that would be the very thing anybody would suggest if he had an experience of repeated chanting of *Ramnam* (name of Rama) and getting absorbed in it while spinning. But he did not observe silence that day. He talked on various topics with his friend Sri. Keshavrao Deshpande who had come up alone, leaving his students below on the ground floor. While speaking about the presidentship of the Gujarat Provincial Congress Committee, the subject of the qualification for presidentship was touched. Gandhiji said, "For a ladies' meeting I would appoint as president a well-educated and highly-cultured woman like Srimati Jaiji Petit (an ardent Khadi lover of an illustrious Parsi family), if such a lady was at hand; otherwise, I would not hesitate to suggest the name of Surajbehn who is doing Khadi work or, in her absence, of Ba (his wife Mrs. Kasturba Gandhi). But I would never suggest any other lady, educated but without any interest in the work." This led him to the talk about an excellent worker and the first name that came to his lips was that of an *antyaja* sister, Gangabehn. As he has enthusiastically spoken of her to many



friends, it would not be amiss if I broadcast Bapu's eulogy. "I have never seen any woman in the Ashram more absorbed in her work than she, ever since she came to stay with us. She could be as well termed a Yogini (a woman adept in *Yoga* i. e. union with God). She is steeped in only one thing—weaving. No other talk interests her. She has the capacity to earn quite well but she is completely indifferent."

Sri. Keshavarao was listening spell-bound to the talk, because the name of this sister has never appeared in papers. She is known only to those who live with her and now to the people of Ramesara where she stays. Speaking to Deshpande again, Gandhiji continued: "Very few women may be looking as stately and sedate as that six-foot-tall Gangabai. Were I to stand by her side I would look like her son. And she has an iron constitution. While she puts in so much work, she is entirely free from pride. She never forgets the limits of modest behaviour. If she happens to come here and I ask her to take a chair she would never do so. She would look for a quiet corner and sit there unobtrusively. Blessed, indeed, is the birth of that woman. She lives the life her name (Ganga a holy river) suggests.' Singing thus the virtues of Gangabehn the while, he finished his spinning.

Then he rose and began to read the post which had arrived. Gandhiji's mail means letters streaming down to him from all quarters of the globe. It would be but natural, if he gets letters in shoals from our country, but even the foreign mail makes quite a heap. Somebody may send him books, while others may speak of the conditions of their country. Let me add here that most of the foreign correspondents are pacifists. Sir George Lloyd (Governor of Bombay, who had jailed him) has failed in his cherished desire to keep Gandhiji away from the limelight and stop the growth of the world's attraction for him. I think that his foreign mail has now grown far bigger than before he went to jail, even though Gandhiji does not concern himself about foreign questions, does not even express any view thereon. A newspaper reporter once asked for his view on a certain question. "I hold no opinion, in the matter," said Gandhiji. The reporter persisted: "Can one imagine that a penetrating observer like yourself has no opinion? Please do say something." "But it is just because I am 'a penetrating observer' that I do not give any opinion without a close study of the question," rejoined Gandhiji immediately, "and I have not even the spare time to study a foreign question." And yet there are these so many foreign correspondents, to whom he suggests nothing else but *ahimsa*. "It is in *ahimsa* that my faith grows deeper every



day. Your country may watch the movement going on in this country, understand it, and adopt from it whatever is useful for you"—that is all he will write.

I had been waiting for two days, but he was not able to spare a moment for a talk with me. In the end he gave me some time today. Besides that pertaining to *Young India* and *Navajivan*, I wanted to talk on some other matters also. But before I could finish these, visitors began to rush in. A gentleman came with a *sannyasi* with whom Gandhiji talked for a while, but when the *sannyasi* got down to the old old question of violence vs. non-violence, Gandhiji refused to be drawn into a discussion and begged the *sannyasi's* pardon. But even in doing that much, sometime would necessarily elapse. Then came an Englishwoman. She had taken Gandhiji's previous permission for the meeting. At the sight of her black silken wear, Gandhiji put the natural question: "Why is this black?" She felt abashed. "I have a sister in Paris and I ask her to send me a new pattern every season. This is the last word in Parisian fashion. I blush to own it, but, you see, we are what we are." She talked about many other things also and then said "Sarojinidevi (Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, devi =a Goddess but here a term of respect) has provided me with several dresses made of Khadi and I wear them also." "So, I take it, it's my misfortune that you came to me with this dress on and not Khadi!" She felt all the more abashed and exclaimed, "O my ... ! I thought I should come in my best clothes to see you and I wore this! If ever I come again I will be dressed in Khadi. But the colour is a little yellowish, not white; will you like it?" Gandhiji: "If it's Khadi, I will certainly like it, whatever the colour."

When this visit was over a Parsi gentleman entered. He too was attired in a suit of the latest English fashion and had fixed this appointment. He first showed a monthly magazine of his Association and requested Gandhiji, "If you can kindly send us a few words by way of a message to Parsi young men, we would like to publish it in the next issue." After this request he should have left.

But Gandhiji asked him: "What are you?" "I have appeared for the Solicitor's Exam. I am going to practise in Karachi and I am now going there." After a pause he said: "Gandhiji, I would like to put you one single question, May I?" "Yes, you may." "This is my question. With what high hopes you had started non-co-operation and how little have they succeeded today! As you had cherished high hopes, are you not as sorely disappointed?" Gandhiji: "There is no word like 'disappointment' in my dictionary. I was certain that we could win Swaraj in a year, but the certainty was conditional. 'Provided people did so much, the result would be such'—that was the



stipulation. And, let me add, it was not thoughtless either. If somebody says, 'If we stand ladders, one over other, we can reach the high heavens'—that would be a foolish fancy. But I don't think I had given an absurd condition."

"Was not the thing you expected from the people inherently beyond their capacity?"

Gandhiji: "Not in the least. I had seen with my own eyes that in Ahmedabad—at least in December last (at the Congress session) people had the consciousness of having won Swaraj already; and we *would* have got everything we expected, but then came Chauri Chaura¹. That it happened was also an excellent thing. The ways of the Lord are inscrutable. Whatever He does is always for our good. Had Swaraj fallen into our hands at the time perhaps the result would have been bad. From our experiences of the last two years, I see nothing but our good in what has come about. I do not feel at all today that we have lost the war."

The gentleman: "There is victory in defeat. Is that what you mean? Gandhiji: "Yes: To the extent of our advance in the march, it is victory. We have a better consciousness of our powers today."

The gentleman: "But they call you a visionary. What do you say to it? I, for one, feel that a lawyer would do nothing before examining a question in all its aspects. And, being an astute lawyer, one who goes deep into his case, you had convinced yourself that the step had to be taken no matter if it meant disappointment afterwards; and only then you launched the movement." Gandhiji: "Everything you say is correct—except one thing. There was no question of disappointment for me. I would never enter a fight, if I felt the slightest possibility of future disappointment. And I tell you, throughout my legal career I have acted that way. I would take up a case only when I was convinced that the client was certain to win, since he had a clear and clean case. And it happened several times that halfway in the conduct of a case I would discover that the case was weak, that there was something black in the client's acts; I would then frankly request the magistrate, 'Please decide the case against me' and would also persuade the client to rest content with the judgement. As a result, I have lost extremely few cases in my life. I took this case in exactly the same manner. I had expected sacrifices to a particular extent from the people."

The gentleman: "That means you definitely expected that the people would offer sacrifices to the extent that you had asked them to?"



Gandhiji: "There is no doubt in the matter."

God knows whether this answer satisfied the gentleman. But he was induced to put another question at the end of this one.

The gentleman: "I have not been able to understand your *mantar* (a Parsi mispronunciation of *mantra*—a potent charm) of Khadi. Is Khadi indispensable for every one who wants to do political work?"

Gandhiji: "It is. Had you put that question first, I would have been gladder."

The gentleman: I am a patriot and I am spirited. Why should I need Khadi? Is it a *sine qua non*?

Gandhiji: "You have spirit, you love your country—as much as I— but what you lack is knowledge. It is not pride, it is my thirty years' experience, that impels me to say that you have no knowledge of the conditions of our country. Your very question shows that. You want *Swaraj* but for whom? For the weak among us or the strong? And do you know the needs of the weak? To show our sympathies with them, is not at least some gesture essential? Khadi is that gesture. Take it from me as God's truth that there are crores in India who have not even a *langoti* (a bare strip) to wear. I have covered at least so much of my body, but they can hardly cover even their nakedness. That was not our plight a hundred years ago; there were then with us two occupations that kept India alive and covered - farming and weaving. But what happened afterwards? This very day I happened to read a sentence of Burke which Morley has quoted—a sentence that would draw tears from anybody. It says in effect: 'Burke has denounced in a language burning with indignation the man who stopped spinners from spinning, snatched from the weavers' hands their looms, robbed the Bengali ryot of his handful of corn, robbed him even of the opium with which the poor man could forget his tyrants and their tyranny.' We have today to expiate for the misdeeds, for the sins, which those henchmen of the Company (East India Company) committed and that we cannot do without identifying ourselves completely with the weak. There is no other course. Is machinery the remedy? That will give us a few mill-owners or millionaires. What earthly use are they to me? They are no good for winning *Swaraj*. What I would, therefore, earnestly advise everybody is this: 'Fill the stomach of every poor Indian. And for that there is only one way—the one I have shown.' I am prepared to undersign *Swaraj* if that is done. But the fact is that a thick film, a coating, covers up our vision and we grope in the dark without being able to see what is clear as daylight.



Right today an Englishwoman visited me (she has been referred to in this same letter). She said, "There is a printing press in the jail which, with my husband, I used to visit. One day I heard the sound of lashes. As nobody was visible, I asked my husband, 'What's that?' 'A prisoner is whipped,' he said. I closed my ears immediately and said, "Let's go away. I can't bear it." my husband tried to dissuade me. "O, they are scoundrels. He must have committed some offence. What else could be done?" But I said, "Whatever it be. I can't wait for a moment here. I can't bear the sound." Now this woman could do nothing else. She felt that her heart would be deeply pained, if she heard the sound any more or saw those prisoners. And if the heart was moved to its depths, one has but to think out the way to stop the punishment. But how could that be done? So she closed her ears. That is your situation. That was mine also. We all move about with closed eyes. But that is not my state now. An economist like Sir M. Vishweshwaraiyya may not listen to me, because he does not like to. He thinks I am exaggerating. You don't want to give up your profession, you would like to go along the old rut, and so you may perhaps say that this loin-cloth is a mere pose. But I can take you today to places, to regions of the country, where people don't have any spare clothing for a change and they have to do without their bath all the year round, to places where they have not even a *langoti* to wear. And what does a *langoti* mean? A rag worth a pice. How wretched must be that poverty where even that they cannot buy? That miserable poverty cannot be removed without our use of Khadi, without men like you and myself taking to spinning. And if that suffering is not alleviated, what is the good of Swaraj?"

The gentleman was feeling fidgety. Perhaps like that English-woman he could not bear to hear this sad tale. He said: "Well then, I will take your leave. I was once wearing Khadi, but my parents came in the way."

Gandhiji: "That means that you did understand the need for Khadi. *You* did not wear Khadi only owing to the opposition of parents. But Parsis are by nature so amiable that a son can bring round the father or a father his son. You also may try to win over your parents and they will agree."

The gentleman: "But how to move them from their diehard views?"

Gandhiji: "O, parents cannot hold on rigidly to their views, when their children plead. You may at least try."



The gentleman: "Definitely, I will try. Well, sir, I am going to Karachi. Can I be of service to you for anything there? You may freely tell me. If you have any message to send I will deliver that also."

Gandhiji: "If you can give the message that Karachi may wear Khadi, you may do so."

After this talk, some of the big crowd that was waiting downstairs grew impatient and they began to stream in one after another. A few sisters were the first to come. There was a German lady also. She had worn a Khadi sari and had put a vermilion mark on her forehead! Various topics must have been discussed with her but how could I have the privilege of always listening to all such conversations? She sat so long, that even the time for Gandhiji's walk was up. When Gandhiji could get away from her he started for the stroll. But it turned out that there were some persons still, who were eager to join him in his walk in order to talk with him. As a rule Gandhiji does not assign his time for a walk to interviewers, but on that day he had made an exception. The evening prayers were held after his return at 8 p. m. and it was only at 8.30 p. m. that he could get some time for relaxation. Even during this period Gandhiji would be looking after the 'Home', he had created around him in Juhu. If to some inmate he would expound the principles of non-violence and non-possession, before some other he would open out his experiences in introspection. Any one who knows that this is how his day passes would take not even a minute of his time unnecessarily. And if all his days pass quite like this, he may have to observe two silence days instead of one.

1. People broke into a violent riot at this place in U.P. Gandhiji took that as God's warning and stopped the proposed mass civil disobedience movement at Bardoli in Gujarat in early 1922. But the movement had by then grown so powerful, that Sir George Lloyd once admitted that it was 'within an inch of success.'



(Navajivan, 6-4-1924)

It is not irrelevant to give some pertinent facts about the Travancore Satyagraha. In his letter dated 13th March, Sri Keshav Menon, Secretary, Kerala Provincial Congress Committee, had requested Gandhiji to send him a message in relation to this *satyagraha*. Sri Menon had stated therein: "The road along which it is proposed the procession should pass, is kept in good order as a pukka road from public money and it is at present freely used by Christians, Muslims and caste-Hindus without any hindrance."

In his reply dated 19-3-1924 Gandhiji said:

"The procession you propose to take out is nothing but a kind of Satyagraha. It is quite unnecessary to draw your attention to the conditions which should be observed. No physical force should be used if any of our brothers stop the procession. You may bow down without any protest but you need not disperse and if you are thrashed you should quietly bear it. Every member of the procession must be fully aware of this condition and be prepared to follow it in practice. There should be no aggressive spirit among the processionists and if you feel that they may not observe this condition, you need not hesitate to give up starting the procession altogether. I am afraid we have not negotiated long enough with the opponents of reform. Hence, all the greater need for caution. The question is very difficult and it is easy for me to give you advice from my sick bed here. I shall, therefore, end with my wishes for your success after this hint for circumspection.' Some local gentlemen appear to have seen Gandhiji later on. After meeting them Gandhiji has written the following letter to Sri Keshav Menon dated 1st April:

'Sri Shivram Iyer and Vanchesura Iyer have come to see me in the matter of your Satyagraha. They state that the proposed road for the procession is one of the private roads belonging to the temple to which they lead, and that the temple is under the sole ownership of Brahmin trustees, who, according to these brothers, are entitled to control the traffic on the road. I asked them, 'If these roads are exclusively the private property of Brahmins, do non-Brahmins use it?' They admitted that they did. I then told them that so long as a single non-Brahmin can go along those roads, the so-called 'untouchables' and 'unapproachables' must be given the same right. They agreed and declared that some time would necessarily pass before the trustees and other Brahmins concerned could be persuaded to accept this view. Pandit Malaviyaji, moreover, is to go to the South within two months. If the trustees of the temple agree



to end the dispute by appointing him an arbitrator between them on one side and you as the representative of 'untouchables' and 'unapproachables' on the other, I would advise you to postpone the Satyagraha for a time. You may declare to the people, when you do so, that the Satyagraha is suspended, for the present, simply because of the appointment of the arbitrator. It is clear that all this advice is given under the presumption that the facts which the Iyer brothers have stated are all true. They say they are as eager for reform as we and, if that is so, we should yield to them in a way that would not involve any breach of principle.'

These letters reveal within what strict limits Gandhiji wants to hedge in Satyagraha.



(*Navajivan*, 17-4-1924)

After the arrests of Sri Keshav Menon and other leaders at Vaikom in Travancore, the local Government stopped arresting and began to prevent them from passing through the forbidden road. To counteract this move Satyagrahis began a sit-down Satyagraha with fasting, all day and night, at the very place of prevention, so as to compel the government either to arrest them or allow them free passage. Sri George Joseph had taken the leadership at this time. In reply to a letter from him, Gandhiji had written to him:

"In reply to your telegram, I have wired: 'Stop fasting, (but) stand or sit by turns at (the) place (of) Satyagraha till arrested.' Fasting has definite limits in Satyagraha. You can't fast against a tyrant, because that would mean a kind of violence on him. You may demand punishment for disobeying his order, but if he does not punish you and makes it impossible for you to disobey his order, and be liable to punishment, you have no right to deliberately impose a punishment upon yourself. A fast can be undertaken only against a loved one and that, too, not for securing any rights but for reforming him. For example a son may fast against a drunkard father. The fasts which I had observed in Bombay and Bardoli were of this type. It was to reform those who loved me that I had undertaken them. But I may never fast against one who not only does not love me but regards me as his enemy—for instance, General Dyer. Do you understand me? You should keep patience. You are in an Indian State; you can even take a deputation to the Dewan or the Maharaja. You can also send him a petition backed by thousands of signatures of sympathetic Sanatani Hindus. You may also meet your opponents. You can thus help your peaceful, gentle, Satyagraha in a thousand ways. And you have already attracted public attention by launching upon this Satyagraha. You will take particular care to see that nobody dies of fasting or gets impatient and commits violence.'



A.I.C.C. At Ahmedabad

(*Navajivan*, 6-7-1924)

The resolutions which Gandhiji was going to propose in the A.I.C.C. must have surprised hardly anybody. These resolutions should have either immediately succeeded the Bardoli resolution (which withdrew the mass civil disobedience movement in 1922) or should have been passed at least a year and a half ago. But the fact that Gandhiji found it so difficult to see them through even in the form in which they were finally accepted shows what a set-back there has been during the last 2 years. The resolutions in their present form were thus quite like beginning over again from the very beginning.

* * * *

Readers will find many changes in the resolutions originally proposed and those that were finally passed. In his articles on the A.I.C.C. Gandhiji has discussed these resolutions thoroughly.¹ It is necessary here to refer only to those points that are not discussed therein and to correct some wrong statements appearing in the press.

The penalty clause of the first resolution² has been dropped. Let me give, in brief, the circumstances that brought it about. Even before votes were taken on the resolution, Gandhiji had, in all seriousness, asked the voters to vote according to their convictions without being swayed by his personality and had declared his earnest desire to know the number of genuine believers in his resolution. And in order to find out that number, he had also stated beforehand that the votes of even those who had walked out of the A.I.C.C. meeting in disgust were to be taken into account. 'Those who have left have taken away their votes in their pockets, but we have but to include them in the counting.' he had stated. Nobody had suggested that inclusion, the idea came to him spontaneously, and when the votes were counted, he not only insisted on taking the votes of the absentees into account, but even got, after the counting was complete, his already-passed resolution amended.

Nothing wrong has happened because of the deletion of the penalty clause. If I can take the freedom to disclose a discussion held in camera, I may say that Maulana Abul Kalam Azad was the first to declare in the session of the Working Committee that some persons resented the insertion of that penalty clause and that, if it was dropped, everyone was prepared to implement the original resolution. And when that whole resolution was put before the open session of the All India Congress Committee, he



had repeated the same view and declared that, if that penalty clause was dropped, he promised to personally put the resolution in practice and that he was prepared to give an assurance, on behalf of those who did not implement it, that they would, on their own, tender their resignations in order to maintain their self-respect. Sri Purushottamdas Tandon also had stressed the same point. Those who had supported the whole resolution have bound themselves to carry it out in practice, no matter whether the punitive clause remained or was withdrawn, and those who had opposed the clause have done so now from the assurance given by the Maulana Saheb.

There has been only a minor change in the second resolution. (Vide foot note P. 91) The original resolution gave the All India Congress Committee the power to take disciplinary action against the defaulting Secretary or a Provincial Congress Committee. That power has not been withdrawn by the modified resolution, but it may be exercised now only after the particular Provincial Congress Committee makes amends for its default and does something wrong in taking that step.

On the third resolution (vide footnote p. 91), Gandhiji's own exposition is perfect. The language is clumsy and being a 'compromise' resolution, it can be adversely criticised as one that will not satisfy a frank-hearted man. But the circumstances under which it was framed are a sufficient exoneration. And to the man who does not wish to comply with the request made therein, it is all the same whether the language be clumsy or lucid.

As regards the fourth resolution (vide footnote p. 91). I take the liberty to say something in addition to what Gandhiji has stated.

In a sense the fourth resolution must be considered jointly with the fifth³ which was declared *ultra vires* and dropped. No other pen can describe, as picturesquely as Gandhiji has done in his article⁴, the effect on his mind of the attitude which the members of the All India Congress Committee displayed towards both the resolutions.

The way the A.I.C.C. handled them is an exhibition of our slackness in discipline. At the sight of the proceedings of the Committee on the resolutions, Gandhiji must have realised that we were straining at a gnat after swallowing a camel. For one thing, last year, we had not the slightest compunction in discussing and re-discussing a thousand times resolutions which watered down that snow-white resolution on the boycott of Councils and finally accepting the one that practically withdrew the boycott. For another, though it was quite clear that Deshbandhu Das' resolution (which



opposed Gandhiji's resolution No. 4) laid an axe at the very root of the Congress creed, it did not strike a single member to get up and try to get it ruled out as unconstitutional. But the most unkindest cut, which must have pained Gandhiji more deeply than any other, lay in the fact that those resolutions, which supported the hitherto-accepted Congress programme and those others which like his fifth resolution merely bowed down regretfully to the prevailing hard facts, were adroitly thwarted by raising legal niceties against them. During these days of the A.I.C.C. session, Gandhiji came to realise with the deepest pain how saturated every fibre of our frame is with the poison of legal sophistry, even though the law courts have been boycotted long since.

Not only did it never appear to Deshbandhu Das that his resolution was unconstitutional, but he even showed by clever analytic argumentation that his resolution was not essentially different from Gandhiji's. That analysis reminded me of one of our plays in childhood days. A child would put the question, "Give a word made of three letters, 'g', 'd', and 'o'" Another would say 'God' in reply, but a third would object and say, "No, 'dog'." Then a fourth one would give his judgment: 'Both correct.' Nobody cared to take even the trouble of looking into the implications of Deshbandhu Das' resolution. On the contrary, Babasaheb Paranjapye gave an 'excellent' exposition on it and disclosed to all and sundry what interpretation the supporters of Das' resolution were going to put upon it (meaning they would take it as winking at the commission of violent acts). And yet Deshbandhu insisted that he was not going to remove or change a stop or a comma from his resolution. That was the height of the tragedy.

Gandhiji has shown⁵ what circumstances had compelled him to propose his fifth resolution. But the members had got into a mood of levity and were incapable of even paying any attention to these circumstances. Dr. Choithram was merely the last straw. Though Gandhiji was painfully constrained to speak of Dr. Choithram only, as the man who had thrust a dagger into Gandhiji's heart, it must be admitted that, in point of fact, it was not he alone but the whole (All India Congress) Committee that had done so; and, as if specially to beg Gandhiji's pardon on behalf of the whole Committee, it was Maulana Mohammad Ali, the President, who again rose at the end of Gandhiji's heart-rending statement and, with eyes flowing with tears, fell at Gandhiji's feet.

Gandhiji has given in his article⁶ a gist of his outpouring on that occasion. But who can depict in language the intensity of the feelings with which he uttered those



words or the facial expression revealing them? On that day, as one listened to that pathetic utterance, one naturally harked back to the famous Gujarati line⁷: 'A gentleman's depth of sincerity is shown on the day when his eyes shed tears of blood.' On that day everyone saw Gandhiji's blood gushing out through his eyes and words. Never has there been an occasion of this sombreness during all the last seven years of Gandhiji's stay in India. And those who lived with him in South Africa ever that they too had never seen the like of it during his long stay there. That will give the reader some idea of the profound depth of Gandhiji's grief on that day, and will also plumb the depth of the abyss into which our faith in our principle has fallen. Let me give some of Gandhiji's own words:

"What I saw after the passage of the resolution on Gopinath Saha (Gandhiji's resolution No. 4), at once tickled me and pained me. I thought, 'What should I say now to these people? I will say something later on through *Young India*.' And why was it that I felt deeply hurt? Because we who have gathered here are men who were resolved to win Swaraj; and men who have solemnly accepted non-violence as the one means to win it. And yet we belauded today nothing but violence. How can we have the cheek to advocate violence in a meeting of the All India Congress Committee of all places? If the creed of the Congress, if the resolve of the Congress, is our creed, is our resolve, not a word of violence can ever escape our lips. And on that resolution (No. 4) I won the victory by as many as eight votes. I have never known in my life what it is to be 'victorious' and 'beat down' and 'opponent' ... Dr. Paranjpye has said nothing new. He has, on the contrary, only toned down my principle. I have gone to the length of saying that my motto is शठं प्रत्यपि सत्यम् (truth towards even a villain). I have spoken of kissing the feet of the man who has violated your sister's honour, of the enemy who has stabbed you. And that principle I would not give up to gain the rule of the whole world. That there is an alternative—the path of violence—I admit. For that same reason I had pleaded at the Delhi meeting of the A.I.C.C. (in 1921) that we must frankly state what we believe. But to-day we dressed up a show. If you want to fight arms, by all means do: and if you play fair as soldiers, I will go away myself to the Himalayas but send you from there my congratulations. But what passes my capacity to endure is a sham. A single word from me on the Gopinath resolution ought to have been superfluous. I may certainly speak on other resolutions, argue with you, explain my position. But if I have to deliver a speech, even now, in defence of what is the very pivot of the Congress, we had better given up our fight altogether.



And after committing that act of violence, we got into a devil-may-care mood. Gangadharrao asked me, "What shall I do?" (after Dr. Choithram got Gandhiji's fifth resolution ruled out). I said, "Tender your resignation here and now." Were I to follow my personal predilection, I would tell him, "Burn your boats. Let all your property go to the dogs." (But Gandhiji knew. Gangadharrao could not rise to that height of sacrifice and hence his fifth resolution to cover him and the like). Asaf Ali (a barrister) also talked in the same strain (of softening down non-co-operation. "What fault have the lawyers committed (that the boycott of law courts may not be lifted, while that of Councils has been)? It was under these circumstances that I had drafted my resolution (No. 5). And I saw how you treated it. Your opposition only pleased me. Because the very submission of that resolution was for myself a stigma, was like preparing a cup of poison for myself, and with my own hands. But that cup I drank to the dregs, because from my thirty years' profession of national service, I had no doubt that I had correctly felt the public pulse I saw the limitation of all of us as regards our capacity for suffering and I felt that, willy-nilly, I had but to frame that resolution myself. But then a 'law point' was raised against me! That startled me and I asked myself, "Well, my good fellow, tell me, are you worshipping God or Satan? Why cherish this craze (for serving the people)? What is the sense in saddling yourself with all this worry?"

When he came to this stage and referred to Dr. Choithram, tears, pent up for a long while, gushed out and his voice was choked for a while. But immediately he collected himself and spoke out the language of his heart in brief:

"I believe in dealing with men who can act on the square, and you people are diplomatic. And what, after all, is the Congress? It will turn out as you fashion it. If you wish to be true to yourself, you must go out of the Congress and work in the villages. You can exact from me a slave's toil, but by straightforward means, not crooked. You may indeed hoodwink me, but when I see that you are exploiting me for your own ends, I would fly to God for refuge and will keep miles away from you."

I have dropped several other portions of that speech which Gandhiji has given. For a while everyone sat stock-still, as though fascinated by a charm. Then, at the suggestion of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Saheb, one by one they began to speak. But none of them had the courage to speak out what he felt at heart—except two persons Sri. Mazumdar, a Bengali delegate, and Brother Shaukat Ali. The few words that the latter uttered, steadily, quietly and without being swept off by emotion, sank deep into the heart of the hearers. I think I am not doing injustice to anybody, when I say that



nobody understood the message, and felt the pain, of Gandhiji better than the Maulana. He declared, "It is you who have moulded us into men out of slaves. It is true, we have not yet imbibed straightforwardness, but that you can instil in us only by remaining with us, not by running away." It was as if with only these few words that the Maulana bound down Gandhiji to the Congress work. The country cannot be too grateful to the Maulana for that service. It was Maulana who had stood astride like a Colossus over the whole Cocanada session of the Congress. Is it any exaggeration to say that at Ahmedabad also, it was the same Shaukat Ali who, in spite of Gandhiji's presence, had ridden the stage?

1. Vide App. I-1, 2, 3



RESOLUTIONS

I Hand spinning

2. 1. In view of the fact that the members of Congress organisations throughout the country have themselves hitherto neglected hand-spinning, in spite of the fact that the spinning wheel and its product handspun Khaddar have been regarded as indispensable for the establishment of Swaraj and although their acceptance has been regarded by the Congress as a necessary preliminary to civil disobedience, the A.I.C.C. resolves that members of all elected Congress organisations shall, except when disabled by sickness or prevented by continuous travelling or other similar cause, regularly spin for at least half an hour every day and shall each send to the Secretary of All India Khadi Board or to any person appointed by him in this behalf at least 2,000 yards of even and well-twisted yarn of their own spinning so as to reach him not later than the 15th day of August 1924, and thereafter in regular monthly succession. Any member failing to send the prescribed quantity by the prescribed date shall, unless unavoidably prevented, be deemed to have vacated his office and such vacancy shall be filled in the usual manner; provided that the member vacating in the manner aforesaid shall not be eligible for re-election before the next general election for the members of the several organisations.

2. In view of the fact that certain members, whilst the proceedings of the committee were going on, deemed it necessary to withdraw from the committee, by reason of their resentment of the penalty clause in the obligatory spinning resolution, and in view of the fact that the penalty clause of the resolution was carried only by 67 against 37 votes and further in view of the fact that the said penalty clause would have been defeated if the votes of the withdrawals had been given against, this committee considers it proper and advisable to remove the penalty clause from the resolution and to reaffirm the said resolution without the said penalty clause.

II Defaulters

In as much as it has been brought to the notice of the Committee that instructions issued from time to time by offices, and organisations duly authorised thereto have sometimes not been carried out properly. It is resolved that such disciplinary action, including dismissal, as may be deemed advisable by respective executive committee of the P. C. Cs. of the provinces in which the failure has occurred shall be taken against the person about whom complaint may be made and in the



cases of complaints by or on behalf of the central organization such disciplinary action as may be taken by the Provincial Executive Committee shall be reported to the complaining organisations. In the case of default by the whole organisations the disciplinary action shall be taken by the superior organization.

III Request to Representatives

The A.I.C.C. draws the attention of the Congress voters to the fact that the five boycotts, viz., of all foreign cloth, Government law-courts, educational institutions, titles and legislative bodies, except in so far as the boycott of legislative bodies may be affected by the Cocanada resolution and the propaganda for the exclusive use of Khaddar are still part of the Congress programme and therefore, considers it desirable that those Congress voters, who believe in the Congress programme, do not elect to the various organisations subordinate to the Congress those who do not believe in the principle of, and carry out in their own persons, the said five boycotts, except where affected by the said Cocanada resolution, and do not exclusively use hand-spun Khaddar; and the A.I.C.C. therefore, requests such persons who are now members of Congress elective organisations to resign their places.

IV Condemnation of Murders

The A.I.C.C. regrets the murder of Ernest Dey by Gopinath Saha and offers its condolences to the deceased's family; and though deeply sensible of the love, however misguided, of the country prompting the murder, the A.I.C.C. strongly condemns this and all political murders and is emphatically of opinion that all such acts are inconsistent with the non-violent policy of the Congress; and is of opinion that such acts retard the progress towards Swaraj, and interfere with the preparations for civil disobedience which in the opinion of the A.I.C.C. is capable of evoking the purest sacrifice but which can only be offered in a perfectly peaceful atmosphere.

V Appreciation of Sikhs

The A.I.C.C. places on record its appreciation of the amazing self-sacrifice undergone by the Sikhs in the prosecution of the defence of their religious rights and congratulates them specially on the bravery and cool courage exhibited by them at the time of unnecessary, uncalled for and cruel firing at Jaito.



VI Opium Policy

In the opinion of the A. I. C. C. the opium policy of the Government of India is altogether contrary to the moral welfare of the people of India and other countries. The A. I. C. C. is further of opinion that the people, of India would welcome the total abolition of the opium traffic for purposes of revenue and is also of opinion that the production of opium is out of all proportion to the medical requirements of India.

The A.I.C.C. hereby appoints Mr. C.F. Andrews to conduct an enquiry in collaboration with the Assam Provincial Congress Committee into the opium habits of the people of Assam and the effect upon them of the opium policy of the Government and for this purpose authorises the Working Committee to make the necessary arrangements.

VII Indian Over-seas

After reading the report of Messrs. Andrews and Chatutvedi on emigration from India for labour purposes, the A.I.C.C. hereby authorises the Working Committee to send, if necessary, the deputation suggested in the report to the Malay, Peninsula and Ceylon and invite the co-operation of other organisations with the deputation.

3. Vide Gandhiji's article 'Defeated And Humbled', App. I-2, para. 6, for this fifth resolution.
4. *ibid.*
5. *ibid.*
6. *ibid.*
7. जे दि लोचन बरसे लोही ते दि साजन सांचा जाणियां |



Sabarmati,
d. 27-7-1924

I had your wire from Itarsi. I am glad Mohammad Ali is in Delhi. I have wired to him asking him as Congress President to investigate and publish a preliminary report. Hakimji wires saying accounts are most exaggerated. Anyway, if we can tackle the Delhi business in a business-like way, much trouble can be saved. I am myself eager to go early. My weak body prevents. But I do often think I should go in any event and be by Mohammad Ali's side. However, I restrain myself unless there is a clear call.

Why do you want me to be President of the Congress at Belgaum? Surely, I shall influence people and proceedings whether I am President or not. My usefulness is gone if I cannot get the country to adopt Hindu Muslim Unity and the Charkha as articles of national faith. If we don't get the expected response during the ensuing months regarding spinning and if we do not get Hindus and Mussulmans to come nearer, what should I do at Belgaum? As representing a stubborn minority, it is possible to do a lot. A superficial make-believe majority must hinder the movement.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi



Sabarmati

26-7-1924

*Dear Mr. Petit,

I have purposely delayed sending reply to your letter of the 17th ultimo, which you kindly sent in reply to mine. I was hoping to find out some details of a letter I wrote to you before I was imprisoned. But I cannot trace it. Mr. Chaturvedi recollects the letter but no trace can be found. The reference in your letter is to a letter Mr. Banarasidas (Chaturvedi) wrote. Mr. Banarasidas has a distinct recollection of your having promised in reply to my letter half the amount that was being paid here. I venture to suggest that Mr. Banarasidas does not need to be a whole-time officer. There is not work enough for him. As it is, being an expert, he does more than most of us. He has literary obligations which bring him no fees and which he cannot do in Bombay without much cost. As you know he is a simple-living man. He is, therefore, able to do here four times as much work in value as he can do in Bombay. Three-fourth of his time is devoted to overseas work (of Indians Overseas). It is, therefore, in my opinion fit that bunds specially earmarked for the purpose are utilized for his work. It is cheaper for the Association (Indians Overseas' Association) to pay for his work done here than to have him in Bombay and pay a heavy salary. Of course, he can be sent for whenever his services may be required there.

Before I ask you to place my letter before the Committee, I would like, if I can, to convince you that the position suggested by me is the correct one. At the time of sending your reply, will you please mind sending me the names of the members of the Committee, so as to enable me to place my views before them too.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. Gandhi



Sabarmati,
26-7-1924

*Dear Motilalji,

Here are my answers to your questions:

- (1) In my opinion it is open to No-changers to carry on active propaganda against Council-entry, but I consider it to be highly inadvisable in the interest of the national cause.
- (2) It is equally open to the other party, if one commences. But would advise restraint to both.

* * * *

- (5) I am not now, and am not likely at any time, to 'work' for a majority, unless work includes also spinning and such like.
- (6) Whatever the No-changers may or may not do, I certainly think that it is open to the Swarajists to consolidate their power by every honourable means.
- (7a) They should be all executive bodies (all Congress Committees). I do not know what they are today. As I have told you, I would like to suggest amendment of the constitution to make the Congress machinery more effective.
- (7b) I am certain that if the Congress is to do effective work, its executives should be in the hands of those who fully believe in and carry out the Congress programme for the time being.

I certainly think that Maulana Mohammad Ali should answer your questions.

I am to be in Bombay on 30th August. I hope you received my card in reply to your last letter.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi



Sabarmati,
26-7-1924

*Dear friend,

I thank you for your letter. The current issue of *Young India* gives my considered opinion on opium. If the whole of opium traffic was stopped today and sale restricted to medicinal use only, I know there will be no agitation against it worth the name. From the moral standpoint, there is no defence of the Indian opium policy.

I am keeping fairly good health, thanks.

Mister W. Paton
111 A, Russa Road,
Calcutta.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi



Sabarmati,
26-7-1924

Charles F. Weller, Esq.,
League of Neighbours,
Broad and West Grant Streets,
Elizabeth, New Jersey,
U.S. A.

*Dear Mr. Weller,

I have been unable before today to overtake your kind letter of 22nd May. I thank you for it and the offer of your home. I must however resist the temptation. I must make no other experiment till the one I am now making can be demonstrated to have succeeded. Today I can make no such claim for it. On the contrary, my method seems to have dissatisfied many of my intellectual co-workers. I dare not transfer my activity at the present moment to any other place. If the plant I am tending here grows into a hardy tree, all else, is easy. I would, therefore,

ask you and other friends, instead of tempting me away from the present field of labour, to help me to success by studying the problem and in so far as it may commend itself to them by cultivating world opinion in its favour.

With my kind regards to you and yours,

I am,
Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi



Sabarmati,
27-7-1924.

*My dear Jawaharlal,

In my opinion you should enter into correspondence with the Government and ascertain the reason of the prohibition and say that if anything can be pointed out to the Committee as really objectionable, your Committee would be prepared to delete the passages. If the Government return an unsatisfactory reply, you should intimate to them that the books will not be withdrawn from circulation.

The Government are not likely to bother the children and even if they do the only thing they can do is to remove the books from the children. The latter may be advised then not to mind and hand over the books to the police. I do not think there is any other penalty. Please look up the law and let me know. I feel that no matter how much we may have become demoralised, we may not shirk a battle that may be given to us. We need not take up aggressive civil disobedience, we may not take up mass civil disobedience, but we must face that which comes our way and tests us. Don't you think so? How to give battle will be a question for you to decide as the situation develops.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

P. S. Pray, do not worry about my health. It is all right and answers my purpose. You must be resourceful enough to mend the Charkha. For the handle all you need is an iron inset. Wood always non-co-operates with iron and gives in. Immediately you fix in an iron ring, you will find it will work all right. Please note that mere nails will not do. No part of the handle should have friction with the iron axle.

Yours,
M.K.G.



Sabarmati,
27-7-1924

*Maulana Mohammad Ali,
Delhi.

My dear Brother,

Yours is a hard task. I often think of risking my health and running to Delhi. If you think I should do so, you have only to say the word. You must have got both my wires yesterday. I would like you to make, if you will shoulder the burden, an exhaustive inquiry and publish your finding. I know you can act boldly. Spare neither the Hindus nor the Mussulmans whenever they may be in the wrong. Hear patiently all the sides. Publicly invite them. Take their written evidence.

Pandit Motilalji sent me a copy of the questions put by him to you and complained that you had not yet answered them. I got the letter yesterday. He asked me too to reply to his general questions which I have done. If you have not yet replied, I would suggest your replying. Our strength must be in our work and only that.

With love,

Yours,
M. K. Gandhi



Sabarmati,
27-7-1924

*Babu Bhagwandasji,
Sevashram,
Benaras Cantt.

Dear Babu Bhagwandas,

I thank you for your letter. I assure you, I am continually taxing myself as to how to end this wrangling. I know that there is room for both the *policies*. But as you very properly say, they can only work like submarines and aeroplanes. Fields of action must be different. They will not then clash but help. I am seeking means of exit from the Congress without a fire-works display. In Mr. Tilak's own time I had no difficulties in working along my own lines. And I know that I venerated him and that he did not dislike me and helped me whenever he could.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. Gandhi



Sabarmati,
27-7-1924

*Dr. Satyapal,
Bradlaugh Hall.
Lahore,

Dear Dr. Satyapal,

I have your letter. I am doing all I can about Delhi. My weak body stands in the way of my going to Delhi. If members resign because they will not spin, it is as well that they resign. If Congressmen believe in spinning, they must spin. If they do not, let us drop Khaddar from the Congress programme.

About the peasants, if they are willing to go through the fire, much can be done for them.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. Gandhi



Sabarmati,

27-7-1924

*Dr. Chimandas,
Nihayunjo Pir,
Hyderabad (Sind)

My dear Chimandas,

I have your letter. You must have seen my argument in *Young India*, showing why it is necessary to send half an hour's output to the Congress for the nation. You may spin for yourself. But you must spin for the nation too.

Pray do not worry about my health.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. Gandhi



Sabarmati,
27-7-1924

*Miss Emily Hobhouse,
The Warran House St. Ines,
Cornwall.

Dear Miss Hobhouse,

Friends had preserved your letter of 8th December 1922. It was like meeting you to receive that letter. I never met Miss Addams.

I was quite happy in the Prison. I had as many books as I wanted, so long as they were non-political.

I wonder if you ever read *Young India*. It would be a privilege to send it to you, if you would care to read it. How are you keeping in body?

Yours sincerely,

M. K. Gandhi



Sabarmati,
27-7-1924

*Seth Khushiram Daryandmal,
Zemindar,
Jacobabad (Sind).

Dear Friend,

I have your letter. I endeavour to uphold the cause of truth only. As for the Mussalman, I should advise the Hindus to ignore the thing entirely.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi



Sabarmati,

27-7-1924

*Babu Dharnidhar Prasad,
P. O. Simri (Darbhanga).

Dear Dharnidhar Babu,

I was glad to hear from you. I agree with you about working with a separate organisation. But I am staying in just now for the sake of the Swarajists chiefly. But I am making for a separate organization or a practically unanimous Congress. I hope your domestic troubles will be soon over.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. Gandhi



Sabarmati,

27-7-1924

*Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramaiyya.

Machlipattam.

Dear Dr. Pattabhi,

I did think of the *Kalashala* and expected to hear from you. I am now moving in the matter, but I may not be able to help as early as you would like me to be. Of course, I may fail altogether. Do you contemplate help through the Congress? Is this Rs. 10,000 the last that you will need or would you have continually to rely upon help from outside the province? Give me all you can to influence donors. Yes, spinning is infliction. One friend is trying to do 50,000 yards here all by himself.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. Gandhi



Sabarmati,

29-7-1924

Pandit Motilal Nehru,
Allahabad.

Dear Motilalji,

I thank you for your affectionate letter. I would certainly have listened to you, if you had not been the party to tell me that a certain very intimate friend of yours had, with high fever on, held on to his post in the Assembly and would not forsake his post inspite of medical advice. Even after the debate he would not give himself rest. If you could not prevail with *such* an intimate friend, how should you with me? 'Example is better than precept,' say so many copy-books. But really there is no cause for anxiety about me. It is true I have lost weight to an alarming extent, but I cannot eat under great pressure of work. The strain of sitting itself during those meetings was great. If there were not so many calls on my time, I would certainly have jumped at your offer of the Ganges retreat, but the Delhi people are worrying me. I have many delicate problems in the Ashram. I would love to write to you about them, if I had the time to disburden myself and you the time to give a friendly ear. But I must desist, I wanted to write an important letter to you today, but I must not as I have some friends waiting for me. I shall try tomorrow. I would like you not to hesitate to write on business matters wherever you feel you have anything to say to me. I have written to Mohammad Ali asking him to send you a reply. I have sent him copy of my answers to you.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. Gandhi



Sabarmati,

31-7-1924

*Shrimati V. K. Vilasini,
Hill Palace,
Trippoonitara,
Cochin State.

Dear friend,

This is the answer to your question.

Love Truth at all cost. This can be done only by loving all that lives, and feeling for them.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. Gandhi



Sabarmati,

1-8-1924

*Maulana Shaukat Ali,
Bombay.

My dear Brother,

I have your two letters. I am sorry about Bi-Amma (Shaukat Ali's mother). I hope you will get the permission you have sought. That we should be exiles in our own country! And yet play about Swaraj! The pity of it all!

The health having suffered, I got Vithalbai (V. J. Patel) to put down the (Bombay) Corporation address for 30th August. So ordinarily I should like us to start touring in the beginning of September. But I have written to Mohammad Ali and have told him I could now go to Delhi if he wants me. I must try and see whether I can stand the strain. Even if he does not need me. I think we should begin work through Delhi, I observe that Moharram Day is 12th August. It is another anxious date for us. I do not know where we should find ourselves that day. Consider all these things and think out where we should be.

I know your own difficulties about the Khilafat work. As for the Swaraj movement, so far the Khilafat, I think we shall have to rely upon the quality of a few workers rather than the quantity of many.

I have said my say about the choice of the President. There is so much passion about that it seems almost impossible to do clean work if one has to fight for a majority. The latter must come easily, if it is to be at all useful. I intensely dislike the Western method of attaining majorities.

I will try to read the Khilafat news.

With love,

Yours

M. K. Gandhi



*Janab Asafali,
Delhi.

Dear friend,

I have your letter. I do not know what I should call it, impatience or impropriety, which you have shown in one of your letters. Whatever it be, it was quite natural, since you were working under the most trying circumstances and at a time when you did not know what part you might have to play in the new movement. Were I placed in the same circumstances, I too would perhaps do exactly what you did and would be tempted to blame everything and everybody. I hope, the statements that have been issued recently will have some good effect. But I wish no statements of any kind were made till some clear and definite lead was given by the Congress President.

Can nothing be done about settling privately the cases pending in the courts? Even if it be true that the police must take cognisance of specific crimes, how does it affect us? If all the interested parties were resolved not to let the cases proceed in courts, the police would find it extremely difficult to prove a single case. Like you, I too cannot help feeling that if these cases continue in courts, we shall never be able to get at the truth, because, as you rightly say, those who know anything will be afraid to approach us.

I am returning the papers you want.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. Gandhi¹

1. Re-translated, as the original letter could not be traced.



Sabarmati,

6-8-1924

On Dr. Annie Besant on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of her life of public service:

*As everyone knows, it is my misfortune to hold certain views as to policies and principles fundamentally different from Dr. Annie Besant's. But that fact does not, in any way, detract from my regard for her as a woman of high character, noble purpose, ceaseless energy and indomitable courage. She loves India with the devotion of a daughter. Her industry and application are the envy of us all. Her courage never shone so brilliant as when at the risk of losing popularity she opposed non-co-operation. May she be long spared to serve India and humanity.

M. K. Gandhi



Sabarmati,

6-8-1924

*Dear Mr. Natarajan,

(Editor, *The Social Reformer*, Bombay)

I thank you for your letter. I did see the cutting you have kindly sent me. I felt like shooting the reporter when I saw the wire. But as it is against my creed to do so I subsided and believed that no sane man or woman could credit me with any such absurd remark. There is no mention of the wheel in any of my wires. How can there be? The wheel may assist when the people have settled down on dry land and have recovered from the nervous prostration that must have overtaken thousands of our countrymen.¹ What I did say to the people of Ahmedabad was that the work was beyond the capacity of any private agency, but that if they would send me money I would see that it went to the proper quarters. I added that all of the hearers, rich and poor, could spin for their naked countrymen and women and send me the yarn and I would undertake to see that it was utilized for the relief of the sufferers. The fact is the news has stunned me. I am fretting with myself for our utter incapacity when nature delivers her stunning blows. It is my unquenchable belief in the utter goodness of the Deity that makes me hope for good even out of this seeming calamity and prevents me from becoming a raving maniac.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. Gandhi

1. Reference to the floods which had then overrun large parts of the Malabar District in South India.



Sabarmati,

9-8-1924

*Dear friend,

I have your letter. When a wife does not agree with her husband's views but is otherwise pure, the husband can win her over by affection free from animal passion. During the process the husband must follow that which he regards as best, leaving the wife free to do as she thinks best. But she must not expect the husband to pay for her expensive tastes. The husband is bound to support her so far as food and clothing are concerned. She is entitled to divide his income, but she cannot expect him to incur debts for her. I am satisfied that where pure affection alone rules, all differences vanish or inspite of differences an honourable way out is found.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. Gandhi



Sabarmati,
9-8-1924

*Badrul Hussain, Esq.,
Abid Manzil,
Hyderabad (Deccan)

My dear Badrul,

I was pained to learn from Mrs. Naidu that you thought I had asked you to sit down in a village and work there to the exclusion of every other activity and although you could do more work, I do not remember having said any such thing at all. But I do remember having told you that if you could not organize on a large scale without extraneous help, you should certainly go to the villages and begin there. It is wrong to produce on a large scale if there is no local market. But if you have confidence in yourself and can organise the whole of Hyderabad, nothing would please me better. Only you must become self-supporting. Nor do I wish to prevent you from manufacturing the finest Khaddar you can and from making it as artistic as you can. I must have been in an idiotic state when I spoke to you, if you carried the impression that I wanted you to manufacture only the coarsest Khaddar when you are capable of producing the finest. And it would be the last thing in the world for me to ask anyone to do anything that may not be to his or her taste.

Do please write if I am not clear. And share this letter with Padmaja (Mrs. Sarojini Naidu's daughter) so that she may know my views.

Yours sincerely,
Bapu



Sabarmati

9-8-1924

*Tirath Ram,
Cawnpore.

Dear friend,

You have my sympathy in your distress. Suicide is a sin and as all sin means separation, the distance between you and your wife must widen with suicide. Nor will death solve the problem. For you will go to your destined place and she to hers. But whilst you are yet in the present body, you can correct yourself. Was it the body you loved or the soul within? If it was the body, you could have embalmed it and kept it chained in your room. If it was the latter, surely her soul is still with you. Is not the memory of all that was good in her enough for you? Or was your love merely selfish? Loved ones should be nearer to us after their deaths.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. Gandhi



Sabarmati

9-8-1924

*Maulanas Shaukat Ali

and

Mohammad Ali

My dear Brothers,

I have wires from both of you. I do not know where you are. If Bi-Amma is within reach please give my warmest respect to her. Tell her I shall not be sorry if God takes her away. No mother can depart this world with more pride and satisfaction than she. The sorrow will be felt by those who may be left behind. We do not like to part with the oldest of our relatives. Mother we want with us for all time. God has, however, willed otherwise. But though the body dissolves, the spirit ever abides. May it then be well with you whether she is permitted to remain with us yet a while or whether she is taken away.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. Gandhi



Sabarmati

9-8-1924

*Dear Motilalji,

I promised to write to you an important letter but I have not been able up to now. I was ready four days ago when I received Mrs. Naidu's letter informing me she was coming here. I, therefore, stopped the letter pending her arrival. I wanted to say that I was prepared to facilitate your securing the Congress machinery, actually assisting you to do so. In no case will I be party to vote-catching in the sense it is being understood at the present moment. I would be prepared to work outside the Congress but not in opposition to it. I have no interest in anything, but promoting a peaceful atmosphere, Khaddar and Hindu-Muslim Unity and removal of untouchability. In all this I know I should get your assistance. I would, naturally, have an organisation for that work, but not with any desire to capture the Congress ultimately. I would not like to waste the nation's time in wrangling over getting a majority in an atmosphere such as is prevalent today.

If you are not prepared to take over the whole of the Congress machinery, I am quite prepared to facilitate your taking over those provinces where you think you have no difficulty in running it.

Short of my coming into your programme, I would like to place myself at your disposal.

Then there is the question of the Congress President. Rajagopalachari, Gangadharrao and Rajendra Babu insist on my accepting the office. Vallabhbhai and Shankarlal approve of my idea of not accepting. Jamnalalji is neutral and so is perhaps Mrs. Naidu. I forgot to say that Shaukat Ali too is insistent that I should accept the office. The only condition that will make me reconsider my position would be your desire that I should accept. Will you please consult Messrs Das, Kelkar and others and let me know what you would desire me to do in both the matters referred to by me?

I have read this letter to Mrs. Naidu.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. Gandhi



Last National Educational Conference

1-2 August, 1924.

(*Navajivan*, 10-8-1924)

The proceedings of the Educational Conference of the teachers of national institutions held last week were in many respects remarkable, exemplary and worthy of reflection. In the last Sunday's *Navajivan* an attempt was made to give a verbatim report of Gandhiji's speech as President. It was Gandhiji himself who had drafted all the resolutions of the Conference and on the very first day copies were distributed among the members for their consideration and discussion among themselves.

Nearly 500 out of the 800 teachers of Gujarat's national institutions must have attended the Conference. They took a lively interest in the discussions and frankly put before Gandhiji the conditions prevailing in their parts as well as their capacities and their weaknesses. Gandhiji has not visited a single school after his release from jail, but this Conference, mirrored for him, so to say, the prevailing state of national education in the whole of Gujarat.

The quietness, despatch and efficiency with which the work of the Conference was completed provided a model for any Conference and any big national congregation.

At the risk of being charged with a little unfairness to the members, let me state here that Gandhiji had to explain some resolutions repeatedly, and yet some of us wondered if the votes cast for some resolutions were really the outcome of a clear perception of all the issues involved in them—a state of things that would not fail to awaken in us the consciousness of our imperfections.

But awareness of weakness is always for our good. The whole session of the Conference may be said to have provided a meter that showed the calibre of the teachers. Readers of *Navjivan* know the text of the resolutions as proposed by Gandhiji and the form in which they were finally passed. Gandhiji's inaugural address can be termed as nothing but an exposition on the resolutions he had sponsored. His attitude, as revealed in that speech, coupled with his acceptance of the resolutions in their altered forms provides an excellent illustration of the grandeur of his ideal and the extent of its practice with which he may be content. In the All India Congress



Committee Gandhiji was once constrained to say, "I can be as hard as iron and as soft as wax". In this Conference he had declared on one occasion "I was then roaring like a lion" and on another, "I am as gentle as a lamb". One can confidently assert that the teachers must have carried home with them graphic and indelible impressions of both these traits of Gandhiji.

The resolutions passed on the first day were all about what the *Vidyapith* (National University at Ahmedabad) and other institutions were expected to do. They did not raise any controversy or much discussion. One cannot help feeling that it would have been better if the first of these resolutions was passed in its original form. The establishment of an *adhyapan-mandir* (Training College) was, in truth, the only method that could sufficiently answer the need of enhancing the teachers' efficiency. But it appears that as Gandhiji saw that in its present state the *Vidyapith* would not be able to bear the burden of an *adhyapan-mandir*, he himself proposed a more amenable resolution. The modified one suggests a curriculum for the training of the teachers but has the defect of having made no provision for a teachers' examination or the like. In accepting this modification Gandhiji yielded simply to the sentiments of the teachers. It now remains to be seen what *shikhana-samiti* (Education Committee) the schools appoint and how useful that *samiti* turns out to be in practice.

The second resolution, which gave the first place to primary education¹ is of great importance and it was an excellent thing that it was passed without any change whatsoever. It is desirable that the *Vidyapith* takes early steps to implement this resolution.

The third resolution is co-related with the second. It is somewhat different in wording from the form originally proposed, but everyone understands that the object aimed at in both the original and amended resolutions was the same. Whatever one may say about the ancient village schools, the fact stands that the few old men still alive give us an idea of the high quality of education imparted to them. All that Gandhiji wanted to say was this: the trammels of the present situation—the big machinery of schools with the paraphernalia and implements which are regarded as essential requisites and the use of text books etc.—deprive the teachers of all initiative and resourcefulness and make education stereotyped. If this defect is borne in mind in the implementation of the resolution, the situation may improve. In order to carry out this resolution in its true spirit, it is necessary to come in closer contact with the villagers and take the help of the proficient teachers among them. The possibility of finding out



able teachers from among old schoolmasters is as great as that of discovering efficient workers from among the village folk.

The fourth resolution was about text book. While taking action upon it, it would be good to always bear in mind the views which Gandhiji has elaborately expressed in his presidential speech.

So much about resolutions meant for the consideration of those who are not teachers.

Resolutions which dealt with the duties of teachers took up the whole of the second day. And that was just what ought to have been done. Being of prime importance the resolutions were thoroughly thrashed. Finally, they were submitted in the open Conference in the language approved by a majority of teachers.

From the ideological point of view, the fifth and the seventh resolutions were very important, the seventh more so than even the fifth, as being more for the right it was more widely applicable. If there are teachers in national schools who really believe in truth and non-violence as the right and only means for the attainment of Swaraj, and consequently in the necessity of adopting in practice all the items of non-co-operation, then it is clear that principles deduced from the above 'must be observed in national schools' and that 'they cannot be given up at any cost'. It would have been better on that account if the seventh resolution was first taken up for consideration. After this preface, I am tempted to enter into a somewhat nice dissection of the fifth resolution. Both the original resolution of Gandhiji and the one finally passed have been published in the last issue of *Navajivan*. I am afraid that the subtle distinction between the two must have passed beyond the comprehension of many voters. Professor Pathak had, in his telling speech, tried to explain that distinction and to show that the amended form of the resolution was better than the original. It was a pleasure to listen to the 'logic' which distinguished that speech. At the same time it showed how very tenaciously specialists in any field—here that of education—refuse to come out of the groove of their specialist attitude. In support of the amended resolution, Professor Pathak declared that the most essential thing was life itself, neither non-co-operation nor national education, that both these were useful only in so far as they tended to nourish life, and that it was because the principles of non-co-operation were *not* opposed to true education that they might be adopted in practice, but if they were, even they might be given up. As a statement of principle, this is unexceptionable. But the learned Professor forgot that it was for national education that the people had



gathered there and not for education pure and simple, and he soft-pedalled the important fact that the whole movement of national education had arisen from, and was an integral part of the comprehensive non-co-operation agitation. The fact that the nation was actually at war with the

foreign rule was missed during the discussion of this resolution, as it is done now-a-days in many other things, because we have at present waived the use of some of our weapons of non-cooperation. That was why the simple and direct language of the original resolution was changed. Non-co-operation is not a principle to be followed in practice for ever. It is only a war measure. History attests the fact that every nation that has waged a struggle for freedom has made not only its educational but all its other institutions adapted to the strategy of the war it was engaged in. All the same—and are we not, the 'highly literate', doctrinaires, sticklers for the *shastra's* letter?—that straight and simple resolution did not meet with the approval of a majority. But Gandhiji did not hesitate to accept the amendment because he was getting through it also the core of what he wanted.

The very heart-piercing exposition which Gandhiji made when he dealt with the principles of non-co-operation deserves to be given here verbatim if that were possible. Sri Kakasaheb (Kakasaheb Kalelkar, a versatile writer in Gujarati, though a Deccani by birth) had given vent to several expressions which might raise the spirits of the teachers. "How long are we going to hug faint-heartedness? We had better ceased to be teachers, if we want to go on infecting our children with fear and the like," he had said. Gandhiji took up those expressions for his starting theme and declared:

"There has been a lively discussion on this resolution. I want to pour cold water on the language of exhortation which Kaka has used. If, keyed up to a fit of excitement, you acclaim this resolution, it will do us no good. If we have not got the strength to implement this resolution, we must frankly say so. Such confession of weakness is not weakness. but strength. If you want to see a very model of weakness, you have but to look at me. You may throw at me as many stones as you like for it. It is vanity, it is pure mulishness, to go on making a show of strength without possessing it. Those who are not capable of putting into practice what this resolution demands, may give up the business right here. But the rest may give their all. I am always eager to acclaim those who go the whole hog, but if we march on without having a clear perception of our limitations, we shall fall into the plight of the mill which toppled down recently.² Definitely, there must have been some weakness in that structure, since it was that



building, and no other, which crashed. We do not wish to get into that hole. That is why what we want through this resolution is to know the number of soldiers we have with us, the number of true believers in the principle of non-co-operation.

As a matter of fact, it is glib talk—this one about principle. The things that really matter are only two: the 'untouchable' and the spinning wheel. Are we, or are we not, ready to do those two things? For the first, what is required is to melt the hearts of others and risk one's own livelihood. For the second, to give up sloth and do the manual labour of turning the wheel with our own hands. Those who have not the will or the strength to do them, should make a quiet exit from this business.

Untouchability!—that is a heinous sin committed by Hinduism. As the great Wheel of Time rolls on, Hinduism is put on trial ever more severely. There is not an iota of doubt in my mind that Hinduism will be wiped off the surface of this earth, if it fails in this its acid test. The question that stares us in the face is whether we want to purify ourselves or to become *pariahs* of the world by keeping our own brothers untouchables. We have become untouchables, in South Africa, in East Africa, and even here in India. Even here we are forbidden entry into European quarters. That 'touch-me-not-ism' the Englishmen have learnt only after coming here. They saw and wondered, 'Oh, here is queer religion! One human being considers himself polluted if he touches a brother of his own faith! Will not let himself get even into the shadow of that other human! Well, if we do not adopt the same course our existence may be at stake!' Thinking along these lines, they created their superior, exclusive circles. I do not think they are to blame for this in any way at all. It is we who have taught them this 'untouchability.'

If you have the strength of heart, you will settle in a village with only a spinning-wheel and be able to collect such children as will gladly learn up these two things. You will be able to saturate them with zeal for these two items of work. If you succeed in achieving only these two objects, you have done enough and more. Do not worry about other things. Leave all the rest to Providence. If you have the strength, the way for you is clear.

But suppose, in doing so, the risk of losing your sustenance stares you in the face? It is just because we want to create a situation which averts the fear of losing one's maintenance, that we are carrying on this agitation for Swaraj. We can claim success for this movement only when hundreds, thousands, millions of India's children, sons and daughters, give up all worry about maintenance, become indifferent



in the matter altogether. In every country that enjoys freedom, the very idea of maintenance is clean forgot by its sons and daughters in their absorption of doing their duty for their native land. The question of livelihood is nowhere more fraught with worry and fright than in India. And India claims that it gives the place of prime importance to things of the spirit and not of the flesh! And yet, it is in that country of all others which makes this claim that the spectres of death and loss of livelihood cause the greatest terror. I say so because I am a Hindu all over. Why should the possible loss of maintenance be a subject of such horror for us? There is the profession of weaving always at hand and calling us. If that cannot be done, we will hue wood, break stones and bear them ourselves to the market. We can go a step even further and take up the sacred work of cleaning latrines, for, in that case, we are certain to get 15 to 20 rupees for the work, and people will flatter us in addition for doing it. In truth, therefore, livelihood is no question with us at all. Those who desire Swaraj, are longing, craving for it, those who think it their duty to offer their own tithes in this sacrifice, must simply forget the idea of maintenance. And then, if it really comes to starvation? If parents, wife, children and other dependents have also to starve with us? But the prime *dharma* of a man is to feed others first and then take a morsel for himself. Consistently with that *dharma*, we may certainly take all the trouble, we possibly can to feed ourselves and family, (but not at the cost of it). The author of the *Mahabharata* has discussed the question, which of the two is greater: self-effort or destiny (*Prarabdha=fate* in this life created by us by our actions in past lives), but he has not been able to give a clear-cut answer. But, on our part, we do see that at least our fate acts like a will-o'-the-wisp. So our *dharma* lies in doing our best and there the matter ends for us. 'I will get my sister married (pay the expenses)'—why should I have the arrogance to say so? Who am I to feed the sister? (It is God who feeds all). Suppose I died suddenly! In such a case a man like myself may at least have the satisfaction of feeling that though I do not give my sister any inheritance in money, I do leave her the spinning wheel.

"I did not want to say any word of exhortation; I wanted, on the contrary, to pour cold water, but these words came out spontaneously. If you are not prepared to put these two items into practice, please throw out this resolution. If you are prepared, if you have the strength, accept it, acclaim it only then. If you do not acclaim it, our work stops just here. We will not then be able to proudly say to India, "In Gujarat we have this (large) number of national schools and this (large) number of children studying in them."



Without premeditating as to whether these piercing shafts of his will lacerate the hearts of the hearers or not, he released them quietly, in the natural course of his speech, and thus taught a lesson to those who grow hot themselves in order to make a fiery speech.

We will not enter here into the controversy regarding the distinction between *hova joie* (should be) and *raheva joie* (should remain). In order to let not a particle of doubt remain about the trend of the voters, Gandhiji immediately accepted the suggestion of one or two members and took votes for a second time even though the resolution was passed already. And then he congratulated those who accepted the resolution and advised them to make of it a glorious success.

Resolution No. 6 is a natural corollary of No. 5 and No. 7 and is framed with the object of encouraging a climate of cleanliness and purity. It aims at bringing the teachers in closer contact with the parents of the school children and at making them not merely school masters but teachers of the whole society round about.

The eighth and the ninth resolution about learning spinning, carding etc. and about the free gift of yarn may be termed as those dealing with the practical application of the principles accepted already. One can understand some flaw creeping into the implementation of some resolutions which may not be fully understood, one may also see the point that, owing to the impossibility of reforming the prevalent conditions, the other resolutions may not be effectively put into practice here and there, but no teacher can excuse himself on any ground whatsoever from taking action upon the eighth and the ninth resolutions. Through actual practice of those resolutions the teachers will be able to provide an object lesson to the whole society and transform the very face of Gujarat into a healthy smiling one. If these resolutions are put on the shelf, it may as well be said afterwards that the whole Conference was a failure.

Sri Chandulal Dave then proposed a resolution requiring the Vidyapith to take some concrete steps to advance female education. In his speech thereon he expressed dissatisfaction at the fact that Gandhiji refused to discuss that subject though he himself had characterised it as one of serious import. In a language tense with emotion, a sister seconded this resolution of Sri Chandulal whom she called "Women's Champion." She sat down with this incisive remark: 'If Gandhiji, who has the large heartedness to take under his wings even the prostitutes, forgets us, women, leaves



us in the lurch, I shudder at the consequences." As these speakers had not understood Gandhiji's heart, he poured it out before the Conference:

"Sri Chandulal has not caught my meaning. This question is really serious, is of the gravest moment. It is so grave and stupendous that it is beyond the scope of discussion by this Conference. Padmabehn's speech left me in utter surprise. To me the prostitute is no less than my sister. Wherever I have been, I have made it a point to have her *darshan* and am going to do so still. I am going to put before her the spinning-wheel as her saving bark. My incarceration has not modified my views in the slightest degree. My views on women's education are thronging upon my mind with such velocity and vehemence that I cannot put them here, before you. It is my claim that I have pondered over this question more deeply and more often than any other feminist. I further claim that as a result of this agitation (of non-co-operation) no class has taken greater strides in awakening than of women.

"That the spinning-wheel would fail to move the woman's heart is an impossibility. The wheel is her real education, the education of the very core of her being. And what is the meaning of passing 'resolutions' about the thing which the woman is already practising with heart and soul? When all is said, these resolutions are but paper-resolves still. We do not see, do not care to see, what passes before our eyes. Shall we be

able to give, even after years and years, any greater education than what is being given now when women, looked down upon till now as uncultured and illiterate, give up their *purdah* and boldly come forth for national service? Real female education is proceeding apace as a part and parcel of this movement. Nay, this movement itself would have been impossible if 'female education' were not closely keeping step with it.

"The subject of female education is beyond the reach of yourselves, mine and of this whole Conference. To think of it is to empty an ocean, to attempt to catch a mirage in our hands. Woman is nothing less than '*ardhangana*' (man's half body). Who can give *that* education? What avails it if a few women became graduates of Karve's University (S. N. D. T. University for women specially)? That does not mean 'female education'; 'female education' really lies in the conviction, universally held, that woman is the very half of man (*ardhangana*).

"To rouse public conscience to that extent we must have sufficient leisure to ponder over the subject and discuss it with numerous people. If it is thought that as



Chancellor of the Vidyapith I must do at least something in the matter, I may say that the burden which Sri Chandulal and others impose on me is too heavy. We have neither the means nor the number of women required for the work. The Chancellor cherishes many an aspiration, but what could he do, poor man? Distribution of a few rupees and the opening of a few girls' schools will not bring about women's education. That is why I am keeping mum over the matter. And our schools and colleges are ever ready to welcome girls. You may conceive a scheme—any scheme—and bring it ready-made and the Vidyapith is prepared to consider it, but it will not itself draft a scheme. It is 'the expert's business' to bear that burden, submit his views, carry on a vigorous campaign in its favour and get into the Senate as a member. The Vidyapith does not want to shirk this work, but if somebody proposes a monster scheme of education as a part of the Swaraj movement, the Vidyapith will definitely refuse to consider it. The Vidyapith does not want to ignore the subject, put it into the limbo of oblivion, but I am talking simply of the Vidyapith's limitations. I am myself incapable of thinking over this resolution in a quarter of an hour. Both as leader and ordinary soldier, I humbly appeal to you to remove from your minds any suspicion that I have no heart for women's education and to withdraw this resolution in order to save ourselves from ridicule".

Sri Chandulal then withdrew his resolution. It was but in the fitness of things that at the conclusion of the Conference Gandhiji congratulated him and the many others who had proposed various resolutions but withdrawn them. Let us end this article with Gandhiji's concluding remarks at the Conference:

"The credit for the work done today goes entirely to you. You have loaded me today with a heavy debt of gratitude and I request you to bear hard on me with still heavier debt by taking effective action upon the resolutions passed. My only appeal to you is not to let these resolutions remain here, on paper—'to be filed' finally—but to carry them with you as things dear to your heart. Implement them fully, enjoy the sweet fruit they bear and let the whole of Gujarat too eat them. May God give you the strength to do so!"

1. Here is the text of that resolution:

"Whereas self-purification is the permanent form of non-co-operation, and whereas the Congress endeavour is to propagate the permanent principles of non-cooperation in the villages, and whereas in the opinion of this Conference the work of self-purification should begin with children, this



Conference holds that the Vidyapith should concentrate more on primary education than on secondary or higher education and Vidyapitb should, therefore, so change its policy as to spread Primary education in the villages."

2. One of the structures of the spinning and weaving mills in Ahmedabad belonging to Seth Mansukhbhai had collapsed and several men were crushed to death just previously.



Gandhiji in the National College

(*Navajivan*, 10-8-1924)

Ever since Gandhiji's release Principal Kripalani and his students were thinking it hard how best to welcome Gandhiji when he visited the college. When a fund was opened in Gujarat as a token of its welcome to Gandhiji, the students began to collect their mite from amongst themselves and it was their initiative that induced the professors to give their share. In a very few days as many as Rs. 1100 were collected. The students had begun to spin almost regularly since then. Gandhiji was invited to visit the Gujarat National College on the morning of Friday, 8-8-1924, to receive this purse of Rs. 1100—to which Rs. 129 were added later on—*dhoties* and sheets woven out of yarn spun by the students and the quantity of yarn spun for this occasion specially and made up of contributions from the minimum quota of 5 *tolas*, (2 ozs.) per student.

Principal Kripalani welcomed Gandhiji in the language of this poem—अतिथि (the Guest)—of Rabindranath Tagore.¹

"The night darkened. Our day's work had been done. We thought that the last guest had arrived for the night, and the doors in the village were all shut. Only some said, 'The king was to come'. We laughed and said, 'No, it cannot be!'

It seemed there were knocks at the door and we said, "It was nothing but the wind." We put the lamps and lay down to sleep. Only some said, "It is the messenger!" We laughed and said, "No, it must be the wind!"

There came a sound in the dead of the night. We sleepily thought it was the distant thunder. The earth shook, the walls rocked and it troubled us in our sleep. Only some said, "It was the sound of wheels." We said in a drowsy murmur, "No, it must be the rumbling of clouds!"

The night was still dark when the drum sounded. The voice came, "Wake up! delay not!" We pressed our hands on our hearts and shuddered with fear. Some said, "Lo, there is the king's flag!" We stood up on our feet and cried, "There is no time for delay!"

The king has come—but where are lights, where are wreaths? Where is the throne to seat him? Oh, shame, Oh, utter shame! Where is the hall, the decorations?



Some one has said, 'Vain is the cry! Greet him with empty hands, lead him into thy rooms all bare!'

Open the doors, let the conch shells be sounded! In the depth of the night has come the king of our dark, dreary house. The thunder roars in the sky. The darkness shudders with lightning. Bring out thy tattered piece of mat and spread it in the courtyard. With the storm has come of a sudden our king of the fearful night."

Principal Kripalani compared Gandhiji's arrival with the advent of 'the king of the fearful night' and with tragic self-castigation said, "We did not have the time to spin. Nor did we have the time to discard mill-made clothes! You have come all of a sudden and struck us dumb with surprise!"

1. Sri Mahadevbhai has translated the poem into a charming Gujarati song for the readers of *Navajivan*. The English translation appearing in *Gitanjali* made by the Poet himself is given here.



Sabarmati,
10-8-1924

*A. W. Baker, Esq.,
P. O. Port Shipstone
Natal.

Dear Mr. Baker,

I have received two letters from you. The first I acknowledged. I have the books too. Do write always please. But I feel that I must go my way. We are all searchers. It is well with us so long as we do not interpose the I between God and ourselves.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. Gandhi



Sabarmati,
10-8-1924

*Paul F. Cressey, Esq.,
Granville, Ohio,
U.S.A.

Dear friend,

We are taught from childhood discipline in self-denial. Though, therefore, in the East we ever fail to live up to it, we know that life is *not* for indulgence but essentially for self-denial. Would that the students of America could imbibe that one lesson.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. Gandhi



Sabarmati,
10-8-1924

*Lala Balakiran,
Bhaskar Press,
5, Kutchery Road,
Debra Dun.

Dear Friend,

I would not like to send any message to the Amir. I would like my work to speak for itself. Nor would I care to send any present. My yam has not been separately converted into cloth.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. Gandhi

P. S. I have just received your second letter. I rather like these resignations. We are responding to Truth. Satyagraha is not excitement. It follows calm determination. I shall wait indefinitely.

M. K. G.



*D. R. Kane, Esq.,
M. L. C.
Yeotmal.

Sabarmati
10-8-1924

Dear friend,

I thank you for your letter.

- (1) I am against compulsory education. Compulsion may be unjust. It is certainly unnecessary.
- (2) If we get Swaraj today, I should resist any attempt to make primary or any education compulsory. We have not yet tried the voluntary system.
- (3) The Yeotmal Municipality will be within the terms of the Congress resolution if it availed itself of the compulsory education measure. But if I had any say in the matter, I would plead with the councillors to try all voluntary effort before trying compulsion. I know the evil effects of the latter wherever it has been tried.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

*Janab Ali Hasan, Bar-at-Law,
Patna.

Sabarmati

Dear friend,

I did have your letter. A Hindu is one who believes in the Vedas, Upanishads, Puranas, etc. and *Varnashrama-dharma*. I am unable to agree with you that we may reject the claim of those who say they belong to particular religions. I claim to be the best judge of what I believe.

Don't you?

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi



The Editor,
Tej.

Sabarmati
13-8-1924

Dear Gupta,¹

I bow down a thousand thousand times to that Krishna, who is the inspirer of the Gita, the Lord of 16000 senses (capillaries?), the Perfect, never failing Brahmachari; Immutable and Lord of our heart, and not to any other (Krishna).

Yours sincerely,

M. K. Gandhi

1. Translated from the original in Hindi.



*Sri. C. R. Das,

Sabarmati

Calcutta.

15-8-1924

Dear friend,

A friend of Mr. Khopkar has handed the enclosed to me. He says Mr. Khopkar thinks you could not have signed the paper. But if you have, Mr. Khopkar is prepared, he says, to prove his innocence to your satisfaction. Will you please tell me what I should say to Mr. Khopkar's friend?

I hope you and Mrs. Das are keeping well.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. Gandhi



Sabarmati

15-8-1924

*Dear Dr. Kitchlew,

An unknown correspondent has sent me a cutting from *Arjun*. I had it translated into Urdu. Will you please go through it and let me know what truth, if any, there is in it?

Yours sincerely,

M. K. Gandhi



Sabarmati

15-8-1924

*My dear Miss Schlesin,

Though late in the day, your letter was most welcome. If you wanted to make it a model of neatness, you have failed badly. The same slovenliness, the same smudging. I can almost see your inky fingers in your letter. Here is the certificate you want. You will be entitled to accuse me of untruthfulness in that I have not certified to your slovenliness. Let me hope the new 'master' will fare better. I must refuse to plead 'guilty' to all the charges you have noted against me. Why should I care about giving you a 'business certificate'? But how are the mighty fallen?

Regarding the £ 24 I thought the draft of £ 150 included the amount. However, I am writing to Parsee Rustomjee to write off the whole of the balance whatever it might be of the £ 150.

My health is fair. Now that you have commenced to write, will you continue?

Yours sincerely,

M. K. Gandhi



Sabarmati

15-8-1924

*Dear Motilalji,

I thank you for your letter.

I am sharing with you my whole soul.

The more I think of it the more my soul rises against a battle for power at Belgaum. But I do not want to be mixed up with the Council's programme. This can only happen by Swarajists manning the Congress or their not acting upon the Congress. I am quite willing to follow whichever course commands itself to you and friends. With me in the Congress, the Councils etc., should remain out of it. I would then gladly occupy the place I did from 1915 to 1918. My purpose is not to weaken the power of the Swarajists, certainly not to embarrass them. Show me the way and I shall try my best to suit you. If there is anything not quite clear in this, please ask.

I am off to Delhi tomorrow in reply to Mohammad Ali's wire.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. Gandhi



Sabarmati

15-8-1924

*Raja of Kanaka,
Orissa.

Dear Raja Saheb,

I must apologise for not having acknowledged your two letters earlier. I wanted to study the papers on my file before replying. I am so pressed for work that I have not yet been able to study them. I hope to do so soon and write to you further.

Thanking you for promise of prompt attention.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. Gandhi



On The way to Delhi

Delhi, 18-8-1924

Navajivan d. 24-8-1924

This is the first time after his release when Gandhiji has stirred out to have a *darshan* of India. One may say Juhu was a 'retreat'—in a sense and Ahmedabad his home. When, therefore, he left Ahmedabad for Delhi, that was the start of his tour for the *darshan* of India.

He had long ago written to Mohammad Ali to call him to Delhi by wire, whenever his presence was needed there. Accordingly, there was a telegram from Mohammad Ali saying in effect, 'Parleys (are) going on. Chances (of a) compromise (are) very bright. Very advisable to come immediately'. Gandhiji's mind was already made up in the matter and he immediately decided to start the very next day—after meeting the 'Big Brother' (M. Shaukat Ali) who was due to arrive that same night.

The journey may well be termed a quiet, undisturbed one. The news that Gandhiji had come out on a *daura* (journey) had not yet reached many quarters and the stations were definitely free from big crowds. At some stations small dusters of men did collect near his compartment, but they were mostly railway servants or passengers. To see Khadi on their person was of course out of the question. I do not remember any station except Ajmer where friends dressed in Khadi had come to see Gandhiji. In our carriage the passengers were all Indians, but Khadi was conspicuous only by its absence.

Gandhiji spent the whole day in writing, but even on that day as a friend from the United Provinces was given an appointment for a talk and as he was travelling with us for that express purpose, Gandhiji conversed with him when he was free from his writing work. It is only rarely now-a-days that Gandhiji enters into a discussion, even into a long talk, but being in the train this friend got a good long time for his interview. He began it by asking what he should do for the country. He is a scholar of repute, writes excellent articles in Urdu, and yet Gandhiji told him, "A *yagna* (sacrifice) of spinning for the country is going on. You may help me as much as you can in that *yagna*. If you see to it that all

those who come in your contact give their individual oblation at the alter-flame of that sacrifice, you have done my work completely."



While showing his difficulties, the friend was disclosing the working of his mind also. "You are a wonderful man. A time was when we regarded politics as downright politics and nothing else; never objected to violence and Machiavellian tactics. It was you who opened our eyes and we accepted non-violence. You then showed us the religious—the spiritual—character of the movement and after a long deliberation in the jail we came to the definite conclusion that that alone was the right attitude. And now you say that the object behind the spinning resolution

is definitely civil resistance in future. So now you ask us again to come down from the spiritual to the political level. It is all a matter of ordinary course for you—woven into your nature. But what about the fact that to keep pace with you the hand of our brain-clock has to take a thousand rounds at a slight diversion of the road by you?"

The talk drifted from one subject to another and back again to the first, but Gandhiji allowed these digressions in order to please the friend.

Q: You want to remove all bitterness, all your efforts tend towards that consummation, all your articles play upon that same tune—but how can this acerbity be removed?

Gandhiji: By refusing to pay a man in his own coin, to answer back the opponents' attacks.

Q: But we have necessarily to part our ways and by the very act bitterness is bound to result.

Gandhiji: It is for me to show that it does not.

Q: Do you regard non-co-operation as a philosophy of life or as a strategic policy?

Gandhiji: Both.

Q: If you regard it as an expedient method, why can we not change the tactic? It does not mean giving up one's principle. What does it matter if even all the boycotts are withdrawn?

Gandhiji: If we give up the boycotts, civil resistance becomes an impossibility. Without the boycotts, we cannot create the spirited attitude needed for civil resistance. The moment we give up the boycotts, people's faith in civil disobedience evaporates. I have already stated outright that the workers have lost their faith even in non-violence and once this faith in non-violence is lost, any talk of civil resistance is moonshine, has no meaning. That is why I want to gather around



me only those who believe in the boycotts and in spinning, i.e., those who have a religious faith in them. Only then can a climate of civil disobedience be created.

Q: That is all right. But you demand too much from the man of clay. Why not take from him only as much as he can give?

Gandhiji: Yes; but when are my demands too high? And you will not say that I must give up my principles on that account?

Q: How then can this ill-feeling be removed?

Gandhiji: I am only changing the fields of work. Things to-day are different from yesterday. Let us march now in the company of actual workers only. The estrangement will disappear automatically thereby. But I have gone to the length of declaring my readiness to give up the boycotts even.

Q: When?

Gandhiji: When I submitted a common programme. Its only condition is that it should be acceptable to every party, to even the Indian Princes.

Q: That means Lord Reading (the then Viceroy) also should accept Khadi?

Gandhiji: Yes. Can even he manage to do without accepting it some day?

Q: But you simply wrote an article and sat still. Did nothing further. Suppose you and Motilalji confer together and issue a joint appeal?

Gandhiji: Yes, but I doubt if such a joint appeal is feasible. I feel that Swarajists do not accept the spinning wheel as a *dharma*.

Q.: They realize quite well its economic value.

Gandhiji: If they considered it as a sovereign remedy even from only the economic angle, that would be something. But it is not so. What I want in the country is heart conviction. If that is absent, the idea of a 'common programme' is no use.

Q: If they have not that heart conviction, the reason is what I have already stated—bitterness. If that disappears they also will be fully convinced at heart that in the spinning wheel and Khadi lies the only way to our salvation.

Gandhiji: Not at all. Is there any heart-burning between me and the Moderate friends? Are they, in any way, alienated from the No-changers? Not the least; and yet they will not join in this programme. The fact is, Sri Shastriji does not think that



the spinning-wheel has any value at all as a means of our economic uplift. Men like Maulana Hasrat Mohani regard it as an entirely worthless activity and such a man as Sri Chintamani thinks it even harmful to the country! In the same way Swarajists do not believe that the spinning-wheel is a necessary means for our economic rise. There is a different way. It has its place. I respect them. They would, naturally, never give up, merely to end ill feelings, what to them is an activity beneficial to the country. You are doing them injustice. I see their honesty in thought, you don't. I want that work done in the spirit in which Dr. Ray (Dr. P. C. Ray, an eminent scientist, was a whole-hearted believer in Khadi) is doing it. Will Swarajists or Moderates take up the work with his faith?

Q: O, you want work like that of Dr. Ray! But if the whole country imbibes the mentality of Dr. Ray, civil disobedience becomes an impossibility. (Dr. Ray was also a staunch 'Co-operator').

Gandhiji: I am certain that civil disobedience will be no good for winning Swaraj, so long as it does not become the ripe fruit of activities of this sort.

Q: But you are very hasty and impatient.

Gandhiji: I give everyone the time he requires and take from him only as much as he gives. I will carry on with as many soldiers as I get, however small their number. 672 persons gave me self-spun yarn in Gujarat. I can get a lot of work done through them.

Q: What are those 672 going to achieve?

Gandhiji: They can be of immense help to me. The fact that those sisters and brothers did spin and send the yarn to me, makes at least me trust them as persons having the stuff to do what they say.

Q: How do you say they are men of their word? Most of them do it sheepishly—just because Gandhi asks them. And I am not talking of those 672; how can you assume that all such persons are honest at heart? There is every chance of rogues and swindlers getting into the crowd of spinners. What work are you going to take from them?

Gandhiji: Let them be rogues—though I don't believe it. But even if they are, they will shed off their roguery only that way (by continuing to spin).



Q: Good heavens. Mahatmaji! I see my brothers who will not give up their rascality, though they, never fail to do their *namaz*; full five times a day. Will one hour's spinning achieve the miracle?

Gandhiji: I wish you did not cite the instance of *namaz*. But since you have, here is my answer. *Namaz* may have lost its pristine power, because the worshippers may be doing it mechanically. But why compare spinning with the present day affected observance of *namaz*? Just think of its marvelous power when it was begun—1300 years ago. The same thing holds good for spinning. I can imagine that when spinning was a universal practice, it might not have any religious significance, but at the present day those who had never touched or seen a spinning wheel are seen taking a solemn resolve to spin. Are they not taking a training in patience, forbearance, peacefulness? It is my belief that today whoever resolves to spin for the cause of the country does so out of a purely religious faith.

Q: But among your 672, there may be many women and many others who have nothing to do with the Congress. What use will these women be for civil disobedience?

Gandhiji: Yes, yes. They are certain to be of great use. It is through women that I hope to take my work, when men turn out to be useless.

Q: So then you hope to reform even the *badmashes* by making them spin?

Gandhiji: Definitely. But the *badmashes* will not spin. Otherwise, I would even go a step further and say, 'Let him be a *badmash*, a drunkard, a profligate, but if he spins whole-heartedly for one month, he is certain to give up his villainy etc.' Though I am sure that there is none such among these 672.

Q: Well then, I will procure for you several spinners from *Bhindi Bazaar* (a slum locality in Bombay). Will their lives be reformed and be of use for civil disobedience?

Gandhiji: All right. This is my stipulation with you. You must make them spin and I must reform them.

Q: O. K. I say, I can move among the 'Golden Gangs' for three months and get them to spin.

Gandhiji: Do by all means. And I will make them leave their 'Golden Gang.'



Q: Very well, give me the money that I may start the work.

Gandhiji: Why money ? Approach the men whom you want to make spinners, ask them to beg cotton, procure a spinning-wheel for their use, learn up carding, card that cotton, learn up spinning and then spin it. You get the *mawalis* (the riff-raff) of Bombay do that much and then demand from me, "Now bring your Swaraj'.

Q: That's nice! You hedge us in all a round. How can you get these poor people do all that? They may spin merely.

Gandhiji: Not merely spin and be done with it. They must be men who spin with zest—men avidly interested in doing it, men who will willingly undergo all the trouble it involves in order to be saturated with love for it.

Q: And are your 672 of that type? Do they all card their cotton and spin it? Bosh.

Gandhiji: I do think at least many of them must be carding their cotton. Be the fact as it may, certainly it is not I who supply them with cotton.

Q: All right. But it passes my comprehension how their spinning will cleanse them.

Gandhiji: Dear friend, I speak from experience when I say that those who do this work regularly will go on purifying themselves, if they are not clean. And that is enough for me, I may say. If I get only 60 such sincere workers—not even 600—I will raise from them 60,000 enthusiasts.

Q: What time will it take?

Gandhiji: God knows. Before all of us are dead and gone. For the present, I can give you only that time-limit. You may laugh at it, but, really I don't care if the world cries out in disgust : 'O, this is a hundred years' programme that Gandhi has given'.

Q. These Augean stables must be cleansed. And if that is done, where is the harm in giving the Congress over to the Swarajists?

Gandhiji: None at all. Only, I do not want to embarrass the Swarajists. If I entrust the Congress to them right today, they may feel that I am investing myself with the importance of indispensability. They feel a sense of security by my stay in the Congress. My sudden exit may appear to them as a kind of pressure and would certainly worry them. But if I leave the Congress gladly when they wish me to and help them from outside, that would be fine. Maulana Shaukat Ali asked me, "Would it my exit not give a shock to the country?" I said, "Let it. If the country



has any illusions about me, let them be cleared." The Swarajists are honest in their views. They think the Councils alone will deliver the goods and I feel you can never have Swaraj through them and, if you have, it will not be Swaraj worth the name. All the same, it is but meet that they should be allowed to make the attempt. If I can bring real Swaraj through my own programme, they are certain to admit in future, "Our programme was not the right one."

But if I put them under difficulties, they would lose some strength and I definitely wish that even in the work they are doing, they must make the best show by putting forth all their strength in it. If No-changers ask me to do a single thing that would perturb the Swarajists, I would never do it. I am a Satyagrahi in every fibre of my frame. Even if I get out of the Congress. I will help them; if I remain in it, then also I will help them. What I want to do is to show them the miracle that Satyagraha performs. I am acting in this matter in exactly the same way as I behaved with members of my family. A time is certain to come when they will all realize, 'This man is clean, is free from malice and craft.' Today I want to create a situation under which they may feel, 'Gandhi has surrendered the maximum he can. Nothing further could be expected from him.'

I find that I have given an account of this talk at great length; and yet I have dropped many things and I think nothing from what I have given could have been cut out. That talk continued for a long time. Gandhiji felt tired and went to bed that night a little later than usual. All the same he got up the next morning and plunged himself in his writing work at the right time.

The train reached Delhi at 10 a. m. The crowd on the platform, consisting equally of Mohammedans and Hindus, was as stupendous as is used to be in 1921. Who could say from this commingling that it was these same Hindus and Mohammedans who had mutually broken their heads a few days back? The whole platform was so densely packed that egress had become an ordeal. Hundreds of men were standing on the roofs of the carriages of the train which stood on the platform opposite.

They stood even on the window-sills of the compartments, and even on the other side of our train where there was no platform, the congestion of men was by no means less dense. The same love and the same madness in love were in evidence now as in 1920-21.

Though hardly 24 hours have passed since we arrived, it is not difficult to scent the atmosphere. Why, in the very *tonga* which carried us to Maulana Mohammad Ali's



house, we had an inkling of the public mood. The Hindu *tonga* driver was immensely proud that he could seat Hindus in his tonga and was recounting the events he had seen and heard of with a good deal of exaggeration.

"Had not the Hindus fought, the very name 'Hindu' would have been wiped off from Delhi"—these were the comments of another Hindu friend who also was a *tonga*-driver.

And yet, after coming here to Maulana Mohammad Ali's house, we found that there was a very large number of Hindu women among the *darshan*-seekers. They did not feel any constraint in getting into Maulana Saheb's house and having the *darshan*. Amongst the crowds there must be quite a large number who must have thrown stones at one another and who must be feeling ashamed at heart at the sight of their erstwhile opponents. That shows that the quarrels between Hindus and Mussulmans are superficial though they appear dreadful, while that with the Government is deep-seated.

Gandhiji is meeting the Hindus and Mussulmans of Delhi. According to appointments fixed previously by the Maulana Saheb, some persons belonging to both the parties (communities) have already seen Gandhiji. Today is Monday and nobody will visit him. Tomorrow again both the parties will meet him. It would be premature to state their attitudes. Gandhiji himself will perhaps give out his own impressions in the matter.

The Maulana had a boil on his leg. It burst out, but hardly was he free from that trouble, when two new boils sprang up, which are still painful. When he came to the station, he was limping all the while, but immediately on reaching home he sat down to spin. The spindle was a little out of order and the thread drawn out snapped, frequently; the Maulana, however, would not give up spinning. I thought he would give up the wheel in an hour or so, but he plied the wheel all through his leisure time. After Bhai Devdas repaired the spindle, his zeal increased all the more. He was working away at the wheel all through the time Gandhiji was talking with Mussulman brothers. He must have thus spun as many as 500 yards before night time.

The Begum Saheb knew spinning already and it was from her that the Maulana learnt it. Even on a bad spindle, his yarn does promise to be even. There is no doubt that he will be able to spin very good, even and well-twisted yarn on an excellent wheel.



As for Bi Amma Saheb, she was on her deathbed. The Nawab Saheb of Rampur did not allow her sons to see her there. She, therefore, insisted, "Happen what it may, take me out of Rampur." Braving a great risk, Dr. Ansari brought her to Delhi and now she refuses to leave the world before the advent of Swaraj. Maulana Shaukat Ali used to say, "Mother has the faith that she saw the 1857 rebellion in her early life and she is going to see Swaraj."

That, of course, God alone knows. But the fact stands that even at present when Bi Amma is still not conscious enough to speak—she utters a word or two and relapses into unconsciousness—the words that come out of her lips are: "Alas! What will Khuda do to these people? Brother is cutting his brother's throat! How unfortunate we are! We do not see even now that in our internecine quarrels it is the outsider who has a heyday."



Sabarmati

24. 8. 1924

My dear Rajagopalachari,

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

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

Now for Malabar. I have applications from many sources. What would you have me to do? I was thinking of sending some one to make a Special Report in collaboration with you. But as nothing has as yet been done I would like your suggestions. Plenty of clothing has been collected. Please guide me about its disposal too.

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

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



My programme:

29th	to	3 Sept.	Bombay
4th			Poona
5th			Bombay.

Then uncertain. Probably leave Bombay for Delhi on 5th.

30. 8. 1924

*Dear Motilalji,

.....

Mrs. Naidu handed me yesterday your letter to me. The original must have reached Sabarmati by now. I made a full surrender, i.e., as far as I am capable of making, in my two letters to you. I knew of the above incident long after I wrote to you. If there was anything more to surrender, I should have sent you on hearing about the incident a wire surrendering the rest.

You will have me, therefore, almost on your terms. The 'almost' is necessary because I hold some few things dearer than life and than all the ties of the world. But if you will let me have something willingly and whole-heartedly, knowing that it is right to give, then I want this.

Our resolution should:

- (1) reiterate the Congress belief in the principle and policy of full non-cooperation including the boycott of legislative bodies
- (2) but suspend them all save that of foreign cloth up to the end of 1925
- (3) should invite everybody to join the Congress
- (4) should exclude the boycott of Empire goods
- (5) and should confine Congress activity solely to the spread of hand-spinning and hand-spun Khaddar, Hindu Muslim Unity and for Hindus the removal of untouchability.

This means that Congressmen, as such, should have nothing to do either with Councils or boycotts, but they may form their own organisations independently of the Congress to go on with Councils and other activities not inconsistent with the Congress



activity. Therefore, there can be no organisation to prosecute the Council or other boycotts suspended under the resolution. Support of the existing national schools will continue and when possible new ones may be opened but they may not have any connection with the Government.

The 4 anna franchise should be abolished and instead each person becoming a member of a Congress organisation should be a Khaddar-wearer; should contribute per month as a condition of membership at least 2000 yards of his own spinning, it being open to every member to contribute the full quota for the whole year at a time.

I see no other way of making the Congress organisation a real and living thing; nor can I see any hope for the poor of India without the spinning-wheel and we shall never fire their imagination unless we spin ourselves.

There are other alterations I should suggest in the Constitution but they need not be mentioned now. They are meant purely for effective and expeditious working. We should have a declaration that the Working Committees should be regarded as executive bodies and the A.I.C.C. a deliberative body and that executive bodies should contain only those who are committed to the full programme of the Congress. But under my proposal you would be as eligible for election to the Working Committee as I. What I mean is that if the four boycotts are suspended, Council-entry or practice in a law court should by itself be no bar. As a matter of fact, it may be inadvisable for a busy lawyer or a busy councillor to come into the Working Committee whose members would be expected to give their whole time and attention to the three things of the Congress programme.

Under my plan again there should be no exception in favour of Bengal. As a matter of fact, Swarajists may organise themselves fully in every province without let or hindrance from the Congress. But the Congress organisation should have only one programme everywhere. Thus Das may convert the Congress organisation and form himself into a Swaraj organisation pledged only to the three things. The idea is this: the Congress will neither help nor hinder other organisations, but the latter should all, if their members are Congressmen, help the Congress programme. Conversely, Congressmen who believe in many other things, not prohibited by the Congress, may join other organisations for their other activities.

* * * *



On the business part, so far as I can see, only the qualifications of membership may prove an obstacle but I hope you will see that if *we all* believe in Khaddar even as an economic necessity, the acceptance of my proposition is a necessity.

You will observe that I have written the letter as the thoughts have come to me. I do not mind for my sake, as I wish to live on your sufferance.

Yours sincerely

M. K. Gandhi

Gandhiji In Bombay

d. 31-8-1924

(*Navajivan*, d. 7-9-1924)

This may well be said to be Gandhiji's first visit of Bombay after his release. Friends did come to Juhu to see him, but this was the first occasion when people could see Gandhiji to their hearts' content, observe him and make inquiries about and from him. Sri Revashankarbhai's house at Gamdevi in Bombay is as full of visitors as before and the yarn that streams into it breaks all previous records. Everyone understands that it is not possible to gratify Gandhiji these days with flower-garlands or even with money. The only thing that can please him is yarn. Sri Vithalbhai also (afterwards the first Indian President of the Legislative Assembly, Delhi), when he gave an address of welcome to him on behalf of the city-fathers of Bombay, gave him yarn and so did the Bombay Provincial Congress Committee. And, as for women, there may be hardly any who does not give him a gift of yarn. One Parsi sister who chose to be anonymous gave him through her husband, nearly 2 lbs. of excellent yarn, fine, even and well-twisted. There may be quite a number of such women—nobody knows how many—who, in the midst of the rush and bustle of Bombay, somehow manage to steal some time from their busy hours and do silent national work.

This being his first visit to Bombay, Gandhiji did not stint in giving an appointment to any and every person or institution that wanted it. He even tried to visit as many places as he could. For different purposes there were different functions. All of these he attended and addressing audiences of varying characters, he gave his



message in forms suitable to the audience he addressed. Just as the Address of the Corporators of the *primus urbis* of India was short, simple and loving, so was his answer in perfect accord with the Address. To that audience composed of Hindus, Mussulmans, Parsis, Christians, Jews, co-operators and non-co-operators, Government officials and private individuals, and men as well as women, he stated that it was the duty of every human being to serve all living creatures and asked from them nothing more than what they could give.

"It is my firm faith that the day is coming, when on the one hand we shall cease to regard the field of politics as distinct from that of religion and on the other expand the sphere of religion from its present narrow preserve. We, Hindus, Mussulmans, and other classes, regard the God of our religion as different from that of others and fight with them. But we shall soon learn the *dharma* that teaches unity in diversity and shall begin to serve one and all without distinction. That is why I have been inviting India to take up three political-cum-religious activities. They are: propagation of Khadi, heart-unity between Hindus, Mussulmans, Parsis, Christians, Jews and all others, and for Hindus, penance for the deadly sin of untouchability. The best way, therefore, to thank you for your Address is to invite you to join me in these activities, since it is in them that there is a confluence of politics and *seva-dharma* (religion of service) or social service—call it what you will—and since neither you nor anyone else in the world can ever think of it as unacceptable.

At the meeting of the Bombay Provincial Congress Committee Mrs. Sarojini Naidu asked the members to put their doubts, if any, before Gandhiji. Three or four friends thereupon criticised the spinning resolution of Ahmedabad and wanted to elicit Gandhiji's views on the matter. To all of them Gandhiji gave one single answer.

"The right position is that all those who have any doubts about the capacity of the spinning-wheel to win Swaraj must go on arguing against the wheel and voicing their opposition to their hearts' content, so long as the resolution in its favour is not passed. But if they are defeated by a majority they must respect the majority vote and abide by the resolution in practice; and those who do not want to spin as a matter of principle must resign from the membership of their respective Congress Committees. Therein lies justice, decorum and propriety.

"I will not reply to all other doubts right today. I am consulting the leaders and you will get the answer in a short time. The fact is, my watch runs fast and yours goes slow, but I want to carry you with me in my quick march and I am an efficient Swarajist



or No-changer, whatever you like to call me. I will, therefore, find some way out. Till then it is my advice

that everyone should immerse himself in the spinning wheel activity."

There were two ladies' meetings, one of which was under the auspices of the Women's Association. In that meeting Gandhiji eulogised the services of the immortal G. O. M. (Grand Old Man) of India—Dadabhai Naoroji—and showed wherein lay the secret of his greatness. The women had already collected more than four thousand rupees and yet Gandhiji did not fail to ask for the donation of yarn from them also. The second meeting was for the distribution of prizes to students of a girls' school. There was a very striking attendance of the girls' mothers and other women. The girls performed two dramatic pieces very spiritedly, one, an anecdote of the life of King Prithviraj and the other of the heroic Queen of Jhansi. If men may act women's parts why not women of men? Both seem to be wanting in good taste. But what wonder if women ape men during the transition period when they are only just beginning to taste the joys of free education?

But I digressed into a talk about the performances. To the parents of the girls and other ladies and gentlemen assembled there Gandhiji made an earnest appeal: "If you have not sufficient strength, you may lay the axe of retrenchment on all other schools, but, please spare these girls' schools which deserve your pity". To the girls he said: "You took up swords and played the parts of heroes, but I wish you were not satisfied with only that much. In such functions you must exhibit many performances on the spinning-wheel. Only then will the functions become you".

At the Vile Parle meeting, a gentleman gave, as a gift, a ball of yarn intertwined in an exceedingly confused mass. Referring to it Gandhiji said, "The country presents today the spectacle of as tangled a web as is this one. I wish the friend takes it back, unravels the skein and sends me a neat hank made out of it. Why, one can even spin good yarn of the same length within the same time as it would take to clear this mess. If we believe in the principle: 'Swaraj will come striding on the thread of yarn', then, at the sight of this tangle, we must admit that we shall not be fit for Swaraj within a million years. *Our* yarn must be strong, well-twisted and even and such as can match mill-yarn equally, because we want the millions of India to busy themselves in spinning.

Students approach Gandhiji for an autograph. A big official's daughter also requested Gandhiji to give her his hand-writing in her autograph-album. To these students and this girl Gandhiji had a word of plain speaking:



"You see, friends, you value so much the autograph of a 'great man'. But you cannot get it without paying the price." "We will give you *your* price—whatever it be", they promised at once. How can they imagine what price Gandhiji would ask for? They might have thought, Gandhiji would ask them at the most to contribute some amount for the Malabar Flood Relief Fund or an ornament on the body and so they gave their assent to Gandhiji's condition. But Gandhiji demanded the price of the monthly payment of 2000 yards of self-spun yarn! That girl agreed even to that condition, but the collegian lads had not the strength to give a definite undertaking to spin that much yarn. They promised to try.

Gandhiji never fails to ask for donations for the Malabar Fund, wherever he goes. Under the auspices of the Parsi Rajkiya Sabha (Parsi Political Association), Sri Bharucha had arranged in a theatre a public meeting which restricted attendance to only the purchasers of tickets. On the sole ground as Gandhiji thought, that the meeting had only one purpose, viz., the proceeds were to go for the Malabar Fund, he agreed to attend that public meeting.

Only after attending this meeting at the Excelsior Theatre, in fact, only after listening to Sri Jayakar's speech, did Gandhiji realize that the meeting was held for the double object of collecting the Malabar Fund and of honouring him. It is impossible to give a full and faithful picture of that meeting. One can give an accurate account only if he can retain a detached outlook. But if the reporter himself is carried away into identifying himself with the scene enacted? Who would describe and what? An exceedingly remarkable instance of good resulting from evil was evidenced at that meeting. What was merely formal and complimentary turned suddenly into intensely serious and natural there. One could see then the dazzling flash of the forked lightning of *sat* (truth) piercing through dark clouds of *maya* (delusion) piled thick one upon another in countless profusion.

This was how it happened. Many speakers who succeeded Mr. Jayakar delivered speeches admiring Gandhiji. Sri Bharucha might have thought it would be a very befitting tribute to Gandhiji if speakers belonging to all political parties and all communities joined in paying him their tribute. Accordingly Sri Jamnadas Dwarkadas (a follower of Mrs. Besant) was asked to speak. He delivered a really excellent speech. He said that despite several differences of opinion he was second to none in his respect, love and reverence for Gandhiji. Hardly had he declared so, when someone from the audience opposite bawled out, "Call him Mahatmajji, not Gandhiji." Sri



Jamnadas, in perfect good faith, explained, "Gandhiji himself has told me that the adjective 'Mahatma' only pains him at heart and I do not want to inflict that pain on him." And then he proceeded. One or two voices again repeated the very same remonstrance. Sri Jamnadas again clarified his stand, "I adore him because, though a human being like all of us, he is the best among us—and not because he is a Mahatma ('Mahatma' has a special significance in Theosophy). At last Sri Bharucha sent one or two gentlemen to the gallery upstairs, quieted the disturbers and everything went on smoothly. Many other speeches were delivered even after this one of Sri Jamnadas. The essence of all the speeches was practically one and the same. In the present disturbed state of the country, there was only one man who could bring about peace and harmony and that was Gandhiji and none else. Sarojini Devi even declared, "I am asked by Gandhiji to say only two words. I wish he had asked me to say one. How can I have the face to say anything? Would it not look like repeating the folly of the *chela* (disciple) in that well-known story? That *chela* persistently urged, "Guruji, do please say a word or two. The people may learn a bit". At last the Guru was exasperated and said, "You fool, if people won't learn from my living example, will they by a few words from my lips?"

I have thus accidentally given away the pegs on which Gandhiji hung his speech. The meeting had already lasted a fairly long time and perhaps, if that tense atmosphere had not been worked up, he would have spoken for about five minutes and got the meeting dispersed. But he was compelled to speak at length.

At the outset he said:

"We have today spoken so volubly that it would be nothing wrong if I respected Sarojinidevi's advice and kept quiet. But I have left at home my instrument for mute appeal and there is the rub. Had I brought it, I would have given you an object lesson and simply said, 'Take up the wheel and join me in the spinning bout.' I had no idea that I would get the advice Sarojinidevi gave us or that I was fated to hear so many encomiums for myself today. I am fed up with praises. Take it from me that I do not like them, but at present I will say nothing more about it. I will only state that I thank those who have expressed their admiration for me and request them—as Sri Jayakar has suggested—to help me quietly in my work. If I can get silent help from all of you, the burden of a great work involving tremendous responsibility can be lifted.

"Before I proceed I beg of one or two friends to express their repentance for their action. If we go at all to any public meeting, we should have already mastered



the lesson of polite behaviour. We must also know the predilections of the speakers invited and respect them. If we cannot do so, we had better not attend the meeting at all. This rule of any respectable assembly has been broken by two or three brothers. What Sri Jamnadas has said is perfectly true. The word 'Mahatma' has been invoked in order to get drunk with it and commit many a wicked crime. That word 'Mahatma' stinks in my nostrils and when, in addition, somebody insists that everyone should call me a 'Mahatma', I get sick to the saturation point and life becomes unbearable. If I did not know that the more I prohibited the use of the word 'Mahatma', the more it was used, I would have clinched the issue by simply asking the public not to utter the word. In the Ashram (Satyagrahashram at Ahmedabad)—where life is lived my way—everyone, man, woman, or child, has strict injunctions not to use the appellation 'Mahatma' for me. They may not even refer to me as 'Mahatma' in any of their letters. They may call me Gandhi or Gandhiji. It is to me that the obstructionists in Jamnadas' speech have been rough and they have committed a breach of peace. Ours is a peaceful fight. Without courteous behaviour there can be no peacefulness. Any peacefulness that is bereft of politeness can only be rigid and lifeless, whereas we are worshippers of Life vibrant in every atom. A serenity that is informed with Life inevitably includes courteous and becoming behaviour. It is, therefore, my advice to all those who shouted Jamnadas down to tell him, "Please forgive me." Jamnadas used, in fact, expressions of great admiration for me, but if he had said, 'No man can be a greater nuisance than Gandhi'—and he who feels so has the right to say so—even then nobody has any right to stop him from speaking; even then we must respectfully hear him."

(At this period of Gandhiji's speech, a man from the first gallery opposite stood up, joined his palms and bent down his head as gestures of regret. Gandhiji declared, "That is enough. But there, on the upper gallery, there are one or two brothers. Will they not apologise? I would say, those who don't are not fit for Swaraj." Cries even from the audience came forth, "Stand up and apologise." Two persons got up in response and offered their apology. Gandhiji felt at ease then and resumed his speech. Just then a third person rose up on his own and begged pardon!)

"And now I say, let no one commit such a crime again. 'Every brain is different from every other,' as we say. If we cannot bear with one another, we become impossible persons. The Hindu cannot tolerate the Muslim and the Muslim the Hindu and destroys his (Hindus) temples. If both imbibe the spirit of forbearance, all these



wrangles would come to an end. Tolerance is a virtue that one has to practise in every walk and

every time of life. If once tolerance becomes widespread—Hindus,

Mussulmans, Parsis—all will put up with differences. The greatest stumbling block in the path of our progress is this intolerance. I am trying to root out this mental epidemic. But I am an insignificant creature, not an exalted being. Were I the latter, I would have stopped this intolerance. I am still so lacking in purity, love, courteous and modest behaviour! Otherwise, you would see such a weird light in my eyes, such a mystic charm in my language, that you would realise in a flash, that non-violent non-co-operation could never be offered by an intolerant person. I have already often told you that Dyer is not our enemy, nor is O' Dwyer. Never *think* of them as enemies. Have compassion for even him who may have committed an inimical act. If we cannot, must not, despise such a man, however can we hold Jamnadas in contempt? If a guest visits our home, what do we do? We ask the members of the family to move away and give the seat of honour to our guest. If Jamnadas happens to be our opponent, he is here as our guest, and can never be contemned. If he is but our brother, well then, any such treatment automatically becomes impossible.

"My heart was torn at the sight of Jamnadas' discomfiture, but that grief turned into joy when you so very politely begged his pardon. That was a thing really after my heart. Those penitents are sure to reap a rich reward, but even we who have been witnesses to the scene are certain to benefit spiritually. I am not going to touch here the question of Council-entry, but let me, in all humility and with due deference to Mr. Jayaker, tell him that it is impossible to come across such scenes along the way of the Councils. It is in such confessions that I see the seed of real Swaraj.

"Mr. Deodhar need not have talked at length about Malabar, because we have gathered here for no other reason than of honouring the distressed sisters and brothers of Malabar. You have contributed your mite by giving small or big fees for attendance. But Sri Deodhar had a double purpose in view in making that speech. Over and above this contribution he has asked you to undergo some self-denial, forego some things and give them to him; and it needs no saying that I fully support him. Readers of *Young India* and *Navajivan* know that I ask even children,

"What would you do if your own brothers or sisters were hungry? Would you not share with them your own food and raiment?" Something as a sacrifice in food and clothing—that is the kind of donation I ask for from you. I am often asked whether the



donation given in charity is properly utilised. The criticism is fair in a sense, but unfair also. And dishonesty dare not lodge in a place where Deodhar happens to be. There is a world of difference between his views and mine in several matters. Some of his views I simply detest, but I have not the slightest doubt about his purity. Whenever I visit his home—veritably a poor man's residence—I feel the Soul Universal dwelling therein. That friend penetrates into dense jungles, suffers bitter heat and cold, bears uncongenial climates and waters—all for unalloyed social service. Why may we not help him?

"Yes, but there is one thing. Never listen to him if he in-weighs against the spinning-wheel.

"India, I know, expects something tangible from me. They think that at Belgaum I shall show such a way as will make us all of one mind again or at least able to bear with views opposed to ours. I cannot deceive myself. I do not believe that because I am loaded with so much laudation I really deserve it. The only meaning that this lavish praise carries to me is that the people cherish higher expectations from me than what I have yet been able to fulfil. They expect greater love, greater renunciation, greater service. But how can I cope with that demand? My body is so weak and that is due only to my sin. Man never falls a prey to disease even though he may be innocent of any sin. God has endowed us with a body in order to keep it healthy and sin is but a conscious or unconscious breach of God's or Nature's laws. If punishment is meted out to us when we break a kingly law even unconsciously, how is it reasonable or possible to expect any other result from the violation of Nature's laws? The thief is never allowed to go scot-free. Punishment is mitigated for a crime committed in ignorance that is the only difference.

I sinned and so I fell ill; and I am an imperfect man, so long as such sins happen to be committed by me whether consciously or unconsciously. How can an imperfect man give an advice that is perfect? That is why I am still groping.

"And yet I have with me no other implement, no other weapon, than Satyagraha. Till now I have put before the country the terrible facet of Satyagraha. Now I propose to put only its gentle, attractive, sedate side. If people take to it with zest the result—victory—is a certainty. I believe I know the *shastra*—the religious principle—of Satyagraha through and through. In the present conditions of India, I shall always be haunted with the fear that the country will not be able to digest the strong dose of Satyagraha in its terrible form. But if we intelligently administer its mild



diluted dose we can achieve great things even before the Belgaum session of the Congress. Everyone—Co-operator, Non-co-operator, rigid No-changer, Pro-changer, Swarajist, Liberal, Conventionist, Hindu, Mussulman, Parsi, Christian, Jew, everyone can use that potion and benefit thereby. Satyagraha does not mean civil disobedience only and nothing else.

"I have sent some suggestions to Pandit Motilalji but yesterday. The world knows how well we hit it off together. In a letter I wrote to him yesterday I poured out my heart, because if he could be brought round others would follow suit. Vidushi (a popular title meaning 'highly learned') Besant came to see me yesterday. To her also I said the same thing. Can I ever presume to stand comparison with the *Vidushi* either in age or experience? To her, therefore, I put my plea as would a child to its mother. With the same humility, I am going to talk to Sri Shastriar. To the Englishmen also I will say the same thing. If they all understand the thing, great and immediate benefit is likely to accrue to us. I will not enter into the details of my scheme but you will understand that the spinning-wheel is bound to be included in it. That thing—the spinning wheel—is certain to have a place, evident or otherwise, in all my schemes. Without it neither is my life possible nor India's. To me it seems that the time is coming when you also will find it impossible to dispense with it.

"If you regard me as a 'Mahatma', the reason lies neither in my love of truth nor in my peacefulness. It lies in my deep and profound love for the poorest of the poor. Cost what it may, I can never abandon the cause of the miserables, the torn and tattered. That is really why you all feel that Gandhi is of some use. Hence. I appeal to all who love me, Ratanshi, Pickthall, Jayakar and all others, "Since you love me, please try to do some thing for those whom I love, viz., the dumb millions of Indian villages so that they may no longer remain naked and hungry. I say, worship them, the lowliest and lost. And how will you worship them? Let me tell you. Not by a mechanical telling of the beads of a rosary. The man who uses a rosary without putting his heart into it is certain not to gain salvation; he will only sink lower down, since, while he may be outwardly prattling God's name, with the telling of every bead his heart would be whetting sharp a dagger to kill somebody. I admit that even while turning the wheel it is possible for my mind to be wicked. But, at least, the outer - the concrete-result of the spinning work will not be any the less effective by the dirt of my mind. All I can say is that for myself I spin in the name of God or Khuda for the woe- begone children of India and ask you to do likewise. It is possible that there may be an error in my advice, that economists may show in future that it was a mistaken one; but they will



themselves admit that it was an error on the right side, that the country only gained thereby because some quantity of yarn, small or large, came out of it and there was an increase in the cloth production of India. Take me for a disciple of Sir Dinshaw Wachha (a Parsi patriot, economist and once the President of the Congress). He has shown that India needs 13 ½ yards of cloth per man and gets 9 ½ yards. That means we must produce sufficient cloth to cover the deficit of 4 yards per man. What a vast quantity will it come to, if everyone of you spin only a 100 yards per day. There is the proverb, "Little drops of water make a mighty ocean" and there is sense in it. If all of us draw out threads of yarn, we can cover up and bind the whole of India with it. Personally I have the undying faith that once you begin to spin, you too will admit in future, 'Really, Gandhi is right in what he says.'

"I am convinced that behind all this love for me there is nothing else but my complete oneness with the poor. I can be a Bhangi with Bhangis or a Dhed with Dheds and do their work with equal ease. If untouchability is not destroyed during my present lifetime, and if it is ordained that I should take a second birth, I wish to be born a Bhangi and none else. If untouchability persists in Hinduism and if it is possible for me to renounce Hinduism, I would recite the *Kalma* (Muslim prayer) or be a convert to Christianity. But I have such deep faith in my religion, that I have but to live and die in it. So even on that account if I am born again I would love to be born a Bhangi. I say, therefore, that if you have any pity for Bhangis, Dheds and the wretchedly poor of Orissa, you must forget foreign or mill-made cloth and wear the one spun by the poorest and woven by Dheds. How is it possible for them to provide us with the cloth of our fastidious tastes? They are a terror-stricken people. There are so many famished sisters in Kathiawar who cannot get even an anna (= 1/16 Rupee) or two at the end of a whole day! They were supplied with spinning wheels and they began to earn a little. Their wheels have stopped working now and they are lamenting for the mere pittance of a few pice they used to get. And there is quite a large number of such sisters. I would feel no shame in approaching them once again and making them spin, if I can tell them that even Jayakar has taken to the wheel and so has Sarojini; and that Mrs. Besant and Dadabhai's grand-daughter and Shri Shastriar—they all spin.

"I do not wish to open *sadavrats* (places where food is supplied free to all) in India. I would rather wish that they were closed. These *sadavrats*, I think, are a stain on the fair face of our land. That is why I wish to make everyone self-reliant. I would never give these sisters a few coins by way of a dole, but I would make them earn their living. If you wish to make these sisters and other poor persons and Dhed-Bhangis self-



dependent, you should perform the sacrifice of self-spinning. Let everyone contribute 2000 yards of self-spun yarn. I will then give Swaraj in a year.

"But please listen carefully. I do not give a definite time-limit unconditionally. I do not say we can have Swaraj if you alone spin. I do affirm that we can win it if all of us spin. It is a dead fact that then only you will be able to persuade others to spin, when you yourselves spin and set the example. The *Bhagwadgita* states that the masses follow in the wake of the classes. They say that fashions in dress (in Britain) change

according as the Prince of Wales changes his attire. You are regarded as the salt of India—or wish to be regarded so. Will not others follow if you begin to spin forthwith?

"Let alone that plea. Whether Swaraj comes from your spinning or not, if you feel for the beggar's plight, I beg of you to spin in pity for him. Be in tune with the submerged; let your heart vibrate in sympathy with them.

“Even Mirabai¹ has sung of the thread of yarn:

सूतरने तांतणो मने हरजीए बांधी
जेम ताणे तेम तेमनी जे,
मने लागी कटारी प्रेमनी |

A cotton thread of yarn
Is wound me all around;
The more He draws it tight
The more to him I'm bound.
Love's dart by Hari sent
In twain my heart has rent.

"If we have that love for the crores of our sisters and brothers, they too would bind us tight with the thread of cotton yarn and we them. I know of only that principle of economics and no other.

"Let me say one more thing. You may have heard of the riots in Nagpur. The Hindus' hearts are impure and so are the Mussulmans'. Under this situation what else can I put before the public except these three things? In all my present experiments



of peaceful Satyagraha you will see these three things invariably included. If you all bear these three things in mind, I think we shall all be able to stand on one and the same platform. Let the talk of boycotts of courts, Councils etc. be set aside. All of us may not see eye to eye in those matters, but let us present a united front as regards those things about which we are in agreement.

After speaking so long, he put these same things in a very few words for the benefit of those who did not understand Gujarati. The substance was quite the same, but there was definitely a charming novelty in the way it was put.

"I have emptied the burden of my heart and I have spent myself so much now that I cannot say more. I too have had my spate of say. In essence, however, it is simply this: There are two sides to my nature, one warlike and dreadful, the other cool and peaceful. Many friends have parted from me on account of my former i. e. the terrible aspect. And for the same reason, there had been on several occasions dividing chasms between me on one side and my wife, my son, and my deceased brother on the other. But in the other aspect of my nature it is only love that overflows. Regarding my dreadful side the other party has to make an effort to see love even in it. There may be very few as ruthless in self-analysis as I. I have not a shred of doubt that in my dreadful aspect also there is not even a trace of hatred, but there is a chance there of my committing Himalayan blunders. Students of psychology, however, will attest that the source of both these facets can be one and the same, viz., love. Love that is boundless can assume a terrifying form at times. If I have sometimes afflicted my wife, the act has thrust a deep wound on my heart also. If I have hurt the feelings of any Englishman who used to stay with me in South Africa, that pain has caused me even greater distress. If Englishmen feel offended at my doings here, let me tell them that I have felt even more sorely grieved.

It is not because I love the Englishmen less, but because I love them as dearly as my kith and kin that I say to them, "You have sucked us and are still doing the same. But you are unaware of the fact. You are lording it over us, but you will have to repent for it one day." It was to open the eyes of England that I had to reveal the terrible aspect of my nature. But that dreadful form has now disappeared. I have told Pandit Motilalji, "I have no fight left in me now. I am now seeking only surrender. How can I entertain any other feeling when there is a split in our very home and mutual hatred and venom are ever on the increase? I must, therefore, make Herculean efforts to make amends. Either at Belgaum or before it, I do not want to offer any opposition,



whatsoever, that would cause or widen a rift in the country. I shall believe myself defeated and humbled, and hope to unite all of us by appeasement. The whole of mankind will take a leaf out of India's book when, as we go along that way, India discards its insanity of today and wins freedom. What more than this can I say? I may only pray to God that He may lead me along the righteous path and calm down whatever element of attachment, aversion or anger there may still be lurking in any corner of my heart and may send me such a message as all will be glad to listen to."

This speech has been given at all this length—it is reproduced nearly verbatim—in order that everyone can see the heart of Gandhiji wounded by our strifes. There is no need to refer to other speeches. One can disburden oneself of all the pent-up feelings of the heart in a private talk, but during these three or four days the Bombay public had a remarkable experience of the fact that it was possible to give vent to such a white heat of feelings even in a long public speech and that too without any sentimental effusion or unrestraint in expression.

Speaking before the Hindus of Vile Parle he referred to a talk with Maulana Hasrat Mohani and said in effect: "Hasrat Mohani Saheb told me, 'You want to remove untouchability. Let me then tell you that in North India Hindus consider even Muslims to be untouchables. If you can get that removed, I am prepared to get Mussulmans do in return whatever you want—not excluding even the stoppage of cow-slaughter.' I had but to bend down my head for very shame. I replied, 'You should do your part, your *dharma*, regardless of others. If you feel that for the sake of Hindu feelings it is a virtue to save the cow and a sin to desecrate and destroy temples, then you may persuade Muslims to do those two things. I do not want to strike a bargain with you. But for myself let me tell you that I am going to plead before every Hindu. 'It is a sin for a Hindu to regard any human being an untouchable on the ground of birth or religion. How then can we, Hindus, look down upon a Muslim brother as an untouchable? If Hinduism consists in regarding followers of other faiths as untouchables, that Hinduism is certain to meet its doom'".

He then dealt with his future programme in that same meeting. "I am fed up. I confess myself beaten. There is no fight left in me now. The Swarajists as well as the Mussulmans have floored me. We can never be united by fighting among ourselves. In the last All India Congress Committee I fought hard and won. But I saw that it brought only increased bitterness. My heart, therefore, shed anguished tears and does so still. I will now be the last person to repeat that thing in Belgaum."



These expressions gushing out from a heart stirred to its depth with agony cannot have failed to move the stoniest hearts among the audience. Vidushi Annie Besant has even declared already, "I am in agreement with the three unifying items of work which Gandhiji has now put before the public." A leading Moderate said with an endearing smile, "One may or may not accept your plea intellectually, but one is tempted to do what you say at the sight of you and the appealing earnestness with which you put the plea." "Well then," replied Gandhiji, "do that much for the sake of your feelings for me. That also is all right with me."

Let us all hope that the ambrosia of peace and Swaraj will rise out of this tremendous churning² in the heart that seems confined within an individual but is really the boundless ocean of humanity.

1. A princess belonging to the highest royal House of Mewar, who renounced her all to worship Lord Krishna. Her poems of haunting music and mystical experiences still sway the hearts of Gujarat and Central India.

2. Reference to the mythological story of the churning of the Ocean by Gods and Demons which culminated in the coming out of a jar full of ambrosia.



At Poona and Surat

d. 4th and 5th Sept. 1924

(*Navajivan*, d. 14-9-1924)

After submitting before a number of meetings in Bombay his scheme to bring all political parties on a common platform and work out an agreed programme as one united body, Gandhiji went to Poona, where he spent a day and then to Surat. At both these places this same subject was discussed and Gandhiji delivered speeches dilating upon the excellence of that common programme. It is impossible to give here reports of all the speeches—nor is it necessary—but I will give a gist of the important part of every speech.

The workers of Poona were greedy. They wanted to take from Gandhiji maximum help at the cost of minimum time, with the result, I believe, that Gandhiji was put to a rather excessive strain and some points that needed detailed discussion did not receive the attention they deserved. All the same the discussions held over some points were of the greatest importance and after I finish giving the substance of Gandhiji's speeches, I shall reproduce that part out of these discussions which may be useful to the public.

Gandhiji submitted before the public meeting held at night in Poona his common programme. At the beginning, however, he wanted from the residents of Poona an account of the work they had done during the past two years and discussed the question of Khadi vs. mill cloth.

"You ask me why it is impossible to carry out the boycott of foreign cloth by wearing Indian mill-made clothing. This betrays great ignorance. Mill cloth alone is not enough for carrying out in full the boycott of foreign cloth. And right till today the Bengalis are loud in their complaints about how the mill-owners cheated Bengal during the Bengal Partition agitation of 1905. Let us take a leaf out of their experience and realise that boycott through mill cloth alone is an impossibility. Our Swadeshi propaganda must therefore be confined to the use of Khadi only. It is therefore clear that so far as the Congress is concerned there can be no talk of mill cloth."

Earlier, during the daytime, there had been a long discussion with the Swarajists. At the end of it a gentleman had got up and said, "At the unveiling ceremony of the statue of Chiplunkar (one of the earliest champions of Swadeshi), you had stated,



“Maharashtra possesses the spirit of renunciation but not faith. What do you mean thereby?” Gandhiji had told him, “I shall reply to that question at the public meeting tonight.” Giving his answer there Gandhiji said:

“Faith means self-confidence and that means trust in God. That man is a man of faith who, at the sight of black clouds clustering thick above him, the shore of safety being totally beyond his ken, and all the portents of death looming large, has the grit to affirm, “I am not going to be drowned.” Draupadi was being stripped of her clothing and all her husbands—Udhishthira, Bheema, Arjuna, Nakula and Sahadeva—had lost the power to defend her. Even at that crisis Draupadi did not lose faith. She cried aloud to Lord Krishna to rush to her rescue. She had the faith that as long as Krishna was there to help her, nobody on earth could do her harm. Do you have that faith? If you have, you can win Swaraj on the single-handed strength of Poona only. The man of faith never makes conditions with God, never postpones responding to His call. Harishchandra did not delay his response in the least. He, on the contrary, had raised his sword to cut off his wife's head.”

Referring to those who ridiculed Khadi as a mad man's dream, Gandhiji said:

“I had asked Col. Maddock, ‘Will you not let your students wear Khadi?’ He never called me a lunatic then. On the contrary, he said, ‘If the students want to wear Khadi, why should I forbid them?’ And Mrs. Maddock has even taken Khadi with her on her return home. It is only the man who wants to shirk the work that invents a thousand excuses. What prevents one from using Khadi is one's own weakness of heart, nothing else. And let us start with the presumption that Gandhi is a madcap. All right; am I then mad in asking you to wear the same thing as viliagers do? You may call me a man off the hinges for many other things, but if you call me one for harping upon Khadi, I will retort, ‘Who call me mad are mad themselves.’ because I am speaking from the depth of self-experience. I would even say, if you don't do anything else, please do at least this Khadi work out of compassion for the poor men's straits. I appeal to you to see God in the form of the poor and contribute 2000 yards for the sake of those forms of God. They live in Champaran (Bihar), Orissa etc.; they find it so hard to get even 4 pice (pice= 1/64 of a rupee); they live on uncooked rice (for want of fuel) and are reduced to mere skin and bones.”

After dealing with untouchability and Hindu-Muslim Unity he wound up his speech in the following words:



"I confess I am defeated. It is my solemn resolve to leave the Congress, if Motilalji and Kelkar ask me to quit. I am not going to call for voting at Belgaum. We, No-changers and Pro-changers, are befogging the masses by asking them to vote for this or that party. I now feel that it was a crime I committed when I took votes at the Ahmedabad session of the All India Congress Committee. It was sheer madness on my part to have asked the members to divide themselves and cast votes. I am a soldier all in all. I should have realized that I could fight only under those circumstances which did not create animosity. If hate is born out of my fight with Motilalji and Kelkar, I would rather be on my knees before them than let that thing happen. Better far that I drown myself in the Sabarmati river than nurse venom in my heart against anybody. Yes, where it is a fight on principle, I am definitely a fighter. But where the stench of enmity issues out of it, how can I have the heart to fight? How is it possible for me to fight when I see that by our internecine brawls, it is only the third party that gains in power? Hence my oath not to offer a fight. A single word more to the Poonaites and I beg your leave to go. This Crazy Bania says this as his parting word: "Oh, Poonaites! Have faith and win Swaraj."

The meeting was a big one and there was a heavy shower of rain during the proceeding of the speech. But seeing the gravity and intensity of Gandhiji's language, not a single person got up from his seat to leave. As he approached the end of his speech, his voice automatically grew loud and tense with feeling. In that meeting of 10 to 15 thousand persons, there might hardly be any to whom Gandhiji was not audible. All were deeply affected. Sunk in deep thought they all dispersed.

At Surat

Surat's enthusiasm beggars description. Crowds and crowds of women used to come for *darshan*. Even those leaders who did not believe in non-co-operation visited him and many of them were present at the public meeting at night. An English family also attended the meeting.

This was the first as well as last question which Gandhiji put at the public meeting in Surat! 'Where, O where, have gone that resplendent lustre, that unity, and that heroism which distinguished Surat in the past? Oh for the return of all that, so that from Surat it may overflow into Gujarat and from Gujarat into India?' Gandhiji made a somewhat long preface at Surat before submitting his universally acceptable programme. 'How dare I talk of civil disobedience and boycott, when I see that hatred



is ever on the increase, that all my things go wrong and upset my apple cart?' At Surat, there was no question of a tussle between Khadi and mill cloth; the only thing he had to say there was about how to increase the production of Khadi. He therefore stated:

"History gives not a single instance of Swaraj won by holding meetings. Swaraj requires blood-sweating exertion. It is not by speeches, articles or long expositions that we succeed in managing our household affairs. Only then can family-life go on smoothly when every member of the family faithfully performs the part of work that falls to his or her lot. If we want to gain Swaraj, everyone has but to toil and moil for it."

Referring to the lunacy of Gulbarga, Gandhiji had said at Poona: "I am not prepared to break my ties of friendship with Mussulmans owing to the madness of Gulbarga." He stressed the same point at Surat at much greater length: "If even one of the two parties, Hindu or Muslim, sheds of its crooked ways unity becomes an accomplished fact in no time, but if we are moved by a lust for revenge, we must give up all talk of unity in our lifetime. If we are really in earnest about winning Swaraj, one of the two has but to mend its ways and be clean at heart. But the Hindu, it is said, is cowardly and submissive by temperament. Vengeance, however, is not the way to drive out fear. In fact both the parties are ridden with fear and both are slaves in consequence. The Government regards both as slaves. So both in fact are cowards and nothing but non-violence can drive out that fear. True, that peacefulness must be a brave man's peacefulness. But is the use of the stick an essential condition for acquiring bravery? What is needed is to learn the art of dying. We hear of the destruction of Hindu temples. How can temples be saved and kept standing if the officiating priest takes to his heels and leaves them to their fate? You may argue, "Should we then fall at the feet of the idol-breakers and beseech their mercy?" I would answer, "Defend your idols by dying. When the besieger sees that the opponent is determined to save the temple even at the cost of his life, he will see reason."

"You cannot defend your icons by thrashing or killing the assailant. Mussulmans also will not be able to defend Islam by killing Hindus. If they want to defend Islam by slaughter, it is dead certain that Islam itself will be exterminated. No religion on earth is going to save itself or flourish by means of the sword. Thirty years of reflection and experience impel me to declare that no man, who wants to save his religion or country, can do so by any other means than that of non-violence. No religion has spread or remained alive by the use of the sword, nor is it ever going to. It is the *fakirs* of Islam



and the *sannyasis* of Hinduism who have been the stay and support of their respective religions. There have been saints and seers in Hindu Dharma who have revealed the secret of self-immolation. Please read your *shastras* with an intelligent, discriminating eye. Don't draw me into a discussion as to what Rama did. When Parvati was in distress, she performed austerities. And it was by means of austerity that Draupadi defended herself, when Dharmaraj (the embodiment of *dharma*) Udhishthira, Bheema the Terrible and that Arjuna with his powerful Gandiva missile, stood helplessly staring at the scene.

I can give such messages to Mussulmans through Maulana Abdul Bari Saheb and the Ali Brothers, but being a Hindu myself, it is my right and privilege to say this same thing to each and every Hindu. The Hindu's *sangathan*¹ lies in his austerity. But today, we both, Mussulmans and Hindus, have lost our faith in God. We have lost all self-confidence and now wish to become brave by taking the help of *goondas*. That can save neither Hinduisim nor Islam. It is only *tapashcharya* (austerity) or *fakiri* (renunciation) that will save either. Destroy all fear root and branch. Jamnalalji's arm was wounded. I was only glad. I would have been glad if he had even lost his life in the attempt to stop the communal feud, because then Hinduism would have been protected all the more securely. It was only an accident that a stone hit him. But he who deliberately goes into the midst of a hail of stones would certainly be hit by them and may even die. Had Jamnalalji died that way, both the fighting parties would have felt ashamed and both would have shed tears.

"Be brave that way and win the hearts of Muslims. I am not opposed to *akharas*. If we are weak in body we may by all means conduct *akharas* (gymnasiums) for that object, but we must not open them for the settlement of Hindu-Muslim fights. The final and best payment of scores can come only through austerity and truth. The author of the Mahabharata has proclaimed a golden truth in no uncertain voice: "Put a thousand *yagnas* (sacrifices) in one pan of a balance and truth in the other. Truth will be found to weigh heavier." After forty years of experience I say that that is true. When we shall win by those means, this Hindu-Muslim tension will disappear."

In conclusion he asked the people to remove the dirt of untouchability, to maintain sanity and serenity even when wild waves sweep over the country, to increase one's soul-force by being purer, to renounce rich dishes and other luxuries, to relish an honest dry bread like the best of sweets and thus to recapture the departed glory of Surat.



I had stated earlier that I would reproduce some questions which Gandhiji answered at Poona. Here they are:

Q. You ask the Congress to do these three things only. Does not the Congress lose its political character?

Gandhiji: Yes, for a time. But I ask for only a year's experiment till we complete the boycott of foreign cloth.

Q. But you wish to drive out from the Congress everyone except the spinners. Have only the Khadi workers the right to remain in the Congress and not even those who implement your other two items?

Gandhiji: I am every inch a fighter. I therefore say things after full knowledge as to how to conduct the war. Hindu-Muslim Unity and removal of untouchability do not require any physical labour. What is necessary there is propaganda and education. Self-honesty alone can achieve great things in these matters but for Khadi work, over and above self-honesty, one has to do the physical labour of using one's hands daily. My aim is to unite both the workers and the masses by the chain of loving collaboration. Hand-spun yarn alone can achieve that object. If members of the Congress spin, crores will follow their example and spin likewise.

Q. So then, all those who are in sympathy with your other items of work have necessarily to remain out of the Congress?

Gandhiji: They may help from outside. Crowds having sympathy with me always collect in their thousands around me. But how does that help me? I am intent on creating an army of spinners of 2000 yards per month. And cannot one get the time to spin even 2000 yards? Are you more heavily loaded with work than I?

Q. But I revert to the question I had put at first. There is the great danger of the Congress ceasing for ever to be a political body.

Gandhiji: No, it won't. I cannot give a political programme right today, without entering into a fight. But if you do all that I suggest at present, I will immediately offer a political programme. I am not a world-renouncing *sadhu* (a recluse or a saint), I am a political-minded man. Only, I am a politician of a gentler kind. Was I not a politician in South Africa? Could I have pitted myself against General Smuts without possessing the requisite knowledge of politics? I do want to fight, but please let me prepare my army and my armoury.



Q. 'Give up the offices of the Congress,' you say. But will that allay hatred and enmity?

Gandhiji: If we give them up in a fit of pique they may not soften, but if you renounce the offices with the sole object of removing bitterness it would definitely disappear.

Q. What will you do with him who is out to suppress Khadi and demolish your principle?

Gandhiji: Nobody wants to do that. And even if anybody does, I am unperturbed.

Q. But you can't gain anything by giving up your principle when that itself is attacked. Then at least you have but to fight and defend it.

Gandhiji: There is such ingrained power in my principle, that nobody can suppress it. What I want to give up is not my principle, but the All India Congress Committee if necessary.

Q. We would be helpless if we are not in the Committee. On what authority then can we do any work?

Gandhiji: Just think a little more deeply. You see that the Fergusson College stands in defiance of your national institutions. On what backing of the Congress does it do so? It is simply a superstition to believe that work can be done only under the aegis of the Congress. The output of your work will be in exact accordance with your innate capacity. And what is the use of possessing that organisation which uses up all your energy and wealth in merely keeping it in good repair? It is definitely better in that case to liquidate the organisation. If the organisation remains in our hands without our craving or striving for it, let it. But where it devours all your energy in order to keep it in your hands, it is better that the control passes out of your hands."

This is but a cursory diary of Poona and Surat. I have not mentioned even in passing any thing about the superb meeting of women. But there would be a distressing gap even in these brief notes, if I missed giving in short Gandhiji's address at the National University Convocation held in Poona for conferring degrees to graduates.



Beginning with the statement that it was not on the basis of his claim as an erudite scholar that he was standing there and begging the students' pardon for it, he explained the real aim of education.

"The education you are taking has Swaraj for its goal. In Gujarat I have constituted myself the Chancellor of the National University there, but that I have done as a fighter for Swaraj and with the object of creating soldiers for Swaraj out of the students. When I landed on the soil of England on 6th August 1914, what was the sight that met my eyes? As the fight deepened, all the 'Inns' began to close one after another. Even

in Oxford and Cambridge educational activities were brought largely to a standstill. During the war they gave a subordinate place to learning. And why should they not? Education is fruitful only when it moulds the student into an excellent citizen, a fiery patriot, and a man who can by his behaviour cover with glory his society, his country and his own life as a gentleman.

"24 years ago, in South Africa also I had seen the same sight. Collegians got themselves recruited as soldiers, or as members of the Red Cross staff. Young men and women left their colleges *en bloc* and got themselves employed in some such national work. But I was a Black man. I saw White lawyers and barristers leaving their courts and going to the Front; and when I saw the courts all empty for this reason, I felt ashamed and was impelled to join that work. When a calamity besets a country, that is the only work that ought to be done. If you see this point, the fact that a man with no claim to scholarship like myself stands before you here on this occasion has sense; otherwise to make me the President here is only to make me the butt of ridicule.

"If a newly-arrived Englishman visits your institution after going round through Government educational institutions, what will he expect to see here? Will he admire the magnificence of your buildings? Or the high scholarship of your teachers? Will he hope to see you speaking fluently in chaste English? Not at all. He will be in the look-out for quite a novel picture here. He may not have seen students of any other institution engaged in spinning. Here he will be eager to see exhibits of

your spinning and weaving work. He will expect to see cotton-pods blooming in your courtyard. He will ask you to show him your yarn and if he finds it excellent, he will make a mental note, 'Manchester is in danger.' But if he sees it coarse and uneven he will say to himself, 'O, it's all right. Manchester has no cause for worry.' He will not expect you to be aping the Sahebs ways, but to be living a simple life like that of the



poor themselves. He will be surprised if he finds you talking among yourselves in any but your mother tongue. When General Botha went to England and a meeting with the King was arranged, he refused pointblank to utter a single word in English. He insisted on speaking in his native tongue, 'Taal', which is but a parochial form of Dutch and he talked through an interpreter. Not that he did not know English—he knew it better than myself—but he thought that his talk in his mother tongue, Taal, lended him dignity. President Kruger also always refused to speak in any other language but Taal. And that was how he consolidated his power. I will therefore want you to talk with me in Hindi, Urdu or Marathi. If you get teachers who know how to speak faultless English, that is nothing, no gain. Your honour lies in having teachers who can teach through Hindi or Marathi, teachers who are materially as poor as beggars but are rich in religion, rich in the sacrifice of all they possess. It does not matter if in erudition, they do not count as much as others. I only beg of you to realise the well-defined limit of the Vidyapith and clearly understand the object for which it stands."

1. A movement called *sangathan* (organised union) was set on foot in those days by several Hindu leaders.



Sabarmati,

d. 6-9-1924.

*Dear Motilalji,

I received your letter yesterday in Surat. To your telegram I sent a brief reply from Bombay. I sent a brief wire yesterday in reply to your letter. I am sorry my letter gave you offence. Pray forgive me. Was it not better that I told you what I heard than that I should have kept it to myself? Will you please believe me when I tell you that those who surround me hardly ever speak to me?

* * * *

My offer however stands to be considered on its merits. Will you please consider it and oblige me? As you know I have already discussed it with Mrs. Besant and Messrs. Jayakar and Natrajan. I have also discussed it with the Swarajists in Poona. Whether it is accepted or not, my decision is final that I shall not directly or indirectly be the cause of dividing the Congress by a vote. Whatever happens must be by agreement.

P.S. I have your wire. I need hardly add anything to the foregoing.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. Gandhi



Sabarmati,

d. 6-9-1924

Chi.¹ Jamnalal,

I have received both your wire and letter. I had not a moment to spare for writing during my tour of Bombay, Poona and Surat. I reached the Ashram this morning. I was not at all grieved at your injury. I even believe that many like us may have to offer life-sacrifices. The virus has spread so far and wide and dishonesty is so rampant, that I even believe we are not going to be saved from this calamity without the self-immolation of several pure souls. Try, if you can, to find out the root cause of the trouble. Are there not any wise Muslims or wise Hindus who can view the situation rightly and remove the causes of the tension? You may have understood my resolve. I have decided not to solve any important issue at Belgaum by a majority vote. Mutual rancour has grown so virulent that we must set aside for the present the use of any aggressive form of *satyagraha*. If we do not we ourselves, I think, would come to ruin. Not a single thing is taken in the right light. Everything is misinterpreted and there is distrust everywhere. We must, in these times, stand still like a rock and be passive witnesses of all that others do. I have repeatedly explained this in *Young India*. I do not know how much of that matter has appeared (in Translation) in *Navajivan*.

Blessings,

Bapu

(Translated from Gujarati)

1. Chi. =Chiranjivi, meaning long-lived, a term of address couched as a blessing to a youngster.



Sabarmati,

d. 6-9-1924

*My dear Jawaharlal,

I have your wire. I had heard from Father already. I am so sorry. I thought I was writing a harmless letter showing the depth of my feeling.

* * * *

I have therefore implored Father to let me have his views on the merits of the proposal. I have discussed it with many friends among the Swarajists. I can see no other honourable solution of the difficulties. Please tell me what you think about it.

The Nabha answer (Jawaharlal was refused permission to enter that State) is from its own standpoint conclusive. The only answer that can be returned is to take up the challenge and be arrested. In the present state of things it seems to be unwise. The best thing therefore is to be silent and wait for better times.

I have your very prompt report on Amethi. It makes very painful reading. I do not know what to do. I have sent Shuaib and Kristodas to Gulbarga also, privately, merely to ascertain facts. Do please go to Sambhar as soon as you can. You may take and (names illegible). They should know the place. As Mohammad Ali has not been able to make much headway, it is difficult to say anything regarding my movement. I am here at least till Monday.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. Gandhi.



Sabarmati,

d. 6-9-1924

*Dear Gopabandhu Babu,

I have your letter. If Mahavir Sinha and the others who have misappropriated public funds have means, I should unhesitatingly advise lawsuit. The boycott is not for our hurt. We may lose all private property, but we must defend trust property. I advised Niranjana Babu to take proceedings and resign. He can be re-elected. I hope you are quite all right now. Amritlal Thakkar tells me your school is in want. Please write to Jamnalalji.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. Gandhi



Sabarmati,

d. 6-9-1924

*My dear Rajgopalachari,

I do not know if your mind keeps pace with the swift changes that have come over me. I see as clearly as daylight that we must not resist the evil that has crept into our ranks. We must abdicate power altogether. If we have faith in our mission and if the mission is intrinsically good, we must succeed. We must risk even present injury to the movement. There should be no decision by majority of votes. We must continue to surrender upto the very margin of principle. Hence I am putting forward the programme of Charkha, Untouchability and Hindu-Muslim Unity.

What is this row about your attempt to have a penal clause in your spinning resolution? My heart goes out to you in your difficulties. Do let the local control go, if it costs all that energy. Or is the storm all over now?

Have you studied the working of Devdhar's Relief Committee? Can you amalgamate with him? What is the nature of his work? I would advise you to try to have one non-official Committee only, if possible. Monies are pouring in. Do you want me to send all to you? What about South Canara? What about the different centres? There is a terrific amount of clothing lying here. Pray give me detailed instructions. I am here till Monday at the least. But it is probable that I shall be here for at least a week.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. Gandhi



Sabarmati,

d. 7-9-1924

*The Raja Sahib of Kanaka,

Dear Raja Saheb,

I am now sending you copies of two statements my Secretary has prepared for me. You will observe that if the facts are as set forth in the statements which have been prepared from the papers in my possession, they require personal investigation. Will you entertain the idea of my sending to your Raj Mr. Andrews or Rajendrababu or Pandit Jawaharlal? I would love to go there myself, but my hands are just now tied up.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. Gandhi



Ashram,

d. 8-9-1924

*Bhai Anandanand,

You are proceeding to Delhi not as Angad (emissary for war or peace) on behalf of Ramachandra nor as Krishna for Udhishthira, but as a representative of Nishadraja to create, if possible, a situation that compels the grant of permission to wash the Holy Feet¹ and serve Him.

Or you are going there to shed lustre on me as a servant of Sudama (an extremely poor co-student of Lord Krishna who begged for His favour) would do if he is sent on a mission somewhere. You are not going there to secure justice, but to grant it. Jadabharata (a sage who acted like a *jada=an* inanimate thing) quietly bore with all the tribulations that befell him. You do not visit the place as Rudra (the Terrible God= Destroyer), but as Vishnu (the soothing Preserver). The question with us is not what the Maulana should do. The question is what I, that is you, ought to do. In this matter it is my resolve to put into practice, in letter and spirit, all the high philosophy which I have spilt on the pages of *Navajivan*. You may help me there with all your soul and body. And do it under the conviction that only that course of action could behove you and me. It is a 'must' for me to put into action in this case that thing which I have been preaching the world to practise. We are bent upon doing this work of Mohammad Ali to his full satisfaction even at the cost of every possible harm to *Young India* and *Navajivan*. Could there be anything more glorious than that his paper sees the light of day with you as the guardian angel? Regard *Comrade* and *Hamdard* as your very own as my own papers. You go there under the distinct understanding that these two shall take the first place in your heart and *Young India* and *Navajivan* the next.

In your sincere modesty and tactful behaviour I see the surest signs of Hindu-Muslim Unity and so of Swaraj. And never think of returning from Delhi in a hurry.

Bapu's blessings.

(Translated from Gujarati)

1. A beautiful tale hangs round this Nishadraja, a devotee of Lord Rama. He allowed Laxman (brother) and Sita (wife) to embark his boat to cross the Ganga on their way to their exile in a forest, but stopped Sri Ramachandra. On being asked the reason, he said, "My Lord! The dust of your feet has been known to have turned a stone into a woman. (Ahalya, turned into a stone by a curse, regained



her life that way). If my boat turns into a woman likewise, I lose my means of sustenance and have to support two wives instead of one! So let me first wash your feet." In this way he compelled Ramachandra to let him wash His feet.



Sabarmati,

8-9-1924

To

*Mohammad Ali

My dear brother,

It is now just after five Monday morning. I have commenced to use ink but somehow or other the hand has not yet settled down to the inkpen yet. And I want to talk to you without avoidable impediment.

Only yesterday I realised what you wanted. Remember that though I have been successfully at the head of two presses. I know next to nothing of the details. I have not yet been to the Navajivan office. I never knew what was brought from Delhi and what was not. I thought I was bringing something that was mine. Now I am sending something that is yours. What is mine is yours—Swami included. But where he fails or you

find him wanting you should fall back upon me. I cannot supply his ability but I shall find the money somehow, if money can make up for lost time. I believe Swami when he tells me he could not have managed to send you the machines earlier. Why can you not have both *Comrade* and *Hamdard* printed elsewhere for the time being and ask me to find the deficit?

Swami says the Press will take time to set up in all its details. He says he never understood that he was to put up everything. He thought and I too that he was wanted for the machines only. He says he was not willing to cart all the furniture here. Neither he nor his agent had the requisite knowledge at the time. The agent who actually took delivery knew very little of press things.

But the point is not what A or B understood but what you need, and what I can do. Even whilst I was in Delhi I did not understand that the sole delay was due to the delay caused on my side and thought that even after the machines were set up there were many things that had to be done in Delhi by you before we could make a start.

Now please use Swami freely. After all he is among those who are the closest to me. If he fails, I have failed. A man who is no judge of men is a failure even though he may have a heart of gold and may have the best of intentions in the world. He must



then cease to deal with men and things. I have therefore always said that I must be judged by the test that my closest companions pass through. You, Swami, Mahadeo, Hayat, Ashfaq, Moazzam, Deodas, Krishnadas, Shuaib are among them. It is not enough that I can pull on well with you; Swami, Mahadeo, Devdas etc. also ought. If they cannot, they should disappear from my public life even as 'Ba' has at any rate for the present. They are the instruments through which I work, as Hayat, Moazzam are the ones through whom you work.

I am therefore sending Swami so that you and he can come near each other and know each other better. For me a proper regulation of these personal relations means more for Swaraj and Unity than a thousand public documents.

With deepest love,

Yours,

M. K. Gandhi

*Dear Satishbabu,

I was deeply touched by your wire. I am sending you a consoling reply.

No one has displaced or wishes to displace Krishnadas (Kristodas). I still cannot do without him. Last time Krishnadas did not accompany me because he and I came to the conclusion that it was the best for him and the cause. He is the wisest among the four, who are rendering personal service and doing secretarial work. Mahadeo, Devdas and Pyarelal regard him as more advanced in wisdom and *tapasya* than they. I wonder what led Kristodas to think that any of them could ever think of ousting Kristodas. I do not need four with me in my travels. One at least must remain behind to attend to affairs. Only Mahadeo or Devdas can constantly remain behind, if only because neither Pyarelal nor Kristodas can attend to *Navajivan* and the Gujarati correspondence. Kristodas must therefore be a constant companion with me. He has gone to Gulbarga because he alone was acceptable to Shuaib. The latter would have taken Mahadeo with him if I had insisted. But I know him to be very

sensitive. I wanted him to go under the best of auspices. And when he asked for Kristodas, although Mahadeo was suggested, I unhesitatingly agreed. Kristodas was willing. He and Shuaib hit it off well together. Pray therefore do not be anxious about Kristodas. He shall be with me not merely for your sake, he will be with me for my sake.



I am more anxious to have him by me than you can be to put him by me. It has been the privilege of my life to have some companions whom I have felt redressed (?) and comforted to have by me. Krishnadas is not the least among them.

I have written this with your pen. The first you sent me I prized very much and always kept it with me. In the gaol, I lent it to Indulal. It got spoiled. He sent it out for repairs. The friend whom he entrusted with the precious charge lost it. Krishnadas has therefore given me the one I am using. I have also received two ... (word illegible). May I thank you for all these delicate attentions? Add one more by wiring a promise never more to worry about Krishnadas.

Yours,

M. K. Gandhi

*Dear friend,

Mahadeo has handed me both your letters for which I thank you. I am under no delusion. The Liberals may or may not join, the Swarajists may or may not join. What I feel is that we are non-co-operating among ourselves. This we must avoid. The rest will take care of itself. So much for the first letter.

As for the second, I have made it clear that the surrender, if it has to be made, must be your own act. You know the situation best. I can only suggest principles that flow from non-violence. Dastane and Deodhar did say many things in Juhu. They have indeed affected me but not in the way you fear. From all their talks I gathered that all the principal members did not believe fully in non-violence or the Khaddar work. Take for instance Mr. Bapat. He was the leader of the Mulshipeth Campaign (Satyagraha against the requisition of farm lands by the Government for the use of Tata Company). He is no believer in non-violence. Take Mr. Nimbkar. He certainly does not believe in non-violence. I have listened to his speeches and read his writings too. There have been repeated complaints against him. But these are matters that call for reform within, not surrender. The idea of surrender was evolved long after the All India Congress Committee meeting (at Ahmedabad). It came to me when I saw some poisonous writings. If we were all angels, I would still have us to surrender. To assert our principle is to surrender office, not principle. The latter has to be lived. Though it has a political consequence, the conception of Satyagraha is purely spiritual. Humanity is its essence. It is never polemical. It grows on your opponent unperceived, if your conduct is correct. If you surrender, you will do so, so as to do more and better work.



The way is so totally different from the ordinary. I do not make my language purposely ambiguous. What I think is original, i.e. the method. I have not the language to give expression to it, hence the ambiguity. But this much is easily understood.

Do not hold on to office if it means breeding of hatred. Do retain it if it comes to you unsought, if it comes to you because public opinion is so overwhelmingly in your favour. I have no manner of doubt that the people of all the provinces will be with those who are out and out against the present Government and who are prepared to sacrifice themselves to the uttermost for the sake of their service. It matters little whether the servants are in the Congress or outside.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. Gandhi

d. 13-9-1924, on the way to Delhi

Letter to Rajagopalachari on reading his letter to Shankarlal wherein he had stated: "Bapu's latest means the collapse of a great idea. I feel like a tree uprooted by the flood. I was never before so depressed as I feel now,"

*My dear Rajagopalachari,

I am on my way to Delhi for Hindu Muslim quarrel. I read your letter to Shankarlal. I am sad because you are sad. I wish you were by my side. How can you continue when we are so hopelessly divided? Read my article in current *Young India* fifty times if necessary and you will find out my meaning perhaps. It is written most for you. Your letter to Shankarlal

suggested it. We are not giving up boycotts because they are removed from the national programme for all time. Surely if we have courage of our convictions, we can revive them any moment. Why should suspension mean abandonment if we have trust in ourselves?

Yours sincerely,

M. K. Gandhi



Bhai Sanmukhram,

The following things are essential for *brahmacharya* (perfect continence): (1) Stay in a solitary place, (2) light food, (3) healthy reading, (4) constant contemplation, (5) very heavy physical and mental labour, (6) abstinence from spices and intoxicants, (7) avoiding amorous sights in dramas etc., (8) inward aloofness during any contact with women, (9) refraining from being alone with one's wife or any woman, (10) chanting of *Ramnam* or of any such other *japa*.

Bapu's blessings

(Translated from Gujarati).



C/o: Comrade Office,

Delhi, d. 14-9-1924

*Dear Dr. Besant,

I am eternally grateful for your letter and your note on our conversation. I wired to you on receipt of your letter that *Young India* was already published. I am therefore now handing the note to the *Associated Press of India*. I have not yet heard from the Swarajists. It is therefore not possible to say what the A.I.C.C. (All India Congress Committee) is likely to say. I shall however keep you informed of any developments that may take place.

My son will go to Adyar as soon as you want him to. Indeed he will regard it as a privilege to teach you spinning.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. Gandhi



C/o: M. Mohammad Ali.

Comrade Office, Delhi,

d. 15-9-1924

*My dear Rajagopalachari,

I have been constantly thinking of you ever since the reading of your letter. How is it that you do not see the necessity as clearly as I do of the step I have taken? I agree with you that it is better to leave the Congress if we cannot enforce our programme. The difficulty is to know how. I cannot help feeling that we cannot embarrass the Swarajists. They are supplying a felt want. They do represent a large section of people who want petty relief. Shall we obstruct them? Ours is predominantly a spiritual activity. Its strength is developed unperceived and not by merely debating and vote-taking. I am still not clearly expressing myself. I have simply set forth one argument out of many for the course I have taken and advised for adoption by us all. Somehow or other I *feel* the absolute correctness of the step even though I cannot demonstrate it to your satisfaction. I know how difficult it must be for you and others suddenly to accommodate yourselves to these sudden changes. But how shall I help myself? I know I am putting an undue strain upon the loyalty and the faith of co-workers. But is it not better that I should do that rather than that I should suppress the clear voice within? Of what use should I be, if I once stifled that monitor? But this merely by the way.

(The rest of the letter deals with the South India Flood Relief work).



Message to the *Hindu*, Lahore

*Dear Lala Karmachand,

Here is my message:

I am averse to the multiplication of newspapers at the present moment. A large number are simply fomenting trouble and increasing the tension between Hindus and Mussulmans. If your paper being a Hindu paper does not pledge itself to the surrender by the Hindus of every material interest to the Mussulmans, I for one cannot welcome the enterprise.

M. K. Gandhi

Delhi, d. 17-9-1924

*Dear Motilalji,

I have your wire. I am in Delhi for sometime at any rate. I shall therefore be delighted to see you and Mr. Das whenever you come. I have taken what might be the final plunge. My fast for 21 days commences from today. That is how I have learnt to understand religion.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. Gandhi

Delhi, d. 17-9-1924

*My dearest Charlie (C. F. Andrews),

Don't you fret over my decision. It has been taken after deep prayer and clearest possible indication. This fast of 21 days is the least I can do. Oh the agony of it all! Every day has been a day of torture. But I shall soon be at peace. I was longing to see my duty clearly. The light has come like a flash. Can a man do more than give his life?

With the dearest love,

Yours,

Mohan



Delhi Letter

Let me admit at once that I am writing this letter for the sake of writing something, as there is no such tangible news as I can give. And what other news is it possible to give these days than the bare statement that the conflagration is blazing all around? If we go into the causes of the riots that have raged or are raging, nothing more serious is found than what the following lines of the Gujarati poet Akha indicate:

**वा वायाथी नळियुं खस्युं,
ते देखीने कूतरुं भस्युं,
कोई कहे में दिठो चोर,
घणो थयो त्यां शोर बकोर ॥**

The wind blew off a single tile
That made a dog bark loud awhile,
Then someone said, "The thief I saw",
A row was raised from nothing so.

And yet if the same thing is seen uniformly everywhere, one is naturally inclined to see something at the bottom of that 'nothing' behind the riots.



The Article on Gulbarga

(d. 17-9-1924)

It was some such natural inference that had led Gandhiji to say in his article on Gulbarga¹ that there seemed to be an organization at the back of these riots, inasmuch as in the madness for destruction, the method is the same. This article received great publicity here and much discussed. Many people came to understand it and demand an explanation. The real work which has brought him here had thus to be put aside and some of Gandhiji's time was taken up in these explanations. Distrust and suspicion are still at large. And as long as the present mood, when hardly anybody is prepared to talk freely and honestly, continues, rapprochement will take time. And it is difficult to say how long this period will last, when even before one wound is healed up and the bandage removed, others are inflicted. But Gandhiji is tackling this question with the same degree of patience as the degree of impatience he used to exhibit, and does so still, for bracing up the country for action in the struggle for Swaraj. For the solution of this great problem he is doing many things all at once—giving a clarification to somebody, sending a message to another place or conferring with a third party. And every moment his heart cries out to God:

बिगड़ी हमारी बात अब तो सुधारे रे हरि!

Things have gone with us so awry!

Rush to help and save us worry.

And yet during this period of breath-taking exertions, he manages to find time for small kindly acts, just for the gratification of friends. Sardar Mangalsinghji and a few other Sikh friends hit upon the start of a nationalist daily here. They were able to secure for it an enthusiastic and learned man, Sri. Panikkar, who, after the incarceration of Gidwaniji, has been doing this same work of service of the Akalis. They thereupon decided to make its start auspicious by having Gandhiji's blessings and he agreed to declare open the *Hindustan Times*. To bring out the first number in time they had made hectic preparations, days and nights long, and had every reason to expect it to be out on the 15th evening but somehow the machines rebelled at the last stage. 'Let the Press at least be opened at Gandhiji's hands', thought the Sardar Saheb



and he took Gandhiji to the premises, because he was afraid that Gandhiji might not return to Delhi in the near future.

Among many others I have seen only the Sikhs who have the genius of transforming in a trice an ordinary function into one of becoming gravity and grandeur. About fifty friends were invited besides Gandhiji. The hall was close and stuffy and there were no electric fans there. Tall and sturdy Sikh "volunteers" therefore stood up from their seats and, looking like stately trees with branches waving in the wind, they began to fan the whole assembly with fans in their out-stretched and revolving hands. Sikh "volunteers" does not mean here regular Volunteers appointed for the task, but any and every Sikh who was impelled with an urge to render that service. A second would get up to relieve the first and a third the second and so on right till the end of the meeting. It must have been a pleasant surprise to many, when they saw even Sardar Mangalsingh rising up likewise. But just as among the Mussulmans the prince and the pauper are on the same level when they do their *namaz*, so these Sikh brothers seem to have acquired the potent charm of regarding the rich and the poor alike in the matter of rendering service. Impulsively I thought at first, 'I must take the fan from the Sardar Saheb and give him rest.' But then it struck me, 'Would it not look like a theatrical pose?' I curbed my urge only with that second thought. Ah, if every kind of service was as infectious as this!

Good God! But I forgot the *Hindustan Times*! You will never find a Sikh function which does not begin with hymns of Nanak and Kabir that lift up the soul from the sorrows of the world. And so was it here. What simple and profound truth the following conveys!

कोई हर समान नहीं राजा,
कोई हर समान नहीं राजा,
ये भूपत सब दिवस चार के।
झूठे कर्ज दिवाजा॥ कोई०॥
हाथ पसार सके को जन को
ध्रुव प्रह्लाद निवाजा॥ कोई०॥



No king can match the Ruler Divine,
No one can be like Him benign;
These earthly kings are a passing show
No good for help and hollow so!
Of kids distressed like Dhruva,² Prahlad
Who can be, but God, their dad?

And then they sang another:

अमृत रस चाखिये महाराज!

"Let us, O friends! drink the nectar drink."

Sri Panikkar and Maulana Mohammad Ali requested Gandhiji to declare the Press open. After listening to the hymn inviting people to drink ambrosia, what other message could Gandhiji have to give than to advise them to really do so? "If you can drink it through the papers, you may certainly do it,—otherwise there is no meaning in having papers to read"—that was the sum and substance of Gandhiji's speech. But let me rather give an actual summary of that neat little speech:

"If power fell into my hands, I would close all the papers except *Young India*. Why should a man of such views care to come here to open a paper? But I dote upon the Sikh brothers. And hence my presence here. At the present times I simply pity the new paper that embarks upon its perilous voyage. (Press laws were very strict and rigorously enforced then). I would wish well of it and hope that it did not utter a single superfluous word. The one thing that I anxiously cogitate over these days is how to quench the conflagration that is blazing all over our country. And I have discussed this same subject in my article written on the way to Delhi. Our goal is not unity of Hindus and Muslims only, but of all the communities in India. And till that is not achieved, danger looms large upon all of us. To add to our troubles Government also is hemming us in on all sides. Dark clouds are lowering upon us and it seems as if we have to learn out A B C over again. And yet if I am in a position to give you a piece of advice, let me say that a man with faith in God need never give way to despair. And I hope your community will never sink into the slough of despond.

"You are justified in your claim to be the first Nationalist venture in Delhi. You have got a learned man as the Editor and the whole responsibility rests with the Sardar Saheb. I therefore hope that you will conduct the paper thoughtfully, with a clear



perception of all the dangers through which journalists of the present day have to pass. And as the Maulana told you, let there be not a single word of untruth in your paper.

"You have a religious attitude, you will not launch upon a single activity without rousing your religious fervour and crying aloud 'Satshri Akal' (God the Timeless is the one Truth). I trust there is not a single statement, not a single sentence, nay, not a single word, which is not based on truth, in which something true is kept back or some lie is hinted. Let us die, but not kill. Let our heads be severed off our trunks, but we will never stoop to tell a lie. "God's name is the one truth"—let us never forget that and go on with our work. You will then have rendered real service to the Sikhs, to your *Gurudwaras* (Sikh temples) and to India."

Gandhiji has been trying to give this very same message in a thousand ways and in varying expressions.

P.S. It seems as if God has ordained a punishment to me, simply as retributive justice for writing in the beginning of this letter that I had no news to give. I finished this letter and put it before Gandhiji. He read it through and just as I was going to enclose all matter for *Navajivan* in an envelope, he gave me a written script:

"Don't discuss with me, at least today, the resolve I have made but accept it silently and cheerfully."

His Wednesday silence is not yet over. The heart that was stirred to its bottom has taken the terrible vow of 21 days' fast and asked me in addition not to discuss it but to seal my mouth. It is but meet therefore that I should take silence after merely stating the above fact. He has been crying out every moment to have faith in God. Let me not scatter his precept to the winds by expressing grief at his step.

1. App. III—1

2. Being the unfavourite queen's son, Dhruva was refused permission by his father, the king, to sit on his lap. Deeply offended Dhruva resorted to a forest and did *tapasya*. Lord Vishnu revealed Himself and made him one of the Immortals. The Pole Star is called Dhruva. Lord Vishnu took the manlion *avatar* in order to save the child Prahlad and kill his father Hiranyakashipu who being an Asura (demon) had forbidden the worship of Lord Vishnu and the child had refused to obey the order.



Delhi,

d. 18-9-1924

*Dear Dr. Besant,

I thank you for your letter. You know of my fast. I shall not therefore have the privilege of presiding at the celebration of 2nd October. Of course, I shall hope to send a message.

Regarding the Congress passing the constitution I see many difficulties. But I am keeping an open mind. We shall discuss it when we can meet. I do not expect any untoward result from the fast.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. Gandhi

The Meaning of the Penance

(Navajivan, 28-9-1924)

हरिनो मारग छे शूरानो, नहि कायरनुँ काम जोने|
परथम पहेलुं मस्तक मूकी, वळती लेवुं नाम जोने||
सुत वित दारा शीश समरपे, ते पामे रस पीवा जोने|
सिन्धु मध्ये मोती लेवा, मांही पड्या मरजीवा जोने||
मरण आगळे ते भरे मूठी, दिलनी दुग्धा वामे जोने|
तीरि ऊभा जुए तमासो, ते कोडी नव पामे जोने||
प्रेमपंथ पावकनी जवाळा, भाळी पाछा भागे जोने|
मांही पड्या ते महासुख माणे, देखनारा दाझे जोने||
माथा साटे मोंधी वस्तु, सांपडवी नहि सहेल जोने|
महापद पाम्या ते मरजीवा, मूकी मननो मेल जोने||
राम-अमलमां राता माता, पूरा प्रेमी परखे जोने|
प्रीतमना स्वामीनी लीला, ते रजनी दन नरखे जोने||



The Path of the Lord

The path of the Lord is for heroes:
it is not meant for shrinkers.
Offer first your life and your all: Then
take the name of the Lord.
He only tastes of the Divine Cup who gives
up his wife, his wealth, his own life.
For, verily, he who seeks for pearls must
dive to the bottom of the sea, endangering
his very existence.
Death he regards as naught: he forgets all
the miseries of mind and body.
He who stands on the shore, fearing to take
the plunge, attains naught.
The pathway of love is the ordeal of
fire, the shrinkers turn away from it.
Those who take the plunge into the
fire, attain eternal bliss.
Those, who stand afar, looking on,
are scorched by the flames.
Love is a priceless thing, only to be
won at the cost of death.
Those who live to die, these attain;
for they have shed all thoughts of self.
Those heroic souls who are rapt
in the love of the Lord, they are the true
lovers.
Pritam says, it is given to them alone to see
the Lila of the Lord by night and day.

(Translated by Mahadev Desai)

Bapu himself usually begins the prayers here. He himself sings the *slokas* (Sanskrit verses) fervently and himself selects the hymn to be sung. Since the arrival of



Balkoba, the congregation has increased in number and the attendants are moved by a surge of love and devotion for God. Though prayers were held twice since Balkoba's arrival, he had not sung the hymn, 'हरिनो मारग छे शूरानो' (The Path of the Lord). This morning, Gandhiji grew impatient and before Balkoba could begin, he said, "Sing that hymn—

‘हरिनो मारग छे शूरानो!’

My last letter ended in a note of uneasiness and I was not sure if I could regain sufficient composure for a second letter. For two days the anguish continued and no attempt to stop the torrent of tears could succeed. Impelled by waves of disturbing thoughts such as, "Ah, if Bapu could but be persuaded to give up the fast!" "Lord forbid it, but if his body is unable to stand it, what, O what may happen!", I used to besiege Bapu with my pleadings, even though I was forbidden to do so. The next morning therefore Bapu told me, "I am prepared to discuss with you all the 24 hours, but I want you to understand this fast". Then he gave me a good long time to explain his stand and in a very short time. I felt a most unexpected tranquility, as the beginning of this letter made without a trace of uneasiness attests. Not only have I regained my peace of mind, but every word of the hymn 'The Path of the Lord' seems now to flood the heart with an entirely new light. The reason for this change is *shravan* (receptive hearing) and *manan* (meditation on what was heard). I saw immediately that *shravanbhakti* (devotion expressed through *shravan*) is the greater need of the moment than *ashrubhakti* (devotion expressed through tears). And as my *shravanbhakti* increased my *mananbhakti* also increased with it, with the result that today I am now at peace with myself. What a good thing it would be if all gain a similar serenity! I shall therefore have the satisfaction of having done my part, by making the reader experience, as best I can, the hallowness and quietude of the atmosphere prevailing here and thus sharing with him the *shravanbhakti* which has pacified my heart.

The reader is aware that on the first day I was asked peremptorily not to discuss the fast. But can the Maulana be ordered so? So he was told, "Don't cry like that. Have patience." The Maulana's plea was put forth with all the resentment that love generates and backed up with tears gushing in his eyes. "What is this Bapu? Is this the kind of *mohabbat* (love) you have for us? You have simply cheated us. You will take



every step only after consultation with us—that was our understanding. Has it evaporated?"

"But can there not be some things about which I have to render my account to Khuda first and last?"

"But you have made Khuda the witness between you and us."

"No we are both Khuda's bondsmen. Both of us are pledged to Him. It is with Him that I hold converse today. This thing (fasting at the call of God) is, by its very nature, such as forbids consultation with others. It is bred in my bones. My whole life has been built upon its basis. All my former fasts had been undertaken without any body's previous consultation."

"But may it not be a hasty step when it is taken so suddenly? You simply laugh it out, *you* don't worry at all but have you thought of what may happen to *us*?"

"Everything will go well with you. And why do you take it for granted that I shall die?"

"And why do you take it for certain that you will live on? Playing these pranks with health and imagining that nothing is going to happen!"

"Oh, come now. Take my word for it. Calm yourself. You must not give way to tears. I will explain further tomorrow."

Hakimji also was really worried. He held: "It is not right for you to take such a drastic step when parleys are still going on. Give us a fortnight's notice. You may freely go on a fast if the situation in the country does not improve within fifteen days. We won't stop you then."

"All right. Try that method of a fifteen days' notice. Don't publish the news of my fast for 15 days and let nobody come here. And then at the end of that period you may come here and tell me that the country is quiet. I will end my fast six days after that report." Hakim Saheb could not help smiling. When he touched the health-angle of the fast, Gandhiji told him, "I am certain that even after 21 days' fast my health will be better than yours at least." The Begum Saheb even thrust aside her veil, sat down before Bapu in the midst of all of us and insisted: "I am never going to get up from here till you give up the fast. Were Bi Amma (mother of the Ali Brothers) able to come upstairs, she would have here been herself. But she is bedridden and I have come instead. Do give up the fast or we will all fast in merry company with you for 21 days."



The day wore off to 1.30 p. m. in these pleadings. We gave up further attempts and dispersed. But Gandhiji? At 1. 30 p. m. he sat up to spin because that thing was left undone!

The 18th morning dawned,—with the faces of all of us in the house, mine and others' fallen. Bapu renewed his talk.

Just then a sturdy old Muslim villager of Multan came in, rushing and jostling his way through the impeding volunteers, shook hands with Gandhiji and sat down. He was in the highest spirits, but then Maulana Mohammad Ali told him, "Do you know he is on a *roza* (fast) of 21 days - because Muslims and Hindus do not stop fighting?" The old man grew pale and began to grumble, "Somebody incites *badmashes* of both the communities and so all these brawls. But none of us there is quarrelling" and with these words he too began to urge, "Take but a quarter pound of milk daily. Eat very sparingly, say, even on alternate days, but please do some such thing; for, in the case of a person like you, every act is a prayer to God whether you sit or stand, eat or drink."

Highly pleased Gandhiji said, "And can this also not be a prayer? This abstinence from eating—this *roza*?" The question puzzled the simple old man, "But do listen to the earnest entreaty of such a nobody like myself; and eat." And then as he left, he said, "I will come again after ten or twenty days." "Do come," said Bapu, "after twenty days."

[What follows has been reproduced from Sri. Mahadevbhai's own article in *Young India* d. 23-10-1924]

Bapu asked me:

'Do you see the meaning of my fast on account of the Bombay and Chauri Chaura incidents?'

'Yes', said I.

'Then why can you not see the meaning of this fast?'

'There you fasted by way of penance for what you thought was a crime committed by you. There is no such thing here. There is not the semblance of an offence that may be attributed to you.'

'What a misconception! In Chauri Chaura the culprits were those who had never seen me, never known me. Today the culprits are those who know me and even profess to love me!'



'Shaukat Ali and Mohammad Ali', I said, 'are trying their best to quench the conflagration. But it is beyond them. Some men may be beyond their reach, even your reach. What can they do? What can you do? The situation will take time to improve.'

'That is another story', he answered, 'Shaukat Ali and Mohammad Ali are pure gold. They are trying their best, I know. But the situation is out of our hands today. It was in our hands six months ago. I know my fast will upset them. Indirectly it might have an effect on their minds, but it was not meant to produce an effect on any one's mind.'

'That's all right', I replied. 'But you have yet to tell me where your error lay for which you are doing penance.'

'My error! Why, I may be charged with having committed a breach of faith with the Hindus. I asked them to befriend Muslims. I asked them to lay their lives and their property at the disposal of the Mussulmans for the protection of their Holy Places. Even today I am asking them to practise *Ahimsa*, to settle quarrels by dying, but not by killing. And what do I find to be the result? How many temples have been desecrated? How many sisters come to me with complaints? As I was saying to Hakimji yesterday, Hindu women are in mortal fear of Mussulman *goondas*. In many places they fear to go out alone. I had a letter from..... How can I bear the way in which his little children were molested? How can I now ask Hindus to put up with everything patiently? I gave the assurance that the friendship of Mussulmans was bound to bear good fruit. I asked them to befriend them, regardless of the result. It is not in my power today to make good that assurance, neither it is in the power of Mohammad Ali or Shaukat Ali. Who listens to me? And yet I must ask the Hindus even today to die and not to kill. I can only do so by laying down my own life. I can teach them the way to die by my own example. There is no other way..... I launched non-co-operation. Today I find that the people are non-co-operating against one another, without any regard for non-violence. What is the reason? Only this, that I am not completely non-violent. If I were practising non-violence to perfection, I should not have seen the violence I see around me today. My fast is therefore a penance. I blame no one. I blame only myself. I have lost the power wherewith to appeal to people. Defeated and helpless I must submit my petition in His Court. Only He will listen, no one else.'

It was a torrent that I could hardly catch, much less reproduce. I asked at the end: 'But, Bapu, should the penance take only this shape, and no other? Is fasting prescribed by our religion?' 'Certainly,' said he, 'What did the Rishis of old do? It is



unthinkable that they ate anything during their penances—in some cases, gone through in caves, and for hundreds of years. Parvati who did penance to win Shiva would not touch even the leaves of trees, much less fruit or food. Hinduism is full of penance and prayer. I have decided on this fast with deeper deliberation than I gave to any of my previous fasts. I had such a fast in mind even when I conceived and launched non-co-operation. At that time, I said to myself, 'I am placing this terrible weapon in the hands of the people. If it is abused, I must pay the price by laying down my life.' That moment seems to have arrived today. The object of the previous fasts was limited. The object of this is unlimited and there is boundless love at the back of it. I am today bathing in that ocean of love.'

Maulana Shaukat Ali came the next day. Maulana Mohammad Ali had built much on his coming, for he had fondly hoped that he would probably shake Gandhiji's resolve. Indeed Gandhiji had promised him that he would give up the vow if Shaukat or he convinced him that the fast was morally or in any other way wrong. The long talk with him was, however, of no avail, as far as the continuance of the fast was concerned, but it threw even more light on the inner meaning.

'What have we done, Mahatmaji, to remedy the situation' 'he exclaimed. 'Almost nothing! You have been preaching through your paper, but you have yet undertaken no long journey. Pray, travel through the affected areas and purify the atmosphere. This fast is hardly the way to fight the wrong.'

Gandhiji replied: 'It is for me a pure matter of religion. I looked around me, and questioned myself, and found that I was powerless. What could I effect even by means of a long tour? The masses suspect us today. Pray, do not believe that the Hindus in Delhi fully trust me. They were not unanimous in asking me to arbitrate. And naturally, there have been murders. How can I hope to be heard by those who have suffered? I would ask them to forgive those who have murdered their dearest ones. Who would listen to me? The Anjuman (a Muslim organisation) refuses to listen to Hakimji. When we were in the midst of negotiation about their arbitration, I heard of Kohat (the place where communal fury burst out wildly). I asked myself, 'What are you going to do now?' I am an irrepressible optimist, but you at times base yours on sand. No one will listen to you today. In Visnagar in Gujarat, they gave a cold shoulder to Mr. Abbas Tyabji and Mahadeo. In Ahmedabad a storm was nipped in the bud. Some trouble was brewing in Umreth when I left Gujarat. That I should be a passive witness of all these, shows the depth of my incapacity. There are hundreds of sisters whose love and



affection I still possess. They are in mortal fear today. To them I want to show by my own example the way to die.

'Fight I do not mind if it be fair, honourable, brave fighting between the two communities. But today it is all a story of unmitigated cowardice. They would throw stones and run away, murder and run away, go to court, put up false witnesses and cite false evidence. What a woeful record? How am I to make them brave? You are trying your best. But I should also try my best. I must recover the power to react on them.' 'No', rejoined Shaukat Ali. 'You have not failed. They listened to you. They were listening to you. In your absence they had other advisers. They listened to their advice and took to evil ways. They will still see the folly of their ways, I am sure. You have done much to reduce the poison in the popular mind. I would not bother about these disturbances at all. I would simply go and tell them, "Devils, play this game to your heart's content. God is still there. You may kill one another. You cannot kill Him.' Do not, Sir, come in the way of the Lord. You are wrestling with Him. Let Him have His way'.

'I wrestling with Him!' exclaimed Gandhiji in surprise. 'If there is pride or defiance in me it is all over with me. Dear man, this fast is the result of several days' continued prayers. I have got up from sleep at 3 o' clock in the night and have asked Him what to do. On the 17th of Sept. the answer came like a flash! If I have erred, He will forgive me. All I have done, all I am doing, is done in a fully God-fearing spirit, and in the house of a God-fearing Mussulman at that. My religion says that only he who is prepared to suffer can pray to God. Fasting and prayer are common injunctions in my religion. But I know of this sort of penance even in Islam. In the life of the Prophet I have read that the Prophet often fasted and prayed and forbade others to copy him. Someone asked him why he did not allow others to do the thing he himself was doing. 'Because I live on food divine', he said. He achieved most of his great things by fasting and prayer. I learnt from him that only he can fast who has inexhaustible faith in God. The Prophet had revelations not in moments of ease and luxurious living. He fasted and prayed, kept awake for nights together and would be on his feet at all hours of the night as he received the revelations. Even at this moment I see before me the picture of the Prophet thus fasting and praying. My dear Shaukat, I cannot bear the people accusing you and your brother of having broken your promises to me. I cannot bear the thought of such an accusation. I must die for it. This fast is but to purify myself, to strengthen myself. Let me not be misunderstood. I am speaking to you as though I was a Mussulman, because I have cultivated that respect for Islam which you have for it.



After I have fasted and prayed, I shall be all the stronger, with all my reverence for Islam, to appeal to both the communities. It is my own firm belief that the strength of the soul grows in proportion as you subdue the flesh. We have to fight hooliganism and we are not sufficiently spiritually strong to fight it.'

At this point Shaukat Ali changed the line of his argument. 'Are you not', said he, 'even bound to consider what a shock it will be to the country, this long fast of yours?'

'No! for man so often deceives himself! He often does things to please others, which he should have avoided. Religion, therefore, teaches him to stand before the world after having taken a particular resolve. What vanity, to think that the world would be shocked at one's own great penance! And whose wishes are we to consider? There would be no limit. Had Rama stopped to consult and argue, he would never have gone on *vanavasa* (dwelling in a forest) and rid the earth of its suffering. He waited for no one's advice. He went forth, for he prized his plighted word more than his life. Only he can take great resolves who has indomitable faith in God and has fear of God.'

'One more question', said Shaukat Ali as he stood up to go, 'Do you need to consult no one before arriving at such a decision? You need not even take into consideration the effect it would have on your health or body?'

'No. It is a matter between me and my Maker. And if I must consult someone, I had better not taken the vow at all. You talk of the effect on my health and body. Well, if I am too weak to stand it I may die. What is the body worth? Whilst I was in jail I read with rapturous delight the lives of the Companions of the Prophet. There is a story that Hazrat Umar sent a present of 500 *dinars* to some one. He shrank from it and began to cry. His wife asked him why he was crying. He said, 'Maya—unreality—has come to me. What will happen to me?' The *dinars* were a present from such a holy man as Hazrat Umar. But he shrank from it, because it was unreal, evanescent. And so is life. Let God keep this body if He has still to make some use of it. Let it perish if it has fulfilled His purpose. In fact, I had thought of going on a permanent vow of fasting, if matters did not improve after the fast terminated. Hakimji asked me not to think of it. 'How can I cast it out of my mind?' said I. 'It is in my bones, it is part of my very being.' I would ask Mussulmans to befriend the Hindus, if they think it is not contrary to their religion. If they think and tell me it is contrary to their religion, then I am sure I should have no cause to live any more. I should die. I had a plain talk with Khwaja Hasan Nizami Sahib also the other day. I told him 'Why do you try to convert the waifs and strays and the untouchables? Better convert me, so that after I am converted many more might



follow me. If those poor people embrace Islam, they will not do so because they understand the beauty of Islam, but for other reasons. Islam will not be a whit richer for them.'

It was an impressive dialogue. I have not even done bare justice to it. Shaukat Ali seemed quite over powered. As he rose he said. "Three things I pray for every day; the first is Hindu Muslim Unity, the second, that my mother may live to see Islam and India free; the third, that Mahatma Gandhi's mission may be fulfilled."

Gandhiji felt relieved at the fact that the Maulana did not argue for long. It seemed that the Maulana could understand him in almost a hint.

It is in order to show the meaning of this fast that I have recounted the talk at all this length and with this calmness. But grief and becoming alert from it are two quite different things. If a man does nothing but grieve for his sorrows, weakness and despair overwhelm him, but if a bolt from the blue only awakens him, braces him up for action, he takes the road of self-development. The fact of Gandhiji's fast is indeed a very serious shock to us, but he hopes that instead of depressing us it only rouses us from our deep slumber. And even today, when owing to the fact that his feeling of utter helplessness had grown unbearable he is crying out through his austere penance for God's succour, he has been inspiring the people with hope through his letters and messages and asking us to shake ourselves free from the wretched imbecility of the heart which has overtaken us. Scores of telegrams stream into this place everyday, the purport of many of them being only this: 'We will do whatever you ask us to, forget our wrangles, but please end your fast.' Quite a number of friends also pray to him through letters to terminate the fast. Gandhiji's reply is his appeal to them all in this one strain: "Pray, don't be upset by the fast. Friends, on the contrary, should be proud that God granted me the strength to go through this penance." To some one else he writes: 'If I give up fast, I betray the Monitor of my soul. This is not a fast for death but for a purer life; but of course God's Will be done.' To a third he says: 'What is after all a twentyone days' fast? The fast is nothing, if I can become the-re-through the recipient of all this boundless love!'

Those who appeal to him by wire to break the fast, implore him in various ways. Someone says: "You are our stay and support, Why throw away the precious gem of life for the folly of the idiots of a few towns?" Some other argues: "This country is hopelessly unfit. Your fast will leave it cold. Give it up." Then a third one puts in: "Why undergo this physical torture for the sins of others?'" Someone else quotes a scriptural



text: "Hindu *dharma* forbids a fast of more than five days without consultation with friends. Your fast is against our religion. Please break it on the sixth day," Despite his physical weakness he dictates replies to these people by wire: 'Don't you wish that, as a Hindu, I must keep my plighted troth? Fitness or otherwise is not the question with me. I have but to think of only one thing: What is my *dharma* in this case. The fast undertaken in God's name has but to be completed. I do not believe in a literal interpretation of *dharma-shastra*. According, as I understand, Hindu *dharma* it is replete with instances of such austerities."

So much about those who want Gandhiji to break the fast. But there are a few telegrams, a very few that can be counted on fingers' tips which say, "May your fast be completed without a mishap!" Yesterday there was a wire from Surat which even stated : "Congratulations for twentyone days' fast". Bapu was immensely pleased. Immediately he was moved to a smile and say, "Must be a Jain." Just at that moment Rewashankarbhai (a Jain friend) also, who had come from Bombay and was present there, spoke in a similar strain. And how can I put down in language the profound satisfaction and peace that Bapu felt at the exhorting words of that same Revashankar bhai, who could not bear the sight of Bapu's skeleton frame at the Sassoon Hospital in Poona? He said as he was sitting by Bapu's bed: "I assure you, I am not unhappy at all—no, not in the least. This is bound to end in good. There was no other go left for you. And are there not our Jain *munis* (recluses) who undergo fasts for a number of days?" Highly gratified Bapu agreed: "Yes, they do indeed. It is simply because I happen to be 'a great man', that people are in panic and there is this rush. The world never cares even to think of the so-many others—poor men who undergo long fasts!" Sri Natrajan's letter gave him the same delight. It said in effect: "I was at first stunned. But then I saw that a man like you could do nothing else. A glorious chapter is opening in the history of our country through your fast."

As I am talking of these telegrams let me give here a sample of the jokes Bapu indulges in in the midst of his physical agony. Lala Harkishanlal wired: When we met in 1920, you told me that three things were dear to your heart, removal of untouchability, freedom of the country and Hindu Muslim Unity, and that they were your favourite activities. Why not live for all the three rather than die for one of them? Live, work, suffer sorrows and tribulations for all, and pray, but don't commit suicide."

Gandhiji burst into a loud laugh as the telegram was read to him and himself-wrote down the reply: "Thanks. Fast not for death but (for) self-purification. God



willing, I shall live to see that desire fulfilled and to make you draw out threads of yarn." In that immortal Hope, which depends on God's Will, lies the hope of us all also.

Seven days are over today. He was looking extremely weak and emaciation is now clearly visible. He finds it a little difficult even to sit up on his bed for the morning prayer. Today he himself admitted: "My voice is growing faint. I cannot sing loudly even the hymns. I shall have to stop speaking altogether."

Nobody can ever say that at the sight of this condition it is an easy thing to keep up courage. But what other thing except courage is helpful here? Let us throw off the weakness of our mind, peep into the recesses of our heart, undergo *tapa* (penance) purified by *japa* (chanting of God's name) and chant *japa* charged with potency through *tapa*. Only then may the prayer of us, insignificant erring creatures, bear some fruit. (*Rentia baras*=the spinning-wheel. twelfth. Gandhiji's birthday fell according to the Hindu calendar year on the 12th of the bright half of Ashwin. The people called it *rentia baras* from the great love Gandhiji bore for the wheel. The birth-day fell that time on 25.9.1924, the 8th (ashtami) day of the fast (*anashan*). Hence the article, is dated as *Rentia baras, d. 25.9.1924, anashan ashtami'*.)



The Second Week

(*Navajivan*, 5.10.1924)

His vow completed a week last Wednesday and today the second week is over. I have been consistently giving everyday the news of his health. At the end of the 2nd week the body appears a little more reduced, but the lustre on the face is as glowing as of old, with the difference that it wears a specially kindly and gentle look. During the first week he used to get up for his bath etc. and descend the steps of the ladder for a short stroll. Both these things have stopped during the second week. He cannot now get down from the bed to go out or even sit up on it without aid and so he keeps lying all the day. Only for the sake of spinning, he seems to be exercising his will-power. From the weakness evident in all other movements of the body, the doctors had, naturally, felt at first that he might have lost the capacity to revolve his hand and keep up the sitting posture for half an hour at a stretch. They had, therefore, advised him to give up spinning. But Gandhiji, who was behaving like a perfectly obedient patient in all other matters, gave them a challenge in this. It was the doctors who had to acknowledge defeat, for at the end of half an hour of spinning, there was not only no sign of greater strain but their examination revealed an even healthier pulse! They had to admit: "This (spinning) is for you a tonic!"

The other exception to physical weakness was with regard to his writing capacity. The doctors feel that there also it must be his iron will that was at work, because even during the second week the output of his writing work was by no means negligible! The doctors had at first forbidden writing and dictating, but who can suppress Gandhiji's impelling urge for service?

He wrote a long letter to the members of the Unity Conference. Ever since that day the doctors realised that he ought to be allowed to write whatever he wanted to, because, just as turning the spinning-wheel was for him a medicinal dose, so he has been distributing doses of nectar even though he was undergoing an austere penance through his writings. Only he can appraise at its true value what a really ambrosial drink he is serving, who knows that besides one letter to the *Navajivan* reader, two letters to the Unity Conference and a small article for *Young India*, Bapu has been writing to some exceptionally lucky persons daily, letters written in his own hand, with the regularity of a religious rite kept up everyday. He has not the strength to sit up for



writing all this, but he keeps the writing materials near his pillow and writes in his lying posture.

In the first week, he used to sing loudly during the prayers and with such gusto that his voice was audible to a large number. But now it has become impossible for him to sit upright for the prayers and sing aloud. He has, as a substitute, cultivated the habit of listening for a long time. Pandit Malaviyaji came to see him one day. He uttered not a word by way of a talk but expressed his desire to read *Dhruvakhyan* (the story of Dhruva in poetry) to Gandhiji and for about an hour and a half, or even two, he recited the canto of Dhruva from *Shrimad Bhagavat* (standard book for Lord Vishnu's devotees) which sang of the glory of the *tapasya* through which the little Dhruva had attained the vision and very close nearness of the Lord. Gandhiji too is now experiencing more and more his proximity to God by listening to devotional music more than ever before. Today Malaviyaji recited to him *Prahlad-akhyan* and Balkobaji has come over from the city to stay with Gandhiji so that whenever Gandhiji likes, he can be at hand to sing hymns to him. Pandit Malaviyaji, moreover, has arranged for several musicians who fill up Gandhiji's time from 4 to 6 p. m. with melodious hymns. However much one may abstain from the food of the body, renunciation of the food of the soul is unthinkable. Only then can a man get at the enjoyment of immortality when the food of his soul goes on increasing day by day. It seems as if Gandhiji is furnishing us with an object lesson on that memorable dictum:

त्यागेनैकेन देवा अमृतत्वमानशुः |

(Through their renunciation alone did the Gods come to enjoy the drink of immortality).

And is there any wonder if he, who is having such ambrosial food and is nourishing the soul with incessant communion with God, can defeat the doctors' scientific prognosis? This miracle happened on Monday last. Among those who serve Gandhiji, the position of doctors is, naturally, the first. It is a matter of superb joy to Drs. Ansari and Abdurrehman to examine Gandhiji twice a day. But another doctor also, a Dr. Sen who tests Gandhiji's urine, attends on him with extraordinary devotion. One day he remarked to Andrews: "I never dreamt that a day was to come when I would get this glorious chance of serving Gandhiji this way." On this Monday also Gandhiji's urine was sent to him for analysis as usual. Poisonous substances were



visible in his urine from even the beginning of the fast but not at all to any worrying degree. But on Monday he found their presence to an alarming extent. He took a second examination, but with the same result. He, therefore, informed the doctors. The news spread dismay. Immediately on hearing it Hakim Saheb Ajmal Khan who could not attend even the Unity Conference owing to his poor health, left for Gandhiji's residence. Hakimji as well as the doctors held that the virulence in urine which had grown to such a dangerous proportion would disappear if Gandhiji took a little sugar. Hakimji came up to Gandhiji earlier than the doctors. Deshbandhu (a popular title=brother of the country) Das and his wife Sri Vasanti Devi were already there. But it was Gandhiji's silence day. How could they argue the matter with Gandhiji during his silence? Deshbandhu sat simply dumb and silent. But Hakim Saheb pleaded his case very persistently. To him Gandhiji wrote in Urdu: "Please be good enough to wait till tomorrow. I will explain everything then." Hakimji retorted. "That you will. But it is we who want to have our say and listen to us you shall." Gandhiji simply kept smiling all the while that Hakimji argued. At last Gandhiji was constrained to write again in Urdu: "God willing, you will find nothing in the urine tomorrow." That provoked Hakimji to a broad laugh and he broke out: "O, you are a *vali*, a *mahatma*, and you can say so. But I am a physician. How can I have that trust?" Gandhiji simply smiled again in reply. Hakimji himself then said, "All right. I will come again tomorrow morning." Hardly was Gandhiji gloating over his victory over Hakimji, when the doctors put in their appearance. Dr. Ansari wore a grave and serious look. They had come, already resolved, to compel Gandhiji to take medicine at all events on that day. But Gandhiji forestalled them and started giving them mild loving rebukes in writing, before they could say anything. "Why have you raised all this commotion for nothing? Why all this alarm from the urine analysis when in all other respects I am a much better patient than you would wish anybody to be." "Nobody denies that you are keeping well", put in Dr. Abdurrehman, "but the virus has grown to such an alarming extent that all your good symptoms will be of no avail to us if it increases only slightly now. The pulse may then be all right, the heart regular, respiration quite O. K, and yet the brain may be affected and we become helpless. We may then have to cry over a lost case." Dr. Ansari implored, "Let me tell you I am not by nature a man easily scared, as everyone will attest. But we have been watching your health continuously for the last three or four days. The development we complain of is ever on the increase, not decrease. If it goes on growing at this rate, we shall have to throw our eyes up in despair! Your condition has passed the stage when that thing can be allowed to grow for a moment longer."



Gandhiji quietly wrote down: "All right. But let us wait till tomorrow. We will discuss the matter after reading tomorrow's analysis."

"But you have already given us your word," stressed Dr. Ansari, "that you will break the fast when we think it risky to continue it. And we do not at all ask you to break the fast. We simply say, 'Take a single teaspoonful of medicine, so that the poison may stop from spreading into the system. We will take care to see that through that dose your body does not get any nourishment, that is, we will give it in such a quantity as will arrest this growth but not diminish the effect of the fast on your body. But how can we accept your plea of waiting till tomorrow? Can there be no end to the risk we take? It has reached its last limit!" None can portray with the pen the intensity of the tragic helplessness, sympathy and love which the words of Dr. Ansari were charged. Only he can know it who had marked every lineament of his face as he was expressing those feelings then. Gandhiji replied: "But it is impossible for me to take sugar. You know the reason. There is my second vow not to take anything after evening twilight. I hope tomorrow's analysis will relieve all your worry."

How is it possible to pierce through argument the shell of a soul that has made itself invulnerable by taking many vows? But Dr. Ansari refused to take defeat. "Well then, we will eschew an oral dose. If we give you an intra-veinous injection, it will have the same effect, and that does not violate your vow in any way. Compared with yesterday's, today's poison is so much greater in proportion that we cannot risk a night's delay."

Gandhiji again assured them: "Be at ease about the night. Even Hakimji has promised to wait till tomorrow's analysis."

Dr. Ansari: "But it is we who are watching you for the last thirteen days, not Hakimji. I can't accept Hakimji's word in this matter. I know your constitution thoroughly and Hakimji examined your pulse only today."

Gandhiji wrote back: "But today the quantity also of urine is smaller. I tell you, you will find a much reduced percentage of poison in the evening analysis."

Thus while, on the one hand, the doctors were afraid of putting Gandhiji's brain to strain by drawing him into lengthy arguments, they saw, on the other hand, a very grave danger in letting him continue the fast. They were thus between the devil and the deep sea. 'How long may we go on making Gandhiji write scripts!' they felt every moment. At the same time they knew that they would be relieved from deep anxiety,



if by God's grace Gandhiji could be won over to their view. They, therefore, continued pleading with him.

Dr. Rehman said: "I cannot say that tomorrow's analysis may not be better, since you have defeated even 'science'. None of the symptoms which, we were afraid, would be visible can be detected even at present. All our medical lore has proved untrue, so far as you are concerned. But we are but common men and examine common human beings. Our risk is smaller only when we examine you by ordinary standards. We request you to understand how serious our responsibility is."

Who can measure the depth of Gandhiji's perplexity when the question whether to yield to this loving appeal or remain firm was posed before him? He wrote again— one trenchant, piteous cry: "In any case please have pity on me;—till only tomorrow!" The doctors' loving hearts were touched at this lamb-like cry of helplessness. For a long while dead silence prevailed. At the sight of the doctors' gloomy silence, instead of appealing to them to have mercy on him Gandhiji was moved to pity them and began trying to appease them. He wrote a note at some good length to request them to keep patience. "You don't take into consideration different idiosyncrasies. What may apply to others, may not to me. It is not true, moreover, that you have come to your conclusions from observations of persons undergoing fasts. Your expectations are based on the cases of those who did not fast. Your science (allopathy) has not yet entered into a penetrating examination of the numerous effects of fasting."

Dr. Ansari countered: "No. We are talking from observations of those who have fasted. The transformations such persons' systems undergo have been noted by the medical science."

It was not possible to say anything in refutation of this answer— except the blunt avowal: "All tight. Then those persons may not be like myself. Mine is an exceptional case." But Gandhiji did not offer that argument. He clinched the issue in only two words: 'Everything tomorrow' and took off the spectacles from his nose, which he had worn for writing. This gesture, the doctors realised, was a polite but decisive notice for closure of the discussion. They, therefore, got up. But as he was rising, Dr. Rehman said, "It would not be surprising, if simply your will-power arrests the growth of poisonous elements." And Gandhiji responded with a childlike, unaffected smile of self-confidence, i. e. faith in God.

I do not see the necessity of even begging the reader's pardon for recounting this historic anecdote word for word. The doctors came out. Dr. Ansari remarked. "I



have decided. I am sleeping for the night right here." Dr. Rehman thought that nothing was going to happen till the next morning, but he said, "Let us first see the evening analysis and then decide." They both went to the city and knew of the evening analysis there. The noxious elements had disappeared almost completely! Dr. Sen, poor man, was puzzled. Such an alarming percentage in the morning and next to nil in the evening! "May there not be an error?" suggested a friend. Dr. Sen felt pricked: "If I err in the urine examination of such a man as Gandhiji, all my reputation goes to the bottom of the sea." He took a second examination none the less, with the very same result! Drs. Ansari and Rehman were intimated. They too were struck dumb with wonder. They had left for their homes with the decision to bring back with them instruments and medicines of various kinds, but this surprising analysis relieved them and they returned empty-handed and slept soundly in the room adjoining Gandhiji's till the next morning. Dr. Rehman got up early in the morning and went to see Gandhiji. With triumphant smile playing on his lips, Gandhiji remarked, "So in coming over here, from the city, you had a good change of air! Had'nt you?" "We will come daily now," said Dr. Rehman. "Yes, do," replied Gandhiji, "But for rest for your tired limbs, not for me."

That night Gandhiji was treated with a new rich dish of spiritual food. The Bishop of Calcutta (and Metropolitan of India) who is in the town for the Unity Conference comes to see Gandhiji of and on and, with a word or two of cheer, goes away. On that memorable Monday night, everyone flocked to see him. The Bishop also was given the news by Andrews and invited. Not only did he come, but stated that he was not going to leave the place, till the evening analysis was given over the telephone. For full two hours he waited, but brushed aside all requests to go upstairs to meet Gandhiji. "I don't wish to disturb him at all. I have come to inquire after his health from you only." Gandhiji came to know of it. The evening prayers were delayed then as there was an unusual rush and bustle of visitors and as Balkoba had not arrived from the city owing to a very heavy downpour of rain. Gandhiji wrote to me on a scrip: "Request the Bishop to join us in the evening prayer, if he would be good enough to sing *Lead Kindly Light*." Immediately I ran to the Bishop. He was simply mad with joy. At once he tried to recollect the lines of that hymn, but in the exuberance of his joy, he forgot a stanza or two. Andrews scribbled the missing stanzas on a piece of paper but had doubts about the accuracy of two words in one of them. Both of them taxed their brains for the exact words. The Bishop at last said, "Let us ask Gandhiji himself." Both got up and as they were going up the ladder, Andrews remarked, "We have written just the right



words. He need not be bothered now." After the twilight prayers were over, both these devout Christians sang the English hymn "Lead Kindly Light" in an exceedingly melodious tune. And Gandhiji closed his eyes for the night with the words "One step enough for me" ringing in his ears and the message of "Lead Kindly Light" evoking His contemplation in the mind.

Successful End

d. 8-10-1924

(*Navajivan*, d. 12-10-1924)

तुम कारन तप संयम किरिया
कहो कहाँ लौं कीजे?
तुम दर्शन बिनु सच या झूठी
अन्तर चित्त न भीजे।
चेतन अब मोहि दर्शन दीजे॥

Self-restraint and gravest penance
For Thee I did perform;
How long have I to do them for
The vision of Thy form?
Without it, Lord! the heart remains
Hard and dry like stone!
Now, please! I pray, do grant Thy sight
And my sins condone.

The developments during the second week of fasting were narrated in the last number. The doctors' flurry, their discussion with Gandhiji and his pacification of their fears were given as vividly as I could. Let me now deal with the third and the last week.

The doctors too had, by then, realised that it was futile to appeal to him to take food. They had also understood the real meaning of the promise Gandhiji had given them. "If a choice has to be made between death and food"—these were the words



Gandhiji had used—the decision really rested not with them but with Gandhiji. They saw that as Gandhiji had not a shred of doubt that his body was not going to succumb to that number of days of fasting, there remained no possibility of his feeling any constraint in giving them the promise he had given. Thenceforth, therefore, they gave up all idea of urging Gandhiji to take food and began to regard it their religious duty to tend him during his fast and help him in its successful completion. When Dr. Bevelkar, a specialist in fast cases, came from Poona to see Bapu, he was emphatic in his pronouncement. "This is really wonderful! He needs not a single doctor. I have never seen a patient like him. After so many days of fasting, a man is spent and gets hardly more than two hours of sleep, but here is Gandhiji with a full seven hours' sleep! It is nothing but his soul force, his tremendous power of concentration, that is keeping him up so well." Quite so. Which doctor can prescribe for the man who not only always treats himself, but cures countless others besides? All the same, it would be sheer ingratitude on my part if I did not mention here that the services the doctors rendered to Gandhiji were excellent beyond comparison. Regularly every morning they would examine him and with smiling faces remark, "Mahatmaji! You are a miracle-worker—even in your recovery!" And who can deny that those words themselves were a powerful pick-me-up?

The last three or four days passed in great inner struggle—that was how I felt—though physical pain was entirely absent. I gathered this impression from a casual but revealing remark he once made to me: "There is no pain in the body at all. In South Africa the suffering had begun as early as in the second week. This time there is something wrong with the mouth and I don't like to drink water. That's all. But even that shows that this is not a perfect fast; there's some defect." How can a man like him tolerate even that degree of body-consciousness? Anything that discloses the slightest attachment to the body is unbearable to him. Everyone of us felt last week that Devdas (fourth son) should be called. Once I pressed this point rather hard. He was then spinning. He blurted out in irritation: "You are crazy, simply crazy. The boy does not want to come. You wrote to him and then did Dr. Ansari and yet he wrote back to say emphatically that he did not want to come just then. Why are you so very particular about his coming? Why lure into infatuation the boy who is controlling it?" After this telling remark we gave up our insistence about calling Devdas.

The whole week, I may say without exaggeration, was spent in the one longing to totally eradicate *dehatmabhava* (man's rooted sense or consciousness that his body and his soul were one and the same, i. e., the human craving for keeping the body alive



and in comfort). For that he would ask Sri Vinoba (now of the 'Bhoodan' fame) to read to him two or three chapters from the *Bhagwadgita* and make Balkobaji sing to him more than one hymn. For the last four days, moreover, Sri Vinoba recites *Kathopanishad* to him every evening. As he remembers the whole of the treatise, why should he need a light for the purpose? In perfect quietude and serenity of mood he sings one part daily and gives his exposition on the same. When Bapu listens to the *akhyan* (story in verse) of Nachiketa¹, that prince among the adepts of spiritual wisdom, Bapu closes his eyes literally and figuratively against the rush of world-currents. And whenever it strikes him that it is ordained that within hardly more than two or three days he has but to plunge into the whirlpool of worldly worries, he feels disconcerted and thinks, "How nice it would have been if this fast was to continue till the attainment of perfect Self-realisation!" If it appears at times that he gets impatient and reproaches his beloved Lord with the cry:

तुम कारन तप संयम किरिया कहो कहाँ लौं कीजे!

Self-restraint and gravest penance
For Thee I did perform;
How long have I to do them for
The vision of Thy form?

at other times, taking upon his shoulders the load of the whole world's sins, he seems to be praying to God:

हौं प्रसिद्ध पातकी, तू पाप पुंजहारी।

Behold, this, the gravest sinner;
Save me! Lord! the One Redeemer!

And who can doubt that nothing but nectar is going to come out of this churning of the great ocean? Only, this tremendous whirling becomes unbearable to the sight of the ordinary erring human. 'If such a terrific storm rages even after such a titanic *tapasya* as his, how much greater suffering may have to be undergone for gaining perfection or total oneness with everything and everybody?' that is the distressing thought that strikes our poor human intelligence which then confesses its helplessness.



While this upheaval was still going on, the 8th of October—Dasserah, the holy day of conquest—(Hindus celebrate this day as Sri Ramachandra invaded Ceylon on that day) came up. Telegrams of felicitations etc. for the successful termination of the fast began to pour in. Even before it was 12 noon, the whole hall on the lower floor was filled up with men. Exactly when the clock struck twelve, Bapu began to call up friends from below one after another. The first to be invited were Imam Saheb, Balkoba, and Andrews. Eyes bedewed with tears, there was Shankarlal Bankar already by Bapu's bedside. Bapu called him close to his side and stroked him. The doctors were then called up. "Is there no one else down below?" he inquired, and someone answered: "There are so many others. The Ali Brothers, Begum Saheb, Mr. and Mrs. Das, the Nehrus—Mr. and Mrs. Motilalji and Jawaharlal and his wife—all are waiting downstairs." Bapu then asked somebody to call all of them upstairs. Dr. Ansari could not withhold his tears when he approached Bapu and bent down to embrace him. Then came Mohammad Ali. He kept at a respectful distance. "Come, brother, come near," accosted Bapu. He too folded up Bapu closely in his arms and shed tears. Everyone then sat down. Imam Saheb (who accompanied Gandhiji on his return to India and was an Ashram inmate) was asked to begin Khuda's prayer as given in the Quran-e-Shareef. With a loud and lusty voice he sang the first *sura* (verse) "Bismilla-i-rahman-i-raheem". Then with the same decorum and propriety Andrews was asked to sing:

'When I survey the Wondrous Cross
On which the Prince of glory died.'

Among those present there were two other Christians besides Andrews: Sudhir Rudra and George Joseph. For a while, as the song was being sung, every one experienced perfect unison between the sufferings on the Cross and those on the fasting bed, between the love and tears of Jesus and the love and tears of Bapu, and one could see many eyes streaming with tears. After these two, Sri Vinoba was called to recite a *mantra* from the Upanishad. The whole hall was filled up with the weird glory and greatness of Truth extolled in that *mantra* and sung by him in his melodious tune.

Then Balkoba sang '*Vaishnava jana to*' (He is a Vaishnava, who ...) and after it '*Jaya Jagadish Hare*' (Victory to Lord Hari) and at last the prayer ended with the *dhun* (repeated chanting of one or more lines):



रघुकुल रघुकुल रीति सदा चलि आई| प्राण जाँय बरु वचन न जाई||

“Though life be lost
To Truth I’ll hold;”
That was the maxim
with Raghavs2 bold.

In a voice faltering with emotion, Bapu then began:

"Hakim Saheb and Mohammad Ali,

These twentyone days of fasting have passed in deep peace. Unity between Hindus and Mussulmans is not with me a new-fangled craze. I have been cherishing that ideal for the last thirty years. I am mad after it and yet I have not been successful so far. I do not know what the Lord wishes. When I took the vow of fasting for 21 days, I had apportioned it into two parts. One part ends today. The other I had suspended at the desire of Hakimji and other friends. Even if I had not done so, my fast would have ended definitely today, owing to the successful termination of the Unity Conference. Today I beg of you to give me a promise—the promise has, in fact, already been given—that you will die for Hindu Muslim Unity. I, for one, am convinced that Hindu *Dharma* goes fruitless—and I venture to add Islam also does the same—if unity is not achieved. There is nothing more essential than Unity. We have got to live together in amity and peace. Hinduism is not Hinduism, Islam is not Islam, if Hindus cannot pray in their temples and Mussulmans cry *azan* in their mosques without let or hindrance. The time has now come when I must break my fast and I shall again plunge into the vortex of worldly troubles. That is why though the promise has already been given, I request you to repeat it in order to lighten the burden that I am going to bear."

Hakim Saheb also gave a brief reply: "I have every hope and faith that the hardship you have voluntarily undergone will bear excellent fruit. We all are ready and prepared to help you in your righteous but arduous task. If it is not fully completed we will even leave aside all our other business and try to help you through it. May you recoup your health and be at peace and may God bring your fast to a glorious fulfilment."

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad declared: "Hakimji has already given the assurance on behalf of all the Muslims present here. I have full faith that the hearts of Hindus and Muslims are going to be united and that too within a very short time. Man can't



do anything more for this cause than sacrifice his life and I am prepared to dedicate my life for it."

A few moments of silence then prevailed. Who else but Dr. Ansari had the right and privilege to bring the fast to an end? He handed a glass of orange juice to Bapu. Getting another pillow besides the one under his head, Bapu brought his fast to an end by sipping that juice even as he lay stretched on his bed. And every sip of his brought fresh life, so to say, in the bodies of even all those who used to eat their fill everyday during the fast; and all of them felt the thrill of enjoying the happy end of a long fast.

If all of us cherish the memory of this *tapasya*, assimilate its meaning and wake up from our present state,

'Then life has been worthwhile.'

* * * *

**उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत।
क्षुरस्य धारा निशिता दुरत्यया, दुर्ग पथस्तत्कवयो वदन्ति॥**

“Get up, wake up, attain the Good and know It”.
Hard's the path and filled with danger
This—what they call - 'the Godly way';
'Like walking on a long long razor',
—So do the seers and sages say.

1. Seeing his father giving away only old cows in charity during a sacrifice Nachiketa persistently inquires, "And to whom, Father, are you giving me?" The irate father says, "To Yama (God of Death)!" Nachiketa takes Father at his word and goes to Yama, who was out. He fasts for three days at Yama's door till His arrival. Yama is pleased and is prepared to grant three boons. Nachiketa begs the boon of the knowledge (realization) of death and the Indwelling Soul. He thus gains the wisdom of the Spirit.

2. Belonging to the line of Raghu in which Lord Rama was born.



Fourth Week

(Delhi, d. 15-10-1924)

Four weeks have ended today since the *tapasya* of the fast for 21 days was begun. I had ended that chapter with a description of Bapu's mental struggle and of the happy ending of the fasting vow. It seems that the painful duty of having to write about the fourth and even the fifth week will fall upon me, because it will take Gandhiji at least a fortnight to be up and doing. After a long fast a man may usually feel dull and listless, may not relish new food or may even be tempted to be a glutton, as a reaction from his long abstinence. Bapu has suffered from none of these. He has now begun to take ordinary food with the same ease and cheerfulness as those with which he had begun the fast. The vow ended at 12 noon, but because of the prayer etc. the fruit juice could be taken at about 12.45 p. m. Two days later he began to take milk and gradually increase its quantity—2 ozs., 3, 4 and so on—and today he has come to 25 ozs. of milk and a few oranges. Before the end of the fast, quite a number of Jain *munis* (sages) had written to him specially to send their blessings and felicitations as well as detailed suggestions as to how to taper off the fast. The letters revealed inordinate love for Bapu, but owing to his vow to take only five articles of food in a meal, he has not been able to follow in practice anyone of these instructions except that of taking fruit. Even with the diet he is taking at present, everything—sleep etc.—goes on with clock-work regularity.

Prayers, hymns etc. also are going on quite regularly. One day a woman came up and beseeched us, "Please, do let me go. I want to put him a question." We thought she might be some unhappy woman who wanted to pour out the anguish of her soul regarding her family affairs or the like and we were reluctant to let her go inside, but were compelled to yield to her very persistent entreaty. She asked only one question; "Mahatmaji, how should one do *bhakti* (worship, prayer etc)? I wish to do Lord Shiva's *bhakti*. Tell me how I must do it." Gandhiji was taken aback for a while and then in a pathetic tone said, "Sister! How can I tell you how? I myself do not know how to do *bhakti*. All I know and can say is this: 'Be good and do good'." The simple-minded woman felt relieved and happy and went her way. But that question, it appears, revolved in Bapu's mind continuously. One is, naturally, struck with wonder why the man, who was immersed in *bhakti* all these days and whose every action, it appears clearly, is dedicated to the Lord, should have been impelled to give such a halting answer to that woman. 'As God is beyond description in language, so is His *bhakti*'—



may that be the reason? Whatever it be, since the very next day, Bapu is getting the eleventh section (dealing with Lord Krishna) of Bhagwat (a gospel on *bhakti*) regularly read to him. The recitation of the *Bhagwadgita* is already going on and to that this *Bhagwat* has been added.

Bapu is generally open to visitors at all hours of daytime except this period of prayers etc. A friend urged: "Now, please, enough of such a terrible vow! Wickedness is certain to persist to some degree in this world." Immediately Bapu countered with a laugh: "Don't you suppose I am vain enough to think I possess the power to remove the wickedness of the world! If I fasted, it was only for my own purification. It was my religious duty to undergo that much penance. That has been done. The fruit rests with God."

An Englishwoman, a follower of the Bahai faith, frequently visits Bapu since the meetings of the Unity Conference and joins us in our evening prayers. Three days ago, she requested permission to put two or three questions to Bapu. One of her questions was: "Do you wish to bring about unity of all mankind or of the communities of India only?" Pat came Bapu's answer. "Unity of all mankind through that of India's communities. How can I think of world unity when I have not yet been able to bring about unity within India itself? To think of world unity is to transgress my limitations. I am, therefore, trying to achieve, first, only the unity of the communities here. But I have the faith that world unity is automatically gained to some extent through the achievement of unity in India."

It was during this same week that a Catholic astrologer came to see him. Andrews knew him. Immediately on his telling Gandhiji that the astrologer used every penny of the earning from his forecasts for public benefit and was eager to see Gandhiji, the latter replied, "Provided he does not talk to me of astrology, he is welcome." Andrews spoke of this condition to the astrologer who accepted it very gladly and went upstairs to see Gandhiji. For a while he closely observed the features etc. of Gandhiji; he then bent down on his knees, offered some prayer and with eyes dimmed with tears quietly departed. After coming down he remarked to Andrews, "If anybody can be compared with him, it is St. Francis. I can think of no one else. I feel myself blessed at his sight."

Such variegated gatherings continue every day. One day many Muslim brothers collected around him. It was the time for *namaz*. Everyone went to the terrace. The *azan* was cried out and all did their *namaz*. An hour later *that same terrace was filled*



up with Hindus. There were among the crowd Mohammad Ali and several Muslim friends of course. And Balkoba began the (Hindu) prayer. Andrews also sings Christian hymns frequently. During our stay at Mohammad Ali's house also, we used to offer our (Sanskrit) prayers very regularly. Sometimes it happened that immediately after the morning *azan* ended, our prayers would begin. But why should this sight be confined only to the bungalows of M. Mohammad Ali and R. B. Sultansingh? If it becomes a common sight all over the country, that itself can cement unity of all the communities.

But I began with the narration of Bapu's daily routine and slipped into a description of the atmosphere around him. The fast was started on Wednesday and on the next Wednesday he stopped walking. It has been resumed today, i.e., on Wednesday again. Resting on Dr. Abdur Rehman, Bapu walked from his room to the verandah outside today. And the doctors have permitted him to enter into some talk. Pandit Motilalji, who is still here, comes to discuss things with Bapu, but only after getting the doctors' permission, and goes away after about an hour's talk. Yesterday, moreover, though he felt a little tired afterwards, Bapu talked not once but thrice—with Andrews in the morning, the Akalis (a reforming sect among the Sikhs) in the afternoon and the resident of Kohat in the evening. Let me give here his very useful talk with Andrews.

(What follows is reproduced from Mahadevbhai's article, entitled 'An Interesting Conversation,' in *Young India* dated 31.10.1924.)

Early in the morning, after the usual reading of the *Bhagwat* was over, Bapu sent for Mr. Andrews. He came in, singing to himself a hymn. Mr. Andrews takes great delight in trying to understand correctly the hymns sung at the prayers and then selecting exactly parallel hymns from Christian authors to demonstrate the close affinity between all God's devotees on this earth. This very morning he said to me, "In the face of such conclusive proof in the essential oneness of all religions, how can anybody claim exclusive superiority of *his* own religion? The fact seems to be that every man can find the satisfaction of the needs of his spiritual life in the religion in which he was brought up." When he came upstairs, he said to Bapu, "I am going to sing for you this morning a hymn, which I am sure you have never heard before. A military officer, in the Bible, goes to Christ and prays for the recovery of a servant of his, who is lying ill at home. Christ offers to go and see the patient himself. But the officer, considering himself utterly unworthy of so much special attention from the



Lord, asks Him merely to express his wish that the patient should survive and he was sure that this would be enough. Such is the story that lies behind this hymn."

With this introduction Mr. Andrews sang the hymn given below:

I am not worthy; cold and bare
The lodging of my soul;
How canst Thou deign to enter there
Lord, speak and make me whole

* * * *

And fill with Thy love and power
This worthless heart of mine.

"How closely it resembles the hymn of Tulsidas you are so fond of!"¹ said Mr. Andrews when he had finished. Bapu answered, "I have heard it before," to the agreeable surprise of Mr. Andrews. "I heard it sung in 1893," continued Bapu, "I used to meet Christians of all denominations then in South Africa and I distinctly remember having heard the hymn at the Sunday services which I used to attend " Here he recalled some of his old reminiscences with his Christian friends which I need not give here. This over, Bapu said, "But I called you here for an entirely different reason. I wish you to understand properly the meaning of the spinning franchise."

Then there followed a lengthy talk an account of which I give here as accurately as possible:

Bapu: You did not like my article in the latest issue of *Young India*. But I tell you the argument is irresistible. You disapprove of my article, because you omit to take note of the concluding portion where I make it clear that my appeal is addressed only to those who believe in voluntary spinning as an absolute necessity for the country. They should have no difficulty in accepting the condition of having to spin and contribute 2000 yards of yarn. When you say you will spin voluntarily, you should have no hesitation in readily joining an institution where the condition of membership is to ply the wheel. That is precisely why I said that in a country such as France, where extreme importance is attached to military training, it would be perfectly legitimate to lay down military training as an indispensable condition of membership in its National



Assembly. If today in India we accept the importance of spinning, we ought, most naturally, to agree to it as a condition of membership in the Congress.

Andrews: Your point is very weak. That you should make any comparison with French military training is terrible! I would rather go to jail or become an exile than join the army, even as Bertrand Russel did, or Romain Rolland, who left his country because he could not reconcile himself to fighting.

Bapu: Yes, I too would do the same. That matters little. It is right that the conscientious objectors should stand by their principles and suffer the consequences. But if the whole country in general felt the necessity of military training, why should there be any objection to giving it a place in the law of the land?

Andrews: I don't think you should take the example about military training. You ought to have chosen a better analogy. You could certainly take the instance of the Prohibition Law of the United States. It was only when about 80 per cent of the population of America showed the readiness to abandon drink that the law was enacted. There is nothing to prevent your making about 80 per cent of the Indian population spin through a separate organisation of your own and then get spinning adopted as a condition of membership in the National Assembly. As it is, you are placing the cart before the horse.

Bapu: No, I am perfectly logical. Has an organisation got the right to require its members to fulfil certain obligation or not? The thing may or may not appeal to the individual member, but you certainly cannot say that we have not the right to adopt it?

Andrews: In America everyone had the right to drink before the Prohibition Law was passed. They have today the right to re-introduce drink by repealing the law. What I want to know is this: is the Congress the mouth-piece of public opinion, or of the opinion of a small body of men? Will the Congress be a National Assembly or a small Committee?

Bapu: It will be a National Assembly. You are entitled to say that my experience is wrong. But once you concede that the Congress has the right to impose restrictions on its members, I would be able to convince you easily of the rest.

Andrews: You must not make of the Congress a party organisation. It should be a voluntary elective body of the Nation.



Bapu: You do not quite realise what the Congress is. Today it happens to be an ill-defined and disorganised institution. There is much more in it than is apparent from its constitution. If the Congress is to be a truly democratic organisation, its constitution must be more dynamic, more honest. It must more truly fulfil the requirements of the nation. We don't need numbers. When I secured the acceptance of the four anna franchise, I had hoped that the Congress would become a mighty assembly, but workers were lacking. Our country today is a country of idlers and dreamers. I refer, not to the dumb millions who are groaning under poverty and slavery, but to ourselves the so-called intelligentsia, the talkers. How can I engage all these in some kind of national work except through the spinning wheel? In what other manner could the Congress be made a practical organisation? My hope is that this will come about by the 2000 yards a month spinning idea. As matters stand at present, we have nothing like concerted effort at all. One says, 'I shall wield the axe,' another wants to sew, yet another would like to devote himself to something else dear to him. This leads to nowhere. I am at concentrating all the energy and effort on one thing and obtaining substantial results.

Andrews: I am afraid you are going to establish a new kind of religion, with spinning and wearing Khaddar as its essential factor. Why should I be specially concerned with whether so and so wears Khaddar or foreign-made cloth? All I principally care to know is what the man is morally worth. Christ wanted us in judging a person to be guided by his heart and not by his outward appearance.

Bapu: There is a difference between Christian and Hindu ideals.

Andrews: You might as well say that if I ate a particular diet I would gain spiritually. Take such a saint as Bishop Westcott of Durham. He took meat; but it does not follow, therefore, that he was unspiritual.

Bapu: Hard cases make bad law. You cannot preach to the generality of the people asking them to eat what they like, and yet continue to believe that they are pure.

Andrews: But I will come to the original objection. Are we sincerely making serious attempts to prepare the ground, as they did in America before prohibiting drink by law?

Bapu: I am ever preparing the ground. We are today what we are because of four years' strenuous work. The Congress long ago accepted the importance of



spinning. Moreover, the conditions in the two countries are different. America was a 'wet' country. There, the people had to be weaned from drinking. They had to do something they never did before. Here, all that is wanted is that the people should revert to an art, which was theirs for ages, but which has been neglected for some time past. That is all.

Furthermore, here he quoted a *sloka*¹ from the Gita which literally translated means: "No sincere effort is wasted and there is no ban against sincere effort. The least performance of this duty saves you from calamities."

Andrews : Why do you say so? There is waste in it. We are all fitted for different kinds of work. We may be so preoccupied with other work as not to find even half an hour's time for spinning. I notice Mahadev sitting up even at midnight for spinning. I also saw Maulana Mohammad Ali busy spinning even at midnight during the Conference and then I wondered to what purpose all this could be.

Bapu: That these friends have to do their spinning at midnight merely suggests unmethodical habits, and want of the 'time sense': that is all.

Andrews: Apart from the half-an-hour imposition, I feel that other things have been thrown into the background since you began to talk of concentration on spinning. So much energy is taken up in Khaddar work that the urgent need of checking the drink and drug evils is practically overlooked.

Bapu: In recommending spinning my sole idea has been to place before the country a programme, which would easily appeal to the common mind and also be a unifying force. It excludes nothing. Picketing of liquor shops was given up because of the fear of violence, not in order to concentrate on Khaddar. It is not necessary to lay so much emphasis on the other items of the programme as on Khaddar. All agree that drink should be avoided. There is nothing new in this to tell the people. There will be some who will continue to drink even though Swaraj is established. Those must be tackled after Swaraj.

Andrews: Is not a strenuous movement for the abolition of the opium traffic immediately called for? The country is convinced that it is.

Bapu: I don't believe it.

Andrews: Are you aware that women labourers in the mills drug their babies with opium?



Bapu: Yes, but don't say that the thing has begun to eat into vitals. Don't imagine that the country will allow it to gain more ground. As for the babies, you have the question of education of the labourers, the question of medical aid, the question of the number of hours for which women labourers should be made to work and numerous other questions connected with their protection.

Andrews: When you settled upon the three-fold programme of untouchability, Hindu-Muslim unity and Khaddar and left out the question of drink, it struck me as a sad omission.

Bapu: No, I never forget it. There is really nothing to tell the people about it.

Andrews: Rather, it has become impossible to get the people to take interest in the opium question.

Bapu: For the matter of that if you and I stopped writing about South and East Africa nobody would worry about the condition of the Indians there either. We are dealing with people who know nothing. But you must remember that work for the prevention of drink is still going on. Wherever Khaddar has gained a footing, the whole process of purification has begun. You could realise this if you went to Borsad or to Ramesara or Bardoli. Temperance work and the conditions of social life in the villages mainly occupy the attention of our workers wherever a Khaddar centre exists.

Andrews: But why make the wearing of Khaddar and spinning a religious duty? Will not the people boycott those that are daring enough not to wear Khaddar or to spin?

Bapu: Well, it must be a religious duty. Are you sure every Indian will occupy himself usefully in the service of the country, simply if I cease to insist on making spinning a religious duty? Yet, that does not, at all, mean that person not wearing Khaddar or not spinning should be boycotted. On the contrary, it would be our duty to embrace them and win them ultimately to the side of Khaddar by our love, certainly not by talking or thinking ill of them. I have suffered the penance of twentyone days' fast simply because we fell from this standard. Will not the people still understand? True boycott can only be of one kind, that of refusal to accept personal service and denying oneself the advantages of association with the person so dealt with, while being ever ready to render him help in case of need. I would welcome that kind of boycott in the case of a person addicted to drink, but not in the case of those who



don't wear Khaddar. For there is certainly not that sin in wearing foreign cloth as in drink.

Andrews: You make me feel more at ease. I am glad you have cleared these points. Only, I don't like the idea of your making Khaddar a test of moral fitness. A friend writes to me to say that he has given up wearing Khaddar because it has become a cheap method of popularity.

Bapu: The friend makes a mistake. Am I to cease doing what is proper because another person makes pretence of doing that thing? That would be like my giving up speaking the truth because some people feign truth.

Andrews: But can't you eliminate the expression *shuddha* and *ashuddha* (pure and impure) from the Khaddar terminology?

Bapu: I should certainly use these terms in connection with cloth. Foreign cloth for an Indian to wear would be impure. I would not apply this to the case of Indians in England, for instance; yet just as a man is not an impure being simply because he wears impure cloth, so also a person leading an impure life does not purify himself because he wears pure clothes. The economic value of what I call *shuddha* cloth, i. e. Khaddar, is always there; that is why even a prostitute may wear pure Khaddar and help to keep out foreign cloth.

Andrews: I don't see how you can call foreign-made cloth 'impure.'

Bapu: I know that. We must agree to differ there. Air gathered from the plains of Delhi would be an impure commodity to be inhaled in Simla. It is in this sense that I call foreign made cloth *ashuddha*, i. e., impure.

Andrews: But I don't see that. I am, however, glad you have explained so many other things.

Before the fast, such talks were quite frequent with Gandhiji which he engaged in with everybody. But after the fast, barring the discussions with Pandit Motilal Nehru, this was the first long discussion of an important and serious character.

His future programme rests on the rapidity with which he recovers. If he does so quickly, he intends to go to Kohat first of all.

१. मम हृदय भवन प्रभु तोरा| तह आय असे बहु चोरा||



कह तुलसिदास सुन रामा| लूटहि तस्कर तव धामा||

चिन्ता यह मोहि अपारा| अपजस नहि होय तुम्हारा||

२. नेहामिक्रम नाशोस्ति प्रत्यवायो न विद्यते|

स्वल्पमप्यस्य धर्मस्य त्रायते महतो मयात्||

Delhi,

d. 18-10-1924

*Dear Dr. Besant,

Dr. Ansari gave me your letter with the papers today. You may put me down as a Convener. I have no choice as to the place. If it is the third week of November, I should make a strenuous effort to attend. I think that you should be the Provincial Secretary.

I am,

Yours sincerely,

M. K. Gandhi



The Fifth Week

Delhi, d. 22-10.1924

I hope the heading does not frighten the reader. I feel it so heavy to bear the burden of *Navajivan* - specially when Gandhiji himself is at hand—that I lighten it by this counting of the weeks and thus persuading myself that the onerous duty will not now lie with me for many more weeks.

It is already the fifth week of the fast, but certainly Gandhiji has not yet regained vitality to the needed extent. A little exertion tires him out. Last week he got down from the upper floor, strolled for about 8 or 10 minutes in the garden and rocked on the swing in it for about the same time. The next day the doctor took him for an outing for about an hour's drive in his car. He did not feel the effect on that day, but on the next he felt utterly exhausted and had no mind at all to go out for a walk.

It is a matter of satisfaction to say that he is now taking almost the same quantity of milk as before the fast. Fruit also he can take in a fairly good quantity. For the last three days the doctor has permitted him to take even two or three toasted slices. He can sit up a little longer on his bed besides. He no longer needs any support during the prayer and spinning periods.

Let me, when I am talking of spinning, state how much his capacity in that matter has increased. Gandhiji is certain that the growth is the result of his concentrated spinning during the weeks of his *tapasya*. He can now spin easily from 300 to 320 yards per hour. In addition, he has extended his spinning period definitely to more than half an hour, because he can now sit up longer and spin with the same evenness in the thread and uniform speed.

He attends to important letters himself and insists on reading personally all the reports of communal wrangles, however long they be. And he listens regularly to those parts in the newspapers which deserve his attention.

And this above all. There is the same regular listening to Gita and Bhagwat. It is impossible to give a completely faithful idea of the profound peace he gains, and of the immense benefit that accrues to us, from that listening and the incessant meditation which follows it.

It was during these same days that he wrote the following in a letter to one of his dear ones:



“यततो ह्यपि कौंतेय पुरुषस्य विपश्रितः।
इन्द्रियाणि प्रमाथीनि हरन्ति प्रसभं मनः॥

("For, inspite of the wise man's endeavour, O Kaunteya, the unruly senses distract his mind perforce - 'Gita According to Gandhi', by Mahadev Desai.)"

How perfect is the truth this saying conveys! And what depths of compassion does that word *Kaunteya* contain! Do what we may, our mind—a veritable monkey drunk with wine—carries us hither and thither millions of miles away from the central object! It is only for the like of us that *Bhagwat* has been written."

"Only for the like of us"—what inspiring and invigorating oneness of heart these words carry! Speaking about the compassion the word 'Kaunteya' suggests, he said, "This word alone and no other can fit in here. Every word in the Gita has been chosen with perfect propriety and yet there has been no effort at choosing. That is what I call art *par excellence*. In putting the single word, "Kaunteya", the author means to say: "You are born of mother Kunti, you belong to the erring human species, are born of the weaker sex and you can easily understand this यततो ह्यपि etc. And did not the Lord know Kunti quite well?" In the same context the talk turned to the essential meaning of:

प्रकृतिं यांति भूतानि निग्रहः किं करिष्यति।

(Even a man of knowledge acts according to his nature; all creatures follow their nature; what then will constraint avail?—'Gita According To Gandhi' by Mahadev Desai)

Bapu explained: "It is clear that the verse is capable of misinterpretation and abuse. But it never means one must cease to strive. A man may put in Herculean efforts and yet if he seems to fail, he must not lose heart and give up the struggle, but must realise his limitations also - that is what the *shloka* wants to point out. Do you think that the *purushartha* (spiritual effort) of a man like Shrimad Rajachandra was a whit less than amazing? What distance was there between him and the hill-top of Self-realization? And yet, for several long years, he could not attain to perfect, incessant, *brahmacharya*. (Shrimad Rajachandra set at rest many a philosophical doubt of Gandhiji re. Hinduism.) What else could it be attributed to except the fault of Nature? If we too fail, we need not despair. Let us ward off the gloom and go on with our efforts by reminding ourselves that nature has come in the way of even such extraordinary



personalities. That *shloka* is meant to afford solace and peace to the man who plods and plods without any visible result."

There has been a regular flow and ebb of visitors here. Many friends had come and have gone away and many others are still coming. Andrews who had come early on the fourth day of the fast remained with Bapu right upto the 19th. He left Delhi only when he felt sure that there was no longer any need to worry about Gandhiji's health. It is impossible to fill up the place left vacant by him. As he was about to go, he embraced Bapu. "You make the parting all the harder to bear every time you leave." Bapu remarked. Andrews even touched Ba's (=Mother's; Mrs. Gandhi was popularly called 'Ba') feet, the Indian fashion, to beg her leave to depart. She in turn put her palms on his head to give him her blessings and to pray to God to save him from troubles—just as she would do, if it were Devdas or myself departing. Andrews was happy beyond measure. "Wonderful!" he exclaimed, "Ba regards me her son! She blessed me!"

Andrews left and Manilal (third son) came up that very night. His train was late and as it was Sunday then, Bapu's silence was to begin that same night! But Bapu has given the go-by to dotage, not to fatherly love. We came from the station late at 10 p. m.; 9 p.m. is the usual lights-off hour in Bapu's room. Somebody went upstairs and returned to say that Bapu was asleep. "Well then, we shall meet in the morning," said the son who had come to see Father after a lapse of seven years and quietly resigned himself to the situation. But soon after, Bapu himself inquired of somebody: "Has not Manilal come?" We all then went up. After Manilal had finished paying obeisance to him, Bapu asked him: "When did you arrive?" "A short while ago", replied Manilal, "but I was told you were sleeping and I didn't come upstairs." "Sleeping? Who said so?" burst out Bapu. "I was thinking of you every moment."

Inquiry about work first and then about men and things—that is Bapu's rule. "To whom did you entrust the charge of the *Indian Opinion*?" he asked. "To God", replied Manilal, "I read the *Reuter's* message that you intended to go on a fast. Then came a second one saying that nine days had gone by since the fast began. I then sent you a cablegram and got your reply. Twentyone days of fasting! Good God! I had heard of your condition during the 14 days' fast and actually seen its after-effects. How could I control myself after that experience? I left without seeing anybody at all." Speaking of the state of mind of Kallenbach (one of Bapu's closest friends), he said : "Kallenbach, I may say, was so affected that at the very last moment he was forced to stop himself



from getting into the steamer. He rushed things like mad. He took a car, drove to the Passport Office, bought a ticket, made all the necessary arrangements for departure and wired to his partner. "However can I stay on here? Who knows, I may not see him again! How can I brook a moment's delay?" he said. Everyone pleaded hard with him. "Your relatives have come only just now from Germany. You mustn't go away like that— without even meeting them and helping them to get installed", they urged. But he simply refused to listen to them. It was only a peremptory telegram from his partner that broke his resolution and he contented himself with securing leave to start for here in December."

Both Manilal and Kallenbach were at Johannesburg when Bapu was fasting for 14 days. But Bapu was in no hurry to inform them of the fast; in fact it was only after quietly completing it that he had written: "Fourteen days of fasting have ended without trouble." Bapu thus puts his dear ones to a severe test at times. How can Manilal with this mental background keep himself in check this time?

But the usual time to begin his silence had passed long before. "Well then, how long do you propose to stay here?" asked Bapu. "I have given the date, 12th November, for my return. I gave that promise to Rustomji Seth¹ before coming over here". "Had you stayed with us for about 6 months," Bapu observed, "it would have been so nice! But promise is promise. You are going on the 12th and that's the end of the matter. So now we will have our chat the day after tomorrow." His silence started late at 10. 20. p. m.!

Somebody may grumble, 'O, he is boring us with his talk of love. And mad after Gandhi; simply another Boswell, singing Gandhiji's glories!' But I am neither love-mad nor Gandhi-mad. I do, indeed, try to develop my devotion and my heart melts at any extraordinary manifestation of goodness or love in an individual or event. It is not Bapu's praise that I am never tired of singing but I bear witness to the immense power which unalloyed love possesses. I merely show to the world how through the many events, big and small, of his life Bapu is training himself, throwing himself into a crucible for self-purification and testing his strength of character. I only wish everyone else may learn to analyse his thoughts and acts likewise and be inspired with hope at Bapu's example. It is to me a matter of regret, not pleasure, that in Bapu's own paper, his praises appear even indirectly. That is exactly why I have given vent to my uneasiness at the beginning of this letter.



One of those of whom I am now going to speak, made me deeply ashamed of myself. He was a Muslim gentleman. For 15 to 20 days at a stretch, he used to come every morning. "Is Gandhiji busy? If some leaders have come, I don't want to see him," he would say and quietly wait in the room below for three or four hours. If sometimes he got a chance, he would go upstairs, catch a glimpse of Gandhiji, come down to wait again and then go away. Even this gentleman's patience was at last exhausted. He declared to Gandhiji his resolve to dedicate his whole property to him and had a talk with him. Gandhiji told him, "No property ever stands on my name. You may treat that property as a trust from God and maintain yourself by opening a Khadi shop and propagate Khadi." I thought he should be satisfied with this much, but he came to me and said: "I am going home. Please send me in writing what Gandhiji has said." I lost my temper and blurted out, "What is this madness? Can you not remember what he told you? Why assume that others will not accept your word?" He was hurt but said not a word, as he had trained himself in forbearance more than I. But again on the next day he came and waited! I had at last to go to Gandhiji and tell him that the gentleman wanted a written message from him. "Has he come today again?" asked Gandhiji, "bring him to me." I took him to Gandhiji. As he was going up the ladder, his eyes were flooded with tears. Gandhiji made him sit close by and wrote the letter he wanted. As he was taking it away he said, "Please put your hand upon my head. Bless me so that I may have the courage to act rightly for my spiritual good." At the very sight of the letter and of the love Gandhiji had poured therein, the consciousness of my own unworthiness dawned on me and I bowed to that gentleman many times as I bade him farewell.

Another gentleman visited Bapu one night. He was a Rajput hailing from the Punjab. It was 9 p. m. when he came up with his two children. Andrews is the very model of considerateness and when he speaks slowly in Hindi his language acquires immediately a softness and charm all its own. He said, "You see, it's 9 p. m.; Gandhiji went to bed just a few minutes before. Can you not come again tomorrow?" The visitors replied with the same sweetness. "Yes, we can, definitely. But we may not break our fast before having Gandhiji's *darshan*. We are hungry," That melted Andrews at once. "Then I can take you up, if you are satisfied with the sight of Gandhiji from a distance. If you go near him, he may perhaps wake up." said Andrews. "Agreed. His *darshan* from a distance is enough for us," the visitors replied. Immediately all of them went up and returned after two or three seconds. When they were leaving, they called Andrews to them and said, "Please accept these two thousand and five hundred



rupees. They are to be used by Gandhiji in any way he likes. We had come here to give that amount. It is not possible for us to come again tomorrow."

One day a Bhangi with a white beard chanced to come up. Thirteen or fourteen years ago, when Andrews was here as a Professor, this Bhangi was, I learnt, in service under him. Coming to know that his onetime Saheb was in Delhi and staying with Gandhiji, he could not contain himself and came to Andrews as fast as his legs could carry. Andrews also recognised him and the old acquaintance was warmly renewed. "I am glad you came to see me," said Andrews as he was returning from him, but that Bhangi pleaded, "I have never seen Mahatmaji. Will you not please take me for his *darshan*?" Andrews responded immediately and took him to Gandhiji. The Bhangi's joy knew no bounds when he returned and he gazed at Andrews with such grateful eyes, that Andrews was impelled to embrace him and give him a loving note (of recommendation) to one of his (Andrews') friends!

The last week Gandhiji met a good number of people. He had long talks with Motilalji, pertaining chiefly to the clause that made it compulsory for all Congress members to spin 2000 yards of yarn monthly. Panditji had several objections, which he put before Gandhiji. At the end, however, he stated, "If my acceptance of the clause is likely to influence the Liberals and others to do the same, I will certainly accept it." But in order that all the Swarajists may understand the full implications of the clause from Gandhiji himself and then give free vent to their own reactions, there is going to be their meeting right here on the 31st instant. There is a likelihood of a heart-to-heart talk then between them and Gandhiji. It is certainly not true that after his release from jail he has met one and all of the Swarajists.

Gandhiji's *sadhana* (spiritual pursuit) is at present confined to toning down differences by creating a climate of understanding between men of varying views and thus increasing amity all around.

"We shall know each other better
When the mists have rolled away".

Gandhiji is very fond of the English hymn which has these lines as its keynote and he is, at present, engrossed in scattering the mist of misunderstanding and bring everyone closer to another.



His talk with Khwaja Hasan Nizami affords another instance in point. Khwaja Saheb visits Gandhiji quite often. During the last week itself he came twice. His latest visit was only casual but quite accidentally a talk of very grave import cropped up.

Khwaja Saheb said, "I was explaining just now my views on Hindu-Muslim Unity to Mahadevji (Mahadev Desai) downstairs. Long before this idea of unity was mooted, I have been on cordial terms with Hindus. I have many Hindu friends still. I have stayed in Brindavan-Gokul (places sanctified as scenes of Lord Krishna's childhood exploits), have studied Krishnacharitra (charitra = life) and Ramayana. Many people used to say that I was turning a Hindu. And now, since I have started the '*tabligh*' activity, many of my friends protest, "What is this you are doing? You will lose all your reputation. You are bringing to naught all that you have done." "I don't care," I rejoin, "if I lose my reputation. The work I am doing even at that cost shows how intensely I feel for Islam." I believe in calling a spade a spade. In simple and straight language I express my views in the fortnightly *Darvesh*. About the Unity Conference I stated that the language of its resolutions betrayed legal niceties of the most abstruse kind. Just as the clauses of the Penal Code were full of confusing legal jargon, so were these resolutions framed in clumsy, intricate, language. I added that if the leaders wanted to lead the common man to the path of Unity, they should desist from passing such resolutions, but say plain things to plain men."

Gandhiji then put in, "I must admit I read the article you speak of and I did not like it. And for this reason, you have done nothing wrong in offering your criticisms, but you have gone the length of simply ridiculing the whole Conference. Your attitude behind these criticisms was not of the right, constructive type. Your article gives me the impression that you do not like unity at all, you frown upon even the holding of the Conference for that object. Why may we not criticise a thing we don't like? But we must admit this much at least. It was definitely a laudable aim for which they had gathered there and they had made an honest attempt to achieve it. But you simply dismissed the whole Conference by pooh-poohing it. And that too in what paper? In *Muballig*, which is still saturated with poison and has not even yet changed its tone. Could you not have written it in any other paper? You could have sent your article to *Young India*, if nowhere else. You should have acknowledged at least the good motives that underlay the holding of the Conference. But here you give your article to a paper that spit poisonous and anti-unity articles. Naturally, therefore, one would be led to wonder if Khwaja Saheb was really in favour of the very idea of unity."



I forget the context but as the talk proceeded it turned to topics like that of the Muslim objections against music before mosques. That led Khwaja Saheb to narrate at length the story of Hazrat Goss (Abdul Kadar Jilani). "This Hazrat had a neighbour who used to play on musical Instruments loudly, make other sounds, create, in short, a hell of a noise. The disciples of the Hazrat Saheb would fret and fume and often complain against the man, but he would tell them, "Why pay attention to his clamour? Should we concentrate on our *namaz* or let our mind wander and think of that?" For many days these loud noises continued and all the while Hazrat Saheb kept patience. One day, however, there was complete silence. Hazrat Saheb wondered. "Why was there no disturbance from that man today?" "He has been hauled up before the court and a case is going on against him," said the disciples. Immediately Hazrat Saheb left for the court and begged of the Hakem (Governor), "This man is my neighbour and I must not let his honour be sullied. If he has committed a crime which, if forgiven, would harm others, then of course let him be punished. But if the crime is such as can be condoned with only a fine, please do so. I will myself pay the fine." The Governor set the man free, the man was overwhelmed with a sense of obligation, grew ashamed of his doings and became a Muslim."

Gandhiji was delighted. "Oh, that's Abdul Kadar Jilani you are talking of; I am sure. I too had read of him in jail. When he was a child and about to start on a journey, his mother gave him some *ashrafis* (Arabic coins). To hide them safely, she sewed them up in the child's waist-coat and with them she gave him a piece of motherly advice: "Whatever happens, let the heavens fall, you must never tell a lie. Always speak the truth." Dacoits met him on the way. Every individual in that caravan was carefully searched one after another and robbed of all he had. Abdul Kadar's turn came in due course. "What have you got?" they asked him. The child pointed out the invisible *ashrafis* skilfully sewn into the jacket. The highwaymen were struck with wonder and released him unharmed. And his truthfulness so powerfully affected them that they returned the whole looted property to the caravan.

"There is no doubt that Islam can claim a galaxy of such stars. But it is not right to point them out before Hindus. Does Islam possess the monopoly of producing such men? Hinduism also is replete with men of dizzy heights. But just as from such examples nobody need renounce his creed and be a Hindu, so is it unnecessary for anybody to accept Islam from the instance of Abdul Kadar Jilani. If men like him abounded in Islam and if the whole of Hindustan turned Islamic on that account, I would not care a bit. But just as there have been topmost individuals as well as the



basest in Hinduism, so there have been wicked men in Islam also. I would not like your giving the instance of Abdul Kadar Jilani with a view to convert anybody into Islam.

"But you can say something else to the Hindus. Why do you ask Dheds and Bhangis to become Muslims? You can, instead, say to the Hindus, "Why, there have been so many high lights among Hindus. You Hindus, are believers in *abheda* (absence of essential difference between one creature and another). How can you regard a human being an untouchable? Are you not ashamed of this ostracism?" You can serve Hinduism this way. And I can quote Abdul Kadar's example and tell Muslims, "There have been men of this type in Islam. They believed in truth, in forbearance, in forgiveness even to the enemy. How can you stain their names by misbehaviour?" That is how I may serve Islam. And if, this way, we have so purified our religion that others may wish to accept our faith, who can stop them or raise any objection?

"But if somebody takes advantage of man's poverty and tells him — 'Come, friend, I will give you so many rupees, will pay off your debt; give up the men of your faith who harass you; come into our fold,'—that, I say, is a bad thing. In that case the man does not accept Islam out of his love for it. It is the lure of lucre that brings him. Crowds flew to Mohammad Saheb, but was it because they got good food that they ran to Him? All they got was dates and water—and sometimes hunger, if even these two were not available. All the same large numbers flocked to him and accepted Islam because they respected his personality and saw the great powers of his soul. If another Mohammad Saheb glitters in the sky of humanity and the whole world becomes Muslim, I for one would not turn a hair.

"It is simply because I understand and appreciate the beauties of Islam that I speak so much about it. I do not believe that Islam owes its spread to the power of the sword. It is the fakirs of Islam who have propagated it. It is truthfulness, renunciation and courage that have made it so widely accepted. Everyone will agree that the sword has defended Islam, but the honour of spreading it goes to none but its fakirs. That is why I affirm that the propagation of Islam by physical force, by temptation and such other means will not serve Islam but only harm it. And this also I say only because I love Islam."

Khwaja Saheb was silently listening to all this. With visible pleasure he remarked, "Yes. The method you have shown of doing the work is right and your objection against the tone of ridicule in my article is also correct. I accept both these points, not because I am dazzled by the greatness of your personality but because my heart agrees with



them. I do not agree with you in many things and I may never enter the field of politics—that field is banned by my elders—but I accept your advocacy of spinning. And if I have plunged into *Tabligh*, it is not in order to convert others into Islam, but to save those, who had already been converted by my elders from renouncing it and becoming 'Aryas'. That apart, I like the method however, you have pointed out. I will still think over what you have said and see you of and on."

"Do," said Gandhiji. As he was leaving, he said he would send some of the books he had written.

Another very important conversation that took place during this week itself has to be noted, but for want of space it can be given now only next week.

1. Seth= a rich man. Besides giving solid financial support to Gandhiji. Sri Rustomji, a Parsi friend, had suffered imprisonment during the South African struggle and was looking after the *Indian Opinion*.



Sixth Week

(Delhi, d. 29-10-1924)

"Sixth Week"—that is the heading I am still compelled to give because Gandhiji's health has not improved sufficiently for a change in it. But progress continues. For the last three days he has been regularly having a walk, morning and evening, for about 25 to 30 minutes, though definitely not at his old brisk pace. He can bear the strain of an evening outing for an hour, but a long talk or writing for an hour or two at a stretch exhausts him. And occasions for talks arise endlessly. The Delhi chapter has not yet ended. The courts go on conducting cases and both the parties continue to hurl accusations against each other and submit witnesses to prove their contentions. The question of settling the disputes through arbitration becomes more and more difficult as time passes and the more difficult it becomes the longer and more numerous the talks grow and with them the greater is the exertion that Gandhiji has to undergo.

One can hardly say that he has gathered sufficient strength for writing for his weeklies. Yesterday he wrote two articles for *Young India*—rather he *had* to write them, as there was no other go. How can he help writing an article on the bomb¹ which the Government of Bengal has exploded? And as for his article on spinning, necessarily he goes on writing on the subject as his ever-searching mind discovers new vistas.

His *gnanayagna* (sacrifice in the form of gathering knowledge and wisdom) of listening to the Bhagwat and the Gita continues regularly. How to continue that *Yagna* after the 1st—that is the subject of Gandhiji's constant concern; repeatedly he remarks with regret, "The moment we start from here, this peace is certain to end." Today being their New Year's Day the Gujaratis staying here had come to see him. "Pray, let us have from you some words of wisdom," they said. "Sermons I have preached in plenty and now I am fed up," replied Gandhiji and kept quiet. Then after a while, "If you can't do anything else, you can at least spin daily and send the yarn to the Congress regularly." Telegrams for a message are sent by quite a number of papers. But 'message' he never sends. When, however, he was besieged by telegrams for a message to Desh-bandhu Das, *Forward* for its first anniversary number, he sent the following:-

"I am but an indifferent copy of Tulsidas. Tulsidas saw none but Rama everywhere. I do not see the uplift of our country without Hindu- Muslim unity, removal of untouchability and universal use of pure hand-spun Khadi."



I may not write much today about the atmosphere here. One very remarkable dialogue is likely to take up the whole space at my disposal. The departure of a friend from here last week has left a vacancy hard to fill up. He was a favourite disciple of Andrews and had been here for the last many days. He restrained himself from going upstairs—even for Bapu's *darshan* only—under the conviction that any service rendered to Andrews and others was quite as good as service to Bapu himself, and stayed all the while on the floor below. Though he was a highly educated man, he had not only no aversion for cooking; washing utensils, and the like but took a positive delight in doing such things.

(What follows is reproduced from Sri Mahadevbhai's own article in *Young India* dated 13th November, 1924)

*On the evening when Mr. Andrews left Delhi he said to Gandhiji, "I have not even introduced Ramachandran as yet to you. But he has been here all the while with us and helping us. He wants to ask you some questions and I shall be so glad if you could have a talk with him before he leaves tomorrow to go back to Shantiniketan." Exactly at half past five, after the morning prayer, he was summoned. He had set down his questions—the doubts and difficulties that tormented him. Yet he could not altogether trust himself at first to be able to ask all that he wanted to. But ultimately he mustered sufficient courage, and he found to his utter surprise that in a moment Bapu's gentle inquiries about him, his place, his studies, had left no room for hesitation or nervousness. It is impossible to reproduce all the conversation that Ramchandran was privileged to have that morning with Gandhiji. I can but present the barest summary. 'How is it,' proceeded Ramachandran, 'that many intelligent and eminent men, who love and admire you, hold that you consciously or unconsciously have ruled out of the scheme of national regeneration all considerations of Art?' 'I am sorry,' replied Gandhiji, 'that in this matter I have been generally misunderstood. There are two aspects of things—the outward and the inward. It is purely a matter of emphasis with me. The outward has no meaning except and so far as it helps the inward. All true Art is thus the expression of the soul. The outward forms have value only in so far as they are the expression of the inner spirit of man.' Ramachandran hesitatingly suggested: 'The great artists themselves have declared that art is the translation of the urge and unrest in the soul of the artist into words, colours, shapes etc.'



'Yes,' said Gandhiji, 'Art of that nature has the greatest possible appeal for me. But I know that many call themselves as artists, and are recognized as such, and yet in their works there is absolutely no trace of the soul's upward urge and unrest.'

'Have you any instance in mind?'

'Yes,' said Gandhiji, 'take Oscar Wilde. I can speak of him, as I was in England at the time that he was being much discussed and talked about.'

'I have been told,' put in Ramachandran, 'that Oscar Wilde was one of the greatest literary artists of modern times.'

'Yes, that is just my trouble. Wilde saw the highest Art simply in outward forms and therefore succeeded in beautifying immorality. All true Art must help the soul to realise its inner self. In my own case I find that I can do entirely without external forms in my soul's realisation. I can claim, therefore, that there is truly sufficient Art in my life, though you might not see what you call works of Art about me. My room may have blank walls, and I may even dispense with the roof, so that I may gaze upon the starry heavens overhead that stretch in an unending expanse of beauty. What conscious Art can give me the panoramic scenes that open out before me, when I look up to the sky above with all its shining stars? This, however, does not mean that I refuse to accept the value of productions of Art, generally accepted as such, but only that I personally feel how inadequate these are, compared with the eternal symbols of beauty in Nature. These productions of man's Art have their value only so far as they help the soul onward towards self-realisation.'

'But the artists claim to see and to find Truth through outward beauty,' said Ramachandran. 'Is it possible to see and find Truth in that way?'

'I would reverse the order,' Gandhiji immediately answered, 'I see and find beauty in Truth or through Truth. All Truths, not merely true ideas, but truthful faces, truthful pictures, or songs, are highly beautiful. People generally fail to see Beauty in Truth, the ordinary man runs away from and becomes blind to the beauty in it. Whenever men begin to see Beauty in Truth, then true Art will arise.'

Ramachandran then asked, 'But cannot Beauty be separated from Truth, and Truth from Beauty?'

'I should want to know exactly what is Beauty,' Gandhiji replied. 'If it is what people generally understand by that word, then they are wide apart. Is a woman with fair features necessarily beautiful?'



'Yes,' replied Ramachandran without thinking.

'Even,' asked Bapu continuing the question, 'if she may be of an ugly character?'

Ramachandran hesitated. Then he said, 'But her face in that case cannot be beautiful. It will always be the index of the soul within. The true artist with the genius of perception will produce the right expression.'

'But here you are begging the whole question,' Gandhiji replied. 'You now admit that mere outward form may not make a thing beautiful. To a true artist only that face is beautiful which, quite apart from its exterior, shines with the truth within the soul. There is then, as I have said, no Beauty apart from Truth. On the other hand, truth may manifest itself in forms which may not be outwardly beautiful at all. Socrates, we are told, was the most truthful man of his time and yet his features are said to have been the ugliest in Greece. To my mind he was beautiful, because all his life was a striving after Truth, and you may remember that his outward form did not prevent Phidias from appreciating the beauty of Truth in him, though as an artist he was accustomed to see Beauty in outward forms also!'

'But Bapuji,' said Ramachandran eagerly, 'the most beautiful things have often been created by men whose own lives were not beautiful.'

'That,' said Gandhiji, 'only means that Truth and Untruth often co-exist, good and evil are often found together. In an artist also not seldom the right perception of things and wrong co-exist. Truly beautiful creations come when right perception is at work. If these moments are rare in life, they are also rare in art.'

All this set Ramachandran thinking hard. 'If only truthful or good things can be beautiful, how can things without a moral quality be beautiful?' he said half to himself and half aloud. Then he asked the question, 'Is there truth, Bapuji, in things that are neither moral nor immoral in themselves? For instance, is there truth in a sunset or a crescent moon that shines amid the stars at night?'

'Indeed', replied Gandhiji, 'these beauties are truthful, in as much as they make me think of the Creator at the back of them. How else could these be beautiful, but for the truth that is in the centre of creation? When I admire the wonder of a sunset or the beauty of the moon my soul expands in worship of the Creator. I try to see Him and His mercies in all these creations. But even the sunsets and sunrises would be mere hindrances, if they did not help me to think of Him. Anything which is a hindrance



to the flight of a soul is a delusion and a snare; even like the body which often does hinder you in the path of salvation.'

'I am grateful' exclaimed Ramachandran, 'to hear your views on Art, and I understand and accept them. Would it not be well for you to set them down for the benefit of the younger generation in order to guide them aright?'

'That,' replied Gandhiji with a smile, 'I could never dream of doing, for the simple reason that it would be an impertinence on my part to hold forth on Art. I am not an art student, though these are my fundamental convictions. I do not speak or write about it, because I am conscious of my own limitations. That consciousness is my only strength. Whatever I might have been able to do in my life has proceeded more than anything else out of the realisation of my own limitations. My functions are different from the artist's and I should not go out of my way to assume his position.'

Ramachandran now turned to the next question. 'Are you against all machinery, Bapuji?'

'How can I.' he answered, smiling at Ramachandran's naive question, 'when I know that even this body is a most delicate piece of machinery? The spinning wheel itself is a machine. What I object to is the craze for machinery, not machinery as such. The craze is for what they call labour-saving machinery. Men go on 'saving labour,' till thousands are without work and thrown on the open streets to die of starvation. I want to save time and labour, not for a fraction of mankind, but for all. I want the concentration of wealth, not in the hands of a few, but in the hands of all. Today machinery merely helps a few to ride on the backs of millions. The impetus behind it all is not the philanthropy to save labour, but greed. It is against this constitution of things that I am fighting with all my might.'

'Then Bapuji' said Ramachandran with eagerness, 'you are fighting not against machinery, as such, but against its abuses which are so much in evidence today?'

'I would unhesitatingly say 'yes' but I would add that scientific truths and discoveries should first of all cease to be the mere instruments of greed. Then labourers will not be over-worked and machinery, instead of becoming a hindrance, will be a help. I am aiming, not at eradication of all machinery but limitation.'

Ramachandran said, 'When logically argued out, that would seem to imply that all complicated power-driven machinery should go.'



It might have to go,' admitted Gandhiji, 'but I must make one thing clear. The supreme consideration is man. The machine should not tend to make atrophied the limbs of men. For instance, I would make intelligent exceptions. Take the case of the Singer Sewing Machine. It is one of the few useful things ever invented and there is a romance about the device itself. Singer saw his wife labouring over the tedious process of sewing and seaming with her own hands, and simply out of his love for her he devised the sewing machine, in order to save her from unnecessary labour. He, however, saved not only her labour but also the labour of everyone who could purchase a sewing machine.'

'But,' in that case, said Ramachandran 'there would have to be a factory for making these Singer Sewing Machines, and it could have to contain power-driven machinery of ordinary type.'

'Yes,' said Bapu, smiling at Ramachandran's eager opposition. 'But I am socialist enough to say such factories should be nationalised, or state-controlled. They ought only to be working under the most attractive and ideal conditions, not for profit, but for the benefit of humanity, love taking the place of greed as the motive. It is an alteration in the condition of labour that I want. This mad rush for wealth must cease, and the labourer must be assured, not only of a living wage, but a daily task that is not a mere drudgery. The machine will under these conditions be as much a help to the man who owns it. The present mad rush will then cease and the labourer will work (as I have said) under attractive and ideal conditions. This is but one of the exceptions I have in mind. The sewing machine had love at its back. The individual is the one supreme consideration. The saving of the labour of the individual should be the object, and honest humanitarian conditions, and not greed, the motive. Thus, for instance, I would welcome any day a machine to straighten crooked spindles. Not that blacksmiths will cease to make spindles; but when the spindle gets wrong every spinner will have a machine of his own to get it straight. Therefore, replace greed by love and everything will come right.'

Ramachandran was evidently not satisfied with this. He had understood Gandhiji to be against all machinery and he had felt this was right too. So he wanted to go to the root of the matter. But it was getting late and he had many more questions to ask. 'Don't mind losing your train,' said Gandhiji, smiling. 'I am prepared to satisfy you. You may ask any questions you like this morning and it won't tire me now in the least.'



The young friend had by no means exhausted his list of questions. The assurance from Gandhiji that he would give him full liberty that morning put him entirely at ease and gathering courage once more he proceeded with the next question which dealt with the institution of marriage.

'The third question.' said Ramachandran, 'that I would like to ask you is whether you are against the institution of marriage,'

'I shall have to answer this question at some length.' said Bapu. 'The aim of human life is *Moksha*. As a Hindu, I believe that *moksha* is freedom from birth, by breaking the bonds of the flesh, by becoming one with God. Now marriage is a hindrance in the attainment of this supreme object, inasmuch as it only tightens the bonds of the flesh. Celibacy is a great help, inasmuch as it enables one to lead a life of full surrender to God. What is the object generally understood of marriage, except a repetition of one's own kind? And why need you advocate marriage? It propagates itself. It requires no agency to promote its growth.'

'But must you advocate celibacy and preach it to one and all?'

'Yes,' said Gandhiji—Ramachandran looked perplexed—'Then you fear there will be an end of creation? No. The extreme logical result would be not extinction of the human species, but the transference of it to a higher plane.'

'But may not an artist or a poet or a great genius leave a legacy of his genius to posterity through his own 'children?'

'Certainly not,' said Bapu, with emphasis. 'He will have more disciples than he can ever have children; and through these disciples all his gifts to the world will be handed down in a way that nothing else can do it. It will be the soul's marriage with the spirit, the progeny being the disciple—a sort of divine procreation. No! You must leave marriage to take care of itself. Repetition and not growth would be the result; for lust has come to play the most important part in marriage.'

'Mr. Andrews,' said Ramachandran, 'does not like your emphasis on celibacy.'

'Yes, I know,' said Gandhiji, 'that is the legacy of Protestantism. Protestantism did many good things, but one of its few evils was that it ridiculed celibacy.'

'That,' rejoined Ramachandran, 'was because it had to fight the deep abuses in which the clergy of the age had sunk.'



'But all that was not due to any inherent evil of celibacy,' said Bapu. 'It is celibacy that has kept Catholicism green up to the present day.'

Ramachandran's last question was about the much-discussed 'Spinning Franchise.' Ramachandran assured Gandhiji, at the outset, that he was a spinner, but had to confess that he, with three friends at Shantiniketan, only began spinning after they had heard of the fast. He also affirmed that he believed in universal spinning. But he could not understand how the Congress could compel its members to spin. Persuasion and not compulsion should be the method.

'I see,' said Gandhiji, 'you even go further than Mr. Andrews. He would not have the Congress to compel its members, but he would fain become a member of voluntary association with rules about spinning. You object to any such association whatsoever?'

Ramachandran remained silent. 'Well then.' replied Gandhiji enjoying the argument, 'I ask you, has the Congress any right to say that its members shall not drink? Will that be a restriction of the freedom of the individual too? If the Congress exercised that right of enjoying abstinence from drinking, there would be no objection. Why? Because the evils of drink are obvious. Well, I say that in India today where millions are on the brink of starvation and plunged in utter misery, it is perhaps a much worse evil to import foreign cloth. Think of the starving millions of Orissa. When I went there, I saw the famine-stricken. Thanks to a kind Superintendent, who was in charge of an industrial home, I saw also their children, bright, healthy, and merry, working away at their carpets, baskets, etc. There was no spinning, because these other things were much in vogue at the time. But on their faces there was the lustre of joyful work.

But when I came to the famine-stricken, what did I see? They were merely skin and bone, only waiting to die. They were then in that condition, because they would under no circumstances work. Even though you had threatened to shoot them, if they refused to work, I am sure they would have preferred to be shot, rather than do any honest work. This aversion from work is a greater evil than drink itself. You can take some work out of a drunkard. A drunkard retains something of a heart. He has intelligence. These starved men, refusing to work, were like mere animals. Now, how can we solve the problem of getting work out of people like this? I see no way except that of universalising spinning. Every yard of foreign cloth, brought into India, is one bit of bread snatched out of the mouths of the starving poor. If you could visualise, as I can, the supreme need of the hour, which is to give India's starving millions a chance



to earn their bread with joy and gladness, you would not object to the spinning franchise. I take the Congress to be a body of men and women who accept the paramount necessity of spinning. Why should it not ensure the integrity of membership in the body by making it compulsory for every member to spin? And you talk of 'persuasion.' What can be better persuasion than that every member of the Congress spins regularly a certain quantity of yarn every month? How would it be honest for the Congress members to ask people to spin, when they do not spin themselves?'

Ramachandran replied with great earnestness, 'But how can you exclude people, who do not spin, from the Congress? They may be doing valuable services to the nation in other ways.'

'Why not?' asked Gandhiji. 'What is the reason of property-franchise? Why is it necessary for a man to pay four annas to be a member? And why is age considered a necessary qualification? Would the eight year old violinist prodigy of Italy have the franchise? John Stuart Mill, however clever he might have been, when he was seven years old, with his knowledge of Greek and Latin, had no franchise at that age. Why were these prodigies excluded? Some men will have to be excluded under any franchise. No; today many will not accept my position, but I have faith that the day will come, it may be after my death—when men will say that after all what Gandhi said was right.'

It was now seven o'clock and Ramachandran had missed his train. But he had gained what was infinitely more precious. The next morning, before starting, he was fortunate enough to get another talk—this time a brief one, but one that at last converted him.

'So, Bapuji, truth is the main thing,' said Ramachandran resuming the previous day's conversation. 'Beauty and Truth are not separate aspects of the same thing.'

'Truth,' repeated Gandhiji with greater emphasis, 'is the first thing to be sought for, and Beauty and Goodness will be added unto you. Jesus was to my mind a supreme artist, because he saw and expressed Truth; and so was Mohammad, the *Quran* being the most perfect composition in all Arabic literature at any rate, that is what scholars say. It is because both of them strove first for Truth, that the grace of expression naturally came in, and yet neither Jesus nor Mohammad wrote on Art. That is the Truth and Beauty I crave for, live for and would die for.'



Ramachandran reverted to his difficulties as to Gandhiji's logical position with regard to machinery. 'If you make an exception of the Singer Sewing Machine and your spindle,' he said, 'where would these exceptions end?'

Gandhiji replied, 'Just where they cease to help the individual and encroach upon his individuality. The Machine shouldn't be allowed to cripple the limbs of man.'

'But I was not thinking just now of the practical side, Bapuji,' said Ramachandran. 'Ideally, would you not rule out all machinery? When you except the sewing machine, you will have to make exceptions of the bicycle, the motor car, etc.?''

'No, I don't,' said Bapu, 'because they do not satisfy any of the primary wants of man; for it is not the primary need of man to traverse distances with the rapidity of a motor car. The needle, on the contrary, happens to be an essential thing in life—a primary need. Ideally, however, I would reject this very body, which is not helpful to salvation, and seek the absolute liberation of the soul. From that point of view, I would reject all machinery, but machines will remain because, like the body, they are inevitable. The body itself, as I told you, is the purest piece of mechanism; but if it is a hindrance to the highest flights of the soul, it has to be rejected!'

'Why is it a necessary evil?' asked Ramachandran.

'Because it is the habitation, both of God and Satan,' replied Gandhiji.

'Let me now put my last question,' said Ramachandran. 'May not, after all, some artists be able to see Truth in and through Beauty?'

'Some may,' said Gandhiji, 'but here too, just as elsewhere, I must think in terms of the millions. And to the millions we cannot give that training to acquire a perception of Beauty, in such a way as to see Truth in it. Show them Truth first, and they will see Beauty afterwards. Orissa haunts me in my waking hours and in my dreams. Whatever can be useful to those starving millions is beautiful to my mind. Let us give today first the vital things of life and all the graces and ornaments of life will follow.'

Here the long conversation ended, and early the same morning Ramachandran started on his way back to Shantiniketan, rich with Bapu's blessings, wondering how far the teaching of his Gurudev, Rabindranath Tagore, would harmonise with that which he had just heard, and how far there was a fundamental difference.

1. Reference to the Ordinance under which numbers of men were arrested and 'detained' without trial for an indefinite period.



Delhi,

30-10-1924

*Dear Motilalji,

Ever since the firing of the Viceregal bomb I have been taxing myself as to what we can do and our helplessness has preyed upon me. This is my conclusion: We must not do anything in haste or anger. We must, therefore, bow before the storm. For the time being we must revert to the old method of simply expressing our opinion and we should concentrate All-India opinion upon the lawless methods of the Government and therefore attack the principle of the Government adopting extraordinary measures and should therefore call upon the Government to repeal even Regulation III of 1818.¹ If extraordinary powers are required by any extraordinary situation, they can be taken only upon a vote of elected representatives. I know that even this is tall talk and it jars on me. But I see no other way out at the present moment.

So much for the All-India work. If I could carry you, that is you personally and Swarajists with me, I would ask the Working Committee or the A.I.C.C. to concentrate its efforts upon the three items mentioned. Give me a compact disciplined Congress, and I can see my way again to answering Government action with popular action. But till then, and till Hindus and Mussulmans speak with one mind and till we show substantial work about Khaddar and untouchability, I for one see no prospect of any effective direct action. Since the Bengal arrests the idea of retiring from the Congress has possessed me, unless I receive the enthusiastic support of Swarajists in my proposals. I simply want to bring into being a compact organisation which will respond to every call. I do not care how small that organisation is. All other non-violent activities may go on. I can understand their utility upto a point. But I am convinced that they will all be a wasted effort, if nobody concerns himself with bringing into being a disciplined and effective organisation. I feel deeply hurt and humiliated that we cannot take up with any degree of effect the Government challenge. I think I have told you all you can want to know from me.

I sent a little note to Das as he passed through Delhi. Please tell him it is not want of will which keeps me tied down to Delhi. I hardly looked at the newspapers before. But since the arrests I have been eagerly scanning everything about them in all the papers that come under my notice.



I was so glad you were able to go to Nagpur and more so that you were able to get the parties agree to your and Maulana's arbitration.

I hope you are well.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. Gandhi

1. A rusty Regulation which was unearthed from the Statute Book to make arrests without warrants and detentions for indefinite periods wear the cloak of legality.



Seventh Week

(On the way to Calcutta, d. 3-11-1924)

Gandhiji has now begun to feel that he is his old self again. He tries to walk a little longer than before and in fact he does. His talks with visitors last longer than before and when there is an excess in this regard, the fatigue provides a good warning that his health has not yet returned completely to its pre-fast normal. His weight had gone up by 4 lbs., i.e. it had come to 92 lbs., immediately after the end of the fast, but there is no further increase though nearly a week has passed.

Every evening he goes out for a walk. Hakim Saheb is invariably with him at the time. The latter's brother died last week and Gandhiji was chafing that his health prevented him from going to the Hakim Saheb's house and he had to content himself with a letter of condolence. Hardly was the ink dry when Hakim Saheb himself came up and, instead of Gandhiji consoling him, it was he who enlivened Gandhiji by throwing in a few titbits of jokes in his talk. Hakim Saheb's own health has gone down considerably and he too now recognises that Gandhiji's prediction on the first day of the fast that after its completion Gandhiji would be fresher than Hakimji has come true. In a sense Gandhiji himself has begun to attend on Hakimji. He saw that in order to improve Hakimji's health to some extent at least it was necessary to take him for a walk with him every evening. He, therefore, pressed Hakim Saheb to accompany him in his evening walk. This pair of two old men, both elders in renunciation, wisdom, and age, who are careful to preserve not only the honour of their own community but that of the other's also, presents a really worth-seeing sight as they sit side by side in a car to go out for a stroll at about 4. 30 p. m. In 1918 when Gandhiji was lying seriously ill in his Ashram (at Ahmedabad) his elder brother Khushalchandbhai—father of the present Manager of the Ashram, Maganlalbhai—used to accompany him in a carriage for such an outing. It is Hakim Saheb at present who has taken the place of Gandhiji's elder brother. Naturally, they have long talks on the way. The principal subject is, of course, the burning question of the day, viz. unity, but they talk about their respective religions also. As a result Hakim Saheb has now expressed his desire to learn from Gandhiji the essence of the Bhagwadgita.

The public's contact with Gandhiji's religious life is usually only through his articles. During his touring campaign in 1921, people could see that, even though loaded with tremendous responsibility and pressure of work, he had the power of disposing of a mountain of work within a surprisingly short time. But they had hardly



any chance to see the religious aspect of his daily life. In Delhi they have now got this opportunity for the first time. His evening prayer has become a veritable public function with free entry for one and all. Lots of men come from the city simply to attend it. Others inquire of its time by telephone and, presenting themselves at the right time, quietly join in the prayer held in the terrace and go home as quietly after being witnesses to Gandhiji's joy at that time. *Bhajanmandalis* (groups of hymn singers)—like the *Premsabha* which sings of Lord Rama's incidents—request Gandhiji to let them sing religious story poems to him and men well-versed in devotional music offer their services. A friend who comes to him these days plays upon his *sitar* in such melodious tunes that Gandhiji, observed, "The line

मो सम कौन कुटील खल कामी

(Who so crooked, wiked and lustful as myself?) ceaselessly vibrates in my memory right from the beginning of the playing to its end and even for a long while afterwards. Repeatedly he asked the player to sing that same hymn. Nothing moves so much the strings of that heart, which is ever striving in search of the pinnacle of self-purification, as this hymn of the poet Soordas (a mediaeval blind saint) because the poet unreservedly proclaims from house-tops his unworthy ways and piteously prays to the Divine Saviour of fallen souls to deign to rain His grace upon him.

Interviewers have grown in number these days and, now that he is regaining vitality, is Gandhiji the man to refuse requests for interviews? An amusing interview with two or three Swarajists of the Punjab took place recently.

"But, Mahatmaji, are you sure there will be unity in our ranks?"

"It is on the basis of that conviction that I am working for it."

"And is your Three-point Programme also for the same object?"

"Definitely."

"But how can it bring about unity? People may differ in their views as to how to establish Hindu Muslim Unity. One man may suggest one way and another quite a different one. How can such heterogeneous elements be unified?"

"My dear friend, these three items are exactly those, I believe, on which we can come to an agreement. But if we can't, I don't intend to achieve unity by force."



"No, Mahatmaji, I don't mean that. In passing resolutions we shall all easily agree. Whatsoever resolutions you propose on all these three items will suit everybody."

"That is, it is not at all necessary to implement them?"

The visitors could not resist a smile.

"No, no, Mahatmaji; but your object, I take it, in making spinning compulsory is to make the educated, cultured, classes do some physical labour?"

"Yes, one of the objects."

"Why not then propose a resolution on physical labour itself?—and leave the manner of doing it to the discretion of every individual member?"

"So that for one hour somebody may spin, another play football and a third chop wood? Is that what you mean?"

Everyone laughed outright. Gandhiji continued: "Physical labour there certainly is, but I want every Congressman to take a vow by which he may perform only that kind of physical work which is the most fruitful."

"If, Mahatmaji, you want to win Swaraj by means of the spinning wheel, you must first of all stop all railway trains and steamers from running and all spinning and weaving mills from working. Only then can your spinning programme succeed. The weak always go to the wall, Mahatmaji. Everyone suffers from his sins. Whose is the fault but the sinner's?"

"Weak? In what sense?"

"Weak in all sense."

"And by 'the strong' you mean men like Taimur and Nadirshah? Let me then tell you that a thousand Taimurs and Nadirshahs have come and gone but this weak and meek India is still alive—while "the strong" have left not a trace, simply passed out of memory. I for one can't believe that the weak are destroyed. The weakest of the weak has been endowed by God with inexhaustible soul-force."

I don't think the friends went away quite pleased and satisfied. But the majority of visitors during this week, I may say, come from Englishmen, rather from Europeans, or better still the Whites. Among the Englishmen there were the professors of St. Stephen's College. They would peep in whenever it suited them, inquire about



Gandhiji's health, sit for a while and then go away. But they were regular visitors none the less. Among the Europeans, there was a missionary from Switzerland. Goodness was writ large on his face. He spoke only broken English and found it rather difficult to understand Gandhiji's.

"You will please forgive me. I can't speak English well enough." "It is a foreign tongue for me also. We are both equal in that respect."

"Everyone knows you all over Europe. In Germany, in Switzerland, you are quite a name—because you are an excellent Christian."

"But I am not a Christian", said Gandhiji as he laughed.

"But you follow Christ's principles in life very faithfully."

"Yes, that's true. But those principles are found in my religion also, in other religions as well."

The visitor was a little put out. "But in Christianity specially so."

"That is doubtful. I think all religions enjoin certain general commandments—'speak the truth', 'harm nobody' etc. The man, therefore, who follows them in life is as good a Christian, as he is a good Hindu or a good Moslem. But personally my own religion gives me peace; if I got it from any other, I would certainly embrace that religion." The visitor did not seem to appreciate this remark, perhaps because he could not understand Gandhiji's English well enough. But in the end he said, "I am really very thankful to you for this meeting," and then he left.

But the word 'European' did not cover all the foreign visitors. There were many among them who were Americans also. There was, for instance, an American tourist who happened to come up to Gandhiji in company with two women. He was an architect who, after passing through many countries, had come to India and was very eager to have a short talk with Gandhiji.

After assuring Gandhiji that Americans knew him well enough, he put some very straight and short questions. Gandhiji responded with equally brief replies.

Q. Will you then give us your view as to how our (Christian) Mission should do their work here?

A. Yes. By doing, not speaking. Not by profession, but by practice.

Q. That is by opening hospitals, schools, colleges etc.? I suppose you mean that.



- A. No. I don't. Because these institutions do not always express Christ's life in action. His life in fact should be represented in every Christian's actual behaviour. That itself would inevitably affect others. So the pure and noble way to propagate a religion is its actual practice by the believer.
- Q. How then may we, Americans, help you? Or may we help you or not?
- A. Do help us. There is only one way. You can help us by closely studying our movement. As things stand at present, anything about India is presented to America either too brightly or too darkly. The right attitude is lacking. What you should do is to study carefully every movement that goes on here and neither praise nor blame us more than we deserve.
- Q. But may we not help Indian students?
- A. Certainly you may. Nobody says, 'you mustn't.'
- Q. May we help them with money then? But our Christian Mission is not so rich.
- A. No, no. I never wish my country to beg money from any other. I would never encourage beggary. What I mean by 'help' is advice and sympathy. In a big rich country like U.S.A. a stranger may lose his bearings, may even go the wrong way. Your institution can lead him to the right path, by showing him the right institutions and neat places for him.

"Quite so. But for the sympathy of the people here, we could not have moved about as we have. Wherever we go, we realise the value of Indian sympathy. We had the same experience in Japan also."

That started one of the women to speak of Japan: "If you don't mind, may I know your attitude towards Japan?"

After a little deliberation Gandhiji said, "Of aloofness and distrust." The questioner was taken aback. Gandhiji then explained:

"For the simple reason that Japan's progress is extremely rapid. One wonders how long that may continue. One may doubt besides if the progress has been going on along right lines. Japan, moreover, is after such wholesale adoption of Western ways that I for one would feel inclined to keep aloof, because in such imitation that country is more likely to be harmed than helped. But take this for a random shot only. Don't give it any weight. Japan I have neither seen nor read of much. I am simply speaking from hearsay."



"No, but you are right. I was there when Dr. (Rabindranath) Tagore visited Japan. He also held the same view. And what do you think of 'Asia for the Asians' movement?"

"I am not for any movement that aims at securing its own rise by wilful harm to others. Asia must not become a danger to other continents by making itself the preserve of Asiatics only. If that happens, the Asiatic menace would be greater than the European—if, for nothing else, because Asiatics are far larger in number."

What was at the back of these questions was not very clear. But the final question let the cat out of the bag.

"Mr. Gandhi, how shall we, the missionaries, fare when you get your freedom? What will happen to the foreign missions that have settled here?"

"Ours will be an attitude of perfect tolerance. I, at least, will try my best to maintain and strengthen it."

As they departed they gave their address and said, "Do remember us, if you happen to visit America."

Another American, Mr. Ward, had delivered lectures on 'Non-violence' and 'Policy of Non-violence' in Bombay and had gone to Lahore. He had requested Gandhiji to grant him an interview. He was given a date, but when he came to Delhi on that day he fell ill. His wife, therefore, came to Gandhiji to beg him to excuse her husband's absence and get another date. Gandhiji was then spinning. Mrs. Ward watched the process attentively. "I wonder how this thread comes out! As if it is hidden somewhere in all this cotton and your fingers are simply drawing it out!", she remarked; and then saying that many people in America knew Gandhiji, she added, "A book of your articles has been published in America. My son brought it and read it through. And now he insists, 'I must read all Gandhiji's articles. I want to hear him speak.' How I wish I could go on watching you spinning like this for hours and hours!" And then she left.

An English friend of hers had accompanied Mrs. Ward. As he rose to depart he revived the memory of his very early contact with Gandhiji. "We had once met in Lahore years ago. Everybody knows you now. You have cut out a new pathway—and not merely for good relations between different communities. You are showing us that different countries also can come nearer your way."

Mr. Ward's appointment was fixed on the third day but he was ill and in hospital still. Mrs. Ward sent word: "It will now be difficult to see you. Mr. Ward wants to send you some message. Please let me know how long you are staying in Delhi."



Gandhiji wrote back immediately:

"I am sorry Mr. Ward is still ill. I am here for several days yet, but Mr. Ward need not think of coming over here. I will see him at the hospital myself."

Mrs. Ward then came on Sunday to take Gandhiji to the hospital where he saw Mr. Ward.

Let me give here a substance of that very noteworthy interview.

Mr. Ward: "Your teaching of non-violence has deeply impressed our country. I myself believe in that principle, but we—my colleagues and myself—have some difficulties as regards its application. I thought, I could solve them if I could understand your movement more clearly. I was eager to see you on that account."

With this preface he began his questions.

Q.: Is not your non-violent movement political in character?

Gandhiji: It is used in the field of politics, because it is my firm belief that political work also must be done along purely spiritual lines. But non-violence has not been conceived of as an exclusively political weapon. It is essentially a movement for self-purification.

Q.: At present you emphasize only three things and Khadi specially. Do you believe that these three things alone will make your country free?

Gandhiji: Yes, the first two things mean unification of the country. By the third, by Khadi, the country's economic uplift will be achieved. I for one believe that so long as the country's economic serfdom is not ended, the other serfdom is certain to continue. That is why I have laid special stress on gaining economic independence first. Once that is achieved, I am sure, all other things will be added unto them.

Q.: Since you want to teach your people the discipline that non-violence entails and to propagate that principle, don't you think that the people—the masses—need to be well-educated first? Without being highly educated how can they understand non-violence, or see the truth?

Gandhiji: The education that you speak of—literary education—is not at all necessary for this work. Except in literacy, our people are fully well-equipped in education in general, common sense, practical wisdom, general culture etc. Everyone is quite at home in the stories of Ramayana and Mahabharata—and illiterate



villagers specially so—and they generally understand the essence, the philosophy underlying them. Let me speak here of my mother herself. The three Rs she was totally innocent of. But she possessed a culture of such respectable height, a spiritual wisdom of such depths that I have seen a very few women so stainless and pure as she. Many indelible childhood impressions of the most exalted kind I owe to her. All the same she had no book-knowledge. And yet like spiritual matters she could understand political tangles also very well. She could see through the palace intrigues of her days and often gave a very helpful and wise view on them.

Q.: Don't you think that your movement may go along non-violent lines for a time and then take a turn for violence?

Gandhiji: Why, that was exactly what happened. And that was why I had to stop from going further along the way it was taking. But if the educated classes enthusiastically support the constructive work I am now doing, I have no doubt we can gain Swaraj by the non-violent method only.

Q: But can millions take to that path?

Gandhiji: I have complete faith that they can. This work cannot be done mechanically. What is needed here is to impress and move hearts—and not of Indians only, but of Englishmen as well. This power (of the soul) cannot be judged by ordinary standards. We cannot say when and how that power may spread. Why may not the English mentality itself be purified by this fight? It is my firm faith that numbers are not at all necessary for the movement's success. It is enough if only a few men of single-minded faith come forth. Millions will then follow. That has been my uniform experience wheresoever I have made experiments in *Satyagraha*. This experiment is the most powerful and the most difficult indeed, but it is not impossible. The fact is, I cannot claim that my own non-violence is pure or deep enough, otherwise that alone would suffice for my work. One of the surest reasons why I always look out for collaborators in my experiments is my own imperfection. As for the efficacy of this weapon I have never had any doubt at all.

Mr. Ward: I see what you mean. But work of that type requires deep faith in God. We have in some respects greater difficulties to face than you. We have to fight against our own people and in matters where their vested interests lie.



Gandhiji: I may be wrong, but I feel that if anybody has to struggle against the greatest difficulties, it is we. We have not only to pit ourselves against vested interests, but also against a most well-organised power. But I may not say anything more about your problems. I may only say that you also have to gain your victory with this very same weapon.

Mr. Ward: Yes, that we have realized long since. We have absolutely no other weapon with us. If we take to the path of violence, our nations, I mean those of the West, are doomed to destruction.

We are on the way to Calcutta today. Pandit Motilalji will join us at Allahabad. There was a wire from Deshbandhu Das: "Your presence Indispensable in our Deliberations." Hakim Saheb, Maulana and Gandhiji conferred together and decided that Gandhiji ought to go to Calcutta. The brew was still stewing in Delhi and Gandhiji could ill afford to leave the town. He started for Calcutta none the less under the idea that that was a work of greater moment and his presence there was even more indispensable than at Delhi.

He anticipated the outcome of this meeting in Calcutta with perhaps greater coldness and indifference than he has ever entertained before going to any conference. He has absolutely no idea as to what may be accomplished, but it is only his sense of duty that takes him. He leaves it to God to guide him. In the meeting of the Swaraj Council there, Gandhiji's proposed resolution on compulsory spinning is bound to be discussed. At this moment of a grave crisis, it would be very good if all the Swarajists meeting there decide to accept the spinning resolution. From the latest talks with Pandit Motilalji, it appears that a difference is likely to arise on the point of the contribution of only self-spun yarn for Congress membership. While some of them, it is gathered, are prepared to send the yarn quota, they insist that they must not be required to spin the yarn themselves but allowed to procure it from others. Gandhiji, on the other hand, takes the view that such a concession even for him who is physically able to spin is untenable. A man who has not the strength to spin may certainly put forth that plea, but all the weight and grace of the resolution would be lost if even a normally healthy person sends his contribution of yarn by procurement—just because he has no inclination to spin.



Visit of Calcutta

d. 4 to 8. 11.1924.

(*Navajivan*. d. 23. 11. 1924)

The reader will be glad to observe that I have changed the heading this time. Not that Gandhiji has fully regained his pre-fast vitality, but his articles in this issue and the events that happened last week show that he has again taken into his hands nearly all the various activities he had been engaged in.

In my last letter I gave the reason for his leaving for Calcutta and the attitude in which he made the journey. I propose in this letter to discuss the reasons for the now well-known outcome of the visit and the circumstances that brought it about. From the output of his work during four days' stay in Calcutta, one may feel that all his weakness has left him now. But as an eyewitness I know how dead tired he used to feel at the end of his discussions and interviews which started from 4. a. m. and continued right up to 11 p. m. at night. And he now feels the accumulated effect of that strain.

On the very first day, the 4th inst., he was invited by Deshbandhu Das to attend a meeting of the Swarajists. He was requested there to state his view on the situation suddenly arisen in Bengal from the Ordinance and on what the country should do about it. Very long consultations followed. Gandhiji reiterated his own reactions to the Ordinance as given in his article on the Viceregal bomb. Saying that the people were not at present strong enough to offer civil disobedience, as the country's internal position was too weak for it, he appealed to all those present there to keep patience and concentrate on the three activities he had proposed. He said in effect: "You may find nothing inspiring in these three items of work; the people too are likely to regard it as a very tame, a very insipid, programme. But it is better that the masses, looking for a stimulating programme, get disappointed and leave us. The country has nothing at all to gain from the collection of massive but do-nothing crowds rending the sky with the cries of 'Mahatma Gandhi—ki—jai' and the like. It is good, both for such multitudes themselves and for us, if they forsake us. My only object is to gain the collaboration of all of us in these three things and thus pick up strength."



And immediately with the opening of this topic came the discussion on Gandhiji's proposed resolution on spinning. "And suppose your resolution is not accepted?" the Swarajists asked.

"In that case," answered Gandhiji, "there is only one go for me and that is to leave the Congress and give you, Swarajists, a free hand. You have exhibited good discipline, you have been able to impress the Government. I may not accept your method of work, but how can I deny that you have succeeded in creating an impression on the Government? I must, therefore, never think of standing in your way. Strict non-co-operators may not approve of this attitude and may even give me the go-by. Even then I can afford to have no other attitude towards you. A fight with you is out of the question for me."

But while Gandhiji's exit from the Congress was unthinkable, his conditions too were unacceptable. Most candidly the Swarajists opened their minds and put him their quandary: "You are speaking of spinning and any argument with you on the matter is futile. But we don't possess the faith you have. We accept the need for spinning, but cannot appreciate your insistence on self-spinning. And how can we accept a condition we cannot intellectually agree with?"

'But then mustn't I stretch a point in order to be helpful to them in some way at least, when the Government has fired this bomb on them to destroy all their achievement? Should they be deprived of the advantage my position as their leader would give them in this crisis they are facing?' That was the thorny question ruminating over which Gandhiji went to bed that night. His heart was repeatedly singing the line:

निर्बल के बल राम|

(God is the Help of the helpless).

"I cannot see my way. God alone will show me the light as to what I must do," he said, as he closed his eyes. In the morning, however, he rose up with all his doubts set at rest. 'I must go to the last limit of self-sacrifice I can make. To help the Swarajists I must give up my point to the utmost extent I can. If the Maharashtrian wing of the Swaraj Party regards compulsory self-spinning as an improper demand, I must agree to the acceptance of yarn spun by anybody else as the fee for Congress membership. This concession may not be in conformity with the ideal position, but it will at least solve the economic question, inasmuch as every Congress member will have to get his yarn



quota spun by someone else.' Under this consideration he declared his readiness to modify the resolution to that extent. After this modification the question of wearing Khadi by Congress members was taken up. Panditji and others pointed out the difficulties that every member would meet with, if he was required to wear Khadi always and everywhere. There were a thousand wearing articles which were indispensable but never made of Khadi. What about socks and hand-gloves? Woolen underwears, so essential in the thick of winter, were not made of handspun handwoven wool. And a thousand other occasions could be imagined when wearing or procuring Khadi became impossible. And if definite exceptions were stated, how long would the list grow and where would it end? That was how they argued. It was, hence, decided to make a rule under which at least on certain occasions every Congress member must have nothing but Khadi on his person. 'If you can't save yourself from sinning in your everyday life, you must make it a point not to sin at least at holy places of pilgrimage. If you want to stick to untouchability outside the precincts of a temple, well, you may do so, but please do regard every creature as your equal at least on that holy ground'—that was the attitude of Gandhiji and under it, it was resolved that a man who did not wear Khadi even under specified circumstances and occasions could certainly not be a Congress member.

But the thought that worked the most to make Gandhiji so conciliatory was: 'To what extent may a man become hard? A man may be 'harder than steel'¹ towards himself, but may he be equally so towards others? If people say that they cannot do without my leadership, should I make my leadership a too costly commodity? If, without departing from my principle, I can lower my ideal so as to meet them halfway, why may I not give up my insistence on the latter? It was this attitude—this one of becoming 'softer than a flower'—that impelled Gandhiji to give his signature to the Joint Statement which has been published under his name also.²

But he decided to hold consultations with at least the No-changers of Bengal before giving that signature and met them accordingly on the 6th evening. Gandhiji's reason for offering the Swarajists the olive-branch was the Government's attack on them and the hard straits they were put to in consequence. Long discussions were held on the question whether that reason was correct and if so to what extent. Gandhiji has given an excellent summary of these discussions in his article. One cannot say that the No-changers were satisfied even after Gandhiji had given the arguments stated in it. They, therefore, made an humble appeal: "We cannot rid ourselves of the fear that the agreement is a breach of principle and that the constructive programme



will thereby go to pieces. We pray, you should not sign the agreement immediately but give it a quiet thought for a week. Please go to your Ashram at Sabarmati, ponder over it there, and then you may sign it, if you like. "Gandhiji promised to think over that appeal. But after coming to his staying place he thought again and then came to the conclusion that it was his duty to stand by the Swarajists because they were really hard pressed. After arriving at this decision he gave his signature to that agreement (the Joint Statement). But even after signing the agreement he met the No-changers the next day in order to explain to them his own position and duty. I wish to give a substance of that talk at some length in the hope that it may throw a little more light than Gandhiji's own article does.

Explaining his own attitude in the beginning Gandhiji said: 'Personally I have not an iota of doubt about the propriety of my step. Formerly I was in a whirlpool of perplexity as to whether I should sign the agreement or not, but now my mind is made up and at ease. I am certain that I could not have done anything other than what I did. It is the very *dharma* of believers in non- violence to continue making sacrifices, till there remained nothing to give. That is why I have gone to the final limit of self-denial. I must go on giving up to such an extent that the opposite party itself may feel cloyed with my grants, to such an extent that he may be staggered at the immensity of my sacrifice. And this is by no means my first experience. The very *dharma* of giving suggests that it should be done in such abundance, in such an overwhelming manner, that the receiver may feel satiated. I must admit, however, that my renunciation, my concession, in this case is not of that type. It is not spontaneous and total renunciation. It is only after a good deal of haggling, after weighing the pros and cons, that I have given what I have. Slowly, very slowly, inch by inch, I have retreated from my position. But, yes; some people think I have given away to them (Swarajists) more than they had hoped for.

"If you once realize completely that non-co-operation is impossible at present, you will at once see that I had but to go on in concession as far as I have done. Wherever I go I see nothing but violence stalking abroad. The hearts of the people too are filled so much with violence, that it is now a crime to carry on non-co-operation on a national scale. But there is a difference between 'national' and 'individual' non-co-operation. Individuals, therefore, will go on practising non-co-operation to the extent they used to. Rather say that if they give it up, it will only show that their original non-co-operation was meaningless.



"The spinning franchise has been hotly discussed. You think that I have yielded too much, that I have now made Khadi a merely formal affair. Nothing of the kind. Read the history of Khadi. It will tell us how many strides we have taken. In its earliest stage people were encouraged to take various vows—'shuddha' (=pure, i.e., cloth made of wholly handspun yarn) 'mishra' (=mixed, i.e. cloth in which the warp could be of millspun yarn) etc. The next step was to completely discard *swadeshi* mill-made-clothing and substitute handspun Khadi. Then the spinning wheel was brought in vogue. Later on volunteers were required to wear nothing but Khadi. The next forward step was to make the knowledge of spinning compulsory. Further on everyone was insistently exhorted to spin. Then came resolutions making it compulsory for workers to spin and now we have made spinning a qualification for franchise.

"Yes, I admit. Each and every Congressman is not going to spin. But those who have been already spinning are not going to stop it. On the contrary, there is bound to be an increase in the number of spinners. And how many of them can afford the expense of getting their yarn spun by others? A large majority will contribute only self-spun yarn. How can we compel a man to spin, when he remains unconvinced about the propriety of self-spinning. We must, therefore, rest content, if he does not himself spin but sends his quota by getting it spun. Let us, I say, think a little more deeply. That every Congressman must spin was never a principle with us. Even that idea was never entertained by a large number. I was practically alone in holding that view. Yes, long ago a gentleman from Ceylon did ask me in a letter why spinning should not be made compulsory for Congressmen. But at that time I dismissed the suggestion as impossible and gave no thought to it. Later on, however, it appeared feasible to me and I put it before the country. If, therefore, there has been any surrender, it is only a little relaxation of my ideal (not principle)—a little lowering of the aim to be achieved.

"And you think I brought down Khadi to a matter of ceremonial wear? No. Even that fear is groundless. A resolution to wear Khadi is one thing and a disqualification for membership for not wearing Khadi quite another. Voting is a very definite act. There must be no vagueness also about the qualifications for it, nor must they be too difficult for an ordinary man to possess. Mr. Suharawardy, the Deputy Mayor of the Calcutta Corporation, came yesterday clad in Khadi from top to toe. He does not wear Khadi habitually, but he regarded yesterday's occasion as one where Khadi was the befitting dress. How can I ask such a man to wear only a Khadi robe, when he presents himself as a lawyer in a court of law? I may only hope that when he wears Khadi at national functions, he will not start wearing foreign or mill-made clothes privately,



merely out of spite. Those who use Khadi already are certain to go on using them and those who never wear it, will have, at least on occasions, an opportunity to enter the holy Congress temple with the sacred Khadi dress. As matters stand, who can say that Congress delegates wear Khadi today? 90 percent of the delegates come to the Congress with at least their *dhoties* made, not of Khadi but of mill-cloth. This condition makes this bad show an impossibility."

Then the question of joining hands with the Swarajists was opened. Gandhiji has discussed why that should be done in his article so completely that I say nothing of it here. "Be as charitable to the Government as I may, I cannot believe that it took the step of arresting the Swarajists for the sake of public good. My conviction that it was taken only to suppress the Swarajists gets deeper every moment." With these few words, he closed the question.

In conclusion he said:

'I have the conviction that, as I have shown in *Young India*, my surrender amounts only to a little descent from my own ideal, but is not a surrender of essence or principle. But if you think that mine was a sacrifice of principle, if you think that my compromise was unwarrantable, you must oppose me tooth and nail. I had explained to Shyam Babu (a leading Bengali No-changer) my object in signing the agreement. I want to evolve order out of the present disorder, harmony out of the present discord. I want to weld a disjointed lifeless people into a compact nation and infuse them with strength and fearlessness. It is harmful to the country, if I have created only a party of blind followers. I can excuse the common classes for blind faith, but you belong to the class of authors, speakers, debaters. You must act only according to your intellectual convictions. It is not that I have gone beyond the pale of error, though, having more experience than you, I am less likely to commit it. But it is possible for a man who errs rarely to make a ghastly blunder when he does. It is possible that I rate the work of the Swarajists too highly. It is possible that I attach too much importance to the need for Hindu Muslim unity. If you feel like that, you may unreservedly choose a new road and follow that alone. You will then have behaved only with self-respect. There are two kinds of sacrifices: of one's own independent judgment and of one's essential principles. The late Mr. Gokhale used to say that for the public good one may make a sacrifice of the first kind but never of the second. From that point of view you are at perfect liberty to have any attitude you like towards this agreement.'

Then followed a number of questions and answers. I must give at least a few:



Q.: The Congress will no longer remain the poor man's Congress. It will be the preserve of the rich, because they can buy yarn from anywhere.

A.: No. It will fully remain the poor man's Congress. It will be the Congress' business to supply cotton to the poor, but the latter's to give their labour. The middle classes also will not buy yarn, but spin their quota. Let those who are idle or averse to spinning get their yarn spun.

Q.: You started non-co-operation with the wicked Government and now you are gradually giving it up. But that apart, you are now preaching co-operation with wickedness. The Swarajists have been guilty of such lies and duplicity that one wonders how co-operation with them is at all possible.

A.: I have never said that we must non-co-operate with evil everywhere we find it. We should non-co-operate only when we have to be accessories to wicked acts. Even if the accusations you are making are well founded, we are not going to be partners in their lies. And you forget, it was after cooperating with the Government for thirty years that I began non-co-operation. While in this case no occasion has yet arisen that calls for non-co-operation with our brothers or with Swarajists. Have we ever co-operated with them to such an extent as to justify our non-co-operation now? My one business today is to reform the hearts of Hindus and Muslims and I ask for help in that same work from one and all. When their hearts will have been transformed, my hope of getting Swaraj immediately will go up a thousand-fold.

Q.: You want to bring into one camp even the Moderates, and to find room for believers in violence as well. I wonder. How can all these conflicting elements be roped in?

A.: What I want to do is to live for truth and die for it. I would wish people to be at least truthful, at least honest. If I compel everyone to accept as his goal a situation that I alone regard as ideal, my action will only breed hypocrisy, not honesty. The Statement that I have signed today will give an impetus to honesty. Let a man take a vow to do the least he can but keep it perfectly—that is all I want. That was why I used to urge that the words 'peaceful' and 'legitimate' be dropped from the Congress creed. (The aim of the Congress was 'the attainment of Swaraj by all peaceful and legitimate means'). Is it not better to refrain from taking a vow of non-violence than to take it and still cherish violence? Let the country accept my ideals if it likes them. If it does not, I must keep them in my



pocket. All this notwithstanding, I have certainly not given any unwarrantable concession. If some Hindu comes to me and says, 'I do not want the retention of Hindu Muslim unity as one of the objects of the Congress,' do you think I would accept his proposal? In the same way, if the use of Indian mill-cloth had been suggested as the minimum qualification for voting, I should never have accepted the proposal. I would have simply destroyed Khadi that way.

Q.: A time was when you were telling us that an honest shoebblack was better than a co-operating lawyer. And now you are going to become a lawyers' and V. I. P.s' man.

A.: That is a good point. Every word of what I had said was true. But does non-co-operation even exist today? If non-co-operation were spread to every nook and corner of the country, if men of even the boot-black's class were carrying it out to the full, they could certainly keep out the co-operators. But you see, I am not the lord and master of the Congress. If I want to be a leader, I can only be one by demanding easily practicable conditions, not impossible ones. Had there not been these quarrels, had not the venom spread as far as it has, I would have carried the Congress along the old rut. But the situation has altered completely and I felt that I must now be patient and forbearing and forget all talk of a fight.

After thus attempting to satisfy the No-changers, Gandhiji left for his stay. One of the leading No-changers told me, "Venom has gone so deep that Swarajists and No-changers regard each other as enemies. How can they accept Gandhiji's idea of 'The Law of Love ?' - There is the rule. Otherwise, if we think over all that he said, there seems to be no difficulty in embracing the Swarajists." On the next day after signing the agreement, everyone came to Gandhiji before dispersing and on behalf of all the Swarajists Pandit Motilalji said, "Gandhiji, now you must give us lessons in spinning. We will leave for our homes only after learning it up from you." When on the 4th inst. Mr Kelkar met Gandhiji for the first time after the agreement, he remarked, "Let us sit together. Are we not old friends?" "No," Gandhiji immediately rejoined, "Old enemies. New friends."

Let me now wind up with that much the history of this new friendship.

I have many other things to note in the context of that history as well as in that of Gandhiji's stay in Calcutta. During the period Deshbandhu Das' house had ceased to be his home, but become a public resort. Meetings of Swarajists were held in one part, in the other there was a regular procession of countless men to see Gandhiji. And this



was all a motley gathering. Bengali women flocked to him in endless numbers, and so did the Gujaratis and others. Crowds collected in their thousands down below. They would, however, cease to make a row after having Gandhiji's *darshan* : but such a large number of people came even upstairs that giving an interview or merely meeting them often became impossible. A sizable number of foreigners also had come there—two Englishmen had a long discussion and a Frenchwoman as well as a Chinese gentleman had had their interviews. And many other foreigners had visited the place merely to 'see' Gandhiji. As he was leaving Calcutta, two Englishwomen came to him on the station platform, simply to get acquainted and shake hands with Gandhiji. One American woman approached him for an autograph and during the journey a Danish woman requested an interview in the train! His mantra of friendship has thus spread so far and wide that everybody wishes to become his friend. The two English visitors also referred to above, had seen him with the sole object of discussing how friendship could be established, not only between themselves and Gandhiji as individuals, but between Englishmen and Indians. To one of these two Gandhiji said, "If these two or three things are accomplished it is easy to create friendship between India and Britain. India must be self-dependent for that end its economic problem must be solved. If the foreign cloth which has been making India dependent and lifeless disappears from the land, India can gain the strength to face the world fearlessly. I agree with you when you say that total and absolute non-co-operation between Englishmen and Indians is unthinkable. Man will always be dependent on his fellowman. What I want to do is to improve the relationship between the two into one of equality. If it becomes that of the fellowship of man to man, I should feel satisfied. But today you come here to fill your pockets at India's cost and so there is a conflict of interests. And one party lives upon the life-blood of the other. If once that unnatural relationship is ended, a foundation for mutual friendship can be laid. As things stand at present, the Englishman considers himself a superior being. That sense of superiority has but to go.

"And then the question of Hindu Muslim unity. It is said that Englishmen desire it, but a suspicion about their *bona fides* always persists. One cannot help feeling that Englishmen are not sincere in their professions. They should, on the contrary, think that their own interest lies in encouraging unity and should feel the satisfaction of having discharged their duty thereby.

"And last comes the question of the excise revenue. Englishmen must make an all-out effort to give it up because it is an immoral revenue. That income, it is said, pays



for the education given in the country. I say, let education go and, if India is protected from that revenue, let even that protection go, but this revenue has got to be stopped.

"And that thing brings me to the root of the problem. Englishmen have such deep-rooted distrust of Indians that they have imposed an army expenditure of crores of rupees. If Englishmen stay in India only with the good-will of Indians, there would remain no need at all for an army of foreigners. But today everywhere we find nothing but suspicion and distrust and everywhere barriers of steel walls are raised up. "If these matters are settled, I for one would give up any talk of a scheme for the grant of Swaraj, because it would then become a matter of days before Swaraj itself would come knocking at our door."

The gentleman was quietly listening to all this. He admitted the existence of the superiority-complex in Englishmen. He said that the feeling largely existed but it was a defect of temperament, not of the heart. It was nothing more than the insularity of an islander. He accepted the immorality of the excise revenue also. Only, Gandhiji's castigation of the import of foreign cloth and of the heavy army expenditure, he felt himself unable to agree with. He believed that when such a need arose God ordained that one nation should rule over another for the latter's good and that Englishmen were given that divine right.

1. Allusion to the Sanskrit poet Bhavabhuti's lines which say that the hearts of supermen are harder than steel and softer than a flower and who can know them?

2. App. V-1.

2

But what really worried the gentleman was the recent events in Bengal. He suggested to Gandhiji new line of work.

The gentleman: Can you not condemn the anarchy that is going on, the violence that has become so wide-spread there? If you do so, we Englishmen and Europeans may feel safe and be inclined to extend the hand of friendship.

Gandhiji: But I have been condemning them. In season and out I have given vent to my strongest disapproval.



The gentleman: But you alone. Have others done so? Mr. Das has not condemned them?

Gandhiji: What? Not Mr. Das? I can cite a dozen lectures by him in which he has condemned violence and anarchy in the strongest terms.

The gentleman: And I too can cite his statements that go against these condemnations. But that is not the point. Can you not give us that assurance again—at the present day?

Gandhiji: Certainly we may. Why not? Mr. Das also can give that assurance.

The gentleman: But I wish you hold a public meeting and give us that assurance. It would have a very healthy effect and then on one matter at least Englishmen and Indians can agree.

Gandhiji: I am afraid that will not satisfy you. Such an assurance will lead neither you nor us anywhere. Can the beginning of our friendship be based on that slender foundation? That much we may do for our own interest, if for nothing else. Whether we accept non-violence or not as a principle, at least in our own interest, we have but to accept that policy in practice. Hence, you cannot be satisfied with only that much. And have you any idea of the repercussion of your suggestion? It would only mean that support the Government in the anarchy, in the immorality it is steeped in. It would mean our support to its attack on the nation's freedom.

The gentleman: But you don't see the Government's position. It was only after a very close inquiry and after the conviction that a powerful anarchist party was in existence that the Government took these steps.

Gandhiji: Conviction? Police conviction. And police conviction is the Governor's conviction. I am convinced that many of those who have been arrested have no connection, whatsoever, with the anarchist party. The real anarchist party has been left untouched. It is the Swarajist party that has been attacked by the Government. Because the Swarajists have become an eye-sore

The gentlemen: Not the Swarajists, but their deeds. It was the Gopinath Saha resolution that strengthened the party and gave it a fillip.

Gandhiji: I don't think the resolution gave it an impetus. The All India Congress Committee passed a resolution against that resolution. And even if it had not,



the fact stands that there has not been a single incidence of political crime after that resolution.

The gentleman: But cannot a resolution like that of the All India Congress Committee be passed now

Gandhiji: There is no occasion that calls for it today. It would become necessary if somebody had passed a resolution in favour of anarchy or violence. But if we pass a resolution of that type without any valid reason, it would be tantamount to supporting the Government in its tyranny.

The gentleman: Well, let it go. But if anarchists are a danger to the Government, what else could it do? What would you do if you were in that position?

Gandhiji: I? Excuse me, but if I were the Governor and people trusted me, instead of taking up their mentor's role, I should call the people's leaders to me, submit to them the reports that had come to me and ask them what I should do. If the people had no faith in me. I should do nothing.

I wish you to understand what I mean. The way to bring about friendship is not the one you suggest, but the one I do. England's present relationship with India is very unnatural. It is easy and natural for Englishmen to improve it because their own interest lies therein. If they transform the present relationship, it would raise their prestige and the Indians' regard for them would grow likewise. The only loss they would sustain would be of a thing over which they never had any right whatsoever.

You are talking of inquiry. What was the inquiry made in the case of Subhash Bose?¹ No Englishman is ever treated like that. There were very serious charges against Parnell (an Irish leader) and yet he was saved the humiliation of appearance in a public court. A Commission was appointed to try him. A Divisional Commissioner in the Bombay Presidency—Crawford—was accused of bribery and corruption, a serious charge. If he were tried in an ordinary court of law, how would his position be respected? And so a Commission was appointed in his case also. I say Subhash Bose was a man of his status, was in every way, his peer. But neither is he produced before a court, nor is any inquiry made. And quite unjustifiably the police hustles him into the prison without showing him any cause, without charging him of any offence.



The gentleman: Yes, Subhash Bose was an excellent gentleman, a very efficient officer and Europeans also used to love him. But in the case of an anarchist there is no half-way house. You can either retain a connection with him or cut him off. If there is the slightest suspicion, there is no other way except that of his arrest. And I am sure, you do not believe that all the underlying cause for the arrest and all the moves of a suspect should be given to the public?

Gandhiji: That may be. But at least the case must be tried in an open court. And what do your respected Judges in high positions do? Do you know that it was these judges of high standing who had tried cases in the Punjab and that they had sent to jail the most innocent people? Lala Harkishanlal (a well-known Moderate leader) and that Kalinath Roy, the man who would not hurt a fly! Whoever would send such men to jail? Just read the Punjab report (of the Congress Inquiry Committee) Not a single fact, not a single charge stated therein has been refuted till now.

There were many other topics touched. Gandhiji said at the end: "For myself I may say that I am an enemy of anarchism and violence. And I assure you I will try to eradicate them and make millions and millions join me in my movement. But this I repeat. The assurance you want will help neither you nor us. It is the Englishman who must make his relationship with Indians straight and clean."

Another Englishman came in. His face glowed with the lustre of child-like simplicity and openness of heart. Let me give almost the whole of Gandhiji's talk with him.

Q.: I was amazed at your fast. I had never heard of such a thing before. You must have reduced the needs of the flesh to almost a cipher!

Gandhiji: What could I do? Life had grown irksome. It had become very hard for me to live on and do nothing. I had to begin the fast.

Q.: And you succeeded. I had a long talk with His Lordship the Bishop. He told me your fast had a wonderful effect. I hope you will similarly improve the relationship between Englishmen and Indians.

Gandhiji: Yes, that's my life-work.

Q.: Let me hope, however, you may not have to fast for that purpose.



Gandhiji smiled. "No, there is a difference in the relationship between Englishmen and Indians and that between Hindus and Muslims. The Englishman cherishes a feeling of superiority over the Indian. There is not that feeling among Hindus and Mussulmans. The Englishman does not forget that he belongs to the ruling race. Neither Hindus nor Mussulmans have that attitude. It requires a greater exertion to win the hearts of Englishmen, I have many friends among Englishmen. But they are individuals here and there. As a rule, I have to be on my guard, I feel a constraint, when I talk with Englishmen; before the Mussulman or the Hindu I can freely pour out my heart; because the Englishman is likely to misunderstand and misinterpret me more gravely. That is why there is always a kind of mental reserve in my talk with an Englishman."

Q.: I hope, after the fast, you have done away with that reserve.

Gandhiji: No. But I am not complaining against the Englishman. Only, I cannot shake myself free from the fear that they may not understand me. It took me 20 years in South Africa to prove to the Englishmen that I was an honest man! And for 20 years I had to come in close contact with them, to show them all my work, to lay open, in fact, my very life before them. Only then they realised that I was an honest man and trusted me. So I would require a whole life to be able to open my heart in a talk with an Englishman in the street.

Q.: Do you think the time is not ripe for it?

Gandhiji: Not that exactly. I do give there a bit of my mind. But when I speak to Hindu or Muslims, I never see any need to be cautious. For instance, out of love for them, what severe strictures I had passed against the Arya Samajists! Because they understand me and I understand them. I can speak to the Muslims also in the same strain, but the Englishman cannot be handled that way. It is not these arrests that I mind. What touches my heart is the fact that law has been so flagrantly abused.

Q.: I agree with you. I too am uneasy over it.

Gandhiji: Let them arrest, let them try the man. I would rather like it. I felt so happy when I was tried and sentenced to six years.

Q.: May I put you one question? Don't you think the distance between Hindus and Muslims is even greater than that between Englishmen and Indians?



Gandhiji: No, I don't. The distance between Hindu and Muslims is only superficial, not deep. And on both the sides there is definitely the desire to meet. There is not even that distance in the masses besides. It is the middle-class men who engineer riots for their own ends. And they make *badmashes* their henchmen.

"But between Englishmen and Indians there is a big gulf. It may even be said that in a sense there seems to be no common meeting ground between them. Take an ordinary 'Tommy.' He simply looks down upon an Indian. And the Indian shies at his sight. There is no feeling at all of respect, of honour, of trust between the two. That is what is dangerous."

Q.: I don't think the estrangement is increasing.

Gandhiji: Nor do I. It is there all the same and to a large extent.

Q.: Any way out?

Gandhiji: That's fine. Englishmen must make it their business to remove the feeling of aloofness. But today even the best of them think that their safety, the guarantee of their very existence, lies in keeping miles apart from Indians.

Q.: You have the power to bridge the gulf. You have proved it through your fast. I don't see anybody who can come up to you there.

Gandhiji: No. That thing is difficult even for me. I have yet to prove to the Englishman that every word I say comes out from the depth of my heart.

Q. No. It is perhaps your method of work in which their faith is lacking.

Gandhiji: That certainly is true, but what I say is also there. They can't understand my non-violence itself. Why should they feel so alarmed at the very name of non-co-operation? It is rooted in non-violence. Any non-co-operation without non-violence is for me an anathema. All I say is this: Sweep off all the dirt within you first of all if you want to make the world around cleaner. If the law of evolution has any sense, it lies in the world's reforming the method it has used so far, in its improving the means it has accepted till now. It must be our object in life to leave the world cleaner than when we saw its light first.

The visitor was impressed. With deep feelings he remarked: I do my part of the work. I do my best. But the whole of India may listen to you. Would it to me?

Gandhiji: That I understand. But let me say a little more about my non-violence. There is this same feeling of trust even as the basis of my idea of 'Swaraj.' On that trust,



on that mutual trust, should its foundation be laid. Today I am immensely proud to call India my motherland. But immediately India takes the road of violence that pride will vanish into thin air. India to me is not merely a geographical expression surrounded by the Arabian Sea, the Indian Ocean, and the Bay of Bengal, and with its crown of the Himalayas, but the country that has been loudly proclaiming for centuries past the glory of non-violence. Hence, any thought of its uplift without the method of non-violence passes my imagination, is simply unbearable. For you people, I had pointed out three ways to one of your compatriots. Take an active part in bringing about Hindu Muslim unity, give your help in the total ban on the import of foreign cloth, and bring down the excise revenue to a complete cipher. Englishmen must regard it their duty to do these three things. If they can succeed in these three objects, they should thank God for having done their duty. But today many Englishmen are only pleased at the sight of our fighting among ourselves. Some Indians even accuse Englishmen of being agents *provocateurs* I have not the language to describe the woeful effects of the present policy of bleeding India white through the importation of foreign cloth. It has made India lifeless. A sustaining profession was snatched out of the hands of the millions of India and today they are unemployed and starving. Most unnecessarily all of them are compelled to go on leave without pay for at least four months in a year. Which nation on earth can keep itself alive after having to go on such a leave? Today, everywhere in the whole of India, people have lost all their zest for work, the very desire to put their shoulder to the wheel has died out. I wish to revive it by making the spinning wheel a thing of universal use. And is there any need to speak to you of the revenue made from the use of intoxicants?

The gentleman departed after thanking Gandhiji profusely. These two Englishmen represented the two types among them as shown by Gandhiji himself. With the first of the two one cannot speak freely, the fear of being mis-interpreted will persist, while with the other the heart will open out of itself. The end of our fight is a long way off, so long as Englishmen of the second type are so few that they can be counted on the fingers' tips.

Among other foreigners was a Chinese professor in Dr. Tagore's *Vishwabharati*. His only object was to have a passing acquaintance with Gandhiji. He touched the question of the internal politics of China, but what could Gandhiji have to say in the matter? A Frenchwoman also chanced to come up. Then there was Dr. Kalidas Nag



who had brought a message from Romain Rolland. This Dr. Kalidas is well-versed in European languages and has taken degrees of the Paris University. He is a fast friend of M. Romain Rolland and it is he who has brought M. Romain Rolland so close to Gandhiji.

He told Gandhiji how very eager people in Europe were to know as much as possible about him and stated that Romain Rolland's book (on Gandhiji) was translated into all the European languages and into Russian by such a leading writer as Maxim Gorky himself.

But to France today such a great son of hers as Romain Rolland is of no value. Nobody is prepared to listen to his message of non-violence and peace and he is an emigre.

He has sent to Gandhiji an invitation card for the Peace Conference at Vienna through Dr. Kalidas. On it there is another emigrant's signature that of Hermann Hass. This German loves Gandhiji deeply and he too has been driven out of his country for his love of peace.

The Conference for which Gandhiji got that card was to be held in Italy, but as it was a Peace Conference, it was not allowed to hold its session there! Europe is thus afraid of peace itself. M. Romain Rolland's message on the card was very brief:

'May your life bring Europe and India together!'

The four or five days spent in Calcutta were thus packed with discussions, talks, interviews, from morning to night. But Gandhiji did have some lighter moments too. One night one of the last to arrive was a villager with his two children. Who would let that poor man come in to see Gandhiji, when even at that late hour there was the inevitable crowd of hundreds waiting outside and it was impossible to allow entry to one and refuse it to another? So the villager gave his bundle of yarn to the man at the gate and said, 'Please send this yarn to Gandhiji.' Immediately Gandhiji saw the bundle, he called him. And the joy of the children and their father knew no bounds!

And what shall I say of his exertion and patriotism ? He lives in some corner of Calcutta in a dirty, narrow slum lane and earns his bread with the sweat of his brow. None the less, he gets his own family and fellow villagers (his village is Ghaziabad, if I am not mistaken) to spin yarn. That bundle must be weighing more than 5 lbs. and the whole of it was spun during the current month. He did not know that it should be given to the Congress and came to Gandhiji! Can there be any stronger proof than this



of the fact that the uniting link between the poor masses and the Congress is this slender thread of yarn?

Some evenings Gandhiji got the delightful chance of having to listen to music. Sri Dilip Kumar Roy once came to Gandhiji with M. Romain Rolland's letter to him (Dilip Kumar) which discussed Dilip Kumar's article on Gandhiji's views on art. But was Gandhiji the man to let slip the chance of listening to music before he asked that well-known musician to read the letter? Dilip Kumar, therefore, filled the room with the reverberating

notes of the hymn,

जानकीनाथ सहाय करे

Who can harm us, even offend
When God's with us to help, defend?

Pandit Motilalji was charmed and prayed for another treat. Dilip Kumar then sang his own favourite:

जब प्राण तन से निकले!

When life is about to leave the frame
My lips may sing Thy glorious name!
Grant that at least to me.

A short discussion on Art then followed, which I must give as a supplementary to that which had taken place only two weeks before.

Dilip Babu could not understand why Gandhiji laid so much stress on natural beauty alone. Does not the painter's brush depict a supernal beauty? Does not the sculptor's hand fashion a thing of beauty? In answer to that question Gandhiji said:

'Personally I can do without these beautiful pictures. That was why I had stated that I liked my walls bare, without any pictures. The reason is that I do not need to see and appreciate God's *lila* (=beautiful handiwork here) through pictures. He has granted us such climates and landscapes that we have natural scenes of entrancing beauty spread out before our eyes. The early morning sun of gold, moon-lit nights of silver, scintillating stars, superb sights on land and sea—these we all get to see in their original grandeur for nothing. Such pictures may be needed in London where for days



together you can't see the sun. How can I recommend the poor people living in this country to buy them?

'My aim is ever and always that of public weal. Art is acceptable to me only to the extent that it tends to the welfare of the people at large. I cannot see Art through European eyes. And what is Europe after all? A mere speck on the earth's surface.

'Indian artists, besides, have lavished their art on the walls of temples and caves and thus made their creations unreservedly open to the public. The poor can resort to these places and get all the enjoyment and inspiration they want.'

'What then about music? You would certainly like the poor to cultivate and enjoy music?'

'Yes, because music is the highest of all arts, it is connected with our life in a thousand ways and the poorest can have easy access to it.'

Dilip Babu then referred to European music and talked of the music sung in the churches there. Gandhiji was not quite a stranger to it and he spoke of some delightful music he had heard there. In the end, however, Gandhiji summed up his views in the following remark:

"Art has a place in life, only when artists make their art helpful to human welfare and enjoyable even by the common man. I think the greatness and glory of art diminishes when it ceases to be a public place of recreation for all and becomes the palace garden of a few."

Dilip Babu interrupted here: "Then, in that sense, you may not like that philosophy, that poem, or literature, which goes above the head of the man in the street?"

"No, I don't. The value of that exercise of intelligence which only a few specialists can understand and appreciate—i.e. which shunts the poor millions—is definitely less than the value of that one which every one can make use of and enjoy. That poem, that literature, alone will live for all time which is of the people, which they can easily get at, and easily appreciate and respond to."

But this letter has grown very long. It has got to be brought to an end now.

On the last day a daughter of one of the sisters of Deshbandhu Das came to see Gandhiji. He asked her to sing a few hymns of Mirabai. Without feeling abashed in the least she sang to him two or three hymns of Mirabai.



मीरा चित धीर न माने

वेग मिलो महाराज!

O come, my Lord, come quickly please!

This Mira's heart is ill at ease.

These lines still ring in the memory .

1. An ex-Civilian who resigned during the non-co-operation movement in 1921, was in 1924 a first lieutenant of Deshbandhu Das, later on President of Congress, and finally organizer of the Indian National Army to make India independent.

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Appendix

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APPENDIX I-1

To The Members Of The All India Congress Committee

Dear friends,

We rightly regard the Congress to be the most representative of the nation whether for better or for worse. In my opinion the Congress has an almost perfect constitution designed to represent the nation to the fullest possible extent. But being ourselves imperfect, we have worked it very indifferently. Our voters roll has been reduced practically to nil in many parts of India. But in spite of it all an organisation that has persisted for forty years and weathered many a storm must remain the most powerful in the land. We regard ourselves as its chosen representatives.

The Congress took a resolution in 1920 that was designed to attain Swaraj in one year. At the end of that year we were within an ace of getting it. But because we failed to get it then, we may not now regard it as indefinitely postponed. On the contrary, we must retain the same attitude of hopefulness as before. Above all we must be determined to get Swaraj soon, sooner than the chilly atmosphere around us will warrant.

It is in that spirit that I have framed the resolutions for submission to you. They have been before the country now for a week. I have read some of the criticism directed against them. I believe I am open to conviction. But the criticism has not altered it. I have no axes to grind, or the only axe I have to grind is that which will enable us to strike at the root of every impediment in our way.

I believe in Khaddar, I believe in the spinning wheel. It has two aspects terrible and benign.

In its terrible aspect it is calculated to bring about the only boycott we need for independent national existence, viz., that of foreign cloth. It alone can kill the demoralising British self-interest. Then and then only, when that interest is killed, shall we be in a position to talk to British statesmen on equal terms. To-day they are, as we would be in their place, blinded by self-interest.

In its benign aspect it gives a new life and hope to the villager. It can fill millions of hungry mouths. It alone can bring us in touch and in tune with the villagers. It is the very best popular education that is needed for the millions. It is life-giving. I would not, therefore, hesitate to turn the Congress into an exclusively Khaddar-producing and



Khaddar-propaganda organisation till the attainment of Swaraj, just as I would not hesitate, if I believed in the use of arms and giving violent battle to England, to make the Congress an organisation exclusively devoted to training the nation in the use of arms. To be truly national the Congress must devote itself exclusively to that which will bring the nation most quickly within reach of Swaraj.

Because I believe in the potency of Khaddar to give Swaraj, I have given it the foremost place in our programme. You will not hesitate summarily to reject it, if you do not share my belief. But if you believe in Khaddar, you will regard the requirements I have submitted as a mild minimum. I assure you, if I was not afraid of putting an undue strain on you, I would not have hesitated to implore you to give four hours per day to spinning instead of a paltry half hour.

In this connection let me confess my distrust of Swarajists. I understand that the Khaddar among them is on the wane more than among the others. It distressed me to find that several Swarajists had said final good bye to Khaddar and that the material of which their dress was made was foreign. A few have threatened that if I persecute them in the manner I am doing, they would give up Khaddar and the *charkha* altogether. I am told that many no-changers are not much better. Khaddar with them still remains a ceremonial dress but for household wear they do not hesitate to wear *videshi* or mill-cloth. The wearing of Khaddar to patronise me is worse than useless and the wearing of it on ceremonial occasions only is hypocritical. Do you not agree with me that both patronage and hypocrisy should be banished from our midst? If you believe in the potency of Khaddar, you will take it up, not because I advocate it but because it has become part of your life. I note that a certain fashion of dress has been prescribed for the Viceregal social function. Prohibition of Khaddar is but a short step from the last. Yet another stage and there will be prohibition in the Assembly and Councils.

Another vexed question is about the practising lawyers. It is clear to me that if we cannot run the Congress without them, we must make the frank confession and remove the boycott. I am free to confess that removal of that boycott is a natural corollary to that of the Councils. If entry into the legislative bodies can give, as they do, some relief, so does practice in the law courts. We are all aware of the signal services that the late Manomohan Ghose rendered to the poor by the voluntary assistance rendered by him to them. The Government institution could not have existed, if they had nothing attractive about them. Only, this is no new discovery. Ours



is a struggle consisting of self-sacrifice pure and simple. We sacrificed the doubtful, temporary and partial good done by these institutions for the lasting good of the whole country. Moreover, if there is such a thing as honour among us, does it not behove us to retain the boycott, apart from any other reason, for the sake of those lawyers who have been disbarred in Tamilnad, Andhra, Karnatak, Maharashtra, and elsewhere? We shall be building traditions of honour only if we cherish it even for the least among us. Let the practising lawyers beware. No family considerations can be allowed to override those of honour. Don't make the mistake of supposing that we can gain Swaraj within a short time, even though we may be dead to all sense of honour. Unless the Congress can at the present moment produce proud, defiant, self-respecting, sensitive, selfless and self-sacrificing patriots who would count no cost too great, there is, for this poor country of ours for a long time to come, no Swaraj in which the poorest can participate. You and I may get a larger share in the spoils of exploitation, but I am sure you will refuse to call that Swaraj.

Need I say anything about the schools? If we cannot resist the temptation of sending our children to the Government schools, really, I cannot understand the opposition to the *system*. If the Government schools and law courts and legislatures are good enough to attract us, our opposition is clearly to the *personnel* and not to the *system*. Non-co-operation was conceived for a much nobler purpose. If the wish is merely that we rather than Englishmen man the system, I grant that the boycotts are not only useless but harmful. The logical outcome of the Government policy is to Europeanise India and immediately we have become Europeanised, our English masters will gladly hand over the reins of Government to us. We would be welcomed as their willing agents. I can have no interest in that deadly process save to put the whole of my humble weight against it. My Swaraj is to keep in tact the genius of our civilisation. I want to write many new things but they must be all written on the Indian slate. I would gladly borrow from the West when I can return the amount with decent interest.

Viewed in the light I have put before you, the five boycotts are vital for the Congress. They are vital for Swaraj for the masses.

Such a big question cannot be decided merely by a show of hands, it cannot be decided even by argument. It must be decided by each one of us by ringing for the still small voice within. Each one of us must retire to his closet and ask God to give a definite guidance.



This battle for freedom is no play for you and me. It is the most serious thing in our lives. If, therefore, the programme sketched by me does not commend itself to you, you must summarily reject it, cost what it may.

26-6-1924,

Young India.

Yours fellow-worker
in the service
of the Motherland,
M. K. Gandhi.



Appendix I-2

DEFEATED AND HUMBLLED

BY M. K. GANDHI

Reporters are rarely able to interest me but one of them did succeed the other day in interesting me in him. I, therefore, gave him towards the end of the interview more than he had expected. He asked me what I would do if the house was evenly divided. I told him in effect that God would send something to prevent such a catastrophe. I had no idea that my innocent and half-humorous remark was prophetic.

The proceedings of the A.I.C.C. reminded me of those at Delhi just before I was imprisoned. The disillusionment of Delhi awaited me at Ahmedabad.

I had a bare majority always for the four resolutions. But it must be regarded by me as minority. The house was fairly evenly divided. The Gopinath Saba's resolution clinched the issue. The speeches, the result and the scenes I witnessed after, were a perfect eye-opener. I undoubtedly regard the voting as a triumph for Mr. Das although he was apparently defeated by eight votes. That he could find 70 supporters out of 148 who voted had a deep significance for me. It lighted the darkness though very dimly as yet.

Up to the point of the declaration of the poll, I was enjoying the whole thing as a huge joke, though I knew all the while that it was as serious as it was huge. I now see that my enjoyment was superficial. It concealed the laceration that was going on within.

After the declaration, the chief actors retired from the scene. And the house abandoned itself to levity. Most important resolutions were passed with the greatest unconcern. There were flashes of humour sandwiched in between these resolutions. Everybody rose on points of order and information. The ordeal was enough to try the patience of any chairman. Maulana Mohammad Ali came through it all unscathed. He kept his temper fairly. He rightly refused to recognise 'points of information.' I must confess that the suitors for fame most cheerfully obeyed his summary rulings. Let not the reader conclude that there was at any stage of the proceedings the slightest insubordination. I have not known many meetings where there was so little acrimony or personalities in the debate as in this, even though feelings ran high and the differences were sharp and serious. I have known meetings where under similar



circumstances the chairmen have found it most difficult to keep order. The President of the A.I.C.C. commanded willing obedience.

All the same, dignity vanished after the Gopinath resolution. It was before this house that I had to put my last resolution. As the proceedings went on I must have become more and more serious. Often I felt like running away from the oppressive scene. I dreaded having to move a resolution in my charge. I would have asked for postponement of the resolution but for the promise I had made in the meeting that I would suggest a remedy, or failing that, move a resolution for protecting litigants from the operation of the third resolution which requests resignation from members who do not believe in the principle of the five boycotts including that of law courts and do not carry them out in their own persons. Protection was intended for those who might be driven to the court either as plaintiffs or defendants. The resolution that was adopted by the Working Committee and previously circulated among the members did protect them. It was substituted by the one actually passed by the A.I.C.C. As the reader knows it exempts from its operation those who might be covered by the Coconada resolution. In drafting that amendment I had not protected litigants. I had wished to do so by a separate resolution. I had announced the fact at the time of introducing the resolution. And it was this promised resolution that opened for me a way out of 'darkness invisible.' I moved it with the preface that it was in redemption of the morning promise. I mentioned too Mr. Gangadhar Rao Deshpande was an instance in point. I do not believe in exemptions and as far as possible. But I know some of the strongest non-co-operators have found it difficult to avoid law courts. Unscrupulous debtors have refused payment to non-co-operators because of their knowledge that the latter could not sue them. Similarly I know men who have brought suits against non-cooperators because they would not defend themselves. The curious will be agreeably surprised to discover, if they searched among the rank and file, the numerous cases in which non-co-operators have preferred to suffer losses, to defending themselves or suing. Nevertheless, it is perfectly true that representatives have not always been able to keep to the prohibition. The practice, therefore, has been to wink at filing suits and more often at defending them. The Committee has from time to time also passed rules legalising the practice to a certain extent. I thought that now when the A.I.C.C. was adopting a rigid attitude regarding the observance of the boycotts, the position of litigants should be clearly defined. Nothing would please me better than for the Congress to have only those representatives on its executive who would carry out all the boycotts to the full. But the exact fulfilment at the present stage



of the boycott of law courts on the part of many is almost an impossibility. Voluntary acceptance of poverty is essential for the purpose. It must take some time before we can hope to man the Congress organisations with such men and women, and run them efficiently. Recognising the hard fact I was prepared to incur the odium of having to move the said resolution of exemption. Hardly had I finished reading it, up sprang the brave Harisarvottama Rao to his feet and in a vigorous and cogent speech opposed it. He said it was his painful duty to oppose me. I told him the pain was mine in that I had to move a resolution I could not defend. His must be the pleasure of opposing an indefensible resolution and of keeping the Congress organisation pure at any cost. I liked this opposition and was looking forward to the voting. But the opposer was followed by Swami Govindananda who raised the technical objection that no resolution designed to affect one previously passed could be moved at the same session of the Committee. The chairman properly rejected the objection, if only because the previous day the very first resolution was amended after it was passed by a majority. But the last straw was unwittingly supplied by Dr. Choithram. I have known him to be a responsible man. A long period of unbroken service lies to his credit. He has embraced poverty for the sake of his country. I was not prepared for a constitutional objection from him in a matter in which the Committee had on previous occasions softened the effect of the boycotts. But he thoughtlessly asked whether my resolution was not in breach of the Congress resolution on boycotts. Maulana Mohammad Ali asked me whether the objection was not just. I said, of course, it was. He, therefore, felt bound to hold my resolution unconstitutional. Then I sank within me. There was nothing, absolutely nothing, wrong about anybody's speech or behaviour. All were brief in their remarks. They were equally courteous. And what is more they were seemingly in the right. And yet it was all hopelessly unreal. The objections were like reading a sermon on the virtue of self-restraint to a hungry man reduced to a skeleton. Each of the actors acted involuntarily, unconsciously. I felt that God was speaking to me through them and seemed to say, "Thou fool, knowest not thou that thou art impossible? Thy time is up." Gangadhar Rao asked me whether he should not resign. I agreed with him that he should do so at once. And he promptly tendered his resignation. The President read it to the meeting. It was accepted almost unanimously. Gangadhar Rao was the gainer.

Shaukat Ali was sitting right opposite at a distance of perhaps six yards. His presence restrained me from fleeing. I kept asking myself, 'Could right ever come out of wrong? Was I not co-operating with evil?' Shaukat Ali seemed to say to me through



his big eyes, 'There is nothing wrong, for all will be right.' I was struggling to free myself from the enchantment. I could not.

The President asked, 'Shall I now dissolve the meeting?' I said, 'Certainly.' But Maulana Abul Kalam Azad who was evidently watching whatever changes my face was undergoing was all eyes. He quickly came up and said, 'We cannot disperse without the message you have promised.' I replied, 'Maulana Saheb! It is true I wanted to say something about the future plans. But what I have been witnessing for the last hour after the Gopinath resolution has grieved me. I do not know where I stand now and what I should do.'

'Then,' he said, 'Say even if it is only that.' I complied and in a short speech in Hindustani laid bare my heart and let them see the blood oozing out of it. It takes much to make me weep. I try to suppress tears even when there is occasion for them. But in spite of all my efforts to be brave, I broke down utterly. The audience was visibly affected. I took them through the various stages I had passed and told them that it was Shaukat Ali who stood in the way of my flight. For I regarded him as trustee for Hindu honour, as I was proud enough to regard myself as such for Mussulman honour. And then I told them that I was unable to say how I would shape my future course. I would consult him and other workers who were closely associated with me. It was the saddest speech I have ever made. I finished and turned round to look for Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. He had stolen away from me and was standing at the farthest end opposite to me. I told him I would now like to go. He said, 'Not yet for a while. For we must speak too.' And he invited the audience to speak. Those who spoke did so with a sob. The sight of the hoary-headed Sikh friend who was choked as he was speaking touched me deep. Of course, Shaukat Ali spoke and others. All begged pardon and assured me of their unwavering support. Mohammad Ali broke down twice. I tried to soothe him. I had nothing to forgive for none had done any wrong to me. On the contrary, they had all been personally kind to me. I was sad because we were weighed in the scales of our own making—the Congress creed—and found wanting; we were such poor representatives of the nation! I seemed to be hopelessly out of place.

My grief consisted in the doubt about my own ability to lead those who would not follow.

I saw that I was utterly defeated and humbled. But defeat cannot dishearten me. It can only chasten me. My faith in my creed stands immovable. I know that God will guide me. Truth is superior to man's wisdom.



[The foregoing was written on Monday the 30th June. I wrote it but I was not satisfied nor am I satisfied now with the performance. On reading it I feel I have not done justice to the meeting or myself. Great as the informal meeting was, the one that preceded it and that stung me to the quick was not less great. I do not know that I have made it clear that no speaker had any malice in him. What preyed upon my mind was the fact of unconscious irresponsibility and disregard of the Congress. creed or policy of non-violence.

The informal meeting was a heart-searcher. It purified the atmosphere. The whole of Tuesday I passed in discussing with co-workers my position. My innermost wish was, and still is, to retire from the Congress and confine my activity merely to Hindu-Muslim Unity, Khaddar and Untouchability. They would not listen. I had no right, they said, to retire at a critical period in the history of the nation. My withdrawal would not smooth matters. It would cause depression and remove from Congress meetings an active restraining influence. I must actively work the programme of which I was the author, so long as the majority favoured it. The programme had a far greater majority than the voting at the A.I.C.C. would indicate. I must travel in the country and see things for myself. My second proposal was for all who fully accepted the Congress creed to retire in favour of the Swarajists. As the argument against it developed, I rejected it myself as thoughtless. It was the last thing the Swarajists wanted. I felt that it would be doing violence to them to expect them to do the impossible. I know that they would not entertain even the first proposal. I offered it to them at Juhu and renewed it in Ahmedabad. I have, therefore, reluctantly decided to drink the bitter cup and continue to be in the Congress organization and shoulder the responsibility for working it until the Congress puts me in an actual numerical minority.

I may not choose short cuts. I must plod. I must pocket my pride and wait till I am driven out.

I must seemingly become a party-man and show that I can still work as a no-party man. I must strive for a majority at the next Congress and endeavour, so far as it is possible, to act impartially. It is not beyond the capacity of a Satyagrahi.

The conditions are incredibly simple. The striving to be in a majority consists in solid work.

1. Over and above the spinning for half an hour every spare minute should be given to it.



2. Extra spinning can be dispensed with in order to do Khaddar propaganda.
3. We may swell the electoral roll by getting as many Congress members as possible.
4. There should be no manipulation of papers.
5. There should be no manoeuvring for securing votes.
6. There should be no criticism of the opposite party, as distinguished from policy.
7. There should be no undue pressure exercised on the voters.

Both the parties are said to have resorted in the past to unscrupulous practices in the matter of election of delegates and members of the subordinate organisations. The best way of avoiding corruption is to be indifferent to the result after having adopted all honest measures for influencing voters.

The no-change programme must be what it means. The proceedings of the Committee have but confirmed the view that the two methods cannot be worked in the same organisation. The Swarajist method cultivates British opinion and looks to the British Parliament for Swaraj. The no-change method looks to the people for it. The two methods represent two opposite mentalities. This is not to say that one is wrong if the other is right. Each may be right in its own place. But for one organization to work both is to weaken both and, therefore, to damage the national cause. Whilst one school claims to give political education through the Councils, the other claims to give it exclusively by working among the people and evoking its organising and administrative capacity. One teaches to look up to a government for popular progress, the other tries to show that even the most ideal government plays among a self-governing people the least important part in national growth. One teaches the people that the constructive programme alone cannot achieve Swaraj, the other teaches the people that it and it alone can achieve it.

Unfortunately, I was unable to convince the Swarajists of this obvious truth. And I saw constitutional difficulty in the way of securing a homogeneous organisation. We must now, therefore, do the next best thing. We must silently work up the constructive programme without regard to what will happen in December, in the full belief that whether the Congress rejects or accepts the programme, for us there is no other. I would ask those newspapers that call themselves no-change papers not to criticise the Swarajists in any shape or form. I am convinced that newspapers play a very small part



in shaping the policy or programme of the masses. They do not know newspapers. The no-changers have to reach and represent those who have had no political education whatsoever.

M. K. G.

3rd July, 1924,

Young India.



APPENDIX I-3

THE ALL INDIA CONGRESS COMMITTEE

All the resolutions of the All India Congress Committee will be found printed elsewhere.¹ The first resolution is bereft of the penalty clause. It was my first defeat in a series. Majorities cannot deceive me. It was impossible for me to be satisfied with a bare majority when I knew that if the Swarajist withdrawals were to be taken into account the defeat was a certainty, I therefore urged the meeting to take into account the withdrawals and remove the penalty clause from the resolution.

The second resolution is not the same as the original draft, but in substance it is the same. The principle of disciplinary action is retained.

The third resolution constitutes real failure. I still feel that the elective organisations of the Congress are executive and that, therefore, they should contain only those who heartily support the Congress Programme for the time being and who prepared not to obstruct or tone it down, but to carry it out in its entirety. But it was not possible to get over the constitutional difficulty. Any restriction upon the Cocanada programme must be considered a breach of the Congress Constitution. Putting the interpretation that I do even now, the original resolution was not a breach. But it was pointed out to me that I have no right to put my own interpretation upon it and that the Swarajists had the right to contend that those who entered the Councils were not debarred from being on the executives. They said that, as a matter of fact, there were Swarajists on the Working Committee already. The argument had great weight with me, and in view of the knowledge that the original resolution, disqualifying the Swarajists from being on the executives, could only be passed by a narrow majority, was decisive in reconciling me to the resolution as finally adopted. It does not please me. But it was the only possible course left save that of dropping the whole proposition. That was required for the sake of keeping before the country the idea of having a homogeneous organisation and of insisting on purity of political conduct. Representatives must be expected to conform to the standards they lay down for others. It must be pointed out in a variety of ways that the Congress is no longer a begging association but that it is primarily a self-purification association designed to achieve its goal by developing internal strength. Public opinion must, therefore, be created in favour of the things needed for the national life. The best way of creating it is to frame propositions and enlisting support therefor. Whilst, therefore, I have



reconciled myself to the possibility of temporary heterogeneity I would strongly plead with both the parties not to obstruct each other's path.

The fourth resolution, however, completed my defeat. It is true that the Gopinath resolution was carried by a bare majority. A clear minority would have pleased me more than a narrow majority. I do not forget the fact that many who voted for Mr. Das's amendment did so because of the rumour of impending arrests. Many, naturally, felt it a point of honour to protect a valued chief and comrade who had rendered signal services to the country and who had performed great self-sacrifice. Sentiment often outweighs moral considerations and I have no doubt that the Bengal Government will make a serious blunder if they arrest Mr. Das and his supporters. It is too late in the day to punish opinions. If there was no moral consideration against supporting Mr. Das's amendment, I would have had no hesitation, whatsoever, in myself tendering my support. But I could not, no Congressman could. Mr. Das sees no difference between my resolution and his. I can only call it self-deception. Those who spoke in support of his proposition did not mince matters. They had room for political murder in their philosophy and after all is it not the common philosophy? The majority of the so-called civilised people believe in and act upon it on due occasions. They hold that for a disorganised and oppressed people political assassination is the only remedy. That it is a false philosophy, that it has failed to make the world better to live in, is only too true. I merely state that if Mr. Das and his supporters have erred, they have the bulk of 'civilised' opinion on their side. The foreign masters of India have no better record to show. If the Congress was a political organization with no limitation as to means, it would be impossible to object to Mr. Das's amendment on merits. It would then be reduced to question of expedience.

But that there were seventy Congress representatives to support the resolution was a staggering revelation. They have proved untrue to their creed. In my opinion the amendment was in breach of the Congress creed or policy of non-violence. But I purposely refrained from raising such an objection. If the members wanted the resolution it was well for them to have it. It is always best in my opinion to let constitutional questions be decided as a rule by members.

The other resolutions do not require any discussion.

The resolution extolling the Sikh sacrifice and bravery was in continuation of the traditional policy of the Congress.



The opium resolution became necessary for two reasons. Miss La Motte, who has been doing most valuable work in trying to reduce the world's growth of opium to its bare medical necessity, has pointed out in tragic terms the immoral opium policy of the Government of India. Mr. Andrews has shown how the Government of India made itself responsible for changing at the Opium Convention the word "medical" to "legitimate" in describing people's requirements, It, therefore, became necessary in view of the approaching convention for the A.I.C.C. to say what the nation thinks of the Government of India policy. It had become equally necessary to investigate the condition of the Assamese under the opium habit. A fine body of men and women are undergoing a process of decay under the cursed opium habit. The Assam Provincial Congress Committee is ready to inquire into the matter. The A.I.C.C. has therefore thought it desirable to appoint Mr. Andrews to conduct the inquiry in co-operation with the Provincial Committee.

The seventh resolution authorises the Working Committee to appoint, if necessary, a deputation to inquire into the condition of Indian labourers of the Malay Peninsula and Ceylon. We know nothing of the condition of the labourers who emigrate to Ceylon and the Malay Peninsula except from the stray reports that appear in the press. It is our duty to study their condition and do whatever we can to ameliorate it.

M. K. Gandhi

3rd July, 1924

Young India

1. See footnote p. 91 to 94.



APPENDIX II- 1

THE REALITIES

It is possible that the reader is being disturbed by the bewildering changes he may be noticing at present in the *Young India* writings. I can assure him that they are not changes, but they are a distinct advance in the direction we are going or should go. They are natural corollaries to the principles we profess.

If we will remember that NON-VIOLENCE is more important than non-co-operation and that the latter without the former is a sin, what I am at present developing in these pages will be as clear as daylight. The difficulty, however, is that the reader does not know much of what is going on behind the scenes. I am restraining myself partly on purpose and partly because I cannot do otherwise. It is difficult to pass on decisions from moment to moment and from day to day to the fellow-workers. I must simply trust that as they are in my opinion the necessary corollary to the main principle, they will be as plain to the reader as they are to me.

The fact is, action must vary with every varying circumstance. It is not inconsistent, if it springs from the same source.

What must be, however, apparent to every one is that our differences are increasing. Each group is making of its programme a matter of principle. Each sincerely believes that its programme will bring us nearer to the common goal. So long as there is a body of people in the country—and it is a large if not a growing body—so long will there be parties prosecuting the Councils programme. Our non-co-operation, therefore, has taken the form of non-co-operation in practice with one another instead of the Government. Without wishing it we are weakening one another and to that extent helping the system we are all seeking to destroy. Let us recognise its chief characteristic. It is parasitical and derives nutrition from the fungi of national life.

Our non-co-operation was meant to be living, active, non-violent force matched against the essential violence of the system. Unfortunately, the non-co-operation never became actively non-violent. We satisfied ourselves with physical non-violence of the weak and helpless. Having failed to produce the immediate effect of destroying the system, it has recoiled upon us with double strength and now bids fair to destroy us, if we do not take care betimes. I, for one, am therefore determined not to participate in the domestic wrangle but would even invite all concerned to do likewise. If we cannot actively help, we must not hinder. I am just as keen a believer as ever in



the five boycotts. But I clearly see, as I did not at the time of the A.I.C.C. meeting, that whilst we maintain them in our own persons, there is no atmosphere for working them. There is too much distrust in the air. Every action is suspected and misinterpreted. And whilst we carry on a war of explanation and counter-explanation, the enemy at the door is rejoicing and consolidating his forces. We must avoid this almost at any cost.

I have, therefore, suggested that we should find out the lowest common measure among all the political parties and invite them all to co-operate on the Congress platform for achieving that common measure. This is the work of internal development without which there will be no effective external political pressure. The politicians who put the external work before the internal, or who think (which is the same thing) that the internal is too slow for them should have the greatest freedom to develop their strength, but in my opinion, this should be outside the Congress platform. The Congress must progressively represent the masses. They are as yet untouched by politics. They have no political consciousness of the type our politicians desire. Their politics are confined to bread and salt—I dare not say butter, for millions do not know the taste of ghee or even oil. Their politics are confined to communal adjustments. It is right, however, to say that we the politicians do represent the masses in opposition to Government. But if we begin to use them before they are ready we shall cease to represent them. We must first come in living touch with them by working for them and in their midst. We must share their sorrows, understand their difficulties and anticipate their wants. With the pariahs we must be pariahs and see how we feel to clean the closets of the upper classes and have the remains of their table thrown at us. We must see how we like being in the boxes, miscalled houses, of the labourers of Bombay. We must identify ourselves with the villagers who toil under the hot sun beating on their bent backs and see how we would like to drink water from the pool in which the villagers bathe, wash their clothes and pots and in which their cattle drink and roll. Then and not till then shall we truly represent the masses and they will, as surely as I am writing this, respond to every call.

"We cannot all do this, and if we are to do this, good-bye to Swaraj for a thousand years and more," some will say. I shall sympathise with the objection. But I do claim that some of us at least will have to go through the agony and out of it only will a nation full, vigorous and free be born. I suggest to all that they should give their mental co-operation and that they should mentally identify themselves with the masses, and as a visible and tangible token thereof, they should earnestly spin for at



least thirty minutes per day in their name and for their sake. It will be a mighty prayer from the intelligentsia among the Hindus, Mussulmans, Parsis, Christians and others of India, rising up to Heaven for their, that is, India's deliverance.

I see no way of removing the Hindu-Muslim tension, which is becoming daily tenser, save by all the parties coming together on the Congress platform and devising the best method of solving a problem which seems to defy solution and to dash to pieces all the fond hope we had of securing a national freedom that is broad-based upon mutual trust and mutual help. If for no other reason, let us, at least for the sake of achieving unity, give up the internecine political strife.

Here is my proposal to that end.

(1) The Congress should suspend all the boycotts except that of foreign cloth till the session of 1925.

(2) The Congress should, subject to (1), remove the boycott of Empire goods.

(3) The Congress should confine its activity solely to the propaganda of hand-spinning and handspun Khaddar, the achievement of Hindu-Muslim unity and in addition, its Hindu member's activity to the removal of untouchability.

(4) The Congress should carry on the existing national educational institutions; and, if possible, open more and keep them independent of Government control or influence.

(5) The four-anna franchise should be abolished and in its place the qualification for membership should be spinning by every member for half an hour per day and delivery to the Congress from month to month of at least 2000 yards of self-spun yarn, cotton being supplied where the member is too poor to afford it.

It is necessary to say a word about the proposed radical change in the Congress constitution. I may be pardoned for saying that I am the principal author of the Congress constitution. It was intended to be the most democratic in the world and, if successfully worked, to bring Swaraj without more (ado). But it was not so worked. We had not sufficient honest and able workers. It must be confessed that it has broken down in the sense in which it was intended. We never had even one crore of members on the roll. At the present moment probably our nominal roll does not exceed two lacs for all India. And the vast majority of these too are as a rule not interested in our proceedings save for paying four annas and voting. But what we need is an effective, swift-moving, cohesive, responsive organization containing intelligent, industrious, national workers. Even if we are a few only, we should give a better account of



ourselves than a cumbrous and slow body with no mind of its own. The only boycott proposed to be retained is that of foreign cloth and, if we are to make it successful, we can only do so by making the Congress for a time predominantly a spinners' association. It will be a great triumph and a great demonstration, if we succeed in one constructive item of a striking magnitude. I hold that the only possible thing of the kind is hand-spinning and handspun Khaddar. If we are to make of Khaddar a national success, the spinning wheel is the only thing. If we are permanently to interest the masses in the national welfare of the country, the spinning wheel is the only medium. If we are to banish pauperism from the land, the spinning wheel again is the only remedy.

The implications of my proposals are that:

- (a) The Swarajists should be free to organise themselves without any opposition from the Congress or no-changers.
- (b) The members of other political bodies should be invited and induced to join the Congress.
- (c) The no-changers should be precluded from carrying on any propaganda either direct or indirect against Council-entry.
- (d) Those who do not personally believe in any of the four boycotts will be free, without any disgrace whatsoever, to act as if they did not exist. Thus non-co-operating lawyers will be free to resume practice if they chose and title holders, school masters etc., will be free to join the Congress and be eligible to the executive.

The scheme enables all the political parties to work unitedly for the internal development. The Congress presents a suitable opportunity for a conference of all political parties inside and outside the Congress to frame a Swaraj scheme acceptable to all and for presentation to the Government. Personally I am of opinion that time has not arrived for any such presentation. I believe that it would increase our internal strength beyond expectation, if we could all simply unite to make the foregoing constructive programme a success. But a large number of those who have hitherto led the country think otherwise. In any event a Swaraj scheme for the sake of ourselves is a necessity. As the reader will remember, I am in this matter a complete convert to Babu Bhagwandas's view. I would, therefore, join any such conference, if my presence was required, and assist at framing the scheme. The reason for insisting on this matter being treated as an activity outside the Congress is to keep the Congress purely for



internal development for full one year. When we have achieved a measure of success commensurate with the task before us, the Congress may function for outside political activity.

What if the proposal is not accepted and it is found difficult to bring together all parties on the Congress platform and to heal the breach between the Swarajists and ourselves? My answer is simple. If the whole fight is for 'capturing' the Congress, I must refuse to enter upon it. I would advise all who think with me to do likewise. I would advise handing the Congress over to the Swarajists on their terms and leave the Swarajists to work the Councils programme unhampered by any counter propaganda. I would engage the no-changers purely on the constructive programme and advise them to seek such help from the other parties as they can give.

Those who depend for national regeneration solely on the constructive programme may be expected to lead in the matter of self-sacrifice. Not one of the things we hold dear can be achieved by trying to retain power in the Congress in opposition to the Swarajists. We must hold it on their sufferance. Both parties will be guilty of corrupting the simple people who worship the name 'Congress', if they are made at our bidding to engage in a suicidal tug of war. Power that is sought in the name of service and can only be obtained by a majority of votes is a delusion and snare to be avoided, especially at the present moment.

Whether I have convinced the reader of the soundness of my proposal or not, my mind is made up. It hurts me to think that those with whom I have hitherto worked hand in glove should be working in a seemingly opposite direction.

What I have sketched above is not conditions of surrender. Mine is an unconditional surrender. I would guide the Congress next year only if all parties wish me to. I am trying to see daylight out of this impenetrable darkness. I seem to see it dimly. But I may be still wrong. All I know is that there is no fight left in me. This is much for a born fighter to say. I have fought my dearest ones. But I fight out of love. I should fight the Swarajists too out of love. But I must, I see, first prove my love. I thought I had proved it. I see I was wrong. I am, therefore, retracing my steps. I ask everyone to help me to do so and to reunite the two wings on a common platform. The Congress must, for sometime to come at least, remain largely a homogeneous body.

M. K. Gandhi

11th September 1924,
Young India



APPENDIX II-2

BOLSHEVISM OR DISCIPLINE

Two American friends have written to me a passionately-worded letter saying that in the name of religion I am probably introducing in India Bolshevism which knows no God or morality and is frankly atheistic. They say that the alliance between Mussulmans and myself is an unholy alliance and a menace to the world, for, they argue, Mussulmans are today aiming at supremacy in the East with the help of Bolshevik Russia. I have heard this charge hurled against me before now, but I have hitherto taken no notice of it. But it seems to me it is time for me to consider it when it is brought by responsible foreign friends in all good faith. In the first place I must confess I do not know the meaning of Bolshevism. I know that there are two opposite parties, one painting it in the blackest colours, the other hailing it as deliverance for the down-trodden masses all the world over. I do not know what to believe. All I can say is that my movement is not atheistic. It is not a denial of God. It has been undertaken in His name and is being continued with constant prayer. It is undoubtedly a mass movement but it seeks to touch the masses through their hearts, their better nature. It is a process of discipline and hence it is that it has filled even some of the best of my co-workers with despair.

I am proud of the alliance between the Mussulmans and myself. Islam is not a denial of God. It is a passionate avowal of one supreme deity. Not even its worst detractors have accused Islam of atheism. If, therefore, Bolshevism is atheism, there can be no common ground between it and Islam. They must in that case come to death-grip. It will be an embrace of opponents, not of friends. I have retained the American letter phraseology. But let me inform my American readers and others that I am under no delusion. My pretension is very humble. The alliance there is between the Ali Brothers and myself, i. e., between a few Mussulman friends and myself. I would love to call it an alliance between Mussulmans and Hindus—not myself. But that seems to be a day-dream. In truth, therefore, one may say, there is an alliance between some Mussulmans including the Ali Brothers and some Hindus including myself. How far it carries us, the future will show. There is no vagueness about the alliance. It is the most natural thing in the world. It is tragic that it excites wonder and even apprehension. What can be more natural than that Hindus and Mussulmans, born and bred in India, having the same adversities, the same hopes, should be permanent friends, brothers



born of the same mother—India? The surprise is that we should fight, not that we should unite. And why should the combination be a menace to the world? The greatest menace to the world today is the growing, exploiting, irresponsible imperialism which through the enslavement of India is threatening the independent existence and expansion of the weaker races of the world. That imperialism is a negation of God. It does ungodly acts in the name of God. It covers its inhumanities, Dyerisms and O' Dwyerisms, under cover of humanity, justice and righteousness. And the pity of it is that the majority of Englishmen do not know that their name is being exploited. The great pity of it is that sober God-fearing Englishmen are beguiled into the belief that all is well when all is ill with India, that all is well with the African race when they are being exploited and degraded in their name. If the defeat of Germany and the central powers ended the German peril, the victory of the Allies has brought into being a peril no less deadly for the peace of the world. I wish, therefore, that the so-called alliance between Mussulmans and Hindus will become a permanent reality based on a frank recognition of enlightened self-interest. It will then transmute the iron of sordid imperialism into the gold of humanitarianism. The Hindu-Muslim alliance is intended to be a blessing to India and to the world, for it is conceived in a spirit of peace and good-will to all. It has adopted non-violence and truth as the indispensable means for achieving Swaraj in India. Its symbol—the charkha, the spinning wheel—is a symbol of simplicity, self-reliance, self-control, voluntary co-operation among millions. If such an alliance proves a menace to the world, then there is no God or God is asleep.

M. K. Gandhi

21st August. 1924

Young India.



Appendix III-1

GULBARGA GONE MAD

I hinted last week¹ that there was evidently an organization at the back of the mania for desecrating Hindu temples. Gulbarga is the latest instance in point. Whatever the Hindu provocation, if there was any, the Mussulman outburst has an ominous look about it. The desecration of temples cannot be justified in any circumstance whatsoever. Maulana Shaukat Ali, when he heard of Shambhar and Amethi desecrations, exclaimed in a fit of temper that the Mussulmans should not be surprised if the Hindus retaliate and some day find that their mosques have been desecrated. The Hindus may feel flattered or pleased over the Maulana's indignant exclamation, but I do not and I advise the Hindus not to be. Let them understand that I feel, perhaps more keenly than most of them, every fanatic outburst on the part of Mussulmans. I am fully aware of my responsibility in the matter. I know that many Hindus feel that I am responsible for many of these outbursts. For, they argue, I contributed the largest share to the awakening of the Mussulman masses. I appreciate the charge. Though I do not repent of my contribution, I feel the force of the objection. Therefore, if for no other reason, for this at least of greater responsibility, I must feel, more keenly than most Hindus can, these desecrations. I am both an idolater and an iconoclast in what I conceive to be the true senses of the terms. I value the spirit behind idol worship. It plays a most important part in the uplift of the human race. And I would like to possess the ability to defend with my life the thousands of holy temples which sanctify this land of ours. My alliance with the Mussulmans presupposes their perfect tolerance for my idols and my temples. I am an iconoclast in the sense that I break down the subtle form of idolatry in the shape of fanaticism that refuses to see any virtue in any other form of worshipping the Deity save one's own. This form of idolatry is more deadly for being more fine and evasive than the tangible and gross form of worship that identifies the Deity, with a little bit of a stone or golden image.

True Hindu-Muslim unity requires Mussulmans to tolerate, not as a virtue of necessity, not as a policy, but as part of their religion, the religion of others so long as they, the latter, believe it to be true. Even so is it expected of Hindus to extend the same tolerance as a matter of faith and religion to the religions of others, no matter how repugnant they may appear to their, the Hindus', sense of religion. The Hindus must, therefore, reject the idea of retaliation. The law of retaliation we have been



trying since the day of Adam and we know from experience that it has hopelessly failed. We are groaning under its poisonous effect. Above all, the Hindus may not break mosques against temples. That way lies slavery and worse. Even though a thousand temples may be reduced to bits, I would not touch a single mosque and expect thus to prove the superiority of my faith to the so-called faith of fanatics. I would love to hear of priests dying at their posts in defence of their temples and their idols. Let them learn to suffer and to die in the defence of their temples, even as God allows Himself to be insulted and broken up in the insult and damage done to the idols in which, being omnipresent, He undoubtedly resides. Hindus will not defend their religion or their temples by seeking to destroy mosques and thus proving themselves as fanatical as the fanatics who have been desecrating temples.

To the unknown who are undoubtedly behind these desecrations I submit : "Remember that Islam is being judged by your conduct. I have not found a single Mussulman defending these outbursts, not even under provocation. There seems to me to have been little, if any, provocation offered by the Hindus. But let us assume that it was otherwise, that Hindus played music near mosques to exasperate Mussulmans, that they even removed a stone from a minaret. Yet I venture to say that Mussulmans ought not to have desecrated Hindu temples. Even retaliation has its limits. Hindus prize their temples above their lives. It is possible to contemplate with some degree of equanimity injury to life, but not to temples. Religion is more than life. Remember that his own religion is the truest to every man even if it stands low in the scales of philosophic comparison. But presumption is against such Hindu provocation. The desecration in Multan was an unprovoked act. I have been trying to find proof for the allegations about Hindu desecration in the places referred to in my article on Hindu Muslim tension. I have failed to receive any proof in support of them. You will not enhance the reputation of Islam by the acts reported about Amethi, Shambhar, and Gulbarga. If you will permit me to say so, I feel about the honour of Islam as much as I feel about my own religion. This I do because I desire to live in perfect, open and hearty friendship with Mussulmans. I cannot help saying that these desecrations are cutting a deep wound in my heart."

To the Hindus and Mussulmans of Delhi, I say "Yours is a golden opportunity, if you desire amity between the two communities. In the light of what seems to have happened at Amethi, Shambhar, and Gulbarga, it is doubly your duty to solve the question. You have had the rare good fortune of having amongst you two Mussulmans, Hakim Saheb Ajmal Khan and Dr. Ansari, who have hitherto enjoyed the confidence of



both the communities. You have, therefore, noble traditions behind you. You can turn your quarrels to good account by closing the ranks and establishing a heart-friendship that will not break under any strain whatsoever. I have placed my services at your disposal. If you will have me to act as a mediator between you, I am prepared to bury myself in Delhi and, in collaboration with any others whom you may appoint, endeavour to find out the true facts. An authentic story of the events of July last and the circumstances that led to them is a necessary preliminary to a lasting solution. I ask you to come to a decision quickly. The Hindu-Muslim question is the question on a proper solution of which hangs the destiny of India in the immediate future. Delhi can solve the question, for the others are likely to follow what Delhi might do."

M. K. Gandhi.

28th August, 1924.

Young India.

1. In 'Young' India of August 21, 1924, Mahatma Gandhi referred to the desecration of two temples one at Moradabad and one at Amethi in Lucknow and stated, "There is no doubt that these cases have an organisation at their back"—an organisation which "cannot enhance the dignity of Islam" and "cannot popularize it."



Appendix III-2

HINDU MUSLIM UNITY

[Translated by Mahadev Desai from *Navajivan* d. 14-9-1924]

I had occasion, whilst addressing a public meeting at Surat, to refer to the question of Hindu-Muslim unity in detail, as some friends there wanted to know my views about Sangathan. After the meeting I had a letter from a Mussulman friend offering suggestions for the solution of the question. I now see that even Gujarat is not quite free from the dangers of communal disturbances. The Visnagar affair can hardly be said to be yet settled. There is some trouble in Mandal. There was fear of a little disturbance in Ahmedabad. Some trouble is apprehended in Umreth. Other parts (e. g., Bhagalpur in Bihar) are also in the same plight.

The question of Hindu Muslim unity is getting more and more serious every day. One thing should be made clear at the outset. In the case of many of these disturbances, we hear of Government agents being at the back of them. The allegation, if true, would be painful to me, not surprising. It should not be surprising if the Government fomented the troubles, it being their policy to divide us. It would be painful because of the necessary implication that neither of the communities realizes wherein lies its interest. Only those can be set by the ears by a third party, who are in the habit of quarrelling. Government has never been heard of having fomented a quarrel, say, between the Brahmans and Banias, nor amongst the Sunni Mussulmans. The suspicion or fear of their having set the Hindus and Mussulmans by the ears is always entertained, because both have quarrelled so often. It is this habit of quarrelling that needs to be abandoned if we want to have Swaraj and retain it.

Quarrels must break out so long as the Hindus continue to be seized with fear. Bullies are always to be found where there are cowards. The Hindus must understand that no one can afford them protection, if they go on hugging fear. Fear of man argues want of faith in God. Only he trusts to his physical strength, who has no faith or very little faith in God's omnipresence. The Hindu must cultivate either of these two—faith in God or faith in one's physical might. If he does neither, it will spell the ruin of the community.

The first, viz., reliance on God and shaking off the fear of man is the way of non-violence and the best way. The second, viz., reliance on one's physical might is the way of violence. Both have a place in the world. It is open to us to choose either. One man



cannot try both at the same time. If all the Hindus and Mussulmans both elect the way of violence, we had better cease to talk of winning Swaraj in the immediate future. Armed peace means not a little fighting that will end with the breaking of a few heads or of a dozen temples. It must mean prolonged fighting and rivers of blood. I am against Sangathan, and I am not. If Sangathan means opening *akhadas* (gymnasiums) and organising the Hindu hooligans through them, I would regard it as a pitiable condition. You cannot defend yourself and your religion with the help of hooligans. It is substituting one peril for another, and even adding another. I would have nothing to say against *akhadas* if they were used by the Brahmans, Banias and others for the development of their physique. *Akhadas* as *akhadas* are unexceptionable. But I have no doubt that they are no good for giving a training to fight the Mussulmans. It will take years to acquire the physical strength to fight.

The *akhada* is, therefore, not the way. We will have to go in for *tapasya*, for self-purification, if we want to win the hearts of Mussulmans. We shall have to cast off all the evil in us. If they attack us, we shall have to learn not to return blow for blow, but bravely to face death—not to die a craven death leaving wife and children behind, but to receive their blows and meet death cheerfully.

I would tender the same advice to the Mussulmans. But it is unnecessary, as the average Mussulman has been assumed to be a bully. The general impression is that Mussulmans can fight and fight well. I do not, therefore, need to tell them how they should defend themselves from the attacks of the Hindus; on the contrary, I have to appeal to them to forbear. I have to appeal to them to get the *goonda* element under control and to behave peaceably. The Mussulmans may regard the Hindus as a menace in other matters. They do regard them as uneconomic menace. They do dread the Hindus' interference with their religious rites on the Bakr-id day. But they are in no fear of being beaten by the Hindus. I will, therefore, tell them only this: 'You cannot protect Islam with the *lathi* or the sword. The age of the *lathi* is gone. A religion will be tested by the purity of its adherents. If you leave it to the *goondas* to defend your youth, you will do serious harm to Islam. Islam will, in that case, no longer remain the faith of the *fakirs* and worshippers of Allah.'

I have up to now confined myself to giving general advice. Maulana Hasrat Mohani told me that Mussulmans ought to protect the cow for the sake of the Hindus, and Hindus should cease to regard the Mussulmans as untouchables, as he said they are regarded in North India. I told him : 'I will not bargain with you in this matter. If the



Mussulmans think it their duty to protect the cow for the sake of the Hindus, they may do so, irrespective of how the Hindus behave towards them. I think it a sin for a Hindu to look upon a Mussulman as an untouchable, and the Hindu ought not to do so, irrespective of a Mussulman killing or sparing the cow. The Mussulman ought to be no more untouchable to a Hindu than a Hindu of any of the four castes is to one or the other. I regard these things as axiomatic. If Hinduism teaches hatred of Islam or of non-Hindus, it is doomed to destruction. Each community should then put its house in order without bargaining with the other. To nurse enmity against the Mussulman, for the sake of saving the cow, is a sure way to kill the cow and doubly sinful. Hinduism will not be destroyed by a non-Hindu killing a cow. The Hindus' religion consists in saving the cow, but it can never be his religion to save the cow by a resort to force towards a non-Hindu. The Hindus want Swaraj in India, and not a Hindu Raj. Even if there was a Hindu Raj, and toleration one of its features, there would be place in it for Mussulmans as well as Christians; it would redound to the credit of Hinduism, if stopping of cow-slaughter was brought about not by force, but as deliberate voluntary act of self-denial on the part of Mussulmans and others. I would, therefore, deem it unpatriotic even to nurse a dream of Hindu Raj'.

Then there is the trouble about music. It is fast growing every day. A letter, I had in Surat, says that, as it is not obligatory on a Hindu to play music, he should stop it before mosques to spare the feelings of the Mussulmans. I wish the question was as simple as the correspondent thinks. But it is the opposite of simple. Not a single Hindu religious ceremony can be performed without the accompaniment of music. Some ceremonies require the accompaniment of continuous music. No doubt, even here due regard ought to be had for the feelings of the Mussulmans. The music may in such cases be less noisy. But all this can be and ought to be done on the basis of 'give and take.' Having talked with a number of Mussulmans in the matter, I know that Islam does not make it obligatory for a Mussulman to prevent a non-Mussulman from playing music near mosques. Nor is such a thing on the part of a non-Mussulman calculated to injure Islam. Music should never, therefore, be a bone of contention.

In many places, however, the Mussulmans have forcibly sought to stop Hindus from playing music. This is clearly intolerable. What is readily yielded to courtesy is never yielded to force. Submission to courteous request is religion, submission to force is irreligion. If the Hindus stop music for fear of a beating from the Mussulmans, they cease to be Hindus. The general rule in this respect may be said to be this, that where the Hindus have long been deliberately observing the custom to stop music before



mosques, they must not break it. But where they have been playing music without interference, the practice should continue. Where trouble is apprehended and facts are disputed, both communities ought to refer the matter to arbitration.

Where a court of law has prohibited music, the Hindus should not take the law in their own hands. And the Mussulmans should not insist on stopping music by force.

Where the Mussulmans refuse to yield, or where the Hindus apprehend violence, and where there is no prohibition by a court of law, the Hindus must take out their processions with music accompanying, and put up with all the beating inflicted on them. All those who join such processions or who form the musical band must thus sacrifice themselves. They will thereby defend their Faith and their self-respect.

Where the Hindus are unequal to this soul-force, it is open to them to resort to force in self-defence. Where death without resistance is the only way, neither party should think of resorting to law courts or help from Government. Even if one of the parties resort to such aid, the other should refrain. If resort to law courts cannot be avoided, there ought to be at least no resort to false evidence.

It is the rule of honourable combat that, after having heartily given and taken blows, both the parties quiet down, and seek no reinforcement from outside. There should be no bitterness or feeling of revenge behind.

A quarrel should, in no case, be carried from one street to another. The fair sex, the aged and the infirm, children and all non-combatants ought to be free from molestation. Fighting would be regarded as sportsman-like, if these rules are observed.

I hope that the Hindus and Mussulmans in Gujarat will keep their heads cool and keep the peace. I hope also that the fear of a possible trouble in Umreth is unjustified. Let both the communities there hold mutual consultations and settle their differences amicably.

Running away for fear of death, leaving one's dear ones, temples or music to take care of themselves, is irreligion. It is cowardice. It is not manly, it is unmanly. Non-violence is the virtue of the manly. The coward is innocent of it.

It will take some time before the average Hindu ceases to be a coward and the average Mussulman ceases to be a bully. In the meantime, the thinking section of both the communities should try their best, on all occasions of trouble, to refer matters to



arbitration. Their position is delicate, but they should expend all their energy in keeping the peace.

M. K. Gandhi

22nd September, 1924

Young India.



APPENDIX III-3

THE 'UNITY' CONFERENCE AT DELHI WHERE IT WAS WANTING

'Repent! Repent! Though ye have gone
Through paths of wickedness and woe;
And though your sins be red as scarlet,
They shall be white as snow.'

It is not easy to speak about the deliberations and the results, of the Unity Conference. It may be admitted at once that it did not meet in vain; though some of the resolutions, especially the one which was regarded as the main resolution, namely, No, 4,¹ do not strike one as conceded from the heart, and smack of the treaty-terms wrested by one party from another, yet the sure achievement of the Conference consists in the unanimous acceptance of resolutions 2 and 3—the one ruling out force absolutely as a remedy of communal strife; the other proposing the formation of a National Panchayat. If every member of the Conference tries by every means in his power to follow this resolution ruling out force, the object of the Conference might be achieved.

Two more facts may be noted. It must be said to the credit of the Conference, that it had done nothing under the pressure of the fast. The fact that the long and weary discussions fructified into resolutions, which, however inadequate, satisfied all parties, does indicate a desire for Unity, which has replaced the former distrust of Unity, the want of faith, both in the possibility and the efficacy of Unity.

For this result the Conference is mainly indebted to the efforts of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Pandit Motilal Nehru and Swami Shraddhanandji. It may be said without fear of contradiction that without Maulana Abul Kalam Azad the second,² and to my mind the most important, resolution might not have been passed in its present form; that without Swami Shraddhanandji's and Pandit Malaviyaji 's readiness 'to agree with thine adversary quickly' no resolution would have been passed; that a less patient and tactful President might easily have got sick of the whole business and dissolved the Conference in bitter impatience.

More than this, I am afraid, cannot be said. The Conference was an indication of the desire for Unity, but not of the will for it. The will can only come out of a 'broken and contrite heart' which 'the Lord will not despise.'



I am afraid the whole significance of the fast was, in a way, lost upon the Conference. It was not undertaken to get the two communities to meet and frame a set of resolutions; it was not undertaken with a view to get promises of better relations. It was taken mainly as a penance. It was truly the outcome of a 'broken and contrite heart.' In so far as it was meant to be a prayer, it was meant to evoke the spirit of true repentance in everyone's heart. For everyone of us had sadly betrayed the cause.

Was the Conference an expression of true repentance? Gandhiji *did* want us to do penance, not by fasting but by 'retracing our steps.'

'Sacrifice and meat-offering thou desirest not,
Else would I give it Thee.
A broken and contrite heart, O Lord,
Thou wilt not despise.'

Have we retraced our steps? Most of the resolutions passed and those also proposed, but wisely ruled out by the President, were more in the nature of demands for the reduction of armaments than for the stoppage of all war. There is no doubt repentance in the first part of the second resolution which was supported most ably and movingly by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. There was unquestionably the sacred flame of repentance in the words of Maulana Shaukat Ali when he addressed the house at the close. But the spirit of repentance did not seem to me to pervade the atmosphere. No one will argue that nothing had happened for which we need repent. Sacred person and property had been violated; sacred shrines had been desecrated; hearts, more sacred than shrines and truer houses of God, had been broken. A cry ought to have gone out, the echoes of which should have reverberated from every nook and corner of the land. That lacerated soul's outcry was wanting.

Because it was wanting, there was also lacking the courage of conviction which counts no cost; which stands out not only against kith and kin, but against the whole world. With that courage comes the will for union, for heart unity, the true will for Swaraj.

But the sacred flame is still burning from which we may yet catch a spark.

9th October, 1924
Young India.

Mahadev Desai



1. A synopsis of some important clauses of this omnibus resolution is given below:

(1) Full freedom to every individual or group to follow his or their religious practices with due regard to the feelings and rights of others. None may revile the founders, holy persons or tenets of any other faith.

(2) All places of worship shall be considered sacred and inviolable and shall in no case be attacked or desecrated.

(3) The exercise of the right of cow-slaughter by Muslims may be stopped not by the use of force, resolution of a local body, act of legislature or order of a court, but only by mutual consent and trust in good sense of Mussulmans.

The above does not unsettle any local custom or agreement already in existence. Nor does it authorise cow- slaughter in a new place—i. e. where it had not taken place before.

Cow-slaughter shall not take place in a manner offensive to Hindus.

The Muslim members of the Conference hereby call upon their co-religionists to do everything possible to reduce cow-slaughter.

(4) The Hindu right of music shall not be stopped by Muslims by the use of force etc. but by mutual consent and trust in the good sense of Hindus.

No unsettlement of any local custom re. music as in 3 above.

The Hindu members call upon their co-religionists to avoid playing music before mosques.

(5) If a Hindu temple or a house stands near a mosque the music in it shall not be stopped by Muslims by force etc. but they should trust to the good sense of the Hindus to accommodate them.

(6) All disputes re. clauses No. 3, 4 & 5 may be settled by a National Panchayat to be formed under resolution No.3 (Vide *infra*).

(7) Everyone has full freedom to convert or reconvert any person, by persuasion, but not by force, fraud or material inducements.

2. Resolution No. II

This Conference deplores the dissensions going on in several parts of India between Hindus and Muslims, resulting in loss of life, burning and plunder of property and desecration of temples. The Conference regards them as barbarous and contrary to religion The Conference is of opinion that it is unlawful and irreligious to take the law into one's hands for retaliation or punishment. The Conference holds that all differences of whatsoever nature, should be referred to arbitration and, failing that, to a court of law.

Resolution No. III

There shall be a Central National Panchayat, with power to appoint local Panchayats. They shall settle all disputes, including recent occurrences.



The following be appointed members of the Central National Panchayat with powers to add and co-opt other members:

(1) Mahatma Gandhi (2) Hakim Ajmal Khan (Muslim) (3) Lala Lajpat Rai (Hindu) (4) G. K. Nariman (Parsi) (5) Dr. S. K. Datta (Christian) (6) Master Sunder Singh of Lyallpur (Sikh).



Appendix IV- 1

ALL ABOUT THE FAST

I wish to assure the reader that the fast¹ has not been undertaken without deliberation. As a matter of fact, my life has been at stake ever since the birth of non-co-operation. I did not blindly embark upon it. I had ample warning of the dangers attendant upon it. No act of mine is done without prayer. Man is a fallible being. He can never be sure of his steps. What he may regard as answer to prayer may be an echo of his pride. For infallible guidance man has to have a perfectly innocent heart incapable of evil. I can lay no such claim. Mine is a struggling, striving, erring, imperfect soul. But I can rise only by experimenting upon myself and others. I believe in absolute oneness of God and therefore also of humanity. What though we have many bodies? We have but one soul. The rays of the sun are many through refraction. But they have the same source. I cannot, therefore, detach myself from the wickedest soul (nor may I be denied identity with the most virtuous). Whether, therefore, I will or not, I must involve in my experiment the whole of my kind. Nor can I do without experiment. Life is but an endless series of experiments.

I knew that non-co-operation was a dangerous experiment. Non-co-operation in itself is unnatural, vicious, and sinful. But non-violent non-co-operation, I am convinced, is a sacred duty at times. I have proved it in many cases. But there was every possibility of mistake in its application to large masses. But desperate diseases call for desperate remedies. Non-violent non-co-operation was the only alternative to anarchy and worse. Since it was to be non-violent, I had to put my life in the scales.

The fact that Hindus and Mussulmans, who were only two years ago apparently working together as friends, are now fighting like cats and dogs in some places, shows conclusively that the non-co-operation they offered was not non-violent. I saw the symptom in Bombay, Chauri Chaura and in a host of minor cases. I did penance then. It had effect *pro tanto*. But this Hindu-Muslim tension was unthinkable. It became unbearable on hearing of the Kohat tragedy. On the eve of my departure from Sabarmati for Delhi, Sarojini Devi wrote to me that speeches and homilies on peace would not do. I must find out an effective remedy. She was right in saddling the responsibility on me. Had I not been instrumental in bringing into being the vast energy of the people? I must find the remedy if the energy proved self-destructive. I wrote to say that I should find it only by plodding. Empty prayer is as sounding brass or a tinkling



cymbal. I little knew then that the remedy was to be this prolonged fast. And yet I know that the fast is not prolonged enough for quenching the agony of my soul. Have I erred, have I been impatient, have I compromised with evil? I may have done all these things or none of them. All I know is what I see before me. If real non-violence and truth had been practised by the people who are now fighting, the gory duelling that is now going on would have been impossible. My responsibility is clearly somewhere.

I was violently shaken by Amethi, Sambhar and Gulbarga. I had read the reports about Amethi and Sambhar prepared by Hindu and Mussulman friends. I had learnt the joint finding of Hindu and Mussulman friends who went to Gulbarga. I was writhing in deep pain and yet I had no remedy. The news of Kohat set the smouldering mass aflame. Something had got to be done. I passed two nights in restlessness and pain. On Wednesday I knew the remedy, I must do penance. In the Satyagrahashram at the time of morning prayer we ask Shiva, God of Mercy, to forgive our sins knowingly or unknowingly committed. My penance is the prayer of a bleeding heart for forgiveness for sins unwittingly committed.

It is warning to the Hindus and Mussulmans who have professed to love me. If they have loved me truly and if I have been deserving of their love, they will do penance with me for the grave sin of denying God in their hearts. To revile one another's religion, to make reckless statements, to utter untruth, to break the heads of innocent men, to desecrate temples or mosques, is a denial of God. The world is watching some with glee and some with sorrow the dog fight that is proceeding in our midst. We have listened to Satan. Religion—call it by what name you like—is made of sterner stuff. The penance of Hindus and Mussulmans is not fasting but retracing their steps. It is true penance for a Mussulman to harbour no ill for his Hindu brother and an equally true penance for a Hindu to harbour none for his Mussulman brother.

I ask of no Hindu or Mussulman to surrender an iota of his religious principle. Only let him be sure that it is religion. But I do ask of every Hindu and Mussulman not to fight for an earthly gain. I should be deeply hurt if my fast made either community surrender on a matter of principle. My fast is a matter between God and myself.

I did not consult friends—not even Hakim Saheb who was closeted with me for a long time on Wednesday, nor Maulana Mohammad Ali under whose roof I am enjoying the privilege of hospitality. When a man wants to make up with his Maker, he does not consult a third party. He ought not to. If he has any doubt about it, he certainly must. But I had no doubt in my mind about the necessity of my step. Friends



would deem it their duty to prevent me from undertaking the fast. Such things are not matters for consultation or argument. They are matters of feeling. When Rama decided to fulfil his obligation, he did not swerve from his resolve either by the weepings and wailings of his dear mother, or the advice of his preceptors, or the entreaty of his people, or even the certainty of his father's death, if he carried out his resolve. These things are momentary. Hinduism would not have been much of a religion, if Rama had not steeled his heart against every temptation. He knew that he had to pass through every travail, if he was to serve humanity and become a model for future generations.

But was it right for me to go through the fast under a Mussulman roof? Yes, it was. The fast is not born out of ill-will against a single soul. My being under a Mussulman roof ensures it against any such interpretation. It is in the fitness of things that this fast should be taken up and completed in a Mussulman house.

And who is Mohammad Ali? Only two days before the fast we had a discussion about a private matter in which I told him, what was mine was his and what was his was mine. Let me gratefully tell the public that I have never received warmer or better treatment than under Mohammad Ali's roof. Every want of mine is anticipated. The dominant thought of every one of his household is to make me and mine happy and comfortable. Doctors Ansari and Abdur Rahman have constituted themselves my medical advisers. They examine me daily. I have had many a happy occasion in my life. This is no less happy than the previous ones. Bread is not everything. I am experiencing here the richest love. It is more than bread for me.

It has been whispered that by being so much with Mussulman friends, I make myself unfit to know the Hindu mind. The Hindu mind is myself. Surely I do not need to live amidst Hindus to know the Hindu mind when every fibre of my being is Hindu. My Hinduism must be a very poor thing, if it cannot flourish under influences the most adverse. I know instinctively what is necessary for Hinduism. But I must labour to discover the Mussulman mind. The closer I come to the best of Mussulmans, the juster I am likely to be in my estimate of the Mussulmans and their doings. I am striving to become the best cement between the two communities. My longing is to be able to cement the two with my blood, if necessary. But, before I can do so, I must prove to the Mussulmans that I love them as well as I love the Hindus. My religion teaches me to love all equally. May God help me to do so. My fast is among other things meant to qualify me for achieving that equal and selfless love.



M.K. Gandhi

25th September, 1924,
Young India.

1. Announcing a fast for 21 days Mahatma Gandhi issued the following statement from Delhi on September 18:

"The recent events have proved unbearable for me. My hopelessness is still more unbearable. My religion teaches me that whenever there is distress which one cannot remove, one must fast and pray. I have done so in connection with my own dearest ones. Nothing evidently that I say or write can bring the two communities together. I am, therefore, imposing on myself a fast of 21 days commencing from today and ending on Wednesday, October 6.

"I reserve the liberty to drink water with or without salt. It is both a penance and a prayer.

"As penance I need not have taken the public into my confidence, but I publish the fast as (let me hope) an effective prayer both to Hindus and to Mussulmans, who have hitherto worked in unison, not to commit suicide. I respectfully invite the heads of all the communities, including Englishmen, to meet and end this quarrel which is a disgrace to religion and to humanity. It seems as if God has been dethroned. Let us reinstate Him in our hearts."

Commenting on the above statement Mahatmaji wrote in *Young India* of September 25, 1924;

I observe that in my note on fasting I have been made to say,—"My hopelessness is still more unbearable." My statement mentions 'helplessness.' Not hopelessness. A man with a grain of faith in God never loses hope, because he ever believes in the ultimate triumph of Truth. A man of God never strives after untruth and therefore he can never lose hope. On the contrary, his hope shines the brightest 'amidst encircling gloom.' But my helplessness is a very patent fact before me. I may not ignore it. I must ever confess it. There is a beautiful Tamil proverb which says, 'God is the sole help of the helpless.' The truth of this never came upon me with so much force as it has come today. Handling large masses of men, dealing with them, speaking and acting for them is no joke for a man whose capacity God has so circumscribed. One has, therefore, to be ever on the watch. And the reader may rest assured that I took the final step after I had realised to the full my utter helplessness. And I cried out to God even like Draupadi when she seemed to be abandoned by her five brave protectors. And her cry did not ascend to the Almighty in vain. That cry must not be from the lip. It has to be from the deepest recesses of one's heart. And, therefore, such a cry is only possible when one is in anguish. Mine has expressed itself in a fast which is by no means adequate for the issues involved. My heart continually says:

"Rock of Ages cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee."



and Sangathan. I have said my say about these movements already. So far as possible I do not wish during the privileged weeks to say anything on matters of controversy. I wish to engage the attention of the reader on the solution they offered. They said: "We believe in the divinity of the Vedas. We believe in Shri Krishnaji Maharaj and Ramchandrajaji Maharaj (the adjectives are theirs). Why cannot Hindus believe in the divinity of the Quran and say with us that there is no God but God and Mohammad is His Prophet? Ours is not an exclusive religion, but it is essentially inclusive."

I told them that the solution was not quite so simple as they put it. The formula they suggested might be good enough for the cultured few, but it would prove ineffective for the man in the street. For the Hindus cow-protection and the playing of music even near the mosque was the substance of Hinduism and for the Mussulmans cow-killing and prohibition of music was the substance of Islam. It was, therefore, necessary that the Hindus abandon the idea of compelling Mussulmans to stop cow-killing, and Mussulmans the idea of compelling the Hindus to stop music. The regulation of cow-slaughter and playing of music must be left to the goodwill of the respective communities. Each practice would assume a becoming proportion with the growth of the tolerant spirit. But I do not propose to elaborate here this ticklish question.

I wish to examine the attractive formula presented by the Mussulman friends and state what is at least acceptable to me and as my instinct is wholly Hindu, I know that what I am about to say will be acceptable to the vast mass of Hindus.

In fact, it is the average Mussulman who will not accept the divinity of the Vedas and the other Hindu scriptures, or Krishna or Rama as prophets or incarnations of the Deity. With the Hindu it is a new-fangled notion to revile the Quran and the Prophet. I have known the Prophet spoken of with reverence in Hindu circles. There are even Hindu songs paying tribute to Islam.

Take the first half of the formula. God is certainly One. He has no second. He is unfathomable, unknowable and unknown to the vast majority of mankind. He is everywhere. He sees without eyes, and hears without ears. He is formless and indivisible. He is uncreate, has no father, mother or child; and yet He allows Himself to be worshipped as father, mother, wife and child. He allows Himself even to be worshipped as stock and stone, although He is none of these things. He is the most elusive. He is the nearest to us if we would but know the fact. But He is farthest from



us when we do not want to realise His omnipresence. There are many Gods in the Vedas. Other scriptures call them angels. But the Vedas sing of only one God.

I have no hesitation in regarding the Quran as revealed, as I have none in regarding the Bible, the Zend Avesta, the Granth Saheb and any other clean scriptures as revealed. Revelation is the exclusive property of no nation, no tribe. If I know Hinduism at all, it is essentially inclusive and ever-growing, ever-responsive. It gives the freest scope to imagination, speculation and reason. I have found not the slightest difficulty in Hindu circles about evoking reverence for the Quran and the Prophet. But I have found difficulty in Mussulman circles about invoking the same reverence for the Vedas or the incarnations. I had a very good Mussulman client in South Africa. He is, alas, dead now. The relation of client and counsel developed into one of close companionship and mutual regard. We often had religious discussions. My friend, though not learned in any sense of the term, had an intellect as sharp as a razor. He knew everything of the Quran. He knew something of other religions also. He was interested in my accepting Islam. I said to him, "I can pay full respect to the Quran and the Prophet, why do you ask me to reject the Vedas and the incarnations? They have helped me to be what I am. I find the greatest consolation from the Bhagavad Gita and Tulsidas's Ramayan. I frankly confess that the Quran, the Bible and the other scriptures of the world, in spite of my great regard for them, do not move me as do the Gita of Krishna and the Ramayan of Tulsidas." The friend despaired of me and had no hesitation in saying that there must be something wrong with me. His, however, is not an exceptional case because I have since met many Mussulman friends who have held the same view. I do, however, believe that this is a passing phase. I share Justice Amir Ali's view that Islam in the days of Harun-al-Rashid and Mamun was the most tolerant amongst the world's religions. But there was a reaction against the liberalism of the teachers of their times. The reactionaries had many learned, able and influential men amongst them and they very nearly overwhelmed the liberal and tolerant teachers and philosophers of Islam. We in India are still suffering from the effect of that reaction. But I have not a shadow of doubt that Islam has sufficient in itself to become purged of illiberalism and intolerance. We are fast reaching the time when the acceptance of the formula suggested by the friends will be a common thing among mankind. The need of the moment is not one religion, but mutual respect and tolerance of the devotees of the different religions. We want to reach, not the dead level, but unity in diversity. Any attempt to root out traditions, effects of heredity, climate and other surroundings is not only bound to fail, but is a sacrilege. The soul of



religions is one, but it is encased in a multitude of forms. The latter will persist to the end of time. Wise men will ignore the outward crust and see the same soul living under a variety of crusts. For Hindus to expect Islam, Christianity or Zoroastrianism to be driven out of India is as idle a dream as it would be for Mussulmans to have only Islam of their imagination rule the world. But if belief in One God and the race of His prophets in a never-ending chain is sufficient for Islam, then we are all Mussulmans, but we are also all Hindus and Christians. Truth is the exclusive property of no single scripture.

M. K. Gandhi

19th September, 1924,
Young India



Appendix IV- 3

TO THE READER!

What shall I write to you? My relation with you is, to my mind, uncommon. It is neither greed for money nor ambition for fame, that has impelled me to take up the editorial pen. It is in order to make a moving appeal to your conscience that I have accepted the work. It has fallen into my hands unasked—under the exigencies of circumstances. But ever since it fell, my thought has been riveted on you. Every week I have tried to pour out my very soul into the pages of *Navajivan* and I have not written a single word without invoking God's presence. I have never regarded it my *dharma* to serve you none but palatable dishes. Often enough I have given you bitter draughts to quaff. But through all these draughts, bitter or sweet, I have ever tried to point out to you what I saw as the purest of *dharma*, as the best form of national service.

If I am undergoing a fast today, it is but in order to be fitter for the editorial chair. I know that a large number of the readers of *Navajivan*, both men and women, are guided by my articles in their views and acts. And suppose I have misled them? Harmed them? This thought was rankling in my breast all the while till now.

I never had a shred of doubt about the anti-untouchability campaign. Nor is there even a possibility of the slightest doubt as regards the spinning-wheel. That is the crutch of the poor, the one means of satisfying the hungry millions, the safe and sure refuge of the indigent woman for saving her honour. It is impossible, I think, to save India from starvation except by the universal acceptance of the spinning-wheel. There is, therefore, not the ghost of a chance of error in its propagation.

There is, likewise, absolutely no room for doubt about the need for Hindu-Muslim Unity. Swaraj, without it, is a myth.

But what has always kept me hanging in doubt is the question whether you are ready enough for the acceptance of *ahimsa* (non-violence) in its wide, expanded sense. I have, of course, proclaimed from house-tops that *ahimsa* or forgiveness is the quality only of the brave. Only he may restrain himself from doing violence to the opponent, who has the power to beat him. But suppose my articles led you to mistake *ahimsa* for cowardice? Suppose they made you lapse from your *dharma* to defend your kith and kin? In that case it would mean nothing less than perdition for me. Often enough have I written and said that cowardice can never be anybody's *dharma*. There



is, in this world, definitely a place for the sword, but none for the craven's heart. That man meets with only one end, his doom, and fully deserves it. But what I have tried to show you is that he also, who takes up the sword, dies by the sword. Whom will a man save, and whom defend, by the sword? The power of the sword is as zero before the power of the soul. *Ahimsa* is the strength of the soul, the sword is the strength of the body. Use of the sword degrades the spirit into a thing of the flesh, that of *ahimsa*, makes the soul perfect as the father in heaven. The man who does not understand this truth must never fail to protect his dear ones even by the use of the sword.

It is not by preaching that I can propagate this sublime principle of *ahimsa*. A man cannot make others adopt it, unless he first practises it himself. I am, therefore, at present implementing that *dharma* myself. I will not draw the sword against even those Mussulmans who desecrate my temples. I will not get angry with them. Even them I will win over only with my love.

I have declared that if even a single true lover is born in India, he can, single-handed, protect his religion. I wish to be like him. I have always exhorted you also to be like him. I know there is plenty of love in me, but is there any limit to the extension of love's domain? And I know my love is not boundless. Have I not yet to be capable of hugging a snake with love? I have the fullest faith that before a man, who is an embodiment of *ahimsa*, even a deadly cobra coils up in peace.

I am going through self-analysis, developing my love, by undertaking the fast. I wish to show you your duty by first implementing my own. It were futile, if you began a fast in sympathy with me. The privilege of fasting accrues to only a deserving person and he too cannot do so without the right time for it. Your duty is simply to put into execution the three-fold programme I have set before you through various pleadings. I am certain all else will be added unto you.

Instead of casting doubts on the propriety of my fast, or of feeling aggrieved over it, I would like you to pray to God that I may safely pass through this ordeal, resume your service through the columns of *Navajivan* and my pen may be charged with mightier power.¹

Your servant,
Mohandas Gandhi

1. Translated from *Navajivan* dtd. 24-9-1924



Appendix IV-4

GLORY OF TAPASYA

Hinduism bristles with brilliant example of *tapasya* (austerity). If Parvati desired the hand of Shiva, She must undergo *tapasya*. If Shiva lapsed into an error, even He had no other go. And Vishvamitra was the very embodiment of *tapasya*. When Rama left for the forest, Bharat took the Yogic path, started on a *tapasya* of a very severe form, and reduced himself to a skeleton.

There is no other way with God except this one for moulding and testing a man. If the soul is really distinct from the body, the soul may remain cheerful even though we make the body suffer.

Victuals are the food of the body, knowledge and meditation that of the soul. Every individual has to realise this truth by and for himself of and on, till it is woven completely into his being.

But if a penance is not informed with faith, devotion, humility, etc., then it becomes a meaningless toil. It may even be a vain show. A thousand times better than such self-tormentors are the humble *bhaktas* (devotees) of the Lord who do not abstain from their ordinary meals and pleasures.

I do not possess today the strength to write down the story of my *tapasya*, but I may say that life had become impossible without it. Destiny has ordained that I must plunge again into the stormy sea. O God! Without Thy grace I am helpless. Deign to have mercy and save me.¹

Mohandas Gandhi

1. Translated from *Navajivan* dtd 8.10.1924.



Appendix IV-5

CHANGE OF HEART

2nd October, 1924

(Mahatma Gandhi's Birthday)

Hitherto it has been a struggle and a yearning for a change of heart among Englishmen who compose the Government of India. That change has still to come. But the struggle must, for the moment, be transferred to a change of heart among the Hindus and Mussulmans. Before they dare to think of freedom they must be brave enough to love one another, to tolerate one another's religion, even prejudices and superstitions, and to trust one another. This requires faith in oneself. And faith in oneself is faith in God. If we have that faith we shall cease to fear one another.

M. K. Gandhi

29th September, 1924

Young India



Appendix V- 1

THE JOINT STATEMENT

The following is the text of the statement issued in Calcutta on the 6th inst. over the signatures of Mr. Gandhi, Mr. C. R. Das and Pandit Motilal Nehru:-

Whereas, although Swaraj is the goal of all the parties in India, the country is divided into different groups seemingly working in opposite directions, and whereas such antagonistic activity retards the progress of the nation towards Swaraj, and whereas it is desirable to bring, so far as possible, all such parties within the Congress and on a common platform, and whereas the Congress itself is divided into two opposing sections, resulting in harm to the country's cause, and whereas it is desirable to reunite these parties for the purpose of furthering the common cause, and whereas a policy of repression has been commenced in Bengal by the Local Government with the sanction of the Governor General, and whereas in the opinion of the undersigned this repression is aimed in reality not at any party of violence but at the Swaraj party in Bengal and, therefore at constitutional and orderly activity, and whereas, therefore, it has become a matter of immediate necessity to invite and secure the co-operation of all parties for putting forth the united strength of the nation against the policy of repression, we the undersigned, strongly recommend the following for adoption by all parties and eventually by the Congress at Belgaum:-

The Congress should suspend the programme of non-co-operation as the national programme, except in so far as it relates to the refusal to use or wear cloth made out of India.

The Congress should further resolve that different classes of work of the Congress may be done, as may be found necessary, by the different sections within the Congress and should resolve that the spread of hand-spinning, hand-weaving and all antecedent processes and the spread of handspun and hand-woven Khaddar and the promotion of unity between different communities, specially between the Hindus and Mussulmans, and the removal of untouchability by the Hindus from amongst them should be carried on by all sections within the Congress, and the work in connection with the Central and Provincial Legislatures should be carried on by the Swaraj Party on behalf of the Congress and as an integral part of the Congress organization and for such work the Swaraj party should make its own rules and administer its own funds. In



as much as experience has shown that without universal spinning India cannot become self-supporting regarding her clothing requirement, and in as much as hand-spinning is the best and the most tangible method of establishing a visible and substantial bond between the masses and Congressmen and women and in order to popularize hand-spinning and its products the Congress should repeal Article VII of the Congress Constitution and should substitute the following therefor:-

"No one shall be a member of any Congress Committee or organization who is not of the age of 18 and who does not wear handspun and hand-woven Khaddar at political and Congress function or while engaged in Congress business, and does not make a contribution of 2000 yards of evenly spun yarn per month of his or her own spinning or in case of illness, unwillingness or any such causes a like quantity of yarn spun by any other person."

M.K. Gandhi

C.R. Das

Motilal Nehru

13th November, 1924.

Young India.



Appendix V-2

THE LAW OF LOVE

A friend tells me that whilst I am wooing the Swarajists, the Liberals and others, I seem to be forsaking the No-changers and that they are bewildered at the change I am undergoing. The friend asks me to state my position from the No-changers' standpoint and to explain the seeming transformation in my attitude. He says I must clearly define the benign aspect of non-co-operation or Satyagraha that I adumbrated at the Excelsior Theatre meeting in Bombay.

In the first instance, I would clear the ground by saying that my own views remain unchanged. I swear by non-violent non-co-operation and all the boycotts that follow from it. But I see as clearly as daylight (this I did not see at Juhu) that the country as a whole has not understood non-violence and therefore has not understood the non-co-operation that was presented to it. I, therefore, see equally clearly that the keeping up of non-cooperation without its active principle, non-violence, must do harm to the country. It has done much harm already, in that it has divided the country into opposing parties. In such circumstances, non-co-operation as a national programme, must for the time being be suspended. The root of non-co-operation is in Satyagraha, which is love. The law of love—call it attraction, affinity, cohesion, if you like—governs the world. Life persists in the face of death. The universe continues in spite of destruction incessantly going on. Truth triumphs over untruth. Love conquers hate. God eternally triumphs over Satan.

The non-co-operation that I conceived was to be a binding force. The split in the Congress ranks and still more clearly the Hindu-Muslim dissensions, show that our non-co-operation has proved a dissolving element. I must, therefore, endeavour to show its benignant aspect by advising suspension and by total surrender on my part. In so doing I do not need to woo the No-changers. They claim to know non-violence and its implications. They pin their faith on the constructive programme to the exclusion of everything else. I abate not a jot or tittle from that programme. On the contrary, every step I am taking is calculated to give strength to it. The Hindu-Muslim question is of paramount importance. We want the weight of the whole country's opinion to be brought to bear upon it. We must stoop to conquer. Retaining every bit of non-co-operation in our own persons, we must make the path of those, who do not believe in it, smooth for helping us and helping the country in the constructive effort.



The past four years have shown us the way. We have gained much, but we have lost also much. We must conserve the gains and regain the lost ground. The mass awakening is the greatest gain. We must hold to it. The generating of mutual strife is the greatest loss. We must repair it quickly. One cannot do so unless we suspend the terrible aspect of non-co-operation. The No-changers' duty, if they are anything worth, is self-effacement, silent work. They must not fight for power or office or name. They must work silently, result or no result. They must live on the sufferance of their fellow workers, the Swarajists and the Liberals, if they will rejoin the Congress.

The best way to show how to do it, is to do it myself. I am, therefore, engaged in surrendering to the utmost of my capacity to the Swarajists as well as the Liberals. I have nothing to surrender to the No-changers; for I am supposed to have no differences of opinion with them.

I must cease to be a party-man. I invite No-changers to do likewise.

We must not hinder the Swarajists in their very difficult task. Wherever No-changers cannot have a majority without a bitter struggle, they must gladly and willingly and gracefully yield to the Swarajists. If they have power or office, it must be by virtue of service, not by manipulation of the vote. The vote is there no doubt. But it must come if it is to come, without the asking. Is it not easy enough to see that service requires no power, no office, no prestige? I would like every one of us to be a mere servant of the nation. I would like No-changers so to behave as to be wanted by Swarajists, Liberals, and all others. But whether they do so or not, I must act up to my faith. God weighed me at the last All India Congress Committee and found me wanting. My pride told me that I must yet fight the Swarajists. But the unquenchable spirit of service in me tells me that I must fight neither the Swarajists, nor the Liberals, nor the Englishmen. I must prove to everyone that I am what I profess to be—their friend and servant. My creed is service of God and, therefore, of humanity. I can neither serve God nor humanity, if as an Indian I do not serve India, and as a Hindu I do not serve the Indian Mussulmans. Voluntary service means pure love. I must strive my utmost, during the coming year of grace, to express in every little act of mine whatever love I am capable of.

M.K. Gandhi

23rd October, 1924.

Young India

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