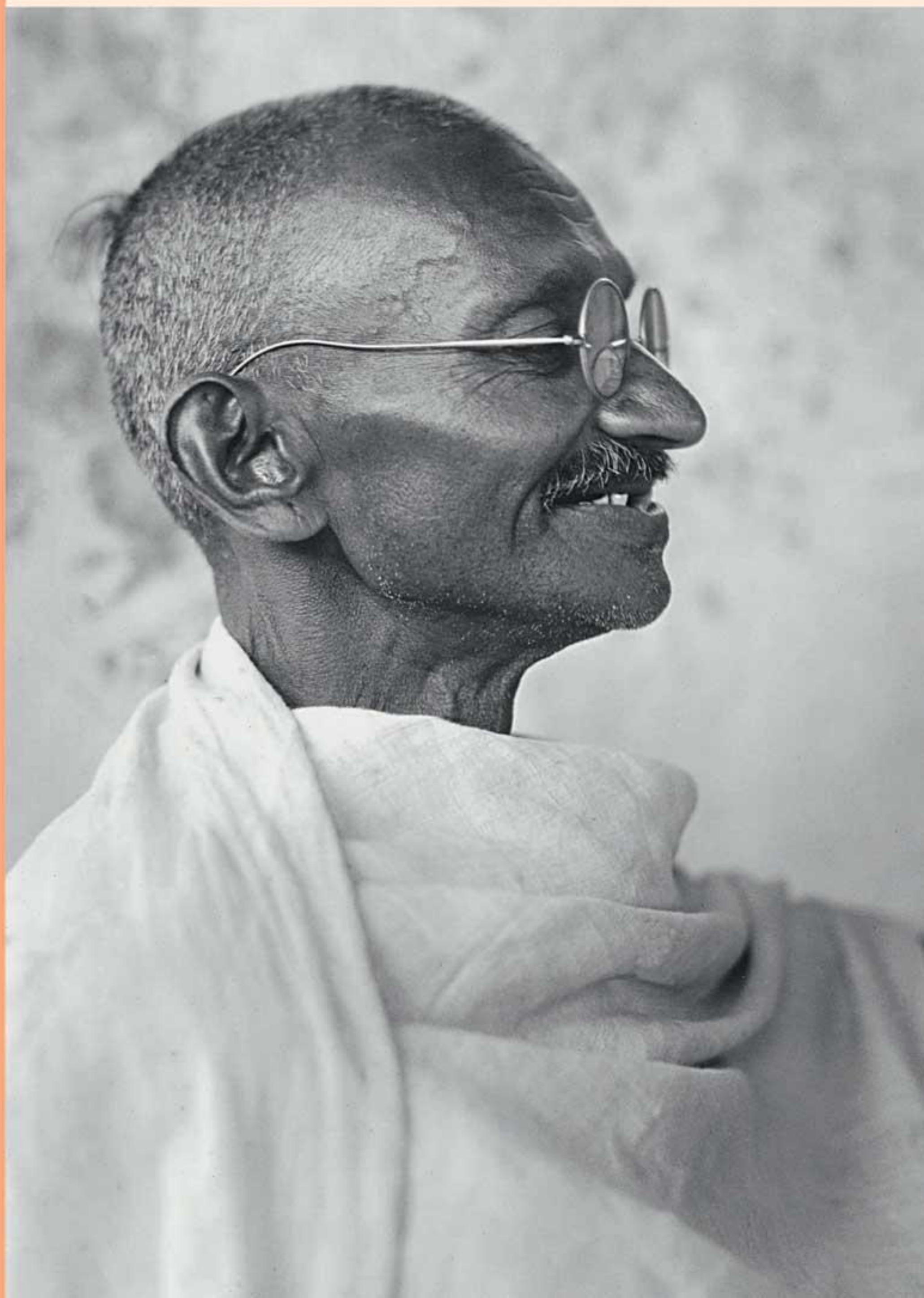


The Selected Works of  
**MAHATMA GANDHI**

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**Volume FIVE**

**THE VOICE OF TRUTH**



# The Voice of Truth

By: M. K. Gandhi

General Editor: Shriman Narayan

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## Foreword

In this last Volume of the Series, we have tried to select Gandhiji's choicest writings and speeches on a variety of topics. The first part of the Volume contains some of the important speeches delivered by Mahatma Gandhi on historic occasions. The second part includes selections of his thoughts on philosophy, religion, culture, art, literature, science, economics, politics, sociology and education. An attempt has been made to present Gandhiji's views on different subjects under suitable chapters for the convenience of the reader. To maintain uniformity, indirect narration has been changed to direct speech at a few places. But for slight editing, the original texts have been faithfully adhered to.

I do hope that this collection of speeches and writings will help the reader in understanding Gandhiji's views on almost all important subjects which affect the lives of individuals, groups and nations.

Raj Bhavan

Ahmedabad,

October, 16-1968

Shriman Narayan

## Publisher's Note

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

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

## GLOSSARY

*Advaita* : monism; non-duality or identity of the soul with Brahman

*Advaitism* : doctrine of non-duality

*Advaitist* : a believer in non-duality

*Ahimsa* : non-violence; love

*Ananda* : Joy; bliss

*Anekantavadi*: a believer in many-sidedness of Reality

*Aparigraha* : non-possession

*Ashrama* : one of the four stages of life according to Hinduism;  
a hermitage; a place for disciplined community living

*Asteya* : non-stealing

*Atman* : spirit; soul

*Avatar* : incarnation

*Bhajan* : a religious song

*Bhakti* : devotion

*Bhaktiyoga* : the path of devotion

*Bhangi* : a sweeper, a scavenger

*Brahma* : the Divine Reality; the Universal Spirit

*Brahmachari* : a celibate

*Brahmacharya*: celibacy; pursuit in quest of God

*Chapati* : thin flat cake made of flour; unleavened bread

*Charkha* : a spinning wheel

*Chit* : Knowledge

<i>Daridranarayan:</i>	God in the form of poor
<i>Dharma</i>	: religion; Duty
<i>Dvaitism</i>	: doctrine of duality
<i>Ganja</i>	: narcotic from the flower of Indian hemp
<i>Goonda</i>	: hooligan
<i>Goondaism</i>	: hooliganism
<i>Guru</i>	: a teacher, a spiritual guide
<i>Harijans</i>	: literally, the people of Hari, i.e. God; the name which Gandhiji gave to untouchables
<i>Hathayoga</i>	: a system of yoga in which the exercises of physical postures, poses and breathing are chiefly treated to discipline body and mind towards self-realization
<i>Hijarat</i>	: exodus or going away from one's native land
<i>Himsa</i>	: violence
<i>Jam-i-Jam</i>	: universal provider
<i>Kalma</i>	: basic Muslim prayer
<i>Kalpadruma</i>	: a tree supposed to grant all desires
<i>Kamadhenu</i>	: the cow of plenty, supposed to fulfill all desires
<i>Kanyadana</i>	: giving away of daughter in marriage
<i>Karma</i>	: action
<i>Khaddar, Khadi:</i>	hand-spun and hand-woven cloth
<i>Kisan</i>	: peasant

<i>Mahatma</i>	:	a great soul
<i>Mantra</i>	:	a sacred formula, a sacred text used for repetition and meditation, a sacred incantation
<i>Moksha</i>	:	salvation; freedom from birth and death
<i>Mukti</i>	:	salvation
<i>Namaz</i>	:	Muslim prayer
<i>Neti, Neti</i>	:	not this, not this
<i>Nirvana</i>	:	state of salvation, i.e., of absolute bliss & calm according to Buddhist thought
<i>Niyamas</i>	:	rules; observances
<i>Pancha</i>	:	arbitrator
<i>Panchama</i>	:	one belonging to fifth caste, an outcaste
<i>Panchayat</i>	:	village council consisting of five persons elected by the people
<i>Panchayat Raj:</i>	:	administration through Panchayat, i.e. the people
<i>Pariah</i>	:	an outcaste
<i>Purna Swaraj</i>	:	complete independence
<i>Raj</i>	:	kingdom; administration
<i>Ramanama</i>	:	name of Rama—incarnation of God in Hindu religion, recitation of God's name
<i>Rama Raj</i>	:	Kingdom of Rama, beneficent rule
<i>Rishi</i>	:	a seer

<i>Sadavrata</i>	:	a place where free meals are served
<i>Sadhana</i>	:	striving; practice, persistent effort
<i>Samadhi</i>	:	state of ecstasy
<i>Sat</i>	:	truth; that which exists
<i>Satya</i>	:	truth
<i>Satyagraha</i>	:	literally, holding on the truth; truth-force or soul-force
<i>Satyagrahi</i>	:	one who practices Satyagraha
<i>Savarna</i>	:	belonging to one of the four castes
<i>Shastra</i>	:	a scripture
<i>Sthitaprajna</i>	:	a man of steady wisdom
<i>Swadeshi</i>	:	literally of one's own country; insistence on the use of goods made in one's own country, preferably hand-made and those too of the neighbours first
<i>Swaraj</i>	:	self-government, home rule, independence
<i>Syadvad</i>	:	the doctrine of "May be" in Jaina philosophy; an assertion of probability (in philosophy)
<i>Syadvadi</i>	:	a believer in Syadvad
<i>Tabligh</i>	:	religious propaganda and conversion
<i>Tapas</i>	:	penance; religious austerity
<i>Tapasya</i>	:	austerity, penance or asceticism
<i>Upanishadas</i>	:	ancient philosophical writings of the Hindus
<i>Vaishnava</i>	:	a devotee of Vishnu
<i>Varna</i>	:	occupational division of Hindu society
<i>Varnadharma</i>	:	duty enjoined by caste rules

*Varnashrama* : four divisions of society according to occupations and of life into four stages, viz., student's, householder's, forest dweller's and that of a recluse

*Vedas* : scriptures of the Hindus

*Yajna* : a sacrifice

*Yogi* : one practicing religious discipline; an ascetic

*Zamindar* : a landlord

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*The Voice of Truth*  
*Part One*  
(SOME FAMOUS SPEECHES)

In my opinion the Sanskrit text 'सत्यं ब्रूयात् प्रियं ब्रूयात्, न ब्रूयात् सत्यमप्रियम्' means that one should speak the truth in gentle language. One had better not speak it, if one cannot do so in a gentle way; meaning thereby that there is no truth in a man who cannot control his tongue.

*Young India, 17-9-1925, p. 318*

## 01. BENARAS HINDU UNIVERSITY SPEECH

(4-2-1916)

[Pandit Malaviya had invited Gandhiji to speak on the occasion of the opening of the Benaras Hindu University. Lord Hardinge, the Viceroy, had come specially to lay the foundation-stone of the University. To protect his life, extra precautions were taken by the police. They were omnipresent and all houses along the route were guarded. Benaras was, so to say, in a state of siege.

Eminent persons from all over India had come. Many of them delivered addresses. On February 4, 1916, it was Gandhiji's turn to address the audience, mostly consisting of impressionable youths. A galaxy of princes, bedecked and bejewelled, had occupied the dais. The Maharaja of Darbhanga was in the chair.

Gandhiji who was clad in a short, coarse *dhoti*<sup>1</sup>, Kathiawadi cloak and turban rose to speak. The police precautions and the luxury around him hurt him deeply. Turning to the audience, Gandhiji said that he wanted to think audibly—speak without reserve:]

I wish to tender my humble apology for the long delay that took place before I was able to reach this place. And you will readily accept the apology when I tell you that I am not responsible for the delay nor is any human agency responsible for it. The fact is that I am like an animal on show, and my keepers in their over kindness always manage to neglect a necessary chapter in this life, and that is, pure accident. In this case, they did not provide for the series of accidents that happened to us—to me, keepers, and my carriers. Hence this delay.

Friends, under the influence of the matchless eloquence of Mrs. Besant who has just sat down, pray, do not believe that our University has become a finished product, and that all the young men who are to come to the University, that has yet to rise and come into existence, have also come and returned from it finished citizens of a great empire. Do not go away with any such impression, and if you, the student world to which my remarks are supposed to be addressed this evening, consider for one moment that the spiritual life, for which this country is noted and for which this country has no rival, can be transmitted through the lip, pray, believe me, you are wrong. You will never be able merely through the

lip, to give the message that India, I hope, will one day deliver to the world. I myself have been fed up with speeches and lectures. I accept the lectures that have been delivered here during the last two days from this category, because they are necessary. But I do venture to suggest to you that we have now reached almost the end of our resources in speech-making; it is not enough that our ears are feasted, that our eyes are feasted, but it is necessary that our hearts have got to be touched and that our hands and feet have got to be moved.

We have been told during the last two days how necessary it is, if we are to retain our hold upon the simplicity of Indian character, that our hands and feet should move in unison with our hearts. But this is only by way of preface. I wanted to say it is a matter of deep humiliation and shame for us that I am compelled this evening under the shadow of this great college, in this sacred city, to address my countrymen in a language that is foreign to me. I know that if I was appointed an examiner, to examine all those who have been attending during these two days this series of lectures, most of those who might be examined upon these lectures would fail. And why? Because they have not been touched.

I was present at the sessions of the great Congress in the month of December. There was a much vaster audience, and will you believe me when I tell you that the only speeches that touched the huge audience in Bombay were the speeches that were delivered in Hindustani? In Bombay, mind you, not in Benaras where everybody speaks Hindi. But between the vernaculars of the Bombay Presidency on the one hand and Hindi on the other, no such great dividing line exists as there does between English and the sister languages of India; and the Congress audience was better able to follow the speakers in Hindi. I am hoping that this University will see to it that the youths who come to it will receive their instruction through the medium of their vernaculars. Our language is the reflection of ourselves, and if you tell me that our languages are too poor to express the best thought, then say that the sooner we are wiped out of existence the better for us. Is there a man who dreams that English can ever become the national language of India? Why this handicap on the nation? Just consider for one moment what an unequal race our lads have to run with every English lad.

I had the privilege of a close conversation with some Poona professors. They assured me that every Indian youth, because he reached his knowledge through the English language, lost at least six precious years of life. Multiply that by the number of students turned out by schools and colleges, and find out for yourselves how many thousand years have been lost to the nation. The charge against us is that we have no initiative. How can we have any, if we are to devote the precious years of life to the mastery of a foreign tongue? We fail in this attempt also. Was it possible for any speaker yesterday and today to impress his audience as was possible for Mr. Higginbotham? It was not the fault of the previous speakers that they could not engage the audience. They had more than substance enough for us in their addresses. But their addresses could not go home to us. I have heard it said that after all it is English educated India which is leading and which is doing all the things for the nation. It would be monstrous if it were otherwise. The only education we receive is English education. Surely we must show something for it. But suppose that we had been receiving during the past fifty years education through our vernaculars, what should we have today? We should have today a free India, we should have our educated men, not as if they were foreigners in their own land but speaking to the heart of the nation; they would be working amongst the poorest of the poor, and whatever they would have gained during these fifty years would be a heritage for the nation. Today even our wives are not the sharers in our best thought. Look at Professor Bose and Professor Ray and their brilliant researches. Is it not a shame that their researches are not the common property of the masses?

Let us now turn to another subject.

The Congress has passed a resolution about self-government, and I have no doubt that the All India Congress Committee and the Muslim League will do their duty and come forward with some tangible suggestions. But I, for one, must frankly confess that I am not so much interested in what they will be able to produce as I am interested in anything that the student world is going to produce or the masses are going to produce. No paper contribution will ever give us self-government. No amount of speeches will ever make us fit for self-government.

It is only our conduct that will fit us for it. And how are we trying to govern ourselves?

I want to think audibly this evening. I do not want to make a speech and if you find me this evening speaking without reserve, pray, consider that you are only sharing the thoughts of a man who allows himself to think audibly, and if you think that I seem to transgress the limits that courtesy imposes upon me, pardon me for the liberty I may be taking. I visited the Vishwanath temple last evening, and as I was walking through those lanes, these were the thoughts that touched me. If a stranger dropped from above on to this great temple, and he had to consider what we as Hindus were, would he not be justified in condemning us? Is not this great temple a reflection of our own character? I speak feelingly, as a Hindu. Is it right that the lanes of our sacred temple should be as dirty as they are? The houses round about are built anyhow. The lanes are tortuous and narrow. If even our temples are not models of roominess and cleanliness, what can our self-government be? Shall our temples be abodes of holiness, cleanliness and peace as soon as the English have retired from India, either of their own pleasure or by compulsion, bag and baggage?

I entirely agree with the President of the Congress that before we think of self-government, we shall have to do the necessary plodding. In every city there are two divisions, the cantonment and the city proper. The city mostly is a stinking den. But we are a people unused to city life. But if we want city life, we cannot reproduce the easy-going hamlet life. It is not comforting to think that the people walk about the streets of Indian Bombay under the perpetual fear of dwellers in the storeyed buildings spitting upon them. I do a great deal of railway travelling. I observe the difficulty of third-class passengers. But the railway administration is by no means to blame for all their hard lot. We do not know the elementary laws of cleanliness. We spit anywhere on the carriage floor, irrespective of the thought that it is often used as sleeping space. We do not trouble ourselves as to how we use it; the result is indescribable filth in the compartment. The so-called better class passengers overawe their less fortunate brethren. Among them I have seen the student world also; sometimes they behave no better. They can speak

English and they have worn Norfolk jackets and, therefore, claim the right to force their way in and command seating accommodation.

I have turned the searchlight all over, and as you have given me the privilege of speaking to you, I am laying my heart bare. Surely we must set these things right in our progress towards self-government. I now introduce you to another scene. His Highness the Maharaja who presided yesterday over our deliberations spoke about the poverty of India. Other speakers laid great stress upon it. But what did we witness in the great pandal in which the foundation ceremony was performed by the Viceroy? Certainly a most gorgeous show, an exhibition of jewellery, which made a splendid feast for the eyes of the greatest jeweller who chose to come from Paris. I compare with the richly bedecked noble men the millions of the poor. And I feel like saying these noble men, "There is no salvation for India unless you strip yourselves of this jewellery and hold it in trust for your countrymen in India." I am sure it is not the desire of the King-Emperor or Lord Hardinge that in order to show the truest loyalty to our King Emperor, it is necessary for us to ransack our jewellery boxes and to appear bedecked from top to toe. I would undertake, at the peril of my life, to bring to you a message from King George himself that he expects nothing of the kind.

Sir, whenever I hear of a great palace rising in any great city of India, be it in British India or be it in India which is ruled by our great chiefs, I become jealous at once, and say, "Oh, it is the money that has come from the agriculturists." Over seventy-five percent of the population are agriculturists and Mr. Higginbotham told us last night in his own felicitous language, that they are the men who grow two blades of grass in the place of one. But there cannot be much spirit of self-government about us, if we take away or allow others to take away from them almost the whole of the results of their labour. Our salvation can only come through the farmer. Neither the lawyers, nor the doctors, nor the rich landlords are going to secure it.

Now, last but not the least, it is my bounden duty to refer to what agitated our minds during these two or three days. All of us have had many anxious moments while the Viceroy was going through the streets of Benaras. There were

detectives stationed in many places. We are horrified. We asked ourselves, "Why this distrust?" Is it not better that even Lord Hardinge should die than live a living death? But a representative of a mighty sovereign may not. He might find it necessary even to live a living death. But why was it necessary to impose these detectives on us? We may foam, we may fret, we may resent, but let us not forget that India of today in her impatience has produced an army of anarchists. I myself am an anarchist, but of another type. But there is a class of anarchists amongst us, and if I was able to reach this class, I would say to them that their anarchism has no room in India, if India is to conquer the conqueror. It is a sign of fear. If we trust and fear God, we shall have to fear no one, not the Maharajas, not the Viceroys, not the detectives, not even King George.

I honour the anarchist for his love of the country. I honour him for his bravery in being willing to die for his country; but I ask him—is killing honourable? Is the dagger of an assassin a fit precursor of an honourable death? I deny it. There is no warrant for such methods in any scriptures. If I found it necessary for the salvation of India that the English should retire, that they should be driven out, I would not hesitate to declare that they would have to go, and I hope I would be prepared to die in defence of that belief. That would, in my opinion, be an honourable death. The bomb-thrower creates secret plots, is afraid to come out into the open, and when caught pays the penalty of misdirected zeal.

I have been told, "Had we not done this, had some people not thrown bombs, we should never have gained what we have got with reference to the partition movement." (Mrs. Besant: 'Please stop it.') This was what I said in Bengal when Mr. Lyon presided at the meeting. I think what I am saying is necessary. If I am told to stop I shall obey. (Turning to the Chairman) I await your orders. If you consider that by my speaking as I am, I am not serving the country and the empire, I shall certainly stop. (Cries of 'Go on.') (The Chairman: 'Please, explain your object.') I am simply...(another interruption). My friends, please do not resent this interruption. If Mrs. Besant this evening suggests that I should stop, she does so because she loves India so well, and she considers that I am erring in thinking audibly before you young men. But even so, I simply say this that I want

to purge India of this atmosphere of suspicion on either side, if we are to reach our goal; we should have an empire which is to be based upon mutual love and mutual trust. It is not better that we talk under the shadow of this college than that we should be talking irresponsibly in our homes? I consider that it is much better that we talk these things openly. I have done so with excellent results before now. I know that there is nothing that the students are not discussing. There is nothing that the students do not know. I am, therefore, turning the searchlight towards ourselves. I hold the name of my country so dear to me that I exchange these thoughts with you, and submit to you that there is no room for anarchism in India. Let us frankly and openly say whatever we want to say to our rulers, and face the consequences if what we have to say does not please them. But let us not abuse.

I was talking the other day to a member of the much abused Civil Service. I have not very much in common with the members of that Service, but I could not help admiring the manner in which he was speaking to me. He said: "Mr. Gandhi, do you for one moment suppose that all we, Civil Servants, are a bad lot, that we want to oppress the people whom we have come to govern?" "No," I said. "Then if you get an opportunity put in a word for the much abused Civil Service." And I am here to put in that word. Yes, many members of the Indian Civil Service are most decidedly overbearing; they are tyrannical, at times thoughtless. Many other adjectives may be used. I grant all these things and I grant also that after having lived in India for a certain number of years some of them become somewhat degraded. But what does that signify? They were gentlemen before they came here, and if they have lost some of the moral fibre, it is a reflection upon ourselves.

Just think out for yourselves, if a man who was good yesterday has become bad after having come in contact with me, is he responsible that he has deteriorated or am I? The atmosphere of sycophancy and falsity that surrounds them on their coming to India demoralizes them, as it would many of us. It is well to take the blame sometimes. If we are to receive self-government, we shall have to take it. We shall never be granted self-government. Look at the history of the British

Empire and the British nation; freedom loving as it is, it will not be a party to give freedom to a people who will not take it themselves. Learn your lesson if you wish to from the Boer War. Those who were enemies of that empire only a few years ago have now become friends.

(At this point there was an interruption and a movement on the platform to leave. The speech, therefore, ended here abruptly.)

*Mahatma*, pp. 179-84, Edn. 1960

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1. A long piece of cloth worn as lower garment by men in India

## 02. STATEMENT IN THE GREAT TRIAL OF 1922

(18-3-1922)

(The historical trial of Mahatma Gandhi and Shri Shankarlal Ghelabhai Banker, editor, and printer and publisher respectively of *Young India*, on charges under Section 124 A of the Indian Penal Code, was held on Saturday, 18<sup>th</sup> March 1922, before Mr. C.N. Broomfield, I.C.S., District and Sessions Judge, Ahmedabad.

Sir J. T. Strangman, Advocate-General, with Rao Bahadur Girdharlal Uttamram, Public Prosecutor of Ahmedabad, appeared for the Crown. Mr. A. C. Wild, Remembrance of Legal Affairs, was also present, Mahatma Gandhi and Shri Shankarlal Banker were undefended.

Among the members of the public who were present on the occasion were: Kasturba Gandhi, Sarojini Naidu, Pandit M. M. Malaviya, Shri N. C. Kelkar, Smt. J. B. Petit, and Smt. Anasuyababen Sarabhai.

The Judge, who took his seat at 12 noon, said that there was slight mistake in the charges framed, which he corrected. The charges were then read out by the Registrar. These charges were of "bringing or attempting to bring into hatred or contempt or exciting or attempting to excite disaffection towards His Majesty's Government established by law in British India, and thereby committing offences punishable under Section 124 A of the Indian Penal Code," the offences being in three articles published in *Young India* of September 29 and December 15 of 1921, and February 23 of 1922. The offending articles were then read out: first of them was, "Tampering with Loyalty"; and second, "The Puzzle and its Solution", and the last was "Shaking the Manes".

The Judge said that the law required that the charges should not only be read out but explained. In this case it would not be necessary for him to say much by way of explanation. The charge in each case was that of bringing or attempting to bring into hatred or contempt or exciting or attempting to excite disaffection towards His Majesty's Government, established by law in British India. Both the

accused were charged with the three offences under Section 124 A, contained in the articles read out, written by Mahatma Gandhi and printed by Shri Banker.

The charges having been read out, the Judge called upon the accused to plead to the charges. He asked Gandhiji whether he pleaded guilty or claimed to be tried.

Gandhiji said: "I plead guilty to all the charges. I observe that the King's name has been omitted from the charge, and it has been properly omitted."

The Judge asked Shri Banker the same question and he too readily pleaded guilty.

The Judge wished to give his verdict immediately after Gandhiji had pleaded guilty, but Sir Strangman insisted that the procedure should be carried out in full. The Advocate-General requested the Judge to take into account "the occurrences in Bombay, Malabar and Chauri Chaura, leading to rioting and murder". He admitted, indeed, that "in these articles you find that non-violence is insisted upon as an item of the campaign and of the creed," but he added "of what value is it to insist on non-violence, if incessantly you preach disaffection towards the Government and hold it up as a treacherous Government, and if you openly and deliberately seek to instigate others to overthrow it?" These were the circumstances which he asked the Judge to take into account in passing sentence on the accused.

As regards Shri Banker, the second accused, the offence was lesser. He did the publication but did not write. Sir Strangman's instructions were that Shri Banker was a man of means and he requested the court to impose a substantial fine in addition to such term of imprisonment as might be inflicted upon.

Court: Mr. Gandhi, do you wish to make any statement on the question of sentence?

Gandhiji: I would like to make a statement.

Court: Could you give me in writing to put it on record?

Gandhiji: I shall give it as soon as I finish it.

Gandhiji then made the following oral statement followed by a written statement that he read.

**Before** I read this statement I would like to state that I entirely endorse the learned Advocate-General's remarks in connection with my humble self. I think that he was entirely fair to me in all the statements that he has made, because it is very true and I have no desire whatsoever to conceal from this court the fact that to preach disaffection towards the existing system of Government has become almost a passion with me, and the Advocate-General is entirely in the right when he says that my preaching of disaffection did not commence with my connection with *Young India* but that it commenced much earlier, and in the statement that I am about to read, it will be my painful duty to admit before this court that it commenced much earlier than the period stated by the Advocate-General. It is a painful duty with me but I have to discharge that duty knowing the responsibility that rests upon my shoulders, and I wish to endorse all the blame that the learned Advocate-General has thrown on my shoulders in connection with the Bombay occurrences, Madras occurrences and the Chauri Chaura occurrences. Thinking over these things deeply and sleeping over them night after night, it is impossible for me to dissociate myself from the diabolical crimes of Chauri Chaura or the mad outrages of Bombay. He is quite right when he says, that as a man of responsibility, a man having received a fair share of education, having had a fair share of experience of this world, I should have known the consequences of every one of my acts. I know them. I knew that I was playing with fire. I ran the risk and if I was set free I would still do the same. I have felt it this morning that I would have failed in my duty, if I did not say what I said here just now.

I wanted to avoid violence. Non-violence is the first article of my faith. It is also the last article of my creed. But I had to make my choice. I had either to submit to a system which I considered had done an irreparable harm to my country, or incur the risk of the mad fury of my people bursting forth when they understood the truth from my lips. I know that my people have sometimes gone mad. I am deeply sorry for it and I am, therefore, here to submit not to a light penalty but

to the highest penalty. I do not ask for mercy. I do not plead any extenuating act. I am here, therefore, to invite and cheerfully submit to the highest penalty that can be inflicted upon me for what in law is a deliberate crime, and what appears to me to be the highest duty of a citizen. The only course open to you, the Judge, is, as I am going to say in my statement, either to resign your post, or inflict on me the severest penalty if you believe that the system and law you are assisting to administer are good for the people. I do not expect that kind of conversion. But by the time I have finished with my statement you will have a glimpse of what is raging within my breast to run this maddest risk which a sane man can run.

[He then read out the written statement:]

I owe it perhaps to the Indian public and to the public in England, to placate which this prosecution is mainly taken up, that I should explain why from a staunch loyalist and co-operator, I have become an uncompromising disaffectionist and non-co-operator. To the court too I should say why I plead guilty to the charge of promoting disaffection towards the Government established by law in India.

My public life began in 1893 in South Africa in troubled weather. My first contact with British authority in that country was not of a happy character. I discovered that as a man and an Indian, I had no rights. More correctly I discovered that I had no rights as a man because I was an Indian.

But I was not baffled. I thought that this treatment of Indians was an excrescence upon a system that was intrinsically and mainly good. I gave the Government my voluntary and hearty co-operation, criticizing it freely where I felt it was faulty but never wishing its destruction.

Consequently when the existence of the Empire was threatened in 1899 by the Boer challenge, I offered my services to it, raised a volunteer ambulance corps and served at several actions that took place for the relief of Ladysmith. Similarly in 1906, at the time of the Zulu 'revolt', I raised a stretcher bearer party and served till the end of the 'rebellion'. On the both occasions I received medals and was even mentioned in despatches. For my work in South Africa I was given

by Lord Hardinge a Kaisar-i-Hind gold medal. When the war broke out in 1914 between England and Germany, I raised a volunteer ambulance corps in London, consisting of the then resident Indians in London, chiefly students. Its work was acknowledged by the authorities to be valuable. Lastly, in India when a special appeal was made at the War Conference in Delhi in 1918 by Lord Chelmsford for recruits, I struggled at the cost of my health to raise a corps in Kheda, and the response was being made when the hostilities ceased and orders were received that no more recruits were wanted. In all these efforts at service, I was actuated by the belief that it was possible by such services to gain a status of full equality in the Empire for my countrymen.

The first shock came in the shape of the Rowlatt Act—a law designed to rob the people of all real freedom. I felt called upon to lead an intensive agitation against it. Then followed the Punjab horrors beginning with the massacre at Jallianwala Bagh and culminating in crawling orders, public floggings and other indescribable humiliations. I discovered too that the plighted word of the Prime Minister to the Musalmans of India regarding the integrity of Turkey and the holy places of Islam was not likely to be fulfilled. But in spite of the forebodings and the grave warnings of friends, at the Amritsar Congress in 1919, I fought for co-operation and working of the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms, hoping that the Prime Minister would redeem his promise to the Indian Musalmans, that the Punjab wound would be healed, and that the reforms, inadequate and unsatisfactory though they were, marked a new era of hope in the life of India.

But all that hope was shattered. The Khilafat promise was not be redeemed. The Punjab crime was whitewashed and most culprits went not only unpunished but remained in service, and some continued to draw pensions from the Indian revenue and in some cases were even rewarded. I saw too that not only did the reforms not mark a change of heart, but they were only a method of further draining India of her wealth and of prolonging her servitude.

I came reluctantly to the conclusion that the British connection had made India more helpless than she ever was before, politically and economically. A disarmed India has no power of resistance against any aggressor if she wanted to engage,

in an armed conflict with him. So much is this the case that some of our best men consider that India must take generations, before she can achieve Dominion Status. She has become so poor that she has little power of resisting famines. Before the British advent India spun and wove in her millions of cottages, just the supplement she needed for adding to her meagre agricultural resources. This cottage industry, so vital for India's existence, has been ruined by incredibly heartless and inhuman processes as described by English witnesses. Little do town dwellers know how the semi-starved masses of India are slowly sinking to lifelessness. Little do they know that their miserable comfort represents the brokerage they get for their work they do for the foreign exploiter, that the profits and the brokerage are sucked from the masses. Little do they realize that the Government established by law in British India is carried on for this exploitation of the masses. No sophistry, no jugglery in figures, can explain away the evidence that the skeletons in many villages present to the naked eye. I have no doubt whatsoever that both England and the town dwellers of India will have to answer, if there is a God above, for this crime against humanity, which is perhaps unequalled in history. The law itself in this country has been used to serve the foreign exploiter. My unbiased examination of the Punjab Martial Law cases has led me to believe that at least ninety-five per cent of convictions were wholly bad. My experience of political cases in India leads me to the conclusion, in nine out of every ten, the condemned men were totally innocent. Their crime consisted in the love of their country. In ninety-nine cases out of hundred, justice has been denied to Indians as against Europeans in the courts of India. This is not an exaggerated picture. It is the experience of almost every Indian who has had anything to do with such cases. In my opinion, the administration of the law is thus prostituted, consciously or unconsciously, for the benefit of the exploiter.

The greater misfortune is that Englishmen and their Indian associates in the administration of the country do not know that they are engaged in the crime I have attempted to describe. I am satisfied that many Englishmen and Indian officials honestly believe that they are administering one of the best systems devised in the world, and that India is making steady, though, slow progress. They do not know, a subtle but effective system of terrorism and an organized

display of force on the one hand, and the deprivation of all powers of retaliation or self-defence on the other, has emasculated the people and induced in them the habit of simulation. This awful habit has added to the ignorance and the self-deception of the administrators. Section 124 A, under which I am happily charged, is perhaps the prince among the political sections of the Indian Penal Code designed to suppress the liberty of the citizen. Affection cannot be manufactured or regulated by law. If one has no affection for a person or system, one should be free to give the fullest expression to his disaffection, so long as he does not contemplate, promote, or incite to violence. But the section under which Mr. Banker and I are charged is one under which mere promotion of disaffection is a crime. I have studied some of the cases tried under it, I know that some of the most loved of India's patriots have been convicted under it. I consider it a privilege, therefore, to be charged under that section. I have endeavoured to give in their briefest outline the reasons for my disaffection. I have no personal ill-will against any single administrator, much less can I have any disaffection towards the King's person. But I hold it to be a virtue to be disaffected towards a Government which in its totality has done more harm to India than any previous system. India is less manly under the British rule than she ever was before. Holding such a belief, I consider it to be a sin to have affection for the system. And it has been a precious privilege for me to be able to write what I have in the various articles tendered in evidence against me.

In fact, I believe that I have rendered a service to India and England by showing in non-co-operation the way out of the unnatural state in which both are living. In my opinion, non-co-operation with evil is as much a duty as is co-operation with good. But in the past, non-co-operation has been deliberately expressed in violence to the evil-doer. I am endeavouring to show to my countrymen that violent non-co-operation only multiplies evil, and that as evil can only be sustained by violence, withdrawal of support of evil requires complete abstention from violence. Non-violence implies voluntary submission to the penalty for non-co-operation with evil. I am here, therefore, to invite and submit cheerfully to the highest penalty that can be inflicted upon me for what in law is deliberate crime, and what appears to me to be the highest duty of a citizen. The only

course open to you, the judge and the assessors, is either to resign your posts and thus dissociate yourselves from evil, if you feel that the law you are called upon to administer is an evil, and that in reality I am innocent, or to inflict on me the severest penalty, if you believe that the system and the law you are assisting to administer are good for the people of this country, and that my activity is, therefore, injurious to the common weal.

*Mahatma*, Vol. II, (1951) pp. 129-33

### 03. ON THE EVE OF HISTORIC DANDI MARCH

(11-3-1930)

[On the 11<sup>th</sup> March 1930, the crowd swelled to 10,000 at the evening prayer held on the Sabarmati sands at the Ahmedabad. At the end, Gandhiji delivered a memorable speech on the eve of his historic march:]

In all probability this will be my last speech to you. Even if the Government allow me to march tomorrow morning, this will be my last speech on the sacred banks of the Sabarmati. Possibly these may be the last words of my life here.

I have already told you yesterday what I had to say. Today I shall confine myself to what you should do after my companions and I are arrested. The programme of the march to Jalalpur must be fulfilled as originally settled. The enlistment of the volunteers for this purpose should be confined to Gujarat only. From what I have seen and heard during the last fortnight. I am inclined to believe that the stream of civil resisters will flow unbroken.

But let there be not a semblance of breach of peace even after all of us have been arrested. We have resolved to utilize all our resources in the pursuit of an exclusively non-violent struggle. Let no one commit a wrong in anger. This is my hope and prayer. I wish these words of mine reached every nook and corner of the land. My task shall be done if I perish and so do my comrades. It will then be for the Working Committee of the Congress to show you the way and it will be up to you to follow its lead. So long as I have not reached Jalalpur, let nothing be done in contravention to the authority vested in me by the Congress. But once I am arrested, the whole responsibility shifts to the Congress. No one who believes in non-violence, as a creed, need, therefore, sit still. My compact with the Congress ends as soon as I am arrested. In that case there should be no slackness in the enrolment of volunteers. Wherever possible, civil disobedience of salt laws should be started. These laws can be violated in three ways. It is an offence to manufacture salt wherever there are facilities for doing so. The possession and sale of contraband salt, which includes natural salt or salt earth,

is also an offence. The purchase of such salt will be equally guilty. To carry away the natural salt deposits on the seashore is likewise violation of law. So is the hawking of such salt. In short, you may choose any one or all of these devices to break the salt monopoly.

We are, however, not to be content with this alone. There is no ban by the Congress and wherever the local workers have self-confidence, other suitable measures may be adopted. I stress only one condition, namely, let our pledge of truth and non-violence as the only means for the attainment of *Swaraj* be faithfully kept. For the rest, everyone has a free hand. But, that does not give a license to all and sundry to carry on their own responsibility. Wherever there are local leaders, their orders should be obeyed by the people. Where there are no leaders and only a handful of men have faith in the programme, they may do what they can, if they have enough self-confidence. They have a right, nay it is their duty, to do so. The history of the world is full of instances of men who rose to leadership, by sheer force of self-confidence, bravery and tenacity. We too, if we sincerely aspire to *Swaraj* and are impatient to attain it, should have similar self-confidence. Our ranks will swell and our hearts strengthen, as the number of our arrests by the Government increases.

Much can be done in many other ways besides these. The liquor and foreign cloth shops can be picketed. We can refuse to pay taxes if we have the requisite strength. The lawyers can give up practice. The public can boycott the law courts by refraining from litigation. Government servants can resign their posts. In the midst of the despair reigning all round people quake with fear of losing employment. Such men are unfit for *Swaraj*. But why this despair? The number of Government servants in the country does not exceed a few hundred thousand. What about the rest? Where are they to go? Even free India will not be able to accommodate a greater number of public servants. A Collector then will not need the number of servants, he has got today. He will be his own servant. Our starving millions can by no means afford this enormous expenditure. If, therefore, we are sensible enough, let us bid good-bye to Government employment, no matter if it is the post of a judge or a peon. Let all who are co-operating with the

Government in one way or another, be it by paying taxes, keeping titles, or sending children to official schools, etc. withdraw their co-operation in all or as many ways as possible. Then there are women who can stand shoulder to shoulder with men in this struggle.

You may take it as my will. It was the message that I desired to impart to you before starting on the march or for the jail. I wish that there should be no suspension or abandonment of the war that commences tomorrow morning or earlier, if I am arrested before that time. I shall eagerly await the news that ten batches are ready as soon as my batch is arrested. I believe there are men in India to complete the work begun by me. I have faith in the righteousness of our cause and the purity of our weapons. And where the means are clean, there God is undoubtedly present with His blessings. And where these three combine, there defeat is an impossibility. A *Satyagrahi*, whether free or incarcerated, is ever victorious. He is vanquished only, when he forsakes truth and non-violence and turns a deaf ear to the inner voice. If, therefore, there is such a thing as defeat for even a *Satyagrahi*, he alone is the cause of it. God bless you all and keep off all obstacles from the path in the struggle that begins tomorrow.

*Mahatma*, Vol. III (1952), pp. 28-30

## 04. SPEECH AT THE ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE

(30-11-1931)

[The following is the text of the speech that Mahatma Gandhi delivered at the plenary session of the Round Table Conference in London on November 30, 1931.]

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### Rule of Majority

I do not think that anything that I can say this evening can possibly influence the decision of the Cabinet. Probably the decision has been already taken. Matters of liberty of practically a whole Continent can hardly be decided by mere argumentation, or even negotiation. Negotiation has its purpose and has its play, but only under certain conditions. Without those conditions, negotiations are a fruitless task. But I do not want to go into all these matters. I want as far as possible to confine myself within the four corners of the conditions that you, Prime Minister, read to this Conference at its opening meeting. I would, therefore, first of all say a few words in connection with the Reports that have been submitted to this Conference. You will find in these Reports that generally it has been stated that such and such is the opinion of a large majority, some, however, have expressed an opinion to the contrary, and so on. Parties who have dissented have not been stated. I had heard when I was in India, and I was told when I came here, that no decision or decisions will be taken by the ordinary rule of majority, and I do not want to mention this fact here by way of complaint that the Reports have been so framed as if the proceedings were governed by the test of majority.

But it was necessary for me to mention this fact, because to most of these Reports you will find that there is a dissenting opinion, and in most of the cases that dissent unfortunately happens to belong to me. It was not a matter of joy to have to dissent from fellow delegates. But I felt that I could not truly represent the Congress unless I notified that dissent.

There is another thing which I want to bring to the notice of this Conference, namely, what is the meaning of the dissent of the Congress? I said at one of the preliminary meetings of the Federal Structure committee that the Congress claimed to represent over 85 percent of the population of India, that is to say the dumb, toiling, semi-starved millions. But I went further that the Congress claimed also, by right of service, to represent even the Princes, if they would pardon my putting forth that claim, and the landed gentry, and the educated class. I wish to repeat that claim and I wish this evening to emphasize that claim.

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### Congress Represents India

All the other Parties at this meeting represent sectional interests. Congress alone claims to represent the whole of India and all interests. It is no communal organization; it is a determined enemy of communalism in any shape or form. Congress knows no distinction of race, color or creed; its platform is universal. It may not always have lived up to the creed. I do not know a single human organization that lives up to its creed. Congress has failed very often to my knowledge. It may have failed more often to the knowledge of its critics. But the worst critic will have to recognize, as it has been recognized, that the Indian National Congress is a daily growing organization, that its message penetrates the remotest village of India, that on given occasions the Congress has been able to demonstrate its influence over and among these masses who inhabit its 700,000 villages.

And yet, here I see that the Congress is treated as one of the Parties. I do not mind it; I do not regard it a calamity for the Congress, but I do regard it as a calamity for the purpose of doing the work for which we have gathered together here. I wish I could convince all the British public men, the British Ministers, that the Congress is capable of delivering the goods. The Congress is the only all-India wide national organization, bereft of any communal bias: that it does represent all minorities which have lodged their claim—I hold unjustifiably—to represent 46 percent of the population of India. The Congress, I say, claims to represent all these minorities.

What a great difference it would be today if this claim on behalf of the Congress was recognized. I feel that I have to state this claim with some degree of emphasis on behalf of peace, for the sake of achieving the purpose which is common to all of us, to you Englishmen who sit at this Table and to us the Indian men and women who also sit at this Table. I say so for this reason: Congress is a powerful organization: Congress is an organization which has been accused of running or desiring to run a parallel Government; and in a way I have endorsed the charge. If you could understand the working of the Congress you would welcome an organization which could run a parallel Government and show that it is possible for an organization, voluntary, without any force at its command, to run the machinery of Government even under adverse circumstances.

But no. Although you have invited the Congress, you distrust the Congress. Although you have invited the Congress, you reject its claim to represent the whole of India. Of course it is possible at this end of the world to dispute that claim, and it is not possible for me to prove this claim; but, all the same, if you find me asserting that claim, I do so because a tremendous responsibility rests upon my shoulders.

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### **The Way of Negotiation**

The Congress represents the spirit of rebellion. I know that the word 'rebellion' must not be whispered at a Conference which has been summoned in order to arrive at an agreed solutions of India's troubles through negotiation. Speaker after speaker has got up and said that India should achieve her liberty through negotiation, by argument, and that it will be the greatest glory of Great Britain if Great Britain yields to India's demands by argument. But the Congress does not hold quite that view. The Congress has an alternative which is unpleasant to you.

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### **The Old Way**

I heard several speakers—I have tried to follow every speaker with the utmost attention and with all the respect that I could possibly give to these speakers—saying what a dire calamity it would be if India was fired with the spirit of

lawlessness, rebellion, terrorism and so on. I do not pretend to have read history, but as a schoolboy I had to pass a paper in history also, and I read that the page of history is soiled red with the blood of those who have fought for freedom. I do not know an instance in which nations have attained their own without having to go through an incredible measure of travail. The dagger of the assassin, the poison bowl, the bullet of the rifleman, the spear and all these weapons and methods of destruction have been up to now used by, what I consider, blind lovers of liberty and freedom. And the historian has not condemned them. I hold no brief for the terrorists. Mr. Ghuznavi brought in the terrorists and he brought in the Calcutta Corporation. I felt hurt when he mentioned an incident that took place at the Calcutta Corporation. He forgot to mention that the Mayor of that Corporation made handsome reparation for the error into which he himself was betrayed, and the error into which the Calcutta Corporation was betrayed, through the instrumentality of those members of the Corporation who were Congressmen.

I hold no brief for Congressmen who directly or indirectly would encourage terrorism. As soon as this incident was brought to the notice of the Congress, the Congress set about putting it in order. It immediately called upon the Mayor of the Calcutta Corporation to give an account of what was done and the Mayor, the gentleman that he is, immediately admitted his mistake and made all the reparation that it was then legally possible to make. I must not detain this Assembly over this incident for any length of time. He mentioned also a verse which the children of the forty schools conducted by the Calcutta Corporation are supposed to have recited. There were many other mix-statements in that speech which I could dwell upon, but I have no desire to do so. It is only out of regard for the great Calcutta Corporation, and out of regard for truth, and on behalf of those who are not here tonight to put in their defence, that I mention these two glaring instances. I do not for one moment believe that this was taught in the Calcutta Corporation schools with the knowledge of the Calcutta Corporation. I do know that in those terrible days of last year several things were done for which we have regret, for which we have made reparation.

If our boys in Calcutta were taught those verses which Mr. Ghuznavi has recited, I am here to tender an apology on their behalf, but I should want it proved that the boys were taught by the schoolmasters of these schools with the knowledge and encouragement of the Corporation. Charges of this nature have been brought against Congress times without number, and times without number these charges have also been refuted, but if I have mentioned these things at this juncture, it is again to show that for the sake of liberty people have fought, people have lost their lives, people have killed and have sought death at the hands of those whom they have sought to oust.

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### **The New Way**

The Congress then comes upon the scene and devises a new method not known to history, namely, that of civil disobedience, and the Congress has been following up that method. But again, I am up against a stone wall and I am told that that is a method that no government in the world will tolerate. Well, of course, the Government may not tolerate, no Government has tolerated open rebellion. No Government may tolerate civil disobedience, but Governments have to succumb even to these forces, as the British Government has done before now, even as the great Dutch Government after eight years of trial had to yield to the logic of facts. General Smuts, a brave general a great statesman, and a very hard taskmaster also, but he himself recoiled with horror from even the contemplation of doing to death innocent men and women who were merely fighting for the preservation of their self-respect. Things which he had vowed he would never yield in the year 1908, reinforced as he was by General Botha, he had to do in the year 1914, after having tried these civil resisters through and through. And in India, Lord Chelmsford had to do the same thing: the Governor of Bombay had to do the same thing in Borsad and Bardoli. I suggest to you, Prime Minister, it is too late today to resist this, and it is this thing which weighs me down, this choice that lies before them, the parting of the ways probably. I shall hope against hope, I shall strain every nerve to achieve an honourable settlement for my country, if I can do so without having to put the millions of my countrymen

and countrywomen, and even children, through this ordeal of fire. It can be matter of no joy and comfort to me to lead them again to a fight of that character, but, if a further ordeal of fire has to be our lot, I shall approach that with the greatest joy and with the greatest consolation that I was doing what I felt to be right, the country was doing what it felt to be right, and the country will have the additional satisfaction of knowing that it was not at least taking lives, it was giving lives: It was not making the British people directly suffer, it was suffering. Professor Gilbert Murray told me—I shall never forget that, I am paraphrasing his inimitable language—“Do you not consider for one moment that we Englishmen do not suffer when thousands of your countrymen suffer, that we are so heartless?” I do not think so. I do know that you will suffer but I want you to suffer because I want to touch your hearts; and when your hearts have been touched then will come the psychological moment for negotiation. Negotiation there always will be; and if this time I have travelled all these miles in order to enter upon negotiation, I thought that your countrymen, Lord Irwin, had sufficiently tried us through his ordinances, that he had sufficient evidence that thousands of men and women of India and thousands of children had suffered; and that, ordinance or no ordinance, *lathis*<sup>1</sup> or no *lathis*, nothing would avail to stem the tide that was onrushing and to stem the passions that were rising in the breasts of the men and women of India who were thirsting for liberty.

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### The Price

Whilst there is yet a little sand left in the glass, I want you to understand what this Congress stands for. My life is at your disposal. The lives of all the members of the Working Committee, the All-India Congress Committee, are at your disposal. But remember that you have at your disposal the lives of all these dump millions. I do not want to sacrifice those lives if I can possibly help it. Therefore, please remember, that I will count no sacrifice too great if, by chance, I can pull through an honourable settlement. You will find me always having the greatest spirit of compromise if I can but fire you with the spirit that is working in the Congress, namely, that India must have real liberty. Call it by any name you like;

a rose will smell as sweet by any other name, but it must be the rose of liberty that I want and not the artificial product. If your mind and the Congress mind, the mind of this Conference and the mind of the British people, means the same thing by the same word, then you will find the amplest room for compromise, and you will find the Congress itself always in a compromising spirit. But so long as there is not that one mind, that one definition, not one implication for the same word that you and I and we may be using, there is no compromise possible. How can there be any compromise when we each one of us has a different definition for the same words that we may be using. It is impossible, Prime Minister, I want to suggest to you in all humility, that it is utterly impossible then to find a meeting ground, to find a ground where you can apply the spirit to compromise. And I am very grieved to have to say up to now I have not been able to discover a common definition for the terms that we have been exchanging during all these weary weeks.

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### Our Goal

I was shown last week the Statute of Westminster by a sceptic, and he said, "Have you seen the definition of Dominion?" I read the definition of "Dominion" and naturally I was not at all perplexed or shocked to see that the word "Dominion" was exhaustively defined and it had not a general definition but a particular definition. It simply said: the word 'Dominion' shall include Australia, South Africa, Canada and so on ending with the Irish Free State. I do not think I noticed Egypt there. Then he said, "Do you see what your Dominion means?" It did not make any impression upon me. I do not mind what my Dominion means or what complete independence means. In a way I was relieved.

I said, I am now relieved from having to quarrel about the word 'Dominion', because I am out of it. But I want complete independence, and even so, so many Englishmen have said, "Yes, you can have complete independence, but what is the meaning of complete independence?", and again we come to different definitions.

One of your great statesmen was debating with me, and said: "Honestly I did not know that you meant this by complete independence." He ought to have known but he did not know, and I shall tell you what he did not know. When I said to him: "I cannot be a partner in an Empire", he said: "Of course, that is logical." I replied: "But I want to become that. It is not as if I shall be if I am compelled to, but I want to become a partner with Great Britain. I want to become a partner with the English people; but I want to enjoy precisely the same liberty that your people enjoy, and I want to seek this partnership not merely for the benefit of India, and not merely for mutual benefit; I want to seek partnership in order that the great weight that is crushing the world to atoms may be lifted from its shoulders."

This took place ten or twelve days ago. Strange as it may appear, I got a note from another Englishman, whom also you know, and whom also you respect. Among many things, he writes: "I believe profoundly that the peace and happiness of mankind depend on our friendship"; and, as If I would not understand that, he says: "Your people and mine." I must read to you what he also says: "And of all Indians you are the one that the real Englishman likes and understands."

He does not waste any words on flattery, and I do not think he has intended this last expression to flatter me. It will not flatter me in the slightest degree. There are many things in this note which, if I could share them with you, would perhaps make you understand better the significance of this expression, but let me tell you that when he writes this last sentence he does not mean me personally. I personally signify nothing, and I know I would mean nothing to any single Englishman; but I mean something to some Englishmen because I represent a cause, because I seek to represent a nation, a great organization which has made itself felt. That is the reason why he says this.

But then, if I could possibly find that working basis, Prime Minister, there is ample room for compromise. It is for friendship I crave. My business is not to throw overboard the slave-holder and tyrant. My philosophy forbids me to do so, and today the Congress has accepted that philosophy, not as a creed, as it is to me,

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but as a policy, because the Congress believes that is the right and the best thing for India, a nation of 350 million to do.

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### Our Weapon

A nation of 350 million people does not need the dagger of the assassin, it does not need the poison bowl, it does not need the sword, the spear or the bullet. It needs simply a will of its own, an ability to say 'no' and that nation is today learning to say 'no'.

But what is it that that nation does? To summarily, or at all, dismiss Englishmen? No. Its mission is today to convert Englishmen. I do not want to break the bond between England and India, but I do want to transform that bond. I want to transform that slavery into complete freedom for my country. Call it complete independence or whatever you like, I will not quarrel about that word, and even though my countrymen may dispute with me for having taken some other word, I shall able to bear down that opposition so long as the content of the word that you may suggest to me bears the same meaning. Hence, I have times without number to urge upon your attention that the safeguards that have been suggested are completely unsatisfactory. They are not in the interests of India.

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### Financial Cramp

Three experts from Federation of Commerce and Industry have, in their own way, each in his different manner, told out of their expert experiences how utterly impossible it is for anybody of responsible Ministers to tackle the problem of administration when 30 percent of her resources are mortgaged irretrievably. Better than I could have shown to you, they have shown out of the amplitude of their knowledge what these financial safeguards mean for India. These mean the complete cramping of India. They have discussed at this Table financial safeguards but that includes necessarily the question of Defence and the question of the Army. Yet while I say that the safeguards are unsatisfactory as they have been presented, I have not hesitated to say, and I do not hesitate to repeat that

the Congress is pledged to giving safeguards, endorsing safeguards which may be demonstrated to be in the interests of India.

At one of the sittings of the Federal Structure Committee I had no hesitation in amplifying the admission and saying that those safeguards must be also of benefit to Great Britain. I do not want safeguards which are merely beneficial to India and prejudicial to the real interests of Great Britain. The fancied interests of India will have to be sacrificed. The fancied interests of Great Britain will have to be sacrificed. The illegitimate interests of India will have to be sacrificed. The illegitimate interests of Great Britain will also have to be sacrificed. Therefore, again I repeat, if we have the same meaning for the same word, I will agree with Mr. Jayakar, with Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and other distinguished speakers who have spoken at this Conference.

I will agree with them all that we have, after all these labours, reached a substantial measure of agreement, but my despair, my grief, is that I do not read the same words in the same light. The implications of the safeguards of Mr. Jayakar, I very much fear, are different from my implications, and the implications of Mr. Jayakar and myself are perhaps only different from the implications that Sir Samuel Hoare, for instance, has in mind; I do not know. We have never really come to grips. We have never got down to brass tacks, as you put it, and I am anxious—I have been pining—to come to real grips and to get down to brass tacks all these days and all these nights, and I have felt: why are not we not coming nearer and nearer together, and why are we wasting our time in eloquence, in oratory, in debating, and in scoring points? Heaven knows, I have no desire to hear my own voice. Heaven knows, I have no desire to take part in any debating. I know that liberty is made of sterner stuff, and I know that the freedom of India is made of much sterner stuff. We have problems that would baffle any statesman. We have problems that other nations have not to tackle. But they do not baffle me; they cannot baffle those who have been brought up in the Indian climate. Those problems are there with us. Just as we have to tackle bubonic plague, we have to tackle the problem of malaria. We have to tackle, as

you have not, the problem of snakes and scorpions, monkeys, tigers and lions. We have to tackle these problems because we have been brought up under them.

They do not baffle us. Somehow or other we have survived the ravages of these venomous reptiles and various creatures. So also shall we survive our problems and find a way out of those problems. But today you and we have come together at a Round Table and we want to find a common formula which will work. Please believe me that whilst I abate not a little of the claim that I have registered on behalf of the Congress, which I do not propose to repeat here, while I withdraw not one word of the speeches that I had to make at the Federal Structure Committee, I am here to compromise; I am here to consider every formula that British ingenuity can prepare, every formula that the ingenuity of such constitutionalists as Mr. Sastri, Dr. Tej Bahadur Sapru, Mr. Jayakar, Mr. Jinnah, Sir Muhammad Shafi and a host of others can weave into being.

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### **Mutual Trust**

I will not be baffled. I shall be here as long as I am required because I do not want to revive civil disobedience. I want to turn the truce that was arrived at in Delhi into a permanent settlement. But for heaven's sake give me, a frail man 62 years gone, a little bit of a chance. Find a little corner for him and the organization that he represents. You distrust that organization though you may seemingly trust me. Not for one moment differentiate me from the organization of which I am but a drop in the ocean. I am no greater than the organization to which I belong. I am infinitely smaller than that organization; and if you find me a place, if you trust me, I invite you to trust the Congress also. Your trust in me otherwise is a broken reed. I have no authority save what I derive from the Congress. If you will work the Congress for all it is worth, then you will say goodbye to terrorism; then you will not need terrorism. Today you have to fight the school of terrorists which is there with your disciplined and organized terrorism, because you will be blind to the facts or the writing on the wall. Will you not see the writing that these terrorists are writing with their blood? Will you not see that we do not want bread of wheat, but we want the bread of liberty; and

without that liberty there are thousands today who are sworn not to give themselves peace or to give the country peace.

I urge you then to read that writing on the wall. I ask you not to try the patience of a people known to be proverbially patient. We speak of the mild Hindu, and the Musalman also by contact good or evil with the Hindu has himself become mild. And the mention of the Musalman brings me to the baffling problem of minorities. Believe me, that problem exists here, and I repeat what I used to say in India—I have not forgotten those words—that without the problem of minorities being solved there is no *Swaraj* for India, there is no freedom for India. I know and I realize it; and yet I came here in the hope ‘perchance’ that I might be able to pull through a solution here. But I do not despair of some day or other finding a real and living solution in connection with the minorities’ problem. I repeat what I have said elsewhere that so long as the wedge in the shape of foreign rule divides community from community and class from class, there will be no real living solution, there will be no living friendship between these communities.

It will be after all and at best a paper solution. But immediately you withdraw that wedge, the domestic ties, the domestic affections, the knowledge of common birth—do you suppose that all these will count for nothing?

Were Hindus and Musalmans and Sikhs always at war with one another when there was no British rule, when there was no English face seen there? We have chapter and verse given to us by Hindu historians and by Musalman historians to say that we were living in comparative peace even then. And Hindus and Musalmans in the villages are not even today quarrelling. In those days they were not known to quarrel at all. The late Maulana Muhammad Ali often used to tell me, and he was himself a bit of an historian. He said: ‘If God’—‘Allah’ as he called out—‘gives me life, I propose to write the history of Musalman rule in India; and then I will show, through documents that British people have preserved, that Aurangzeb was not so vile as he has been painted by the British historian; that the Mogul rule was not so bad as it has been shown to us in British History; and so on. And so have Hindu historians written. This quarrel is not old; this quarrel is coeval with this acute shame. I dare to say, it is coeval with the British advent, and

immediately this relationship, the unfortunate, artificial, unnatural relationship between Great Britain and India is transformed into a natural relationship, when it becomes, if it does become, a voluntary partnership to be given up, to be dissolved at the will of either party, when it becomes that you will find that Hindus and Musalmans, Sikhs, Europeans, Anglo-Indians, Christians, Untouchables, will all live together as one man.

I do not intend to say much tonight about the Princes, but I should be wronging them and should be wronging the congress if I did not register my claim, not with the Round Table conference but with the Princes. It is open to the Princes to give their terms on which they will join the Federation. I have appealed to them to make the path easy for those who inhabit the other part of India, and therefore, I can only make these suggestions for their favourable consideration, for their earnest consideration. I think that if they accepted, no matter what they are, but some fundamental rights as the common property of all India, and if they accepted that position and allowed those rights to be tested by the Court, which will be again of their own creation, and if they introduced elements—only elements—of representation on behalf of their subjects, I think that they would have gone a long way to conciliate their subjects. They would have gone a long way to show to the world and to show to the whole of India that they are also fired with a democratic spirit, that they do not want to remain undiluted autocrats, but that they want to become constitutional monarchs even as King George of Great Britain is.

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### An autonomous Frontier Province

Let India get what she is entitled to and what she can really take, but whatever she gets, and whenever she gets it, let the Frontier Province get complete autonomy today. That Frontier will then be a standing demonstration to the whole of India, and therefore, the whole vote of the Congress will be given in favour of the Frontier Province getting Provincial Autonomy tomorrow. Prime Minister, if you can possibly get your Cabinet to endorse the proposition that from tomorrow the Frontier Province becomes a full-fledged autonomous

province, I shall then have a proper footing amongst the Frontier tribes and convene them to my assistance when those over the border cast an evil eye on India.

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### Thanks

Last of all, my last is a pleasant task for me. This is perhaps the last time that I shall be sitting with you at negotiations. It is not that I want that. I want to sit at the same table with you in your closets and to negotiate and to plead with you and to go down on bended knees before I take the final lead and final plunge.

But whether I have the good fortune to continue to tender my co-operation or not does not depend upon me. It largely depends upon you. But it may not even depend upon you. It depends upon so many circumstances over which neither you nor we may have any control whatsoever. Then, let me perform this pleasant task of giving my thanks to all from Their Majesties down to the poorest men in the East End where I have taken up my habitation.

In that settlement, which represents the poor people of the East End of London, I have become one of them. They have accepted me as a member, and as a favoured member of their family. It will be one of the richest treasures that I shall carry with me. Here, too, I have found nothing but courtesy and nothing but a genuine affection from all with whom I have come in touch. I have come in touch with so many Englishmen. It has been a priceless privilege to me. They have listened to what must have often appeared to them to be unpleasant, although it was true. Although I have often been obliged to say these things to them they have never shown the slightest impatience or irritation. It is impossible for me to forget these things. No matter what befalls me, no matter what the fortunes may be of this Round Table Conference, one thing I shall certainly carry with me, that is, that from high to low I have found nothing but the utmost courtesy and the utmost affection. I consider that it was well worth my paying this visit to England in order to find this human affection.

It has enhanced, it has deepened my irrepressible faith in human nature that although Englishmen and Englishwomen have been fed upon lies that I see so

often disfiguring your Press, that although in Lancashire, the Lancashire people had perhaps some reason for becoming irritated against me, I found no irritation and no resentment even in the operatives. The operatives, men and women, hugged me. They treated me as one of their own. I shall never forget that.

I am carrying with me thousands upon thousands of English friendships. I do not know them but I read that affection in their eyes as early in the morning I walk through your streets. All this hospitality, all this kindness will never be effaced from my memory, no matter what befalls my unhappy land. I thank you for your forbearance.

*The Nation's Voice* (1958), pp. 74-88

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<sup>1</sup> Staff

## 05. THE 'QUIT INDIA' SPEECHES

(8-8-1942)

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[Gandhi addressed the A. I. C. C. at Bombay on 8-8-'42 outlining his plan of action, in Hindustani, as follow:]

**Before** you discuss the resolution, let me place before you one or two things. I want you to understand two things very clearly and to consider them from the same point of view from which I am placing them before you. I ask you to consider it from my point of view, because if you approve of it, you will be enjoined to carry out all I say. It will be a great responsibility. There are people who ask me whether I am the same man that I was in 1920, or whether there has been any change in me. You are right in asking that question.

Let me, however, hasten to assure that I am the same Gandhi as I was in 1920. I have not changed in any fundamental respect. I attach the same importance to non-violence that I did then. If at all, my emphasis on it has grown stronger. There is no real contradiction between the present resolution and my previous writings and utterances.

Occasions like the present do not occur in everybody's and but rarely in anybody's life. I want you to know and feel that there is nothing but purest *Ahimsa*<sup>1</sup> in all that I am saying and doing today. The draft resolution of the Working Committee is based on *Ahimsa*, the contemplated struggle similarly has its roots in *Ahimsa*. If, therefore, there is any among you who has lost faith in *Ahimsa* or is wearied of it, let him not vote for this resolution.

Let me explain my position clearly. God has vouchsafed to me a priceless gift in the weapon of *Ahimsa*. I and my *Ahimsa* are on our trial today. If in the present crisis, when the earth is being scorched by the flames of *Himsa*<sup>2</sup> and crying for deliverance, I failed to make use of the God given talent, God will not forgive me and I shall be judged unworthy of the great gift. I must act now. I may not hesitate and merely look on, when Russia and China are threatened.

Ours is not drive for power, but purely a non-violent fight for India's independence. In a violent struggle, a successful general has been often known to effect a military coup and to set up a dictatorship. But under the Congress scheme of things, essentially non-violent as it is, there can be no room for dictatorship. A non-violent soldier of freedom will covet nothing for himself, he fights only for the freedom of his country. The Congress is unconcerned as to who will rule, when freedom is attained. The power, when it comes, will belong to the people of India, and it will be for them to decide to whom it should be entrusted. May be that the reins will be placed in the hands of the Parsis, for instance—as I would love to see happen—or they may be handed to some others whose names are not heard in the Congress today. It will not be for you then to object saying, "This community is microscopic. That party did not play its due part in the freedom's struggle; why should it have all the power?" Ever since its inception the Congress has kept itself meticulously free of the communal taint. It has thought always in terms of the whole nation and has acted accordingly....

I know how imperfect our *Ahimsa* is and how far away we are still from the ideal, but in *Ahimsa* there is no final failure or defeat. I have faith, therefore, that if, in spite of our shortcomings, the big thing does happen, it will be because God wanted to help us by crowning with success our silent, unremitting *Sadhana*<sup>3</sup> for the last twenty-two years.

I believe that in the history of the world, there has not been a more genuinely democratic struggle for freedom than ours. I read Carlyle's *French Revolution* while I was in prison, and Pandit Jawaharlal has told me something about the Russian revolution. But it is my conviction that inasmuch as these struggles were fought with the weapon of violence they failed to realize the democratic ideal. In the democracy which I have envisaged, a democracy established by non-violence, there will be equal freedom for all. Everybody will be his own master. It is to join a struggle for such democracy that I invite you today. Once you realize this you will forget the differences between the Hindus and Muslims, and think of yourselves as Indians only, engaged in the common struggle for independence.

Then, there is the question of your attitude towards the British. I have noticed that there is hatred towards the British among the people. The people say they are disgusted with their behaviour. The people make no distinction between British imperialism and the British people. To them, the two are one. This hatred would even make them welcome the Japanese. It is most dangerous. It means that they will exchange one slavery for another. We must get rid of this feeling. Our quarrel is not with the British people, we fight their imperialism. The proposal for the withdrawal of British power did not come out of anger. It came to enable India to play its due part at the present critical juncture. It is not a happy position for a big country like India to be merely helping with money and material obtained willy-nilly from her while the United Nations are conducting the war. We cannot evoke the true spirit of sacrifice and valour, so long as we do not feel that it is our war, so long as we are not free. I know the British Government will not be able to withhold freedom from us, when we have made enough self-sacrifice. We must, therefore, purge ourselves of hatred. Speaking for myself, I can say that I have never felt any hatred. As a matter of fact, I feel myself to be a greater friend of the British now than ever before. One reason is that they are today in distress. My very friendship, therefore, demands that I should try to save them from their mistakes. As I view the situation, they are on the brink of an abyss. It, therefore, becomes my duty to warn them of their danger even though it may, for the time being, anger them to the point of cutting off the friendly hand that is stretched out to help them. People may laugh, nevertheless that is my claim. At a time when I may have to launch the biggest struggle of my life, I may not harbour hatred against anybody.

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<sup>1</sup> Non-violence

<sup>2</sup> Violence

<sup>3</sup> Discipline, practice, persistent effort.

II

[Gandhi's address before the A. I.C. C. at Bombay on 8-8-'42 delivered in Hindustani:]

I congratulate you on the resolution that you have just passed. I also congratulate the three comrades on the courage they have shown in pressing their amendments to a division, even though they knew that there was an overwhelming majority in favour of the resolution, and I congratulate the thirteen friends who voted against the resolution. In doing so, they had nothing to be ashamed of. For the last twenty years we have tried to learn not to lose courage even when we are in a hopeless minority and are laughed at. We have learned to hold on to our beliefs in the confidence that we are in the right. It behoves us to cultivate this courage of conviction, for it ennobles man and raises his moral stature. I was, therefore, glad to see that these friends had imbibed the principle which I have tried to follow for the last fifty years and more.

Having congratulated them on their courage, let me say that what they asked this Committee to accept through their amendments was not the correct representation of the situation. These friends ought to have pondered over the appeal made to them by the Maulana to withdraw their amendments; they should have carefully followed the explanations given by Jawaharlal. Had they done so, it would have been clear to them that the right which they now want the Congress to concede has already been conceded by the Congress.

Time was when every Musalman claimed the whole of India as his motherland. During the years that the Ali brothers were with me, the assumption underlying all their talks and discussions was that India belonged as much to the Muslims as to the Hindus. I can testify to the fact that this was their innermost conviction and not a mask; I lived with them for years. I spent days and nights in their company. And I make bold to say that their utterances were the honest expression of their beliefs. I know there are some who say that I take things too readily at their face value, that I am gullible. I do not think I am such a simpleton, nor am I so gullible as these friends take me to be. But their criticism does not hurt me. I should prefer to be considered gullible rather than deceitful.

What these Communist friends proposed through their amendments is nothing new. It has been repeated from thousands of platforms. Thousands of Musalmans have told me, that if Hindu-Muslim question was to be solved satisfactorily, it must be done in my lifetime. I should feel flattered at this; but how can I agree to a proposal which does not appeal to my reason? Hindu-Muslim unity is not a new thing. Millions of Hindus and Musalmans have sought after it. I consciously strove for its achievement from my boyhood. While at school, I made it a point to cultivate the friendship of Muslim and Parsi co-students. I believed even at that tender age that the Hindus in India, if they wished to live in peace and amity with the whole communities, should assiduously cultivate the virtue of neighbourliness. It did not matter, I felt, if I made no special effort to cultivate the friendship with Hindus, but I must make friends with at least a few Musalmans. It was as counsel for a Musalman merchant that I went to South Africa. I made friends with other Musalmans there, even with the opponents of my client, and gained a reputation for integrity and good faith. I had among my friends and co-workers Muslims as well as Parsis. I captured their hearts and when I left finally for India, I left them sad and shedding tears of grief at the separation.

In India too I continued my efforts and left no stone unturned to achieve that unity. It was my lifelong aspiration for it that made me offer my fullest co-operation to the Musalmans in the Khilafat movement. Muslims throughout the country accepted me as their true friend.

How then is it that I have now come to be regarded as so evil and detestable? Had I any axe to grind in supporting the Khilafat movement? True, I did in my heart of hearts cherish a hope that it might enable me to save the cow. I am a worshipper of the cow. I believe the cow and myself to be the creation of the same God, and I am prepared to sacrifice my life in order to save the cow. But, whatever my philosophy of life and my ultimate hopes, I joined the movement in no spirit of bargain. I co-operated in the struggle for the Khilafat solely in order to discharge my obligation to my neighbour who, I saw, was in distress. The Ali brothers, had they been alive today, would have testified to the truth of this

assertion. And so would many others bear me out in that it was not a bargain on my part for saving the cow. The cow like the Khilafat, stood on her own merits. As an honest man, a true neighbour and a faithful friend, it was incumbent on me to stand by the Musalmans in the hour of their trial.

In those days, I shocked the Hindus by dining with the Musalmans, though with the passage of time they have now got used to it. Maulana Bari told me, however, that though he would insist on having me as his guest, he would not allow me to dine with him, lest some day he should be accused of a sinister motive. And so, whenever I had occasion to stay with him, he called a Brahman cook and made special arrangements for separate cooking. Firangi Mahal, his residence, was an old-styled structure with limited accommodation; yet he cheerfully bore all hardships and carried out his resolve from which I could not dislodge him. It was the spirit of courtesy, dignity and nobility that inspired us in those days. The members of each community vied with one another in accommodating members of sister communities. They respected one another's religious feelings, and considered it a privilege to do so. Not a trace of suspicion lurked in anybody's heart. Where has all that dignity, that nobility of spirit, disappeared now? I should ask all Musalmans, including Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah, to recall those glorious days and to find out what has brought us to the present impasse. Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah himself was at one time a Congressman. If today the Congress has incurred his wrath, it is because the canker of suspicion has entered his heart. May God bless him with long life, but when I am gone, he will realize and admit that I had no designs on Musalmans and that I had never betrayed their interests. Where is the escape for me, if I injure their cause or betray their interests? My life is entirely at their disposal. They are free to put an end to it, whenever they wish to do so. Assaults have been made on my life in the past, but God has spared me till now, and the assailants have repented for their action. But if someone were to shoot me in the belief that he was getting rid of a rascal, he would kill not the real Gandhi, but the one that appeared to him a rascal.

To those who have been indulging in a campaign of abuse and vilification I would say, "Islam enjoins you not to revile even an enemy. The Prophet treated even

enemies with kindness and tried to win them over by his fairness and generosity. Are you followers of that Islam or of any other? If you are followers of the true Islam, does it behove you to distrust the words of one who makes a public declaration of his faith? You may take it from me that one day you will regret the fact that you distrusted and killed one who was a true and devoted friend of yours.” It cuts me to the quick to see that the more I appeal and the more the Maulana importunes, the more intense does the campaign of vilification grow. To me, these abuses are like bullets. They can kill me, even as a bullet can put an end to my life. You may kill me. That will not hurt me. But what of those who indulge in abusing? They bring discredit to Islam. For the fair name of Islam, I appeal to you to resist this unceasing campaign of abuse and vilification.

Maulana Saheb is being made a target for the filthiest abuse. Why? Because he refuses to exert on me the pressure of his friendship. He realizes that it is a misuse of friendship to seek to compel a friend to accept as truth what he knows is an untruth.

To the Quaid-i-Azam I would say: “Whatever is true and valid in the claim for Pakistan is already in your hands. What is wrong and untenable is in nobody’s gift, so that it can be made over to you. Even if someone were to succeed in imposing an untruth on others, he would not be able to enjoy for long the fruits of such a coercion. God dislikes pride and keeps away from it. God would not tolerate a forcible imposition of an untruth.”

The Quaid-i-Azam says that he is compelled to say bitter things but that he cannot help giving expression to his thoughts and his feelings. Similarly I would say: “I consider myself a friend of Musalmans. Why should I then not give expression to the things nearest to my heart, even at the cost of displeasing them? How can I conceal my innermost thoughts from them? I should congratulate the Quaid-i-Azam on his frankness in giving expression to his thoughts and feelings, even if they sound bitter to his hearers. But even so why should the Musalmans sitting here be reviled, if they do not see eye to eye with him? If millions of Musalmans are with you, can you not afford to ignore the handful of Musalmans who may appear to you to be misguided? Why should one with the following of several

millions be afraid of a majority community, or of the minority being swamped by the majority? How did the Prophet work among the Arabs and the Musalmans? How did he propagate Islam? Did he say he would propagate Islam only when he commanded a majority? I appeal to you for the sake of Islam to ponder over what I say. There is neither fair play nor justice in saying that the Congress must accept a thing, even if it does not believe in it and even if it goes counter to principles it holds dear.

Rajaji said: "I do not believe in Pakistan. But Musalmans ask for it, Mr. Jinnah asks for it, and it has become an obsession with them. Why not then say "yes" to them just now? The same Mr. Jinnah will later on realize the disadvantages of Pakistan and will forgo the demands." I said: "It is not fair to accept as true a thing which I hold to be untrue, and ask others to do so in the belief that the demand will not be pressed when the time comes for settling it finally. If I hold the demand to be just, I should concede it this very day. I should not agree to it merely in order to placate Jinnah Saheb. Many friends have come and asked me to agree to it for the time being to placate Mr. Jinnah, disarm his suspicions and to see how he reacts to it. But I cannot be party to a course of action with a false promise. At any rate, it is not my method."

The Congress has no sanction but the moral one for enforcing its decisions. It believes that true democracy can only be the outcome of non-violence. The structure of a world federation can be raised only on a foundation of non-violence, and violence will have to be totally abjured from world affairs. If this is true, the solution of Hindu-Muslim question, too, cannot be achieved by a resort to violence. If the Hindus tyrannize over the Musalmans, with what face will they talk of a world federation? It is for the same reason that I do not believe in the possibility of establishing world peace through violence as the English and American statesmen propose to do. The Congress has agreed to submitting all the differences to an impartial international tribunal and to abide by its decisions. If even this fairest of proposals is unacceptable, the only course that remains open is that of the sword, of violence. How can I persuade myself to agree to an impossibility? To demand the vivisection of a living organism is to ask

for its very life. It is a call to war. The Congress cannot be party to such a fratricidal war. Those Hindus who, like Dr. Moonje and Shri Savarkar, believe in the doctrine of the sword may seek to keep the Musalmans under Hindu domination. I do not represent that section. I represent the Congress. You want to kill the Congress which is the goose that lays golden eggs. If you distrust the Congress, you may rest assured that there is to be perpetual war between the Hindus and the Musalmans, and the country will be doomed to continue warfare and bloodshed. If such warfare is to be our lot, I shall not live to witness it.

It is for that reason that I say to Jinnah saheb, "You may take it from me that whatever in your demand for Pakistan accords with considerations of justice and equity is lying in your pocket; whatever in the demand is contrary to justice and equity you can take only by the sword and in no other manner."

There is much in my heart that I would like to pour out before this assembly. One thing which was uppermost in my heart I have already dealt with. You may take it from me that it is with me a matter of life and death. If we Hindus and Musalmans mean to achieve a heart unity, without the slightest mental reservation on the part of either, we must first unite in the effort to be free from the shackles of this empire. If Pakistan after all is to be a portion of India, what objection can there be for Musalmans against joining this struggle for India's freedom? The Hindus and Musalmans must, therefore, unite in the first instance on the issue of fighting for freedom. Jinnah Saheb thinks the war will last long. I do not agree with him. If war goes on for six months more, how shall we be able to save China?

I, therefore, want freedom immediately, this very night, before dawn, if it can be had. Freedom cannot now wait for the realization of communal unity. If that unity is not achieved, sacrifices necessary for it will have to be much greater than would have otherwise sufficed. But the Congress must win freedom or be wiped out in the effort. And forget not that the freedom which the Congress is struggling to achieve will not be for the Congressmen alone but for all the forty crores of the Indian people. Congressmen must forever remain humble servants of the people.

The Quaid-i-Azam has said that the Muslim League is prepared to take over the rule from the Britishers if they are prepared to hand it over to the Muslim League, for the British took over the empire from the hands of the Muslims. This, however, will be Muslim Raj. The offer made by Maulana Saheb and by me does not imply establishment of Muslim Raj or Muslim domination. The Congress does not believe in the domination of any group or any community. It believes in democracy which includes in its orbit Muslims, Hindus, Christians, Parsis, Jews—every one of the communities inhabiting this vast country. If Muslim Raj is inevitable, then let it be; but how can we give it the stamp of our assent? How can we agree to the domination of one community over the others?

Millions of Musalmans in this country come from Hindu stock. How can their homeland be any other than India? My eldest son embraced Islam some years back. What would his homeland be—Porbandar or the Punjab? I ask the Musalmans: "If India is not your homeland, what other country do you belong to? In what separate homeland would you put my son who embraced Islam?" His mother wrote him a letter after his conversion, asking him if he had on embracing Islam given up drinking which Islam forbids to its followers. To those who gloated over the conversion, she wrote to say: "I do not mind his becoming a Musalman, so much as his drinking. Will you, as pious Musalmans, tolerate his drinking even after his conversion? He has reduced himself to the state of a rake by drinking. If you are going to make a man of him again, his conversion will have been turned to good account. You will, therefore, please see that he as a Musalman abjures wine and woman. If that change does not come about, his conversion goes in vain and our non-co-operation with him will have to continue."

India is without doubt the homeland of all the Musalmans inhabiting this country. Every Musalman should therefore co-operate in the fight for India's freedom. The Congress does not belong to any one class or community; it belongs to the whole nation. It is open to Musalmans to take possession of the Congress. They can, if they like, swamp the Congress by their numbers, and can steer it along the course which appeals to them. The Congress is fighting not on behalf of the Hindus but on behalf of the whole nation, including the minorities. It would hurt me to hear

of a single instance of a Musalman being killed by a Congressman. In the coming revolution, Congressmen will sacrifice their lives in order to protect the Musalmans against a Hindu's attack and *vice versa*. It is a part of their creed, and is one of the essentials of non-violence. You will be expected on occasions like these not to lose your heads. Every Congressman, whether a Hindu or a Musalman, owes this duty to the organization to which he belongs. The Musalman who will act in this manner will render a service to Islam. Mutual trust is essential for success in the final nation-wide struggle that is to come.

I have said that much greater sacrifice will have to be made this time in the wake of our struggle because of the opposition from the Muslim League and from Englishmen. You have seen the secret circular issued by Sir Frederick Puckle. It is a suicidal course that he has taken. It contains an open incitement to organizations which crop up like mushrooms to combine to fight the Congress. We have thus to deal with an empire whose ways are crooked. Ours is a straight path which we can tread even with our eyes closed. That is the beauty of Satyagraha.

In *Satyagraha*, there is no place for fraud or falsehood, or any kind of untruth. Fraud and untruth today are stalking the world. I cannot be a helpless witness to such a situation. I have travelled all over India as perhaps nobody in the present age has. The voiceless millions of the land saw in me their friend and representative, and I identified myself with them to an extent it was possible for a human being to do. I saw trust in their eyes, which I now want to turn to good account in fighting this empire upheld on untruth and violence. However gigantic the preparations that the empire has made, we must get out of its clutches. How can I remain silent at this supreme hour and hide my light under the bushel? Shall I ask the Japanese to tarry awhile? If today I sit quiet and inactive, God will take me to task for not using up the treasure. He had given me, in the midst of the conflagration that is enveloping the whole world. Had the condition been different, I should have asked you to wait yet awhile. But the situation now has become intolerable, and the Congress has no other course left for it.

Nevertheless, the actual struggle does not commence this moment. You have only placed all your powers in my hands. I will now wait upon the Viceroy and plead with him for the acceptance of the Congress demand. That process is likely to take two or three weeks. What would you do in the meanwhile? What is the programme, for the interval, in which all can participate? As you know, the spinning wheel is the first thing that occurs to me. I made the same answer to the Maulana. He would have none of it, though he understood its import later. The fourteen fold constructive programme is, of course, there for you to carry out. What more should you do? I will tell you. Every one of you should, from this moment onwards, consider yourself a free man or woman, and act as if you are free and are no longer under the heel of this imperialism.

It is not a make-believe that I am suggesting to you. It is the very essence of freedom. The bond of the slave is snapped the moment he considers himself to be a free being. He will plainly tell the master: "I was your bondslave till this moment, but I am a slave no longer. You may kill me if you like, but if you keep me alive, I wish to tell you that if you release me from the bondage, of your own accord, I will ask for nothing more from you. You used to feed and clothe me, though I could have provided food and clothing for myself by my labour. I hitherto depended on you instead of on God, for food and raiment. But God has now inspired me with an urge for freedom and I am today a free man, and will no longer depend on you."

You make take it from me that I am not going to strike a bargain with the Viceroy for ministries and the like. I am not going to be satisfied with anything short of complete freedom. May be, he will propose the abolition of salt tax, the drink evil, etc. But I will say, "Nothing less than freedom."

Here is a *mantra*,<sup>1</sup> a short one, that I give you. You may imprint it on your hearts and let every breath of yours give expression to it. The *mantra* is: 'Do or Die'. We shall either free India or die in the attempt; we shall not live to see the perpetuation of our slavery. Every true Congressman or woman will join the struggle with an inflexible determination not to remain alive to see the country in bondage and slavery. Let that be your pledge. Keep jails out of your

consideration. If the Government keep me free, I will spare you the trouble of filling the jails. I will not put on the Government the strain of maintaining a large number of prisoners at a time, when it is in trouble. Let every man and woman live every moment of his or her life hereafter in the consciousness that he or she eats or lives for achieving freedom and will die, if need be, to attain that goal. Take a pledge, with God and your own conscience as witness, that you will no longer rest till freedom is achieved and will be prepared to lay down your lives in the attempt to achieve it. He who loses his life will gain it; he who will seek to save it shall lose it. Freedom is not for the coward or the faint-hearted.

A word to the journalists. I congratulate you on the support you have hitherto given to the national demand. I know the restrictions and handicaps under which you have to labour. But I would now ask you to snap the chains that bind you. It should be the proud privilege of the newspapers to lead and set an example in laying down one's life for freedom. You have the pen which the Government can't suppress I know you have large properties in the form of printing presses, etc., and you would be afraid lest the Government should attach them. I do not ask you to invite an attachment of the printing press voluntarily. For myself, I would not suppress my pen, even if the press was to be attached. As you know my press was attached in the past and returned later on. But I do not ask from you that final sacrifice. I suggest a middle way. You should now wind up your standing committee, and you may declare that you will give up writing under the present restrictions and take up the pen only when India has won her freedom. You may tell Sir Frederick Puckle that he can't expect from you a command performance, that his press notes are full of untruth, and that you will refuse to publish them. You will openly declare that you are wholeheartedly with the Congress. If you do this, you will have changed the atmosphere before the fight actually begins.

From the Princes I ask with all respect due to them a very small thing. I am a well-wisher of the Princes. I was born in a State. My grandfather refused to salute with his right hand any Prince other than his own. But he did not say to the Prince, as I feel he ought to have said, that even his own master could not compel

him, his minister, to act against his conscience. I have eaten the Prince's salt and I would not be false to it. As a faithful servant, it is my duty to warn the Princes that if they will act while I am still alive, the Princes may come to occupy an honourable place in free India. In Jawaharlal's scheme of free India, no privileges or the privileged classes have a place. Jawaharlal considers all property to be State-owned. He wants planned economy. He wants to reconstruct India according to plan. He likes to fly; I do not. I have kept a place for the Princes and the *Zamindars*<sup>2</sup> in India that I envisage. I would ask the Princes in all humility to enjoy through renunciation. The Princes may renounce ownership over their properties and become their trustees in the true sense of the term. I visualize God in the assemblage of people. The Princes may say to their people: "You are the owners and masters of the State and we are your servants." I would ask the Princes to become servants of the people and render to them an account of their own services. The empire too bestows power on the Princes, but they should prefer to derive power from their own people; and if they want to indulge in some innocent pleasures, they may seek do so as servants of the people. I do not want the Princes to live as paupers. But I would ask them: "Do you want to remain slaves for all time? Why should you, instead of paying homage to a foreign power, not accept the sovereignty of your own people?" You may write to the Political Department: "The people are now awake. How are we to withstand an avalanche before which even the large empires are crumbling? We, therefore, shall belong to the people from today onwards. We shall sink or swim with them." Believe me, there is nothing unconstitutional in the course I am suggesting. There are, so far as I know, no treaties enabling the empire to coerce the Princes. The people of the States will also declare that though they are the Princes' subjects, they are part of the Indian nation and that they will accept the leadership of the Princes, if the latter cast their lot with the people but not otherwise. If this declaration enrages the Princes and they choose to kill the people, the latter will meet death bravely and unflinchingly, but will not go back on their word.

Nothing, however, should be done secretly. This is an open rebellion. In this struggle secrecy is a sin. A free man would not engage in a secret movement. It is likely that when you gain freedom you will have a C.I.D. of your own, in spite

of my advice to the contrary. But in the present struggle, we have to work openly and to receive bullets on our chest, without taking to heels.

I have a word to say to Government servants also. They may not, if they like, resign their posts yet. The late Justice Ranade did not resign his post, but he openly declared that he belonged to the Congress. He said to the Government that though he was a judge, he was a Congressman and would openly attend the sessions of the Congress, but that at the same time he would not let his political views warp his impartiality on the bench. He held Social Reform Conference in the very *Pandal*<sup>3</sup> of the Congress. I would ask all the Government servants to follow in the footsteps of Ranade and to declare their allegiance to the Congress as an answer to the secret circular issued by Sir Frederick Puckle.

This is all that I ask of you just now. I will now write to the Viceroy. You will be able to read the correspondence not just now but when I publish it with the Viceroy's consent. But you are free to aver that you support the demand to be put forth in my letter. A judge came to me and said: "We get secret circulars from high quarters. What are we to do?" I replied, "If I were in your place, I would ignore the circulars. You may openly say to the Government: 'I have received your secret circular. I am, however, with the Congress. Though I serve the Government for my livelihood, I am not going to obey these secret circulars or to employ underhand methods.'"

Soldiers too are covered by the present programme. I do not ask them just now to resign their posts and to leave the army. The soldiers come to me, Jawaharlal and the Maulana and say: "We are wholly with you. We are tired of the Government tyranny." To these soldiers I would say: You may say to the Government, "Our hearts are with the Congress. We are not going to leave our posts. We will serve you so long as we receive your salaries. We will obey your just orders, but will refuse to fire on our own people."

To those who lack the courage to do this much I have nothing to say. They will go their own way. But if you can do this much, you may take it from me that the whole atmosphere will be electrified. Let the Government then shower bombs,

if they like. But no power on the earth will then be able to keep you in bondage any longer.

If the students want to join the struggle only to go back to their studies after a while, I would not invite them to it. For the present, however, till the time that I frame a programme for the struggle, I would ask the students to say to their professors: "We belong to the Congress. Do you belong to Congress, or to the Government? If you belong to the Congress, you need not vacate your posts. You will remain at your posts but teach us and lead us unto freedom." In all fights for freedom, the world over, the students have made very large contributions.

If in the interval that is left to us before the actual fight begins, you do even the little I have suggested to you, you will have changed the atmosphere and will have prepared the ground for the next step.

There is much I should yet like to say. But my heart is heavy. I have already taken up much of your time. I have yet to say a few words in English also. I thank you for the patience and attention with which you have listened to me even at this late hour. It is just what true soldiers would do. For the last twenty-two years, I have controlled my speech and pen and have stored up my energy. He is a true *Brahmachari*<sup>4</sup> who does not fritter away his energy.

He will, therefore, always control his speech. That has been my conscious effort all these years. But today the occasion has come when I had to unburden my heart before you. I have done so, even though it meant putting a strain on your patience; and I do not regret having done it. I have given you my message and through you I have delivered it to the whole of India.

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1. A sacred formula
  2. Landlords
  3. A Canopy
  4. A Celibate
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### III

[The following is the concluding portion of Gandhiji's speech before the A.I.C.C. at Bombay on 8-8-'42 which was delivered in English:]

I have taken such an inordinately long time over pouring out, what was agitating my soul, to those whom I had just now the privilege of serving. I have been called their leader or, in the military language, their commander. But I do not look at my position in that light. I have no weapon but love to wield my authority over any one. I do sport a stick which you can break into bits without the slightest exertion. It is simply my staff with the help of which I walk. Such a cripple is not elated, when he has been called upon to bear the greatest burden. You can share that burden only when I appear before you not as your commander but as a humble servant. And he who serves best is the chief among equals.

Therefore, I was bound to share with you such thoughts as were welling up in my breast and tell you, in as summary a manner as I can, what I expect you to do as the first step.

Let me tell you at the outset that the real struggle does not commence today. I have yet to go through much ceremonial as I always do. The burden, I confess, would be almost unbearable. I have to continue to reason in those circles with whom I have lost my credit and who have no trust left in me. I know that in the course of the last few weeks I have forfeited my credit with a large number of friends, so much so, that they have begun to doubt not only my wisdom but even my honesty. Now I hold my wisdom is not such a treasure which I cannot afford to lose; but my honesty is a precious treasure to me and I can ill-afford to lose it. I seem however to have lost it for the time being.

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#### Friend of the Empire

Such occasions arise in the life of the man who is pure seeker after truth and who would seek to serve the humanity and his country to the best of his lights without fear or hypocrisy. For the last fifty years I have known no other way. I have been a humble servant of humanity and have rendered on more than one

occasion such service as I could to the Empire, and here let me say without fear of challenge that throughout my career never have I asked for any personal favour. I have enjoyed the privilege of friendship as I enjoy it today with Lord Linlithgow. It is a friendship which has outgrown official relationship. Whether Lord Linlithgow will bear me out, I do not know, but there is a personal bond between him and myself. He introduced me to his daughter. His son-in law, the A.D.C. was drawn towards me. He fell in love with Mahadev more than with me and Lady Anna and he came to me. She is an obedient and favourite daughter. I take interest in their welfare. I take the liberty to give out these personal and sacred tit-bits only to give you an earnest of the personal bond which exists between us; and yet let me declare here that that personal bond will never interfere with the stubborn struggle on which, if it falls to my lot, I may have to launch against Lord Linlithgow, as the representative of the Empire. I will have to resist the might of that Empire with the might of the dumb millions with no limit but of non-violence as policy confined to this struggle. It is a terrible job to have to offer resistance to a Viceroy with whom I enjoy such relations. He has more than once trusted my word, often about my people. I would love to repeat that experiment, as it stands to his credit. I mention this with great pride and pleasure. I mention it as an earnest of my desire to be true to the Empire when that Empire forfeited my trust and the Englishman who was its Viceroy came to know it.

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### Charlie Andrews

Then there is the sacred memory of Charlie Andrews which wells up within me. At this moment the spirit of Andrews hovers about me. For me he sums up the brightest traditions of English culture. I enjoyed closer relations with him than with most Indians. I enjoyed his confidence. There were no secrets between us. We exchanged our hearts every day. Whatever was in his heart, he would blurt out without the slightest hesitation or reservation. It is true he was a friend of Gurudev<sup>1</sup> but he looked upon Gurudev with awe. He had that peculiar humility. But with me he became the closest friend. Years ago he came to me with a note

of introduction from Gokhale. Pearson and he were the first-rank specimens of Englishmen. I know that his spirit is listening to me.

Then I have got a warm letter of congratulations from the Metropolitan of Calcutta. I hold him to be a man of God. Today he is opposed to me.

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### Voice of Conscience

With all this background, I want to declare to the world, although I may have forfeited the regard of many friends in the West and I must bow my head low; but even for their friendship or love I must not suppress the voice of conscience the promptings of my inner basic nature today. There is something within me impelling me to cry out my agony. I have known humanity. I have studied something of psychology. Such a man knows exactly what it is. I do not mind how you describe it. That voice within tells me, "You have to stand against the whole world although you may have to stand alone. You have to stare in the face the whole world although the world may look at you with bloodshot eyes. Do not fear. Trust the little voice residing within your heart." It says: "Forsake friends, wife and all; but testify to that for which you have lived and for which you have to die." Believe me, friends I am not anxious to die. I want to live my full span of life. And for me I put my span of life at 120 years. By that time India will be free, the world will be free.

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### Real Freedom

Let me tell you too that I do not regard England or for that matter America as free countries. They are free after their own fashion, free to hold in bondage coloured races of the earth. Are England and America fighting for the liberty of these races today? If not, do not ask me to wait until after the war. You shall not limit my concept of freedom. The English and American teachers, their history, their magnificent poetry have not said that you shall not broaden the interpretation of freedom. And according to my interpretation of that freedom I am constrained to say they are strangers to that freedom which their teachers

and poets have described. If they will know the real freedom they should come to India. They have come not with pride or arrogance but in the spirit of real earnest seekers of truth. It is a fundamental truth which India has been experimenting with for 22 years.

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### Congress and Non-violence

Unconsciously from its very foundations long ago the Congress has been building on non-violence known as constitutional methods. Dadabhai and Pherozeshah who had held the Congress India in the palm of their hands became rebels. They were lovers of the Congress. They were its masters. But above all they were real servants. They never countenanced murder, secrecy and the like. I confess there are many black sheep amongst us Congressmen. But I trust the whole of India today to launch upon a non-violent struggle. I trust because of my nature to rely upon the innate goodness of human nature which perceives the truth and prevails during the crisis as if by instinct. But even if I am deceived in this I shall not swerve. I shall not flinch. From its very inception the Congress based its policy on peaceful methods, included *Swaraj* and the subsequent generations added non-violence. When Dadabhai entered the British Parliament, Salisbury dubbed him as a black man; but the English people defeated Salisbury and Dadabhai went to the Parliament by their vote. India was delirious with joy. These things however India has outgrown.

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### I will go Ahead

It is, however, with all these things as the background that I want Englishmen, Europeans and all the United Nations to examine in their hearts what crime had India committed in demanding Independence. I ask, is it right for you to distrust such an organization with all its background, tradition and record of over half a century and misrepresent its endeavours before all the world by every means at your command? It is right that by hook or by crook, aided by the foreign press, aided by the President of the U.S.A., or even by the Generalissimo of China who has yet to win his laurels, you should present India's struggle in shocking

caricature? I have met the Generalissimo. I have known him through Madame Shek who was my interpreter; and though he seemed inscrutable to me, not so Madame Shek; and he allowed me to read his mind through her. There is a chorus of disapproval and righteous protest all over the world against us. They say we are erring, the move is inopportune. I had great regard for British diplomacy which has enabled them to hold the Empire so long. Now it stinks in my nostrils, and others have studied that diplomacy and are putting it into practice. They may succeed in getting, through these methods, world opinion on their side for a time; but India will speak against that world opinion. She will raise her voice against all the organized propaganda. I will speak against it. Even if all the United Nations opposed me, even if the whole of India forsakes me, I will say, "You are wrong. India will wrench with non-violence her liberty from unwilling hands." I will go ahead not for India's sake alone, but for the sake of the world. Even if my eyes close before there is freedom, non-violence will not end. They will be dealing a mortal blow to China and to Russia if they oppose the freedom of non-violent India which is pleading with bended knees for the fulfillment of debt long overdue. Does a creditor ever go to the debtor like that? And even when, India is met with such angry opposition, she says, "We won't hit below the belt, we have learnt sufficient gentlemanliness. We are pledged to non-violence." I have been the author of non-embarrassment policy of the Congress and yet today you find me talking this strong language. I say it is consistent with our honour. If a man holds me by the neck and wants to drown me, may I not struggle to free myself directly? There is no inconsistency in our position today.

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### Appeal to United Nations

There are representatives of the foreign press assembled here today. Through them I wish to say to the world that the United Powers who somehow or other say that they have need for India, have the opportunity now to declare India free and prove their bona fides. If they miss it, they will be missing the opportunity of their lifetime, and history will record that they did not discharge their obligations to India in time, and lost the battle. I want the blessings of the whole world so that I may succeed with them. I do not want the United Powers to go

beyond their obvious limitations. I do not want them to accept non-violence and disarm today. There is a fundamental difference between fascism and this imperialism which I am fighting. Do the British get from India all they want? What they get today is from India which they hold in bondage. Think what difference it would make if India was to participate as a free ally. That freedom, if it is to come, must come today. It will have no taste left in it if today you who have the power to help cannot exercise it. If you can exercise it, under the glow of freedom what seems impossible today, will become possible tomorrow. If India feels that freedom, she will command that freedom for China. The road for running to Russia's help will be open. The Englishmen did not die in Malaya or on Burma soil. What shall enable us to retrieve the situation? Where shall I go, and where shall I take the forty crores of India? How is this vast mass of humanity to be aglow in the cause of world deliverance, unless and until it has touched and felt freedom. Today they have no touch of life left. It has been crushed out of them. If lustre is to be put into their eyes, freedom has to come not tomorrow, but today.

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### Do or Die

I have pledged the Congress and the Congress will do or die.

*My Non-Violence* (1960), pp. 183-205

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1. *Ravindranath Tagore*

## 06. SPEECH BEFORE INTER-ASIAN RELATIONS CONFERENCE

(2-4-1947)

[The closing session of the Inter-Asian Relations Conference on April 2, 1947 was a great finale to the intense activity which marked the proceedings during the past ten days. Over 20,000 visitors and delegates and observers gave a great ovation to Gandhiji when Mrs. Naidu introduced him as 'one of the greatest Asians of the age'. Gandhiji who followed Dr. Sjahriar, the Premier of Indonesia, made the following speech:]

I do not think that I should apologize to you for having to speak in a foreign tongue. I wonder if this loud speaker carries my voice to the farthest end of this vast audience. If some of those who are far away are unable to listen to what I may say, it will be the fault of the loud speaker.

I was going to tell you that I do not wish to apologize. I dare not. You cannot understand the provincial language, which is my mother tongue. I do not want to insult you by speaking in my own language (Gujarati). Our national speech is Hindustani. I know that it will be a long time before it can be made into an international speech. For international commerce, undoubtedly, English occupies the first place. I used to hear that French was the language of diplomacy. I was told, when I was young, that if I wanted to go from one end of Europe to the other, I must try to pick up French. I tried to learn French, in order that I may be able to make myself understood. There is a rivalry between the French and the English. Having been taught English, I have naturally to resort to it.

I was wondering, as to what I was to speak to you. I wanted to collect my thoughts, but let me confess to you that I had no time. Yet I had promised yesterday that I would try to say a few words. While I was coming with Badshah Khan, I asked for a little piece of paper and pencil. I got a pen, instead of a pencil. I tried to scribble a few words. You will be sorry to hear that piece of paper is not by side, though I remember what I wanted to say.

You, friends, have not seen the real India and you are not meeting in conference in the midst of real India, Delhi, Bombay, Madras, Calcutta, Lahore all these are big cities and are, therefore, influenced by the West.

I then thought of a story. It was in French and was translated for me by Anglo-French philosopher. He was an unselfish man. He befriended me without having known me, because he always sided with the minorities. I was not then in my own country. I was not only in a hopeless minority, but in a despised minority, if the Europeans in South Africa will forgive me for saying so. I was a coolie lawyer. At the time, we had no coolie doctors, and we had no coolie lawyers. I was the first in the field. You know, perhaps, what is meant by the word 'coolie'.

This friend - his mother was a French woman and his father was an Englishman - said: "I want to translate for you a French story. There were three scientists who went out from France in search of truth. They went to different parts of Asia. One of them found his way to India. He began to search. He went to the so-called cities of those times - naturally this was before British occupation, before even the Mogul period. He saw the so-called high caste people, men and women, till he felt at a loss. Finally, he went to one humble cottage in a humble village. That cottage was a *bhangi*<sup>1</sup> cottage and there he found the truth that he was in search of."

If you really want to see India at its best, you have to find it in the humble *bhangi* homes of such villages. There are seven lakhs of such villages, and thirty eight crores of people inhabit them.

If some of you see the Indian villages, you will not be fascinated by the sight. You will have to scratch below the dung heap. I do not pretend to say that they were places of paradise. Today, they are really dung heaps. They were not like that before. What I say is not from history, but from what I have seen myself. I have travelled from one end of India to the other, and I have seen the miserable specimens of humanity with the lustreless eyes. They are India. In these humble cottages, in the midst of these dung heaps, are to be found humble *bhangis*, in whom you find the concentrated essence of wisdom.

Again, I have learnt from books - books written by English historians. We read books written in English by English historians, but we do not write in our own mother tongue, or in the national language Hindustani. We study our history through English books, rather than through originals. That is the cultural conquest which India has undergone.

The first of these wise men was Zoroaster. He belonged to the East. He was followed by Buddha who belonged to the East - India. Who followed Buddha? Jesus, who came from the East. Before Jesus was Moses who belonged to Palestine, though he was born in Egypt. And after Jesus came Mahomed. I omit my reference to Krishna and Rama and other lights. I do not call them lesser lights but they are less known to a literary world. All the same, I do not know a single person in the world to match these men of Asia. And then what happened? Christianity became disfigured, when it went to the West. I am sorry to have to say that - I would not talk any further.

I have told you the story, in order to make you understand that what you see in the big cities is not the real India. Certainly, the carnage that is going on before our very eyes is a shameful thing. As I said yesterday, do not carry the memory of that carnage beyond the confines of India.

What I want you to understand is the message of Asia. It is not be learnt through the western spectacles or by imitating the atom bomb. If you want to give a message to the West, it must be the message of love and the message of the truth. I do not want merely to appeal to your head. I want to capture your heart.

In this age of democracy, in this age of awakening of the poorest of the poor, you can redeliver this message with the greatest emphasis. You will complete the conquest of the West, not through vengeance, because you have been exploited, but with real understanding. I am sanguine, if all of you put your hearts together - not merely heads - to understand the secret of the message these wise men of the East have left to us, and if we really become worthy of that great message, the conquest of the West will be completed. This conquest will be loved by the West itself.

The West is today pining the wisdom. It is despairing of a multiplication of the atom bombs, because the atom bombs mean utter destruction, not merely of the West, but of the whole world, as if the prophecy of the Bible is going to be fulfilled and there is to be a perfect deluge. It is up to you to tell the world of its wickedness and sin - that is the heritage your teachers and my teachers have taught Asia.

*Harijan*, 20-4-1947, pp. 116-17

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1. A Sweeper

## 07. SPEECH ON THE EVE OF THE LAST FAST

(12.1.1948)

### **My Fast as a Protest**

One fasts for health's sake under laws governing health, fasts as a penance for a wrong done and felt as such. In these fasts, the fasting one need not believe in *Ahimsa*. There is, however, a fast which a votary of non-violence sometimes feels impelled to undertake by way of protest against some wrong done by society, and this he does when he as a votary of *Ahimsa* has no other remedy left. Such an occasion has come my way.

When on September 9<sup>th</sup>, I returned to Delhi from Calcutta, it was to proceed to the West Punjab. But that was not to be. Gay Delhi looked a city of the dead. As I alighted from the train I observed gloom on every face I saw. Even the Sardar, whom humour and the joy that humour gives never desert, was no exception this time. The cause of it I did not know. He was on the platform to receive me. He lost no time in giving me the sad news of the disturbances that had taken place in the Metropolis of the Union. At once I saw that I had to be in Delhi and 'do or die'. There is apparent calm brought about by prompt military and police action. But there is storm within the breast. It may burst forth any day. This I count as no fulfillment of the vow to 'do' which alone can keep me from death, the incomparable friend. I yearn for heart friendship between the Hindus, the Sikhs and the Muslims. It subsisted between them the other day. Today it is non-existent. It is a state that no Indian patriot worthy of the name can contemplate with equanimity. Though the Voice within has been beckoning for a long time, I have been shutting my ears to it, lest it may be the voice of Satan otherwise called my weakness. I never like to feel resourceless, a *Satyagrahi* never should. Fasting is his last resort in the place of the sword - his or other's. I have no answer to return to the Muslim friends who see me from day to day as to what they should do. My impotence has been gnawing at me of late. It will go immediately the fast is undertaken. I have been brooding over it for the last three days. The

final conclusion has flashed upon me and it makes me happy. No man, if he is pure, has anything more precious to give than his life. I hope and pray that I have that purity in me to justify the step.

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### **Worthy of Blessing**

I ask you all to bless the effort and to pray for me and with me. The fast begins from the first meal tomorrow. The period is indefinite and I may drink water with or without salts and sour limes. It will end when and if I am satisfied that there is a reunion of hearts of all the communities brought about without any outside pressure, but from an awakened sense of duty. The reward will be the regaining of India's dwindling prestige and her fast fading sovereignty over the heart of Asia and there through the world. I flatter myself with belief that the loss of her soul by India will mean the loss of the hope of the aching, storm tossed and hungry world. Let no friend, or foe if there be one, be angry with me. There are friends who do not believe in the method of the fast for the reclamation of the human mind. They will bear with me and extend to me the same liberty of action that they claim for themselves. With God as my supreme and sole counselor, I felt that I must take the decision without any other adviser. If I have made a mistake and discover it, I shall have no hesitation in proclaiming it from the housetop and retracing my faulty step. There is little chance of making such a discovery. If there is clear indication, as I claim there is, of the Inner Voice, it will not be gain-said. I plead for all absence of argument and inevitable endorsement of the step. If the whole of India responds or at least Delhi does, the fast might be soon ended.

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### **No softness**

But whether it ends soon or late or never, let there be no softness in dealing with what may be termed as a crisis. Critics have regarded some of my previous fasts as coercive and held that on merits the verdict would have gone against my stand but for the pressure exercised by the fasts. What value can an adverse verdict have when the purpose is demonstrably sound? A pure fast, like duty, is its own

reward. I do not embark upon it for the sake of the result it may bring. I do so because I must. Hence, I urge everybody dispassionately to examine the purpose and let me die, if I must, in peace which I hope is ensured. Death for me would be a glorious deliverance rather than that I should be a helpless witness of the destruction of India, Hinduism, Sikhism and Islam. That destruction is certain if Pakistan ensures no equality of status and security of life and property for all professing the various faiths of the world, and if India copies her. Only then Islam dies in the two Indias, not in the world. But Hinduism and Sikhism have no world outside India. Those who differ from me will be honoured by me for their resistance however implacable. Let my fast quicken conscience, not deaden it. Just contemplate the rot that has set in beloved India and you will rejoice to think that there is an humble son of hers who is strong enough and possibly pure enough to take the happy step. If he is neither, he is a burden on earth. The sooner he disappears and clears the Indian atmosphere of the burden the better for him and all concerned.

I would beg of all friends not to rush to Birla House nor try to dissuade me or be anxious for me. I am in God's hands. Rather, they should turn the searchlights inwards, for this is essentially a testing time for all of us. Those who remain at their post of duty and perform it diligently and well, now more so than hitherto, will help me and the cause in every way. The fast is a process of self-purification.

*Harijan*, 18-1-1948, p. 523

***The Voice of Truth***

***Part two***

**- Selections -**

I do not claim to have originated any new principle or doctrine, I have simply tried in my own way to apply the eternal truths to our daily life and problems... Well all my philosophy, if it may be called by that pretentious name, is contained in what I have said. You will not call it 'Gandhism'; there is no *ism* about it. And no elaborate literature or propaganda is needed about it.

M. K. Gandhi

*Harijan*, 28-3-1936, p. 49

## SECTION I: TRUTH, WORLD AND MAN

### CHAPTER 1: TRUTH AND GOD

For me, Truth is the sovereign principle, which includes numerous other principles. This truth is not only truthfulness in word, but truthfulness in thought also, and not only the relative truth of our conception, but the Absolute Truth, the Eternal principle, that is God. There are innumerable definitions of God, because His manifestations are innumerable. They overwhelm me with wonder and awe and for a moment stun me. But I worship God as Truth only. I have not yet found Him, but I am seeking after Him. I am prepared to sacrifice the things dearest to me in pursuit of this quest. Even if the sacrifice demanded be my very life, I hope I may be prepared to give it.

But as long as I have not realized this Absolute Truth, so long must I hold by the relative truth as I have conceived it. That relative truth must, meanwhile, be my beacon, my shield and buckler. Though this path is straight and narrow and sharp as the razor's edge, for me it has been the quickest and easiest. Even my Himalayan blunders have seemed trifling to me because I have kept strictly to this path. For the path has saved me from coming to grief, and I have gone forward according to my light. Often in my progress I have had faint glimpses of the Absolute Truth, God, and daily the conviction is growing upon me that He alone is real and all else is unreal.

*Introduction to An Autobiography, (1966), p. 11*

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The word *Satya* (Truth) is derived from *Sat*, which means 'being'. Nothing is or exists in reality except Truth. That is why *Sat* or Truth is perhaps the most important name of God. In fact it is more correct to say that Truth is God, than to say that God is Truth. But as we cannot do without a ruler or a general, such names of God as 'King of Kings' or 'The Almighty' are and will remain generally

current. On deeper thinking, however, it will be realized, that *Sat* or *Satya* is the only correct and fully significant name for God.

And where there is Truth, there also is knowledge which is true. Where there is no Truth, there can be no true knowledge. That is why the word *Chit* or knowledge is associated with the name of God. And where there is true knowledge, there is always bliss (*Ananda*). There sorrow has no place. And even as Truth is eternal, so is the bliss derived from it. Hence we know God as *Sat-chit-ananda*, One who combines in Himself Truth, Knowledge and Bliss.

*From Yeravda Mandir* (1957), pp. 1-2

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It is That which alone is, which constitutes the stuff of which all things are made, which subsists by virtue of its own power, which is not supported by anything else but supports everything that exists. Truth alone is eternal, everything else is momentary. It need not assume shape or form. It is pure intelligence as well as pure bliss. We call It *Ishvara*<sup>1</sup> because everything is regulated by Its will. It and the law It promulgates are one. Therefore, it is not a blind law. It governs the entire universe.

*Ashram Observances in Action* (1959), p. 37

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Truth is God—nothing else, nothing less... The nearest word answering to Truth in Sanskrit is *Sat*. *Sat* means ‘being’. God alone is *Sat*. He alone is; nothing and no one else is. Everything else is illusion. *Satya* means *sat*. Truth alone is in the world, nothing else is. This is easy enough to understand. Then what is truth? For us it is a relative term. Absolute Truth is God. Whatever we understand by God is implied in Truth.... It alone really sustains us. For a time many other things may sustain us, but this alone sustains us for all time.

Truth gives perennial joy. In Sanskrit we have the word *Sat*, *Chit*, *Ananda*. It is a fine combination. The three together make one word. Truth is knowledge also. It is life. You feel vitality in you when you have got Truth in you. Again it gives bliss. It is a permanent thing of which you cannot be robbed. You may be sent to

the gallows, or put to torture; but if you have Truth in you, you will experience an inner joy.

*Conversations of Gandhiji (1949)*, pp. 35-36

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In my early youth I was taught to repeat what in Hindu scriptures are known as one thousand names of God. But these one thousand names of God were by no means exhaustive. We believe—and I think it is the truth—that God has as many names as there are creatures and, therefore we also say that God is nameless and since God has many forms we also consider Him formless, and since He speaks to us through many tongues, we consider Him to be speechless and so on. And so when I came to study Islam I found that Islam too had many names for God. I would say with those who say God is Love, God is Love. But deep down in me I used to say that though God may be Love, God is Truth, above all. If it is possible for the human tongue to give the fullest description of God, I have come to the conclusion that for myself, God is Truth.

But two years ago, I went a step further and said that Truth is God. You will see the fine distinction between the two statements, *viz.* that God is Truth and Truth is God. And I came to that conclusion after a continuous and relentless search after Truth which began nearly fifty years ago. I then found that the nearest approach to Truth was through Love. But I also found that the love has many meanings in the English language at least and that human love in the sense of passion could become a degrading thing also. I found too that love in the sense of *Ahimsa*,<sup>2</sup> had only a limited number of votaries in the world. But I never found a double meaning in connection with Truth and even atheists had not demurred to the necessity or power of Truth. But in their passion for discovering Truth the atheists have not hesitated to deny the very existence of God—from their own point of view rightly. And it was because of this reasoning that I saw that rather than say that God is Truth I should say that Truth is God.

I recall the name of Charles Bradlaugh who delighted to call himself an atheist, but knowing as I do something of him, I would never regard him as an atheist. I would call him a God-fearing man, though I know that he would reject the claim.

His face would redden if I would say that "Mr. Bradlaugh, you are a Truth-fearing man, and so a God-fearing man." I would automatically disarm his criticism by saying that Truth is God, as I have disarmed criticisms of many a young man. Add to this the great difficulty that millions have taken the name of God and in His name committed nameless atrocities. Not that scientists very often do not commit cruelties in the name of Truth. I know how in the name of Truth and science inhuman cruelties are perpetrated on animals when men perform vivisection. There are thus a number of difficulties in the way, no matter how you describe God. But the human mind is a limited thing, and you have to labour under limitations when you think of a being or an entity who is beyond the power of man to grasp.

And then we another thing in Hindu philosophy, *viz.* God alone is and nothing else exists, and the same truth you find emphasized and exemplified in the *Kalma*<sup>3</sup> of Islam. There you find it clearly stated that God alone is and nothing else exists. In fact the Sanskrit word for Truth is a word which literally means that which exists—*Sat*. For these and several other reasons that I can give you I have come to the conclusion that the definition, 'Truth is God', gives me the greatest satisfaction. And when you want to find Truth as God the only inevitable means is Love, i.e., non-violence, and since I believe that ultimately the means and end are convertible terms, I should not hesitate to say that God is Love.

*Young India*, 31-12-1931, pp. 427-28

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The seers have described God as '*Neti*', '*Neti*' ('Not this', 'Not this'). Truth will elude you. The sum total of all that is true is Truth. But you can't sum up all that is true.... There are things that can't be analysed. God who can be analysed by my poor intellect won't satisfy me. Therefore I do not try to analyse Him. I go behind the relative to the absolute and I get my peace of mind.

*An atheist with Gandhi* (1958), p. 30

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God is not a person.... The truth is that God is the force. He is the essence of life. He is pure and undefiled consciousness. He is eternal. And yet, strangely enough,

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all are not able to derive either benefit from or shelter in the all-pervading living presence.

*Harijan*, 22-6-1947, p. 200

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God is not some person outside ourselves or away from the universe. He pervades everything, and is omniscient as well as omnipotent. He does not need any praise or petitions. Being immanent in all beings, He hears everything and reads our innermost thoughts. He abides in our hearts and is nearer to us than the nails are to the fingers.

*Ashram Observances in Action* (1959), p. 36

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He is the greatest democrat the world knows, for He leaves us 'unfettered' to make our own choice between evil and good. He is the greatest tyrant ever known, for He often dashes the cup from our lips and under cover of free will leaves us a margin so wholly inadequate as to provide only mirth for Himself at our expense. Therefore it is that Hinduism calls it all His sport—*Lila*, or calls it all an illusion—*Maya*. We are *not*, He alone *Is*. And if we will be, we must eternally sing His praise and do His will. Let us dance to the tune of His *Bansi*-lute, and all would be well.

*Young India*, 5-3-1925, p. 81

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God is good not in the same sense as X is good. X is comparatively good. He is more good than evil, but God is wholly good. There is no evil in Him. God made man in His own image. Unfortunately for us man fashioned Him in his own. This arrogation has landed mankind in a sea of troubles. God is the Supreme Alchemist. In His presence all iron and dross turn into pure gold. Similarly does all evil turn into good.

Again God lives but not as we. His creatures live but to die. But God is life. Therefore, goodness and all it connotes is not an attribute. Goodness is God. Goodness conceived as apart from Him is a lifeless thing and exists only whilst it

is a paying policy. So are all morals. If they are to live in us they must be considered and cultivated in their relation to God. We try to become good because we want to reach and realize God. All the dry ethics of the world turn to dust because apart from God they are lifeless. Coming from God, they come with life in them. They become part of us and enoble us.

Conversely, God conceived without Goodness is without life. We give him life in our vain imaginings.

*Harijan*, 24-8-1947, p. 289

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God is that indefinable something which we all feel but which we do not know.... To me God is Truth and Love; God is ethics and morality; God is fearlessness. God is the source of Light and Life and yet He is above and beyond all these. God is conscience. He is even the atheism of the atheist. For in His boundless love God permits the atheist to live. He is the searcher of hearts. He transcends speech and reason. He knows us and our hearts better than we do ourselves. He does not take us at our word for He knows that we often do not mean it, some knowingly and others unknowingly. He is a personal God to those who need His personal presence. He is embodied to those who need His touch. He is the purest essence. He simply is to those who have faith. He is all things to all men. He is in us and yet above and beyond us. One may banish the word 'God', but one has no power to banish the Thing Itself.

*Young India*, 5-3-1925, pp. 80-81

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There is an indefinable mysterious Power that pervades everything. I feel it, though I do not see it. It is this Unseen Power which makes itself felt and yet defies all proof, because it is so unlike all that I perceive through my senses. It transcends the senses.

But it is possible to reason out the existence of God to a limited extent. Even in ordinary affairs we know that people do not know who rules or why and how he rules. And yet they know that there is a power that certainly rules. In my tour

last year in Mysore I met many poor villagers and I found upon inquiry that they did not know who ruled Mysore. They simply said some God ruled it. If the knowledge of these poor people was so limited about their ruler, I who am infinitely lesser than God, than they to their ruler, need not be surprised if I do not realize the presence of God, the King of Kings. Nevertheless I do feel as the poor villagers felt about Mysore that there is orderliness in the Universe, there is an unalterable Law governing everything and every being that exists or lives. It is not a blind law; for no blind law can govern the conduct of living beings and thanks to the marvellous researches of Sir J. C. Bose, it can now be proved that even matter is life. That Law then which governs all life is God. Law and the Lawgiver are one. I may not deny the law or the lawgiver, because I know so little about it or Him. Even as my denial or ignorance of the existence of an earthly power will avail me nothing, so will not my denial of God and His law liberate me from its operation; whereas humble and mute acceptance of Divine Authority makes life's journey easier even as the acceptance of earthly rule makes life under it easier.

I do dimly perceive that whilst everything around me is ever-changing, ever-dying, there is underlying all that change a Living Power that is changeless, that holds all together, that creates, dissolves, and re-creates. That informing Power or Spirit is God. And since nothing else I see merely through the senses can or will persist, He alone is.

And is this Power benevolent or malevolent? I see it as purely benevolent. For I can see that in the midst of death life persists, in the midst of untruth truth persists, in the midst of darkness light persists. Hence I gather that God is Life, Truth, Light. He is Love. He is the Supreme Good.

*Young India*, 11-10-1928, p. 340

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But He is no God who merely satisfies the intellect, if He ever does. God to be God must rule the heart and transform it. He must express Himself in every smallest act of His votary. This can only be done through a definite realization more real than the five senses can ever produce. Sense perceptions can be, often

are, false and deceptive, however real they may appear to us. Where there is realization outside the senses it is infallible. It is proved not by extraneous evidence but in the transformed conduct and character of those who have felt the real presence of God within.

Such testimony is to be found in the experiences of an unbroken line of prophets and sages in all countries and climes. To reject this evidence is to deny oneself.

This realization is preceded by an immovable faith. He who would in his own person test the fact of God's presence can do so by a living faith. And since faith itself cannot be proved by extraneous evidence, the safest course is to believe in the moral government of the world and therefore in the supremacy of the moral law, the law of Truth and Love. Exercise of faith will be the safest where there is a clear determination summarily to reject all that is contrary to Truth and Love.

I confess....that I have no argument to convince....through reason. Faith transcends reason. All I can advise is not to attempt the impossible.

*Young India*, 11-10-1928, pp. 340-41

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If we exist, if our parents and their parents have existed, then it is proper to believe in the Parent of the whole creation. If He is not, we are nowhere.... He is *one* and yet many; He is smaller than an atom, and bigger than the Himalayas; He is contained even in a drop of the ocean, and yet not even the seven seas can compass Him. Reason is powerless to know Him. He is beyond the reach or grasp of Reason. But I need not labour the point. Faith is essential in this matter. My logic can make and unmake innumerable hypotheses. An atheist might floor me in a debate. But my faith runs so very much faster than my reason that I can challenge the whole world and say, "God is, was and ever shall be."

*Young India*, 21-1-1926, p.30

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Experience has humbled me enough to let me realize the specific limitations of Reason. Just as matter misplaced becomes dirt, Reason misused becomes lunacy.

Rationalists are admirable beings, rationalism is a hideous monster when it claims for itself omnipotence. Attribution of omnipotence to Reason is as bad a piece of idolatry as is worship of stock and stone believing it to be God...

I plead not for suppression of Reason, but for a due recognition of that in us which sanctifies Reason itself.

*Young India*, 14-10-1926, p. 359

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There are subjects where Reason cannot take us far and we have to accept things on faith. Faith then does not contradict Reason but transcends it. Faith is a kind of sixth sense which works in cases which are without the purview of Reason.

*Harijan*, 6-3-1937, p. 26.

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1. God
2. Non-violence
3. Basic Muslim prayer

## Chapter 2: LIFE AND GOD

I am an *Advaitist*<sup>1</sup> and yet I can support *Dvaitism* (dualism). The world is changing every moment, and is therefore unreal, it has no permanent existence. But though it is constantly changing, it has something about it which persists and it is therefore to that extent real. I have therefore no objection to calling it real and unreal, and thus being called an *Anekantavadi*<sup>2</sup> or a *Syadvadi*<sup>3</sup>. But my *Syadvad* is not the *Syadvad* of the learned, it is peculiarly my own. I cannot engage in a debate with them. It has been my experience that I am always true from my point of view, and often wrong from the point of view of my honest critics. I know that we are both right from our respective points of view. And this knowledge saves me from attributing motives to my opponents or critics. The seven blind men who gave seven different descriptions of the elephant were all right from their respective points of view, and wrong from the point of view of one another, and right and wrong from the point of view of the man who knew the elephant. I very much like this doctrine of the manyness of reality. It is this doctrine that has taught me to judge a Musalman from his standpoint and a Christian from his. Formerly I used to resent the ignorance of my opponents. Today I can love them because I am gifted with the eye to see myself as others see me and *vice versa*. I want to take the whole world in the embrace of my love. My *Anekantavad* is the result of the twin doctrine of *Satya* and *Ahimsa*.

*Young India*, 21-1-1926, p. 30

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Life for me is real as I believe it to be a spark of the Divine.

*Art of Living* (1961), p. 53

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The world is the playground of God and a reflection of His glory.

*An Autobiography* (1966), p. 153

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I recognize, that God manifests Himself in innumerable forms in this universe, and every such manifestation commands my spontaneous reverence.

*Young India*, 26-9-1929, p. 320

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He who knows the *Atman*<sup>4</sup> inhabiting the body and realizes Him to be a part of the supreme *Atman* will dedicate everything to Him.

*The Gita According to Gandhi* (1956), p. 186

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From the Imperishable Unmanifest down to the perishable atom everything in the universe is the Supreme and an expression of the Supreme.

*The Gita According to Gandhi* (1956), p. 254

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The world of sense... is every moment in a state of Flux. But even though it is perpetually changing, as its root is *Brahman* or the Supreme, it is imperishable.

*The Gita According to Gandhi* (1956), p. 337

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I believe in the immortality of the soul. I would like to give you the analogy of the ocean. The ocean is composed of drops of water; each drop is an entity and yet it is the part of the whole, 'the one and the many'. In this ocean of life, we are little drops. My doctrine means that I must identify myself with life, with everything that lives, that I must share the majesty of life in the presence of God. The sum-total of this life is God.

*Harijan*, 15-2-1948, p. 33

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1. A believer in non-duality
  2. A believer in manyness of reality
  3. A believer in manyness of reality
  4. Soul

## CHAPTER 3: GOD IN NATURE

I was charmed with the natural scenery about Rishikesh and the Lakshman Jhula, and bowed my head in reverence to our ancestors for their sense of the beautiful in Nature, and for their foresight in investing beautiful manifestations of Nature with a religious significance.

*An Autobiography* (1966), p.296

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I may gaze out upon the starry heavens overhead that stretch in an unending expanse of beauty. What conscious Art of man can give me the panoramic scenes that opens out before me, when I look up to the sky above with all its shining stars.... I personally feel how inadequate these are compared with the eternal symbols of Beauty in Nature.

*Young India*, 13-11-1924, p. 377

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'Is there Truth in a sunset or a crescent moon that shines amid the stars at night?' Indeed. These beauties are truthful, inasmuch as they make me think of the Creator at the back of them. How also 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.

*Young India*, 13-11-1924, p. 378

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I find in the practice of treeworship a thing instinct with a deep pathos and poetic beauty. It symbolizes true reverence for the entire vegetable kingdom, which with its endless panorama of beautiful shapes and forms, declares to us as it were with a million tongues the greatness and glory of God.

*Young India*, 26-9-1929, p. 320

## CHAPTER 4: MAN AND HIS DESTINY

"Is man a special creation of God?"

Man is a special creation of God precisely to the extent that he is distinct from the rest of His creation.

*Young India*, 13-2-1930, p. 56

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In eating, sleeping and in the performance of other physical functions, man is not different from the brute. What distinguishes him from the brute is his ceaseless striving to rise above the brute on the moral plane.

*Harijan*, 7-4-1946, p. 74

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Man is not a brute. He has risen to a higher state after countless births in brute creation. He is born to stand, not to walk on all fours or crawl. Bestiality is as far removed from manhood, as matter from spirit.

*Young India*, 29-4-1926, p. 157

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The brute by nature knows no self-restraint. Man is man because he is capable of, and only in so far as he exercises self-restraint.

*An Autobiography* (1966), p. 238

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Human nature will only find itself when it fully realizes that to be human it has to cease to be beastly or brutal.

*Harijan*, 8-10-1938, p. 282

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Man is higher than the brute in his moral instincts and moral institutions. The law of nature as applied to the one is different from the law of nature as applied to the other. Man has reason, discrimination, and free will such as it is. The brute

has no such thing. It is not a free agent, and knows no distinction between virtue and vice, good and evil. Man, being a free agent, knows these distinctions, and when he follows his higher nature shows himself far superior to the brute, but when he follows his baser nature can show himself lower than the brute. Even the races regarded as the most uncivilized on earth accept some restriction on sexual relations. If it be said that the restriction is itself barbarous, then freedom from all restraints should be the law of man. If all men were to act according to this lawless law, there would be perfect chaos within twenty-four hours. Man being by nature more passionate than the brute, the moment all restraint is withdrawn, the lava of unbridled passion would overspread the whole earth and destroy mankind. Man is superior to the brute inasmuch as he is capable of self-restraint and sacrifice, of which the brute is incapable.

*Young India*, 3-6-1926, p. 204

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Progress is man's distinction, man's alone, not beast's. Man has discrimination and reason. Man does not live by bread alone, as the brute does. He uses his reason to worship God and to know Him, and regards the attainment of that knowledge as the *summum bonum* of life. The brute, if he is said to worship God, does so involuntarily. The desire to worship God is inconceivable in the brute, while man can voluntarily worship even Satan. It must therefore be, and is, man's nature to know and find God. When he worships Satan, he acts contrary to his nature. Of course, I will not carry conviction to one who makes no distinction between man and the brute. To him virtue and vice are convertible terms. While to the man whose end and aim is realization of God, even the functions of eating and drinking can be natural only within certain limits. For having knowledge of God as his end, he will not eat or drink for the sake of enjoyment, but solely for sustaining the body. Restraint and renunciation will therefore always be his watch-words even in respect of these functions.

*Young India*, 24-6-1926, pp. 229-30

*Atman* is the same in every one of us. All souls possess equal potentialities; only some have developed their powers, while others have them in a dormant condition. These latter too will have a like experience, if only they try.

*Navjivan*, 25-5-1924, p. 306

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The Divine powers within us are infinite.

*An Autobiography*, (1966), p. 206

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Man is neither mere intellect, nor the gross animal body, nor the heart or soul alone. A proper and harmonious combination of all the three is required for the making of the whole man.

*Harijan*, 8-5-1937, p. 104

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It is not man's duty to develop all his functions to perfection; his duty is to develop all his God-ward faculties to perfection and to suppress completely those of a contrary tendency.

*Young India*, 24-6-1926, p. 229

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Unless the mind and the body and the soul are made to work in unison, they cannot be adequately used for the service of mankind. Physical, mental and spiritual purity is essential for their harmonious working. Therefore man should concentrate on developing, purifying and turning to the best use *all* his faculties.

*The Gita According to Gandhi*, (1956), p. 208

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The aim of life is that we should serve the Power that has created us, and on Whose mercy or consent depends our very breath, by heartily serving *Its* creation. That means love, not hate, which one sees, very here.

*Harijan*, 6-4-1947, pp. 98-99

The soul's natural progress is towards selflessness and purity.

*The Gita according to Gandhi*, (1956), p. 202

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Man's ultimate aim is the realization of God, and all his activities, social, political, religious, have to be guided by the ultimate aim of the vision of God. The immediate service of all human beings becomes a necessary part of the endeavour simply because the only way to find God is to see Him in His creation and be one with it. This can only be done by service of all.

*Harijan*, 29-8-1936, p. 226

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Man is not at peace with himself till he has become like unto God.

*The Gita According to Gandhi*, (1956), pp. 128-29

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The purpose of life is undoubtedly to know oneself. We cannot do it unless we learn to identify ourselves with all that lives. The sum-total of that life is God. Hence the necessity of realizing God living within every one of us....

The instrument of this knowledge is boundless selfless service.

*The Diary of Mahadev Desai-I*, (1953), p. 184

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Of all the animal creations of God, man is the only animal who has been created in order that he may know his Maker. Man's aim in life is not therefore to add from day to day to his material prospects and, to his material possessions but his predominant calling is from day to day to come nearer his own Maker.

*Young India*, 20-10-1927, p. 355

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Man is not born day after day to explore avenues for amassing riches and to explore different means of livelihood; on the contrary man is born in order that he may utilize every atom of his energy for the purpose of knowing his Maker.

*Young India*, 27-10-'27, p. 357

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Adam is not God but he is a spark of the Divine. And therefore he who is the most religiously behaved has most of the divine spark in him.

*The Gita According to Gandhi*, (1956), p. 128

## CHAPTER 5: SELF-DISCIPLINE

### Faith

It is faith that steers us through stormy seas, faith that moves mountains and faith that jumps across the ocean. That faith is nothing but a living, wide-awake consciousness of God within. He who has achieved that faith wants nothing. Bodily diseased he is spiritually healthy, physically poor, he rolls in spiritual riches.

*Young India*, 24-9-1925, p. 331

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Without faith this world would come to naught in a moment. True faith is appropriation of the reasoned experience of people whom we believe to have lived a life purified by prayer and penance. Belief therefore in prophets or incarnations who have lived in remote ages is not an idle superstition but a satisfaction of an inmost spiritual want.

*Young India*, 14-4-1927, p. 120

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Faith is not a delicate flower which would wither under the slightest stormy weather. Faith is like the Himalaya mountains which cannot possibly change. No storm can possibly remove the Himalaya mountains from their foundations... And I want every one of you to cultivate that faith in God and religion.

*Harijan*, 26-1-1934, p. 8

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A man without faith is like drop thrown out of the ocean bound to perish. Every drop in the ocean shares its majesty and has the honour of giving us the ozone of life.

*Harijan*, 25-4-1936, p. 84

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That faith is of little value which can flourish only in fair weather. Faith in order to be of any value has to survive the severest trials. Your faith is a whitened sepulchre if it cannot stand against the calumny of the whole world.

*Young India*, 25-4-1929, p. 134

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### Prayer

Prayer is the first and the last lesson in learning noble and the brave art of sacrificing self in the various walks of life culminating in the defence of one's nation's liberty and honour. Undoubtedly, prayer requires a living faith in God.

*Harijan*, 14-4-1946, p. 80

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Prayer is an impossibility without a living faith in the presence of God within.

*Young India*, 20-12-1928, p. 420

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I believe that prayer is the very soul and essence of religion, and therefore prayer must be the very core of life of man, for no man can live without religion. There are some who in the egotism of their reason declare that they have nothing to do with religion. But it is like a man saying that he breathes but that he has no nose. Whether by reason, or by instinct, or by superstition, man acknowledges some sort of relationship with the divine. The rankest agnostic or atheist does acknowledge the need of a moral principle, and associates something good with its observance and something bad with its non-observance. Bradlaugh, whose atheism is well known, always insisted on proclaiming his innermost conviction. He had to suffer a lot for thus speaking the truth, but he delighted in it and said that truth is its own reward. Not that he was quite insensible to the joy resulting from the observance of truth. This joy however is not at all worldly, but springs out of communion with the divine. That is why I have said that even a man who disowns religion cannot and does not live without religion.

*Young India*, 23-1-1930 p. 25

Now I come to the next thing, viz. that prayer is the very core of man's life, as it is the most vital part of religion. Prayer is either petitional or in its wider sense is inward communion. In either case the ultimate result is the same. Even when it is petitional, the petition should be for the cleansing and purification of the soul, for freeing it from the layers of ignorance and darkness that envelope it. He therefore who hungers for the awakening of the divine in him must fall back on prayer. But prayer is no mere exercise of words or of the ears, it is no mere repetition of empty formula. Any amount of repetition of *Ramanama* is futile if it fails to stir the soul. It is better in prayer to have a heart without words than words without a heart. It must be in clear response to the spirit which hungers for it. And even as a hungry man relishes a hearty meal, a hungry soul will relish a heart-felt prayer. And I am giving you a bit of my experience and that of my companions when I say that he who has experienced the magic of prayer may do without food for days together but not a single moment without prayer. For without prayer there is no inward peace.

*Young India*, 23-1-1930, p. 25

I have talked of the necessity for prayer, and there through I have dealt with the essence of prayer. We are born to serve our fellowmen, and we cannot properly do so unless we are wide awake. There is an eternal struggle raging in man's breast between the powers of darkness and of light, and he who has not the sheet anchor of prayer to rely upon will be victim to the powers of darkness. The man of prayer will be at peace with himself and with the whole world, the man who goes about the affairs of the world without a prayerful heart will be miserable and will make the world also miserable. Apart therefore from its bearing on man's condition after death, prayer has incalculable value for man in this world of the living. Prayer is the only means of bringing about orderliness and peace and repose in our daily acts. We inmates of the Ashram who came here in search of truth and for insistence on truth professed to believe in the efficacy of prayers but had never up to now made it a matter of vital concern. We did not bestow on it the care that we did on other matters. I awoke from my slumbers one day

and realized that I had been woefully negligent of my duty in the matter. I have therefore suggested measures of stern discipline and far from being any the worse, I hope we are the better for it. For it is so obvious. Take care of the vital thing and other things will take care of themselves. Rectify one angle of a square, and the other angles will be automatically right.

*Young India*, 23-1-1930, p. 26

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Prayer needs no speech. It is in itself independent of any sensuous effort. I have not the slightest doubt that prayer is an unfailing means of cleansing the heart of passions. But it must be combined with the utmost humility.

*An Autobiography*, (1966), p. 54

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As I believe that silent prayer is often a mightier (force) than any overt act, in my helplessness I continuously pray in the faith that the prayer of a pure heart never goes unanswered.

*Young India*, 22-9-1927, p. 321

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Prayer is for remembering God, and for purifying the heart and can be offered even when observing silence.

*Harijan*, 20-4-1947, p. 118

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I can give my own testimony and say that a heartfelt prayer is undoubtedly the most potent instrument that man possesses for overcoming cowardice and all other bad old habits.

*Young India*, 20-12-1928, p. 420

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As food is necessary for the body, prayer is necessary for the soul. A man may be able to do without food for a number of days—as MacSwiney did for over 70 days—but believing in God, man cannot, should not, live a moment without prayer.

*Young India*, 15-12-'27, p. 424

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True meditation consists in closing the eyes and ears of the mind to all else except the object of one's devotion. Hence the closing of eyes during prayers is an aid to such concentration. Man's conception of God is naturally limited. Each one has, therefore, to think of Him as best appeals to him, provided that the conception is pure and uplifting.

*Harijan*, 18-8-1946, p. 265

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I have never found Him lacking in response. I have found Him nearest at hand when the horizon seemed darkest—in my ordeals in jails when it was not all smooth sailing for me. I cannot recall a moment in my life when I had a sense of desertion by God.

*Harijan*, 24-12-1938, p. 395

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If you would ask Him to help you, you would go to Him in all your nakedness, approach Him without reservations, also without fear or doubts as to how He can help a fallen being like you. He who has helped millions, who have approached Him, is He going to desert you? He makes no exceptions whatsoever and you will find that every one of your prayers will be answered. The prayer of even the most impure will be answered. I am telling this out of my personal experience, I have gone through the purgatory. Seek first the Kingdom of Heaven and everything will be added unto you.

*Young India*, 4-4-1929, p. 111

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I agree that, if a man could practise the presence of God all the twenty-four hours, there would be no need for a separate time for prayer. But most people find this impossible. The sordid everyday world is too much with them. For them the practice of complete withdrawal of the mind from all outward things, even though it might be only for a few minutes every day, will be found to be of infinite

use. Silent communion will help them to experience an undisturbed peace in the midst of turmoil, to curb anger and cultivate patience.

*Harijan* 28-4-1946, p. 109

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Prayer is the key of the morning and the bolt of the evening.

*Young India*, 23-1-1930, p. 25

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...I have given my personal testimony. Let everyone try and find that, as a result of daily prayer, he adds something new to his life, something with which nothing can be compared.

*Young India*, 24-9-1931, p. 274

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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.

*Young India*, 25-9-1924, p. 313

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I claim to be a man of faith and prayer, and even if I were cut to pieces, I trust God would give me the strength not to deny Him and to assert that He is.

*Young India*, 8-12-1927, p. 413

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Even if I am killed, I will not give up repeating the names of Rama and Rahim, which mean to me the same God. With these names on my lips, I will die cheerfully.

*Harijan*, 20-4-1947, p. 118

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God answers prayer in His own way, not ours. His ways are different from the ways of mortals. Hence they are inscrutable. Prayer presupposes faith. No prayer goes in vain. Prayer is like any other action. It bears fruit whether we see it or not, and the fruit of heart, prayer is far more potent than action so called.

*Harijan*, 29-6-1947, p. 215

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One with a wicked heart can never be conscious of the all-purifying presence of God.

*Harijan*, 29-6-1947, p. 209

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When the mind is completely filled with His spirit one cannot harbour ill-will or hatred towards any one and reciprocally the enemy will shed his enmity and become a friend. It is not my claim that I have always succeeded in converting enemies into friends, but in numerous cases it has been my experience that when the mind is filled with His peace all hatred ceases. An unbroken succession of world teachers since the beginning of time have borne testimony to the same. I claim no merit for it. I know it is entirely due to God's grace.

*Harijan*, 28-4-1946, p. 109

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### Self-purification

My uniform experience has convinced me that there is no other God than Truth... The only means for the realization of Truth is Ahimsa... The little fleeting glimpses, therefore, that I have been able to have of Truth can hardly convey an idea of the indescribable lustre of Truth, a million times more intense than that of the sun we daily see with our eyes. In fact what I have caught is only the faintest glimmer of that mighty effulgence. But this much I can say with assurance, as a result of all my experiments, that a perfect vision of Truth can only follow a complete realization of Ahimsa.

To see the universal and all-pervading spirit of Truth face to face one must be able to love the meanest of creation as oneself. And a man who aspires after that cannot afford to keep out of any field of life...

Identification with everything that lives is impossible without self-purification; without self-purification the observance of the law of *Ahimsa* must remain an empty dream; God can never be realized by one who is not pure of heart. Self-purification therefore must mean purification in all the walks of life. And purification being highly infectious, purification of oneself necessarily leads to the purification of one's surroundings.

But the path of self-purification is hard and steep. To attain to perfect purity one has to become absolutely passion-free in thought, speech and action; to rise above the opposing currents of love and hatred, attachment and repulsion. I know that I have not in me as yet that triple purity, in spite of constant ceaseless striving for it. That is why the world's praise fails to move me, indeed it very often stings me. To conquer the subtle passions seems to me to be harder far than the physical conquest of the world by the force of arms. Ever since my return to India I have had experiences of the dormant passions lying hidden within me. The knowledge of them has made me feel humiliated though not defeated. The experiences and experiments have sustained me and given me great joy. But I know that I have still before me a difficult path to traverse. I must reduce myself to zero. So long as a man does not of his own free will put himself last among his fellow creatures, there is no salvation for him. *Ahimsa* is the farthest limit of humility.

*An Autobiography*, (1966), pp. 382-83

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The instruments for the quest of truth are as simple as they are difficult. They may appear quite impossible to an arrogant person, and quite possible to an innocent child. The seeker after the truth should be humbler than the dust. The world crushes the dust under its feet, but the seeker after truth should so humble himself that even the dust could crush him. Only then, and not till then, will he have a glimpse of Truth.

*Introduction to An Autobiography*, (1966), p. 11

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Who knows the perishable nature of flesh from the imperishable nature of the Spirit, instinctively knows that self-realization is impossible without self-discipline and self-restraint. The body may either be a play-ground of passion, or a temple of self-realization. If it is the latter, there is no room there for libertinism. The Spirit needs must curb the flesh every moment.

*Young India*, 3-6-1926, p. 205

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If the heart is pure, the grosser impulses of the body will have no scope. But what do we mean by the heart? And when may we believe the heart to be pure? The heart is nothing else but the *Atman* or the seat of the *Atman*. To imagine that it is pure is to imply perfect realization of the *Atman* and, in the presence of such realization, the cravings of the senses are inconceivable. But ordinarily we attribute purity to the heart when we are but striving after such purity. Say, I love you. This only means that I try to cultivate such a feeling for you. If I have unceasing love, I should be a perfectly enlightened man, which, indeed, I am not. Anyone for whom I have true love will not misunderstand my intentions or words, nor will such a one bear ill-will to me. It follows from this that, when anyone looks upon us as his enemy, the fault is primarily ours... Perfect purity of heart, therefore, is the final stage. Before we have reached that stage, as we advance towards greater and greater purity, the cravings of the senses will subside in corresponding measure.

*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. XII, p. 376

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Not until we have reduced ourselves to nothingness can we conquer the evil in us. God demands nothing less than complete self-surrender as the price for the only real freedom that is worth having.

*Young India*, 20-12-1928, p. 420

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## Truthfulness

Not truth simply as we ordinarily understand it, that as far as possible we ought not to resort to a lie; that is to say, not truth which merely answers the saying "Honesty is the best policy" implying that if it is not the best policy, we may depart from it. But Truth, as it is conceived here, means that we have to rule our life by this law of Truth at any cost. In order to clarify the definition, I have drawn upon the celebrated illustration of the life of Prahlad. For the sake of Truth, he dared to oppose his own father, and he defended himself, not by retaliation, by paying his father back in his own coin, but in defence of Truth as he knew it, he was prepared to die without caring to return the blows that he received from his father or from those who were charged with his father's instructions. Not only that; he would not even parry the blows. On the contrary, with a smile on his lips, he underwent the innumerable tortures to which he was subjected, with the result that at last Truth rose triumphant. Not that Prahlad suffered the tortures because he knew that some day or other in his very lifetime he would be able to demonstrate the infallibility of the law of Truth. The fact was there; but if he had died in the midst of tortures, he would still have adhered to Truth. That is the Truth which I would like to follow. There was an incident I noticed yesterday. It was a trifling incident, but I think these trifling incidents are like straws which show which way the wind is blowing. It happened like this. I was talking to a friend who wanted to talk to me aside, and we were engaged in a private conversation. Another friend dropped in, and he politely asked whether he was intruding. The friend to whom I was talking said: "Oh, no; there is nothing private here." I felt taken aback a little, because as I was taken aside, I knew that so far as this friend was concerned, the conversation was private. But he immediately out of politeness, I would call it over-politeness, said that there was no private conversation and that he (the other friend) could join. I suggest to you that this is a departure from my definition of Truth. I think that the friend should have, in the gentlest manner possible, but still openly and frankly said, "Yes, just now, as you rightly say, you would be intruding," without giving the slightest offence to the person if he was himself a gentleman and we are bound to consider everybody a gentleman unless he proves to be otherwise.

But I may be told that the incident, after all, proves the genteelity of the nation. I think that it is over-proving the case. If we continue to say these things out of politeness, we really become a nation of hypocrites. I recall a conversation I had with an English friend. He was comparatively a stranger. He is principal of a college and has been in India for several years. He was comparing notes with me, and he asked me whether I would admit that we, unlike most Englishmen, would not dare to say no when it was no that we meant. And I must confess that I immediately said yes; I agreed with that statement. We do hesitate to say no frankly and boldly, when we want to pay undue regard to the sentiment of the person whom we are addressing. In this *Ashram*<sup>1</sup> we make it a rule that we must say no when we mean no, regardless of consequences. This then is the first rule.

*Ashram Observances in Action*, (1959), pp. 127-30

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### Ahimsa

Literally *Ahimsa* means non-killing. But to me it has a world of meaning and takes me into realms much higher, infinitely higher, than the realm to which I would go if I merely understood by *Ahimsa*—non-killing. *Ahimsa* really means that you may not offend anybody, you may not harbour an uncharitable thought even in connection with one who may consider himself to be your enemy. Pray notice the guarded nature of this thought. I do not say “whom you consider your enemy,” but “who may consider himself your enemy.” For one who follows the doctrine of *Ahimsa* there is no room for an enemy; he denies the existence of an enemy. But there are people who consider themselves to be his enemies, and he cannot help it. So it is held that we may not harbour an evil thought even in connection with such persons. If we return blow for blow, we depart from the doctrine of *Ahimsa*. But I go further. If we resent a friend’s action or the so-called enemy’s action, we still fall short of this doctrine. But when I say we should not resent, I do not say that we should acquiesce. By resenting I mean wishing that some harm should be done to the enemy, or that he should be put out of the way, not even by any action of ours, but by the action of somebody else, or say by divine agency. If we harbour even this thought, we commit a

breach of *Ahimsa*. Those who join the *Ashram* have literally to accept that meaning. That does not mean that we practice this doctrine in its entirety. Far from it. It is an ideal which we have to reach, and it is an ideal to be reached even at this very moment if we were capable of doing so. But it is not a proposition in geometry to be learnt by heart; it is not even like solving difficult problems in higher mathematics; it is infinitely more difficult than that. Many of you have burnt the midnight oil in solving those problems. If you want to follow out this doctrine, you will have to do much more than burn the midnight oil. You will have to pass many a sleepless night, and go through many a mental torture and agony before you can reach, before you can even be within measureable distance of this goal. It is goal, and nothing less than that, you and I have to reach, if we want to understand what religious life means. I will not say more on this doctrine than this; that a man who believes in the efficacy of this doctrine finds, in the ultimate stage when he is about to reach the goal, the whole world at his feet. Not that he wants the whole world at his feet, but it must be so. If you express your love—*Ahimsa*—in such a manner that it impresses itself indelibly upon your so-called enemy, he must return that love. Another thought which comes out of this is that under this rule there is no room for organized assassinations, and there is no room for murders even openly committed, and there is no room for any violence even for the sake of your country, and even for guarding the honour of precious ones that may be in your charge. After all that would be a poor defence of honour. The doctrine of *Ahimsa* tells us that we may guard the honour of those who are in our charge by delivering ourselves into the hands of the man who would commit the sacrilege. And that requires far greater physical and mental courage than the delivering of blows. You may have some degree of physical power,—I do not say courage,—and you may use that power. But after that is expended, what happens? The other man is filled with wrath and indignation, and you have made him more angry by matching your violence against his; and when he has done you to death, the rest of his violence is delivered against your charge. But if you do not retaliate but stand your ground between your charge and the opponent, simply receiving the blows without retaliating, what happens? I give you my promise that the whole of his violence

will be expended on you, and your charge will be left unscathed. Under this plan of life there is no conception of patriotism which justifies such wars as you witness today in Europe.

*Ashram Observances in Action, (1959), pp. 130-134*

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### Celibacy

Those who want to perform national service, or those who want to have a glimpse of real religious life, must lead a celibate life, no matter whether married or unmarried. Marriage but brings a woman closer to the man, and they become friends in a special sense, never to be parted either in this life or in the lives that are to come. I do not think, that in our conception of marriage, our lust should necessarily enter. Be that as it may, this is what is placed before those who come to the *Ashram*.

*Ashram Observances in Action, (1959), p. 134*

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The world seems to be running after things of transitory value. It has no time for the other. And yet when one thinks a little deeper it becomes clear that it is the things eternal that count in the end.

What is *Brahmacharya*<sup>1</sup>? It is the way of life which leads us to *Brahma* (God). It includes full control over the process of reproduction. The control must be in thought, word and deed. If the thought is not under control, the other two have no value. There is saying in Hindustani: "He whose heart is pure has the all purifying waters of the Ganges in his house." For one whose thought is under control, the other is mere child's play. The *Brahmachari*<sup>2</sup> of my conception will be healthy and will easily live long. He will not even suffer from so much as a headache. Mental and physical work will not cause fatigue. He is ever bright, never slothful. Outward neatness will be an exact reflection of the inner. He will exhibit all the attributes of the steadfast one described in the *Gita*. It need cause no worry if not one person is met with answering the description.

Is it strange that one who is able completely to conserve and sublimate the vital fluid which has the potentiality of creating human beings, should exhibit all the attributes described above? Who can measure the creative strength of such sublimation, one drop of which has the potentiality of bringing into being a human life? Patanjali has described five disciplines. It is not possible to isolate any one of these and practice it. It may be posited in the case of Truth, because it really includes the other four. And for this age the five have been expanded into eleven. Acharya Vinoba has put them in the form of a Marathi verse: They are non-violence, truth, non-stealing, *Brahmacharya*, non-possession, bread labour, control of the palate, fearlessness, equal regard for all religions, *Swadeshi*<sup>3</sup> and removal of untouchability.

All these can be derived from truth. But life is complex. It is not possible to enunciate one grand principle and leave the rest to follow of itself. Even when we know a proposition, its corollaries have to be worked out.

It is well to bear in mind that all the disciplines are of equal importance. If one is broken all are. There seems to be a popular belief amongst us that breach of truth or non-violence is pardonable. Non-stealing and non-possession are rarely mentioned. We hardly recognize the necessity of observing them. But a fancied breach of *Brahmacharya* excites wrath and worse. There must be something seriously wrong with a society in which values are exaggerated and underestimated.

Moreover, to use the word *Brahmacharya* in a narrow sense is to detract from its value. Such detraction increases the difficulty of proper observance. When it is isolated even the elementary observance becomes difficult, if not impossible. Therefore, it is essential that all the disciplines should be taken as one. This enables one to realize the full meaning and significance of *Brahmacharya*.

*Harijan*, 8-6-1947, p. 180

### Control of the Palate

A man who wants to control animal passion does so more easily if he controls his palate. I am afraid this is a rather difficult observance. I am just now coming after having inspected the Victoria hostel. I saw there not to my dismay,—though it should be to my dismay,—but I am used to it now, that there are so many kitchens, not kitchens that are established in order to serve caste restrictions but kitchens that have become necessary in order that people can have the condiments and the exact weight of the condiments to which they are accustomed in the places from which they have come. And therefore we find that for the Brahmans themselves there are different compartments and different kitchens catering for the delicate tastes of all those different groups. I suggest that this is simply slavery to the palate, rather than mastery over it. I may say this. Unless we take our mind off from this habit, unless we shut our eyes to the tea shops and coffee shops and all these kitchens, unless we are satisfied with foods that are necessary for the maintenance of health, and unless we are prepared to rid ourselves of stimulating, heating and exciting condiments that we mix with our food, we shall certainly not be able to control the over-abundant and unnecessary stimulation that we may have. If we do not do that, the result naturally is that we abuse ourselves and we abuse even the sacred trust given to us, and we become inferior to animals. Eating, drinking and indulging in passion we share in common with the animals; but have you ever seen a horse or a cow indulging in the abuse of the palate as we do? Do you suppose that it is a sign of civilization, a sign of real life that we should multiply our eatables so far that we do not even know where we are and seek dish after dish until at last we have become absolutely mad and run after the newspaper sheets which give us advertisements about these dishes?

*Ashram Observances in Action, (1959), pp. 134-35*

### Non-stealing

I suggest that we are thieves in a way. If I take anything that I do not need for my own immediate use and keep it, I steal it from somebody else. I venture to

suggest that it is the fundamental law of Nature without exception, that she produces enough for our wants from day to day, and if everybody took enough for himself and nothing more, there would be no pauperism, there would be no man dying of starvation in this world. But so long as we have got this inequality, so long we are stealing, I am no socialist, and I do not want to dispossess those who have got possessions; but I do say that those of us who want to see light out of darkness have to follow this rule in their own lives. I do not want to dispossess anybody, for I should then be departing from the rule of *Ahimsa*. If somebody else possesses more than I do, let him. But so far as my own life has to be regulated, I do say that I dare not possess anything which I do not need. In India we have got millions of people living on one meal a day, and that meal consisting of a *chapati*<sup>4</sup> with no fat spread on it and a pinch of salt. You and I have no right to anything more until these millions are clothed and fed better. You and I, who ought to know better, must adjust our wants, and even undergo voluntary starvation, in order that they may be fed and clothed.

*Ashram Observances in Action*, (1959), pp. 136-37

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### Non-Possession

This principle is really a part of Non-stealing. Just as one must not receive, so must one not possess anything which one does not really need. It would be a breach of this principle to possess unnecessary food-stuffs, clothing, or furniture. For instance, one must not keep a chair if one can do without it. In observing this principle one is led to a progressive simplification of one's own life.

*Ashram Observances in Action*, (1959), p. 113

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### Physical Labour

Physical labour is essential for the observance of Non-stealing and Non-possession. Man can be saved from injuring society, as well as himself, only if he sustains his physical existence by physical labour. Able-bodied adults must do all their personal work themselves, and must not be served by others, except for

proper reasons. But they must at the same time, remember, that service of children, as well as of the disabled, the old and the sick, is a duty incumbent on every person who has the required strength.

*Ashram Observances in Action*, (1959), p. 113

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### **Swadeshi**

*Swadeshi* is an essential observance. I suggest that we are departing from one of the sacred laws of our being when we leave our neighbour and go out somewhere else in order to satisfy our wants. If a man comes from Bombay here and offers you wares, you are not justified in supporting the Bombay merchant so long as you have got a merchant at your very door, born and bred in Madras. That is my view of *Swadeshi*. In your village, so long as you have got your village barber, you are bound to support him to the exclusion of the finished barber who may come to you from Madras. If you find it necessary that your village barber should reach the attainments of the barber from Madras, you may train him to that. Send him to Madras by all means, if you wish, in order that he may learn his calling. Until you do that you are not justified in going to another barber. That is *Swadeshi*. So when we find that there are many things that we cannot get in India, we must try to do without them. We have to do without many things which we may consider necessary; but believe me, when you are in that frame of mind, you will find a great burden taken off your shoulders, even as the Pilgrim did in the inimitable book, *The Pilgrim's Progress*. There came a time when the mighty burden that the Pilgrim was carrying on his shoulders dropped from him, and he felt a freer man than he was when he started on the journey. So will you feel freer men than you are now, immediately you adopt *Swadeshi*.

*Ashram Observances in Action*, (1959), pp. 137-39

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### **Fearlessness**

I found, throughout my wanderings in India, that India, educated India is seized with a paralysing fear. We may not open our lips in public; we may not declare

our confirmed opinions in public; we may hold those opinions and may talk about them secretly, but they are not for public consumption. If we had taken a vow of silence, I would have nothing to say. But when we open our lips in public, we say things we do not really believe in. I do not know whether this is not true of almost every public man who speaks in India. I then suggest to you that there is only one Being,—if Being is the proper term to be used,—whom we have to fear, and that is God. When we fear God, we shall fear no man, no matter how highly placed he may be. And if you want to follow the vow of Truth in any shape or form, you must be fearless. And so you find, in the *Bhagavadgita*, fearlessness is designated the first essential quality of a good man. We fear consequences, and therefore we are afraid to tell the truth. A man who fears God will certainly not fear any earthly consequence. Before we can aspire to understand what religion is, and before we can aspire to guide the destinies of India, do you not see that we should adopt this habit of fearlessness? Or shall we overawe our countrymen, even as we are overawed? We thus see how important fearlessness is.

*Ashram Observances in Action*, (1959), pp. 139-40

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### Removing Untouchability

Untouchability is a blot that Hinduism today carries with it. I decline to believe that it has been handed to us from immemorial times. I think that this miserable, wretched, enslaving spirit of untouchability must have come to us when we were in the cycle of our lives at our lowest ebb, and that evil has still stuck to us and it still remains with us. It is to my mind a curse that has come to us, and so long as that curse remains with us, so long I think we are bound to hold that every affliction that we labour under in this sacred land is a fit and proper punishment for this great crime that we are committing. That any person should be considered untouchable because of his calling passes one's comprehension; and you, the student world who receive all this modern education, if you become a party to this crime, it were better that you received no education whatsoever.

*Ashram Observances in action*, (1959), pp. 140-41

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### Silence

It has often occurred to me that a seeker after Truth has to be silent. I know the wonderful efficacy of silence. I visited a Trappist monastery in South Africa. A beautiful place it was. Most of the inmates of that place were under a vow of silence. I inquired of the Father the motive of it and he said the motive is apparent: "We are frail human beings. We do not know very often what we say. If we want to listen to the still small voice that is always speaking within us, it will not be heard if we continually speak." I understood that precious lesson. I know the secret of silence.

*Young India*, 6-8-1925, pp. 274-75

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Experience has taught me that silence is part of the spiritual discipline of a votary of Truth. Proneness to exaggerate, to suppress or modify the truth, wittingly or unwittingly, is a natural weakness of man, and silence is necessary in order to surmount it. A man of few words will rarely be thoughtless in his speech; he will measure every word.

*An Autobiography*, (1966), p. 46

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Silence has now become both a physical and spiritual necessity for me. Originally it was taken to relieve the sense of pressure. Then I wanted time for writing. After, however, I had practised it for some time I saw the spiritual value of it. It suddenly flashed across my mind that that was the time when I could best hold communion with God. And now I feel as though I was naturally built for silence.

*Harijan*, 10-12-1938, pp. 373-74

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Silence of the sewn-up lips is no silence. One may achieve the same result by chopping off one's tongue, but that too would not be silence. He is truly silent who, having the capacity to speak, utters no idle word.

*Harijan*, 24-6-1933, p.5

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## Humility

Truth is not to be found by anybody who has not got an abundant sense of humility. If you would swim on the bosom of the ocean of Truth you must reduce yourself to zero.

*Young India*, 31-12-1931, p. 428

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The spirit of non-violence necessarily leads to humility. Non-violence means reliance on God, the Rock of Ages. If we would seek His aid, we must approach Him with a humble and contrite heart... We must act, even as the mango tree which droops as it bears fruit. Its grandeur lies in its majestic lowness.

*Young India*, 12-1-1921, p. 13

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Humility must not be here confounded with mere manners or etiquette. One man will sometimes prostrate himself before another, although his heart is full of bitterness against him. This is not humility, but cunning. A man may chant *Ramanama<sup>6</sup>*, or tell his beads all day long, and move in society like a sage; but if he is selfish at heart, he is not meek, but only hypocritical.

A humble person is not himself conscious of his humility. Truth and the like perhaps admit of measurement, but not humility. Inborn humility can never remain hidden, and yet the possessor is unaware of its existence. The story of Vasishtha and Vishvamitra furnishes a very good case in point. Humility should make the possessor *realize*, that he is as nothing. Directly we imagine ourselves to be something, there is egotism. If a man who keeps observances is proud of keeping them, they will lose much, if not all of their value. And a man who is proud of his virtue often becomes a curse to society. Society will not appreciate it, and he himself will fail to reap any benefit from it. Only a little thought will suffice to convince us, that all creatures are nothing more than mere atom in this universe. Our existence as embodied being is purely momentary; what are a hundred years in eternity? But if we shatter the chains of egotism, and melt into the ocean of humility, we share its dignity. To feel that we are something is to

set up a barrier between God and ourselves; to cease feeling that we are something is to become one with god. A drop in the ocean partakes of the greatness of its parent, although it is unconscious of it. But it is dried up, as soon as it enters upon an existence independent of the ocean. We do not exaggerate, when we say that life on earth is a mere bubble.

A life of service must be one of humility. He who would sacrifice his life for others has hardly time to reserve for himself a place in the sun. Inertia must not be mistaken for humility, as it has been in Hinduism. True humility means most strenuous and constant endeavour entirely directed towards the service of humanity. God is continuously in action without resting for a single moment. If we would serve Him or become one with Him, our activity must be as unwearied as His. There may be momentary rest in store for the drop which is separated from the ocean, but not for the drop in the ocean, which knows no rest. The same is the case with ourselves. As soon as we become one with the ocean in the shape of God, there is no more rest for us, nor indeed do we need rest any longer. Our very sleep is action. For we sleep with the thought of God in our hearts. This restlessness constitutes true rest. This never-ceasing agitation holds the key to peace ineffable. This supreme state of total surrender is difficult to describe, but not beyond the bounds of human experience. It has been attained by many dedicated souls, and may be attained by ourselves as well.

*From Yeravda Mandir, (1957), pp. 45-48*

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1. A place for disciplined community living.
  2. Celibacy; observance of chastity or continence in the quest of God.
  3. A celibate
  4. Literally of one's own country; insistence on the use of goods made in one's own country, preferably hand-made and those too of the neighbours first.
  5. Thin flat cake made of flour; unleavened bread.
  6. Literally, the name of Rama, recitation of God's name

## CHAPTER 6: AN IDEAL MAN

One who renounces all the cravings which torment the heart and derives his contentment from within himself is said to be a *Sthitprajna* or *Samadhistha* (one stable in spirit). He is unruffled in adversity, and he does not hanker after happiness. Pleasure and pain are felt through the five senses. Therefore this wise man draws his senses away from sense objects even as a tortoise draws in his limbs. The tortoise withdraws into his shell when he apprehends danger. But in the case of human beings sense objects are ready to attack the senses at all times; therefore their senses must be always be drawn in, and they should be ever ready to fight against sense objects. This is the real battle. Some people revert to self-mortification and fasting as weapons of defence against sense objects. These measures have their limited use. The senses do not make for sense objects so long as a man is fasting, but fasting alone does not destroy his relish for them. On the other hand that relish may be heightened when the fast is broken, and a man can get rid of it only with the grace of God. The senses are so powerful that they drag a man behind them by force if he is not on his guard. Therefore a man must always keep them under control. This end he can achieve only if he turns his eyes inward, realizes God Who resides in his heart and is devoted to Him. One who thus looks upon Him as his goal and surrenders his all to Him, keeping his senses in control, is a *yogi* stable in spirit. On the other hand if a man is not master of his senses, he is always musing on the objects of sense and conceives an attachment for them, so that he can hardly think of anything else. From this attachment arises desire; and when the desire is thwarted he gets angry. Anger drives him nearly mad. He cannot understand what he is about. He thus loses his memory, behaves in a disorderly manner and comes to an ignoble end. When a man's senses rove at will, he is like a rudderless ship which is at the mercy of the gale and is broken to pieces on the rocks. Men should therefore abandon all desires and restrain their senses, so that these do not indulge in undesirable activity. The eyes then will look straight and that too only at holy objects; the ears will listen to hymns in praise of God or to cries of distress;

hands and feet will be engaged in service. Indeed all the organs of sense and of action will be employed in helping a man to do his duty and making him a fit recipient of the grace of God. And once the grace of God has descended upon him, all his sorrows are at an end. As snow melts in the sunshine, all pain vanishes when the grace of God shines upon him and he is said to be stable in spirit. But if a man is not stable-minded, how can he think good thoughts? Without good thoughts there is no peace, and without peace there is no happiness. Where a stable-minded man sees things clear as daylight, the unstable man distracted by the turmoil of the world is as good as blind. On the other hand what is pure in the eyes of the worldly wise looks unclean to and repels the stable-minded man. Rivers continuously flow into the sea, but the sea remains unmoved; in the same way all sense objects come to the *yogi*, but he always remains calm like the sea. Thus one who abandons all desires, is free from pride and selfishness and behaves as one apart, finds peace. This is the condition of a perfect man of God, and he who is established therein even at the final hour is saved.

*Discourses on the Gita*, (1960), pp. 11-13

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The ideal of the *Sthitaprajna* (man whose understanding is secure), described in the Second Chapter of the *Gita*, is always before me and I am ceaseless in my efforts to reach that ideal. Whatever others might say of me, I know I am yet far from it. When one really reaches such a state, his very thought becomes charged with a power which transforms those around him. But where is that power in me now? I can only say that I am a common mortal, made of the same clay of which others are made, only ceaselessly striving to attain the lofty ideal which *Gita* holds before all mankind.

*Harijan*, 23-3-1947, p. 74

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If we accept that ideal of a *Sthitaprajna* i.e., "the man of steady wisdom" i.e., a *Satyagrahi*, we would not regard anybody as our enemy; we must shed all enmity and ill-will. That ideal is not meant for the select few—the saint or the seer only; it is meant for all. I have described myself as a scavenger having

become one, not only in the name but in fact, while I was in Phoenix. It was there that I took up the bucket and the broom, impelled by the inner urge to identify myself with the lowest of the low. As a humble fellow-toiler, then, let me bear witness that anyone, even a simple-minded villager who wants to and tries, can attain the state of mental equipoise described in the *Gita* verses. We all lose our sanity at times, though we may not care to admit it or be even aware of it. A man with a steady mind will never lose patience, even with a child, or indulge in anger or abuse. Religion, as taught in the *Gita*, is a thing to be practised in this life. It is not a means for attaining merit in the next, irrespective of what you may do here. That would be a negation of religion.

*Harijan*, 14-4-1946, p. 78

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The lesson of *Bhagavad Gita* is meant not for those who have forsaken the world, but for every householder, irrespective of his birth and state. Everybody's duty should be to attain the state described therein, and this can only be done if life is built on the rock of fearlessness.

*Harijan*, 5-1-1947, p. 479

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Is it too difficult an ideal to follow? No. On the contrary, the conduct laid down in it is the only conduct worthy of the dignity of human beings.

*Harijan*, 28-4-1946, p. 111

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I confess that, in spite of my trying to reach the state, I am far away from the condition of equipoise.

*Harijan*, 10-8-1947, p. 270

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No one can attain perfection while he is in the body for the simple reason that the ideal state is impossible so long as one has not completely overcome his ego, and ego cannot be wholly got rid of so long as one is tied down by shackles of the flesh.

*Young India*, 20-9-1928, pp. 319

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But it is impossible for us to realize perfect Truth so long as we are imprisoned in this mortal frame.

*From Yeravda Mandir*, (1957), p. 5

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The goal ever recedes from us. The greater the progress, the greater the recognition of our unworthiness. Satisfaction lies in the efforts not in the attainment. Full effort is full victory.

*Young India*, 9-3-1922, p. 141

## SECTION - II: MEANS AND ENDS

### CHAPTER 7: MEANS AND ENDS

For me, it is enough to know the means. Means and end are convertible terms in my philosophy of life.

*Young India, 26-12-1924, p. 424*

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The means may be likened to a seed, the end to a tree, and there is just the same inviolable connection between there means and the end as there is between the seed and the tree.

*Hind Swaraj, (1962), p. 71*

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They say 'means are after all means'. I would say 'means are after all everything'. As the means so the end..... There is no wall of separation between means and end. Indeed the Creator has given us control (and that too very limited) over means, none over the end. Realization of the goal is in exact proportion to that of the means. This is a proposition that admits of no exception.

*Young India, 17-7-1924, p. 236*

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Right conduct is not like Euclid's right line. It is like a beautiful tree, not one of whose millions of leaves is like any other. Though therefore they are from one seed and belong to the same tree, there is none of the uniformity of a geometrical figure about any part of a tree. And yet we know that the seed, the branches and the leaves are one and the same. We know too that no geometrical figure can bear comparison with a full-blossomed tree in point of beauty and grandeur.

*Young India, 14-8-1924, p. 267*

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Imagine a rectangular frame without a slate. The slightest rough handling of the frame would turn the right angles into acute and obtuse angles and if the frame was again rightly handled at one corner the other three would be automatically turned into right angles.

*Harijan*, 30-11-1947, p. 447

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Impure means result in an impure end..... One cannot reach Truth by untruthfulness. Truthful conduct alone can reach Truth. Are not Non-violence and Truth twins? The answer is an emphatic 'No'. Non-violence is embedded in Truth and vice versa. Hence has it been said that they are faces of the same coin. Either is inseparable from the other. Read the coin either way. The spelling of words will be different. The value is the same. This blessed state is unattainable without perfect purity. Harbour impurity of mind or body and you have untruth and violence in you.

*Harijan*, 13-7-1947, p. 252

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"To work thou hast the right, never to the fruit thereof" is one of the golden precepts of the *Gita*.

*Harijan*, 18-8-1940 p. 254

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We are merely the instruments of the Almighty Will and are therefore often ignorant of what helps us forward and what acts as an impediment. We must thus rest satisfied with a knowledge only of the means, and if these are pure, we can fearlessly leave the end to take care of itself.

*Satyagraha in South Africa*, (1950), p. 318

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The clearest possible definition of the goal and its appreciation would fail to take us there, if we do not know and utilize the means of achieving it. I have, therefore, concerned myself principally with the conservation of the means and their progressive use. I know if we can take care of them, attainment of the goal

is assured. I feel too that our progress towards the goal will be in exact proportion to the purity of our means.

This method may appear to be long, perhaps too long, but I am convinced that it is the shortest.

*Selections from Gandhi, (1957), pp. 36-37*

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However much I may sympathize with and admire worthy motives, I am an uncompromising opponent of violent methods even to serve the noblest of causes..... Experience convinces me that permanent good can never be the outcome of untruth and violence. Even if my belief is a fond delusion, it will be admitted that it is a fascinating delusion.

*Young India, 11-12-1924, p. 406*

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I have often said that if one takes care of the means, the end will take care of itself. Non-violence is the means, the end for every nation is complete independence.

*Harijan, 11-2-1939, p. 8*

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My faith in the wise saying that what is gained by the sword will also be lost by the sword is imperishable.

*Harijan, 2-9-1939, p. 260*

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By detachment I mean that you must not worry whether the desired result follows from your action or not, so long as your motive is pure, your means correct. Really, it means that things will come right in the end if you take care of the means and leave the rest to Him.

*Harijan, 7-4-1946, p. 72*

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Success or failure is not in our hands. It is enough we do our part well.... Ours is but to strive. In the end, it will be as He wishes.

*Harijan*, 12-1-1947, p. 490

## CHAPTER 8: THE MEANING OF NON-VIOLENCE

God can be found only through love, not earthly, but divine.

*Harijan*, 23-11-1947, p. 425

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Where love is, there God is also.

*Satyagraha in South Africa*, (1950), p. 237

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*Ahimsa* means Universal Love.

*From Yeravda Mandir*, (1957), p. 10

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*Ahimsa* means 'Love' in the Pauline sense, and yet something more than the 'Love' defined by St. Paul, although I know St. Paul's beautiful definition is good enough for all practical purposes. *Ahimsa* includes the whole creation, and not only human. Besides, 'Love' in the English language has other connotation too, and so I was compelled to use the negative word. But it does not, as I have told you, express a negative force, but a force superior to all the forces put together. One person who can express *Ahimsa* in life exercises a force superior to all the forces of brutality.

*Harijan*, 14-3-1936, p. 39

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Non-violence is soul-force or the power of the Godhead within us. We become Godlike to the extent we realize non-violence.

*Harijan*, 12-11-1938, p. 326

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*Ahimsa* is not merely a negative state of harmlessness, but it is a positive state of love, of doing good even to the evil-doer. But it does not mean helping the evil-doer to continue the wrong or tolerating it by passive acquiescence. On the

contrary, love—the active state of *Ahimsa*—requires you to resist the wrong-doer by dissociating yourself from him, even though it may offend him or injure him physically. Thus if my son lives a life of shame, I may not help him to do so by continuing to support him; on the contrary, my love for him requires me to withdraw all support from him although it may mean even his death. And the same love imposes on me the obligation of welcoming him to my bosom when he repents. But I may not by physical force compel my son to become good. That, in my opinion, is the moral of the story of The Prodigal son.

*Young India*, 25-8-1920, p. 2

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In its positive form, *Ahimsa* means the largest love, the greatest charity. If I am a follower of *Ahimsa* I must love my enemy. I must apply the same rules to the wrong-doer, who is my enemy or a stranger to me, as I would to my wrong-doing father or son! This active *Ahimsa* necessarily includes Truth and fearlessness. As man cannot deceive the loved one, he does not fear or frighten him or her. Gift of life is the greatest of all gifts; a man who gives it in reality, disarms all hostility. He has paved the way for an honourable understanding. And none who is himself subject to fear can bestow that gift. He must, therefore, be himself fearless.

*Speeches and Writings of Mahatma Gandhi*, (Fourth Edition), p. 346

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It is no non-violence if we merely love those that love us. It is non-violence only when we love those that hate us. I know how difficult it is to follow this grand Law of Love. But are not all great and good things difficult to do? Love of the hater is the most difficult of all. But, by the grace of God, even this most difficult thing becomes easy to accomplish if we want to do it.

*Selections from Gandhi*, (1957), p. 17

## CHAPTER 9: THE LAW OF HUMAN SPECIES

The world is full of *Himsa* and Nature does appear to be 'red in tooth and claw'. But if we bear in mind that man is higher than the brute, then is man superior to that Nature. If man has a divine mission to fulfil, a mission that becomes him, it is that of *Ahimsa*. Standing as he does in the midst of *Himsa*, he can retire into the innermost depths of his heart and declare to the world around him that his mission in this world of *Himsa* is *Ahimsa* and only to the extent that he practises it does he adorn his kind. Man's nature then he is not *Himsa*, but *Ahimsa*, for he can speak from experience his innermost conviction that he is not the body but Atman and that he may use the body only with a view to expressing the Atman only with a view to self-realization. And from that experience he evolves the ethics of subduing desire, anger, ignorance, malice and other passions, puts forth his best effort to achieve the end and finally attains complete success. Only when his efforts reach that consummation can he be said to have fulfilled himself, to have acted according to his nature. Conquest of one's passions, therefore, is not superhuman, but human, and observance of *Ahimsa* is heroism of the highest type, with no room therein for cowardice or weakness.

*Young India*, 24-6-1926, p. 230

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Non-violence is not a cloistered virtue confined only to the *Rishi*<sup>1</sup> and the cave-dweller. It is capable of being practised by the millions, not with full knowledge of its implications, but because it is the Law of our Species. It distinguishes man from the brute. But man has not shed the brute in him. He has to strive to do so. This striving applies to the practice of non-violence, not to the belief in it. I cannot strive to believe in a principle: I either believe in it or I do not. And if I believe in it, I must bravely strive to practise it. *Ahimsa* is an attribute of the brave. Cowardice and *Ahimsa* do not go together any more than water and fire.

*Harijan*, 4-11-1939, p. 331

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I am not a visionary. I claim to be a practical idealist. The religion of non-violence is not meant merely for the *Rishis* and saints. It is meant for the common people as well. Non-violence is the Law of our Species, as violence is the Law of the Brute. The Spirit lies dormant in the brute, and he knows no law but that of physical might. The dignity of man requires obedience to a higher law—to the strength of the Spirit. The *Rishis*, who discovered the Law of non-violence in the midst of violence, were greater geniuses than Newton. They were themselves greater warriors than Wellington. Having themselves known the use of arms, they realized their uselessness and taught a weary world that its salvation lay not through violence but through non-violence.

*Young India*, 11-8-1920, p. 3

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1. Non-violence is the law of the human race and is infinitely greater than and superior to brute force.
  2. In the last resort, it does not avail to those who do not possess a living faith in the God of Love.
  3. Non-violence affords the fullest protection to one's self-respect and sense of honour, but not always to possession of land or movable property, though its habitual practice does prove a better bulwark than the possession of armed men to defend them. Non-violence in the very nature of things, is of no assistance in the defence of ill-gotten gains and immoral acts.
  4. Individuals or nations, who would practise non-violence, must be prepared to sacrifice (nations to the last man) their all except honour. It is, therefore, inconsistent with the possession of other people's countries, i.e. modern Imperialism, which is frankly based on force for its defence.
  5. Non-violence is a power which can be wielded equally by all—children, young men and women or grown-up people, provided they have a living faith in the God of Love and have, therefore, equal love for all mankind. When non-violence is accepted as the Law of Life, it must pervade the whole being and not be applied to isolated acts.

6. It is a profound error to suppose that whilst the Law is good enough for individual, it is not for masses of mankind.

*Harijan*, 5-9-1936, p. 236

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Consciously or unconsciously, we are acting non-violently towards one another in daily life. All well-constructed societies are based on the Law of Non-violence. I have found that life persists in the midst of destruction and, therefore, there must be a higher law than that of destruction. Only under that law would a well-ordered society be intelligible and life worth living. And, if that is the Law of Life we have to work it out in daily life. Whenever there are jars, wherever you are confronted with an opponent, conquer him with love. In this crude manner, I have worked it out in my life. That does not mean that all my difficulties are solved. Only I have found that this Law of Love has answered as the Law of destruction has never done.

*Young India*, 1-10-1931, p. 286

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I claim that even now, though the social structure is not based on a conscious acceptance of non-violence, all the world over mankind lives and men retain their possessions on the sufferance of one another. If they had not done so, only the fewest and the most ferocious would have survived. But such is not the case. Families are bound together by ties of love, and so are groups in the so-called civilized society called nations. Only they do not recognize the supremacy of the Law of Non-violence. It follows, therefore, that they have not investigated its vast possibilities.

*Harijan*, 22-2-1942, p. 48

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Scientists tell us that without the presence of the cohesive force amongst the atoms that comprise this globe of ours, it would crumble to pieces and we would cease to exist. And even as there is cohesive force in blind matter so must there be in all things animate; and the name for that cohesive force among animate

beings is Love. We notice it between father and son, between brother and sister, friend and friend. But we have to learn to use that force among all that lives, and in the use of it consists our knowledge of God. Where there is Love, there is Life; hatred leads to destruction.

*Young India*, 5-5-1920, p. 7

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All the saints of the world, ancient and modern, were each according to his light and capacity a living illustration of that Supreme Law of our Being. That the brute in us seems so often to gain an easy triumph is true enough. That, however, does not disprove the Law. It shows the difficulty of practice. How should it be otherwise with a Law which is as high as Truth itself? When the practice of the Law becomes universal, God will reign on earth as He does in Heaven. We know the earth, and we are strangers to the Heaven within us. If it is allowed that for some the practice of love is possible, it is arrogance not to allow even the possibility of its practice in all the others.

*Harijan*, 26-9-1936, p. 260

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The man who discovered for us the Law of Love was a far greater scientist than any of our modern scientists. Only our explorations have not gone far enough and so it is not possible for everyone to see all its workings. Such, at any rate, is the hallucination, if it is one, under which I am labouring. The more I work at this Law, the more I feel the delight in life, the delight in the scheme of this universe. It gives me a peace and a meaning of mysteries of Nature that I have no power to describe.

*Young India*, 1-10-1931, p. 287

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The sum total of the experience of mankind is that men somehow or other live on. From which fact I infer that it is the Law of Love that rules mankind. Had violence, i.e. hate, ruled us, we should have become extinct long ago. And yet the tragedy of it is that the so-called civilized men and nations conduct

themselves as if the basis of society was violence. It gives me ineffable joy to make experiments proving that Love is the supreme and only Law of Life. Much evidence to the contrary cannot shake my faith.

*Harijan*, 13-4-1940, p. 90

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This world is held together by bonds of love. History does not record the day-to-day incidents of love and service. It only records incidents of conflict and wars. Actually, however, acts of love and service are much more common in this world than conflicts and quarrels. We find innumerable villages and towns flourishing in the world. If the world were always full of quarrel and discord, they could not possibly exist.

*Bapu's Letters to Ashram sisters*, (1960), p. 113

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If we turn our eyes to the time of which history has any record down to our own time we shall find that man has been steadily progressing towards *Ahimsa*. Our remote ancestors were cannibals. Then came a time when they were fed up with cannibalism and they began to live on chase. Next came a stage when man was ashamed of leading the life of a wandering hunter. He, therefore, took to agriculture and depended principally on Mother Earth for his food. Thus, from being a nomad, he settled down to civilized stable life, founded villages and towns, and from member of a family he became member of a community and a nation. All these are signs of progressive *Ahimsa* and diminishing *Himsa*. Had it been otherwise, the human species should have been extinct by now, even as many of the lower species have disappeared.

*Harijan*, 11-8-1940, p. 245

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Modern science is replete with illustrations of the seemingly impossible having become possible within living memory. But the victories of physical science would be nothing against the victory of the Science of Life, which is summed up in Love which is the Law of our Being. I know that it cannot be proved by

argument. It shall be proved by persons living it in their lives, in utter disregard of consequences to themselves. There is no real gain without sacrifice. And since demonstration of the Law of Love is the realest gain, sacrifice too must be the greatest required.

*Harijan*, 26-9-1936, p. 260

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If we believe that mankind has steadily progressed towards *Ahimsa*, it follows that it has to progress towards it still further. Nothing in this world is static, everything is kinetic. If there is no progression, then there is inevitable retrogression. No one can remain without the eternal cycle, unless it be God Himself.

*Harijan*, 11-8-1940, p. 245

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1. A Seer

## CHAPTER10: THE POWER OF NON-VIOLENCE

I swear by non-violence because I know that it alone conduces to the highest good of mankind, not merely in the next world but in this also. I object to violence because when it appears to do good, the good is only temporary, the evil it does is permanent.

*Young India*, 21-5-1925, p. 178

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Non-violence is the greatest force at the disposal of mankind. It is mightier than the mightiest weapon of destruction devised by the ingenuity of man. Destruction is not the law of the humans. Man lives freely only by his readiness to die, if need be, at the hands of his brother, never by killing him. Every murder or other injury, no matter for what cause, committed or inflicted on another is a crime against humanity.

*Harijan*, 20-7-1935, p. 180

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I have been practising with scientific precision non-violence and its possibilities for an unbroken period of over fifty years. I have applied it in every walk of life, domestic, institutional, economic and political. I know of no single case in which it has failed. Where it has seemed sometimes to have failed, I have ascribed it to my imperfections. I claim no perfection for myself. But I do claim to be a passionate seeker after Truth, which is but another name of God. In the course of that search, the discovery of non-violence came to me. Its spread is my life mission. I have no interest in living except for the prosecution of that mission.

*Harijan*, 6-7-1940, pp. 185-86

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In this age of wonders, no one will say that a thing or an idea is worthless because it is new. To say it is impossible because it is difficult, is again not in consonance with the spirit of the age. Things undreamt of are daily being seen, the impossible is ever becoming possible. We are constantly being astonished these days at the

amazing discoveries in the field of violence. But I maintain that far more undreamt of any seemingly impossible discoveries will be made in the field of non-violence.

*Harijan*, 25-8-1940, p. 260

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*Ahimsa* is a science. The word 'failure' has no place in the vocabulary of science. Failure to obtain the expected result is often the precursor to further discoveries.

*Harijan*, 6-5-1939, p. 113

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Non-violence is like radium in its action. An infinitesimal quantity of it embedded in a malignant growth, acts continuously, silently, and ceaselessly till it has transformed the whole mass of the diseased tissue into a healthy one. Similarly, even a little of true non-violence acts in a silent, subtle, unseen way and leavens the whole society.

*Harijan*, 12-11-1938, p. 327

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Superficially we are surrounded in life by strife and bloodshed, life living upon life. But some great seer, who ages ago penetrated the centre of Truth, said: It is not through strife and violence, but through non-violence that man can fulfill his destiny and his duty to his fellow-creatures. It is a force which is more positive than electricity and more powerful than even other. At the centre of non-violence is a force which is self-acting.

*Harijan*, 14-3-1936, p. 39

## CHAPTER 11: QUALITIES OF VOTARIES OF NON-VIOLENCE

True *Ahimsa* would wear a smile even on death-bed brought about by an assailant. It is only with that *Ahimsa* that we can befriend our opponents and win their love.

*Harijan*, 2-3-1940, p. 19

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Non-violence is a weapon of the strong. With the weak it might easily be hypocrisy. Fear and love are contradictory terms. Love is reckless in giving away, oblivious as to what it gets in return. Love wrestles with the world as with itself, and ultimately gains a mastery over all other feelings. My daily experience, as of those who are working with me, is that every problem would lend itself to solution if we are determined to make the Law of Truth and Non-violence the Law of Life. For Truth and Non-violence are, to me, faces of the same coin.

*Young India*, 1-10-1931, p. 287

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Every action is a resultant of a multitude of forces even of a contrary nature. There is no waste of energy. So we learn in the books on mechanics. This is equally true of human actions. The difference is that in the one case we generally know the forces at work, and when we do, we can mathematically foretell the resultant. In the case of human actions, they result from a concurrence of forces, of most of which we have no knowledge. But our ignorance must not be made to serve the cause of disbelief in the power of these forces. Rather is our ignorance a cause for greater faith. And non-violence being the mightiest force in the world and also the most elusive in its working, it demands the greatest exercise of faith. Even as we believe in God in faith, so have we to believe in non-violence in faith.

*Harijan*, 7-1-1939, 417

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A man cannot then practise *Ahimsa* and be a coward at the same time. The practice of *Ahimsa* calls forth the greatest courage. It is the most soldierly of a soldier's virtues.

*The Modern Review*, October, 1916

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*Ahimsa* is a weapon of matchless potency. It is the *summum bonum* of life. It is an attribute of the brave; in fact, it is their all. It does not come within the reach of the coward. It is no wooden or lifeless dogma, but living and a life-giving force. It is the special attribute of the soul. That is why it has been described as the highest *Dharma*.

*Young India*, 6-9-1928, p. 301

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My *Ahimsa* is neither maimed nor weak. It is all-powerful. Where there is *Ahimsa* there is Truth; and Truth is God. How He manifests Himself, I cannot say. All I know is that He is all-pervading and where He is, all is well. There is, therefore, one law for all. Wherever in the world Truth and Non-violence reign supreme, there is peace and bliss. That these exist nowhere shows that they are hidden from man for the time being. But they cannot disappear forever. That faith must sustain the faithful.

*Harijan*, 29-9-1946, p. 332

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The way of Non-violence and Truth is sharp as the razor's edge. Its practice is more than our daily food. Rightly taken, food sustains the body; rightly practised, non-violence sustains the soul. The body food we can only take in measured quantities and at stated intervals; non-violence, which is the spiritual food, we have to take in continually. There is no such thing as station. I have to be conscious every moment that I am pursuing the goal, and have to examine myself in terms of that goal.

*Harijan*, 2-4-1938, p. 65

Your *Ahimsa* to be effective, must shine through your speech, your action, your general behaviour. A votary of *Ahimsa* must cultivate a habit of unremitting toil, sleepless vigilance, ceaseless self-control.

*Harijan*, 6-5-1939, p. 113

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The very first step in non-violence is that we cultivate in our daily life, as between ourselves, truthfulness, humility, tolerance, loving kindness. Honesty, they say in English, is the best policy. But in terms of non-violence, it is not mere policy. Policies may and do change. Non-violence is an unchangeable creed. It has to be pursued in face of violence raging around you. Non-violence with a non-violent man is no merit. In fact, it becomes difficult to say whether it is non-violence at all. But when it pitted against violence, then one realizes the difference between the two. This we cannot do unless we are ever wakeful, ever vigilant, ever striving.

*Harijan*, 2-4-1938, p. 65

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*Ahimsa* magnifies one's own defects and minimizes those of the opponent. It regards the mote in one's own eye as beam, and the beam in the opponent's eye as a mote.

*Harijan*, 13-5-1939, p. 121

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A votary of *Ahimsa* has, therefore, to be incorruptible, fair and square in his dealings, truthful, straightforward and utterly selfless. He must have also true humility.

*Harijan*, 20-5-1939, p. 133

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Strange as it may appear, the fact remains that people find the easiest of things often times to be the most difficult to follow. The reason, to borrow a term from the science of physics, lies in our inertia. Physicists tell us that inertia is an essential, and in its own place a most useful quality of matter. It is that alone

which steadies the universe and prevents it from flying off at a tangent. But for it the latter would be a chaos of motion. But inertia becomes an incubus and a vice when it ties the mind down to old ruts. It is this kind of inertia which is responsible for our rooted prejudice that to practise pure *Ahimsa* is difficult. It is up to us to get rid of this incubus. The first step in this direction is firmly to resolve that all untruth and *Himsa* shall hereafter be taboo to us, whatever sacrifice it might seem to involve. For, the good these may seem to achieve is in appearance only, but in reality it is deadly poison.

If our resolve is firm and our conviction clear, it would mean half the battle won, and the practice of these two qualities would come comparatively easy to us.

*Harijan*, 21-7-1940, p. 215

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If the method of violence takes plenty of training, the method of non-violence takes even more training, and that training is much more difficult than the training for violence. The first essential of that training is a living faith in God. He who has a living faith in God will not do evil deeds with the name of God on his lips. He will not rely on the sword, but will rely solely on God. But you may say that a coward may also pass off as a believer in God, saying he does not use the sword. Cowardice is no sign of belief in God. The true man of God has the strength to use the sword, but will not use it knowing that every man is the image of God.

*Harijan*, 14-5-1938, p. 110

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'Enmity vanishes before *Ahimsa*' is a great aphorism. It means that the greatest enmity requires an equal measure of *Ahimsa* for its abatement. Cultivation of this virtue may need long practice, even extending to several births. It does not become useless on that account. Travelling along the route, the pilgrim will meet richer experiences from day to day so that he may have a glimpse of the beauty he is destined to see at the top. This will add to his zest. No one is entitled to infer from this that the path will be a continuous carpet of roses without thorns.

A poet has sung that the way reach God accrues only to the very brave, never to the faint-hearted.

*Harijan*, 14-12-1947, p. 468

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Non-violence, to be a potent force, must begin with the mind. Non-violence of the mere body without the co-operation of the mind is non-violence of the weak or the cowardly, and has, therefore, no potency. It is degrading performance. If we bear malice and hatred in our bosoms and pretend not to retaliate, it must recoil upon us and lead us and lead to our destruction.

*Young India*, 2-4-1931, p. 58

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It takes fairly strenuous course of training to attain to a mental state of non-violence.

In daily life, it has to be a course of discipline though one may not like it, like for instance the life of a soldier. But I agree that unless there is a hearty co-operation of the mind the mere outward observance will be simply a mask, harmful both to the man himself and to others. The perfect state is reached only when mind and body and speech are in proper co-ordination.

*Young India*, 1-10-1931, p. 287

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This non-violence cannot be learnt by staying at home. It needs enterprise. In order to test ourselves we should learn to dare danger and death, mortify the flesh and acquire the capacity to endure all manner of hardships. He who trembles or takes to his heels the moment he sees two people fighting is not non-violent, but a coward. A non-violent person will lay down his life in preventing such quarrels. The bravery of the non-violent is vastly superior to that of the violent. The badge of the violent is his weapon—spear, or sword, or rifle. God is the shield of the non-violent.

*Harijan*, 1-9-1940, p. 268

The alphabet of *Ahimsa* is best learnt in the domestic school, and I can say from experience that, if we secure success there, we are sure to do so everywhere else. For a non-violent person, the whole world is one family. He will thus fear none, nor will others fear him.

*Harijan*, 21-7-1940, p. 214

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Non-violence is not mere disarmament. Nor is it the weapon of the weak and the impotent. A child who has not the strength to wield the lathi does not practise non-violence. More powerful than all the armaments, non-violence is a unique force that has come into the world. He who has not learnt to feel it to be a weapon infinitely more potent than brute force has not understood its true nature. This non-violence cannot be 'taught' through word of mouth. But it can be kindled in our heart through the grace of God, in answer to earnest prayer.

*Harijan*, 10-12-1938, p. 377

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Non-violence cannot be preached. It has to be practised.

*Harijan*, 20-3-1937, p. 42

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Man and his deed are two distinct things. Whereas a good deed should call forth approbation and a wicked deed disapprobation, the doer of the deed, whether good or wicked, always deserves respect or pity, as the case may be. 'Hate the sin and not the sinner' is a precept which, though easy enough to understand, is rarely practised, and that is why the poison of hatred spreads in the world.

*An Autobiography*, (1966), p. 206

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If one does not practise non-violence in one's personal relations with others and hopes to use it in bigger affairs, one is vastly mistaken. Non-violence, like charity, must begin at home. But if it is necessary for the individual to be trained in non-violence, it is even more necessary for the nation to be trained likewise. One cannot be non-violent in one's own circle and violent outside it.

*Harijan*, 28-1-1939, p. 441

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If you really want to cultivate non-violence, you should take a pledge that, come what may, you will not give way to anger or order about members of your household or lord it over them. You can thus utilize trifling little occasions in everyday life to cultivate non-violence in your own person and teach it to your children.

*A pilgrimage for Peace*, (1950), p. 90

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I hold that non-violence is not merely a personal virtue. It is also a social virtue, to be cultivated like the other virtues. Surely, society is largely regulated by the expression of non-violence in its mutual dealings. What I ask for is an extension of it on a larger, national and international scale.

*Harijan*, 7-1-1939, p. 417

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We have to make Truth and Non-violence not matters for mere individual practice, but for practice by groups and communities and nations. That, at any rate, is my dream. I shall live and die in trying to realize it. My faith helps me to discover new truths every day. *Ahimsa* is the attribute of the soul, and therefore, to be practised by everybody in all the affairs of life. If I cannot be practised in all departments, it has no practical value.

*Harijan*, 2-3-1940, p. 23

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It follows therefore, that if non-violence becomes successfully established in one place, its influence will spread everywhere... The basic principle on which the practice of non-violence rests is that what holds good in respect of oneself equally applies to the whole universe.

*Harijan*, 12-11-1938, p. 327

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That non-violence which only an individual can use is not of much use in terms of society. Man is a social being. His accomplishments to be of use must be such as any person with sufficient diligence can attain. That which can be exercised only among friends is of value only as a spark of non-violence. It cannot merit the appellation of *Ahimsa*.

*Harijan*, 14-12-1947, p. 468

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To practise non-violence in mundane matters is to know its true value. It is to bring heaven upon earth. There is no such thing as the other world. All worlds are one. There is no 'here' and no 'there'. As Jeans has demonstrated, the whole universe including the most distant stars, invisible even through the most powerful telescope in the world, is compressed in an atom. I hold it, therefore, to be wrong to limit the use of non-violence to cave-dwellers and for acquiring merit for a favoured position in the other world. All virtue ceases to have use, if it serves no purpose in every walk of life.

*Harijan*, 26-7-1942, p. 248

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The simplest things have the knack sometimes of appearing to us as the hardest. If our hearts were opened, we should have no difficulty. Non-violence is a matter of the heart. It does not come to us through any intellectual feat. Everyone has faith in God though everyone does not know it. For, everyone has faith in himself and that multiplied to nth degree is God. The sum total of all that lives is God. We may not be God but we are of God—even as a little drop of water is of the ocean. Imagine it torn away from the ocean and flung millions of miles away. It becomes helpless torn from its surroundings, and cannot feel the might and majesty of the ocean. But if someone could point out to it that it is of the ocean, its faith would revive, it would dance with joy and whole of the might and majesty of the ocean would be reflected in it. Even so it is with all non-violent activities.

*Harijan*, 3-6-1939, p. 151

If one has pride and egoism, there is no non-violence. Non-violence is impossible without humility. My own experience is that whenever I have acted non-violently I have been led to it and sustained in it by the higher promptings of an Unseen Power. Through my own will I should have miserably failed.

*Harijan*, 28-1-1939, p. 442

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I have learned this one lesson—that what is impossible with man is child's play with God, and if we have faith in that Divinity which presides on the destiny of the meanest of His creation, I have no doubt that all things are possible; and in that final hope, I live and pass my time and endeavour to obey His will.

*Young India*, 19-11-'31, p. 361

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I know the path. It is straight and narrow. It is like the edge of a sword. I rejoice to walk on it. I weep when I slip. God's word is: "He who strives never perishes." I have implicit faith in that promise. Though, therefore, from my weakness I fail a thousand times, I will not lose faith.

*Young India*, 17-6-1926, p. 215

## CHAPTER 12: NON-VIOLENCE AND COWARDICE

I do believe that, where there is only a choice between cowardice and violence, I would advise violence.... But I believe that non-violence is infinitely superior to violence, forgiveness is more manly than punishment. Forgiveness adorns a soldier. But abstinence is forgiveness only when there is the power to punish; it is meaningless when it pretend to proceed from a helpless creature.

*Young India*, 11-8-1920, p. 3

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That non-violence can work to a certain extent in the hands of the weak is true. It has so worked with us. But when it becomes a cloak for our weakness, it emasculates us. Far better than emasculation would be the bravery of those who use physical force. Far better than cowardice would be meeting one's death fighting. We were perhaps all originally brutes, and I am prepared to believe that we have become men by a slow process of evolution from the brute. We were thus born with brute strength, but we were born men in order to realize God who dwells in us. That indeed is the privilege of man, and it distinguishes him from the brute creation. But to realize God is to see Him in all that lives, i.e. to realize our oneness with all creation. This is impossible unless we voluntarily shun physical force and develop conscious non-violence that is latent in every one of us. This can only come out of strength.

*Harijan*, 2-4-1938, p. 65

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Non-violence and cowardice are contradictory terms. Non-violence is the greatest virtue, cowardice the greatest vice. Non-violence springs from love, cowardice from hate. Non-violence always suffers, cowardice would always inflict suffering.

*Young India*, 31-10-1929, p. 356

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Non-violence and cowardice go ill together. I can imagine a fully armed man to be at heart a coward. Possession of arms implies an element of fear, if not cowardice. But true non-violence is an impossibility without the possession of unadulterated fearlessness.

*Harijan*, 15-7-1939, p. 201

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Strength does not come from physical capacity. It comes from an indomitable will.

*Young India*, 11-8-1920, p. 3

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A small body of determined spirit fired by an unquenchable faith in their mission can alter the course of history.

*Harijan*, 19-11-1938, p. 343

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Where there is fear there is no religion.

*Young India*, 2-9-1926, p. 308

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Let us fear God and we shall cease to fear man.

*Speeches and Writings of Mahatma Gandhi*, (1933), p. 330

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Spirituality is not a matter of knowing scriptures and engaging in philosophical discussions. It is a matter of heart culture, of immeasurable strength. Fearlessness is the first requisite of spirituality. Cowards can never be moral.

*Young India*, 13-10-1921, p. 323

## Chapter 13: WHAT IS SATYAGRAHA

My goal is friendship with the world and I can combine the greatest love with the greatest opposition to wrong.

*Young India*, 10-3-1920, p. 5

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Non-violence is 'not a resignation from all real fighting against wickedness'. On the contrary, the Non-violence of my conception is a more active and more real fighting against wickedness than retaliation whose very nature is to increase wickedness. I contemplate a mental and therefore a moral opposition to immoralities. I seek entirely to blunt the edge of the tyrant's sword, not by putting up against it a sharper edged weapon, but by disappointing his expectation that I would be offering physical resistance. The resistance of the soul that I should offer instead would elude him. It would at first dazzle him and at last compel recognition from him, which recognition would not humiliate him but would uplift him.

*Young India*, 8-10-1925, p. 346

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Having flung aside the sword, there is nothing except the cup of love which I can offer to those who oppose me. It is by offering that cup that I expect to draw them close to me.

*Young India*, 2-4-1931, p. 54

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For the past thirty years I have been preaching and practising *Satyagraha*. The principles of *Satyagraha* as I know it today, constitute a gradual evolution.

*Satyagraha* differs from Passive Resistance as the North Pole from the South. The latter has been conceived as a weapon of the weak and does not exclude the use of physical force or violence for the purpose of gaining one's end, whereas the

former has been conceived as a weapon of the strongest and excludes the use of violence in any shape or form.

The term *Satyagraha* was coined by me in South Africa to express the force that the Indian there used for full eight years and it was coined in order to distinguish it from the movement then going on in the United Kingdom and South Africa under the name of Passive Resistance.

Its root meaning is holding on to truth, hence Truth-force. I have also called it Love-force or Soul-force. In the application of *Satyagraha* I discovered in the earliest stages that pursuit of truth did not admit of violence being inflicted on one's opponent but he must be weaned from error by patience and sympathy. For what appears to be truth to the one may appear to be error to the other. And patience means self-suffering. So the doctrine came to mean vindication of Truth not by infliction of suffering on the opponent but on one's self.

But on the political field the struggle on behalf of the people mostly consists in opposing error in the shape of unjust laws. When you have failed to bring the error home to the lawgiver by way of petitions and the like, the only remedy open to you, if you do not wish to submit to error, is to compel him by physical force to yield to you or by suffering in your own person by inviting the penalty for the breach of the law. Hence *Satyagraha* largely appears to the public as Civil Disobedience or Civil Resistance. It is civil in the sense that it is not criminal.

The lawbreaker breaks the law surreptitiously and tries to avoid the penalty, not so the civil resister. He ever obeys the laws of the State to which he belongs, not out of fear of the sanctions but because he considers them to be good for the welfare of society. But there come occasions, generally rare, when he considers certain laws to be so unjust as to render obedience to them a dishonor. He then openly and civilly breaks them and quietly suffers the penalty for their breach. And in order to register his protest against the action of the lawgivers, it is open to him to withdraw his co-operation from the State by disobeying such other laws whose breach does not involve moral turpitude.

In my opinion, the beauty and efficacy of *Satyagraha* are so great and the doctrine so simple that it can be preached even to children. It was preached by

me to thousands of men, women and children commonly called indentured Indians with excellent results.

*Young India*, 14-1-1920, p. 5

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*Satyagraha* is literally holding on to Truth and it means, therefore, Truth-force. Truth is soul or spirit. It is, therefore, known as soul force. It excludes the use of violence because man is not capable of knowing the absolute truth and, therefore, not competent to punish. The word was coined in South Africa to distinguish the non-violent resistance of the Indians of South Africa from the contemporary 'passive resistance' of the suffragettes and others. It is not conceived as a weapon of the weak.

Passive resistance is used in the orthodox English sense and covers the suffragette movement as well as the resistance of the Non-conformists. Passive resistance has been conceived and is regarded as a weapon of the weak. Whilst it avoids violence, being not open to the weak it does not exclude its use if, in the opinion of a passive resister, the occasion demands it. However, it has always been distinguished from armed resistance and its application was at one time confined to Christian martyrs.

Civil Disobedience is civil breach of unmoral statutory enactments. The expression was, so far as I am aware, coined by Thoreau to signify his own resistance to the laws of a slave State. He has left a masterly treatise on the duty of Civil Disobedience. But Thoreau was not perhaps an out and out champion of non-violence. Probably, also, Thoreau limited his breach of statutory laws to the revenue law i.e. payment of taxes. Whereas the term Civil Disobedience as practised in 1919 covered a breach of any statutory and unmoral law. It signified the resister's outlawry in a civil, i.e., non-violent manner. He invoked the sanctions of the law and cheerfully suffered imprisonment. It is a branch of *Satyagraha*.

Non-co-operation predominantly implies withdrawing of co-operation from the State that in the non-co-operator's view has become corrupt and excludes Civil Disobedience of the fierce type described above. By its very nature, non-co-

operation is even open to children of understanding and can be safely practised by the masses. Civil Disobedience presupposes the habit of willing obedience to laws without fear of their sanctions. It can, therefore, be practised only as a last resort and by a select few in the first instance at any rate. Non-co-operation, too, like Civil Disobedience is a branch of Satyagraha which includes all non-violent resistance for the vindication of Truth.

*Young India*, 23-3-1921, p. 90

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Carried out to its utmost limit, *Satyagraha* is independent of pecuniary or other material assistance; certainly, even in its elementary form, of physical force or violence. Indeed, violence is the negation of this great spiritual force, which can only be cultivated or wielded by those who will entirely eschew violence. It is a force that may be used by individuals as well as by communities. It may be used as well in political as in domestic affairs. Its universal applicability is a demonstration of its permanence and invincibility. It can be used alike by men, women, and children. It is totally untrue to say that it is a force to be used only by the weak so long as they are not capable of meeting violence by violence. This superstition arises from the incompleteness of the English expression, passive resistance. It is impossible for those who consider themselves to be weak to apply this force. Only those who realize that there is something in man which is superior to the brute nature in him and that the latter always yields to it, can effectively be *Satyagrahis*. This force is to violence, and, therefore, to all tyranny, all injustice, what light is to darkness. In politics, its use is based upon the immutable maxim, that government of the people is possible only so long as they consent either consciously or unconsciously to be governed. We did not want to be governed by the Asiatic Act of 1907 of the Transvaal, and it had to go before this mighty force. Two courses were open to us—to us violence when we called upon to submit to the Act, or to suffer the penalties prescribed under the Act, and thus to draw out and exhibit the force of the soul within us for a period long enough to appeal to the sympathetic chord in the governors or the law-makers. We have taken long to achieve what we set about striving for. That was because

our *Satyagraha* was not of the most complete type. All *Satyagrahis* do not understand the full value of the force, nor have we men who always from conviction refrain from violence. The use of this force requires the adoption of poverty, in the sense that we must be indifferent whether we have the wherewithal to feed or clothe ourselves. During the past struggle, all *Satyagrahis*, if any at all, were not prepared to go that length. Some again were only *Satyagrahis* so called. They came without any conviction, often with mixed motives, less often with impure motives. Some even, whilst engaged in the struggle, would gladly have resorted to violence but for most vigilant supervision. Thus it was that the struggle became prolonged; for the exercise of the purest soul-force, in its perfect form, brings about instantaneous relief. For this exercise, prolonged training of the individual soul is an absolute necessity, so that a perfect *Satyagrihi* has to be almost, if not entirely, a perfect man. We cannot all suddenly become such men, but if my proposition is correct—as I know it to be correct—the greater the spirit of *Satyagraha* in us, the better men will we become. Its use, therefore, is, I think indisputable, and it is a force, which, if it became universal would revolutionize social ideals and do away with despotisms and the ever-growing militarism under which the nations of the West are groaning and are being almost crushed to death, and which fairly promises to overwhelm even the nations of the East. If the past struggle has produced even a few Indians who would dedicate themselves to the task of becoming *Satyagrahis* as nearly perfect as possible, they would not only have served themselves in the truest sense of the term, they would also have served humanity at large. Thus viewed, *Satyagraha* is the noblest and best education. It should come, not after the ordinary education in letters, of children, but it should precede it. It will not be denied, that a child before it begins to write its alphabet and to gain worldly knowledge, should know what the soul is, what truth is, what love is, what powers are latent in the soul. It should be an essential of real education that a child should learn, that in the struggle of Life, it can easily conquer hate by love, untruth by truth, violence by self-suffering.

*Young India*, 3-11-1927, p. 369

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*Satyagraha* is a relentless search for truth and a determination to reach truth.

*Young India*, 19-3-1925, p. 95

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Non-violence in its dynamic condition means conscious suffering. It does not mean meek submission to the will of the evil-doer, but it means the putting of one's whole soul against the will of the tyrant. Working under this law of our being, it is possible for a single individual to defy the whole might of an unjust Empire to save his honour, his religion, his soul and lay the foundation for that empire's fall or its regeneration.

*Young India*, 11-8-1920, p. 3

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There can be no *Satyagraha* in an unjust cause. *Satyagraha* in a just cause is vain, if the men espousing it are not determined and capable of fighting and suffering to the end, and the slightest use of violence often defeats a just cause. *Satyagraha* excludes the use of violence in any shape or form, whether in thought, speech, or deed. Given a just cause, capacity for endless suffering and avoidance of violence, victory is a certainty.

*Young India*, 27-4-1921, p. 129

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The conditions necessary for the success of *Satyagraha* are: (1) The *Satyagrahi* should not have any hatred in his heart against the opponent. (2) The issue must be true and substantial. (3) The *Satyagrahi* must be prepared to suffer till the end for his cause.

*Harijan*, 31-3-1946, p. 64

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Since *Satyagraha* is one of the most powerful methods of direct action, a *Satyagrahi* exhausts all other means before he resorts to *Satyagraha*. He will, therefore, constantly and continually approach the constituted authority, he will appeal to public opinion, educate public opinion, state his case calmly and coolly before everybody who wants to listen to him, and only after he has exhausted all

these avenues will he resort to *Satyagraha*. But when he has found the impelling call of the inner voice within him and launches out upon *Satyagraha* he has burnt his boats and there is no receding.

*Young India*, 20-10-1927, p. 353

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It is fundamental principle of *Satyagraha* that the tyrant, whom the *Satyagrahi* seeks to resist has power over his body and material possessions, but he can have no power over the soul. The soul can remain unconquered and unconquerable even when the body is imprisoned. The whole science of *Satyagraha* was born from a knowledge of this fundamental truth.

*Young India*, 21-5-1931, p. 118

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*Satyagraha* is utter self-effacement, greatest humiliation, greatest patience and brightest faith. It is its own reward.

*Young India*, 26-2-1925, p. 73

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*Satyagraha* is gentle, it never wounds. It must not be the result of anger or malice. It is never fussy, never impatient, never vociferous. It is the direct opposite of compulsion. It was conceived as a complete substitute for violence.

*Harijan*, 15-4-1933, p. 8

## CHAPTER 14: QUALIFICATIONS AND TRAINING OF A SATYAGRAHI

*Satyagraha* literally means insistence on truth. This insistence arms the votary with matchless power. This power or force is connoted by the word *Satyagraha*. *Satyagraha*, to be genuine, may be offered against parents, one's wife or one's children, against rulers, against fellow citizens, even against the whole world.

Such a universal force necessarily makes no distinction between kinsmen and strangers, young and old, man and woman, friend and foe. The force to be so applied can never be physical. There is in it no room for violence. The only force of universal application can, therefore, be that of *Ahimsa* or love. In other words it is soul-force.

Love does not burn others, it burns itself. Therefore, a *Satyagrahi*, i.e., a civil resister, will joyfully suffer even unto death.

It follows, therefore, that a civil resister, whilst he will strain every nerve to compass the end of the existing rule, will do no intentional injury in thought, word or deed to the person of a single Englishman. This necessarily brief explanation of *Satyagraha* will perhaps enable the reader to understand and appreciate the following rules:

1. A *Satyagrahi*, i.e., a civil register will harbour no anger.
2. He will suffer the anger of the opponent.
3. In so doing he will put up with assaults from the opponent, never retaliate; but he will not submit, out of fear of punishment or the like, to any order given in anger.
4. When any person in authority seeks to arrest a civil resister, he will voluntarily submit to the arrest, and he will not resist the attachment or removal of his own property, if any, when it is sought to be confiscated by the authorities.
5. If a civil resister has any property in his possession as a trustee, he will refuse to surrender it, even though in defending it he might lose his life. He will, however, never retaliate.
6. Non-retaliation excludes swearing and cursing.

7. Therefore a civil resister will never insult his opponent, and therefore also not take part in many of the newly coined cries which are contrary to the spirit of *Ahimsa*.
8. A civil resister will not salute the Union Jack, nor will he insult it or officials, English or Indians.
9. In the course of the struggle if any one insults an official or commits an assault upon him, a civil resister will protect such official or officials from the insult or attack even at the risk of his life.

*Young India*, 27-2-1930, p. 69

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In *Satyagraha*, it is never the numbers that count; it is always the quality, more so when the forces of violence are uppermost.

Then it is often forgotten that it is never the intention of a *Satyagrahi* to embarrass the wrongdoer. The appeal is never to his fear; it is, must be, always to his heart. The *Satyagrahi*'s object is to convert, not to coerce, the wrongdoer. He should avoid artificiality in all his doings. He acts naturally and from inward conviction.

Keeping these observations before his mind's eye, the reader will perhaps appreciate the following qualifications which, I hold, are essential for every *Satyagrahi* in India:

1. He must have a living faith in God, for He is his only Rock.
2. He must believe in truth and non-violence as his creed and therefore have faith in the inherent goodness of human nature which he expects to evoke by his truth and love expressed through his suffering.
3. He must be leading a chaste life and be ready and willing for the sake of his cause to give up his life and his possessions.
4. He must be a habitual Khadi-wearer and spinner. This is essential for India.
5. He must be a teetotaller and be free from the use of other intoxicants in order that his reason may be always unclouded and his mind constant.

6. He must carry out with a willing heart all the rules of discipline as may be laid down from time to time.
7. He should carry out the jail rules unless they are specially devised to hurt his self-respect.

The qualifications are not to be regarded as exhaustive. They are illustrative only.

*Harijan*, 25-3-1939, p. 64

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Some time ago I suggested the formation of a Peace Brigade whose members would risk their lives in dealing with riots, especially communal. The idea was that this Brigade should substitute the police and even the military. This reads ambitious. The achievement may prove impossible. Yet, if the Congress is to succeed in its non-violent struggle, it must develop the power to deal peacefully with such situations.

Let us therefore see what qualifications a member of the contemplated Peace Brigade should possess.

1. He or she must have a living faith in non-violence. This is impossible without a living faith in God. A non-violent man can do nothing save by the power and grace of God. Without it he won't have the courage to die without anger, without fear and without retaliation. Such courage comes from the belief that God sits in the hearts of all and that there should be no fear in the presence of God. The knowledge of the omnipresence of God also means respect for the lives of even those who may be called opponents or *goondas*. This contemplated intervention is a process of stilling the fury of man when the brute in him gets mastery over him.
2. This messenger of peace must have equal regard for all the principle religions of the earth. Thus, if he is a Hindu, he will respect the other faiths current in India. He must therefore possess a knowledge of the general principles of the different faiths professed in the country.
3. Generally speaking this work of peace can only be done by local men in their own localities.

4. The work can be done singly or in groups. Therefore no one need wait for companions. Nevertheless one would naturally seek companions in one's own locality and form a local brigade.
5. This messenger of peace will cultivate through personal service contacts with the people in his locality or chosen circle, so that when he appears to deal with ugly situations, he does not descend upon the members of a riotous assembly as an utter stranger liable to be looked upon as a suspect or an unwelcome visitor.
6. Needless to say, a peace-bringer must have a character beyond reproach and must be known for his strict impartiality.
7. Generally, there are previous warnings of coming storms. If these are known, the Peace Brigade will not wait till the conflagration breaks out but will try to handle the situation in anticipation.
8. Whilst, if the movement spreads, it might be well if there are some whole time workers, it is not absolutely necessary that there should be. The idea is to have as many good and true men and women as possible. These can be had only if volunteers are drawn from those who are engaged in various walks of life but have leisure enough to cultivate friendly relations with the people living in their circle and otherwise possess the qualifications required of a member of the Peace Brigade.
9. There should be a distinctive dress worn by the members of the contemplated brigade so that in course of time they will be recognized without the slightest difficulty.

These are but general suggestions. Each centre can work out its own constitution on the basis here suggested.

*Harijan*, 18-6-1938, p. 152

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Although *Satyagraha* can operate silently, it requires a certain amount of action on the part of a *Satyagrahi*. A *Satyagrahi*, for instance, must first mobilize public opinion against the evil which he is out to eradicate, by means of a wide and intensive agitation. When public opinion is sufficiently roused against a social

abuse even the tallest will not dare to practise or openly to lend support to it. An awakened and intelligent public opinion is the most potent weapon of a *Satyagrahi*. When a person supports a social evil in total disregard of unanimous public opinion, it indicates a clear justification for his social ostracism. But the object of social ostracism should never be to do injury to the person against whom it is directed. Social ostracism means complete non-co-operation on the part of society with the offending individual; nothing more, nothing less, the idea being that a person who deliberately sets himself to flout society has no right to be served by society. For all practical purposes this should be enough. Of course, special action may be indicated in special cases and the practice may have to be varied to suit the peculiar features of each individual case.

*Young India*, 8-8-1929, p. 263

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*Ahimsa* requires certain duties which can be done only by those with a trained physique. It is, therefore, most necessary to consider what kind of physical training a non-violent person should receive.

Very few of the rules applying to a violent army will apply to a non-violent body. A violent army will not have its arms for show but for definitely destructive purposes. A non-violent body will have no use for such weapons and will, therefore, beat its swords into ploughshares and spears into pruning hooks, and will shrink from the thought of using them as lethal weapons. The violent soldier will be trained in the use of violence by being taught to shoot. The non-violent soldier will have no time for this pastime. He will get all his training through nursing the sick, saving those in danger at the risk of his own life, patrolling places which may be in fear of thieves and dacoits, and in laying down his life, if necessary, in dissuading them from their purpose. Even the uniforms of the two will differ. The violent men will wear a coat of mail for his protection, and his uniform will be such as can dazzle people. The uniform of the non-violent man will be simple, in conformity with the dress of the poor, and betokening humility. Its purpose will be just to keep him from heat and cold and rain. A violent soldier's protection will be his arms, no matter how much he takes God's name.

He will not shrink from spending millions on armaments. The first and last shield and buckler of the non-violent person will be his unwavering faith in God. And the minds of the two will be as poles asunder. The violent man will always be casting about for plans to work the destruction of his enemy and will pray to God to fulfill his purpose. The national anthem of the British people is worth considering in this connection. It prays to God to save the king, to frustrate the enemy's Knavish tricks, and to destroy him. Millions of Englishmen sing this anthem aloud with one voice standing respectfully. If God is the Incarnation of Mercy, He is not likely to listen to such prayer, but it cannot but affect the minds of those who sing it, and in times of war it simply kindles their hatred and anger to white heat. The one condition of winning a violent war is to keep the indignation against the enemy burning fiercely.

In the dictionary of the non-violent body there is no such word as an external enemy. But even for the supposed enemy he will have nothing but compassion in his heart. He will believe that no man is intentionally wicked, that there is no man but is gifted with the faculty to discriminate between right and wrong and that if that faculty were to be fully developed, it would surely mature into non-violence. He will therefore pray to God that He may give the supposed enemy a sense of right and bless him. His prayer for himself will always be that the spring of compassion in him may ever be flowing, and that he may ever grow in moral strength so that he may face death fearlessly.

Thus since the minds of both will differ as the poles, their physical training will also differ in the same degree.

We all know more or less what military training is like. But we have hardly ever thought that non-violent training must be of a different kind. Nor have we ever cared to discover whether in the past such training was given anywhere in the world. I am of opinion that it used to be given in the past and is even now being given in a haphazard way. The various exercises of *Hatha Yoga*<sup>1</sup> are in this direction. The physical training given by means of these imparts among other things physical health, agility, and the capacity to bear heat and cold.... My reference to *Hatha Yoga* is meant only with a view to showing that this ancient

type of non-violent training still exists, though I know that there is room in it for improvement. I do not know either that the author of this science had any idea of mass non-violence. The exercises had at their back the desire for individual salvation. The object of the various exercises was to strengthen and purify the body in order to secure control of the mind. The mass non-violence we are now thinking of applies to people of all religions and therefore the rules that may be framed must be such as can be accepted by all believers in *Ahimsa*. And then as we are thinking of a non-violent army, that is to say, of bringing into being a *Satyagraha Sangha*, we can but built a new accepting the old as our foundation. Let us then think of the physical training required by a *Satyagrahi*. If the *Satyagrahi* is not healthy in mind and body, he may perhaps fail in mustering complete fearlessness. He should have the capacity to stand guard at a single spot day and night; he must not fall ill even if he has to bear cold and heat and rain; he must have the strength to go to places of peril, to rush to scenes of fire, and the courage to wander about alone in desolate jungles and haunts of death; he will bear, without a grumble, severe beating, starvation and worse, and will keep in his post of duty without flinching; he will have the resourcefulness and capacity to plunge into a seemingly impenetrable scene of rioting; he will have the longing and capacity to run with the name of God on his lips to the rescue of men living on the top storeys of buildings enveloped in flames; he will have the fearlessness to plunge into a flood in order to rescue people being carried off by it or to jump down a well to save a drowning person.

This list can be extended *ad libitum*. The substance of it all is that we should cultivate the capacity to run to the rescue of people in danger and distress and to suffer cheerfully any amount of hardship that may be inflicted upon us. He who accepts this fundamental principle will easily be able to frame rules of physical training for *Satyagrahis*. I have a firm conviction that the very foundation of this training is faith in God. If that is absent, all the training one may have received is likely to fail at the critical moment.

Let no one poohpooh my statement by saying that the Congress has many people who are ashamed to take the name of God. I am simply trying to state the view

in terms of the science of *Satyagraha* as I have known and developed. The only weapon of the *Satyagrahi* is God, by whatsoever name one knows Him. Without Him the *Satyagrahi* is devoid of strength before an opponent armed with monstrous weapons. Most people lie prostrate before physical might. But he who accepts God as his only Protector will remain unbent before the mightiest earthly power.

As faith in God is essential in a *Satyagrahi*, even so is *Brahmacharya*. Without *Brahmacharya* the *Satyagrahi* will have no lustre, no inner strength to stand unarmed against the whole world. *Brahmacharya* may have here the restricted meaning of conservation of the vital energy brought about by sexual restraint, and not the comprehensive definition I have given of it. He who intends to live on spare diet and without any external remedies, and still wants to have physical strength, has need to conserve his vital energy. It is the richest capital man can ever possess. He who can preserve it ever gains renewed strength out of it. He who uses it up, consciously or unconsciously, will ultimately be impotent. His strength will fail him at the right moment. I have often written about the ways and means of conserving this energy. Let the reader turn to my writings and carry out the instructions. He who lusts with the eye or the touch can never conserve his vital energy, nor the man who lusts after flesh-pots. Those who hope to conserve this energy without strict observance of the rules will no more succeed than those who hope to swim against the current without being exhausted. He who restrains himself physically and sins with his thoughts will fare worse than he who, without professing to observe *Brahmacharya*, lives the life of a restrained householder. For he who lusts with the thought will ever remain unsated and will end his life a moral wreck and burden on the earth. Such a one can never be a full *Satyagrahi*. Nor can one who hankers after wealth and fame.

This is the foundation of the physical training for a *Satyagrahi*. The detailed structure of the course can easily be built in consonance with this foundation.

It should now be clear that in the physical training of a *Satyagrahi* there is no room for lethal weapons like the sword or the spear. For far more terrible weapons than we have seen are in existence today, and newer ones are being

invented every day. Of what fear will a sword rid him who has to cultivate the capacity to overcome all fear-real or imaginary? I have not yet heard of a man having shed all fear by learning sword-play. Mahavir and others who imbibed *Ahimsa* did not do so because they knew the use of weapons, but because, in spite of the knowledge of their use, they shed all fear.

A slight introspection will show that he who has always depended on the sword will find it difficult to throw it away. But having deliberately discarded it he is likely to find his *Ahimsa* more lasting than that of him who, not knowing its use, fancies he will not fear it. But that does not mean that in order to be truly non-violent one must beforehand possess and know the use of arms. By parity of reasoning, one might say that only a thief can be honest, only a diseased person can be healthy, and only a dissolute person can be a *Brahmachari*. The fact is that we have formed the habit of thinking along traditional grooves and will not get out of them. And as we cannot take a detached view, we cannot draw the right conclusions and get caught in delusive snares.

*Harijan*, 13-10-1940, pp. 318-19

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Our motto must ever be conversion by gentle persuasion and constant appeal to the head and the heart. We must therefore be ever courteous and patient with those who do not see eye to eye with us.

*Young India*, 29-9-1921, p. 306

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A *Satyagrahi* bids goodbye to fear. He is therefore never afraid of trusting the opponent. Even if the opponent plays him false twenty times, the *Satyagrahi* is ready to trust him the twenty-first time, for an implicit trust in human nature is the very essence of his creed.

*The Mind of Mahatma Gandhi*, (1967), p. 170

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The *Satyagrahi*, whilst he is ever ready for fight, must be equally eager for peace. He must welcome any honourable opportunity for peace.

*Young India*, 19-3-1931, p.40

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A *Satyagrahi* never misses, can never miss, a chance of compromise on honourable terms, it being always assumed that, in the event of failure, he is ever ready to offer battle. He needs no previous preparation, his cards are always on the table.

*Young India*, 16-4-1931, p. 77

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Immediately we begin to think of things as our opponents think of them, we shall be able to do them full justice. I know that this requires a detached state of mind, and it is a state very difficult to reach. Nevertheless for a *Satyagrahi* it is absolutely essential. Three-fourths of the miseries and misunderstandings in the world will disappear, if we step into the shoes of our adversaries and understand their standpoint. We will then agree with our adversaries quickly or think of them charitably.

*Young India*, 19-3-1925, p. 95

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I have always held that it is only when one sees one's own mistakes with a convex lens, and does just the reverse in the case of others, that one is able to arrive at a just relative estimate of the two. I further believe that a scrupulous and conscientious observance of this rule is necessary for one who wants to be a *Satyagrahi*.

*An Autobiography*, (1966), p. 356

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There is no time-limit for a *Satyagrahi* nor is there a limit to his capacity for suffering. Hence there is no such thing as defeat in *Satyagraha*.

*Young India*, 19-2-1925, p. 61

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But if you believe in the efficacy of *Satyagraha*, you will rejoice in this slow torture and suffering, and you will not feel the discomfort of your position as you go and sit in the boiling sun from day to day. If you have faith in the cause and the means and in God the hot sun will be cool for you. You must not be tried and say, 'how long' and never get irritated.

Not a single minute should be wasted in idle conversation, but we must be absorbed in the work before us, and if every one of us works in that spirit you will see that there is pleasure in the work itself.

You may not waste a grain of rice or a scrap of paper, and similarly a minute of your time. It is not ours. It belongs to the nation and we are trustees for the use of it.

*Young India*, 19-3-1925, p. 95

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My advice is *Satyagraha* first and *Satyagraha* last. There is no other or better road to freedom.

*Harijan*, 15-9-1946, p. 312

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The conviction has been growing upon me, that things of fundamental importance to the people are not secured by reason alone, but have to be purchased with their suffering. Suffering is the law of human beings; war is the law of the jungle. But suffering is infinitely more powerful than the law of the jungle for converting the opponent and opening his ears, which are otherwise shut, to the voice of reason.

*Young India*, 5-11-1931, p. 341

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True suffering does not know itself and never calculates. It brings its own joy which surpasses all other joys.

*Young India*, 19-3-1931, p. 41

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A *Satyagrahi* has nothing to do with victory. He is sure of it, but he has also to know that it comes from God. His is but to suffer.

*Young India*, 13-10-1927, p. 345

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Self-sacrifice of one innocent man is a million times more potent than the sacrifice of a million men who die in the act of killing others. The willing sacrifice of the innocent is the most powerful retort to insolent tyranny that has yet been conceived by God or man.

*Young India*, 12-2-1925, p. 60

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1. A system of yoga in which the exercises of physical postures, poses and breathing are chiefly treated to discipline body and mind towards self-realization.

## CHAPTER 15: NON-CO-OPERATION

Non-co-operation is not a passive state, it is an intensely active state, more active than physical resistance or violence. Passive resistance is a misnomer. Non-co-operation in the sense used by me must be non-violent and, therefore, neither punitive, nor vindictive nor based on malice, ill-will or hatred.

*Young India*, 25-8-1920, p. 2

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My Non-co-operation, I hold, is not only not a way of violence, but may be an act of love, if love is the motive that has prompted my refusal. The fact is that all Non-co-operation is not violent, and Non-violent Non-co-operation can never be an act of violence. It may not be always an act of love. For love is an active quality which cannot always be inferred from the act itself. A surgeon may perform a most successful operation, and yet he may have no love for his patient....

Non-co-operation is not violence when the refusal of the restraint is a right and a duty, even though by reason of its performance some people may have to suffer. It will be an act of love when non-cooperation is resorted to solely for the good of the wrong doer.

*Young India*, 10-4-1924, p. 122

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The spirit of non-violence necessarily leads to humility. Non-violence means reliance on God, the Rock of ages. If we would seek His aid, we must approach Him with a humble and a contrite heart.... We must act, even as the mango tree which droops as it bears fruit, its grandeur lies in its majestic lowness....

A non-co-operationist strives to compel attention and to set an example not by his violence, but by his unobtrusive humility. He allows his solid action to speak for his creed. His strength lies in his reliance upon the correctness of his position. And the conviction of it grows most in his opponent when he least interposes his speech between his action and his opponent. Speech, especially when it is

haughty, betrays want of confidence and it makes one's opponent sceptical about the reality of the act itself. Humility, therefore, is the key to quick success.

*Young India*, 12-1-1921, p. 13

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Public opposition is effective only where there is strength behind it. What does a son do when he objects to some action of his father? He requests the father to desist from the objectionable course, i.e. presents respectful petitions. If the father does not agree in spite of repeated prayers, he non-co-operates with him to the extent even of leaving the paternal roof. This is the pure justice. Where father and son are uncivilized, they quarrel, abuse each other and often even come to blows. An obedient son is ever modest, ever peaceful and ever loving. It is only his love which on due occasion compels him to non-co-operate. The father himself understands this loving non-co-operation. He cannot endure abandonment by or separation from the son, is distressed at heart and repents. Not that it always happens thus. But the son's duty of non-co-operation is clear.

Such non-co-operation is possible between a prince and his people. In particular circumstances it may be the people's duty. Such circumstances can exist only where the latter are by nature fearless and are lovers of liberty. They generally appreciate the laws of the State and obey them voluntarily without the fear of punishment. Reasoned and willing obedience to the laws of the State is the first lesson in non-co-operation.

The second is that of tolerance. We must tolerate many laws of the State, even when they are inconvenient. A son may not approve of some orders of the father and yet he obeys them. It is only when they are unworthy of tolerance and immoral that he disobeys them. The father will at once understand such respectful disobedience. In the same way it is only when a people have proved their active loyalty by obeying the many laws of the State that they acquire the right of Civil Disobedience.

The third lesson is that of suffering. He who has not the capacity of suffering cannot non-co-operate. He who has not learnt to sacrifice his property and even his family when necessary can never non-co-operate. It is possible that a prince

enraged by non-co-operation will inflict all manner of punishments. There lies the test of love, patience, and strength. He who is not ready to undergo the fiery ordeal cannot non-co-operate. A whole people cannot be considered fit or ready for non-co-operation when only an individual or two have mastered these three lessons. A large number of the people must be thus prepared before they can non-co-operate. The result of hasty non-co-operation can only lead to harm. Some patriotic young men who do not understand the limitations noted by me grow impatient. Previous preparation is needed for non-co-operation as it is for all important things. A man cannot become a non-co-operator by merely wishing to be one. Discipline is obligatory.

*Young India, 8-1-1925, p. 14*

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Non-co-operation, when its limitations are not recognized, becomes a licence instead of being a duty and, therefore, becomes a crime. The dividing line between right and wrong is often so thin as to become indistinguishable. But it is a line that is breakable and unmistakable.

What is, then, the difference between those who find themselves in jails for being in the right, and those who are there for being in the wrong? Both wear often the same dress, eat the same food and are subject outwardly to the same discipline. But while the latter submit to discipline most unwillingly and would commit a breach of it secretly, and even openly if they could, the former will willingly and to the best of their ability conform to jail discipline and prove worthier and more serviceable to their cause than when they are outside.

Indeed, whilst on the one hand Civil Disobedience authorizes disobedience of unjust laws or unmoral laws of a State which one seeks to overthrow, it requires meek and willing submission to the penalty of disobedience and, therefore, cheerful acceptance of the jail discipline and its attendant hardships.

It is now, therefore, clear that civil resister's resistance ceases and his obedience is resumed as soon as he is under confinement. In confinement, he claims no privileges because of the civility of his disobedience. Inside the jail, by his exemplary conduct he reforms even the criminals surrounding him, he softens

the hearts of jailors and others in authority. Such meek behaviour springing from strength and knowledge ultimately dissolves the tyranny of the tyrant. It is for this reason that I claim that voluntary suffering is the quickest and the best remedy for the removal of abuses and justices.

*Young India*, 29-12-1921, p. 434

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Non-violence is the most vital and integral part of Non-co-operation. We may fail in everything else, and still continue our battle if we remained non-violent. But we capitulate miserably, if we fail in adhering to non-violence.... Any violence on our part must be a token of our stupidity, ignorance and impotent rage. To exercise restraint under the gravest provocation is the truest mark of soldiership. The veriest tyro in the art of war knows, that he must avoid the ambushes of his adversary. And every provocation is a dangerous ambush into which we must resolutely refuse to walk.

*Young India*, 28-7-1921, p. 237

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I consider non-co-operation to be such a powerful and pure instrument, that if it is enforced in an earnest spirit, it will be like seeking first the Kingdom of God and everything else following as a matter of course. People will have then realized their true power. They would have learnt the value of discipline, self-control, joint action, non-violence, organization and everything else that goes to make a nation great and good, and not merely great.

*Young India*, 2-6-1920, p. 3

## CHAPTER 16: CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE

**Non-co-operation** and civil disobedience are but different branches of the same tree called *Satyagraha*.

*Young India*, 26-12-1924, p. 429

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Every *Satyagrihi* was bound to resist all those laws which he considered to be unjust and which were not of a criminal character, in order to bend the Government to the will of the people.

*Young India*, 21-1-1920, p. 3

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If I find that even my father has imposed upon me a law which is repugnant to my conscience, I think it is the least drastic course that I could adopt by respectfully telling him that I cannot obey it. By that course I do nothing but justice to my father... I have myself followed that course with the greatest advantage and I have preached that ever since. If it is not disrespectful to say so to my father, it is not so to say so to a friend and for that matter to my Government.

*Young India*, 21-1-1920, p. 4

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Mass civil disobedience stands on a different footing. It can only be tried in a calm atmosphere. It must be the calmness of strength not weakness, of knowledge not ignorance. Individual civil disobedience may be and often is vicarious. Mass civil disobedience may be and often is selfish in the sense that individuals expect personal gain from their disobedience. Thus in South Africa, Kallenbach and Polak offered vicarious civil disobedience. They had nothing to gain. Thousands offered it because they expected personal gain also in the shape, say, of the removal of the annual poll-tax levied upon ex-indentured men and their wives and grown-up children. It is sufficient in mass civil disobedience if the resister understand the working of the doctrine...

We must dismiss the idea of overawing the Government by huge demonstrations every time someone is arrested. On the contrary, we must treat arrest as the normal condition of the life of a non-co-operator. For we must seek arrest and imprisonment, as a soldier who goes to battle seeks death. We expect to bear down the opposition of the Government by courting and not by avoiding imprisonment, even though it be by showing our supposed readiness to be arrested and imprisoned *en masse*. Civil disobedience then emphatically means our desire to surrender to a single unarmed policeman. Our triumph consists in thousands being led to the prisons like lambs to the slaughter house. If the lambs of the world had been willingly led, they would have long ago saved themselves from the butcher's knife. Our triumph consists again in being imprisoned for no wrong whatsoever. The greater our innocence, the greater our strength and the swifter our victory.

As it is, this Government is cowardly, we are afraid of imprisonment. The Government takes advantage of our fear of gaols. If only our men and women welcome gaols as health resorts, we will cease to worry about the dear ones put in gaols which our countrymen in South Africa used to nickname His Majesty Hotels.

We have too long been mentally disobedient to the laws of the State and have too often surreptitiously evaded them, to be fit all of a sudden for civil disobedience. Disobedience to be civil has to be open and non-violent.

Complete civil disobedience is a state of peaceful rebellion-a refusal to obey every single State-made law. It is certainly more dangerous than an armed rebellion. For it can never be put down if the civil resisters are prepared to face extreme hardships. It is based upon an implicit belief in the absolute efficiency of innocent suffering. By noiselessly going to prison a civil resister ensures a calm atmosphere. The wrong-doer wearis of wrong-doing in the absence of resistance. All pleasure is lost when the victim betrays no resistance. A full grasp of the conditions of successful civil resistance is necessary at least on the part of the representatives of the people before we can launch out on an enterprise of

such magnitude. The quickest remedies are always fraught with the greatest danger and require the utmost skill in handling them.

*Young India*, 4-8-1921, p. 244

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I wish I could persuade everybody that civil disobedience is the inherent right of a citizen. He dare not give it up without ceasing to be a man. Civil disobedience is never followed by anarchy. Criminal disobedience can lead to it. Every State puts down criminal disobedience by force. It perishes, if it does not. But to put down civil disobedience is to attempt to imprison conscience. Civil disobedience can only lead to strength and purity. A civil resister never uses arms and hence he is harmless to a State that is at all willing to listen to the voice of public opinion. He is dangerous for an autocratic State, for he brings about its fall by engaging public opinion upon the matter for which he resists the State. Civil disobedience therefore becomes a sacred duty when the State has become lawless, or which is the same thing, corrupt. And a citizen that barters with such a State shares its corruption or lawlessness.

It is therefore possible to question the wisdom of applying civil disobedience in respect of a particular act or law; it is possible to advise delay and caution. But the right itself cannot be allowed to be questioned. It is a birthright that cannot be surrendered without surrender of one's self-respect.

At the same time that the right of civil disobedience is insisted upon, its use must be guarded by all conceivable restrictions. Every possible provision should be made against an out outbreak of violence or general lawlessness. Its area as well as its scope should also be limited to the barest necessity of the case.

*Young India*, 5-1-1922, p. 5

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We dare not pin our faith solely on civil disobedience. It is like the use of a knife to be used most sparingly if at all. A man who cuts away without ceasing cuts at the very root, and finds himself without the substance he was trying to reach by cutting off the superficial hard crust. The use of civil disobedience will be

healthy, necessary, and effective only if we otherwise conform to the laws of all growth. We must therefore give its full and therefore greater value to the adjective 'civil' than to 'disobedience'. Disobedience without civility, discipline, discrimination, non-violence is certain destruction. Disobedience combined with love is the living water of life. Civil disobedience is a beautiful variant to signify growth, it is not discordance which spells death.

*Young India*, 5-1-1922, p. 3

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Civil disobedience asks for and needs not a single farthing for its support. It needs and asks for stout hearts with a faith that will not flinch from any danger and will shine the brightest in the face of severest trial. Civil Disobedience is a terrifying synonym for suffering. But it is better often to understand the terrible nature of a thing if people will truly appreciate its benignant counterpart. Disobedience is a right that belongs to every human being and it becomes a sacred duty when it springs from civility, or, which is the same thing, love.

*Young India*, 1-4-1926, p. 122

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What we all are after is mass civil disobedience. It cannot be made. It must be spontaneous, if it is to deserve the name and if it is to be successful. And there certainly will be no mass response where the ground has not been previously tilled, manured and watered. The greatest precaution has to be taken everywhere against an outbreak of violence. Whilst it is true, as I have said, that civil resistance this time will continue even though violence may break out, it is equally true that violence on our part will harm the struggle and retard its progress. Two opposite forces can never work concurrently so as to help each other. The plan of civil disobedience has been conceived to neutralize and ultimately entirely to displace violence and enthroned non-violence in its stead, to replace hatred by love, to replace strife by concord.

*Young India*, 27-3-1930, p. 109

Victory is impossible until we are able to keep our temper under the gravest provocation. Calmness under fire is a soldier's indispensable quality. A non-co-operator is nothing if he cannot remain calm and unperturbed under a fierce fire of provocation.....

There should be no mistake. There is no civil disobedience possible, until the crowds behave like disciplined soldiers. And we cannot resort to civil disobedience, unless we can assure every Englishman that he is as safe in India as he is in his own home. It is not enough that we give the assurance. Every Englishman and every Englishwoman must feel safe, not by reason of the bayonet at their disposal but by reason of our living creed of non-violence. That is the condition not only of success but our own ability to carry on the movement in its present form. There is no other way of conducting the campaign of non-co-operation.

*Young India*, 25-8-1921, p. 268

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I have never claimed to be the one original *Satyagrahi*. What I have claimed is the application of that doctrine on an almost universal scale, and it yet remains to be seen and demonstrated that it is a doctrine which is capable of assimilation by thousands upon thousands of peoples in all ages and climes. I know, therefore, that mine is an experiment still in the making and it, therefore, always keeps me humble and rooted to the soil, and in that state of humility I always cling to every true example of *Satyagraha* that comes under my notice as a child clings to its mother's breast.

*Young India*, 22-9-1927, p. 317

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A civil resister does not go to jail to embarrass the jail authorities by indulging in the breach of jail rules. Of course, there can be civil disobedience in jail too. But there are definite rules for it. The point is that the civil resister's fight does not end with his imprisonment. Once we are inside the prison we become civilly dead so far as the outside world is concerned. But inside the prison our fight to

convert the hearts of the Government's bond slaves i.e., the jail officials, just begins....

It is a specialty of non-violence that its action never stops. That cannot be said of the sword or the bullet. The bullet can destroy the enemy; non-violence convert the enemy into a friend and thus enables the civil resister to assimilate to himself the latter's strength.

*A Pilgrimage for Peace*, (1950), pp. 88-89

## CHAPTER 17: FASTING IN SATYAGRAHA

Fasting is a potent weapon in the *Satyagraha* armoury. It cannot be taken by everyone... Mere physical capacity to take it is no qualification for it. It is of no use without a living faith in God. It should never be a mechanical effort or a mere limitation. It must come from the depth of one's soul. It is, therefore, always rare.

*Harijan*, 18-3-1939, p. 56

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There can be no room for selfishness, anger, lack of faith, or impatience in a pure fast... Infinite patience, firm resolve, single-mindedness of purpose, perfect calm, and no anger must of necessity be there. But since it is impossible for a person to develop all these qualities all at once, no one who has not devoted himself to following the laws of *Ahimsa* should undertake a *Satyagrahi* fast.

*Harijan*, 13-10-1940, p. 322

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Fasting unto death is the last and the most potent weapon in the armoury of Satyagraha. It is a sacred thing. But it must be accepted with all its implications. It is not the fast itself, but what it implies that matters.

*Harijan*, 18-8-1946, p. 262

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Fasting cannot be undertaken mechanically. It is a powerful thing but a dangerous thing, if handled amateurishly. It requires complete self-purification, much more than what is required in facing death with retaliation even in mind. One such act of perfect sacrifice would suffice for the whole world. Such is held to be Jesus' example.

*Harijan*, 27-10-1946, p. 372

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Of course, it is not to be denied that fasts can be really coercive. Such are fasts to attain a selfish object. A fast undertaken to wring money from a person or for fulfilling some such personal end would amount to the exercise of coercion or undue influence. I would unhesitatingly advocate resistance of such undue influence. I have myself successfully resisted it in the fasts that have been undertaken or threatened against me. And if it is argued that the dividing line between a selfish and unselfish end is often very thin, I would urge that a person who regards the end of a fast to be selfish or otherwise base should resolutely refuse to yield to it, even though the refusal may result in the death of the fasting person. If people will cultivate the habit of disregarding fasts which in their opinion are taken for unworthy ends, such fasts will be robbed of the taint of coercion and undue influence. Like all human institutions, fasting can be both legitimately and illegitimately used.

*Harijan*, 9-9-1933, p. 4

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If a man, however popular and great he may be, takes up an improper cause fasts in defence of the impropriety, it is the duty of his friends (among whom I count myself), fellow-workers and relatives to let him die rather than that an improper cause should triumph so that he may live. Fairest means cease to be fair when the end sought is unfair.

*Harijan*, 17-3-1946, p. 43

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Fast is the last weapon in the armoury of the votary of *Ahimsa*. When human ingenuity fails, the votary fasts. This fasting quickens the spirit of prayer, that is to say, the fasting is a spiritual act and, therefore, addressed to God. The effect of such action on the life of the people is that when the person fasting is at all known to them their sleeping conscience is awakened. But there is the danger that the people through mistaken sympathy may act against their will in order to save the life of the loved one. This danger has got to be faced. One ought not to be deterred from right action when one is sure of the rightness. It can but

promote circumspection. Such a fast is undertaken in obedience to the dictates of the inner voice and therefore prevents haste.

*Harijan*, 21-12-1947, p. 476

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Fasting unto death is an integral part of *Satyagraha* programme, and it is the greatest and most effective weapon in its armoury under given circumstances. Not everyone is qualified for undertaking it without a proper course of training.

*Harijan*, 26-7-1942, p. 248

## CHAPTER 18: SATYAGRAHI LEADER

The leaders of every clean movement are bound to see that they admit only clean fighters to it.

*Satyagraha in South Africa*, (1950), p. 139

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*Satyagraha* presupposes the living presence and guidance of God. The leader depends not on his own strength but on that of God. He acts as the Voice within guides him.

*Young India*, 2-8-1928, p. 260

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Those who claim to lead the masses must resolutely refuse to be led by them, if we want to avoid mob law and desire ordered progress for the country. I believe that mere protestation of one's opinion and surrender to the mass opinion is not only not enough, but in matters of vital importance, leaders must act contrary to the mass of opinion if it does not commend itself to their reason.

*Young India*, 14-7-1920, p. 4

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In religious *Satyagraha* there can be no room for aggressiveness, demonstrativeness, show. Those who take part in it must have equal respect and record for the religious convictions and susceptibilities of those who profess a different faith from theirs. The slightest narrowness in their outlook is likely to be reflected magnified multifold in the opponent.

*Harijan*, 27-5-1939, p. 144

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I have maintained that we would require a smaller army of *Satyagrahis* than that of soldiers trained in modern warfare, and the cost will be insignificant compared to the fabulous sums devoted by nations to armaments.

*Harijan*, 22-10-1938, p. 298

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*Satyagraha* by the vast mass of mankind will be impossible if they had all to assimilate the doctrine in all its implications. I cannot claim to have assimilated all its implications nor do I claim even to know them all. A soldier of an army does not know the whole of the military science; so also does a *Satyagrahi* not know the whole science of *Satyagraha*. It is enough if he trusts his commander and honestly follows his instructions and is ready to suffer unto death without bearing malice against the so-called enemy.

*Harijan*, 22-10-1938 p. 298

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I realized that before a people could be fit for offering civil disobedience, they should thoroughly understand its deeper implications. That being so, before re-starting civil disobedience on a mass scale, it would be necessary to create a band of well-tried, pure-hearted volunteers who thoroughly understood the strict conditions of *Satyagraha*. They could explain these to the people, and by sleepless vigilance keep them on the right Path.

*An Autobiography*, (1966), p. 357

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A very small part of the preliminary training received by the military is common to the non-violent army. These are discipline, drill, singing in chorus, flag hoisting, signalling and the like. Even this is not absolutely necessary and the basis is different. The positively necessary training for a non-violent army is an immovable faith in God, willing and perfect obedience to the chief of the non-violent army and perfect inward and outward co-operation between the units of the army.

*Harijan*, 12-5-1946, p. 128

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1. There must be common honesty among *Satyagrahis*.

2. They must render heart discipline to their commander. There should be no mental reservation.
3. They must be prepared to lose all, not merely their personal liberty, not merely their possessions, land, cash, etc. but also the liberty and possessions of their families, and they must be ready cheerfully to face bullets, bayonets, or even slow death by torture.
4. They must not be violent in thought, word or deed towards the 'enemy' or among themselves.

*Harijan*, 22-10-1938, p. 298

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My experience has taught me that a law of progression applies to every righteous struggle. But in the case of *Satyagraha* the law amounts to an axiom. As a *Satyagraha* struggle progresses onward, many another elements helps to swell its current and there is a constant growth in the results to which it leads. This is really inevitable, and is bound up with the first principles of *Satyagraha*. For in *Satyagraha* the minimum is also the maximum, and as it is the irreducible minimum, there is no question of retreat, and the only movement possible is an advance. In other struggles, even when they are righteous, the demand is first pitched a little higher so as to admit of future reduction, and hence the law of progression does not apply to all of them without exception.

*The Mind of Mahatma Gandhi* (1967), p. 174

## CHAPTER 19: SATYAGRAHA IN THE FACE OF RIOTS AND AGGRESSION

To quell riots non-violently, there must be true *Ahimsa* in one's heart, an *Ahimsa* that takes even the erring hooligan in its warm embrace. Such an attitude cannot be cultivated. It can only come as a prolonged and patient effort which must be made during peaceful times. The would-be members of a peace brigade should come into close touch and cultivate acquaintance with the so-called *goonda* element in his vicinity. He should know all and be known to all and win the hearts of all by his living and selfless service. No section should be regarded as too contemptible or mean to mix with. *Goondas* do not drop from the sky, nor do they spring from the earth like evil spirits. They are the product of social disorganization, and society is therefore responsible for their existence. In other words, they should be looked upon as a symptom of corruption in our body politic. To remove the disease we must first discover the underlying cause. To find the remedy will then be a comparatively easy task.

*Harijan*, 15-9-1940, p. 285

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"How could a disarmed neutral country allow other nations to be destroyed? But for our army which was waiting ready at our frontier during the last war we should have been ruined."

At the risk of being considered a visionary or a fool I must answer this question in the only manner I know. It must be cowardly of a neutral country to allow an army to devastate a neighbouring country. But there are two ways in common between soldiers of war and soldiers of non-violence, and if I had been a citizen of Switzerland and a President of the Federal State what I would have done would be to refuse passage to the invading army by refusing all supplies. Secondly, by re-enacting a Thermopylae in Switzerland, you would have presented a living wall of men and women and children and inviting the invaders to walk over your corpses. You may say that such a thing is beyond human experience and endurance. I say that it is not so. It was quite possible. Last year in Gujarat,

women stood lathi charges unflinchingly and in Peshawar thousands stood hail of bullets without resorting to violence. Imagine these men and women staying in front of an army requiring a safe passage to another country. The army would be brutal enough to walk over them, you might say. I would then say you will still have done your duty by allowing yourselves to be annihilated. An army that dares to pass over the corpses of innocent men and women would not be able to repeat that experiment. You may, if you wish, refuse to believe in such courage on the part of the masses of men and women; but then you would have to admit that non-violence is made of sterner stuff. It was never conceived as a weapon of the weak, but of the stoutest hearts.

*Young India*, 31-12-1931, p. 427

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If I have called the arrangement with Herr Hitler 'Peace without honour', it was not to cast any reflection on British or French statesmen. I have no doubt that Mr. Chamberlain could not think of anything better. He knew his nation's limitations. He wanted to avoid war, if it could be avoided at all. Short of going to war, he pulled his full weight in favour of the Czechs. That it could not save honour was no fault of his. It would be so every time there is a struggle with Herr Hitler or Signor Mussolini.

It cannot be otherwise. Democracy dreads to spill blood. The philosophy for which the two dictators stand calls it cowardice to shrink from carnage. They exhaust the resources of poetic art in order to glorify organized murder. There is no humbug about their word or deed. They are ever ready for war. There is nobody in Germany or Italy to cross their path. Their word is law.

It is different with Mr. Chamberlain or M. Daladier. They have their Parliaments and Chambers to please. They have parties to confer with. They cannot maintain themselves on a perpetual war footing, if their language is to have a democratic accent about it.

Science of war leads one to dictatorship pure and simple. Science of non-violence can alone lead one to pure democracy. England, France and America have to make their choice. That is the challenge of the two dictators.

Russia is out of the picture just now. Russia has a dictator who dreams of peace and thinks he will wade to it through a sea of blood. No one can say what Russian dictatorship will mean to the world.

It was necessary to give this introduction to what I want to say to the Czechs and through them to all those nationalities which are called 'small' or 'weak'. I want to speak to the Czechs because their plight moved me to the point of physical and mental distress, and I felt that it would be cowardice on my part not to share with them the thoughts that were welling up within me. It is clear that the small nations must either come or be ready to come under the protection of the dictators or be a constant menace to the peace of Europe. In spite of all the goodwill in the world England and France cannot save them. Their intervention can only mean bloodshed and destruction such as has never been seen before. If I were a Czech, therefore, I would free these two nations from the obligation to defend my country. And yet I must live. I would not be a vassal to any nation or body. I must have absolute independence or perish. To seek to win in a clash of arms would be pure bravado. Not so, if in defying the might of one who would deprive me of my independence I refuse to obey his will and perish unarmed in the attempt. In so doing, though I lose the body, I save my soul, i.e. my honour. This inglorious peace should be my opportunity. I must live down the humiliation and gain real independence.

But says a comforter, "Hitler knows no pity. Your spiritual effort will avail nothing before him."

My answer is: "You may be right. History has no record of a nation having adopted non-violent resistance. If Hitler is unaffected by my suffering, it does not matter. For I shall have lost nothing worth. My honour is the only thing worth preserving. That is independent of Hitler's pity. But as a believer in non-violence I may not limit its possibilities. Hitherto he and his likes have built upon their invariable experience that men yield to force. Unarmed men, women and children offering non-violent resistance without any bitterness in them will be a novel experience for them. Who can dare say it is not in their nature to respond to the higher and finer forces? They have the same soul that I have."

This is how I should, I believe, act if I was a Czech. When I first launched out on *Satyagraha*, I had no companion. We were 13,000 men, women and children against a whole nation capable of crushing the existence out of us. I did not know who would listen to me. It all came as in a flash. All the 13,000 did not fight. Many fell back. But the honour of the nation was saved. New history was written by the South African *Satyagraha*.

A more apposite instance, perhaps, is that of Khansaheb Abdul Gaffar Khan, the servant of God as he calls himself, the pride of Afghan as the Pathans delight to call him. He is sitting in front of me as I pen these lines. He has made several thousands of his people throw down their arms. He thinks he has imbibed the lesson of non-violence. He is not sure of his people. I have come to the Frontier Province, or rather he has brought me, to see with my own eyes what his men here are doing. I can say in advance and at once that these men know very little of non-violence. All the treasure they have on earth is their faith in their leader. I do not cite these soldiers of peace as at all a finished illustration. I cite them as an honest attempt being made by a soldier to convert fellow soldiers to the ways of peace. I can testify that it is an honest attempt, and whether in the end it succeeds or fails, it will have its lessons for *Satyagrahis* of the future. My purpose will be fulfilled, if I succeed in reaching these men's hearts and making them see that, if their non-violence does not make them feel much braver than the possession of arms and the ability to use them, they must give up their non-violence, which is another name for cowardice, and resume their arms which there is nothing but their own will to prevent them from taking back.

I present Dr. Benes with a weapon not of the weak but of the brave. There is no bravery greater than a resolute refusal to bend the knee to an earthly power, no matter how great, and that without bitterness of spirit in the fullness of faith that the spirit alone lives, nothing else does.

*Harijan*, 15-10-1938. P. 290-91

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My work will be finished if I succeed in carrying conviction to the human family, that every man or woman, however weak in body, is the guardian of his or her

self-respect and liberty. This defence avails, though the whole world may be against the individual resister.

*Selections from Gandhi, (1957) p. 43*

## SECTION: III COMPARATIVE IDEOLOGIES

### CHAPTER 20: ON SARVODAYA

During the days of my education I had read practically nothing outside textbooks, and after I launched into active life I had very little time for reading. I cannot, therefore, claim much book knowledge. However, I believe I have not lost much because of this enforced restraint. On the contrary, the limited reading may be said to have enabled me thoroughly to digest what I did read. Of these books, the one that brought about an instantaneous and practical transformation in my life was *Unto This Last*. I translated it later into Gujarati, entitling it *Saryodaya* (the welfare of all).

I believe that I discovered some of my deepest convictions reflected in this great book of Ruskin, and that is why it so captured me and made me transform my life. A poet is one who can call forth the good latent in the human breast. Poets do not influence all alike, for everyone is not evolved in an equal measure.

The teachings of *Unto this Last* I understand to be:

1. That the good of the individual is contained in the good of all.
2. That a lawyer's work has the same value as the barber's, inasmuch as all have the same right of earning their livelihood from their work.
3. That a life of labour, i.e., the life of the tiller of the soil and the handicraftsman, is the life worth living.

The first of these I knew. The second I had dimly realized. The third had never occurred to me. *Unto This Last* made it as clear as daylight for me that the second and the third were contained in the first. I arose with the dawn, ready to reduce these principles to practice.

*An Autobiography*, (1966), p. 224

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A votary of *Ahimsa* cannot subscribe to the utilitarian formula (of the greatest good of the greatest number). He will strive for the greatest good of all and die in the attempt to realize the idea. He will, therefore, be willing to die, so that the others may live. He will serve himself with the rest, by himself dying. The greatest good of all inevitably includes the good of the greatest number, and therefore he and the utilitarian will converge in many points in their career, but there does come a time when they must part company, and even work in opposite directions. The utilitarian to be logical will never sacrifice himself. The absolutist will even sacrifice himself.

*Young India*, 9-12-1926, p. 432

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I do not believe in the doctrine of the greatest good of the greatest number. It means in its nakedness that in order to achieve the supposed good of fifty-one per cent, the interest of forty-nine per cent may be, or rather, should be sacrificed. It is a heartless doctrine and has done harm to humanity. The only real, dignified, human doctrine is the greatest good of all, and this can only be achieved by uttermost self-sacrifice.

*The Diary of Mahadev Desai-I*, (1953), p. 149

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If we would see our dream of *Panchayat Raj*,<sup>1</sup> i.e., true democracy realized, we would regard the humblest and lowest Indian as being equally the ruler of India with the tallest in the land. This presupposes that all are pure or will become pure if they are not. And purity must go hand-in-hand with wisdom. No one would then harbour and distinction between community and community, caste and outcaste. Everybody would regard all as equal with oneself and hold them together in the silken net of love. No one would regard another as untouchable. We would hold as equal the toiling labourer and the rich capitalist. Everybody would know how to earn an honest living by the sweat of one's brow and make no distinction between intellectual and physical labour. To hasten this consummation, we would voluntarily turn ourselves into scavengers. No one who has wisdom will ever touch opium, liquor or any intoxicants. Everybody would

observe *Swadeshi* as the rule of life and regard every woman, not being his wife, as his mother, sister or daughter according to her age, never lust after her in his heart. He would be ready to lay down his life when occasion demands it, never want to take another's life.

*Harijan*, 18-1-1948, p. 517

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1 Connoting *Sarvodaya*

## CHAPTER 21: ON SOCIALISM

**Socialism** is a beautiful word, and, so far as I am aware in socialism all the members of society are equal—none low, none high. In the individual body the head is not high because it is the top of the body, nor are soles of the feet low because they touch the earth. Even as members of the individual body are equal, so are the members of society. This is socialism.

In it the prince and the peasant, the wealthy and the poor, the employer and the employee are all on the same level. In the terms of religion there is no duality in socialism. It is all unity. Looking at society all the world over, there is nothing but duality or plurality. Unity is conspicuous by its absence. This man is high, that one is low, that is a Hindu, that a Muslim, third a Christian, fourth a Parsi, fifth a Sikh, sixth a Jew. Even among these there are subdivisions. In the unity of my conception there is perfect unity in the plurality of designs.

In order to reach this state we may not look on things philosophically and say that we need not make a move until all are converted to socialism. Without changing our life, we may go on giving addresses, forming parties and, hawk-like, seize the game when it comes our way. This is no socialism. The more we treat it as game to be seized, the farther it must recede from us.

Socialism begins with the first convert. If there is one such, you can add zeros to the one and the first zero will account for ten and every addition will account for ten times the previous number. If, however, the beginner is a zero, in other words, no one makes the beginning, multiplicity of zeros will also produce zero value. Time and paper occupied in writing zeros will be so much waste.

This socialism is as pure as crystal. It, therefore, requires crystal-like means to achieve it. Impure means result in an impure end. Hence the prince and the peasant will not be equalized by cutting off the prince's head, nor can the process of cutting off equalize the employer and the employed. One cannot reach truth by untruthfulness. Truthful conduct alone can reach truth. Are not non-violence and truth twins? The answer is an emphatic 'no'. Non-violence is

embedded in truth and vice versa. Hence has it been said that they are faces of the same coin. Either is inseparable from the other. Read the coin either way. The spelling of words will be different. The value is the same. This blessed state is unattainable without perfect purity. Harbour impurity of mind or body and you have untruth and violence in you.

Therefore, only truthful, non-violent and pure hearted socialists will be able to establish a socialistic society in India and the world. To my knowledge there is no country in the world which is purely socialistic. Without the means described above, the existence of such a society is impossible.

*Harijan*, 13-7-1947, p. 232

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Truth and *Ahimsa* must incarnate in socialism. In order that they can, the votary must have a living faith in God. Mere mechanical adherence to truth and *Ahimsa* is likely to break down at the critical moment. Hence have I said that truth is God. This God is a living Force. Our life is of that Force. That Force resides in, but is not the body. He who denies the existence of that great Force, denies to himself the use of that inexhaustible Power and thus remains impotent. He is like a rudderless ship which, tossed about here and there, perishes without making any headway. The socialism of such takes them nowhere, what to say of the society in which they live.

If such be the case, does it mean that no socialist believes in God? If there be any, why have they not made any visible progress? Then again, many godly persons have lived before now; why have they not succeeded in founding a socialistic State?

It is difficult completely to silence these two doubts. Nevertheless, it is possible to say that it has perhaps never occurred to a believing socialist that there is any connection between his socialist and belief in God. It is equally safe to say that godly men as a rule never commended socialism to the masses.

Superstitions have flourished in the world in spite of godly men and women. In Hinduism itself untouchability has, till of late, held undoubted sway.

This fact is that it has always been a matter of strenuous research to know this great Force and its hidden possibilities.

My claim is that in the pursuit of that search lies the discovery of *Satyagraha*. It is not, however, claimed that all the laws of *Satyagraha* have been laid down or found. This I do say, fearlessly and firmly, that every worthy object can be achieved by the use of *Satyagraha*. It is the highest and infallible means, the greatest force. Socialism will not be reached by any other means. *Satyagraha* can rid society of all evils, political, economic and moral.

*Harijan*, 20-7-1947, p. 240

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I have claimed that I was a Socialist long before those I know in India had avowed their creed. But my socialism was natural to me and not adopted from any books. It came out of my unshakable belief in non-violence. No man could be actively non-violent and not rise against social injustice, no matter where it occurred. Unfortunately Western socialists have, so far as I know, believed in the necessity of violence for enforcing socialistic doctrines.

I have always held that social justice, even unto the least and the lowliest, is impossible of attainment by force. I have further believed that it is possible by proper training of the lowliest by non-violent means to secure redress of the wrongs suffered by them. That means is non-violent non-co-operation. At times non-co-operation becomes as much a duty as co-operation. No one is bound to co-operate in one's own undoing or slavery. Freedom received through the effort of others, however benevolent, cannot be retained when such effort is withdrawn. In other words, such freedom is not real freedom. But the lowliest can feel its glow as soon as they learn the art of attaining it through non-violent non-co-operation.

*Harijan*, 20-4-1940, p. 97

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Socialism was not born with the discovery of the misuse of capital by capitalists. As I have contended, socialism, even communism, is explicit in the first verse of

Ishopanishad.<sup>1</sup> What is true is that when some reformers lost faith in the method of conversion, the technique of what is known as scientific socialism was born. I am engaged in solving the same problem that faces scientific socialists. It is true, however, that my approach is always and only through unadulterated non-violence. It may fail. If it does, it will be because of my ignorance of the technique of non-violence. I may be a bad exponent of the doctrine in which my faith is daily increasing.

*Harijan*, 20-2-1937, p. 12

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The basis of socialism is economic equality. There can be no *Ramarajya*<sup>2</sup> in the present state of iniquitous inequalities in which a few roll in riches and the masses do not get even enough to eat. I accepted the theory of socialism even while I was in South Africa. My opposition to the socialists and others consists in attacking violence as a means of effecting and lasting reform.

*Harijan*, 1-6-1947, p. 172

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My socialism means 'even unto this last'. I do not want to rise on the ashes of the blind, the deaf and the dumb. In their socialism, probably these have no place. Their one aim is material progress. For instance, America aims at having a car for every citizen. I do not. I want freedom for full expression of my personality. I must be free to build a staircase to Sirius if I want to. That does not mean that I want to do any such thing. Under the other socialism, there is no individual freedom. You own nothing, not even your body.

*Harijan*, 4-8-1946, p. 246

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1. A well-known Upanishad revealing the uniqueness of the Spirit and man's purpose in life.
  2. Reign of Rama, the hero of the Ramayana; beneficent rule.

## CHAPTER 22: ON COMMUNISM

**Bolshevism** is the necessary result of modern materialistic civilization. Its insensate worship of matter has given rise to a school which has been brought up to look upon material advancement as the goal and which has lost all touch with the final things of life.

*The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XV, p. 168*

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I am yet ignorant of what exactly Bolshevism is. I have not been able to study it. I do not know whether it is for the good of Russia in the long run. But I do know that in so far as it is based on violence and denial of God, it repels me. I do not believe in short-violent-cuts to success. Those Bolshevik friends who are bestowing their attention on me should realize that, however much I may sympathize with and admire worthy motives, I am an uncompromising opponent of violent methods even to serve the noblest of causes.

*Young India, 11-12-1924, p. 406*

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What does Communism mean in the last analysis? It means a classless society—an ideal that is worth striving for. Only I part company with it when force is called to aid for achieving it.... The idea of inequality, of "high or low" is an evil, but I do not believe in eradicating evil from the human breast at the point of the bayonet.

*Harijan, 13-3-1937, p. 40*

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"What do you think of Communism? Do you think it would be good for India?"

Communism of the Russian type, that is Communism which is imposed on a people, would be repugnant to India. I believe in non-violent communism...

"But Communism in Russia is against private property. Do you want private property?"

If Communism came without any violence, it would be welcome. For then no property would be held by anybody except on behalf of the people and for the people. A millionaire may have his millions, but he will hold them for the people. The State could take charge of them whenever they would need them for the common cause.

"Is there any difference of opinion between you and Jawaharlal in respect of Socialism?"

There is, but it is a difference in emphasis. He perhaps puts an emphasis on the result, whereas I put on the means. Perhaps according to him I am putting an over-emphasis on non-violence, whereas he, though he believes in non-violence, would want to have Socialism by other means, if it was impossible to have it by non-violence. Of course my emphasis on non-violence becomes one of principle. Even If I was assured that we could have independence by means of violence, I should refuse to have it. It won't be real independence.

*Harijan*, 13-2-1937, p. 6

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I must confess that I have not yet been able fully to understand the meaning of Bolshevism. All that I know is that it aims at the abolition of the institution of private property. This is the only an application of the ethical ideal of non-possession in the realm of economics and if the people adopted this ideal of their own accord or could be made to accept it by means of peaceful persuasion, there would be nothing like it. But from what I know of Bolshevism it not only does not preclude the use of force but freely sanctions it for the expropriation of private property and maintaining the collective State ownership of the same. And if that is so, I have no hesitation in saying that the Bolshevik regime in its present form cannot last for long. For it is my firm conviction that nothing enduring can be built on violence. But be that as it may there is no questioning the fact that the Bolshevik ideal has behind it the purest sacrifice of countless men and women who have given up their all for its sake, and an ideal that is sanctified by the sacrifices of such master spirits as Lenin cannot go in vain the noble example of

their renunciation will be emblazoned forever and quicken and purify the ideal as time passes.

*Young India*, 15-11-1928, p. 381

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I have made the working men's cause my own long before any of the young Communists here were born. I spent the best part of my time in South Africa working for them, I used to live with them, and shared their joys and sorrows. You must therefore understand why I claim to speak for labour. I expect at least courtesy from you if nothing else. I invite you to come to me and discuss things with me as frankly as you can.

You claim to be Communists, but you do not seem to live the life of Communism. I may tell you that I am trying my best to live up to the ideal of Communism in the best sense of the term. And Communism does not, I fancy, exclude courtesy. I am amongst you today, within a few minutes I will leave you. But if you want to carry the country with you, you ought to be able to react on it by reasoning with it. You cannot do so by coercion. You may deal destruction to bring the country round to your view. But how many will you destroy? Not tens of millions. You may kill a few thousands if you had millions with you. But today you are no more than a handful. I ask you to convert the Congress if you can and to take charge of it. But you cannot do so by bidding goodbye to the elementary rules of courtesy. And there is no reason why you should be lacking in ordinary courtesy, when it is open to you to give the fullest vent to your views, when India is tolerant enough to listen patiently to anyone who can talk coherently.

*Young India*, 26-3-1931, p. 53

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The Communists seem to have made trouble-shooting their profession. I have friends among them. Some of them are like sons to me. But it seems they do not make any distinction between fair and foul, truth and falsehood. They deny the charge. But their reported acts seem to sustain it. Moreover, they seem to take their instructions from Russia, whom they regard as their spiritual home rather than India. I cannot countenance this dependence on an outside power. I have

even said that we should not depend even on Russian wheat in our present food crisis. We must have the ability and courage to subsist on what our soil can give us rather than depend on foreign charity. Otherwise, we shall not deserve to exist as an independent country. The same applies to foreign ideologies. I would accept them only to the extent that I can assimilate them and adapt them to the Indian scene. But I must refuse to go under them.

My formula for the Communists, therefore, is that I would prefer to die at their hands, but I will not retaliate.

*Harijan*, 6-10-1946, pp. 338-39

## CHAPTER 23: ON MARX

"Marx showed us that our ideologies, institutions, and ethical standards, literature, art, customs, even religion, are a product of our economic environment."

I do not agree that our ideologies, ethical standards and values are altogether a product of our material environment without any absolute basis outside it. On the contrary as we are, so our environment becomes.

"Is not the Wardha scheme of Basic Education based upon the assumption that purposive activity of the hand moulds not only our thinking but our whole personality? Does that not come very near the materialistic theory of knowledge as propounded by Marx?"

But the Marxist wants to abolish the labouring hand altogether and substitute in its place the machine. He has no use for the hand. Dependence on manual labour, according to Marx, is the symbol and root cause of the destitution and slavery of the worker. It is the function of the machine to emancipate him from this state. I, on the other hand, hold that machine enslaves and only intelligent use of the hand will bring to the worker both freedom and happiness.

The Marxist regards thought, as it were, 'a secretion of the brain' and the mind 'a reflex of the material environment'. I cannot accept that. Above and beyond both matter and mind is He. If I have an awareness of that living principle within me, no one can fetter my mind. The body might be destroyed, the spirit will proclaim its freedom. This to me is not a theory; it is a *fact of experience*.

"The Marxists concede that an individual may transcend his material environment but class behaviour is essentially determined by it. It cannot change unless the economic environment is altered. To transform the capitalist, the capitalistic order must be destroyed."

What an individual can do, a whole class of people can be induced to do. It is all a question of discovering the right technique. The whole of our non-violent non-

co-operation movement, which aims at transforming the British ruling class, is based on this hypothesis. Trusteeship is my answer to the issue of class-conflict.

"The wars were an inevitable consequence of the institution of private property in the capitalistic system."

No, not the economic factor alone. Ultimately it is the Unseen Power that governs the course of events-even in the minds of men who make those events. Supposing Hitler were to die today, it would alter the whole course of current history. Similarly, supposing all capitalists were wiped out as a result of an earthquake or some other natural cataclysm, the history of class-war would then be changed in a way least dreamt of by the exponents of economic interpretation of history. Would not the history of the present have been different if instead of Chamberlain a more dynamic figure had been the Prime Minister of England? Or, if Chamberlain had not shown lack of political courage at the moment?

"The Marxists say that to abolish war we have but to abolish the institution of private property. You have also taught that property is incompatible with the non-violent way of life."

This is only partly true. Was not Helen of Troy the cause of the Trojan war? Were the wars of the Rajputs related to the institution of private property? No. To banish war we have to do more. We have to eradicate possessiveness and greed and lust and egotism from our own hearts. We have to carry war within ourselves to banish it from society...

We may criticise Marx but that he was a great man who can deny? His analysis of social ills or the cures he prescribed for them may or may not be correct. I do not accept his economic theories but this much I know that the poor are being ground down. Something has got to be done for it.

*Mahatma Gandhi-The Last Phase, Vol. II, (1958), pp. 137-39*

## SECTION IV: ONE WORLD

### CHAPTER 24: NATIONALISM AND INTERNATIONALISM

For me patriotism is the same as humanity. I am patriotic because I am human and humane. It is not exclusive. I will not hurt England or Germany to serve India. Imperialism has no place in my scheme of life. The law of a patriot is not different from that of the patriarch. And a patriot is so much the less a patriot if he is a lukewarm humanitarian. There is no conflict between private and political law.

*Young India, 16-3-1921, p. 81*

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It is impossible for one to be internationalist without being a nationalist. Internationalism is possible only when nationalism becomes a fact, i.e., when peoples belonging to different countries have organized themselves and are able to act as one man. It is not nationalism that is evil, it is the narrowness, selfishness, exclusiveness which is the bane of modern nations which is evil. Each wants to profit at the expense of, and rise on, the ruin of the other. Indian nationalism has, I hope, struck a different path. It wants to organize itself or to find full self-expression for the benefit and service of humanity at large.

*Young India, 18-6-1925, p. 211*

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My mission is not merely brotherhood of Indian humanity. My mission is not merely freedom of India, though today it undoubtedly engrosses practically the whole of my life and the whole of my time. But through realization of freedom of India I hope to realize and carry on the mission of brotherhood of man. My patriotism is not an exclusive thing. It is all-embracing and I should reject that patriotism which sought to mount upon the distress or the exploitation of other nationalities. The conception of my patriotism is nothing if it is not always in every case without exception consistent with the broadest good of humanity at large. Not only that but my religion and my patriotism derived from my religion

embrace all life. I want to realize brotherhood or identity not merely with the beings called human, but I want to realize identity with all life, even with such beings as crawl on earth. I want, if I don't give you a shock, to realize identity with even the crawling things upon earth, because we claim common descent from the same God, and that being so, all life in whatever form it appears must be essentially one.

*Young India*, 4-4-1929, p. 107

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Our nationalism can be no peril to other nations, inasmuch as we will exploit none just as we will allow none to exploit us. Through *Swaraj* we would serve the whole world.

*Young India*, 16-4-1931, p. 79

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Just as the cult of patriotism teaches us today that the individual has to die for the family, the family has to die for the village, the village for the district, the district for the province, and the province for the country, even so a country has to be free in order that it may die, if necessary, for the benefit of the world. My love, therefore, of nationalism or my idea of nationalism is that my country may become free, that if need be the whole of the country may die, so that the human race may live. There is no room for race hatred there. Let that be our nationalism.

*Gandhiji in Indian Village*, (1927), p. 170

## CHAPTER 25: DIFFERENT RACES ARE DIFFERENT BRANCHES OF ONE TREE

In the eyes of God who is the Creator of all, His creatures are all equal. Had He made any distinctions of high and low between man and man, they would have been visible as are the distinctions between say, an elephant and an ant. But He has endowed all human beings impartially with the same shape and the same natural wants.

*Harijan*, 22-12-1933, p. 2

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It is wrong, it is sinful, to consider some people lower than ourselves. On God's Earth, nobody is low and nobody is high. We are all His creatures; and just as in the eyes of parents all their children are absolutely equal, so also in God's eyes all His creatures must be equal.

*Harijan*, 5-1-1934, p. 8

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In spite of the differences of races and religions, we shall learn to tolerate and respect one another and consider all human beings as children of one God and, therefore, brothers and sisters of one another. God is the Creator of all life; all His creatures are, therefore, equal in His eyes. Humanity is a gigantic tree having innumerable branches and leaves, and the same life throbs through them all. The realization of unity in diversity is implied in the removal of untouchability.

*Harijan*, 1-12-1933, p. 6

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"What sort of relations would you favour between two races?"

The closest possible. But while I have abolished all distinction between an African and an Indian, that does not mean that I do not recognize the difference between them. The different races of mankind are like different branches of tree-once we recognize the common parent stock from which we are sprung, we realize the

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basic unity of the human family, and there is no room left for enmities and unhealthy competition.

*Harijan*, 18-2-1939, p. 12

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I do not believe... that an individual may gain spiritually and those who surround him suffer... I believe in the essential unity of man and... of all that lives. Therefore I believe that if one man gains... the whole world gains with him and, if one man falls, the whole world falls to that extent. I do not help opponents without at the same time helping myself and my co-workers.

*Young India*, 4-12-1924, p. 398

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One man cannot do right in one department of life whilst he is occupied in doing wrong in any other department. Life is one indivisible whole.

*Young India*, 27-1-1927, p. 31

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Unseen it (South Africa's white man's policy) holds the seeds of a world war.

*Harijan*, 24-3-1946, p. 52

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Does real superiority (of the whites) require outside props in the shape of legislation?

*Harijan*, 24-3-1946, p.52

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Is a civilization worth the name which requires for its existence the very doubtful prop of racial legislation and lynch law?

*Harijan*, 30-6-1946, p. 204

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One day the black races will rise like the avenging Attila against their white oppressors, unless someone presents to them the weapon of *Satyagraha*.

*Harijan*, 19-5-1946, p. 134

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...It will be a dark blot on the history of the white civilization if lynch law is allowed to have its course in South Africa. I hope that the South African Government and the civilized conscience of mankind will not allow that.

*Harijan*, 30-6-1946, p. 206

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This new caste (system) is worse than the ancient but dying institution of India which has some redeeming features, even while it is dying. But the new civilized edition has none. It shamelessly proclaims that white civilization requires the erection of legal barriers in order to protect itself against Asiatics and Africans.

*Harijan*, 2-6-1946, p. 157

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Those who agree that racial inequality must be removed and yet do nothing to fight the evil are impotent. I cannot have anything to say to such people. After all the underdogs will have to earn their own salvation....

The solution is largely in India's hands. If everything is all right in India internally, she is likely to play an effective part in straightening up affairs...

If the UNO fails to deal justly with the South African-Indian dispute, the UNO will lose its prestige. I have no doubt that the UNO can prosper only if it is just.

*Harijan*, 26-10-1947, p. 385

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Do they forget that the greatest of the teachers of mankind were all Asiatics and did not possess a white face? These, if they descended on earth and went to South Africa, will all have to live in the segregated areas and be classed as Asiatics and coloured people unfit by law to be the equals of whites.

*Harijan*, 30-6-1946, p. 204

## CHAPTER 26: ATOM BOMB

There have been cataclysmic changes in the world. Do I still adhere to my faith in truth and non-violence? Has not the atom bomb exploded that faith? Not only has it not done so, but it has clearly demonstrated to me that the twins constitute the mightiest force in the world. Before it the atom bomb is of no effect. The two opposing forces are wholly different in kind, the one moral and spiritual, the other physical and material. The one is infinitely superior to the other which by its very nature has an end. The force of the spirit is ever progressive and endless. Its full expression makes it unconquerable in the world. In saying this I know that I have said nothing new. I merely bear witness to the fact. What is more, the force resides in everybody, man, woman, and child irrespective of the colour of the skin. Only in many it lies dormant, but it is capable of being awakened by judicious training.

It is further to be observed that without the recognition of this truth and due effort to realize it, there is no escape from self-destruction. The remedy lies in every individual training himself for self-expression in every walk of life, irrespective of response by the neighbours.

*Harijan*, 10-2-1946, p. 8

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It has been suggested by American friends that the atom bomb will bring in *Ahimsa* as nothing else can. It will, if it is meant that its destructive power will so disgust the world that it will turn it away from violence for the time being. This is very like a man glutting himself with dainties to the point of nausea and turning away from them only to return with redoubled zeal after the effect of nausea is well over. Precisely in the same manner will the world return to violence with renewed zeal after the effect of disgust is worn out.

Often does good come out of evil. But that is God's, not man's plan. Man knows that only evil can come out of evil, as good out of good.

That atomic energy though harnessed by American scientists and army men for destructive purposes may be utilized by other scientists for humanitarian purposes is undoubtedly within the realm of possibility. But that is not what was meant by my American friends. They were not so simple as to put a question which connoted an obvious truth. An incendiary uses fire for his destructive and nefarious purposes, a housewife makes daily use of it in preparing nourishing food for mankind.

So far as I can see, the atomic bomb has deadened the finest feeling that has sustained mankind for ages. There used to be the so-called laws of war which made it tolerable. Now we know the naked truth. War knows no law except that of might. The atom bomb brought an empty victory to the Allied arms but it resulted for the time being in destroying the soul of Japan. What has happened to the soul of the destroying nation is yet too early to see. Forces of nature act in a mysterious manner. We can but solve the mystery by deducing the unknown result from the known results of similar events. A slave-holder cannot hold a slave without putting himself or his deputy in the cage holding the slave. Let no one run away with the idea that I wish to put in a defence of Japanese misdeeds in pursuance of Japan's unworthy ambition. The difference was only one of degree. I assume that Japan's greed was more unworthy. But the greater unworthiness conferred no right on the less unworthy of destroying without mercy men, women and children of Japan in a particular area.

The moral to be legitimately drawn from the supreme tragedy of the bomb is that it will not be destroyed by counter-bombs even as violence cannot be by counter-violence. Mankind has to get out of violence only through non-violence. Hatred can be overcome only by love. Counter-hatred only increases the surface as well as the depth of hatred.

I am aware that I am repeating what I have many times stated before and practised to the best of my ability and capacity. What I first stated was itself nothing new. It is as old as the hills. Only I recited no copy book maxim, but definitely announced what I believe in every fibre of my being. Sixty years of practice in various walks of life has only enriched the belief which the experience

of friends has fortified. It is, however, the central truth by which one can stand alone without flinching. I believe in what Max Muller said years ago, namely, that truth needed to be repeated as long as there were men who disbelieved it.

*Harijan*, 7-7-1946, p. 212

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I regard the employment of the atom bomb for the wholesale destruction of men, women and children as the most diabolical use of science.

*Harijan*, 29-9-1946, p. 335

## CHAPTER 27: DISARMAMENT

If Germany today changed her policy and made a determination to use her freedom, not for dividing the commerce of the world but for protecting, through her moral superiority, the weaker races of the earth, she could certainly do that without armament. It would be found that before general disarmament in Europe commences, as it must some day, unless Europe is to commit suicide, some nation will have to dare to disarm herself and take large risks. The level of non-violence in that nation, if that event happily comes to pass, will naturally have risen so high as to command universal respect. Her judgments will be unerring, her decisions will be firm, her capacity for heroic self-sacrifice will be great, and she will want to live as much for other nations as for herself.

*Young India*, 8-10-1925, p. 345

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Not to believe in the possibility of permanent peace is to disbelieve in godliness of human nature. Methods hitherto adopted have failed because rock bottom sincerity on the part of those who have striven has been lacking. Not that they have realized this lack. Peace is unattainable by part performance of conditions, even as chemical combination is impossible without complete fulfillment of conditions of attainment thereof. If recognized leaders of mankind who have control over engines of destruction were wholly to renounce their use with full knowledge of implications, permanent peace can be obtained. This is clearly impossible without the great powers of the earth renouncing their imperialistic designs. This again seems impossible without these great nations ceasing to believe in soul-destroying competition and to desire to multiply wants and therefore increase their material possessions. It is my conviction that the root of the evil is want of a living faith in a living God. It is a first class human tragedy that peoples of the earth who claim to believe in the message of Jesus whom they describe as the Prince of Peace show little of that belief in actual practice. It is painful to see sincere Christian divines limiting the scope of Jesus's message to select individuals. I have been taught from my childhood, and I have tested

the truth by experience, that primary virtues of mankind are possible of cultivation by the meanest of the human species. It is this undoubted universal possibility that distinguishes the human from the rest of God's creation. If even one great nation were unconditionally to perform the supreme act of renunciation, many of us would see in our life-time visible peace established on earth.

*Harijan*, 16-5-1936, p. 109

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It is open to the great powers to take up non-violence any day and cover themselves with glory and earn the eternal gratitude of posterity. If they or any of them can shed the fear of destruction, if they disarm themselves, they will automatically help the rest to regain their sanity. But then these great powers have to give up imperialistic ambitions and exploitation of the so-called uncivilized or semi-civilized nations of the earth and revise their mode of life. It means a complete revolution. Great nations can hardly be expected in the ordinary course to move spontaneously in a direction the reverse of the one they have followed and, according to their notion of value, from victory to victory. But miracles have happened before and may happen even in this very prosaic age. Who can dare limit God's power of undoing wrong? One thing is certain. If the mad race for armaments continues, it is bound to result in a slaughter such as has never occurred in history. If there is a victor left, the very victory will be a living death for the nation that emerges victorious. There is no escape from the impending doom save through a bold and unconditional acceptance of the non-violent method with all its glorious implications.

*Harijan*, 12-11-1938, p. 328

## CHAPTER 28: WORLD FEDERATION

**Isolated** independence is not the goal of the world-States. It is voluntary inter-dependence.

*Young India*, 17-7-1924, p. 236

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The better mind of the world desires today not absolutely independent States warring one against another, but a federation of friendly inter-dependent States. The consummation of that event may be far off. I want to make no grand claim for our country. But I see nothing grand or impossible about our expressing our readiness for universal inter-dependence rather than independence.

*Young India*, 26-12-1924, p. 425

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There is no limit to extending our service to our neighbours across our State-made frontiers. God never made those frontiers.

*Young India*, 31-12-1931, p. 427

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The aspiration for independence is the aspiration that fires all nations in Europe. But that independence does not exclude voluntary partnership. Imperialistic ambition is inconsistent with partnership.

*Harijan*, 3-7-1937, p. 165

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The structure of a world federation can be raised only on foundation of non-violence, and violence will have to be totally given up in world affairs.

*Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government 1942-44*, (1957), p. 143

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Federation is undoubtedly a greater and nobler end for free nations. It is a greater and nobler end for them to strive to promote Federation than be self-

centred, seeking only to preserve their own freedom...The very first step to a World Federation is to recognize the freedom of conquered and exploited nations.

*Harijan*, 9-8-1942, p. 265

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Today defence of citizenship is a defence of national commerce, i.e., exploitation. That exploitation presupposes the use of force for imposing commerce upon an unwilling people. Nations have, in a sense, therefore, almost become gangs of robbers, whereas they should be a peaceful combination of men and women united for the common good of mankind. In the latter case, their strength will lie not in their skill in the use of gunpowder, but in the possession of superior moral fibre.

*Young India*, 21-10-1926, p. 366

## CHAPTER 29: WORLD OF TOMORROW

Perhaps never before has there been so much speculation about the future as there is today. Will our world always be one of violence? Will there always be poverty, starvation, misery? Will we have a firmer and wide belief in religion, or will the world be godless? If there is to be a great change in society, how will that change be wrought? By war, or revolution? Or will it come peacefully? Different men give different answers to these questions, each man drawing the plan of tomorrow's world as he hopes and wishes it to be. I answer not only out of belief but out of conviction. The world of tomorrow will be, must be, a society based on non-violence. That is the first law: out of it all other blessings will flow. It may seem a distant goal, an impractical Utopia. But it is not in the least unobtainable, since it can be worked for here and now. An individual can adopt the way of life of the future-the non-violent way-without having to wait for others to do so. And if an individual can do it, cannot whole groups of individuals? Whole nations? Men often hesitate to make a beginning, because they feel that the objective cannot be achieved in its entirety. This attitude of mind is precisely our greatest obstacle to progress-an obstacle that each man, if he only wills it, can clear away.

Equal distribution-the second great law of tomorrow's world as I see it-grows out of non-violence. It implies not that the world's goods shall be arbitrarily divided up, but that each man shall have the wherewithal to supply his natural needs, no more. As a crude example, if one man requires a quarter-pound of flour per week and another needs five pounds, each should not be given arbitrarily a quarter-pound, or five pounds; both should be able to satisfy their wants.

Here we come to perhaps the most vital question connected with the shaping of tomorrow's world. How is this equal distribution to be brought about? Must the wealthy be dispossessed of all their holdings?

Non-violence answers no. Nothing that is violent can be of lasting benefit to mankind. Forceful dispossession would deprive society of many great gifts; the

wealthy man knows how to create and build; his abilities must not be lost. Instead, he must be left in possession of his wealth so that he may use what he reasonably requires for his personal needs and act as trustee for the remainder, to be expended for the benefit of the society. There have been and are such men. To my mind, as soon as a man looks upon himself as a servant of society, earns for its sake, spends for its sake, then his earnings are good and his business venture is constructive.

But does not this whole idea of non-violence imply a change in human nature? And does history at any time record such a change? Emphatically it does. Many an individual has turned from the mean, personal, acquisitive point of view to one that sees society as a whole and works for its benefit. If there has been such a change in one man, there can be the same change in many.

I see no poverty in the world of tomorrow, no wars, no revolutions, no bloodshed. And in that world there will be a faith in God greater and deeper than ever in the past. The very existence of the world, in a broad sense, depends on religion. All attempts to root it out will fail.

*The Mind of Mahatma Gandhi, (1967), pp. 458-60*

## SECTION V: RELIGION AND CULTURE

### CHAPTER 30: THE ESSENTIAL UNITY OF ALL RELIGIONS

There is no religion higher than Truth and Righteousness.

*Selections From Gandhi, (1957), p. 254*

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Let me explain what I mean by religion. It is not the Hindu religion which I certainly prize above all other religions, but the religion which transcends Hinduism, which changes one's very nature, which binds one indissolubly to the Truth within and whichever purifies. It is the permanent element in human nature which counts no cost too great in order to find full expression and which leaves the soul utterly restless until it has found itself, known its Maker and appreciated the true correspondence between the Maker and itself.

*Young India, 12-5-1920, p. 2*

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The root of religion is 'that which binds'. The root meaning of its Sanskrit equivalent *Dharma* is 'that which holds'. It sustains a person as nothing else does. It is rock-bottom fundamental morality. When morality incarnates itself in a living man it becomes religion, because it binds, it holds, it sustains him in the hour of trial.

*Harijan, 26-1-1934, p. 7*

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Religion binds man to God and man to man.

*Harijan, 4-5-1940, p. 117*

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Religion which takes no count of practical affairs and does not help to solve them, is no religion.

*Young India*, 7-5-1925, p. 164

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I reject any religious doctrine that does not appeal to reason and is in conflict with morality. I tolerate unreasonable religious sentiment when it is not immoral.

*Young India*, 21-7-1920, p. 4

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True religion and true morality are inseparably bound up with each other. Religion is to morality what water is to the seed that is sown in the soil.

*Selections from Gandhi*, (1957), p. 255

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True morality consists, not in following the beaten track, but in finding out of the true path for ourselves and in fearlessly following it.

*Selections from Gandhi*, (1957), p. 254

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I believe in the fundamental truth of all great religions of the world. I believe that they are all God given, and I believe that they were necessary for the people to whom these religions were revealed. And I believe that, if only we could all of us read the scriptures of different faiths from the standpoint of the followers of those faiths we should find that they were at bottom all one and were all helpful to one another.

*Harijan*, 16-2-1934, pp. 5-6

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I believe in the truth of all religions of the world. And since my youth upward, it has been a humble but persistent effort on my part to understand the truth of all the religions of the world, and adopt and assimilate in my own thought, word, and deed all that I have found to be best in those religions. The faith that I profess not only permits me to do so but renders it obligatory for me to take the best from whatsoever source it may come.

*Harijan*, 16-2-1934, p. 7

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For me the different religions are beautiful flowers from the same garden, or they are branches of the same majestic tree. Therefore they are equally true, though being received and interpreted through human instruments equally imperfect.

*Harijan*, 30-1-1937, p. 407

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Each religion has its own contribution to make to human evolution. I regard the great faiths of the world as so many branches of a tree, each distinct from the other though having the same source.

*Harijan*, 28-1-1939, p. 448

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All prayer, in whatever language or from whatever religion it was, was prayer addressed to one and the same God and taught mankind that all belonged to one family and should bear love to one another.

All religions enjoined worship of the one God who was all pervasive. He was present even in a droplet of water or in a tiny speck of dust.

Various religions were like the leaves on a tree. No two leaves were alike, yet there was no antagonism between them or between the branches on which they grew. Even so, there is an underlying unity in the variety which we see in God's creation.

*Harijan*, 26-5-1946, p. 154

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"Would you say then that your religion is a synthesis of all religions?"

Yes, if you will. But I would call that synthesis Hinduism, and for you the synthesis will be Christianity. If I did not do so, you would always be patronizing me, as many Christians do now, saying, "How nice it would be if Gandhi accepted Christianity," and Muslims would be doing the same, saying, "How nice it would

be if Gandhi accepted Islam!" That immediately puts a barrier between you and me. Do you see that?

*Harijan*, 6-3-1937, p. 27

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It is the duty of everyone to study the scriptures of religions other than his own. This enables people to keep their religion pure and rid it of blemishes. Moreover, we have Christians, Muslims, Parsis and followers of other religions amongst us. It behoves the Hindus to study their religious books if they regard them as their brothers.

*Harijan*, 25-5-1947, p. 166

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For me all the principal religions are equal in the sense that they are all true. They are supplying a felt want in the spiritual progress of humanity. Hence I have had no difficulty in bringing up Muslim, Parsi and Christian children under my care in their own faith. Indeed, I had to study some literature for their sake when their parents wanted me to teach them particular forms of worship according to special books.

*Harijan*, 6-4-1934, p. 59

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I hold that it is the duty of every cultured man or woman to read sympathetically the scriptures of the world. If we are to respect others' religions as we would have them to respect our own, a friendly study of world's religions is a sacred duty.

*Young India*, 2-9-1926, p. 308

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All men are born free and equal, but one is much stronger or weaker than another physically and mentally. Therefore superficially there is no equality between the two. But there is an essential equality. In our nakedness God is not going to think of me as Gandhi and you as Keithan. And what are we in this mighty universe? We are less than atoms, and as between atoms there is no use asking which is

smaller and which is bigger. Inherently we are equal. The differences of race and skin and of mind and body and of climate and nation are transitory. In the same way essentially all religions are equal.

*Harijan*, 13-3-1937, p. 38

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They are equally true and equally imperfect. The finer the line you draw, the nearer it approaches Euclid's true straight line, but it never is the true straight line. The tree of Religion is the same, there is not that physical equality between the branches. They are all growing, and the person who belongs to the growing branch must not gloat over it and say, 'Mine is the superior one'. None is superior, none is inferior, to the other.

*Harijan*, 13-3-1937, p. 38

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Just as a tree had a million leaves, similarly though God was one, there were as many religions as there were men and women though they were rooted in one God.

*Harijan*, 16-3-1947, p. 63

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I am a believer in the truth of all the great religions of the world. There will be no lasting peace on earth unless we learn not merely to tolerate but even to respect the other faiths as our own. A reverent study of the sayings of different teachers of mankind is a step in the direction of such mutual respect.

*In search of the Supreme*, Vol. III, (1962) p. 10

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Belief in one God is the corner-stone of all religions. But I do not foresee a time when there would be only one religion on earth in practice. In theory, since there is one God, there can be only one religion. But in practice, no two persons I have known have had the same and identical conception of God. Therefore, there will, perhaps, always be different religions answering to different temperaments and climatic conditions. But I can clearly see the time coming when people belonging

to different faiths will have the same regard for other faiths that they have for their own. I think that we have to find unity in diversity... We are all children of one and the same God and, therefore, absolutely equal.

*Harijan*, 2-2-1934, p. 8

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How can there be room for distinctions of high and low where there is this all-embracing fundamental unity underlying the outward diversity? For that is a fact meeting you at every step in daily life. The final goal of all religions is to realize this essential oneness.

The essence of all religions is one; only their approaches are different.

*Gandhiji's View of Life*, (1954), p. 158

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The propagation of truth and non-violence can be done less by books than by actually living those principles. Life truly lived is more than books.

*Harijan*, 13-5-1939, p. 122

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After long study and experience, I have come to the conclusion that (1) all religions are true; (2) all religions have some error in them; (3) all religions are almost as dear to me as my own Hinduism, inasmuch as all human beings should be as dear to one as one's own close relatives. My own veneration for other faiths is the same as that for my own faith; therefore no thought of conversion is possible. The aim of the Fellowship should be to help a Hindu to become a better Hindu, a Musalman to become a better Musalman, and a Christian a better Christian. The attitude of patronizing toleration is false to the spirit of International Fellowship. If I have a suspicion in my mind that my religion is more or less true, and that others' are more or less false, instead of being more or less true, then though I may have some sort of fellowship with them, it is of an entirely different kind from the one we need in the International Fellowship. Our prayer for other must be NOT "God, give him the light that Thou hast given me," BUT "Give all the light and truth he needs for his highest development." Pray

merely that your friends may become better men, whatever their form of religion.

*Selections from Gandhi, (1957), pp. 258-59*

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I do not believe in people telling others of their faith, especially with a view to conversion. Faith does not admit of telling. It has to be lived and then it becomes self-propagating.

*Young India, 20-10-1927, p. 352*

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Preaching jars on me and makes no appeal to me, and I get suspicious of missionaries who preach. But I love those who never preach but live the life according to their lights. Their lives are silent, yet most effective testimonies. Therefore, I cannot say what to preach, but I can say that a life of service and uttermost simplicity is the best preaching. If, therefore, you go on serving people and ask them also to serve, they would understand. But you quote instead John 3, 16, and ask them to believe it. That has no appeal to me, and I am sure people will not understand it. Where there has been acceptance of the gospel through preaching, my complaint is that there has been some motive.

A rose does not need to preach. It simply spreads its fragrance. The fragrance is its own sermon. If it had human understanding and if it could engage a number of preachers, the preachers would not be able to sell more roses than the fragrance itself could do. The fragrance of religious and spiritual life is much finer and subtler than of the rose.

*Harijan, 29-3-1935, p. 50*

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You bid good-bye to humility the moment you say that life is not adequate and that you must supplement it by speech. Human species need not go to animals and shout to them: "We are humans." The animals know them as humans. The language of the soul never lends itself to expression. It rises superior to the body. Language is a limitation of the truth which can be only respected by life.

*Harijan*, 12-12-1936, p. 351

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There is no occasion for articulate expression. Life is its own expression. I take the simile of the rose I used years ago. The rose does not need to write a book or deliver a sermon on the scent it sheds all round, nor on the beauty which everyone who has eyes can see. Well, spiritual life is infinitely superior to the beautiful and fragrant rose, and I make bold to say that the moment there is a spiritual expression in life, the surroundings will readily respond. There are passages in the Bible, the Gita, the Bhagavata, the Koran, which eloquently show this. "Wherever," we read, "Krishna appeared, people acted like those possessed." The same thing about Jesus. But to come nearer home, why are people touched as if by magic wherever Jawaharlal goes? They sometimes do not even know he has come, and yet they take sudden fire from the very thought that he is coming. Now there it may not be described as a spiritual influence, but there is a subtle influence and it is unquestionably there, call it by what name you like. They do not want to hear him, they simply want to see him. And that is natural. You cannot deal with millions in any other way. Spiritual life has greater potency than Marconi waves. When there is no medium between me and my Lord and I simply become a willing vessel for his influences to flow into it, then I overflow as the water of the Ganges at its source. There is no desire to speak when one lives the truth. Truth is most economical of words. There is thus no truer or other evangelism than life.

*Harijan*, 12-12-1936, p. 353

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The time has now passed when the followers of one religion can stand and say, ours is the only true religion and all others are false. The growing spirit of toleration towards all religions is a happy augury of the future.

*The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. V, p. 49

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India, with its ancient religions, has much to give, and the bond of unity between us can best be fostered by a wholehearted sympathy and appreciation of each

other's form of religion. A greater toleration on this important question would mean a wider charity in our everyday relations, and the existing misunderstandings would be swept away.

*The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. p. 50

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"How could you reconcile yourself to believing all religions to be true?"

That has been my fundamental position for years. Underlying it is the idea that you don't become the judges of the world. Differences in the world there have been, and will be. God is all-powerful. He appears in many shapes and forms. If we search, we may find as many religions as there are men. Hundreds of men are merely striving to know the Truth. They will put the Truth in their own way. No two men will put it in identical terms. Though I know that God, the all-powerful, resides in every one of us, we are imperfect media. We are all different. No two bodies are identically the same. No two leaves of the tree are identically the same; there is bound to be some difference. Each one prays to God according to his own light. Whom am I to judge and say that I pray better than you do? I don't judge the Muslims, Parsis, Christians, and Jews. If I am a seeker of Truth, it is quite sufficient for me. I cannot say that because I have seen God in this way, the whole world must see Him in that way. All religions are true and equal. That, however, is not to say that they are equally true in religious terms or are absolutely true. Another man's religion is true for him, as mine is for me. I cannot be a judge of his religion. That is my fundamental position.

*Conversations of Gandhiji*, (1949), p. 85

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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.

*Young India*, 25-9-1924, pp. 317-18

## CHAPTER 31: CIVILIZATION AND CULTURE

In ancient times there were no restrictions on education. It was not controlled by the State but was solely in the hands of the Brahmans who shaped the system of education solely with an eye to the welfare of the people. It was based on restraint and Brahmacharya. It was due to such a system of education that Indian civilization had outlived so many vicissitudes through thousands of years, while such ancient civilizations as those of Greece, Rome and Egypt had become extinct. No doubt the wave of a new civilization has been passing through India. But I am sure that it is transitory, it will soon pass away and Indian civilization will be revivified. In ancient times the basis of life was self-restraint but now it is enjoyment. The result is that people have become powerless cowards and forsook the truth. Having come under the influence of another civilization, it may be necessary to adapt our own civilization in certain respects to our new environment, but we should not make any radical change in a civilization which is acknowledged even by some Western scholars to be the best. It may be urged that it is necessary to adopt the methods and instruments of Western civilization to meet the material forces of that civilization. But the forces born of spirituality, the bed-rock of Indian civilization, are more than a match for material forces. India is pre-eminently the land of religion. It is the first and the last duty of Indians to maintain it as such. They should draw their strength from the soul, from God. If they adhere to that path *Swarajya* which they are aspiring to and working for will become their handmaid.

*Mahatma Gandhi: His Life, Writings and Speeches* (Ganesh & Co.), pp. 194-95

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*Brahmacharya* is inherent in Hindu civilization, and Western civilization lacks it. It might be said the people of the West had prospered, but I would ask what was the age of their civilization. Egypt, Babylon, Greece and other great civilizations had perished, but Indian civilization still lives. The reason for it was that Indian civilization has what they had not, viz., *Brahmacharya*.

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*The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XXV, p. 321*

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We can only hope that, if the Asiatic has faith in himself and in his civilization, he will not lower the latter, and we doubt not that that which has stood the test of ages will come out scatheless in the test it is now undergoing in this sub-continent. But the handful of Asiatics in South Africa have to remember that, if they do not want to disgrace the country of their origin or their system of life, they must thoroughly represent it, and not present a parody of it. They must live up to the moral code that has been handed down to them for ages past. With them, honesty is not merely the best policy, and on that account only to be observed when it is profitable, but it must be adhered to at all cost and in all circumstances. With them, might is not right, but right is always might. They can have nothing to do with the doctrine of the survival of the fittest! They have to live and let live. If they catch the modern craze for competition and adopt the characteristically grasping nature of this vaunted civilization, they will certainly go under.

*The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XI, p. 193*

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I am and I have been a determined opponent of modern civilization. I want you to turn your eyes today upon what is going on in Europe and if you have come to the conclusion that Europe is today groaning under the heels of the modern civilization, then you and your elders will have to think twice before you can emulate that civilization in our Motherland.

*The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XIII, p. 65*

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Modern Civilization is a curse in Europe as also in India. War is the direct result of modern civilization.

*The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XIII, p. 80*

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Modern civilization can be summed up by two expressions. One is that it represents ceaseless activity, and the second is that it aims at the annihilation of space and time. Everybody nowadays appears to be preoccupied, and to me that appears a dangerous symptom. They are all so intent upon earning bread and butter that they have no time for anything else. Modern civilization makes them materialistic, makes them concentrate their thoughts upon their bodies and upon the means of multiplying bodily comforts. Herbert Spencer has summed up the modern man by saying that the civilized man leads a complex life as opposed to the entirely simple life of the savage. The source from which the Asiatic trouble arose in the Transvaal is that the Asiatic's wants are very simple, whereas those of the European are complex and therefore expensive. The tendency of modern methods goes to make the Native's life more complex. While the wants of the raw Native are easily satisfied, the more enlightened of them require many more embellishment. Thus, they require more money, and when they find they cannot get it honestly they resort to dishonesty.

After 18 years of study devoted to the consideration of the question, I have come to the conclusion that instead of there being a change for the better, there has been a change for the worse. I find that the simple life is better than the complex, in that they find time to devote attention to higher pursuits. In ancient civilization, there had been no rush whatsoever. They nowadays look downwards to the earth; in those days they looked upwards to Heaven.

The flesh is not the be-all and the end-all of life. Now is the service of Mammon; then was the service of God. If I did not think that the soul existed and if I did not recognize that in all of them there were identical souls, then I for one would not like to live upon this earth. I would like to die. The body is the vehicle subservient to the soul. The body is simply earth, dross and objectionable.

Ancient civilization made them look to the higher pursuits of life, the love of God, the respect of a neighbour and the consciousness of the existence of the soul. The sooner they returned to the (simple) life, the better.

*The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. X, pp. 279-80*

But from the present civilization, or, rather, from Western civilization, there flow two propositions which have almost become maxims to live by - I call them fallacious maxims. They are "might is right" and "survival of the fittest". Those who have propounded these two maxims have given a meaning to them. I am not going into the meaning that might be attached in our minds to them, but they have said undoubtedly, by "might is right", that physical might is right, that physical strength is right and supreme. Some of them have also combined intellectual strength with physical strength, but I would replace both these with heart-strength, and I say that nobody with merely physical might and intellectual might can ever enjoy that strength that can proceed from the heart. It never can be that mere intellectual or mere physical strength can ever supercede the heart-strength or, as Ruskin would say, social affections. A quickening and quickened soul responds only to the springs of the heart.

*The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. VIII, pp. 243-44*

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It appears that Western civilization is destructive, Eastern civilization is constructive. Western civilization is centrifugal, Eastern civilization is centripetal. Western civilization, therefore, is naturally disruptive whereas Eastern civilization combines. I believe also that Western civilization is without a goal, Eastern civilization has always had the goal before it. I do not mix up or confuse Western civilization with Christian progress. I decline to believe that it is a symbol of Christian progress that we have covered a large part of the globe with the telegraph system, that we have got telephones and ocean greyhounds, and that we have trains running at a velocity of 50 or even 60 miles per hour. I refuse to believe that all this activity connotes Christian progress, but it does connote Western civilization. I think Western civilization also represents tremendous activity, Eastern civilization represents contemplativeness, but it also sometimes represents lethargy. The people in India, the people in China-I leave Japan for the time being-having been sunk in their contemplative mood, have forgotten the essence of the thing, they have forgotten that, in transferring their activity from one sphere of life to another sphere of life, they had not to

be idle, they had not to be lazy. The result is that immediately they find an obstacle in their way, they simply sit down. It is necessary that that civilization should come in contact with that of the West, it is necessary that civilization should be quickened with the Western spirit. Immediately that fact is accomplished, I have no doubt also that the Eastern civilization will become predominant, because it has a goal. I think you will see easily that a civilization or a condition in which all the forces fly away from the centre must necessarily be without a goal, whereas those which converge to a point have always a goal. It is then necessary for these two civilizations to meet and we shall have a different force altogether, by no means a menacing force, by no means a force that disunites, but a force that unites. The two forces are undoubtedly opposing forces, but perhaps in the economy of nature both are necessary. Only we, as intelligent human beings with heart and soul, have to see what those forces are, and have to use them, not blindly but intelligently, not anyhow and haphazard, but with a goal in view. Immediately that is done, there is no difficulty whatsoever in the two civilizations meeting and meeting for a good purpose.

*The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. VIII, pp. 244-45*

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The pandemonium that is going on in Europe shows that modern civilization represents forces of evil and darkness, whereas the ancient, i.e., Indian civilization represents in its essence the divine force. Modern civilization is chiefly materialistic, as ours is chiefly spiritual. Modern civilization occupies itself in the investigation of the laws of matter, and employs human ingenuity in inventing or discovering means of production and weapons of destruction; ours is chiefly occupied in exploring spiritual laws. Our *Shastras*<sup>1</sup> lay down unequivocally that a proper observance of truth, chastity, scrupulous regard for all life, abstention from coveting others' possessions and refusal to hoard anything but what is necessary for our daily wants is indispensable for a right life; that without it a knowledge of the divine element is an impossibility. Our civilization tells us with daring certainty that a proper and perfect cultivation of the quality of *Ahimsa* which, in its active form, means purest love and pity, brings the whole

world to our feet. The author of this discovery gives a wealth of illustration which carries conviction with it.

*The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XIII, pp. 261-62*

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I have ventured utterly to condemn modern civilization because I hold that the spirit of it is evil. It is possible to show that some of its incidents are good, but I have examined its tendency in the scale of ethics. I distinguish between the ideals of individuals who have risen superior to their environment, as also between Christianity and modern civilization. Its activity is by no means confined to Europe. Its blasting influence is now being exhibited in full force in Japan. And it now threatens to overwhelm India. History teaches us that men who are in the whirlpool, except in the cases of individuals, will have to work out their destiny in it; but I do submit that those who are still outside its influence, and those who have a well-tried civilization to guide them, should be helped to remain where they are, if only as a measure of prudence. I claim to have tested the life which modern civilization has to give, as also that of the ancient civilization, and I cannot help most strongly contesting the idea that the Indian population requires to be roused by "the lash of competition and the other material and sensuous, as well as intellectual, stimuli"; I cannot admit that these will add a single inch to its moral stature.

*The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. X, p. 247*

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While Western civilization is still young, we find things have come to such a pass that, unless its whole machinery is thrown overboard, people will destroy themselves like so many moths. Even today we can see that there are more and more cases of suicide every day.

*The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. IX, p. 389*

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But I must frankly confess that I am not so much concerned about the stability of the Empire as I am about that of the ancient civilization of India which, in my

opinion, represents the best that the world has ever seen. The British Government in India constitutes a struggle between the modern civilization, which is the Kingdom of Satan, and the ancient civilization, which is the Kingdom of God. The one is the God of War, the other is the God of Love.

*The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. X, 189*

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But the moment you talk to them (villagers) and they begin to speak, you will find that wisdom drops from their lips. Behind the crude exterior, you will find a deep reservoir of spirituality. I call this culture. You will not find such a thing in the West. You try to engage a European peasant in conversation, and you will find that he is uninterested in things spiritual. In the case of the Indian villager, an age-old culture is hidden under an encrustment of crudeness. Take away the encrustation, remove this illiteracy, and you have the finest specimen of what a cultured, cultivated, free citizen should be.

*Mahatma, Vol. V, (1952), p. 11*

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I should be sorry to learn that Chinese culture resided in brick and mortar or in huge tomes which the moth can eat. A nation's culture resides in the hearts and in the soul of its people. Chinese culture is Chinese only to the extent that it has become part and parcel of Chinese life.

*Mahatma, Vol. V, (1952), p. 12*

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There is no such thing as western or European civilization, but there is a modern civilization, which is purely material.

*The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. IX, p. 479*

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East and West can only and really meet when the West has thrown overboard modern civilization, almost in its entirety. They can also seemingly meet when East has also adopted modern civilization. But that meeting would be an armed truce, even as it is between, say, Germany and England, both of which nations

are living in the Hall of Death in order to avoid being devoured, the one by the other.

*The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. IX, p. 479*

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The Indian culture of our times is in the making. Many of us are striving to produce a blend of all the cultures which seem today to be in clash with one another. No culture can live, if it attempts to be exclusive. There is no such thing as pure Aryan culture in existence today in India. Whether the Aryans were indigenous to in India or were unwelcome intruders, does not interest me much. What does interest me is the fact that my remote ancestors blended with one another with the utmost freedom and we of the present generation are a result of that blend. Whether we are doing any good to the country of our birth and the tiny globe which sustains us or whether we are a burden, the future alone will show.

*Harijan, 9-5-1926, p. 100*

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I do not want my house to be walled in on all sides and my windows to be stuffed. I want the cultures of all the lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible. But I refuse to be blown off my feet by any. I refuse to live in other people's houses as an interloper, a beggar or a slave. I refuse to put the necessary strain of learning English upon my sisters for the sake of false pride or questionable social advantage. I would have our young men and young women with literary tastes to learn as much of English and other world-languages as they like, and then expect them to give the benefits of their learning to India and to the world, like, a Bose, a Ray or the Poet himself. But I would not have a single Indian to forget, neglect or be ashamed of his mother tongue, or to feel that he or she cannot think or express the best thoughts in his or her own vernacular. Mine is not a religion of the prison-house.

*Young India, 1-6-1921, p. 170*

The Gujarat Vidyapeeth does not propose merely to feed on, or repeat, the ancient cultures. It rather hopes to build a new culture based on the traditions of the past and enriched by the experience of later times. It stands for the synthesis of the different cultures that have come to stay in India, that have influenced Indian life, and that, in their turn have themselves been influenced by the spirit of the soil. This synthesis will naturally be of the *Swadeshi* type, where each culture is assured its legitimate place, and not of the American pattern, where one dominant culture absorbs the rest, and where the aim is not towards harmony, but towards an artificial and forced unity.

*Young India*, 17-11-1920, p. 6

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As to the habit of looking to the West for light, I can give little guidance if the whole of my life has not provided any. Light used to go out from the East. If the Eastern reservoir has become empty, naturally the East will have to borrow from the West. I wonder if light, if it is light and not a miasma, can ever be exhausted. As a boy I learnt that it grew with the giving. Anyway I have acted in that belief and have, therefore, traded on the ancestral capital. It has never failed me. This, however, does not mean that I must act like a frog in the well. There is nothing to prevent me from profiting by the light that may come from the West. Only I must take care that I am not overpowered by the glamour of the West. I must not mistake the glamour for true light.

*Harijan*, 13-1-1940, p. 414

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1 Scriptures

## SECTION VI: ART, LITERATURE AND SCIENCE

### CHAPTER 32: ON ART

**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 in 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...

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....

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....

Wilde saw the highest Art simply in outward forms and, therefore, succeeded in beautifying immorality. All true Art must help the soul to realize its inner self. In my own case, I find that I can do entirely without external forms in my soul's realization. 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 out upon the starry heavens overhead that stretch in an unending expanse of beauty. What conscious Art of man 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-realization.

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 it and

becomes blind to the Beauty in it. Whenever men begin to see Beauty in Truth, then true Art will arise.

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!

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 the 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.

*Young India*, 13-11-1924, p. 377

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Truth is the first thing to be sought for, and Beauty and Goodness will then be added unto you. Jesus was, to my mind, a supreme artist, because he saw and expressed Truth; and so was Mohammed, 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 Mohammed wrote on Art. That is the Truth and Beauty I crave for, live for, and would die for.

"May not after all some artists be able to see Truth in and through Beauty?"

Some may, 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.... 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.

*Young India*, 20-11-1924, p. 386

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Man's beauty is in his character, that of a beast in its bodily form. In the case of cow, for instance, we may say how good it is because of its skin, or hair, or feet, or horns; in the case of a man, on the other hand, we do not say that he is good, because he is five feet and a half, and bad because he is four feet and a half, and better if he is an inch more than five and a half feet. The basis of goodness or badness in the case of man lies in his heart, not in the body or even in accumulated wealth.

*Bapu's Letters to Ashram Sisters*, (1952), p. 102

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True beauty, after all, consists in purity of heart.

*Young India*, 20-10-1927, p. 350

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Why should I need an artist to explain a work of art to me? Why should it not speak out to me itself? I tell you what I mean. I saw in the Vatican art- collection a statue of Christ on the Cross which simply captured me and kept me spell-bound. I saw it five years ago but it is still before me. There was no one there to explain its charm to me. In Belur in Mysore, I saw in the ancient temple a bracket in stone made of a little statuette, which spoke out to me without anyone to help me to understand it. It was just a woman, half-naked, struggling with the folds of her clothes to extricate herself from the shafts of Cupid, who is after all lying defeated at her feet in the shape of a scorpion. I could see the agony on the form-the agony of the stings of the scorpion. That, at any rate, was my interpretation of it....

I want art and literature that can speak to the millions.

*Harijan*, 14-11-1936, p. 315

People who claim to pursue "art for art's sake" are unable to make good their claim. There is a place for art in life, apart from the question-what is art? But art can only be a means to the end which we must all of us achieve. If however, it becomes an end in itself, it enslaves and degrades humanity.

*The Diary of Mahadev Desai I*, (1953), p. 160

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Few people, who have devoted themselves to art, are known to have achieved a unique blending of devotion to art and pure and blameless life. We have somehow accustomed ourselves to the belief that art is independent of the purity of private life. I can say with all the experience at my command that nothing could be more untrue. As I am nearing the end of my earthly life, I can say that purity of life is the highest and truest art. The art of producing good music from a cultivated voice can be achieved by many, but art of producing that music from the harmony of a pure life is achieved very rarely.

*Harijan*, 19-2-1938, p. 10

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True art takes note not merely of form, but also of what lies behind. There is an art that kills and an art that gives life.... True art must be evidence of happiness, contentment and purity of its authors.

*Young India*, 11-8-1921, p. 253

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"Won't you ask people to grow flowers on a small piece of land? Colour and beauty is as necessary to the soul, as food is to the body."

No, I won't. Why can't you see the beauty of colour in vegetables? And then, there is beauty in the speckless sky. But no, you want the colours of the rainbow which is a mere optical illusion. We have been taught to believe that what is beautiful need not be useful and what is useful cannot be beautiful. I want to show that what is useful can also be beautiful.

*Harijan*, 7-4-1946, p. 67

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Beauty divorced from utility is inconceivable, utility here being taken in the widest sense of the word. Cloth woven from 400s may or may not be good for wearing, but the laborious effort which one has to put forth in spinning such superfine yarn, the mysteries of the art of spinning which are unfolded to him and the solutions of problems which suggest themselves to him in the process are all beneficial for *Daridranaryana* (God as the poor).....

What do the pictures and sculptures which held me spell-bound at the Vatican show? There are not many who have the capacity of appreciating their beauty. But the painters and the sculptors in question certainly worked with a view to serve humanity. If a picture inspires evil thoughts in the minds of the spectator, it does not deserve to be called artistic. For, art is that which leads a man one step forward on the path of morality and gives him elevated views. If it degrades him ethically, it is not art, but only obscenity.

*The Diary of Mahadev Desai- I*, (1953), pp. 224-25

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Who can deny that much that passes for science and art today destroys the soul instead of uplifting it, and instead of evoking the best in us panders to our basest passions?

*Young India*, 11-8-1927, p. 255

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There is a famous classical saying which has now become a proverb that the man 'that hath no music in himself' is either an ascetic or a beast. We are far from being ascetics, and to the extent that we are devoid of music we are near allied to beasts. To know music is to transfer it to life. The prevalent discord of today is an indication of our sad plight....

Where there is discord and every one striking his own tune, there is bad government or anarchy....Where there is filth and squalor and misery, there can be no music. It implies an atmosphere quite the contrary. If we put a broad interpretation on music, i.e., if we mean by it union, concord, mutual help, it may be said that in no department of life can we dispense with it.

Music today has been regarded to mean the vocal effort of a singing girl. We fight shy of sending our sisters and daughters to music schools. There seems to be superstition that their voice is best when it is devoid of sweetness.

Music, truly speaking, is an ancient and sacred art. The hymns of *Sama Veda*<sup>1</sup> are a mine of music, and no *ayat*<sup>2</sup> of Quran can be recited unmusically. *David's Psalms* transport you to raptures and remind you of hymns from *Sama Veda*. Let us revive that art....

But to go a step further. If we would see music in millions of our poor homes, we should all wear Khadi and spin. The music of the spinning-wheel can be a free gift to all and is, therefore, sweeter. It is the hope and solace and mainstay of the millions and for me, therefore, the truly good music.

*Young India*, 15-4-1926, p. 140

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Music has given me peace. I can remember occasions when music instantly tranquilized my mind when I was greatly agitated over something. Music has helped me to overcome anger. I can recall occasions when a hymn sank deep into me, though the same thing expressed in prose had failed to touch me. I also found that the meaning of hymns discordantly sung has failed to come home to me and that it burns itself on my mind when they have been properly sung. When I hear *Gita* verses melodiously recited, I never grow weary of hearing; and the more I hear, the deeper sinks the meaning into my heart. Melodious recitations of the *Ramayana*, which I heard in my childhood, left on me an impression which years have not obliterated or weakened. I distinctly remember how when once the hymn "The path of the Lord is meant for the brave, not the coward" was sung to me in an extraordinary sweet tune, it moved me as it had never before. In 1907, while in the Transvaal I was almost fatally assaulted, the pain of the wounds was relieved when, at my instance, Oliver Doke gently sang to me' Lead Kindly Light'.

Let no one infer from this that I know music. On the contrary, it would be more correct to say that my knowledge of music is very elementary. I cannot critically judge music. All I can claim is that I have a natural ear for good homely music.

I do not mean to suggest either that because the influence of music has been uniformly good on me, it must act similarly on others. On the contrary, I know that many people employ music to feed their carnal passions. To sum up, therefore, we may say that the influence of music will differ according to temperaments. As Tulsidas has sung:

"The Lord of Creation created everything in this world as an admixture of good and evil.

"But a good man selects the good and rejects the evil, even as the fabled swan is said to help himself to cream, leaving the water in the milk."

*Young India*, 10-1-1929, p. 15

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Music exercises great influence on us. We have not given sufficient consideration to this important fact or else we should have provided for the teaching of music to our boys and girls. The Vedic hymns are found to have been composed on the basis of music. Harmonious music has the power to soothe the anguish of the soul. At times, we find that there is too much restlessness prevailing in large gatherings. This can be arrested and calmed if a national song is sung by all. When a larger number of people sing in harmony it is very inspiring and uplifting. Hundreds of boys singing a poem full of the spirit of adventure and bravery will be an impressive spectacle. While carrying on their work it is quite common to the boatmen and other labourers raise the cry of *Harihar*<sup>3</sup> and *Alla-beli*<sup>4</sup>. This is to enable them to do their work more easily. It is an example of the power of music. I have seen my English friends trying to ignore the cold weather by singing. Our boys easily pick up songs from popular plays and learn to play upon such a crude musical instrument as the harmonium. This prevents cultivating a taste for good music. Instead, if they were trained in classical music, their time which is now wasted in singing popular and often silly songs, would be put to good use. Just as a trained singer does not sing out of tune or out of time, even so a learner of the right kind of music would not sing dirty songs. Music must be given a place in our scheme of education, and its value in the cultural awakening of the people accepted.

"Do you really care for music?"

What a question! I have loved music-particularly devotional songs-since my childhood days. Of course I cannot claim, I warn you, any expert or analytical knowledge of its technique, but I cannot say I regret that very much, seeing that good music always moves me-genuinely. After all that is the essential thing, isn't it?

"Don't you think such a knowledge generally deepens our appreciation for music as an art?"

Maybe. But as I told you just now I have never pined for expertism. To me music is something to receive joy and inspiration from, and I am quite content so long as I get that.

How well I remember, the joy and peace and comfort that music used to give me when I was ailing in a South African hospital. I was then recovering from some hurts I had received at the hands of some roughs who had been engaged to cripple me-thanks to the growing success of my Passive Resistance Campaign. At my request the daughter of a friend of mine used, very often, to sing to me the famous hymn, 'Lead Kindly Light'. And how it acted like a healing balm-invariably! I still remember this song with gratitude. So there-are you persuaded that I really care for music-or shall I have to adduce more convincing proofs?

Mira's songs are always beautiful. Well-I know a good many of them. I like the members of my Ashram to sing to me her lovely songs-so touching in their sincerity and poetic appeal! ...

They are so moving, because they are so genuine. Mira sang because she could not help singing. Her songs well forth straight from the heart-like a spray. They were not composed for the lure of fame or popular applause as are some others' songs....

It would be a tragedy indeed if our beautiful music were to die from sheer popular neglect and indifference. I have always said so....

"To be frank, I was under the impression that art had no place in the gospel of your austere life. In fact I had often pictured you as a dread saint who was positively against music."

Against music !! ....

"May not your asceticism be somewhat responsible for such popular misconceptions? For surely you wouldn't blame the people too much if they found it rather difficult to reconcile asceticism with art?"

But I do maintain that asceticism is the greatest of all arts. For what is art but beauty in simplicity and what is asceticism but the loftiest manifestation of simple beauty in daily life shorn of artificialities and make-believes? That is why I always say that a true ascetic not only practises art but lives it.....

I cannot even conceive of the evolution of India's religious life without her music!

"Why then do people suppose that you are unkind to art?"

Well-well-there are some plausible reasons, I imagine. One is that I fail to see anything in much that passes for art in these days. In other words, my values are different. For instance, I don't call that a great art which demands an intimate knowledge of technique for its appreciation. To me art, in order to be truly great, must, like the beauty of Nature, be universal in its appeal. I cannot, for the life of me, call the power of making hair-splitting distinctions the test of artistic appreciation. True art and its appreciation can have nothing to do with sophisticated pretentiousness. It must be simple in its presentation and direct in its expression like the language of Nature.

"But I am told you are averse to pictures on the walls of your rooms."

But why must my walls be overlaid with pictures if I thought that walls were meant only for sheltering us? Why may I not use them for other purposes?

"But if other people should want to have pictures."

That is their affair, not mine. If it pleases them, let them adorn their walls with as many pictures as they like. Only I do not need them for *my inspiration*, that is all. Nature suffices for me and that's all, there is to it.

Have I not gazed and gazed at the marvellous mystery of the starry vault, hardly ever tiring of that great panorama? Have I not the forests and the seas, the rivers and the mountains, the fields and the valleys with which to slake my thirst for beauty? Could one conceive of any painting comparable in inspiration to that of the star-studded sky, the majestic sea, the noble mountains? Is there a painter's colour comparable to the vermillion of an emergent dawn or the gold of a parting day? No, my friend, I need no inspiration other than Nature's. She has never failed me yet: she mystifies me, bewilders me, sends me into ecstasies. What need have I for the childish colour-schemes of humans? Beside God's handiwork does not man's fade into insignificance? And-to be more concrete-tell me how can art be so thrilling, after all, when Nature, the mightiest artist, is there to cater for us!

Life must immensely exceed all the arts put together. For what is this hot-house art-plant of yours without the life-soul and background of a steady worthy life? It may be all very edifying to flaunt it, but what, after all, does this fussing with art amount to if it all the time stultifies life instead of elevating it? Is it not grotesque to claim-as so many artists do-that art is the crown of creation, the last meaning of existence?

Art greater than life indeed! As if you could ever truly live under the aegis of a slogan! As if the soul could be spoon-fed with just one principle of enjoyment! It is exactly when such high pretensions are loud in the land in the name of art that I have to cry halt. For to me the greatest artist is surely he who lives the finest life. It is therefore not art I repudiate, but the lofty airs it gives itself. In other words, my values are different, that's all....

To me life is far too great a mystery, far too sacred a gift of the Gods to be appraised adequately from one particular angle. And that is why, I said so categorically just now that the greatest artist is he who lives the finest life.

*Among the Great*, (1950), pp. 61-67

I did not want to suggest that arts were to be roundly condemned by all. Don't I know that people have different temperaments? I merely meant that so far as I was concerned I had no need of arts like painting for my own inspiration. For I

myself find enough satisfaction in the view of the starry vault. Perhaps Europe needs paintings to satisfy her. She hasn't our sky.

Her love for painting may, indeed, be due to other sources. I only wanted to impress on you the fact that I, personally, find paintings rather superfluous....

I must repeat I am not keen about painting....

I have told you that so far as I am concerned Nature suffices for me. But for others, if they are sincerely convinced that arts such as painting do any real good to humanity, so far so good. Only, let the artist guard against self-deception and self-love. Let him be always alive to his duty towards the masses. To the extent that his art benefits the masses, it is to be approved of. To the extent that it doesn't, it is to be discouraged....

I cannot quite see eye to eye with those who swear by specialization. A real work of art should appeal to all.

"Why are you so much against specialization?"

I would put to you a counter-question: Why are you so much against the universalization of art, against helping it to derive its real inspiration from the virgin soil of popular response-in short, against vitalizing art by the life-blood of humanity? Why don't you look the plain fact in the face that Nature, which must be the last inspiration of all real arts, never stints? She never specializes in a way so that only the cultured few may enjoy her bounties leaving the vast majority out in the cold. Why then do you want to make art the handmaid of a privileged few? Surely, it can be no part of true art's mission to confine its appeal to a select coterie, a handful of connoisseurs. Why must art lose touch with the life of the soil? I fail to see how you are going to reclaim art unless it were progressively stimulated by some widespread demand of the people. How would you save art if you didn't tend its roots by the sap of the soil which is the fount of life? Why make art into a sort of plaything for a small Upper House? ...

I maintain that the profoundest utterances of man in every great philosophy or religion as in every great art must appeal equally to all. I cannot for the life of me see much in any specialization which can mean nothing to the vast multitude.

Its only tangible effect seems to be that it gives a swelled head to a few and breeds in them contempt for the majority where there should be sympathy and understanding for all. Can there be anything commendable in such a perverted tendency? Or do you suppose that an activity which makes only for division instead of unity could ever redound to the glory of our Creator? Rather than serve such a fine mission would it not be a thousand times better to do our best to alleviate the widespread misery of mankind, to come forward with the balm of sympathy and light of knowledge, to wipe the tears with which the earth is soaked from crust to centre?

*Among The Great, (1950), p. 78-82*

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1. One of the four *Vedas* -the ancient lyrical and highly profound works of the Aryans.
  2. A verse from the Quran
  3. Hindu name of God
  4. Muslim name of God

## CHAPTER 33: ON LITERATURE AND JOURNALISM

For whose sake are we going to have our literature? Not certainly for the great gentry of Ahmedabad. They can afford to engage literary men and have great libraries in their homes. But what about the poor man at the well who with unspeakable abuse is goading his bullocks to pull the big leather bucket? ...Now I have hundreds of such folk for whom I want real life-giving literature. How am I to do so? I live in Segaon today where, in a population of 600, a little over ten are literate, certainly not more than fifty, very likely less. Of the ten or more who can read, there are scarcely three or four who can understand what they read, and among the women there is not one who is literate. 75 per cent of the population are Harijans. Now I thought of getting up a little library for them. The books had to be of course within their understanding, and so I begged a dozen school books from two or three girls who had no use for them. I have with me a young man who is an LL.B. but who has forgotten all his law and cast in his lot with me. He goes to the village and reads to those who come to him from these books whatever they can follow and digest. He takes a newspaper or two with him. But how is he to make them follow our newspapers? What do they know of Spain and of Russia? What do they know of geography? What am I to read to them?

...

You must know that much as I should have loved to bring with me a Segaon boy here, I have not done so. What would he do here? He would find himself in a strange world. But I am here as his representative, as those village folk's representative. That is true democracy. I shall one day ask you to go with me there. I am clearing the way for you. Of course, the road is strewn with thorns, but I shall see that the thorns will be not without roses too.

As I am speaking to you just now, I am put in mind of Dean Farrar and his book on the life of Christ. I may fight the British rule, but I do not hate the English or their language. In fact I appreciate their literary treasures. And Dean Farrar's book is one of the treasures of the English language. You know how he laboured to produce that book? He read everything about Jesus in the English language,

and then he went to Palestine, saw every place and spot in the Bible that he could identify, and then wrote the book in faith and prayer, for the masses in England, in a language which all of them could understand. It is not in Dr. Johnson's style but in the easy style of Dickens. Have we men like Farrar who will produce great literature for the village folk? Our literary men will pore on Kalidas and Bhavabhuti and English authors, and will give us imitations. I want them to go to villages, study them and give something life-giving....

I want art and literature that can speak to the millions.

*Harijan*, 14-11-1936, pp. 314-15

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Let me tell you Gujarati will be none the poorer without novels or literature which is popularly and rightly called 'fiction'. The less we revel in the realm of fiction the better for us. When I went to South Africa some 40 years ago I had armed myself with a few books, one of which was Taylor's Gujarati grammar. The book, I remember, captivated me, but I have never had the opportunity of reading it again. I had it taken out of the library on the day I presided, but could read nothing in it except a few remarks of the Epilogue that he has written to that book of grammar. Some words of his in that Epilogue gripped me. "Who said that Gujarati is a poor or inadequate language?" asks Mr. Taylor passionately. "Gujarati, the daughter of Sanskrit, how can it be poor? How can it be inadequate?" As is the speaker so is his language. It is not its inherent poverty but the poverty of the people speaking it that is reflected in Gujarati. That poverty cannot be wiped out by a few novels. How will it profit us if, to take a simple instance, we had a number of *Nanda Batrishis* in our language? No, I must hark back again to the village, and tell you what I need. Take, for instance, astronomy of which my ignorance was abysmal. In Yeravda Jail I saw Kakasaheb gazing at the stars every night and he infected me with his passion. I sent for books and even a telescope. Books in English there were numerous, but Gujarati books there were none. There was a little book that had been sent to me, but it was a miserable affair. Now why should we not be able to give our people, our village folk, good books on astronomy? But have we for them even tolerable books

on geography? I know of none. The fact is that we have neglected the village folk, and though we depend on them entirely for our food we have behaved all through as though we were their patrons and they were our wards. We have never thought of their needs. Our country presents in the world the solitary pitiable phenomenon of a nation carrying on its affairs through the medium of a foreign tongue. No wonder that our poverty of spirit is reflected in our language. There is no good book in French or German but is translated into English within a short time of its publication. Even its own classics are made available to the average reader, even to the children, in convenient abridged sizes and at the cheapest prices. Have we anything like it? The field is vast and unexplored, and I want our litterateurs and linguists to explore it. I want them to go to the villages, feel the pulse of the people, examine their needs and supply what they want. We have a Village Workers' Training School in Wardha. I asked the Principal of the school to know the village crafts himself if he ever aspired to write intelligently about them. Don't say that your intellects would lose their freshness in villages by being choked in their closed atmosphere. I will say that it is not the closed atmosphere, it is your own closed intellect with which you have gone there. If you will go there with your eyes and ears and intellects open, they will be all the fresher for a live contact with the virgin village air.

*Harijan*, 21-11-1936, pp. 326-27

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I am told that our literature is full of even an exaggerated apotheosis of women. Let me say that it is an altogether wrong apotheosis. Let me place one simple test before you. In what light do you think of them when you proceed to write about them? I suggest that before you put your pens to paper, think of woman as your own mother, and I assure you the chapest literature will flow from your pens even like the beautiful rain from heaven which waters the thirsty earth below. Remember that a woman was your mother before a woman became your wife. Far from quenching their spiritual thirst some writers stimulate their passions, so much so that poor ignorant women waste their time wondering how they might answer to the description our fiction gives of them. Are detailed

descriptions of their physical form an essential part of literature, I wonder? Do you find anything of the kind in the Upanishads, the Quran or the Bible? And yet do you know that the English language would be empty without the Bible? Three parts Bible and one part Shakespeare is the description of it. Arabic would be forgotten without the Quran. And think of Hindi without Tulsidas! Do you find in it anything like what you find in present-day literature about women?

*Harijan*, 21-11-1936, p. 327

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A language mirrors the character of the people who use it. We acquire information about the manners and customs of the Negroes of South Africa by studying their native tongue. A language takes its form from the character and life of those who speak it. We can say without hesitation that the people whose language does not reflect the qualities of courage, truthfulness and compassion are deficient in those virtues. Importing of words expressive of courage or compassion from other tongues will not enrich or widen the content of a language nor make its speakers brave and kind. Courage is not to be had as a gift; if it is there within, covered with rust though it be, it will shine forth when that covering disappears. In our own mother tongue, we find a large number of words denoting an excess of meekness, because we have lived under subjection for many years. Similarly, no other language in the world has as many nautical terms as English. Supposing that an enterprising Gujarati writer were to render books on the subject from English into Gujarati, it would not add one whit to the range and power of our language, nor would it in any way increase our knowledge of ships. But as soon as start building ships and raise a navy, the necessary technical phraseology will automatically establish itself.

*The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. XIV, pp. 11-12

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I had promised the Editor a contribution for the Diwali Number of *Hindustan*, but I find that I have no time to make good the promise. However, thinking that I must write something, I am placing before the readers my views on newspapers. I happened to work in a newspaper office in South Africa owing to certain

circumstances, and had given this subject much thought. I have acted upon the views which I am presenting here.

In my opinion, a newspaper should not be used as the means of earning a living. There are certain spheres of work which have a direct bearing on public welfare; to undertake them for earning one's livelihood is fraught with danger-inasmuch as it obscures, and might hurt, the essential aim which one should put before oneself in taking to such an activity. And when newspapers are made an instrument of earning not only one's livelihood but also of making profits, it leads to a number of evils. It is not necessary to prove to those familiar with newspaper work that such evils are actually operating today on quite a big scale.

Newspapers are meant primarily to educate people, and apprise them of current trends in the history of the world. This is responsible work. Yet we see that readers cannot always depend on the information supplied by newspapers. Often, facts are found to be quite the opposite of what has been reported. If newspaper editors and staff realized that it was their duty to educate the people, they would wait to check the veracity of the news they print. It is true that, often, they have to work under difficult conditions, and sift the mass of information they receive and then infer hurriedly, within the limited time at their disposal, the true facts in each case. And, yet, I feel that it is better not to publish a particular piece of news until its truth has been definitely established.

The reporting of speeches in Indian newspapers is generally defective. There are very few who can write down a speech verbatim while it is being delivered or afterwards from memory. This results in much distortion and interpolation. The best rule would be to send the proof of the reported speech to the speaker for correction and publish its own report of the speech only if the speaker does not revise the proof sent to him.

It is generally seen that newspapers publish any matter they have without regard to its need or importance just to fill in vacant space. This practice is almost universal. It is so in the West also. The reason is that most newspapers have an eye on profits. There is no doubt that newspapers have done great service to the people and these defects are therefore overlooked. But to my mind, they have

done equally great harm. There are newspapers in the West which are so full of trash that it would be a sin to read them. Many create and promote ill-will among people with their prejudices. At times, they produce bitterness and strife even between different families and communities. Thus, newspapers cannot escape criticism merely because they also serve the interests of the people. On the whole, it would seem that the gain and loss from newspapers are almost equal.

It is now an established practice with newspapers to derive their main income from advertisements rather than from subscribers. The result is deplorable. The very newspaper which in its editorial columns strongly denounces the drink-evil publishes advertisements in praise of drink. We read about the ill effects of tobacco as well as where to buy good tobacco or which brand of cigarette to smoke in the same newspapers. Or, it may, on the one hand, publish a severe denunciation of a certain play and, on the other, elsewhere in its columns, a long advertisement of it. The largest source of revenue is derived from medical advertisements, which are the cause of much harm to our people. They, almost wholly, nullify the other services rendered by newspapers. I have seen the harm caused by such advertisements, for many people are lured into buying the medicines-supposed to increase virility, overcome debility, etc. Many of these medicines are those which encourage immorality. It is strange that such advertisements find a place even in religious papers. This custom has been adopted from the West. Whatever the effort, we must either put an end to this undesirable practice or, at least, reform it. It is the duty of every newspaper to exercise care in accepting advertisements for publication in its pages.

The last, though not the least, question is: "What is the duty of a newspaper in a country where there are laws like the 'Seditious Writing Act' and the 'Defence of the India Act' to restrict its freedom?" In order to get over this limitation our newspapers have evolved a style of writing which makes it possible to interpret what they say on a particular matter, which may seem to fall within the purview of these Acts, in two different ways. Some have perfected this art to a science. But in my opinion, this causes harm to our country. People develop a tendency to equivocate and fail to cultivate the courage to speak the truth. It changes the

form of the language which, instead of being an instrument for expressing one's thoughts, becomes a mask for concealing them. I am convinced that this is not the way to educate our people. Both people and individuals must cultivate the habit of speaking their minds. Newspapers are in a position to impart such training to them. The right course, and the one which will ultimately be found to be of the greatest advantage to us, would be that those who are afraid of the above laws and who do not want to get entangled in them should stop publishing newspapers, or that they should frankly state their true views and bear the consequences. Justice Steven has said somewhere that there can be no hatred in the language of a man who has no hatred in his heart. And if there is any hatred one should frankly express it. In case one has not the courage to act thus, one should stop publishing a newspaper. In this lies the good of our people and our country.

*True Education*, (1962), pp. 171-73

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The sole aim of journalism should be service.

*An Autobiography*, (1966), p. 215

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One of the objects of a newspaper is to understand popular feeling and to give expression to it; another is to arouse among the people certain desirable sentiments; and the third is fearlessly to expose popular defects.

*Hind Swaraj or Indian Home Rule*, (1962), p. 19

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Reference to abuses in the States is undoubtedly a necessary part of journalism, and it is a means of creating public opinion. Only, my scope is strictly limited, I have taken up journalism not for its sake but merely as an aid to what I have conceived to be my mission in life. My mission is to teach by example and precept under severe restraint the use of the matchless weapon of *Satyagraha* which is a direct corollary of non-violence and truth. I am anxious, indeed I am impatient to demonstrate that there is no remedy for the many ills of life save that of non-

violence. It is a solvent strong enough to melt the stoniest heart. To be true to my faith, therefore, I may not write in anger or malice. I may not write idly. I may not write merely to excite passion. The reader can have no idea of the restraint I have to exercise from week to week in the choice of topics and my vocabulary. It is a training for me. It enables me to peep into myself and make discoveries of my weaknesses. Often my vanity dictates a smart expression or my anger a harsh adjective. It is a terrible ordeal but a fine exercise to remove these weeds. The reader sees the pages of the *Young India* fairly well dressed up and sometimes, with Romain Rolland, he is inclined to say 'what a fine old man this must be.' Well, let the world understand that the fineness is carefully and prayerfully cultivated. And if it has proved acceptable to some whose opinion I cherish, let the reader understand that when that fineness has become perfectly natural i.e., when I have become incapable of evil and when nothing harsh or haughty occupies, be it momentarily, my thought-world, then and not till then, my non-violence will move all the hearts of all the world. I have placed before me and the reader no impossible ideal or ordeal.

*Young India*, 2-7-1925, p. 232

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Unfortunately, the newspapers have become more important to the average man than the scriptures. I would fain advise them to give up reading newspapers. They would lose nothing by so doing whereas real food for their minds and spirits lies in the scriptures and other good literature.

The Press is called the Fourth Estate. It is definitely a power but to misuse that power is criminal. I am a journalist myself and would appeal to fellow journalists to realize their responsibility and to carry on their work with no idea other than that of upholding the truth.

*Harijan*, 27-4-1947, p. 128

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We think the editors of all such newspapers, which do not run with a commercial motive but only with a view to public service, must be prepared to face extinction at any moment. It is obvious that all newspapers do not come within

the scope of this rule, but only those which aim at public service by advocating reforms in the Government or among the people or in both. What should an editor do when something he has published displeases the Government or is held to violate some law, but is none the less true? Should he apologize? We would say, certainly not. True, he is not bound to publish such matter, but once it has been published, the editor ought to accept responsibility for it.

This raises a very important issue. If the principle we have laid down is correct, it follows that, if any provocative writing has been published unintentionally and no apology is offered for the same, the newspaper will in consequence be prevented from rendering other services as well and the community will go without that benefit. We would not, therefore, apply this principle to matter published unintentionally, but it should apply to what is published after full deliberation. If a newspaper runs into difficulties for publishing any such matter, we think the closing down of the newspaper will be a better service to the public. The argument that in that case one may have to face the confiscation of all one's property and be reduced to poverty has no force. Such a contingency may certainly arise, and it was precisely for this reason that we said that the editor of a journal devoted to public service must be ever ready for death....

Let us take an illustration. Suppose that the Government has committed a gross injustice and robbed the poor. A progressive newspaper is being published in such a place. It writes against the oppressive measure and advises the people to disregard the unjust law of the Government. The Government takes offence and threatens confiscation of property if no apology is forthcoming. Should the reformer apologize? We think the reply is again the same that he should stand the confiscation of his property and close down the newspaper but certainly not offer an apology. The people would then see that, if the reformer could lose his all for their sake, they should also in their own interest oppose the law. If the reformer should apologize, the effect on the people would exactly be the reverse of this. They would know that the man would not be concerned overmuch even if their houses were on fire, that, from a safe distance, he would only indulge in meaningless declamations. When he himself ran into trouble (they would say),

he meekly retired. And so they will think of doing likewise and resign themselves to the inevitable. They will thus argue themselves into greater weakness. It is, therefore, clear in this instance that the best service that the reformer can render will be stop the newspaper.

*The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi-Vol. X, pp. 226-27*

## CHAPTER 34: ON SCIENCE

I was wondering where do I come in? There is no place here for a rustic like me who was to stand speechless in awe and wonderment. I am not in a mood to say much. All I can say is, that all these huge laboratories and electrical apparatus you see here are due to the labour,-unwilling and forced,-of millions. For Tata's thirty lakhs did not come from outside, nor does the Mysore contribution come from anywhere else but this beggar<sup>1</sup> world. If we are to meet the villagers and to explain to them, how we are utilizing their money on buildings and plants which will never benefit them, but might perhaps benefit their posterity, they will not understand it. They will turn a cold shoulder. But we never take them into our confidence, we take it as a matter of right, and forget, that the rule of 'no taxation without representation', applies to them too. If you will really apply it to them, and realize your responsibility to render them an account, you will see that there is another side to all these appointments. You will then find not a little but a big corner in your hearts for them, and if you will keep it in a good nice condition, you will utilize your knowledge for the benefit of the millions on whose labour your education depends. I shall utilize the purse you have given me for *Daridranarayan*. The real *Daridranarayan* even I have not seen, but know only through my imagination. Even the spinners who will get this money are not the real *Daridranarayan* who live in remote corners of distant villages which have yet to be explored. I was told by your professor, that the properties of some of the chemicals will take years of experiments to explore. But who will try to explore villages? Just as some of the experiments in your laboratories go on for all the twenty-four hours, let the big corner in your heart remain perpetually warm for the benefit of the poor millions.

I expect far more from you than from the ordinary man in the street. Don't be satisfied with having given the little you have done, and say "We have done what we could, let us now play tennis and billiards." I tell you, in the billiard room and on the tennis court think of the big debt that is being piled against you from day to day. But beggars cannot be choosers. I thank you for what you have given

me. Think of the prayer I have made and translate it into action. Don't be afraid of wearing the cloth the poor women make for you, don't be afraid of your employers showing you the door if you wear Khadi. I would like you to be men, and stand up before the world firm in your convictions. Let your zeal for the dumb millions be not stifled in the search for wealth. I tell you, you can devise a far greater wireless instrument, which does not require external research, but internal,-and all research will be useless if it is not allied to internal research,- which can link your hearts with those of the millions. Unless all the discoveries that you make have the welfare of the poor as the end in view, all your workshops will be really no better than Satan's workshops, as Rajagopalachari said in joke. Well, I have given you enough food for thought, if you are in a reflective mood, as all research students ought to be.

*Young India*, 21-7-1927, p. 235

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A humanitarian industrial policy for India means to me a glorified revival of hand spinning, for through it alone can pauperism, which is blighting the lives of millions of human beings in their own cottages in this land, be immediately removed. Everything else may thereafter be added, so as to increase the productive capacity of this country. I would, therefore, have all young men with a scientific training to utilize their skill in making the spinning wheel, if it is possible, a more efficient instrument of production in India's cottages. I am not opposed to the progress of science as such. On the contrary the scientific spirit of the West commands my admiration and if that admiration is qualified, it is because the scientist of the West takes no note of God's lower creation. I abhor vivisection with my whole soul. I detest the unpardonable slaughter of innocent life in the name of science and humanity so-called, and all the scientific discoveries stained with innocent blood I count as of no consequence. If the circulation of blood theory could not have been discovered without vivisection, the human kind could well have done without it. And I see the day clearly dawning when the honest scientist of the West will put limitations upon the present methods of pursuing knowledge. Future measurements will take note not

merely of the human family but of all that lives and even as we are slowly but surely discovering that it is an error to suppose that Hindus can thrive upon the degradation of a fifth of themselves or that peoples of the West can rise or live upon the exploitation and degradation of the Eastern and African nations, so shall we realize in the fullness of time, that our dominion over the lower order of creation is not for their slaughter, but for their benefit equally with ours. For I am as certain that they are endowed with a soul as that I am.

*Young India*, 17-12-1925, p. 440

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1. Forced labour

## SECTION VII: ECONOMIC IDEAS

### CHAPTER 35: ECONOMICS AND ETHICS

The whole gamut of man's activities today constitutes an indivisible whole. You cannot divide social, economic, political and purely religious work into watertight compartments. I do not know any religion apart from human activity.

*Harijan*, 24-12-1938, p. 393

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I must confess that I do not draw a sharp or any distinction between economics and ethics. Economics that hurts the moral well-being of an individual or a nation is immoral and, therefore, sinful. Thus the economics that permits one country to prey upon another is immoral. It is sinful to buy and use articles made by 'sweated labour'. It is sinful to eat American wheat and let my neighbour, the grain dealer, starve for want of customer. Similarly, it is sinful for me to wear the latest finery of Regent Street when I know that if I had but worn the things woven by the neighbouring spinners and weavers, that would have clothed me, and fed and clothed them.

*Young India*, 13-10-1921, p. 325

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True economics never militates against the highest ethical standard, just as all true ethics to be worth its name must at the same time be also good economics. An economics that inculcates Mammon worship, and enables the strong to amass wealth at the expense of the weak, is a false and dismal science. It spells death. True economics, on the other hand, stands for social justice, it promotes the good of all equally including the weakest, and is indispensable for decent life.

*Harijan*, 9-10-1937, p. 292

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That economics is untrue which ignores or disregards moral values. The extension of the law of non-violence in the domain of economics means nothing less than the introduction of moral values as a factor to be considered in regulating international commerce.

*Young India*, 26-12-1924, p. 421

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I venture to think that the scriptures of the world are far safer and sounder treatises on laws of economics than many modern textbooks.

*Mahatma*, Vol. I, (1951), p. 238

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You know how Adam Smith in his *Wealth of Nations*, after laying down certain principles according to which economic phenomena are governed, went on to describe certain other things which constituted the 'disturbing factor' and prevented economic laws from having free play. Chief among these was the 'human element'. Now it is this 'human element' on which the entire economics of *Khadi* rests; and human selfishness, Adam Smith's 'pure economic motive', constitutes the 'disturbing factor' that has got to be overcome.

*Harijan*, 21-9-1934, p. 253

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*Khaddar* economics is wholly different from the ordinary. The latter takes no note of the human factor. The former wholly concerns itself with the human.

*Harijan*, 16-7-1931, p. 181

## CHAPTER 36: SUPREMACY OF MAN: FULL EMPLOYMENT

The supreme consideration is man.

*Young India*, 13-11-1924, p. 378

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Every human being has a right to live and therefore to find the wherewithal to feed himself and where necessary to clothe and house himself. But for this very simple performance we need no assistance from economists or their laws.

*Speeches and Writings of Mahatma Gandhi*, (4th Edn.), p. 350

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Through *Khadi*, we were struggling to establish the supremacy of man in the place of the supremacy of power-driven machine over him.

*Harijan*, 21-12-1947, p. 476

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We must utilize all available human labour before we entertain the idea of employing mechanical power.

*Harijan*, 25-8-1946, p. 281

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I heartily endorse the proposition that any plan which exploits the raw materials of a country and neglects the potentially more powerful man-power is lopsided and can never tend to establish human equality....

Real planning consists in the best utilization of the whole man-power of India and the distribution of the raw products of India in her numerous villages instead of sending them outside and re-buying finished articles at fabulous prices.

*Harijan*, 23-3-1947, p. 79

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America is the most industrialized country in the world, and yet it has not banished poverty and degradation. That is because it neglects the universal man-

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power and concentrates power in the hands of the few who amass fortunes at the expense of the many.

*Harijan*, 23-3-1947, p. 79

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As I look at Russia, where the apotheosis of industrialization has been reached, the life there does not appeal to me. To use the language of the Bible, "What shall it avail a man if he gain the whole world and lose his soul?" In modern terms, it is beneath human dignity to lose one's individuality and become a mere cog in the machine. I want every individual to become a full-blooded, fully developed member of the society.

*Harijan*, 28-1-1939, p. 438

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Every human being is a machine, only it should be kept oiled and in proper trim. That is what I am trying to do.

*Harijan*, 25-1-1935, p. 399

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The hungry millions ask for one poem: invigorating food. They cannot be given it. They must earn it. And they can earn only by the sweat of their brow.

*Speeches and Writings of Mahatma Gandhi*, (4th Edn.), p. 593

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To a people famishing and idle, the only acceptable form in which God can dare appear is work and promise of food as wages.

*Young India*, 13-10-1921, p. 325

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I dare not take before them the message of God. I may as well place before the dog over there the message of God as before those hungry millions, who have no lustre in their eyes and whose only God is their bread. I can take before them a message of God only by taking the message of sacred work before them.

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*Young India*, 15-10-1931, p. 310

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We should be ashamed of resting, or having a square meal, so long as there is one able-bodied man or woman without work or food.

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*Young India*, 6-10-1921, p. 314

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According to me the economic constitution of India and for the matter of that the world, should be such that no one under it should suffer from want of food and clothing. In other words everybody should be able to get sufficient work to enable him to make the two ends meet. And this ideal can be universally realized only if the means of production of the elementary necessities of life remain in the control of the masses. These should be freely available to all as God's air and water are or ought to be; they should not be made a vehicle of traffic for the exploitation of others. Their monopolization by and country, nation or group of persons would be unjust. The neglect of this simple principle is the cause of the destitution that we witness today not only in this unhappy land but other parts of the world too.

*Young India*, 15-11-1928, p. 381

## CHAPTER 37: PLAIN LIVING AND HIGH THINKING

A certain degree of physical harmony and comfort is necessary, but above a certain level it becomes a hindrance instead of help. Therefore the ideal of creating an unlimited number of wants and satisfying them seems to be a delusion and a snare. The satisfaction of one's physical needs, even the intellectual needs of one's narrow self, must meet at a certain point a dead stop, before it degenerates into physical and intellectual voluptuousness. A man must arrange his physical and cultural circumstances so that they do not hinder him in his service of humanity, on which all his energies should be concentrated.

*Harijan*, 29-8-1936, p. 226

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I do not believe that multiplication of wants and machinery contrived to supply them is taking the world a single step nearer its goal... I whole-heartedly detest this mad desire to destroy distance and time, to increase animal appetites and go to the ends of the earth in search of their satisfaction. If modern civilization stands for all this, and I have understood it to do so, I call it Satanic.

*Young India*, 17-3-1927, p. 85

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If by abundance you mean everyone having plenty to eat and drink and to clothe himself with, enough to keep his mind trained and educated, I should be satisfied. But I should not like to pack more stuffs in my belly than I can digest and more things than I can ever usefully use. But neither do I want poverty, penury, misery, dirt and dust in India.

*Harijan*, 12-2-1938, p. 2

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What may be hoped for is that Europe on account of her fine and scientific intellect, will realize the obvious and retrace her steps, and from the demoralizing industrialism she will find a way out. It will not necessarily be a return to the old absolute simplicity. But it will have to be a reorganization in

which village life will predominate, and in which brute and material force will be subordinated to the spiritual force.

*Young India*, 6-8-1925, p. 273

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I should not have laboured my point as I have done, if I did not believe that, in so far as we have made the modern materialistic craze our goal, so far are we going downhill in the path of progress... Hence the ancient ideal has been the limitation of activities promoting wealth. This does not put an end to all material ambition. We should still have, as we have always had, in our midst people who make the pursuit of wealth their aim in life. But we have always recognized that it is a fall from the ideal... That you cannot serve God and Mammon is an economic truth of the highest value. We have to make our choice. Western nations are today groaning under the heel of the monster-god of materialism. Their moral growth has become stunted. They measure their progress in £.s.d. American wealth has become the standard. She is the envy of other nations. I have heard many of our countrymen say that we will gain American wealth but avoid its methods. I venture to suggest that such an attempt, if it were made, is foredoomed to failure....

Ours will only then be a truly spiritual nation when we shall show more truth than gold, greater fearlessness than pomp of power and wealth, greater charity than love of self. If we will but cleanse our houses, our palaces and temples of the attributes of wealth and show in them the attributes of morality, we can offer battle to any combinations of hostile forces without having to carry the burden of a heavy militia. Let us seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and the irrevocable promise is that everything will be added unto us. These are Real Economics. May you and I treasure them and enforce them in our daily life.

*Speeches and Writings of Mahatma Gandhi*, (4th Edn.), pp. 353-55

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The less you possess, the less you want, the better you are. And better for what? Not for enjoyment of this life, but for enjoyment of personal service to the fellow-beings; service which you dedicate yourself, body, soul and mind.

*Mahatma*, Vol. III, (1952), p. 157

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I believe that independent India can only discharge her duty towards a groaning world by adopting a simple but ennobled life by developing her thousands of cottages and living at peace with the world. High thinking is inconsistent with complicated material life based on high speed imposed on us by Mammon worship. All the graces of life are possible only when we learn the art of living nobly.

*Harijan*, 1-9-1946, p. 285

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Man falls from the pursuit of the ideal of plain living and high thinking the moment he wants to multiply his daily wants. History gives ample proof of this. Man's happiness really lies in contentment. He who is discontented, however much he possesses, becomes a slave to his desires. And there is really no slavery equal to that of the desires. All the sages have declared from the house-tops that man can be his own worst enemy as well as his best friend. To be free or to be a slave lies in his own hands. And what is true for the individual is true for society.

*Harijan*, 1-2-1942, p. 27

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Even if the paradise of material satisfactions, which they envisage as their final goal, were realized on earth, it would not bring mankind either contentment or peace.

*Mahatma Gandhi-The Last Phase*, Vol. II, (1958), p. 139

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The human body is meant solely for service, never for indulgence. The secret of happy life lies in renunciation. Renunciation is life. Indulgence spells death.

*Harijan*, 24-2-1946, p. 19

## CHAPTER 38: DIGNITY OF LABOUR: BREAD LABOUR

God created man to work for his food and said that those who are without work were thieves.

*Young India*, 13-10-1921, p. 325

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Bodily sustenance should come from bodily labour, and intellectual labour is necessary for the culture of the mind. Division of labour there will necessarily be, but it will be a division into various species of bodily labour and not a division into intellectual labour to be confined to one class and bodily labour confined to another class.

*Mahatma*, Vol. III, (1952), p. 349

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You must teach the people to labour with their hands and realize the dignity of work.

*Mahatma*, Vol. V, (1952), p. 185

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If everybody lived by the sweat of his brow, the earth would become a paradise. The question of the use of special talents hardly needed separate consideration. If everyone laboured physically for his bread, it followed that poets, doctors, lawyers and others would consider it their duty to use those talents gratis for the service of humanity. Their output will be all the better and richer for their selfless devotion to duty.

*Mahatma*, Vol. VII, (1953), p. 389

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Leisure is good and necessary up to a point only. God created man to eat his bread in the sweat of his brow, and I dread the prospect of our being able to produce all that we want, including our foodstuffs, out of a conjurer's hat.

*Harijan*, 16-5-1936, p. 111

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Supposing a few millionaires from America came and offered to send us all our foodstuffs and implored us not to work but to permit them to give vent to their philanthropy, I should refuse point-blank to accept their kind offer... specially because it strikes at the root of the fundamental law of our being.

*Harijan*, 7-12-1935, p. 341

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Last but not least, it seems to us that, after all, nature has intended man to earn his bread by manual labour—"by the sweat of his brow"—and intended him to dedicate his intellect not towards multiplying his material wants and surrounding himself with enervating and soul-destroying luxuries, but towards uplifting his moral being—towards knowing the will of the Creator—towards serving humanity and thus truly serving himself.

*The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. X, p. 130

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If all laboured for their bread and no more, then there would be enough food and enough leisure for all. Then there would be no cry of over-population, no disease and no such misery as we see around. Such labour will be the highest form of sacrifice. Men will no doubt do many other things either through their bodies or through their minds, but all this will be labour of love for the common good. There will then be no rich and no poor, none high and none low, no touchable and no untouchable.

This may be an unattainable ideal. But we need not, therefore, cease to strive for it. Even if, without fulfilling the whole law of sacrifice, that is, the law of our being, we performed physical labour enough for our daily bread, we should go a long way towards the ideal.

If we did so, our wants would be minimized, our food would be simple. We should then eat to live, not live to eat. Let anyone who doubts the accuracy of this proposition try to sweat for his bread, he will derive the greatest relish from the

productions of his labour, improve his health, and discover that many things he took were superfluities.

May not men earn their bread by intellectual labour? No. The needs of the body must be supplied by the body. "Render unto Caesar that which is Caesar's" perhaps applies here well. Mere mental, that is, intellectual labour is for the soul and is its own satisfaction. It should never demand payment. In the ideal state, doctors, lawyers and the like will work solely for the benefit of society, not for self. Obedience to the law of bread labour will bring about a silent revolution in the structure of society. Man's triumph will consist in substituting the struggle for existence by the struggle for mutual service. The law of the brute will be replaced by the law of man.

*Harijan*, 29-6-1935, p. 156

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Let me not be misunderstood. I do not discount the value of intellectual labour, but no amount of it is any compensation for bodily labour which every one of us is born to give for the common good of all. It may be, often is, infinitely superior to bodily labour but it never is or can be a substitute for it, even as intellectual food, though far superior to the grains we eat, never can be a substitute for them. Indeed, without the products of the earth, those of the intellect would be an impossibility.

*Harijan*, 15-10-1925, p. 335

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Intelligent bread labour is any day the highest form of social service....

The adjective 'intelligent' has been prefixed to labour in order to show that labour to be social service must have that definite purpose behind it. Otherwise every labourer can be said to render social service. He does in a way, but what is meant here is something much more than that. A person who labours for the general good of all serves society and is worthy of his hire. Therefore, such bread labour is not different from social service.

*Harijan*, 1-6-1935, p. 125

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Return to the villages means a definite, voluntary recognition of the duty of bread labour and all it connotes. But says the critic, "Millions of India's children are today living in the villages and yet they are living a life of semi-starvation." This, alas, is but too true. Fortunately, we know that theirs is not voluntary obedience. They would perhaps shirk body labour if they could, and even rush to the nearest city if they could be accommodated in it.

Compulsory obedience to a master is a state of slavery, willing obedience to one's father is the glory of sonship. Similarly, compulsory obedience to the law of bread labour breeds poverty, disease and discontent. It is a state of slavery. Willing obedience to it must bring contentment and health. And it is health which is real wealth, not pieces of silver and gold.

*Harijan*, 29-6-1935, p. 156

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My *Ahimsa* would not tolerate the idea of giving a free meal to a healthy person who has not worked for it in some honest way, and if I had the power, I would stop every *Sadavarta*<sup>1</sup> where free meals are given. It has degraded the nation and it has encouraged laziness, idleness, hypocrisy and even crime. Such misplaced charity adds nothing to the wealth of the country, whether material or spiritual, and gives a false sense of meritousness to the donor. How nice and wise it would be if the donor were to open institutions where they would give meals under healthy, clean surroundings to men and women who would work for them. I personally think that the spinning wheel or any of the processes that cotton has to go through will be an ideal occupation. But if they will not have that, they may choose any other work; only the rule should be "No labour, no meal."

*Young India*, 13-8-1925, p. 282

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I do feel that whilst it is bad to encourage begging, I will not send away a beggar without offering him work and food. If he does not work, I shall let him go without

food. Those who are physically disabled like the halt and the maimed have got to be supported by the State. There is, however, a lot of fraud going on under cover of pretended blindness or even genuine blindness. So many blind have become rich because of ill-gotten gains. It would be a good thing if they were taken to an asylum, rather than be exposed to this temptation.

*Harijan*, 11-5-1935, p. 99

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1. A place where free meals are served

## CHAPTER 39: SWADESHI

*Swadeshi* is that spirit in us which restricts us to the use and service of our immediate surroundings to the exclusion of the more remote. Thus, as for religion, in order to satisfy the requirements of the definition, I must restrict myself to my ancestral religion. That is, the use of my immediate religious surrounding. If I find it defective, I should serve it by purging it of its defects.

In the domain of politics, I should make use of the indigenous institutions and serve them by curing them of their proved defects. In that of economics I should use only things that are produced by my immediate neighbours and serve those industries by making them efficient and complete where they might be found wanting. It is suggested that such *Swadeshi*, if reduced to practice, will lead to the millennium....

Much of the deep poverty of the masses is due to the ruinous departure from *Swadeshi* in the economic and industrial life. If not an article of commerce had been brought from outside India, she would be today a land flowing with milk and honey. But that was not to be. We were greedy and so as England. The connection between England and India was based clearly upon an error...

If we follow the *Swadeshi* doctrine, it would be your duty and mine to find out neighbours who can supply our wants and to teach them to supply them where they do not know how to proceed, assuming that there are neighbours who are in want of healthy occupation. Then every village of India will almost be a self-supporting and self-contained unit, exchanging only such necessary commodities with other villages as are not locally producible. This may all sound nonsensical. Well, India is a country of nonsense. It is nonsensical to parch one's throat with thirst when a kindly Mohammedan is ready to offer pure water to drink. And yet thousands of Hindus would rather die of thirst than drink water from a Mohammedan household. These nonsensical men can also, once they are convinced that their religion demands that they should wear garments

manufactured in India only and eat food only grown in India, decline to wear any other clothing or eat any other food....

It has often been urged that India cannot adopt *Swadeshi* in the economic life at any rate. Those who advance this objection do not look upon *Swadeshi* as a rule of life. With them it is a mere patriotic effort-not to be made if it involved any self-denial. *Swadeshi* as defined here, is a religious discipline to be undergone in utter disregard of the physical discomfort it may cause to individuals. Under its spell the deprivation of a pin or a needle, because these are not manufactured in India, need cause no terror. A *Swadeshist* will learn to do without hundreds of things which today he considers necessary....

I would urge that *Swadeshi* is the only doctrine consistent with the law of humility and love. It is arrogance to think of launching out to serve the whole of India when I am hardly able to serve even my own family. It were better to concentrate my effort upon the family and consider that through them I was serving the whole nation and, if you will, the whole of humanity. This is humility and it is love. The motive will determine the quality of the act. I may serve my family regardless of the sufferings I may cause to others. As for the instance, I may accept an employment which enables me to extort money from people. I enrich myself thereby and then satisfy many unlawful demands of the family. Here I am neither serving the family nor the State. Or I may recognize that God has given me hands and feet only to work with for my sustenance and for that of those who may be dependent upon me. I would then at once simplify my life and that of those whom I can directly reach. In this instance, I would have served the family without causing injury to anyone else. Supposing that everyone followed this mode of life, we should have at once an ideal state. All will not reach that state at the same time. But those of us who, realizing its truth, enforce it in practice, will clearly anticipate and accelerate the coming of that happy day.

*Speeches and Writings of Mahatma Gandhi*, (4<sup>th</sup> Edn.), pp. 336-44

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Even *Swadeshi* like any other good thing can be ridden to death if it is made a fetish. That is a danger which must be guarded against. To reject foreign

manufactures, merely, because they are foreign and to go on wasting national time and money in the promotion in one's country of manufactures for which it is not suited, would be criminal folly and a negation of the *Swadeshi* spirit. A true votary of *Swadeshi* will never harbour ill-will towards the foreigner; he will not be actuated by antagonism towards anybody on the earth. *Swadeshism* is not a cult of hatred. It is a doctrine of selfless service, that has its roots in the purest *Ahimsa*, i.e., love.

*From Yeravada Mandir, (1957), p. 66*

## CHAPTER 40: ECONOMIC EQUALITY

All must have an equal opportunity. Given the opportunity, every human being has the same possibility for spiritual growth.

*Harijan*, 17-11-1946, p. 404

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I cannot picture to myself a time when no man shall be richer than another. But I do picture to myself a time when the rich will spurn to enrich themselves at the expense of the poor and the poor will cease to envy the rich. Even in a most perfect world, we shall fail to avoid inequalities, but we can and must avoid strife and bitterness. There are numerous examples extant of the rich and the poor living in perfect friendliness. We have but to multiply such instances.

*Young India*, 7-10-1926, p. 348

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I do not believe in dead uniformity. All men are born equal and free is not Nature's law in the literal sense. All men are not born equal in intellect, for instance, but the doctrine of equality will be vindicated if those who have superior intellect will use it not for self-advancement at the expense of others, but for the service of those who are less favoured in that respect than they.

*Harijan*, 6-10-1946, p. 338

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Economic equality must never be supposed to mean possession of an equal amount of worldly goods by everyone. It does mean, however, that everyone will have a proper house to live in, sufficient and balanced food to eat, and sufficient Khadi with which to cover himself. It also means that the cruel inequality that obtains today will be removed by purely non-violent means.

*Harijan*, 18-8-1940, p. 253

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Economic equality of my conception does not mean that everyone would literally have the same amount. It simply means that everybody should have enough for his or her needs... The elephant needs a thousand times more food than the ant, but that is not an indication of inequality. So the real meaning of economic equality is: "To each according to his need." That is the definition of Marx. If a single man demanded as much as a man with wife and four children, that would be a violation of economic equality.

Let no one try to justify the glaring difference between the classes and the masses, the prince and the pauper, by saying that the former need more. That will be idle sophistry and a travesty of my argument...The contrast between the rich and the poor today is a painful sight. The poor villagers are exploited by the foreign Government and also by their own countrymen-the city-dwellers. They produce the food and go hungry. They produce milk and their children have to go without it. It is disgraceful. Everyone must have balanced diet, a decent house to live in, facilities for the education of one's children and adequate medical relief. That constitutes my picture of economic equality. I do not want to taboo everything above and beyond the bare necessities, but they must come after the essential needs of the poor are satisfied. First things must come first.

*Harijan*, 31-3-1946, p. 63

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Put your talents in the service of the country instead of converting them into £.s.d. If you are a medical man, there is disease enough in India to need all your medical skill. If you are a lawyer, there are differences and quarrels enough in India. Instead of fomenting more trouble, patch up those quarrels and stop litigation. If you are an engineer, build model houses suited to the means and needs of our people and yet full of health and fresh air. There is nothing that you have learnt which cannot be turned to account. (The friend who asked the questions was a Chartered Accountant and Gandhiji then said to him:) There is a dire need everywhere for accountants to audit the accounts of Congress and its adjunct associations. Come to India, I will give you enough work and also your hire - 4 annas per day which is surely much more than millions in India get.

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*Young India*, 5-11-1931, p. 384

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My ideal is equal distribution, but so far as I can see, it is not to be realized. I therefore work for equitable distribution.

*Young India*, 17-3-1927, p. 86

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The real implication of equal distribution is that each man shall have the wherewithal to supply all his natural needs and no more. For example, if one man has a weak digestion and requires only a quarter of a pound of flour for his bread and another needs a pound, both should be in a position to satisfy their wants. To bring this ideal into being, the entire social order has got to be reconstructed. A society based on non-violence cannot nurture any other ideal. We may not perhaps be able to realize the goal, but we must bear it in mind and work unceasingly to near it. To the same extents as we progress towards our goal, we shall find contentment and happiness, and to that extent, too, shall we have contributed towards the bringing into being of a non-violent society.

*Harijan*, 25-8-1940, p. 260

## CHAPTER 41: DECENTRALIZED ECONOMY

I suggest that, if India is to evolve along non-violent lines, it will have to decentralize many things. Centralization cannot be sustained and defended without adequate force. Simple homes from which there is nothing to take away require no policing; the places of the rich must have strong guards to protect them against dacoity. So must huge factories. Rurally organized India will run less risk of foreign invasion than urbanized India, well equipped with military, naval and air forces.

*Harijan*, 30-12-1939, p. 391

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You cannot build non-violence on a factory civilization, but it can be built on self-contained villages...Rural economy as I have conceived it, eschews exploitation altogether, and exploitation is the essence of violence.

*Harijan*, 4-11-1939, p. 331

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I must dissent from the view that the core of planning is centralization. Why should not decentralization lend itself to planning as well as centralization?

*The Hindus*, 28-6-1946

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The end to be sought is human happiness combined with full mental and moral growth. I use the adjective moral as synonymous with spiritual. This end can be achieved under decentralization. Centralization as a system is inconsistent with a non-violent structure of society.

*Harijan*, 18-1-1942, p. 5

## CHAPTER 42: VILLAGE COMMUNITIES

Society based on non-violence can only consist of groups settled in villages in which voluntary co-operation is the condition of dignified and peaceful existence. A society which anticipates and provides for meeting violence with violence will either lead a precarious life or create big cities and magazines for defence purposes. It is not unreasonable to presume from the state of Europe that its cities, its monster factories and huge armaments are so intimately interrelated that the one cannot exist without the other. The nearest approach to civilization based upon non-violence is the erstwhile village republic of India. I admit that it was very crude. I know that there was in it no non-violence of my definition and conception. But the germ was there.

*Harijan*, 13-1-1940, pp. 410-11

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I am convinced that if India is to attain true freedom and through India the world also, then sooner or later the fact must be recognized that people will have to live in villages, not in towns, in huts, not in palaces. Crores of people will never be able to live at peace with each other in towns and palaces. They will then have no recourse but to resort to both violence and untruth.

I hold that without truth and non-violence there can be nothing but destruction for humanity. We can realize truth and non-violence only in the simplicity of village life and this simplicity can best be found in the *Charkha* and all that the *Charkha* connotes. I must not fear if the world today is going the wrong way. It may be that India too will go that way and like the proverbial moth burn itself eventually in the flame round which it dances more and more fiercely. But it is my bounden duty up to my last breath to try to protect India and through India the entire world from such a doom.

*A Bunch of Old Letters*, (1958), pp. 506- 07

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My idea of village *Swaraj* is that it is a complete republic, independent of its neighbours for its own vital wants, and yet interdependent for many others in which dependence is a necessity. Thus every village's first concern will be to grow its own food crops and cotton for its cloth. It should have a reserve for its cattle, recreation and playground for adults and children. Then if there is more land available, it will grow *useful* money crops, thus excluding *Ganja*<sup>1</sup>, tobacco, opium and the like. The village will maintain a village theatre, school and public hall. It will have its own waterworks ensuring clean water supply. This can be done through controlled wells or tanks. Education will be compulsory up to the final basic course. As far as possible every activity will be conducted on the co-operative basis. There will be no castes such as we have today with their graded untouchability. Non-violence with the technique of *Satyagraha* and non-co-operation will be the sanction of the village community. There will be a compulsory service of village guards who will be selected by rotation from the register maintained by the village. The government of the village will be conducted by the *Panchayat* of five persons annually elected by the adult villagers, male and female, possessing minimum prescribed qualifications. These will have all the authority and jurisdiction required. Since there will be no system of punishments in the accepted sense, this *Panchayat* will be the legislature, judiciary and executive combined to operate for its year of office. Any village can become such a republic today without much interference, even from the present Government, whose sole effective connection with the villages is the exaction of the village revenue. I have not examined here the question of relations with the neighbouring villages and the centre if any. My purpose is to present an outline of village government. Here there is perfect democracy based upon individual freedom. The individual is the architect of his own government. The law of non-violence rules him and his government. He and his village are able to defy the might of a world. For the law governing every villager is that he will suffer death in the defence of his and his village's honour.

There is nothing inherently impossible in the picture drawn here. To model such a village may be the work of a life time. Any lover of true democracy and village life can take up a village, treat it as his world and sole work, and he will find

good results. He begins by being the village scavenger, spinner, watchman, medicine man and school-master all at once. If nobody comes near him, he will be satisfied with scavenging and spinning.

*Harijan*, 26-7-1942, p. 238

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My ideal village will contain intelligent human beings. They will not live in dirt and darkness as animals. Men and women will be free and able to hold their own against anyone in the world. There will be neither plague, nor cholera, nor smallpox; no one will be idle, no one will wallow in luxury. Everyone will have to contribute his quota of manual labour... It is possible to envisage railways, post and telegraph... and the like.

*A Bunch of Old Letters*, (1958), pp. 505-06

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1. Narcotic from the flower of Indian hemp

## CHAPTER 43: SELF-SUFFICIENCY

**Man** is not born to live in isolation but is essentially a social animal independent and inter-dependent. No one can or should ride on another's back. If we try to work out necessary conditions for such a life, we are forced to the conclusion that the unit of society should be a village or call it a manageable small group of people who would, in the ideal, be self-sufficient (in the matter of their vital requirements) as a unit and bound together in bonds of mutual co-operation and interdependence.

*Mahatma Gandhi-The Last Phase, Vol. II, (1958), p. 548*

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In other words, there should be equality between the town dwellers and villages in the standard of food and drink, clothing and other living conditions. In order to realize this equality today people should be able to produce their own necessities of life, i.e., clothing, foodstuffs, dwellings and lighting and water.

*Mahatma Gandhi-The Last Phase, Vol. II, (1958), p. 547*

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Truth and non-violence form the foundation of the order of my conception. Our first duty is that we should not be a burden on society, i.e., we should be self-dependent. From this point of view self-sufficiency itself is a kind of service. After becoming self-sufficient we shall use our spare time for the service of others. If all become self-sufficient, none will be in trouble. In such a state of affairs there would be no need of serving anybody. But we have not yet reached that stage and therefore we have to think of social service. Even if we succeed in realizing self-sufficiency completely, man being a social being, we will have to accept service in some form or other. That is, man is as much self-dependent as interdependent. When dependence becomes necessary in order to keep society in good order it is no longer dependence, but becomes co-operation. There is sweetness in co-operation; there is no one weak or strong among those who co-operate. Each is equal to the other. There is the feeling of helplessness

in dependency. Members of a family are as much self-dependent as inter-dependent. There is no feeling of either mine or thine. They are all co-operators. So also when we take a society, a nation or the whole of mankind as a family all men become co-operators. If we can conceive a picture of such co-operation we shall find that there would be no need of support from the lifeless machine. Instead of making the greatest use of machinery we shall be able to do with the least use thereof and therein lies the real security and self-protection of society.

*The Ideology of the Charkha, (1951), pp. 86-88*

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My idea of self-sufficiency is that villages must be self-sufficient in regard to food, cloth and other basic necessities. But even this can be overdone. Therefore you must grasp my idea properly... Self-sufficiency does not mean narrowness. To be self-sufficient is not to be altogether self-contained. In no circumstances would we be able to produce all the things we need. So though our aim is complete self-sufficiency, we shall have to get from outside the village what we cannot produce in the village; we shall have to produce more of what we can in order thereby to obtain in exchange what we are unable to produce.

*Khadi- Why and How, (1959) p. 166*

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As for food, India has plenty of fertile land, there is enough water and no dearth of man power... The public should be educated to become self-reliant. Once they know that they have got to stand on their own legs, it would electrify the atmosphere.

*Harijan, 19-10-1947, p. 379*

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Self-sufficiency is a big word... Villages will be swept away, if they are not self-sufficient as to their primary wants and self-reliant as to their protection against internal disruption by dissensions and disease and external danger from thieves and dacoits. Self-sufficiency, therefore, means all the cotton processes and growing of seasonal food crops and fodder for cattle. Unless this is done there

will be starvation. And self-reliance means corporate organization ensuring adjustment of internal differences through arbitration by the wise men of villages and cleanliness by corporate attention to sanitation and common disease. No mere individual effort is going to suffice. And above all, villagers must be taught to feel their own strength by combined effort to make their villages proof against thieves and dacoits. This is best done by corporate non-violence. But if the way to non-violence does not seem clear to workers, they will not hesitate to organize corporate defence through violence.

*Harijan*, 5-4-1942, p. 107

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Every village has to be self-sustained and capable of managing its affairs even to the extent of defending itself against the whole world.

*Harijan*, 28-7-1946, p. 236

## CHAPTER 44: CO-OPERATION

"Without character there is no co-operation", is a sound maxim.

*Speeches and Writings of Mahatma Gandhi*, (4<sup>th</sup> Edn.), p. 356

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Individual liberty and inter-dependence are both essential for life in society. Only a Robinson Crusoe can afford to be all self-sufficient. When a man has done all he can for the satisfaction of his essential requirements he will seek the co-operation of his neighbours for the rest. That will be true co-operation.

*Harijan*, 31-3-1946, p. 59

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Inter-dependence is and ought to be as much the ideal of man as self-sufficiency. Man is a social being. Without inter-relation with society he cannot realize his oneness with the universe or suppress his egotism. His social inter-dependence enables him to test his faith and to prove himself on the touchstone of reality. If man were so placed or could so place himself as to be absolutely above all dependence on his fellow-beings, he would become so proud and arrogant, as to be a veritable burden and nuisance to the world. Dependence on society teaches him the lesson of humility. That a man ought to be able to satisfy most of his essential needs himself is obvious; but it is no less obvious to me that when self-sufficiency is carried to the length of isolating oneself from society it almost amounts to sin. A man cannot become self-sufficient even in respect of all the various operations from the growing of cotton to the spinning of the yarn. He has at some stage or other to take the aid of the members of his family. And if one may take help from one's own family why not from one's neighbours? Or otherwise what is the significance of the great saying, "The world is my family"?

*Young India*, 13-5-1926, p. 179

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The eye that would dispense with the help of the hands does not practise self-help, but is conceited and self-deceived. And as the different members of the body are self-reliant so far as their own functions are concerned and yet are

mutually helpful and mutually dependent, so are we... each following the rule of self-help in performing his own function, and yet co-operating with one another in all matters of common interest. Only then can we be said to be the servants of the country.

*Young India*, 13-5-1926, p. 179

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Drops in separation could only fade away; drops in co-operation made the ocean which carried on its broad bosom greyhounds.

*Harijan*, 7-9-1947, p. 311

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Ultimately, it is the individual who is the unit. This does not exclude dependence on and willing help from neighbours or from the world. It will be free and voluntary play of mutual forces.

*Harijan*, 28-7-1946, p. 236

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Men should live in co-operation and work for the common good.

*Harijan*, 2-2-47, p. 3

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The seven hundred thousand dollars invested in the Imperial Bank of India, could be swept away by bomb from a Japanese plane, whereas if they were distributed among the seven hundred thousand shareholders, nobody could deprive them of their assets. There will then be voluntary co-operation between these seven hundred thousand units, voluntary co-operation, not co-operation induced by Nazi methods. Voluntary co-operation will produce real freedom and a new order, vastly superior to the new order in Soviet Russia. Some say there is ruthlessness in Russia but that it is exercised for the lowest and the poorest and is good for that reason. For me, it has very little good in it. Some day this ruthlessness will create an anarchy, worse than we have ever seen.

*Mahatma*, Vol. VI, (1953), p. 120

Let it be remembered that co-operation should be based on strict non-violence. There is no such thing as success of violent co-operation. Hitler was a forcible example of the latter. He also talked vainly of co-operation which was forced upon the people and everyone knew where Germany had been led as a result.

It would be a sad thing if India also tries to build up the new society based on co-operation by means of violence. Good brought about through force destroyed individuality. Only when the change is effected through the persuasive power of non-violent non-co-operation, i.e., love, could the foundation of individuality be preserved, and real, abiding progress be assured for the world.

*Harijan*, 9-3-1947, p. 58

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The secret of successful co-operative effort is that the members must be honest and know the great merit of co-operation and it must have a definite progressive goal. Thus holding a certain sum of money in co-operation for the sake of making more money by charging exorbitant rates of interest is a bad goal. But co-operative farming or dairying is undoubtedly a good goal promoting national interest. Such instances can be multiplied.

*Harijan*, 6-10-1946, p. 344

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My knowledge of the technicality of co-operation is next to nothing. My brother, Devadhar has made the subject of his own. Whatever he does, naturally attracts me and predisposes me to think that there must be something good in it and the handling of it must be fairly difficult. Mr. Ewbank very kindly placed at my disposal some literature too on the subject. And I have had a unique opportunity of watching the effect of some co-operative effort in Champaran. I have gone through Mr. Ewbank's ten main points which are like the Commandments, and I have gone through the twelve points of Mr. Collins of Bihar, which remind me of the law of the Twelve Tables. There are so-called agricultural banks in Champaran. They were to me disappointing efforts, if they were meant to be demonstrations of the success of co-operation. On the other hand, there is quite work in the same direction being done by Mr. Hodge, a missionary whose efforts

are leaving their impress on those who come in contact with him. Mr. Hodge is a co-operative enthusiast and probably considers that the result which he sees flowing from his efforts are due to the working of co-operation. I, who was able to watch the efforts, had no hesitation in inferring that the personal equation counted for success in the one and failure in the other instance.

I am an enthusiast myself, but twenty-five years of experimenting and experience have made me a cautious and discriminating enthusiast. Workers in a cause necessarily, though quite unconsciously exaggerate its merits and often succeed in turning its very defects into advantages. In spite of my caution I consider the little institution I am conducting in Ahmedabad as the finest thing in the world. It alone gives me sufficient inspiration. Critics tell me that it represents a soulless soul-force and that its severe discipline has made it merely mechanical. I suppose both-the critics and I-are wrong. It is, at best, a humble attempt to place at the disposal of the nation a home where men and women may have scope for free and unfettered development of character, in keeping with the national genius, and if its controllers do not take care, the discipline that is the foundation of character may frustrate the very end in view. I would venture, therefore, to warn enthusiasts in co-operation against entertaining false hopes....

The credit which is becoming the money power of the world has little moral basis and is not a synonym for Trust or Faith, which are purely moral qualities. After twenty years' experience of hundreds of men, who had dealings with banks in South Africa, the opinion I had so often heard expressed has become firmly rooted in me, that the greater the rascal the greater the credit he enjoys with his banks. The banks do not pry into his moral character; they are satisfied that he meets his over-drafts and promissory notes punctually. The credit system has encircled this beautiful globe of ours like a serpent's coil, and if we do not mind, it bids fair to crush us out of breath. I have witnessed the ruin of many a home through the system, and it has made no difference whether the credit was labelled co-operative or otherwise. The deadly coil has made possible the devastating spectacle in Europe, which we are helplessly looking on. It was perhaps never so true as it is today that, as in law so in war, the longest purse

finally wins. I have ventured to give prominence to the current belief about credit system in order to emphasize the point that the co-operative movement will be a blessing to India only to the extent that it is a moral movement strictly directed by men fired with religious fervour. It follows, therefore, that co-operation should be confined to men wishing to be morally right, but failing to do so, because of grinding poverty or of the grip of the *Mahajan*<sup>1</sup>. Facility for obtaining loans at fair rates will not make immoral men moral. But the wisdom of the Estate or philanthropists demands that they should help, on the onward path, men struggling to be good.

Too often do we believe that material prosperity means moral growth. It is necessary that a movement which is fraught with so much good to India should not degenerate into one for merely advancing cheap loans....

With this standard before us, we will not measure the success of the movement by the number of co-operative societies formed, but by the moral condition of the co-operators. The registrars will, in that event, ensure the moral growth of existing societies before multiplying them. And the Government will make their promotion conditional, not upon the number of societies they have registered, but the moral success of the existing institutions. This will mean tracing the course of every pie lent to the members. Those responsible for the proper conduct of co-operative societies will see to it that the money advanced does not find its way into the toddy-sellers' bill or into the pockets of the keepers of gambling dens. I would excuse the capacity of the *Mahajan* if it has succeeded in keeping the gambling die or toddy from the ryot's<sup>2</sup> home...

I note that the movement takes note of all indigenous industries. I beg publicly to express my gratitude to Government for helping me in my humble effort to improve the lot of the weaver. The experiment I am conducting shows that there is a vast field for work in this direction. No well-wisher of India, no patriot dare look upon the impending destruction of the handloom weaver with equanimity. As Dr. Mann has stated, this industry used to supply the peasant with an additional source of livelihood and an insurance against famine. Every Registrar who will nurse back to life this important and graceful industry will earn the

gratitude of India. My humble effort consists firstly in making researches as to the possibilities of simple reforms in the orthodox handlooms, secondly, in weaning the educated youth from the craving for Government or other services and the feeling that education renders him unfit for independent occupation and inducing him to take to weaving as a calling as honourable as that of a barrister or a doctor, and thirdly by helping those weavers who have abandoned their occupation to revert to it. I will not weary the audience with any statement on the first two parts of the experiment. The third may be allowed a few sentences as it has a direct bearing upon the subject before us. I was able to enter upon it only six months ago. Five families that had left off the calling have reverted to it and they are doing a prosperous business. The Ashram supplies them at their door with the yarn they need; its volunteers take delivery of the cloth woven, paying them cash at the market rate. The Ashram merely loses interest on the loan advanced for the yarn. It has as yet suffered no loss and is able to restrict its loss to a minimum by limiting the loan to a particular figure. All future transactions are strictly cash. We are able to command a ready sale for the cloth received. The loss of interest, therefore, on the transaction is negligible. I would like the audience to note its purely moral character from start to finish. The Ashram depends for its existence on such help as friends render it. We, therefore, can have no warrant for charging interest. The weavers could not be saddled with it. Whole families that were breaking to pieces are put together again. The use of the loan is pre-determined. And we, the middlemen, being volunteers, obtain the privilege of entering into the lives of these families. I hope, for their and our betterment. We cannot lift them without being lifted ourselves. This last relationship has not yet been developed; but we hope, at an early date, to take in hand the education too of these families and not rest satisfied till we have touched them at every point. This is not too ambitious a dream. God willing, it will be a reality some day. I have ventured to dilate upon the small experiment to illustrate what I mean by co-operation to present it to others for imitation. Let us be sure of our ideal. We shall ever fail to realize it, but we should never cease to strive for it. Then there need be no fear of 'Co-operation of scoundrels' that Ruskin so rightly dreaded.

*Speeches and writings of Mahatma Gandhi*, (4th Edn.), pp. 356-63

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The most important question for consideration.... was whether cow farming should be in the hands of individuals or done collectively. I myself had no hesitation in saying that she could never be saved by individual farming. Her salvation, and with her that of buffalo, could only be brought about by collective endeavour. It is quite impossible for an individual farmer to look after the welfare of his cattle in his own home in a proper and scientific manner. Amongst other causes lack of collective effort has been a principal cause of the deterioration of the cow and hence of cattle in general.

The world today is moving towards the ideal of collective or co-operative effort in every department of life. Much in this line has been and is being accomplished. It has come into our country also, but in such a distorted form that our poor have not been able to reap its benefits. *Pari Passu* with the increase in our population land holdings of the average farmer are daily decreasing. Moreover what the individual possesses is often fragmentary. For such farmers to keep cattle in their homes is a suicidal policy; and yet this is their condition today. Those who give the first place to economics and pay scant attention to religious, ethical or humanitarian consideration proclaim from the housetops that the farmer is being devoured by this cattle due to the cost of their feed which is out of all proportion to what they yield. They say it is folly not to slaughter wholesale all useless animals.

What then should be done by humanitarians is the question. The answer obviously is to find a way whereby we may not only save the lives of our cattle but also see that they do not become a burden. I am sure that co-operative effort can help us in a large measure.

The following comparison may be helpful:

1. Under the collective system no farmer can keep cattle in his house as he does today. They foul the air, and dirty the surroundings. There is neither intelligence nor humanitarianism in living with animals. Man was not meant

- to do so. The space taken up by the cattle today would be spared to the farmer and his family, if the collective system were adopted.
2. As the number of cattle increases, life becomes impossible for the farmer in his home. Hence he is obliged to sell the calves and kill the male buffaloes or else turn them out to starve and die. This inhumanity would be averted, if the care of cattle were undertaken on a co-operative basis.
  3. Collective cattle farming would ensure the supply of veterinary treatment to animals when they are ill. No ordinary farmer can afford this on his own.
  4. Similarly one selected bull can be easily kept for the need of several cows under the collective system. This is impossible otherwise except for charity.
  5. Common grazing ground or land for exercising the animals will be easily available under the co-operative system, whereas today generally there is nothing of the kind for individual farmers.
  6. The expense on fodder will be comparatively far less under the collective system.
  7. The sale of milk at good prices will be greatly facilitated, and there will be no need or temptation for the farmer to adulterate it as he does as an individual.
  8. It is impossible to carry out tests of the fitness of every head of cattle individually, but this could easily be done for the cattle of a whole village and would thus make it easier to improve the breed.
  9. The foregoing advantages should be sufficient argument in favour of co-operative farming. The strongest argument in its favour is that the individualistic system has been the means of making our own condition as well as that of our cattle pitiable. We can only save ourselves and them by making this essential change.

I firmly believe too that we shall not derive the full benefits of agriculture until we take to co-operative farming. Does it not stand to reason that it is better for a hundred families in a village to cultivate their lands collectively and divide the income therefrom than to divide the land anyhow into a hundred portions? And what applies to land applies equally to cattle.

It is quite another matter that it may be difficult to convert people to adopt this way of life straightway. The straight and narrow road is always hard to traverse. Every step in the programme of cow service is strewn with thorny problems. But only by surmounting difficulties can we hope to make the path easier. My purpose for the time being is to show the great superiority of collective cattle farming over the individual effort. I hold further that the latter is wrong and the former only is right. In reality even the individual can only safeguard his independence through co-operation. In cattle farming the individual effort has led to selfishness and inhumanity, whereas the collective effort can abate both the evils, if it does not remove them altogether.

*Harijan*, 15-2-1942, p. 39

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"Should peasants pool together their land divide the crop in proportion to the area of the fields they hold?"

My notion of co-operation is that the land would be held in co-operation by the owners and tilled and cultivated also in co-operation. This would cause a saving of labour, capital, tools, etc. The owners would work in co-operation and own capital, tools, animals, seeds, etc. in co-operation. Co-operative farming of my conception would change the face of the land and banish poverty and idleness from their midst. All this is only possible if people become friends of one another and as one family. When that happy event takes place there would be no ugly sore in the form of a communal problem.

*Harijan*, 9-3-1947, p. 59

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The system of co-operation is far more necessary for the agriculturists. The land belongs to the State; therefore, it yields the largest return when it is worked co-operatively.

*Harijan*, 9-3-1947, p. 59

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1. Money-lender
  2. Tiller of soil

## CHAPTER 45: TRUSTEESHIP

To me the *Gita* became an infallible guide of conduct. It became my dictionary of daily reference. Just as I turned to the English dictionary for the meanings of English words that I did not understand, I turned to this dictionary of conduct for a ready solution of all my troubles and trials. Words like *Aparigraha* (non-possession) and *Samabhava* (equability) gripped me. How to cultivate and preserve that equability was the question. How was one to treat alike insulting, insolent and corrupt officials, co-workers of yesterday raising meaningless opposition, and men who had always been good to one? How was one to divest oneself of all possessions? Was not the body itself possession enough? Were not wife and children possessions? Was I to destroy all the cupboards of books I had? Was I to give up all I had and follow Him? Straight came the answer: I could not follow Him unless I gave up all I had. My study of English law came to my help. Snell's discussion of the maxims of Equity came to my memory. I understand more clearly in the light of the *Gita* teaching the implication of the word 'trustee'. My regard for jurisprudence increased, I discovered in it religion. I understood the *Gita* teaching of non-possession to mean that those who desired salvation should act like the trustee who, though having control over great possessions, regards not an iota of them, as his own. It became clear to me as daylight that non-possession and equability presupposed a change of heart, a change of attitude.

*An Autobiography*, (1966), p. 198

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Everything belonged to God and was from God. Therefore it was for His people as a whole, not for a particular individual. When an individual had more than his proportionate portion he became trustee of that portion for God's people.

God who was all-powerful had no need to store. He created from day to day, hence men also should in theory live from day to day and not stock things. If this truth was imbibed by the people generally, it would become legalized and

trusteeship would become a legalized institution. He wished it became a gift from India to the world. Then there would be no exploitation and no reserves as in Australia and other countries for White men and their posterity. In these distinctions lay the seeds of a war more virulent than the last two. As to the successor, the trustee in office would have the right to nominate his successor subject to legal sanction.

*Harijan*, 23-2-1947, p. 39

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My idea of society is that while we are born equal, meaning that we have a right to equal opportunity, all have not the same capacity. It is, in the nature of things, impossible. For instance, all cannot have the same height, or colour or degree of intelligence, etc., therefore, in the nature of things, some will have ability to earn more and others less.

People with talents will have more, and they will utilize their talents for this purpose. If they utilize their talents kindly, they will be performing the work of the State. Such people exist as trustees, on no other terms. I would allow a man of intellect to earn more, I would not cramp his talent. But the bulk of his greater earnings must be used for the good of the State, just as the income of all earning sons of the father go to the common family fund. They would have their earnings only as trustees.

I am inviting those people who consider themselves as owners today to act as trustees, i.e., owners, not in their own right, but owners, in the right of those whom they have exploited. I will not dictate to them what commission to take, but ask them to take what is fair, e.g., I would ask a man who possesses Rs. 100/- to take Rs. 50/- and give the other Rs 50/- to the workers. But to him who possesses Rs. 1,00,00,000/- I would perhaps say, take 1 per cent for yourself. So you see that my commission would not be a fixed figure because that would result in atrocious injustice.

*Young India*, 26-11-1931, pp. 368-69

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If however, in spite of the utmost effort, the rich do not become guardians of the poor in the true sense of the term and the latter are more and more crushed and die of hunger, what is to be done? In trying to find out the solution of this riddle I have lighted on non-violent non-co-operation and civil disobedience as the right and infallible means. The rich cannot accumulate wealth without the co-operation of the poor in society. Man has been conversant with violence from the beginning, for he has inherited this strength from the animal in his nature. It was only when he rose from the state of a quadruped (animal) to that of a biped (man) that the knowledge of the strength of Ahimsa entered into his souls. This knowledge has grown within him slowly but surely. If this knowledge were to penetrate to and spread amongst the poor, they would become strong and would learn how to free themselves by means of non-violence from the crushing inequalities which have brought them to the verge of starvation.

*Harijan*, 25-8-1940, pp. 260-61

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Supposing I have come by a fair amount of wealth-either by way of legacy, or by means of trade and industry, I must know that all that wealth does not belong to me, what belongs to me is the right to an honourable livelihood, no better than that enjoyed by millions of others. The rest of my wealth belongs to the community and must be used for the welfare of the community. I enunciated this theory when the Socialist theory was placed before the country in respect to the possessions held by *zamindars* and ruling chiefs. They would do away with these privileged classes. I want them to outgrow their greed and sense of possession, and to come down in spite of their wealth to the level of those who earn their bread by labour. The labourer has to realize that wealthy man is less owner of his wealth than the labourer is owner of his own viz., the power to work.

The question how many can be real trustees according to this definition is beside the point. If the theory is true, it is immaterial whether many live up to it or only one man lives up to it. The question is of conviction. If you accept the principle of Ahimsa, you have to strive to live up to it, no matter whether you succeed or

fail. There is nothing in this theory which can be said to be beyond the grasp of intellect, though you may say it is difficult of practice.

*Harijan*, 3-6-1939, p. 145

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You may say that trusteeship is a legal fiction. But if people meditate over it constantly and try to act up to it, then life on earth would be governed far more by love than it is at present. Absolute trusteeship is an abstraction like Euclid's definition of a point, and is equally unattainable. But if we strive for it, we shall be able to go further in realizing a state of equality on earth than by any other method....It is my firm conviction that if the State suppressed capitalism by violence, it will be caught in the evils of violence itself and fail to develop non-violence at any time. The State represents violence in a concentrated and organized form. The individual has a soul, but as the State is a soulless machine, it can never be weaned from violence to which it owes its very existence. Hence I prefer the doctrine of trusteeship.... The fear is always there that the State may use too much violence against those who differ from it. I would be very happy indeed if the people concerned behaved as trustees; but if they fail, I believe we shall have to deprive them of their possessions through the State with the minimum exercise of violence....That is why I said at the Round Table Conference that every vested interest must be subjected to scrutiny, and confiscation ordered where necessary with or without compensation as the case demanded. What I would personally prefer would be not a centralization of power in the hands of the State, but an extension of the sense of trusteeship; as in my opinion the violence of private ownership is less injurious than the violence of the State. However, if it is unavoidable, I would support a minimum of state-ownership.

*Modern Review*, (1935), p. 412

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My theory of 'trusteeship' is no make-shift, certainly no camouflage. I am confident that it will survive all other theories. It has the sanction of philosophy and religion behind it. That possessors of wealth have not acted up to the theory does not prove its falsity; it proves the weakness of the wealthy. No other theory

is compatible with non-violence. In the non-violent method the wrong-doer compasses his own end, if he does not undo the wrong. For, either through non-violent non-co-operation he is made to see his error, or he finds himself completely isolated.

*Harijan*, 16-12-1939, p. 376

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I have no hesitation in endorsing the proposition that generally rich men and for that matter most men are not particular as to the way they make money. In the application of the method of non-violence, one must believe in the possibility of every person, however, depraved, being reformed under humane and skilled treatment. We must appeal to the good in human beings and expect response. Is it not conducive to the well-being of society that every member uses all his talents, only not for personal aggrandizement but for the good of all? We do not want to produce a dead equality where every person becomes or is rendered incapable of using his ability to the utmost possible extent. Such a society must ultimately perish. I therefore suggest that my advice that moneyed men earn their crores (honestly only, of course) but so as to dedicate them to the service of all is perfectly sound. तेन त्यक्तेन भूजीया: is a mantra based on uncommon knowledge. It is the surest method to evolve a new order of life of universal benefit in the place of the present one where each one lives for himself without regard to what happens to his neighbour.

*Harijan*, 22-2-1942, p. 49

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As for the present owners of wealth, they will have to make their choice between class war and voluntarily converting themselves into trustees of their wealth. They will be allowed to retain the stewardship of their possessions and to use their talent, to increase the wealth, not for their own sakes, but for the sake of the nation and, therefore, without exploitation.

The State would regulate the rate of commission which they will get commensurate with the service rendered and its value to society. Their children will inherit the stewardship only if they prove their fitness for it.

Supposing India becomes a free country tomorrow, all the capitalists will have an opportunity of becoming statutory trustees. But such a statue will not be imposed from above. It will have to come from below.

When the people understand the implications of trusteeship and the atmosphere is ripe for it, the people themselves beginning with *Gram Panchayats*,<sup>1</sup> will begin to introduce such statutes. Such a thing coming from below is easy to swallow. Coming from above it is liable to prove a dead weight.

*Harijan*, 31-3-1946, pp. 63-64

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If the trusteeship idea catches, philanthropy, as we know it, will disappear....A trustee has no heir but the public. In a State built on the basis of non-violence, the commission of trustees will be regulated. Princes and *zamindars* will be on a par with the other men of wealth.

*Harijan*, 12-4-1942, p. 116

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The doctrine of trusteeship stands on its own merits....

We must not underrate the business talent and know-how which the owning class have acquired through generations of experience and specialization. Free use of it would accrue to the people under my plan. So long as we have no power, conversion is our weapon by necessity, but after we get power, conversion will be our weapon of choice. Conversion must precede legislation. Legislation in the absence of conversion remains dead letter. As an illustration, we have today the power to enforce rules of sanitation but we can do nothing with it because the public is not ready.

"You say conversion must precede reform. Whose conversion? If you mean the conversion of the people, they are ready even today. If, on the other hand, you mean that of the owning class, we may as well wait till the Greek Kalends?"

I mean the conversion of both....

You see, if the owning class does not accept the trusteeship basis voluntarily, its conversion must come under the pressure of public opinion. For that public opinion is not yet sufficiently organized.

"What do you mean by power?"

By power I mean voting power for the people -so broad-based that the will of the majority can be given effect to.

"Can the masses at all come into power by parliamentary activity?"

Not by parliamentary activity alone. My reliance ultimately is on the power of non-violent non-co-operation, which I have been trying to build up for the last twenty-two years.

*Towards New Horizons*, (1959), pp. 90-91

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[On release of Gandhiji and his associates from detention in the Aga Khan Palace, the question of Trusteeship was taken up. Shri K. G. Mashruwala, Shri N.D. Parikh drew up a simple practical trusteeship formula which was placed before Mahatma Gandhi who made a few changes in it. The final draft read as follows:]

1. Trusteeship provides a means of transforming the present capitalist order of society into an egalitarian one. It gives no quarter to capitalism, but gives the present owning class a chance of reforming itself. It is based on the faith that human nature is never beyond redemption.
2. It does not recognize any right of private ownership of property except so far as it may be permitted by society for its own welfare.
3. It does not exclude legislative regulation of the ownership and use of wealth.
4. Thus under State-regulated trusteeship, an individual will not be free to hold or use his wealth for selfish satisfaction or in disregard of the interests of society.
5. Just as it is proposed to fix a decent minimum living wage, even so a limit should be fixed for the maximum income that could be allowed to any person in society. The difference between such minimum and maximum incomes should be reasonable and equitable and variable from time to time so much so that the tendency would be towards obliteration of the difference.
6. Under the Gandhian economic order the character of production will be determined by social necessity, and not by personal whim or greed.

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"When transformation of private property into public property has been achieved by the application of the doctrine of trusteeship, will the ownership vest in the State, which is an instrument of violence, or in associations of a voluntary character like village communes and municipalities, which may of course derive their final authority from State made laws?"

The question involves some confusion of thought. Legal ownership in the transformed condition shall vest in the trustee, not in the State. It is to avoid confiscation that the doctrine of trusteeship comes into play, retaining for society the ability of the original owner in his own right. Nor do I hold that the State must always be based on violence. It might be so in theory but it is possible to conceive a State which in practice would for the most part be based on non-violence.

"How would the successor of a trustee be determined? Will he only have the right of proposing a name, the right of finalization being vested in the State?"

The choice should be given to the original owner, who becomes the first trustee, but it must be finalized by the State. Such arrangement puts a check on the State as well as on the individual.

This did not mean that pending necessary legislation the transformation of the capitalists into trustees would be left to the sweet will of the capitalists. If they proved impervious to the appeal to reason, the weapon of non-violent non-co-operation would be brought into play. Force of circumstances will compel the reform unless they court utter destruction. When *Panchayat Raj* is established, public opinion will do what violence can never do.

*Towards New Horizons*, (1957), pp. 86-87

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#### 1. Village Councils

## CHAPTER 46: THE EVIL OF INDUSTRIALISM

Industrialization on a mass scale will necessarily lead to passive or active exploitation of the villagers as the problems of competition and marketing come in. Therefore, we have to concentrate on the village being self-contained manufacturing mainly for use. Provided this character of the village industry is maintained, there would be no objection to villagers using even the modern machines and tools that they can make and can afford to use. Only they should not be used as a means of exploitation of others.

*Harijan*, 29-8-1936, p. 226

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The present distress is undoubtedly insufferable. Pauperism must go. But industrialism is no remedy. The evil does not lie in the use of bullock carts. It lies in our selfishness and want of consideration for our neighbours. If we have no love for our neighbours, no change however revolutionary, can do us any good...

Indeed, the West has had a surfeit of industrialism and exploitation.... The fact is that this industrial civilization is a disease because it is all evil. Let us not be deceived by catchwords and phrases. I have no quarrel with steamships or telegraphs. They may stay, if they can, without the support of industrialism and all it connotes. They are not an end. ...They are in no way indispensable for the permanent welfare of the human race. Now that we know the use of steam and electricity, we should be able to use them on due occasion and after we have learnt to avoid industrialism. Our concern is therefore to destroy industrialism at any cost.

*Young India*, 7-10-1926, p. 348

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"What is the cause of the present chaos?"

It is exploitation, I will not say, of the weaker nations by the stronger but of sister nations by sister nations. And my fundamental objection to machinery rests on the fact that it is machinery that has enabled these nations to exploit others.

In itself it is a wooden thing and can be turned to good purpose or bad. But it is easily turned to a bad purpose as we know.

*Young India*, 22-10-1931, p. 318

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Industrialism is, I am afraid, going to be a curse for mankind. Exploitation of one nation by another cannot go on for all time. Industrialism depends entirely on your capacity to exploit, on foreign markets being open to you, and on the absence of competitors. It is because these factors are getting less and less every day for England, that its number of unemployed is mounting up daily. The Indian boycott was but a flea-bite. And if that is the state of England, a vast country like India cannot expect to benefit by industrialization. In fact, India, when it begins to exploit other nations-as it must if it becomes industrialized-will be a curse for other nations, a menace to the world. And why should I think of industrialization India to exploit other nations? Don't you see the tragedy of the situation, viz., that we can find work for our 300 million unemployed, but England can find none for its three millions and is faced with a problem that baffles the greatest intellects of England. The future of industrialism is dark. England has got successful competitors in America, Japan, France, and Germany. It has competitors in the handful of mills in India, and as there has been an awakening in India, even so, there will be an awakening in South Africa with its vastly richer resources-natural, mineral and human. The mighty English look quite pygmies before the mighty races of Africa. They are noble savages after all, you will say. They are certainly noble, but no savages; and in the course of a few years the Western nations may cease to find in Africa a dumping ground for their wares. And if the future of industrialism is dark for the West, would it not be darker still for India?

*Young India*, 12-11-1931, p. 355

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Pandit Nehru wants industrialization, because he thinks that, if it is socialized, it would be free from the evils of capitalism. My own view is that the evils are inherent in industrialism, and no amount of socialization can eradicate them.

*Harijan*, 29-9-1940, p. 299

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God forbid that India should ever take to industrialism after that manner of the West. The economic imperialism of a single tiny island kingdom (England) is today keeping the world in chains. If an entire nation of 300 million took to similar economic exploitation, it would strip the world bare like locusts.

*Harijan*, 20-12-1928, p. 422

## CHAPTER 47: THE PLACE OF MACHINERY

Machinery has its place; it has come to stay. But it must not be allowed to displace the necessary human labour. An improved plough is a good thing. But if by some chance, one man could plough up by some mechanical invention of his the whole of the land of India, and control all the agricultural produce and if the millions had no other occupation, they would starve, and being idle, they would become dunces, as many have already become. There is hourly danger of many more being reduced to that unenviable state. I would welcome every improvement in the cottage machine, but I know that it is criminal to displace the hand-labour by the introduction of power-driven spindles unless one is at the same time ready to give millions of farmers some other occupation in their homes.

*Young India*, 5-11-1925, p. 377

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That use of machinery is lawful which subserves the interest of all.

*Young India*, 15-4-1926, p. 142

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I would favour the use of the most elaborate machinery if thereby India's pauperism and resulting idleness be avoided. I have suggested hand-spinning as the only ready means of driving away penury and making famine of work and wealth impossible. The spinning-wheel itself is a piece of valuable machinery, and in my own humble way I have tried to secure improvements in it in keeping with the special conditions of India.

*Young India*, 3-1-1921, p. 350

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"Are you against all machinery?"

My answer is emphatically, 'No'. But, I am against its indiscriminate multiplication. I refuse to be dazzled by the seeming triumph of machinery. I am

uncompromisingly against all destructive machinery. But simple tools and instruments and such machinery as saves individual labour and lightens the burden of the millions of cottages, I should welcome.

*Young India*, 17-6-1926, p. 218

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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 back 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 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 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 their limitation.

"When logically argued out, that would seem to imply that all complicated power-driven machinery should go."

It might have to go out but I must make one thing clear. The supreme consideration is man. The machine should not tend to make atrophied the limbs of man. For instance, I would make intelligent exceptions. Take the case of the Singer Sewing Machine. It is the 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 there would have to be a factory for making these Singer Sewing Machines, and it would have to contain power-driven machinery of ordinary type."

Yes, but I am socialist enough to say that such factories should be nationalized, 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 working it as the State, or the man who owns it. The present mad rush will 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 labour of the individual should be the object, and the honest humanitarian consideration, and not greed, the motive. Replace greed by love and everything will come right.

*Young India*, 13-11-1924, p. 378

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"You are against this machine age, I see."

To say that is to caricature my views. I am not against machinery as such, but I am totally opposed to it when it masters us.

"You would not industrialize India?"

I would indeed, in my sense of the term. The village communities should be revived. Indian villages produced and supplied to the Indian towns and cities all their wants. India became impoverished when our cities became foreign markets and began to drain the villages dry by dumping cheap and shoddy goods from foreign lands.

"You would then go back to the natural economy?"

Yes. Otherwise I should go back to the city. I am quite capable of running a big enterprise, but I deliberately sacrificed the ambition, not as a sacrifice, but because my heart rebelled against it. For I should have no share in the spoliation of the nation which is going on from day to day. But I am industrializing the village in a different way.

*Harijan*, 27-2-1937, p. 18

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Granting for the moment that machinery may supply all the needs of humanity, still, it would concentrate production in particular areas, so that you would have to go about in a roundabout way to regulate distribution, whereas, if there is production and distribution both in the respective areas where things are required, it is automatically regulated, and there is less chance for fraud, none for speculation.

When production and consumption both become localized, the temptation to speed up production, indefinitely and at any price, disappears. All the endless difficulties and problems that our present-day economic system presents, too, would then come to an end.

"Then, you do not envisage mass-production as an ideal future of India?"

Oh yes, mass-production, certainly, but not based on force. After all, the message of the spinning wheel is that. It is mass-production, but mass-production in people's own homes. If you multiply individual production to millions of time, would it not give you mass-production on a tremendous scale? But I quite understand that your 'mass-production' is a technical term for production by the fewest possible number through the aid of highly complicated machinery. I have said to myself that that is wrong. My machinery must be of the most elementary type which I can put in the homes of the millions.

*Harijan*, 2-11-1934, pp. 301-02

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I know that man cannot live without industry. Therefore, I cannot be opposed to industrialization. But I have a great concern about introducing machine industry.

The machine produces much too fast, and brings with it a sort of economic system which I cannot grasp. I do not want to accept something when I see its evil effects which outweigh whatever good it brings with it. *I want the dumb millions of our land to be healthy and happy and I want them to grow spiritually. As yet for this purpose we do not need the machine.* There are many, too many idle hands. But as we grow in understanding, if we feel the need of machines, we certainly will have them. We want industry, let us become industrious. Let us become more self-dependent, then we will not follow the other people's lead so much. We shall introduce machines if and when we need them. Once we have shaped our life on Ahimsa, we shall know how to control the machine.

*Towards New Horizons*, (1959), pp. 45-46

## CHAPTER 48: KHADI AND HAND-SPINNING

*Khadi* connotes the beginning of economic freedom and equality of all in the country... It must be taken with all its implications. It means wholesale *Swadeshi* mentality, a determination to find all the necessities of life in India and that too through the labour and intellect of the villagers... The latter (villages) will be largely self-contained and will voluntarily serve the cities of India and even the outside world in so far as it benefits both the parties.

This needs a revolutionary change in the mentality and taste of many. Easy though the non-violent way is in many respects, it is very difficult in many others. It vitally touches the life of every single Indian, makes him feel aglow with the possession of a power that has lain hidden within himself, and makes him proud of his identify with every drop of the ocean of Indian humanity.

*Khadi* to me is the symbol of unity of Indian humanity, of its economic freedom and equality and, therefore, ultimately, in the poetic expression of Jawaharlal Nehru, 'the livery of India's freedom'.

Moreover, *Khadi* mentality means decentralization of the production and distribution of the necessities of life. Therefore, the formula so far evolved is, every village to produce all its necessities and a certain percentage in addition for the requirements of the cities.

*Constructive Programme*, (1961), pp. 12-13

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The message of the spinning wheel is much wider than its circumference. Its message is one of simplicity, service of mankind, living so as not to hurt others, creating an indissoluble bond between the rich and the poor, capital and labour, the prince and the peasant.

*Young India*, 17-9-1925, p. 321

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I can only think of spinning as the fittest and most acceptable sacrificial body labour. I cannot imagine anything nobler or more national than that, for say one hour in the day, we should all do the labour that the poor must do, and thus identify ourselves with them and through them with all mankind. I cannot imagine better worship of God than that in His name. I should labour for the poor even as they do. The spinning wheel spells a more equitable distribution of the riches of the earth.

*Young India*, 20-10-1921, p. 329

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I feel convinced that the revival of hand-spinning and hand-weaving will make the largest contribution to the economic and the moral regeneration of India. The millions must have a simple industry to supplement agriculture. Spinning was the cottage industry years ago, and if the millions are to be saved from starvation, they must be enabled to reintroduce spinning in their homes and every village must repossess its own weaver.

*Young India*, 21-7-1920, p. 4

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If the reader would visualize the picture of the Indian skeleton, he must think of the eighty per cent of the population which is working its own fields, and which has practically no occupation for at least four months in the year, and which therefore lives on the borderland of starvation. This is the normal condition. The ever recurring famines make a large addition to this enforced idleness. What is the work that these men and women can easily do in their own cottages so as to supplement their very slender resources? Does anyone still doubt that it is only hand-spinning and nothing else?

*Young India*, 3-11-1921, pp. 350-51

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Cottage manufacture of yarn and cloth cannot be expensive even as domestic cookery is not expensive and cannot be replaced by hotel cookery. Over twenty-five crores of the population will be doing their own hand-spinning and having

yarn thus manufactured woven in neighbouring localities. This population is rooted to the soil, and has at least four months in the year to remain idle.

If they spin during those hours and have the yarn woven and wear it, no mill-made cloth can compete with their *Khadi*. The cloth thus manufactured will be the cheapest possible for them.

*Young India*, 8-12-1921, p. 405

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What is claimed for spinning is that:

1. It supplies the readiest occupation to those who have leisure and are in want of a few coppers.
2. It is known to the thousands.
3. It is easily learnt.
4. It requires practically no outlay of capital.
5. The wheel can be easily and cheaply made. Most of us do not yet know that spinning can be done even with a piece of tile and splinter.
6. The people have no repugnance to it.
7. It affords immediate relief in times of famine and scarcity.
8. It alone can stop the drain of wealth which goes outside India in the purchase of foreign cloth.
9. It automatically distributes the millions thus saved among the deserving poor.
10. Even the smallest success means so much immediate gain to the people.
11. It is the most potent instrument of securing co-operation among the people.

*Young India*, 21-8-1924, p. 277

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The disease of the masses is not want of money so much as it is want of work. Labour is money. He who provides dignified labour for the millions in their cottages, provides food and clothing, or which is the same thing, money. The *Charkha* provides such labour. Till a better substitute is found, it must, therefore, hold and field.

*Young India*, 18-6-1925, p. 211

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Idleness is the great cause, the root of all evil, and if that root can be destroyed, most of the evils can be remedied without further effort. A nation that is starving has little hope or initiative left in it. It becomes indifferent to filth and disease. It says of all reforms, 'to what good? That winter of despair can only be turned into the 'sun-shine' of hope, for the millions only through the life-giving wheel, the *Charkha*.

*Young India*, 27-8-1925, p. 299

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The spinning wheel is an attempt to produce something out of nothing. If we save sixty crores of rupees to the nation through the spinning wheel, as we certainly can, we add that vast amount to the national income. In the process we automatically organize our villages. And as almost the whole of the amount must be distributed amongst the poorest of the land, it becomes a scheme of just and nearly equal distribution of so much wealth. Add to this the immense moral value of such distribution, and the case for the *Charkha* becomes irresistible.

*Young India*, 17-2-1927, p. 52

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Indeed, in some places, there are to be found weavers who are classed as untouchables on account of their occupation. They are mostly weavers of coarsest *Khadi* without any pattern. This class was fast dying out when *Khadi* came to the rescue and there was created a demand for their coarse manufacture. It was then discovered that there were numerous Harijan families that even subsisted on spinning. Thus *Khadi* is doubly the poor man's staff of life. It helps the poorest, including the Harijans, who are the most helpless among the poorest. They are so because many occupations which are available to the others are not available to the Harijans.

*Harijan*, 27-4-1934, p. 85

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Spinning would spell the organization of crores into a joint co-operative effort, the conservation and utilization of the energy of the millions, and the dedication of crores of lives to the service of the motherland. The carrying out of such a gigantic task would, further, give us a realization of our own strength. It would mean our acquiring a thorough mastery of the detail and innumerable knotty problems which it presents, e.g., learning to keep account of every pie, learning to live in the villages in sanitary and healthy conditions, removing the difficulties that block the way and so on. For, unless we learn all this, we would not be able to accomplish this task. The spinning wheel, then, provides us with a means for generating this capacity in us.

*Young India*, 27-5-1926, p. 190

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The only universal industry for the millions is spinning and no other. That does not mean that other industries do not matter or are useless. Indeed from the individual standpoint, another industry would be more remunerative than spinning. Watch making will be no doubt a most remunerative and fascinating industry. But how many can engage in it? Is it of any use to the millions of villagers? But if the villagers can reconstruct their home, begin to live again as their forefathers did, if they begin to make good use of their idle hours, all else, all the other industries, will revive as a matter of course.

*Young India*, 30-9-1926, p. 341

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The revival (of *Charkha*) cannot take place without an army of selfless Indians of intelligence and patriotism working with a single mind in the villages to spread the message of the *Charkha* and bring a ray of hope and light into their lustreless eyes. This is a mighty effort at co-operation and adult education of the correct type. It brings about a silent and sure revolution like the silent but sure and life-giving revolution of the *Charkha*.

Twenty years' experience of *Charkha* work has convinced me of the correctness of the argument here advanced by me. The *Charkha* has served the poor Muslims

and Hindus in almost an equal measure. Nearly five crores of rupees have been put into the pockets of these lakhs of village artisans without fuss and tomtoming.

Hence I say without hesitation that the *Charkha* must lead us to *Swaraj* in terms of the masses belonging to all faiths. The *Charkha* restores the villages to their rightful place and abolishes distinctions between high and low.

*Harijan*, 13-4-1940, p. 85

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The spinning wheel is a symbol not of commercial war but of commercial peace. It bears not a message of ill-will towards the nations of the earth but of goodwill and self-help. It will not need the protection of a navy threatening a world's peace and exploiting its resources, but it needs the religious determination of millions to spin their yarn in their own homes as today they cook their food in their own homes. I may deserve the curses of posterity for many mistakes of omission and commission, but I am confident of earning its blessings for suggesting a revival of the *Charkha*. I stake my all on it. For every revolution of the wheel spins peace, goodwill and love.

*Young India*, 8-2-1921, p. 406

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It is my claim that (by reviving *Khadi* and other village industries) we shall have evolved so far that we shall remodel national life in keeping with the ideal of simplicity and domesticity implanted in the bosom of the masses. We will not then be dragged into an imperialism which is built upon exploitation of the weaker races of the earth, and the acceptance of a giddy materialistic civilization protected by naval and air forces that have made peaceful living almost impossible. On the contrary we shall then refine that imperialism into a commonwealth of nations which will combine, if they do, for the purpose of giving their best to the world and of protecting, not by brute-force but by self-suffering, the weaker nations or races of the earth... Such a transformation can come only after the complete success of the spinning wheel. India can become fit for delivering such a message, when she has become proof against temptation

and therefore attacks from outside, by becoming self-contained regarding two of her chief needs-food and clothing.

*Young India*, 29-6-1921, p. 206

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When once we have revived the one industry (*Khadi*), all the other industries will follow. I would make the spinning wheel the foundation on which to build a sound village life; I would make the wheel the centre round which all other activities will revolve.

*Young India*, 21-5-1925, p. 177

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My experience tells me that in order to make *Khadi* universal both in the cities and villages, it should be made available only in exchange for yarn. As time passes I hope people will themselves insist on buying *Khadi* through yarn currency. If, however, this does not happen and they produce yarn grudgingly, I fear *Swaraj* through non-violence will be impossible.

*Swaraj Through Charkha*, (1945), p. 5

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The *Charkha* is the symbol of non-violent economic self-sufficiency. If we and the people grasp this significance of the *Charkha* not a pie need be spent on propaganda for the *Charkha*. Nor need we look to the rich for alms. We shall without effort become the centre of hope, and the people will come to us of their own accord. They will not go elsewhere to seek work.

Every village will become the nerve-centre of independent India. India will then not be known by her cities like Bombay and Calcutta, but by her 400 millions inhabiting the seven lakhs of villages. The problems of Hindu-Muslim differences, untouchability, conflicts, misunderstandings and rivalries will all melt away. This is the real function of the *Sangh*.<sup>1</sup> We have to live and die for it.

*Khadi-Why and How*, (1959), p. 150

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Now I feel that *Khadi* alone cannot revive the villages. Village uplift is possible only when we rejuvenate village life as a whole, revive all village industries and make the entire village industrious.

*Khad- Why and How*, (1959), p. 181

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Our reason for putting forward *Khadi* is that it is the only way to redeem the people from the disease of inertia and indifference, the only way to generate in them the strength for freedom. If other crafts are also thus revitalized; our villages could be made self-sufficient and self-reliant.

*Khadi-Why and How*, (1959), p. 185

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What we are required to prove above all is the necessity for *Khadi* for establishing a strong, non-violent village economy.

*Khadi-Why and How*, (1959), p. 189

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Ponder and realize what wealth this would mean to India, if 300 crores worth of cloth is produced by their own hands in the villages. This is a veritable mint of gold for them and if *Khadi* became universal, the villages will rise to unknown heights. Today our masses are poverty-stricken, without the lustre of hope or intelligence in their eyes. The pure hands of the spinners could create this miracle for them and everyone could help. They should have understanding hearts and seeing eyes to detect the beauty in *Khaddar* even if it is coarse and not be allured by mill finery which could never clothe their nakedness in the true sense of the term. The only way to clothe their nakedness and drive away hunger is for them to grow their own food and make their own cloth. If this happy consummation can be achieved, the eyes of the whole world will be turned towards India.

*Harijan*, 22-9-1946, p. 322

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#### 1. All India Spinners' Association



## CHAPTER 49: VILLAGE INDUSTRIES

Now I have no historical proof, but I believe that there was a time in India when village economics were organized on the basis of such non-violent occupations, not on the basis of the rights of man but on the duties of man. Those who engaged themselves in such occupations did earn their living, but their labour contributed to the good of the community. A carpenter, for instance, ministered to the needs of the village farmer. He got no cash payment, but was paid in kind by the villagers. There could be injustice even in this system, but it would be reduced to a minimum. I speak from personal knowledge of the life in Kathiawad of over sixty years ago. There was more lustre in people's eyes, and more life in their limbs, than you find today. It was a life founded on unconscious *Ahimsa*.

*Harijan*, 1-9-1940, pp. 271-72

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Bit by bit village people are being confined only to the hand-to-mouth business of scratching the earth. Few know today that agriculture in the small and irregular holdings of India is not a paying proposition. The villagers live a lifeless life. Their life is a process of slow starvation. They are burdened with debts....

Mechanization is good when the hands are too few for the work intended to be accomplished. It is an evil when there are more hands than required for the work, as is the case in India...

But if the cloth manufactured in mills displaces village hands, rice mills and flour mills not only displace thousands of poor women workers, but damage the health of the whole population in the bargain. Where people have no objection to taking flesh diet and can afford it, white flour and polished rice may do no harm, but in India, where millions can get no flesh diet even where they have no objection to eating it, if they can get it, it is sinful to deprive them of nutritious and vital elements contained in whole wheat meal and unpolished rice. It is time medical men and others combined to instruct the people on the danger attendant upon the use of white flour and polished rice...

The way to take work to the villagers is not through mechanization but that it lies through revival of the industries they have hitherto followed.

Hence the function of the All-India Village Industries Association must, in my opinion, be to encourage the existing industries and to revive where it is possible and desirable, the dying or dead industries of villages according to the village methods, i.e., the villagers working in their own cottages as they have done from times immemorial. These simple methods can be considerably improved as they have been in hand-ginning, hand-carding, hand-spinning and hand-weaving.

*Harijan*, 16-11-1934, p. 316

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We shall have to see that the villagers become first of all self-contained and then cater for the needs of the city-dwellers.

*Harijan*, 7-12-1934, p. 341

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I am not asking the city-dwellers to go to and live in the villages. But I am asking them to render unto the villagers what is due to them. Is there any single raw material that the city-dwellers can obtain except from the villager? If they cannot, why not teach him to work on it himself, as he used to before and as he would do now but for our exploiting inroads?

*Harijan*, 7-12-1934, p. 340

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Involuntary and voluntary idleness of villagers make them a perpetual prey of exploiters, foreign and indigenous. Whether the exploiter is from outside or from the Indian cities, their state would be the same, they would have no *Swaraj*. So I said to myself, "Let these people be asked to do something else; If they will not interest themselves in *Khadi*, let them take up some work which used to be done by their ancestors, but which has of late died out." There are numerous things of daily use which they used to produce themselves not many years ago, but for which they now depend on the other world. There are numerous things of daily use to the town-dweller for which he depends on the villagers, but which he now

imports from cities. The moment the villagers decide to devote all their spare time to doing something useful and town-dwellers to use those village products, the snapped link between the villagers and the town-dwellers would be restored.

*Harijan*, 7-12-1934, p. 340

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*Khadi* is the sun of the village solar system. The planets are the various industries which can support *Khadi* in return for the heat and the sustenance they derive from it. Without it, the other industries cannot grow. But during my last tour I discovered that, without the revival of the other industries, *Khadi* could not make further progress. For villagers to be able to occupy their spare time profitably, the village life must be touched at all points.

*Harijan*, 16-11-1934, p. 317

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Other village industries come in as a handmaid to *Khadi*. They cannot exist without *Khadi* and *Khadi* will be robbed of its dignity without them. Village economy cannot be complete without the essential village industries such as hand-grinding, hand-pounding, soap-making, paper-making, match-making, tanning, oil-pressing, etc. Congressmen can interest themselves in these and, if they are villagers or will settle down in villages, they will give these industries a new life and a new dress. All should make it a point of honour to use only village articles whenever and wherever available. Given the demand, there is no doubt that most of our wants can be supplied from our villages. When we have become village-minded, we will not want imitations of the West or machine-made products, but we will develop a true national taste in keeping with the vision of a new India, in which pauperism, starvation and idleness will be unknown.

*Constructive Programme*, (1961), pp. 16-17

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The revival of village industries is but an extension of the *Khadi* effort. Hand-spun cloth, hand-made paper, hand-pounded rice, home-made bread and jam, are not uncommon in West. Only, there they do not have one hundredth of the

importance they have in India. For, with us, their revival means life, their destruction means death, to the villagers, as he who runs may see. Whatever the machine age may do, it will never give employment to the millions whom the wholesale introduction of power machinery must displace.

*Harijan*, 4-1-1935, p. 372

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The pursuit of the *Charkha* must become the mainspring of manifold other activities like village industries, *Nai-Talim*,<sup>1</sup> etc. If we are able to adopt the *Charkha* intelligently we can revive the entire economic life of our villages once more.

*Khadi-Why and How*, (1959), p. 151

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I regard *Charkha* as the centre of village uplift. In addition, the worker will have to see what other village crafts can prosper in his village. The first in order among these crafts will be the bullock oil-press. Our workers would have to know its technique which has now been scientifically improved at Maganwadi. Another industry which may be introduced is hand-made paper. This has to be learnt not with the view of supplying paper to the whole country but in order to make the village self-sufficient and capable of earning a little income.

Next to oil and hand-made paper we must revive the hand-*chakki* (grinding stone) -a vital thing in every village. Otherwise flour-mills which have been a source of anxiety to me for several years will be our fate. Similarly in regard to rice, we must get our people in the villages to take to hand-pounding of rice or hand-*chakkis* for husking paddy, for it is a well-established fact that the white polished rice put out by mills is harmful to health.

*Khadi - Why and How*, (1959), pp. 161-62

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Now we have to do the work anew with the objective of all-round village uplift. Let us see how far we can go. Even if our present activities have to be slackened or reduced to nought for sometime on account of these changes, it does not

matter. We have created some sentiment about *Khadi* among the people. But if there is some error in what we told the people about the significance of *Khadi* we must pause. If ours was a wrong claim we must declare our error openly and withdraw our claim.

I would ask city-dwellers to produce their own *Khadi*. I would forgo the temptation to supply *Khadi* to them. We shall go and settle in the villages. In case workers want to leave us on account of this change we shall let them go. Unless our head and heart are converted to this extent we cannot achieve the desired result. We of the A.I.S.A. will merely direct policy. By decentralizing our work as much as possible, we shall free ourselves from day to day *Khadi* work completely. Thereafter we shall concentrate our energy and attention on the other activities or crafts carried out in the vicinity of the village we settle in. Only then will the real substance of our work be realized...Today our main concern should be to lay the foundation for this work as deep as possible.

*Khadi -Why and How*, (1959), p. 177

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I am thinking of ways and means of improving the condition of the people through a rehabilitation of agriculture, cattle-breeding and all other village industries. My problem will be solved, if I succeed even in half a dozen villages, for as is the part so is the whole.

*Khadi-Why and How*, (1959), p. 181

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1. Literally, new education; basic education, the aim of which is to develop the whole man; education through handicrafts.

## SECTION VIII: LABOUR RELATIONS

### CHAPTER 50: THE IDEAL OF LABOUR RELATIONS

True social economics will teach us that the workingman, the clerk and the employer are parts of the same indivisible organism. None is smaller or greater than the other. Their interests should be not conflicting but identical and interdependent...

There cannot be two opinions as to the fact that mill-owners, no less than other business and commercial firms, ought to take a parental interest in the welfare of their employees. The relations between the employer and the employee have been up to now merely those of the master and servant, they should be of father and children.

*Young India*, 3-5-1928, p. 139

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I do not think there need be any clash between capital and labour. Each is dependent on the other.

*Young India*, 4-8-1927, p. 248

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In the West there is still a watertight division between the employer and the employees... I should be untrue to myself and be failing in my duty to you, if I did not place before you what I regard as the highest ideal. The relation between mill-agents and mill-hands ought to be one of father and children or as between blood-brothers. I have often heard the mill-owners of Ahmedabad refer to themselves as 'masters' and their employees as their 'servants'. Such loose talk should be out of fashion in a place like Ahmedabad which prides itself on its love of religion and love of *Ahimsa*. For the attitude is a negation of *Ahimsa*, inasmuch as our ideal demands that all our power, all our wealth and all our brains should be devoted solely to the welfare of those who, through their own ignorance and

our false notions of things, are styled labourers or 'servants'. What I expect of you therefore is that you should hold all your riches as a trust to be used solely in the interest of those who sweat for you, and to whose industry and labour you owe all your position and prosperity. I want you to make your labourers co-partners of your wealth. I do not mean to suggest that unless you legally bind yourselves to do all that, there should be a labour insurrection. The only sanction that I can think of in this connection is of mutual love and regard as between father and son, not of law. If only you make it a rule to respect these mutual obligations of love, there would be an end to all labour disputes, the workers would no longer feel the need for organizing themselves into unions... But that cannot happen until there is a single mill-hand who does not regard the mill in which he works as his own, who complains of sweating and overwork, and who therefore nurses in his breast nothing but ill-will towards his employers.

*Young India*, 10-5-1928, pp. 145-46

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Who can deny the reasonableness of the statement that workmen should be regarded as equal owners with the shareholders? If conflict between capital and labour is to be avoided, as I believe it can and must be, labour should have the same status and dignity as capital. Why should a million rupees put together be more than a million men or women put together? Are they not infinitely more than metal, white or yellow? Or should holders of metal always assume that labour cannot be organized and put together as metal can? For the past eighteen years, consciously or unconsciously, capital and labour have acted in Ahmadabad on the assumption that there is no inherent conflict between the two...

If then labourers are co-equal owners, their organization should have the same access to the transactions of mills as the shareholders. Indeed there can be no confidence on the part of labour if material information is withheld from it.

*Harijan*, 13-2-1937, p. 5

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I have always said that my ideal is that capital and labour should supplement and help each other. They should be a great family living in unity and harmony,

capital not only looking to the material welfare of the labourers but their moral welfare also-capitalists being trustees for the welfare of the labouring classes under them.

*Young India*, 20-8-1925, p. 285

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I have sought the friendship of the capitalists in order to induce them to regard themselves as trustees for the benefit of the labourers, and that they may take their own food after feeding them. Today capital is afraid of labour and labour scouls at capital. I want to replace that relationship by one of mutual trust and respect.

*Young India*, 20-8-1925, p. 291

## CHAPTER 51: THE RIGHTS AND DUTIES OF LABOUR

You must consider every labourer as equal with you and as your blood-brother. If you can reach that state, you will at once understand what a great power you can be for your own good and for the good of the country. I would expect you to contribute to this cause of self-purification by giving up intoxicating drinks and drugs, carrion and beef-eating, gambling and the incurring of debts. And if you have in your midst Musalman labourers also, you must deal and live with them on terms of affection and absolute equality. You ought to take a personal interest in the work which you may be doing. Whilst you have a perfect right to demand from your employers good treatment, adequate wages and decent conveniences, it is expected of you that you will render proper, honest service for the wages that you get. If you will only think a little, you will find that, by reason of your being employed as labourers in any individual concern, you become part-proprietors of that concern, precisely as are those who invest money in that concern. Labour, as a matter of fact, is as much money as metallic coin. If some put their money in any particular concern, you put your labour in it. Just as without money your labour would be useless, so also all the money in the world would be perfectly useless without labour. Therefore, you must take pride in working for the concern as if it were your own. Thus, while on the one hand you will be asserting your rights as part-proprietors, on the other, you will render full service by working honestly.

*Harijan*, 2-2-1934, p. 6

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I entertain great respect for the dignity of labour that I have thrown in my lot with the labourers and for many, many years now I have lived in their midst like them, labouring with my hands and with my feet. In labouring with your bodies you are simply following the law of your being, and there is not the slightest reason for you to feel dissatisfied with your lot. On the contrary, I would ask you to regard yourselves as trustees for the nation for which you are labouring. A nation may do without its millionaires and without its capitalists, but a nation

can never do without its labour. But there is one fundamental distinction between your labour and my labour. You are labouring for someone else. But I consider that I am labouring for myself. Then I am my own master. And in a natural state we should all find ourselves our own masters. But such a state of things cannot be reached in a day. It therefore becomes a very serious question for you to consider how you are to conduct yourselves as labourers serving others. Just as there is no shame in being a labourer for one's self, so also is there no shame in labouring for others.

But it becomes necessary to find out the true relationship between master and servant. What are your duties and what are your rights? It is simple to understand that your right is to receive higher wages for your labour. And it is equally simple to know that your duty is to work to the best of your ability for the wage you receive. And it is my universal experience that as a rule labour discharges its obligations more effectively and more conscientiously than the master who has corresponding obligations towards the labourers. It therefore becomes necessary for labour to find out how far labour can impose its will on the masters. If we find that we are not adequately paid or housed, how are we to receive enough wages, and good accommodation? Who is to determine the standard of wages, and the standard of comfort required by the labourers? The best way, no doubt, is that you labourers understand your own rights, understand the method of enforcing your rights and enforce them. But for that you require a little previous training - education. You have been brought to a central point from the various parts of the country and find yourselves congregated together. But you find that you are not getting enough, you are not properly housed. I therefore venture to suggest to those who are leading you and advising you that their first business is to guide you not by giving you a knowledge of letters but of human affairs and human relations. I make this suggestion respectfully and in all humility because my survey of labour in India is so far as I have been able to undertake it and my long experience of conditions of labour in South Africa lead me to the conclusion that in a large majority of cases leaders consider that they have to give labour the knowledge of the three R's. That undoubtedly is a necessity of the case. But it is to be preceded by a proper knowledge of your own rights and the way of

enforcing them. And in conducting many a strike I have found that it is possible to give this fundamental education to the labourers within a few days.

*Speeches and Writings of Mahatma Gandhi*, (4th Edn.), p. 1045

## CHAPTER 52: STRIKES

In a well-ordered democratic society there is no room, no occasion for lawlessness or strikes. In such a society there are ample lawful means for vindicating justice. Violence, veiled or unveiled must be taboo.

*Harijan*, 1-2-1948, p. 15

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I know that strikes are an inherent right of the working-men for the purpose of securing justice, but they must be considered a crime immediately the capitalists accept the principle of arbitration.

*Young India*, 5-5-1920, p. 6

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How should capital behave when labour strikes? This question is in the air and has great importance at the present moment. One way is that of suppression named or nicknamed 'American'. It consists in suppression of labour through organized *goondaim*.<sup>1</sup> Everybody would consider this as wrong and destructive. The other way, right and honourable, consists in considering every strike on its merits and giving labour its due—not what capital considers as due, but what labour itself would so consider and enlightened public opinion acclaim as just.

One preliminary question will justly arise: Why should there be a strike at all in any well regulated concern? Strikes ought to be impossible when there is perfect understanding between capital and labour, mutual respect and recognition of equality. And since differences there would be sometimes between employers and employed even in the best-regulated concerns, why should there not be a system of arbitration between the parties so that they will always readily carry out in perfect good faith awards of arbitrators?

But we have to consider things not as they should be, but as they are. As time progresses, the labour world is getting more insistent in its demands which are daily increasing, and it does not hesitate to resort to violence in its impatient enforcement of those demands. New methods of enforcing them are being

employed. Workers do not hesitate to injure the property of the employers, dislocate machinery, harass old men and women who would not join the strike, and forcibly keep out black-legs. In these circumstances, how are the employers to behave?

In my opinion, employers and employed are equal partners even if employees are not considered superior. But what we see today is the reverse. The reason is that the employers harness intelligence on their side. They have the superior advantage which concentration of capital brings with it, and they know how to make use of it. One individual rupee has very little potency: but when money combines as capital, the combine derives a power different from and far in excess of the mere sum total of the individual rupees. A million drops individually are negligible. But in combination they make the ocean, carrying on its bosom a fleet of ocean hounds. Whilst capital in India is fairly organized, labour is still in a more or less disorganized condition in spite of unions and their federation. Therefore, it lacks the power that true combination gives.

Moreover, it lacks intelligence, so much so that individuals fight against individuals, unions against unions. Lack of intelligence leads to its exploitation by selfish and unscrupulous men even to the point of creating and promoting mischief. They know no better, being ignorant of the secret of non-violence. The net result is that the workers suffer. If labour were to understand the working of non-violence, the power generated by combination would any day exceed the power of dead metal in the hands of a few capitalists.

Hence my advice to the employers should be that they should willingly regard workers as the real owners of the concerns which they fancy they have created. They should further regard it as their duty to equip the employees with sound education that would draw out the intelligence dormant in them and gladly promote and welcome the power that this combination of the workers gives them.

This noble work cannot be done in a day by the employers. Meanwhile, what should those do who have to face the destruction wrought by strikes in their concerns? I would unhesitatingly advise such employers that they should at once

offer the strikers full control of the concern which is as much the strikers' as theirs. They will vacate their premises not in a huff but because it is right, and, to show their goodwill, they would offer the employees the assistance of their engineers and other skilled staff. The employers will find in the end that they will lose nothing. Indeed, their right action will disarm opposition and they will earn the blessings of their men. They will have made proper use of their capital. I would not consider such action as benevolent. It would be an intelligent use by the capitalists of their resources, and honest dealing in regard to the employees whom they would have converted into honourable partners.

*Harijan*, 31-3-1946, p. 60

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Strikes have today become a universal plague. There are strikes everywhere, America and England not excepted. But, in India, they have a special significance. We are living under an unnatural condition. As soon as the lid is removed and there is a crevice letting in the flesh air of freedom, there will be an increasing number of strikes. The fundamental reason for this spreading strike fever is that life, here as elsewhere, is today uprooted from its basis, the basis of religion, and what an England writer has called 'cash nexus' has taken its place. And that is a precarious bond. But even when the religious basis is there, there will be strikes, because it is scarcely conceivable that religion will have become for all the basis of life. So, there will be attempts at exploitation on the one hand, and strikes on the other. But these strikes will then be of a purely non-violent character. Such strikes never do harm to anyone.

*Harijan*, 22-9-1946, p. 321

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Strikes are now in the air today throughout the world and on the slightest pretext labour goes in for strikes. My own experience of the last six months is that many strikes have done harm to labour rather than good. I have studied so far as I can the strikes in Bombay, a strike at Tata Iron Works, and the celebrated strike of the railway labourers in the Punjab. There was a failure in all these strikes. Labour was not able to make good its points to the fullest extent. What was the

reason? Labour was badly led. I want you to distinguish between two classes of leaders. You have leaders derived from yourselves and they are in their turn advised and led by those who are not themselves labourers, but who are in sympathy or expected to be in sympathy with labour. Unless there is perfect correspondence between these three, there is bound to be a failure. In all these four strikes that perfect correspondence was lacking. There is another substantial reason which I discovered. Labourers look to pecuniary support from their unions for their maintenance. No labour can prolong a strike indefinitely so long as labour depends on the resources of its unions and no strike can absolutely succeed which cannot be indefinitely prolonged. In all the strikes that I have ever conducted I have laid down one indispensable rule that labourers must find their own support. And therein lies the secret of success and therein consists your education. You should be able to perceive that, if you are able to serve one master and command a particular wage, your labour must be worthy and fit to receive that wage anywhere else. Strikers therefore cannot expect to be idlers and succeed. Your attempt must be just. And there should be no pressure exerted upon those whom you call 'blacklegs'. Any force of this kind exerted against your own fellow-labourers is bound to react upon yourselves. And I think your advisers will tell you that these three conditions being fulfilled no strike need fail. But they at once demonstrate to you the necessity of thinking a hundred times before undertaking strike. So much for your rights and the method of enforcing them. But as labour becomes organized strikes must be few and far between. And as your mental and collective development progresses, you will find that the principle of arbitration replaces the principle of strikes and the time has now arrived when we should reach this state.

*Speeches and Writings of Mahatma Gandhi, (4th Edn.), pp. 1045-48*

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The conditions of a successful strike are simple. And when they are fulfilled, a strike need never fail:

1. The cause of the strike must be just.
2. There should be practical unanimity among the strikers.

3. There should be no violence used against non-strikers.
4. Strikers should be able to maintain themselves during the strike period without falling back upon union funds and should therefore occupy themselves in some useful and productive temporary occupation.
5. A strike is no remedy when there is enough other labour to replace strikers. In that case, in the event of unjust treatment or inadequate wages or the like, resignation is the remedy.
6. Successful strikes have taken place even when all the above conditions have not been fulfilled, but that merely proves that the employers were weak and had a guilty conscience. We often make terrible mistakes by copying bad examples. The safest thing is not to copy example of which we have rarely complete knowledge but to follow the conditions which we know and recognize to be essential for success.

*Young India*, 16-2-1921, pp. 52-53

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A pacific strike must be limited to those who are labouring under the grievance to be redressed. Thus if the match manufacturers, say, of Timbuctoo, who are quite satisfied with their lot, strike out of sympathy for mill-hands who are getting starvation wages, the match manufacturers' strike would be a species of violence. They may and should help in a most effective manner by withdrawing their custom from the mill-owners of Timbuctoo without laying themselves open to the charge of violence.

But it is possible to conceive occasions when those who are not directly suffering may be under an obligation to cease work. Thus, if in the instance imagined, the masters in the match-factory combine with the mill-owners of Timbuctoo, it will clearly be the duty of the workers in the match-factory to make common cause with the mill-hands. But I have suggested the addition purely by way of illustration. In the last resort every case has to be judged on its own merits. Violence is a subtle force. It is not easy always to detect its presence though to you may feel it all the same.

*Young India*, 18-11-1926, p. 400

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A strike should be spontaneous and not manipulated. If it is organized without any compulsion, there would be no chance for *Goondaism* and looting. Such a strike would be characterized by perfect co-operation amongst the strikers. It should be peaceful and there should be no show of force.

The strikers should take up some work either singly or in co-operation with each other, in order to earn their bread. The nature of such work should have been thought out beforehand. It goes without saying that in a peaceful, effective and firm strike of this character, there will be no room for rowdyism or looting. I have known of such strikes. I have not presented a Utopian picture.

*Harijan*, 2-6-1946, p. 158

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Obviously, there should be no strike which is not justifiable on merits. No unjust strike should succeed. All public sympathy must be withheld from such strikes.

The public has no means of judging the merits of a strike unless it is backed by impartial persons enjoying public confidence. Interested men cannot judge the merits of their own case. Hence, there must be an arbitration accepted by the parties or a judicial adjudication.

As a rule, the matter does not come before the public when there is accepted arbitration or adjudication. Cases have, however, happened when haughty employers have ignored awards, or misguided employees, conscious of their power to assert themselves, have done likewise and have decided upon forcible extortion.

Strikes for economic betterment should never have a political end as an ulterior motive. Such a mixture never advances the political end and generally brings trouble upon strikers, even when they do not dislocate public life, as in the case of public utility services, such as the postal strike.

The Government may suffer some inconvenience, but will not come to a standstill. Rich persons will put up expensive postal services, but the vast mass

of the poor people will be deprived, during such a strike, of a convenience of primary importance to which they have become used for generations. Such strikes can only take place when every other legitimate means has been adopted and (has) failed.

Sympathetic strikes must be taboo until it is conclusive proved that the affected men have exhausted all the legitimate means at their disposal....

It follows from the foregoing that political strikes must be treated on their own merits and must never be mixed with or related to economic strikes. Political strikes have a definite place in non-violent action. They are never taken up haphazard. They must be open, never led by *goondaim*. They are calculated never to lead to violence.

*Harijan*, 11-8-1946, p. 256

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Two paths are open before India today, either to introduce the Western principle of "Might is Right" or to uphold the Eastern principle that truth alone conquers, that truth knows no mishap, that the strong and the weak have alike a right to secure justice. The choice is to begin with the labouring class. Should the labourers obtain an increment in their wages by violence, even if that be possible? They cannot resort to anything like violence howsoever legitimate may be their claims. To use violence for securing rights may seem an easy path, but it proves to be thorny in the long run. Those who live by sword die also by sword. The swimmer often dies by drowning. Look at Europe. No one seems to be happy there, for, not one is contented. The labourer does not trust the capitalist and the capitalist has no faith in the labourer. Both have a sort of vigour and strength but even the bulls have it. They fight to the very bitter end. All motion is not progress. We have got no reason to believe that the people of Europe are progressing. Their possession of wealth does not argue the possession of any moral or spiritual qualities...

What shall we do then? The labourers in Bombay made a fine stand. I was not in a position to know all the facts. But this much I could see that they could fight in a better way. The mill-owners may be wholly in the wrong. In the struggle

between capital and labour, it may be generally said that more often than not the capitalists are in the wrong box. But when labour comes fully to realize its strength, I know it can become more tyrannical than capital. The mill-owners will have to work on the terms dictated by labour if the latter could command intelligence of the former. It is clear, however, that labour will never attain to that intelligence. If it does, labour will cease to be labour and become itself the master. The capitalists do not fight on the strength of money alone. They do possess intelligence and tact.

The question before us is this: When the labourers, remaining what they are, develop a certain consciousness, what should be their course? It would be suicidal if the labourers rely upon their numbers or brute force, i.e., violence. By so doing they will do harm to industries in the country. If on the other hand they take their stand on pure justice and suffer in their person to secure it, not only will they always succeed but they will reform their masters, develop industries and both master and men will be as members of one and the same family. A satisfactory solution of the condition of labour must include the following:

1. The hours of labour must leave the workmen some hours of leisure.
2. They must get facilities for their own education.
3. Provision should be made for an adequate supply of milk, clothing and necessary education for their children.
4. There should be sanitary dwellings for the workmen.
5. They should be in a position to save enough to maintain themselves during their old age.

None of these conditions is satisfied today. For this both the parties are responsible. The masters care only for the service they get. What becomes of the labourer does not concern them. All their endeavours are generally confined to obtaining maximum service with minimum payment. The labourer on the other hand tries to hit upon all tricks whereby he can get maximum pay with minimum work. The result is that although the labourers get an increment there is no improvement in the work turned out. The relations between the two parties are not purified and the labourers do not make proper use of the increment they get.

A third party has sprung up between these two parties. It has become the labourers' friend. There is need for such a party. Only to the extent to which this party has disinterested friendship for the labourers, can it befriend them.

A time has come now when attempts will be made to use labour as a pawn in more ways than one. The occasion demands consideration at the hands of those that would take part in politics. What will they choose? Their own interest or the service of labour and the nation? Labour stands in sore need of friends. It cannot proceed without a lead. What sort of men give this lead will decide the condition of labour.

Strikes, cessation of work and *hartal* are wonderful things no doubt, but it is not difficult to abuse them. Workmen ought to organize themselves into strong labour unions, and on no account shall they strike work without the consent of these unions.

Strikes should not be risked without previous negotiation with the mill-owners. If the mill-owners resort to arbitration, the principle of *Panchayat*<sup>2</sup> should be accepted. And once the *Pancha*<sup>3</sup> are appointed, their decision must be accepted by both the parties alike, whether they like it or not.

Readers, if you are interested in ameliorating the condition of labour, if you want to befriend the workman and serve him, you will see from the above that there is only one royal road before you, viz., to elevate the workmen by creating between the two parties family relationship. And to secure this end there is no path like truth. Mere increase in wages should not satisfy you, you must also watch by what means they get it and how they spend it.

*Young India*, 11-2-1920, pp. 7-8

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1. Hooliganism
  2. Arbitration
  3. Arbitrators

## CHAPTER 53: LANDLORD AND TENANT

The *Kisan*<sup>1</sup> is the salt of the earth which rightly belongs or should belong to him, not to the absentee landlord or *Zamindar*.

*The Bombay Chronicle*, 20-10-1944

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Land and all property is his who will work it. Unfortunately the workers are or have been kept ignorant of this simple fact.

*Harijan*, 2-1-1937, p. 375

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I believe that the land you cultivate should belong to you, but it cannot be your own all at once, you cannot force it from the *Zamindars*. Non-violence is the only way, consciousness of your own power is the only way.

*Harijan*, 20-5-1939, p. 133

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No man should have more land than he needs for dignified sustenance. Who can dispute the fact that the grinding poverty of the masses is due to their having no land that they can call their own?

But it must be realized that the reform cannot be rushed. If it is to be brought about by non-violent means, it can only be done by education, both of the haves and the have-nots. The former should be assured that there never will be force used against them. The have-nots must be educated to know that no one can really compel them to do anything against their will, and that they can secure their freedom by learning the art of non-violence, i.e., self-suffering.

*Harijan*, 20-4-1940, p. 97

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I would tell you that ownership of your land belongs as much to the *Ryots*<sup>2</sup> as to you.

*Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 2-8-1934

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My objective is to reach your heart and convert you so that you may hold all your private property in trust for your tenants and use it primarily for their welfare. I am aware of the fact that within the ranks of the Congress a new party, called the Socialist Party is coming into being, and I cannot say what would happen if that party succeeds in carrying the Congress with it. But I am quite clear that if strictly honest and unchallengeable referendum of our millions were to be taken, they would not vote for the wholesale expropriation of the propertied classes. I am working for the co-operation and co-ordination of capital and labour, of landlord and tenant.

*Amrita Bazaar Patrika, 2-8-1934*

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But I must utter a note of warning. I have always told mill-owners that they are not exclusive owners of mills and workmen have equal shares in ownership. In the same way, I would tell you that ownership of your land belongs as much to the *Ryots* as to you, and you may not squander your gains in luxurious or extravagant living, but must use them for the well-being of *Ryots*. Once you make your *Ryots* experience a sense of kinship with you and a sense of security that their interests as members of a family will never suffer at your hands, you may be sure that there cannot be a clash between you and them and no class war.

*Amrita Bazar Patrika, 2-8-1934*

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The *Zamindars* would do well to take the time by the forelock. Let them cease to be mere rent collectors. They should become trustees and trusted friends of their tenants. They should limit their privy purse. Let them forgo the questionable perquisites they take from the tenants in the shape of forced gifts of marriage and other occasions, or *Nazarana*<sup>3</sup> on transfer of holdings from one *Kisan* to another or on restoration to the same *Kisan* after eviction for non-payment of rent. They should give them fixity of tenure, take a lively interest in their welfare, provide well-managed schools for their children, night schools for adults, hospitals and dispensaries for the sick, look after the sanitation of villages and in a variety of ways make them feel that they, the *Zamindars*, are their true

friends taking only a fixed commission for their manifold services. In short they must justify their position...

*Kisans* should scrupulously fulfill their obligations to the *Zamindars*. I mean not necessarily the statutory, but the obligations which they have themselves admitted to be just. They must reject the doctrine that their holdings are absolutely theirs to the exclusion of the *Zamindars*. They are or should be members of a joint family in which the *Zamindar* is the head guarding their rights against encroachment. Whatever the law may be, the *Zamindari* to be defensible must approach the conditions of a joint family.

I like the ideal of Rama and Janaka. They owned nothing against the people. Everything including themselves belonged to the people. They lived in their midst a life not above theirs, but in correspondence with theirs. But these may not be regarded as historical personages. Then let us take the example of the great Caliph Omar. Though he was monarch of a vast realm created by his great genius and amazing industry, he lived the life of a pauper and never considered himself owner of the vast treasures that lay at his feet. He was a terror to those officials who squandered people's money in luxuries.

*Young India*, 28-5-1931, pp. 120-21

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To the landlords I say that if what is said against them is true, I would warn them that their days are numbered. They could no longer continue as lords and masters. They have a bright future if they become the trustees of the poor *Kisans*. I have in mind not trustees in name but in reality. Such trustees would take nothing for themselves that their labour and care did not entitle them to. Then they would find that no law would be able to touch them. The *Kisans* would be their friends.

*Harijans*, 4-5-1947, p. 134

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1. Tiller of soil, peasant
  2. Tenants
  3. Gift

## CHAPTER 54: IS CLASS WAR INEVITABLE?

In a free and independent India, antagonism between the classes will be removed. I do not envisage a dead and artificial level among the people. There will be a variety among them as there is among the leaves of a tree. There will certainly be no have-nots, no unemployment, and no disparity between classes and masses such as we see today. I have no doubt whatsoever that, if non-violence in its full measure becomes the policy of the State, we shall reach essential equality without strife.

*Harijan*, 27-4-1940, p. 108

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If the desired change is brought about through non-violent means, the world would not be deprived of the talents of the classes, but then the latter would not exercise them at the expense of the labourers. In the non-violent order of the future, the land would belong to the State, for has it not been said *Sabhi bhumi Gopal ki?*<sup>1</sup> Under such dispensation, there would be no waste of talents and labour. This would be impossible through violent means. It is, therefore, a truism to say that the utter ruin of the land owners, brought about through violence, would also involve the ruin of the labourers in the end. If the land-owners, therefore, acted wisely no party would lose.

*Harijan*, 9-3-1947, p. 59

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By the non-violent method we seek not to destroy the capitalist, we seek to destroy capitalism. We invite the capitalist to regard himself as a trustee for those on whom he depends for the making, the retention and the increase of his capital. Nor need the worker wait for his conversion. If capital is power, so is work. Either power can be used destructively or creatively. Either is dependent on the other. Immediately the worker realizes his strength, he is in a position to become a co-sharer of the capitalist instead of remaining his slave. If he aims at becoming the sole owner, he will most likely be killing the goose that lays the

golden eggs. Inequalities in intelligence and even opportunity will last till the end of time. A man living on the banks of a river has any day more opportunity of growing crops than one living in an arid desert. But if inequalities stare us in the face, the essential equality too is not to be missed. Every man has an equal right for the necessities of life even as birds and beasts have. And since every right carries with it a corresponding duty and the corresponding remedy for resisting any attack upon it, it is merely a matter of finding out the corresponding duties and remedies to vindicate the fundamental elementary equality. The corresponding duty is to labour with my limbs, and the corresponding remedy is to non-co-operate with him who deprives me of the fruit of my labour. And if I would recognize the fundamental equality, as I must, of the capitalist and the labourer, I must not aim at his destruction. I must strive for his conversion. My non-co-operation with him will open his eyes to the wrong he may be doing. Nor need I be afraid of someone else taking my place when I have non-co-operated. For I expect to influence my co-workers so as not to help the wrong doing of my employer. This kind of education of the mass of workers is no doubt a slow process, but as it is also the surest, it is necessarily the quickest. It can be easily demonstrated that destruction of the capitalist must mean destruction in the end of the worker and as no human being is so bad as to be beyond redemption, no human being is so perfect as to warrant his destroying him whom he wrongly considers to be wholly evil.

*Young India*, 26-3-1931, p. 49

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I do not fight shy of capital. I fight capitalism. The West teaches one to avoid concentration of capital, to avoid a racial war in another and deadlier form. Capital and labour need not be antagonistic to each other.

*Young India*, 7-10-1926, p. 348

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Exploitation of the poor can be extinguished not by effecting the destruction of a few millionaires, but by removing the ignorance of the poor and teaching them to non-co-operate with their exploiters. That will convert the exploiters also. I

have even suggested that ultimately it will lead to both being equal partners. Capital as such is not evil; it is its wrong use that is evil. Capital, in some form or other, will always be needed.

*Harijan*, 28-7-1940, p. 219

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*Swaraj*, as conceived by me, does not mean the end of Kingship. Nor does it mean the end of capital. Accumulated capital means ruling power. I am for the establishment of right relations between capital and labour, etc. I do not wish for the supremacy of the one over the other. I do not think there is any natural antagonism between them. The rich and the poor will always be with us. But their mutual relations will be subject to constant change. France is a republic, but there are all classes of men in France.

Let us not be deluded by catch-words. Every single corruption which we notice in India is equally present in the so-called highly civilized nations of the West, if under a variety of names. It is distance that lends enchantment to the view; hence things Western become invested with a sort of glamour in our eyes. In fact there are perpetual differences even in the West between the rulers and the ruled. There, too, people seek for happiness and suffer misery in return.

*Young India*, 8-1-1925, p. 10

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Real socialism has been handed down to us by our ancestors who taught: "All land belongs to Gopal. Where then is the boundary line? Man is the maker of that line and he can therefore unmake it." Gopal literally means shepherd; it also means God. In modern language it means the State, i.e., the people. That the land today does not belong to the people is too true. But the fault is not in the teaching. It is in us who have not lived up to it.

I have no doubt that we can make as good an approach to it as is possible for any nation, not excluding Russia, and that without violence. The most effective substitute for violent dispossession is the wheel with all its implications. Land

and all property is his who will work it. Unfortunately the workers are or have been kept ignorant of this simple fact.

*Harijan*, 2-1-1937, p. 375

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It can be asked whether the present *Rajas*<sup>2</sup> and others can be expected to become trustees of the poor. If they do not become trustees of their own accord, force of circumstances will compel the reform unless they court utter destruction. When *Panchayat Raj* is established, public opinion will do what violence can never do. The present power of the *Zamindars*, the capitalists and the *Rajas* can hold sway only so long as the common people do not realize their own strength. If the people non-co-operate with the evil of *Zamindari* or capitalism, it must die of inanition. In *Panchayat Raj* only the *Panchayat* will be obeyed and the *Panchayat* can only work through the laws of their making.

*Harijan*, 1-6-1947, p. 172

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I do not want to destroy the *Zamindar*, but neither do I feel that the *Zamindar* is inevitable. I expect to convert the *Zamindars* and other capitalists by the non-violent method, and therefore there is for me nothing like an inevitability of class conflict. For it is an essential part of non-violence to go along the line of least resistance. The moment the cultivators of the soil realize their power, the *Zamindari* evil will be sterilized. What can the poor *Zamindar* do when they say that they will simply not work the land unless they are paid enough to feed and clothe and educate themselves and their children in a decent manner. In reality the toiler is the owner of what he produces. If the toilers intelligently combine, they will become an irresistible power. That is how I do not see the necessity of class conflicts. If I thought it inevitable, I should not hesitate to preach it and teach it.

*Harijan*, 5-12-1936, pp. 338-39

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A model *Zamindar* would at once reduce much of the burden the *Ryot* is now bearing. He would come in intimate touch with the *Ryots* and know their wants

and inject hope into them in the place of despair which is killing the very life out of them. He will not be satisfied with the *Ryots'* ignorance of the laws of sanitation and hygiene. He will reduce himself to poverty in order that the *Ryot* may have the necessities of life. He will study the economic condition of the *Ryots* under his care, establish schools in which he will educate his own children side by side with those of the *Ryots*. He will purify the village well and the village tank. He will teach the *Ryot* to sweep his roads and clean his latrines by himself doing this necessary labour. He will throw open without reserve his own gardens for the unrestricted use of the *Ryot*. He will use as hospital, school, or the like most of the unnecessary buildings which he keeps for his pleasure. If only the capitalist class will read the signs of the times, revise their notions of God-given right to all they possess, in an incredibly short space of time the seven hundred thousand dung-heaps which today pass muster as villages can be turned into abodes of peace, health and comfort.

*Young India*, 5-12-1929, p. 396

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I would like to use the landlords and the capitalists for the service of the masses. We must not sacrifice the interests of the masses to the capitalists. We must not play their game. We must trust them to the measure of their ability to surrender their gains for the service of the masses. They are not insusceptible to the higher appeal. It has been my invariable experience that a kind word uttered, goes home to them. If we win their confidence and put them at their ease, we will find that they are not averse to progressively sharing their riches with the masses.

Moreover, let us ask ourselves how much we have done to identify ourselves with the masses. Have we bridged the gulf between the surging millions and us? Let us, we who live in glass houses, not throw stones. To what extent do you share the life of the masses? I confess that with me, it is still an aspiration. We ourselves have not completely shed the habits of living that we say that the capitalists are notorious for.

The idea of class war does not appeal to me. In India a class war is not only not inevitable, but it is avoidable if we have understood the message of non-violence.

Those who talk about class war as being inevitable, have not understood the implications of non-violence or have understood them only skin-deep.

*Amrita Bazaar Patrika*, 3-8-1934

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The class struggle has always been there. It can be ended if the capitalists voluntarily renounce their role and become all labourers. The other way is to realize that labour is real capital, in fact, the maker of capital. What the two hands of the labourer would achieve, the capitalist would never get with all his gold and silver. Can anyone live on gold? But labour has to be made conscious of its strength. It has to have in one hand Truth, and in the other Non-violence, and it would be invincible.

Labour and capital, classes and masses, are as old as the hills. The whole trouble arises from the fact that neither labour, nor those who are guiding the labour movement, realize the dignity and strength of labour. It is like the lame leading the blind.

I got the opportunity and privilege of reading Karl Marx's *Capital* whilst I was in detention. I entertain high regard for his great industry and acumen. But I cannot believe in his conclusion. I have no faith in violence being able to usher in non-violence. World thought is moving and is outdistancing Karl Marx. That, however, does not detract from the merit of that great man's labours.

*Hindustan Times*, 5-1-1946

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Class war is foreign to the essential genius of India, which is capable of evolving communism on the fundamental rights of all on equal justice. *Ram Raj* of my dream ensures rights alike of prince and pauper.

*Amrita Bazaar Patrika*, 2-8-1934

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1. All land belongs to the Lord
  2. Rulers, princes

## SECTION IX: POLITICAL IDEAS

### CHAPTER 55: POLITICS AND RELIGION

I do not divide life into watertight compartments. The life of a nation like that of individuals is an indivisible whole.

*Harijan*, 20-2-1937, p. 13

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For me there is no politics without religion—not the religion of the superstitious and the blind, religion that hates and fights, but the universal Religion of Toleration. Politics without morality is a thing to be avoided.

*Young India*, 27-11-1924, p. 391

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For me, politics bereft of religion are absolute dirt, ever to be shunned. Politics concern nations and that which concerns the welfare of nations must be one of the concerns of a man who is religiously inclined, in other words, a seeker after God and Truth. ... Therefore, in politics also we have to establish the Kingdom of Heaven.

*Young India*, 18-6-1925, p. 214

## CHAPTER 56: THE STATE OF ENLIGHTENED ANARCHY

To me political power is not an end but one of the means of enabling people to better their condition in every department of life. Political power means capacity to regulate national life through national representatives. If national life becomes so perfect as to become self-regulated, no representation becomes necessary. There is then a state of enlightened anarchy. In such a state everyone is his own ruler. He rules himself in such a manner that he is never a hindrance to his neighbour. In the ideal state therefore, there is no political power because there is no State. But the ideal is never fully realized in life. Hence the classical statement of Thoreau that that Government is best which governs the least.

*Young India*, 2-7-1931, p. 162

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Legislation imposed by people upon themselves is non-violence to the extent it is possible in society. A society organized and run on the basis of complete non-violence would be the purest anarchy....

Yes. It is realizable to the extent non-violence is realizable. That State is perfect and non-violent where the people are governed the least. The nearest approach to purest anarchy would be a democracy based on non-violence.

*Harijan*, 21-7-1940, p. 211

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A Government cannot succeed in becoming entirely non-violent, because it represents all the people. I do not today conceive of such a golden age. But I do believe in the possibility of a predominantly non-violent society. And I am working for it.

*Harijan*, 9-3-1940, p. 31

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It needed the perseverance and genius of so many generations of scientists to discover the laws of electricity, but today everybody, even children use electric

power in their daily life. Similarly, it will not always need a perfect being to administer an ideal State once it has come into being. What is needed is a thorough social awakening to begin with. The rest will follow.

*Towards New Horizons*, (1959), p. 93

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There remains the question as to whether in an ideal society, there should be any or no government. I do not think, we need worry ourselves about this at the moment. If we continue to work for such a society, it will slowly come into being to an extent, such that the people can benefit by it. Euclid's line is one without breadth, but no one has so far been able to draw it and never will. All the same, it is only by keeping the ideal line in mind that we have made progress in geometry. What is true here is true of every ideal.

*Harijan*, 15-9-1946, p. 309

## CHAPTER 57: THE INDIVIDUAL IS SUPREME

I cannot pretend to speak for Tolstoy, but my reading of his works has never led me to consider that, in spite of his merciless analysis of institutions organized and based upon force, that is governments, he in any way anticipates or contemplates that the whole world will be able to live in a state of philosophical anarchy. What he has preached, as, in my opinion, have all world-teachers, is that every man has to obey the voice of his own conscience, and be his own master, and seek the Kingdom of God from within. For him there is no government that can control him without his sanction. Such a man is superior to all government.

*The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. X, p. 249*

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I look upon an increase in the power of the State with the greatest fear, because, although while apparently doing good by minimizing exploitation, it does the greatest harm to mankind by destroying individuality which lies at the root of all progress.

*Selections from Gandhi, (1957), p. 41*

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I value individual freedom, but you must not forget that man is essentially a social being. He has risen to present status by learning to adjust his individualism to the requirements of social progress. Unrestricted individualism is the law of the beast of the jungle. We have learnt to strike the mean between individual freedom and social restraint. Willing submission to social restraint for the sake of the well-being of the whole society, enriches both the individual and the society of which one is a member.

*Harijan, 27-5-1939, p. 144*

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Complete independence through truth and non-violence means the independence of every unit, be it the humblest of the nation, without distinction of race, colour

or creed. This independence is never exclusive. It is, therefore, wholly compatible with interdependence within or without. Practice will always fall short of the theory, even as the drawn line falls short of the theoretical line of Euclid. Therefore, complete independence will be complete only to the extent of our approach in practice to truth and non-violence.

*Constructive Programme*, (1961), p. 7

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We must be content to die, if we cannot live as free men and women.

*Young India*, 5-1-1922, p. 5

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Every individual must have the fullest liberty to use his talents consistently with equal use by his neighbours, but no one is entitled to the arbitrary use of the gains from the talents. He is part of the nation or, say the social structure surrounding him. Therefore, he can use his talents not for self only but for the social structure of which he is but a part on whose sufferance he lives.

*Harijan*, 2-8-1942, p. 249

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If individual liberty goes, then surely all is lost, for, if the individual ceases to count, what is left of society? Individual freedom alone can make a man voluntarily surrender himself completely to the service of society. If it is wrested from him, he becomes an automaton and society is ruined. No society can possibly be built on a denial of individual freedom. It is contrary to the very nature of man.

*Harijan*, 1-2-1942, p. 27

## CHAPTER 58: SWARAJ

The word *Swaraj* is a sacred word, a Vedic word, meaning self-rule and self-restraint, and not freedom from all restraint which 'independence' often means.

*Young India*, 19-3-1931, p. 38

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As every country is fit to eat, to drink and to breathe, even so is every nation fit to manage its own affairs, no matter how badly.

*Young India*, 15-10-1931, p. 305

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Self-government depends entirely upon our internal strength, upon our ability to fight against the heaviest odds. Indeed, self-government which does not require that continuous striving to attain it and to sustain it is not worth the name. I have, therefore, endeavoured to show both in word and deed, that political self-government, that is, self-government for a large number of men and women, is no better than individual self-government, and, therefore, it is to be attained by precisely the same means that are required for individual self-government or self-rule.

*Young India*, 1-12-1927, p. 402

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The outward freedom that we shall attain will only be in exact proportion to the inward freedom to which we may have grown at a given moment. And if this is the correct view of freedom, our chief energy must be concentrated upon achieving reform from within.

*Young India*, 1-11-1928, p. 363

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Self-government means continuous effort to be independent of government control, whether it is foreign government or whether it is national. *Swaraj*

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government will be a sorry affair if people look up to it for the regulation of every detail of life.

*Young India*, 6-8-1925, p. 276

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Under *Swaraj* based on non-violence nobody is anybody's enemy, everybody contributes his or her due quota to the common goal, all can read and write, and their knowledge keeps growing from day to day. Sickness and disease are reduced to the minimum. No one is a pauper and labour can always find employment. There is no place under such a government for gambling, drinking and immorality or for class hatred. The rich will use their riches wisely and usefully, and not squander them in increasing their pomp and worldly pleasures. It should not happen that a handful of rich people should live in jewelled palaces and the millions in miserable hovels devoid of sunlight or ventilation.

In non-violent *Swaraj* there can be no encroachment upon just rights; contrariwise no one can possess unjust rights. In a well-organized State, usurpation should be an impossibility and it should be unnecessary to resort to force for dispossessing an usurper.

*Harijan*, 25-3-1939, p. 65

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My *Swaraj* is to keep intact the genius of our civilization. I want to write many new things, but they must be all written on the Indian slate.

*Young India*, 26-6-1924, p. 210

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*Swaraj* for me means freedom for the meanest of our countrymen.... I am not interested in freeing India merely from the English yoke. I am bent upon freeing India from any yoke whatsoever. I have no desire to exchange 'king log' for 'king stork'.

*Young India*, 12-6-1924, p. 195

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In *Swaraj* based on Ahimsa, people need not know their rights, but it is necessary for them to know their duties. There is no duty but creates a corresponding right, and those only are true rights which flow from a due performance of one's duties. Hence rights of true citizenship accrue only to those who serve the State to which they belong. And they alone can do justice to the rights that accrue to them. Everyone possesses the right to tell lies or resort to *goondaism*. But the exercise of such a right is harmful both to the exerciser and society. But to him who observes Truth and Non-violence comes prestige, and prestige brings rights. And people who obtain rights as a result of performance of duty, exercise them only for the service of society, never for themselves. *Swaraj* of a people means the sum total of the *Swaraj* (self-rule) of individuals. And such *Swaraj* comes only from performance by individuals of their duty as citizens. In it, no one thinks of his rights. They come, when they are needed, for better performance of duty.

*Harijan*, 25-3-1939, p. 64

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The true source of rights is duty.... If we all discharge our duties, rights will not be far to seek. If leaving duties unperformed we run after rights, they escape us like a will-o'-the wisp. The more we pursue them, the farther they fly. The same teaching has been embodied by Krishna in the immortal words: "Action alone is Thine. Leave thou the fruit severely alone." Action is duty; fruit is the right.

*Young India*, 8-1-1925, pp. 15-16

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National independence is not fiction. It is as necessary as individual independence. But neither, if it is based on non-violence, may ever be a menace to the equal independence of the nation or the individual as the case may be. As with individual and national independence, so with the international. The legal maxim is equally moral. *Sic utre tuo ut alienum non laedas.*<sup>1</sup> It has been well said that the universe is compressed in the atom. There is not one law for the atom and another for the universe.

*Young India*, 30-1-1930, p. 37

The *Swaraj* of my dream recognizes no race or religious distinctions. Nor is it to be the monopoly of lettered persons, not yet of moneyed men. *Swaraj* is to be for all, including the former, but emphatically including the maimed, the blind, the starving, toiling millions. A stout-hearted, honest, sane, illiterate man may well be the first servant of the nation.

*Young India*, 1-5-1930, p. 149

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*Swaraj* can be maintained, only where there is majority of loyal and patriotic people to whom the good of the nation is paramount above all other considerations whatever, including their personal profit. *Swaraj* means government by the many. Where the many are immoral or selfish, their government can spell anarchy and nothing else.

*Young India*, 28-7-1921, p. 238

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Let there be no mistake as to what *Purna Swaraj* means... It is full economic freedom for the toiling millions. It is no unholy alliance with any interest for their exploitation. Any alliance must mean their deliverance.

*Young India*, 16-4-1931, p. 77

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By political independence I do not mean an imitation of the British House of Commons or the Soviet rule of Russia or the Fascist rule of Italy or the Nazi rule of Germany. They have systems suited to their genius. We must have ours suited to ours. What that can be is more than I can tell. I have described it as *Ramraj*, i.e., sovereignty of the people based on pure moral authority.

*Harijan*, 2-1-1937, p. 374

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It has been said that Indian *Swaraj* will be the rule of the majority community, i.e., the Hindus. There could not be a greater mistake than that. If it were to be true, I for one would refuse to call it *Swaraj* and would fight it with all the

strength at my command, for to me *Hind Swaraj* is the rule of all the people, is the rule of justice.

*Young India*, 16-4-1931, p. 78

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Every community would be on a par with every other under the *Swaraj* constitution.

*Young India*, 1-5-1931, p. 108

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*Purna Swaraj* is the common sacred possession of all of us, \_\_ 'Purna' complete because it is as much for the prince as for the peasant, as much for the rich land-owner as for the landless tiller of the soil, as much for the Hindus as for the Musalmans, as much for the Parsis and Christians as for the Jains, Jews and Sikhs, irrespective of any distinction of caste or creed or status in life. The very connotation of the word and the means of its attainment to which we are pledged, - Truth and Non-violence - precludes all possibility of that *Swaraj* being more for someone than for the other, being partial to someone and prejudicial to the other. Truth and Non-violence leave no room for fraud or falsehood....

*Swaraj* under this method, therefore, can never be achieved by usurping the rights of any community, big or small but by ensuring even-handed justice and fair treatment to all -even the poorest and the weakest in the land.

*Young India*, 19-3-1931, p. 42

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Independence of my conception means nothing less than the realization of the 'Kingdom of God' within you and on this earth. I would rather work and die in the pursuit of this dream, though it may never be realized. That means infinite patience and perseverance.

*Hindustan Standard*, 1-4-1940

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1. Use your own rights so that you do not hurt those of another.

## CHAPTER 59: TRUE DEMOCRACY

By its very nature, non-violence cannot 'seize' power, nor can that be its goal. *But non-violence can do more; it can effectively control and guide power without capturing the machinery of government.* That is its beauty.

*Towards New Horizons*, (1959), pp. 91-92

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Science of non-violence can alone lead one to pure democracy.

*Young India*, 30-6-1920, p. 3

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Democracy must in essence... mean the art and science of mobilizing the entire physical, economic and spiritual resources of all the various sections of the people in the service of the common good of all.

*Harijan*, 27-5-1939, p. 143

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Democracy disciplined and enlightened is the finest thing in the world. A democracy prejudiced, ignorant, superstitious, will land itself in chaos and may be self-destroyed.

*Young India*, 30-7-1931, p. 199

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In true democracy every man and woman is taught to think for himself or herself. How this real revolution can be brought about I do not know except that every reform, like charity must begin at home.

*Harijan*, 14-7-1946, p. 220

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My notion of democracy is that under it the weakest should have the same opportunity as the strongest. That can never happen except through non-violence.

*Mahatma*, Vol. V, (1952), p. 343

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True democracy or the *Swaraj* of the masses can never come through untruthful and violent means, for the simple reason that the natural corollary to their use would be to remove all opposition through the suppression or extermination of the antagonists. That does not make for individual freedom. Individual freedom can have the fullest play only under a regime of unadulterated *Ahimsa*.

*Harijan*, 25-5-1939, p. 143

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Democracy and violence can ill go together. The States that are today nominally democratic have either to become frankly totalitarian or, if they are to become truly democratic, they must become courageously non-violent. It is a blasphemy to say that non-violence can only be practised by individuals and never by nations which are composed of individuals.

*Harijan*, 12-11-1938, p. 328

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The golden rule of conduct, therefore, is mutual toleration, seeing that we will never all think alike and that we shall always see *Truth* in fragment and from different angles of vision. Conscience is not the same thing for all. Whilst, therefore, it is a good guide for individual conduct, imposition of that conduct upon all will be an insufferable interference with everybody else's freedom of conscience.

*Young India*, 23-9-1926, p. 334

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Differences of opinion should never mean hostility. If they did, my wife and I should be sworn enemies of one another. I do not know two persons in the world who had no difference of opinion, and as I am a follower of the *Gita*, I have always attempted to regard those who differ from me with the same affection as I have for my nearest and dearest.

*Young India*, 17-3-1927, p. 82

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For me the only training in *Swaraj* we need is the ability to defend ourselves against the whole world and to live our natural life in perfect freedom, even though it may be full of defects. Good government is no substitute for self-government.

*Young India*, 22-9-1920, p. 1

## CHAPTER 60: DECENTRALIZATION

**Centralization** as a system is inconsistent with non-violent structure of society.

*Harijan*, 18-1-1942, p. 5

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The centre of power now is in New Delhi, or in Calcutta and Bombay, in the big cities. I would have it distributed among the seven hundred thousand villages of India.

*Mahatma Gandhi - The Last Phase*, Vol. 2, (1958), p. 614

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In this structure composed of innumerable villages, there will be ever widening, never ascending circles. Life will not be a pyramid with the apex sustained by the bottom. But it will be an oceanic circle whose centre will be the individual always ready to perish for the village, the latter ready to perish for the circle of villages, till at last the whole becomes one life composed of individuals, never aggressive in their arrogance but ever humble, sharing the majesty of the oceanic circle of which they are integral units.

Therefore, the outermost circumference will not wield power to crush the inner circle but will give strength to all within and derive its own strength from it. I may be taunted with the retort that this is all Utopian and, therefore, not worth a single thought. If Euclid's point, though incapable of being drawn by human agency, has an imperishable value, my picture has its own for mankind to live. Let India live for this true picture, though never realizable in its completeness. We must have a proper picture of what we want, before we can have something approaching it. If there ever is to be a republic of every village in India then I claim verity for my picture in which the last is equal to the first or, in other words, no one is to be the first and none the last.

*Harijan*, 28-7-1946, p. 236

## CHAPTER 61: VILLAGE PANCHAYATS

True democracy cannot be worked by twenty men sitting at the centre. It has to be worked from below by the people of every village...

In my opinion, there is no law which can stop a *Panchayat* from functioning wherever the people want it. Every group (of villages) or its member can have the *Panchayat* system whether the rest of India has it or not. True rights come as a result of duty done. No one can snatch away such rights. The *Panchayat* is there to serve the people. In the true democracy of India, the unit is the village. Even if one village wants *Panchayat Raj*, which is called republic in English, no one can stop it.

*Harijan*, 18-1-1948, p. 519

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*Panchayat* has an ancient flavour; it is a good word. It literally means an assembly of five elected by villagers. It represents the system, by which the innumerable village republics of India were governed. But the British Government, by its ruthlessly thorough method of revenue collection, almost destroyed these ancient republics.

*Young India*, 28-5-1931, p. 123

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Independence must begin at the bottom. Thus, every village will be a republic or *Panchayat* having full powers. It follows, therefore, that every village has to be self-sustained and capable of managing its affairs even to the extent of defending itself against the whole world. It will be trained and prepared to perish in the attempt to defend itself against any onslaught from without. Thus, ultimately, it is the individual who is the unit. This does not exclude dependence on and willing help from neighbours or from the world. It will be free and voluntary play of mutual forces. Such a society is necessarily highly cultured in which every man and woman knows what he or she wants and, what is more, knows that no one should want anything that others cannot have with equal labour.

*Harijan*, 28-7-1946, p. 236

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Distinguished travellers from the world came to India in the days of yore from China and other countries. They came in quest of knowledge and put up with great hardships in travelling. They had reported that in India there was no theft, people were honest and industrious. They needed no locks for their doors. In those days, there was no multiplicity of castes as at present. It is the function of the *Panchayats* to revive honesty and industry. It is the function of the *Panchayats* to teach the villagers to avoid disputes, if they have to settle them. That would ensure speedy justice without any expenditure...

Then, the *Panchayats* should see to cattle improvement. They should show steady increase in the milk yield.

The *Panchayats* should also see to an increase in the quantity of foodstuffs grown in their village. That is to be accomplished by properly manuring the soil... Then, they must see to the cleanliness of their village and its inhabitants. They must be clean and healthy in body and mind. I hope that they would have no cinema house. People say that the cinema can be a potent means of education. That might come true someday, but at the moment I see how much harm the cinema is doing. They have their indigenous games. They should banish intoxicating drinks and drugs from their midst. I hope they will eradicate untouchability if there is any trace of it still left in their village. The Hindus, the Muslims, the Sikhs, the Parsis and the Christians should all live as brothers and sisters.

*Harijan*, 4-1-1948, pp. 499-500

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The greater the power of the *Panchayats*, the better for the people. Moreover, for *Panchayats* to be effective and efficient, the level of people's education has to be considerably raised. I do not conceive the increase in the power of the people in military, but in moral terms.

*Harijan*, 21-12-1947, p. 473

## CHAPTER 62: PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY

I shall strive for a constitution, which will release India from all thraldom and patronage, and give her, if need be, the right to sin. I shall work for an India, in which the poorest shall feel that it is their country in whose making they have an effective voice; an India in which there shall be no high class or low class of people; an India in which all communities shall live in perfect harmony. There can be no room in such an India for the curse of untouchability, or the curse of intoxicating drinks and drugs. Women will enjoy the same rights as men. Since we shall be at peace with all the rest of the world, neither exploiting, nor being exploited, we should have the smallest army imaginable. All interests not in conflict with the interests of the dumb millions will be scrupulously respected, whether foreign or indigenous. Personally, I hate distinction between foreign or indigenous. This is the India of my dreams... I shall be satisfied with nothing less.

*Young India*, 10-9-1931, p. 255

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By *Swaraj* I mean the government of India by the consent of the people as ascertained by the vote of the largest number of the adult population, male or female, native born or domiciled, who have contributed by manual labour to the service of the State and who have taken the trouble of having their names registered as voters... I hope... to achieve the end by demonstrating that real *Swaraj* will come not by the acquisition of authority by a few but by the acquisition of the capacity by all to resist authority when it is abused. In other words, *Swaraj* is to be attained by educating the masses to a sense of their capacity to regulate and control authority.

*Young India*, 29-1-1925, pp. 40

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Mere withdrawal of the English is not independence. It means the consciousness in the average villager that he is the maker of his own destiny, he is his own legislator through his chosen representatives.

*Young India*, 13-2-1930, p. 52



## CHAPTER 63: FRANCHISE AND VOTERS

I cannot possibly bear the idea that a man who has got wealth should have the vote, but that a man who has got character but no wealth or literacy should have no vote, or that a man who works honestly by the sweat of his brow day in and day out should not have the vote for the crime of being a poor man... I am not enamoured of the doctrine of literacy, that voter must at least have a knowledge of the three R's. I want for my people a knowledge of the three R's, but I know also that if I have to wait until they have got a knowledge of the three R's before they can be qualified for voting, I shall have to wait until the Greek Kalends, and I am not prepared to wait all that time.

*Young India*, 8-10-1931, p. 297

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I am wedded to adult suffrage... Adult suffrage is necessary for more reasons than one, and one of the decisive reasons to me is that it enables me to satisfy all the reasonable aspirations, not only of the Musalmans, but also of the so-called untouchables, of Christians, of labourers and all kinds of classes.

*Young India*, 8-10-1931, p. 297

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Elector's private relations with the candidates have often weighed with them more than the candidates' qualifications. It would be well if we set up a better standard for the elections to the legislative councils. Only thus shall we be able to make the best use of the councils. I suggest also that voters should not identify themselves with any party or its quarrels. They should consider candidates' views and not their party. Their character should weigh more even than their views. A man of character will make himself worthy of any position he is given. Even his mistakes will not much matter. I consider it impossible for a man without character to do higher national service so that if I were a voter from among the list, I would first select men of character and then I would understand their views.

*Young India*, 9-6-1920, p. 7

## CHAPTER 64: THE SEAT OF REAL POWER

It must be granted that it is possible to render some service to the State by entering these councils. But it is my firm belief that many can serve the country better by remaining outside. The late Mr. Keir Hardie used to say that it was practically possible for a true Christian to remain in the British Parliament. Carlyle called it the talking shop. When there are many candidates, those who have accepted service of the land as an article of faith would do well to stand outside the lists, and they will find that they will be better occupied by educating the electorate and keeping the elected members to their promises at the polls.

*Young India*, 19-5-1920, p. 5

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It is an illusion to think that M.L.A.s are the guides of the voters. Voters do not send representatives to the Assemblies in order to be guided by them, On the contrary, they are sent there loyally to carry out the people's wishes. The people are, therefore, the guides, not the M.L.A.'s. The latter are servants, the former masters...

If we look around the world we shall find that the best guidance is given by those outside. If that were not so, a rot would set in all governments, because the field for guidance is vast and the Assembly is a very small thing. Parliaments are, after all a mere drop in the ocean of national life.

*Harijan*, 28-4-1946, p. 112

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Under a Free Government, the real power will be held by the people... The mightiest Government will be rendered absolutely impotent if the people realizing their power use it in a disciplined manner and for the common good... It must be remembered that only an infinitesimal proportion of the people can hold positions of responsibility and power in a country's government. Experience all the world over shows that the real power and wealth are possessed by people outside the group that holds the reins of Government.

*Young India*, 24-4-1930, p. 137



## CHAPTER 65: LEGISLATURES

We shall benefit by our people entering the councils if they are true men filled with humility and love of the country, courageous, fearless and versed in the subject they have to handle.

*Young India*, 19-5-1920, p. 5

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Two hundred and fifty of these legislators let loose on the people in a province without opposition, are, in my opinion, the worse plague. Is it after all for replacing the white rapacity by the black that so many noble souls, who are no more with us, suffered and sacrificed everything worth living for in their lives? There must be an escape out of this morass. If these legislatures are not so numerous, the evils would be less. Fifty members in the lower house and half that number in the upper house, for each province, which is going to be smaller on the linguistic basis, would minimize the nuisance.

*Mahatma*, Vol. VIII, (1954), p. 292

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The other use of legislatures is to prevent undesirable legislation and bring in laws which are useful for the public, so that as much help as possible can be given to the constructive programme.

*Harijan*, 17-12-1946, p. 13

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The Congress should not have to spend money on the elections. Nominees of a popular organization should be elected without any effort on the latter's part...

An organization which looks to money for everything can never serve the masses.

*Harijan*, 17-2-1946, p. 13

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I am certainly not enamoured or I do not swear by two legislatures. I have no fear of a popular legislature running away with itself, and hastily passing some laws

of which afterwards it will have to repent. I would not like to give a bad name to it and then hang the popular legislature. I think that a popular legislature can take care of itself, and since we are dealing with the poorest country in the world, the less expenses we have to bear the better it is for us.

*Gandhian Constitution for Free India*, p. 93

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The whole of the constructive programme including unity, removal of untouchability, prohibition-is in pursuit of truth and non-violence. If there can be any interest for us in going to the legislatures, it can be only for this reason and for nothing else. Truth and non-violence are both the means and the end, and given the right type of men the legislatures can be the means of achieving the concrete pursuit of truth and non-violence. If they cannot be that, it will be our fault and not theirs. If we have a real hold on the masses, the legislatures are bound to be that and nothing else.

In making room for the parliamentary programme we are advancing a step further in the direction of non-violence... Truth and non-violence are no cloistered virtues but applicable as much in the forum and the legislatures as in the market place.

*Harijan*, 8-5-1937, pp. 97-98

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If fighting for the legislatures meant a sacrifice of truth and non-violence, democracy would not be worth a moment's purchase. The voice of the people is the voice of God, and it is the voice of 300 millions that we have to represent. Is it not possible to do so with truth and non-violence?

*Harijan*, 1-5-1937, p. 89

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In my opinion Congressmen who are members of Assemblies, whether as mere members or Ministers or Speakers, have in every act of theirs to bear in mind the fact that they have, in virtue of the Congress Constitution, to confirm to truth and non-violence. Thus the conduct of a Congressman in an Assembly would have to be that of strictest honesty and courtesy in dealing with its opponents. He will

not resort to shabby politics, will not hit below the belt, will never take a mean advantage of his adversary. The greater his position in the Assembly, the greater is his responsibility in these matters. A member in the Assembly no doubt represents his constituency and his party but also represents the whole of his province. A minister no doubt advances his own party but never at the expense of the nation as a whole.

Looked at from the point of view here suggested, the Speaker's position assumes very high importance, greater than that of the Prime Minister. For he has to discharge the functions of a judge while he occupies the chair. He has to give impartial and just rulings. He has to enforce decorum and laws of courtesy between members. He has to be calm in the midst of storms. He has opportunities of winning over opponents which no other member of the House can possibly have.

*Harijan*, 16-7-1938, p. 184

## CHAPTER 66: MAJORITY AND MINORITY

If we want to cultivate a true spirit of democracy, we cannot afford to be intolerant. Intolerance betrays want to faith in one's cause.

*Young India*, 2-2-1921, p. 33

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Claiming the right of free opinion and free action as we do, we must extend the same to others. The rule of majority when it becomes coercive, is as intolerable as that of a bureaucratic minority. We must patiently try to bring round the minority to our view by gentle persuasion and argument.

*Young India*, 26-1-1922, p. 54

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The rule of majority has a narrow application, i.e., one should yield to the majority in matters of detail. But it is slavery to be amenable to the majority, no matter what its decisions are. Democracy is not a state in which people act like sheep. Under democracy, individual liberty of opinion and action is jealously guarded. I therefore, believe that the minority has a perfect right to act differently from the majority.

*Young India*, 2-3-1922, p. 129

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In matters of conscience the law of majority has no place.

*Young India*, 4-8-1920, p. 3

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The rule of majority does not mean that it should suppress the opinion of even an individual if it is sound. The opinion of an individual should have greater weight than the opinion of many, if that opinion is sound on merits. That is my view of real democracy.

*Mahatma*, Vol. VI, (1953), p. 354

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One of the speakers said again that "the true solution of the Asiatic question lay in the application of the maxim, 'the greatest good for the greatest number.' We must confess that we are not blind believers in that maxim; we think that it has worked untold mischief in many cases, and is yet likely to do so in the history of the world's progress.

*The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. IV, p. 237*

## CHAPTER 67: A CODE OF CONDUCT FOR GOVERNORS AND MINISTERS

1. An Indian Minister or Governor should use as far as possible only Indian made goods... He and his family should wear nothing but Khadi, so that India's poor can eke out a living. He should also ply the spinning wheel-the banner of non-violence.
2. He should learn both the scripts (Hindi) and (Urdu), and avoid talking with his colleagues in English, freely use his regional language instead. Government communiqües, orders and circulars should be issued, if possible in Hindustani only, which would create a widespread enthusiasm among the people to learn it and gradually, through such a natural process, it would become the national language.
3. He should be completely free from all prejudices against any caste or creed, and from any favouritism towards his own relatives and friends. To the Minister, his own son or brother should rank no higher than any other ordinary citizen, including the poorest artisan or labourer.
4. His private life should be so simple that it inspires respect, or even reverence. He should give one hour to productive physical labour as an incentive to the people. He should either spin for an hour or increase the agricultural output of the country by growing cereals or fruits and vegetables in his compound.
5. Bungalows and motor cars should be ruled out of course; if he has to go far or on an urgent business, he should certainly use a car; but its use should be, definitely, very limited. I see that a car may perhaps be quite necessary.
6. I wish that he live along with his colleagues in a compact colony, so that a group feeling is established easily. His family, too, can thereby cultivate close personal relationship with those of others Ministers.
7. The other members of his family, including children, should do all the household work themselves, servants should be used as sparingly as possible.
8. His rooms should not be furnished with expensive foreign-made furniture such as sofas, cupboards and chairs, especially at present, when crores of

his countrymen do not have a single cotton mattress to sit upon even a piece of cloth to wear.

9. Finally, he should neither drink nor smoke.

*Biharni Komi Agman, (Gujarati), pp. 227-28*

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1. An Indian Governor should, in his own person and in his surroundings, be a teetotaller. Without this, prohibition of the fiery liquid is well-nigh inconceivable.
  2. He and his surroundings should represent hand spinning as a visible token of identification with the dumb millions of India, a token of the necessity of 'bread labour' and organized non-violence as against organized violence on which the society of today seems to be based.
  3. He must dwell in a cottage accessible to all, though easily shielded from gaze, if he is to do efficient work. The British Governor naturally represented British might. For him and his was erected a fortified residence-a palace to be occupied by him and his numerous vassals who sustained his Empire. The Indian prototype may keep somewhat pretentious buildings for receiving princess and ambassadors of the world. For these, being guests of the Governor should constitute an education in what "Even Unto This Last" - equality of all-should mean in concrete terms. For him no expensive furniture, foreign or indigenous. Plain living and high thinking must be his motto, not to adorn his entrance but to be exemplified in daily life.
  4. For him there can be no untouchability in any form whatsoever, no caste or creed or colour distinction. He must represent the best of all religions and all things Eastern or Western. Being a citizen of India, he must be a citizen of the world. Thus simply, one reads, did the Khalif Omar, with millions of treasure at his feet, live; thus lived Janaka of ancient times; thus lived, as I saw him, the Master of Eron in his residence in the midst of, and surrounded by, the sons of the Lords and Nabobs of the British Isles. Will the Governors of India of the famished millions do less?

5. He will speak the language of the province of which he is the Governor and Hindustani, the lingua franca of India written in the Nagari or Urdu script. This is neither Sanskritized Hindi nor Persianized Urdu. Hindustani is emphatically the language which is spoken by the millions north of the Vindhya Range.

This does not pretend to be an exhaustive list of the virtues that an Indian Governor should represent. It is merely illustrative.

*Harijan*, 24-8-1947, p. 289

## CHAPTER 68: THE POPULAR MINISTERS

But it seems to me that my numerous correspondents who have been writing voluminously think that ministerships are prizes for past services and that certain Congressmen can demand their inclusion. I venture to suggest to them that ministerships are avenues to service which those who are called to it should render cheerfully and to the best of their ability. There can therefore never be a scramble for these offices.

It would be decidedly wrong to create ministerships for the sake of conciliating interests. If I were a Prime Minister and I was pestered with such claims I should tell my electors to choose another leader. These offices have to be held lightly, not tightly. They are or should be crowns of thorns, never of renown. Offices have been taken in order to see if they enable us to quicken the pace at which we are moving towards our goal.

*Harijan*, 7-8-1937, p. 204

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Today you have worn on your head a crown of thorns. The seat of power is a nasty thing. You have to remain ever wakeful on that seat. You have to be more non-violent, more humble and more forbearing. You had been put to test during the British regime. But in a way it was no test at all. But now there will be no end to your being tested. Do not fall a prey to the lure of wealth. May God help you. You are there to serve the villages and the poor.

*The Miracles of Calcutta*, (1959), pp. 32-33

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They (Ministers) may not make private gains either for themselves or for their relatives or friends. If the relatives or friends get any appointment, it must be only because they are the best amongst the candidates, and their market value is always greater than what they get under the Government.

*Harijan*, 28-4-1938, p. 88

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Ministers should not be sensitive (to public criticism). They would take in good part even carping criticism... The critics expect much more from these chosen servants of the people than from others in the way of simplicity, courage, honesty and industry.

*Harijan*, 21-9-1947, p. 325

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Our ministers are of the people, from the people. Let them not arrogate to themselves greater knowledge than those experienced men who do not happen to occupy ministerial chairs.

*Harijan*, 16-11-1947, p. 409

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The leaders have the reins of Government and the disposal of millions of rupees is in their hands. They have to be vigilant. They must be humble. People often think nothing of not keeping their word. They should never promise what they cannot do. Once a promise is made, it must be kept at all cost.

*Harijan*, 14-12-1947, p. 467

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A popular ministry is responsible to the legislatures and cannot do anything without their consent. Every elected member in a popular legislature is responsible to his voters. Therefore, the voter who represents the public should ponder well before embarking on any criticism of the Government. The tax-payer gets full return for his money, as for example, the water tax in cities. No tax-payer could get water on his own for the same payment. But even so, and in spite of the fact that the tax is levied by the popular will, tax-payers always resent even paying such taxes. It is, of course, true that one cannot prove the benefit of all taxes as easily as the one I have cited as an example. But as society grows in size and complexity and the field of service also grows, it is difficult to explain to the individual tax-payer, how he gets his return for any particular tax. This much, however, is clear that taxes as a whole should stand for the general benefit

of society. If this were not so, the argument that taxes were levied by popular will would not hold.

*Harijan*, 8-9-1946, p. 293

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The legislative assemblies should be their only law-makers. Ministers were liable to be changed at will. Their acts should be subject to review by their courts. They should do all in their power to make justice cheap, expeditious and incorruptible. For that purpose *Panchayat Raj* had been suggested. It was not possible for a high court to reach lakhs and lakhs of people. Only extraordinary situations required emergency legislation. Legislative assemblies, even though the procedure might entail some delay, must not be superseded by the Executive.

*Harijan*, 19-10-1947, pp. 377-78

## CHAPTER 69: THE POLICE, CRIMES AND JAILS

Civil liberty is not criminal liberty.

*Harijan*, 23-10-1937, p. 308

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Nevertheless, I have conceded that even in a non-violent State a police force may be necessary. This, I admit, is a sign of my imperfect *Ahimsa*. I have not the courage to declare that we can carry on without police force as I have in respect of any army. Of course, I can and do envisage a State where the police will not be necessary. But whether we shall succeed in realizing it, the future alone will show.

The police of my conception will, however, be of a wholly different pattern from the present-day force. Its ranks will be composed of believers in non-violence. They will be servants, not masters of the people. The people will instinctively render them any help, and through mutual co-operation they will easily deal with the ever-decreasing disturbances. The police force will have some kind of arms, but they will be rarely used, if at all. In fact the policemen will be reformers. Their police work will be confined primarily to robbers and dacoits.

*Harijan*, 1-9-1940, p. 265

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In Independence India of the non-violent type, there will be crime but no criminals. They will not be punished. Crime is a disease like any other malady and is a product of the prevalent social system. Therefore, all crime including murder will be treated as a disease. Whether such an India will ever come into being is another question.

*Harijan*, 5-5-1946, p. 124

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What should our jails be like in free India? All criminals should be treated as patients and the jails should be hospitals admitting this class of patients for

treatment and cure. No one commits crime for the fun of it. It is a sign of a diseased mind. The causes of a particular disease should be investigated and removed. They need not have palatial buildings when their jails become hospitals. No country can afford that, much less can a poor country like India. But the outlook of the jail staff should be that of physicians and nurses in a hospital. The prisoners should feel that the officials are their friends. They are there to help them regain their mental health and not to harass them in any way. The popular governments have to issue necessary orders, but meanwhile the jail staff can do not a little to humanize their administration.

*Harijan*, 2-11-1947, pp. 395-96

## SECTION X: SOCIAL IDEAS

### CHAPTER 70: THE SOCIAL IDEAL

Human society is a ceaseless growth, an unfoldment in terms of spirituality.

*Mahatma*, Vol. II, (1951), p. 296

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All society is held together by non-violence, even as the earth is held in her position by gravitation. But when the law of gravitation was discovered, the discovery yielded results of which our ancestors had no knowledge. Even so when society is deliberately constructed in accordance with the law of non-violence; its structure will be different in material particulars from what it is today.

*Harijan*, 11-2-1939, p. 8

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I remember to have read, I forget whether in the Delhi Fort or in the Agra Fort, when I visited them in 1896, a verse on one of the gates, which when translated reads thus: "If there is paradise on earth, it is here, it is here, it is here." That fort with all its magnificence at its best, was no paradise in my estimation. But I should love to see that verse with justice inscribed on the gates of Pakistan, at all the entrances. In such paradise, whether it is in the Union or in Pakistan, there will be neither paupers, nor beggars, nor high, nor low, neither millionaire employers, nor half-starve employees, nor intoxicating drinks or drugs. There will be the same respect for women, as vouchsafed to men, and the chastity and the purity of men and women will be jealously guarded. Where every woman, except one's wife will be treated by men of all religions, as mother or sister or daughter, according to her age. Where there will be no untouchability, and where there will be equal respect for all faiths. They will be all proudly, joyously and voluntarily bread labourers. I hope that everyone who listens to me or reads these lines, will forgive me, if stretched on my bed and basking in the sun, inhaling the life-giving sunshine, I allow myself to indulge in this ecstasy.

*Harijan*, 18-1-1948, p. 526



## CHAPTER 71: FOURFOLD DIVISION OF SOCIETY AND FOUR STAGES OF LIFE

**Everyone** will admit that Hinduism is nothing without the law of *Varna*<sup>1</sup> and *Ashrama*.<sup>2</sup> It would be impossible to find any *Smriti*<sup>3</sup> work of which a large part was not devoted to *Varnashrama Dharma*. This law of *Varna* and *Ashrama* is to be traced to our most ancient scriptures-the *Vedas*, and so no one who calls himself a Hindu may ignore it. It is his duty to study it in all its bearings, and to reject it if it is an excrescence, and to foster it and restore it to its pristine purity, if it represents a universal law.

So far as the law of *Ashrama* is concerned it is extinct, alike in profession and observance. Hinduism lays down four *Ashramas* or stages-the life of a *Brahmachari* (continent student), the life of a *Grihastha* (householder), the life of a *Vanaprastha* (who has retired) and the life of a *Sannyasi* (renunciator)-through which every Hindu has to pass to fulfill his purpose in life. But the first and the third are practically non-existent today, the fourth may be said to be observed in name to a small extent. The second is professed to be observed by all today, but it is observed in name, not in spirit. *Grihasthas* or householders of a kind we are all, inasmuch as we eat and drink and propagate our kind, like all created beings. But in doing so, we fulfill the law of the flesh and not of the spirit. Only those married couples who fulfill the law of the spirit can be said to observe the law of *Grihatha-shrama*. Those who live the mere animal life do not observe the law. The life of householders of today is one of indulgence. And as the four stages represent a ladder of growth and are interdependent, one cannot leap to the stage of a *Vanaprastha* or a *Sannyasi*, unless he or she fulfilled the law of the first two *Ashramas-Brahmacharya* and *Grihastha*. The law of the *Ashrama*, therefore, is a dead letter today. It can be revived only if the law of *Varna*, with which it is intimately interlinked, is revived.

That brings us to a consideration of the law of *Varna*. *Varna* is intimately, if not indissolubly connected with the birth, and the observance of the law of *Varna* means the following on the part of us all of the hereditary and traditional calling

of our forefathers in a spirit of duty. Those who thus fulfill the law of their *Varna* can be counted on one's fingers' ends. This performance of one's hereditary function is done as a matter of duty, though it naturally carries with it the earning of one's livelihood. Thus, the function of a *Brahmana* is to study and to teach the science of *Brahman* (or spiritual truth). He performs the function as he cannot do otherwise, as it is the law of his being. That secures him his livelihood, but he will take it as a gift from God. A *Kshtriya* will perform the function of protecting the people in the same spirit, accepting for his livelihood whatever the people can afford to give him. A *Vaishya* will pursue wealth-producing occupations for the welfare of the community, keeping for himself enough for his own maintenance and rendering the balance to the community in one shape or other. A *Shudra* will perform physical labour in the same spirit of service.

*Varna* is determined by birth, but can be retained only by observing its obligations. One born of *Brahmana* parents will be called a *Brahmana*, but if his life fails to reveal the attributes of a *Brahmana* when he comes of age, he cannot be called a *Brahmana*. He will have fallen from *Brahmanahood*. On the other hand, one who is born not a *Brahmana* but reveals in his conduct the attributes of a *Brahmana* will be regarded as a *Brahmana*, though he will himself disclaim the label.

*Varna* thus conceived is no man-made institution but the law of life universally governing the human family. Fulfillment of the law would make life livable, would spread peace and content, end all clashes and conflicts, put an end to starvation and pauperization, solve the problem of population and even end disease and suffering.

But if *Varna* reveals the law of one's being and thus the duty of one has to perform, it confers no right, and the idea of superiority or inferiority is wholly repugnant to it. All *Varnas* are equal, for the community depends no less on one than on another. Today *Varna* means gradations of high and low. It is a hideous travesty of the original. The law of *Varna* was discovered by our ancestors by stern austerities. They sought to live up to the law to the best of their capacity. We have distorted it today and have made ourselves the laughing stock of the

world. No wonder that we have today amongst the Hindus a section which is bending its energies to a destruction of the institution which in their opinion spells the ruin of the Hindus. And certainly one need have no mercy for the hideous distortion, which means nothing but destruction of Hinduism.

*Harijan*, 28-9-1934, pp. 260-61

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*Varnashrama Dharma* defines man's mission on this earth. He is not born day after day to explore avenues for amassing riches and to explore different means of livelihood; on the contrary man is born in order that he may utilize every atom of his energy for the purpose of knowing his Maker. It restricts him, therefore, for the purpose of holding body and soul together, to the occupation of his forefathers. That and nothing more or nothing less is *Varnashrama Dharma*

*Young India*, 27-10-1927, p. 357

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Though the law of *Varna* is a special discovery of some Hindu seer, it has universal application. Every religion has some distinguishing characteristic, but if it expresses a principle or law, it ought to have universal application. That is how I look at the law of *Varna*. The world may ignore it today but it will have to accept it in the time to come.

The four *Varnas* have been compared in the *Vedas* to the four members of the body, and no simile could be happier. If they are members of one body, how can one be superior or inferior to another? If the members of the body had the power of expression and each of them were to say that it was higher and better than the rest, the body would go to pieces. Even so, our body politic, the body of humanity, would go to pieces, if it were to perpetuate the canker of superiority or inferiority. It is this canker that is at the root of the various ills of our time, especially class-wars and civil strife. It should not be difficult for even the meanest understanding to see that these wars and strifes could not be ended except by the observance of the law of *Varna*. For it ordains that everyone shall fulfill the law of one's being by doing in a spirit of duty and service that to which one is born.

*Harijan*, 28-9-1934, pp. 261-262

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*Varnashrama*, as I interpret it, satisfies the religious, social and economic needs of a community. It satisfies the religious needs, because a whole community accepting the law is free to devote ample time to spiritual perfection. Observance of the law obviates social evils and entirely prevents the killing economic competition. And if it is regarded as a law laying down, not the rights or the privileges of the community governed by it, but their duties, it ensures the fairest possible distribution of wealth, though it may not be an ideal, i.e., strictly equal distribution. Therefore, when people in disregard of the law mistake duties for privileges and try to pick and choose occupations for self-advancement, it leads to confusion of *Varna* and ultimate disruption of society. In this law, there is no question of compelling any person to follow the parental occupation against his or her aptitude that is to say, there can be no compulsion from without as there was none for, perhaps, several thousand years, during which the law of *Varnashrama* worked without interruption. By training, the people had recognized the duty and the justice of the law, and they voluntarily lived under it. Today, nations are living in ignorance and breach of that law and they are suffering for it. The so-called civilized nations have by no means reached a state which they can at all regard with equanimity and satisfaction.

*Harijan*, 4-3-1933, p. 5

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*Varna* has nothing to do with caste. Down with the monster of caste that masquerades in the guise of *Varna*. It is this travesty of *Varna* that has degraded Hinduism and India. Our failure to follow the law of *Varna* is largely responsible both for our economic and spiritual ruin. It is one cause of unemployment and impoverishment, and it is responsible for untouchability and defections from our faith.

*Young India*, 24-11-1927, p. 390

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Man being a social being has to devise some method of social organization. We in India have evolved caste: they in Europe have organized class. Neither has the solidarity and naturalness of a family which perhaps is a God-ordained institution. If caste had produced certain evils, class has not been productive of anything less.

If class helps to conserve certain social virtues, caste does the same in equal, if not greater, degree. The beauty of the caste system is that it does not base itself upon distinctions of wealth possessions. Money, as history has proved, is the greatest disruptive force in the world. Even the sacredness of family ties is not safe against the pollution of wealth, says Shankaracharya. Caste is but an extension of the principle of the family. Both are governed by blood and heredity. Western scientists are busy trying to prove that heredity is an illusion and that *milieu* is everything. The solid experience of many lands goes against the conclusion of these scientists; but even accepting their doctrine of *milieu*, it is easy to prove that *milieu* can be conserved and developed more through caste than through class.

*Young India*, 29-12-1920, p. 2

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1. Colour; one of the four divisions of Hindu society (i.e., Brahman, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra) based on hereditary occupations.
  2. Stage of life; abode of spiritual teacher; place for disciplined community living.
  3. The codes, based on recollection of the Shastras.

## CHAPTER 72: THE ROLE AND STATUS OF WOMAN

My own opinion is that, just as fundamentally man and woman are one, their problem must be one in essence. The soul in both is the same. The two live the same life and have the same feelings. Each is a complement of the other. The one cannot live without the other's active life....

But somehow or other man has dominated woman from ages past, and so woman has developed an inferiority complex. She has believed in the truth of man's interested teaching that she is inferior to him. But the seers among men have recognized her equal status.

Nevertheless there is no doubt that at some point there is bifurcation. Whilst both are fundamentally one, it is also equally true that in the form there is a vital difference between the two. Hence the vocations of the two must also be different. The duty of motherhood, which the vast majority of women will always undertake, requires qualities which man need not possess. She is passive, he is active. She is essentially mistress of the house. He is the bread winner. She is the keeper and distributor of the bread. She is the care-taker in every sense of the term. The art of bringing up the infants of the race is her special and sole prerogative. Without her care the race must become extinct.

In my opinion it is degrading both for man and woman that woman should be called upon or included to forsake the hearth and shoulder the rifle for the protection of that hearth. It is a reversion to barbarity and the beginning of the end. In trying to ride the horse that man rides, she brings herself and him down. The sin will be on man's head for tempting or compelling his companion to desert her special calling. There is as much bravery in keeping one's home in good order and condition as there is in defending it against attack from without. As I have watched millions of peasants in their natural surroundings and as I watch them daily in little Segaon, the natural division of spheres of work has forced itself on my attention. There are no women blacksmiths and carpenters. But men and women work on the fields, the heaviest work being done by the males. The

women keep and manage the homes. They supplement the meagre resources of the family, but man remains the main bread-winner.

The division of the spheres of work being recognized, the general qualities and culture required are practically the same for both the sexes.

My contribution to the great problem lies in my presenting for acceptance Truth and *Ahimsa* in every walk of life, whether for individuals or nations. I have hugged the hope that in this woman will be the unquestioned leader and, having thus found her place in human evolution, will shed inferiority complex....

I have suggested in these columns that woman is the incarnation of *Ahimsa*. *Ahimsa* means infinite love, which again means infinite capacity for suffering. Who but woman, the mother of man, shows this capacity in the largest measure? She shows it as she carries the infant and feeds it during nine months and derives joy in the suffering involved. What can beat the suffering caused by the pangs of labour? But she forgets them in the joy of creation. Who again suffers daily so that her babe may wax from day to day? Let her transfer that love to the whole of humanity, let her forget she ever was or can be the object of man's lust. And she will occupy her proud position by the side of man as his mother, maker and silent leader. It is given to her to teach the art of peace to the warring world thirsting for that nectar. She can become the leader in *Satyagraha* which does not require the learning that books give but does require the stout heart that comes from suffering and faith.

My good nurse in the Sassoon Hospital, Poona, as I was lying on a sick-bed years ago, told me the story of a woman who refused to take chloroform because she would not risk the life of the babe she was carrying. She had to undergo a painful operation. The only anaesthetic she had was her love for the babe, to save whom no suffering was too great. Let not women, who can count many such heroines among them, ever despise their sex or deplore that they were not born men. The contemplation of that heroine often makes me envy woman the status that is hers, if she only knew. There is as much reason for man to wish that he was born a woman as for woman to do otherwise. But the wish is fruitless. Let us be happy

in the state to which we are born and do the duty for which nature has destined us.

*Harijan*, 24-2-1940, pp. 13-14

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As Nature has made men and women different, it is necessary to maintain a difference between the education of the two. True, they are equals in life, but their functions differ. It is woman's right to rule the home. Man is master outside it. Man is the earner, woman saves and spends. Woman looks after the feeding of the child. She shapes its future. She is responsible for building its character. She is her children's educator, and hence, mother to the Nation. Man is not father (in that sense). After a certain period, a father ceases to influence his son; the mother never abdicates her place. The son, even after attaining manhood, will play with the mother even as the child does. He cannot do that with his father.

If this is the scheme of Nature, and it is just as it should be, woman should not have to earn her living. A state of affairs in which women have to work as telegraph clerks, typists or compositors can be, I think, no good, such a people must be bankrupt and living on their capital.

Hence just as, on the one hand, it is wrong to keep women in ignorance and under suppression; so, on the other, it is a sign of decadence and it is tyrannical to burden them with work which is ordinarily done by men.

*The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. XIV, p. 31

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I do not need to be a girl to be wild over man's atrocities towards woman. I count the law of inheritance among the least in the list. The Sarda Bill deals with an evil far greater than the one which the law of inheritance connotes. But I am uncompromising in the matter of woman's rights. In my opinion she should labour under no legal disability not suffered by man. I should treat the daughters and sons on a footing of perfect equality. As women begin to realize their strength, as they must in proportion to the education they receive, they will naturally resent the glaring inequalities to which they are subjected.

But to remove legal inequalities will be a mere palliative. The root of the evil lies much deeper than most people realize. It lies in man's greed of power and fame and deeper still in mutual lust. Man has always desired power. Ownership of property gives this power. Man hankers also after posthumous fame based on power. This cannot be had, if property is progressively cut up in pieces as it must be if all the posterity become equal co-sharers. Hence the descent of property for the most part on the eldest male issue. Most women are married. And they are co-sharers, in spite of the law being against them, in their husband's power and privileges. They delight in being ladies-this and what not simply for the fact of being the wives of particular lords. Though therefore they may vote for radical reform in academic discussions over inequalities, when it comes to acting up to their vote, they will be found to be unwilling to part with the privileges.

Whilst therefore I would always advocate the repeal of all legal disqualifications, I should have the enlightened women of India to deal with the root cause. Woman is the embodiment of sacrifice and suffering, and her advent to public life should therefore result in purifying it, in restraining unbridled ambition and accumulation of property. Let them know that millions of men have no property to transmit to posterity. Let us learn from them that it is better for the few to have no ancestral property at all...

The privilege of the awakened women should be to spot and eradicate age-long evils.

*Young India*, 17-10-1929, p. 340

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Man, the law-giver, will have to pay a dreadful penalty for the degradation he has imposed upon the so-called weaker sex. When woman, freed from man's snares, rises to the full height and rebels against man's legislation and institutions designed by him, her rebellion, no doubt non-violent will be nonetheless effective.

*Young India*, 16-4-1925, p. 133

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Man has regarded woman as his tool. She has learnt to be his tool, and in the end found it easy and pleasurable to be such, because when one drags another in his fall the descent is easy.

*Harijan*, 25-1-1936, p. 396

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Of all the evils for which man has made himself responsible, none to me, is so degrading, so shocking or so brutal as his abuse of the better half of humanity, the female sex, not the weaker sex. It is the nobler of the two, for it is even today the embodiment of sacrifice, silent suffering, humility, faith and knowledge.

*Young India*, 15-9-1921, p. 292

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To call woman the weaker sex is a libel; it is man's injustice to woman. If by strength is meant brute strength, then indeed is woman less brute than man. If by strength is meant moral power, than woman is immeasurably man's superior. Has she not greater intuition, is she not more self-sacrificing, has she not greater powers of endurance, has she not greater courage? Without her man could not be. If non-violence is the law of our being, the future is with woman.... Who can make a more effective appeal to the heart than woman?

*Young India*, 10-4-1930, p. 121

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I believe in the proper education of woman. But I do believe that woman will not make her contribution to the world by mimicking or running a race with man. She can run the race, but she will not rise to the great heights she is capable of by mimicking man. She has to be the complement of man.

*Harijan*, 27-2-1937, p. 19

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Woman, I hold, is the personification of self-sacrifice, but unfortunately today she does not realize what a tremendous advantage she has over man. As Tolstoy used to say, they are labouring under the hypnotic influence of man... If they

would realize the strength of non-violence they would not consent to be called the weaker sex.

*Young India*, 14-1-1932, p. 19

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Refuse to be the slaves of your own whims and fancies, and the slaves of men. Refuse to decorate yourselves, don't go in for scents and lavender waters; if you (women) want to give out the proper scent, it must come out of your heart, and then you will captivate not man, but humanity. It is your birth-right. Man is born of woman, he is flesh of her flesh and bone of her bone. Come to your own and deliver your message again.

*Young India*, 8-12-1927, p. 406

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Woman must cease to consider herself the object of man's lust. The remedy is more in her hands than man's. She must refuse to adorn herself for men, including her husband, if she will be an equal partner with man. I cannot imagine Sita even wasting a single moment on pleasing Rama by physical charms.

*Young India*, 21-7-1921, p. 229

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The woman who knows and fulfils her duty realizes her dignified status. She is the queen, not the slave, of the household over which she presides.

*Harijan*, 12-10-1934, p. 277

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Equality of sexes does not mean equality of occupations. There may be no legal bar against a woman hunting or wielding a lance. But she instinctively recoils from a function that belongs to man. Nature has created sexes as complements of each other. Their functions are defined as are their forms.

*Harijan*, 2-12-1939, p. 359

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I make no distinction between man and woman. Woman should feel just as independent as man. Bravery is not man's monopoly.

*Harijan*, 5-1-1947, p. 478

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Today few women take part in politics and most of these do not do independent thinking. They are content to carry out their parents' or their husbands' behests. Realizing their dependence, they cry out for women's rights. Instead of doing this, however, women workers should enrol women as voters, impart or have imparted to them practical education, teach them to think independently, release them from the chains of caste that bind them, so as to bring about a change in them which will compel men to realize woman's strength and capacity for sacrifice and give her places of honour.

*Harijan*, 21-4-1946, p. 96

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Therefore, I advise women to resort to civil rebellion against all undesirable and unworthy restraints. All restraints to be beneficial must be voluntary. There is no possibility of harm resulting from civil rebellion. It presupposes purity and reasoned resistance.

*Harijan*, 23-3-1947, p. 80

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Women may not look for protection to men. They must rely on their own strength and purity of character and on God.

*Harijan*, 15-9-1946, p. 312

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Man should learn to give place to women and a community or country in which women are not honoured cannot be considered as civilized.

*Harijan*, 11-1-1948, p. 508

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Chastity is not a hot-house growth. It cannot be superimposed. It cannot be protected by the surrounding wall of the *purdah*.<sup>1</sup> It must grow from within, and to be worth anything, it must be capable of withstanding every unsought temptation.

*Young India*, 3-2-1927, p. 37

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Women are special custodians of all that is pure and religious in life. Conservative by nature, if they are slow to shed superstitious habits, they are also slow to give up all that is pure and noble in life.

*Harijan*, 25-3-1933, p. 2

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I do believe that it is woman's mission to exhibit *Ahimsa* at its highest and best... For woman is more fitted than man to make explorations and take bolder action in *Ahimsa*... For the courage of self-sacrifice woman is any day superior to man, as I believe man is to woman for the courage of the brute.

*Harijan*, 5-11-1938, p. 317

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1. Veil

## CHAPTER 73: THE IDEAL OF MARRIAGE

Absolute renunciation, absolute *Brahmacharya*, is the ideal state. If you dare not think of it, marry by all means, but even then live a life of self-control.

*Harijan*, 7-9-1935, p. 234

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It is wholly wrong of parents to force marriage on their daughters. It is also wrong to keep their daughters unfit for earning their living. No parent has a right to turn a daughter out on to the street for refusal to marry.

*Harijan*, 15-9-1946, pp. 311-12

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Marriage is a natural thing in life, and to consider it derogatory in any sense is wholly wrong.... The idea is to look upon marriage as a sacrament, and, therefore, to lead a life of self-restraint in the married estate.

*Harijan*, 22-3-1942, p. 88

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The ideal that marriage aims at is that of spiritual union though the physical. The human love that it incarnates is intended to serve as a stepping stone to divine or universal love.

*Young India*, 21-5-1931, p. 115

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Rightly speaking, the true purpose of marriage should be and is intimate friendship and companionship between man and woman. There is in it no room for sexual satisfaction. That marriage is no marriage which takes place for the satisfaction of the sex desire. That satisfaction is a denial of true friendship.

*Harijan*, 7-7-1946, p. 214

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Those who see in Sita a willing slave under Rama do not realize the loftiness of either her independence or Rama's consideration for her in everything. Sita was no helpless, weak woman incapable of protection herself or her honour.

*Harijan*, 2-5-1936, p. 93

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The wife is not the husband's bondslave, but his companion and his help-mate, and an equal partner in all his joys and sorrows-as free as the husband to choose her own path.

*An Autobiography*, (1966), p. 18

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I hold that the right education in this country is to teach woman the art of saying 'no' even to her husband, to teach her that it is no part of her duty to become a mere tool or a doll in her husband's hands. She has rights as well as duties.

*Harijan*, 2-5-1936, p. 93

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A correspondent laid down the following conditions of marriage: (1) Mutual attraction or love; (2) Eugenic fitness; (3) Approval and consent of the respective families concerned; and consideration for the interest of the social order to which one belongs; (4) Spiritual development.

I accept generally the conditions for an ideal marriage enumerated by my correspondent. But I would change their order of importance and put 'love' last in the list. By giving it the first place, the other conditions are liable to be overshadowed by it altogether and rendered more or less nugatory. Therefore, spiritual development ought to be given the first place in the choice for marriage. Service should come next, family considerations and the interest of the social order should have the third place, and mutual attraction or 'love' the fourth and last place. This means that 'love' alone, where the other four conditions are not fulfilled, should not be held as a valid reason for marriage. At the same time, marriage where there is no love should equally be ruled out even though all the other conditions are fully complied with. I should score out the condition of

eugenic fitness, because the begetting of offspring being the central purpose of marriage eugenic fitness cannot be treated merely as a 'condition', it is the *sine qua non* of marriage.

*Harijan*, 5-6-1937, pp. 133-34

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Manu has described the first child as *dharmaja* -born out of a sense of duty, and children born after the first as *kamaja*-carnally born. That gives in a nutshell the law of sexual relations.

*Harijan*, 24-4-1937, p. 83

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Innumerable persons eat in order to satisfy the palate, but such indulgence does not, therefore, become one's duty. Very few eat to live, but they are the ones who really know the law of eating. Similarly, those only really marry who marry in order to experience the purity and sanctity of the marriage tie and thereby realize the divinity within.

*Harijan*, 7-7-1946, p. 214

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You will guard your wife's honour and be not her master, but her true friend. You will hold her body and her soul as sacred as I trust she will hold your body and your soul. To that end you will have to live a life of prayerful toil, and simplicity and self-restraint. Let not either of you regard another as the object of his or her lust.

*Young India*, 2-2-1928, p. 35

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I admit that between husband and wife there should be no secrets from one another.... I hold that husband and wife merge in each other. They are one in two or two in one.

*Harijan*, 9-3-1940, p. 30

What is *Kanyadan*<sup>1</sup> in the case of little children? Has a father any rights of property over his children? He is their protector not owner. And he forfeits the privilege of protection when he abuses it by seeking to barter away the liberty of his ward.

The least that a parent, who has so abused his trust as to give in marriage an infant to an old man in his dotage or to a boy hardly out of his teens, can do, is to purge himself of his sin by remarrying the daughter when she becomes widowed. As I have said, such marriages should be declared null and void from the beginning.

*Young India*, 11-11-1926, p. 388

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The system has to go. Marriage must cease to be a matter of arrangement made by parents for money. The system is intimately connected with caste. So long as the choice is restricted to a few hundred young men or young women of a particular caste, the system will persist no matter what is said against it. The girls or boys or their parents will have to break the bonds of caste if the evil is to be eradicated... All this means education of a character that will revolutionize the mentality of the youth of the nation.

*Harijan*, 23-5-1936, p.117

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...A strong public opinion should be created in condemnation of the degrading practice of dowry and young men who soil their fingers with such ill-gotten gold should be ex-communicated from society. Parents of girls should cease to be dazzled by English degrees and should not hesitate to travel outside their little castes and provinces to secure true, gallant young men for their daughters.

*Young India*, 21-6-1928, p. 207

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If we would be pure, if we would save Hinduism, we must rid ourselves of this poison of enforced widowhood. The reform must begin by those who have girl-widows taking courage in both their hands and seeing that the child-widows in

their charge are duly and well married - not remarried. They were never really married.

*Young India*, 5-8-1926, p. 276

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1. Giving away of daughter in marriage

## CHAPTER 74: CHILDREN

If I am to identify myself with the grief of the least in India, aye, if I have the power, the least in the world, let me identify myself with the sins of the little ones who are under my care. And so doing in all humility, I hope someday to see God-Truth-face to face.

*Young India*, 3-12-1925, p. 422

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Children inherit the qualities of the parents, no less than their physical features. Environment does play an important part, but the original capital on which a child starts life is inherited from its ancestors. I have also seen children successfully surmounting the effects of an evil inheritance. That is due to purity being an inherent attribute of the soul.

*An Autobiography*, (1966), p. 234

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A real property that a parent can transmit to all equally is his or her character and educational facilities. Parents should seek to make their sons and daughters self-reliant, well able to earn an honest livelihood by the sweat of the brow.

*Young India*, 17-10-1929, p. 340

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If we are to reach real peace in this world and if we are to carry on a real war against war, we shall have to begin with children; and if they will grow up in their natural innocence, we won't have to struggle, we won't have to pass fruitless idle resolutions. But we shall go from love to love and peace to peace, until at last all the corners of the world are covered with that peace and love for which, consciously or unconsciously, the whole world is hungering.

*Young India*, 19-11-1931, p. 361

## CHAPTER 75: BIRTH-CONTROL

I think it is the height of ignorance to believe that the sexual act is an independent function, necessary like sleeping or eating. The world depends for its existence on the act of generation, and as the world is the play-ground of God and a reflection of His glory, the act of generation should be controlled for the ordered growth of the world. He who realizes this will control his lust at any cost, equip himself with the knowledge necessary of the physical, mental and spiritual well-being of his progeny, and give the benefit of that knowledge to posterity.

*An Autobiography*, (1966), p. 153

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The union is meant not for pleasure, but for bringing forth progeny. And union is a crime when the desire for progeny is absent.

*Young India*, 12-3-1925, p. 88

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Once the idea that the only and grand function of the sexual organ is generation, possesses man and woman, union for any other purpose they will hold as criminal waste of the vital fluid and the consequent excitement caused to man and woman as an equally criminal waste of energy.

*Harijan*, 21-3-1936, p. 48

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Sex urge is a fine and noble thing. There is nothing to be ashamed of in it. But it is meant only for the act of creation. Any other use of it is a sin against God and humanity.

*Harijan*, 28-3-1936, p. 53

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It is wrong and immoral to seek to escape the consequences of one's acts. It is good for a person who over-eats to have an ache and a fast. It is bad for him to indulge his appetite and then escape the consequence by taking tonics or other

medicine. It is still worse for a person to indulge in his animal passions and escape the consequences of his acts. Nature is relentless and will have full revenge for any such violation of her laws. Moral results can only be produced by moral restraints. All other restraints defeat the very purpose for which they are intended.

*Young India*, 12-3-1925, pp. 88-89

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There can be no two opinions about the necessity of birth-control. But the only method handed down from ages past is self-control or *Brahmacharya*. It is an infallible sovereign remedy doing good to those who practise it. And medical men will earn the gratitude of mankind, if instead of devising artificial means of birth control, they will find out the means of self-control....

Artificial methods are like putting premium upon vice. They make man and woman reckless. And respectability that is being given to the methods must hasten the dissolution of the restraints that public opinion puts upon one. Adoption of artificial methods must result in imbecility and nervous prostration. The remedy will be found to be worse than the disease.

*Young India*, 12-3-1925, pp. 88-89

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If it is contended that birth-control is necessary for the nation because of over-population, I dispute the proposition. It has never been proved. In my opinion, by a proper land system, better agriculture and a supplementary industry, this country is capable of supporting twice as many people as there are in it today.

*Young India*, 2-4-1925, p. 118

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The bogey of increasing birth-rate is not a new thing. It has been often trotted out. Increase in population is not and ought not to be regarded as a calamity to be avoided. Its regulation or restriction by artificial methods is a calamity of the first grade, whether we know it or not. It is bound to degrade the race if, it becomes universal which, thank God, it is never likely to be. Pestilence, war and

famines are cursed antidotes against cursed lust which is responsible for unwanted children. If we would avoid this threefold curse, we would avoid too the curse of unwanted children by the sovereign remedy of self-control. The evil consequences of artificial methods are being seen by discerning men even now. Without, however, encroaching upon the moral domain, let me say that propagation of the race rabbit-wise must undoubtedly be stopped; but not so as to bring greater evils in its train. It should be stopped by methods which in themselves ennable the race. In other words, it is all a matter of proper education which would embrace every department of life; and dealing with one curse will take in its orbit all the others. A way is not to be avoided because it is upward and therefore uphill. Man's upward progress necessarily means ever-increasing difficulty, which is to be welcomed.

*Harijan*, 31-3-1946, p. 66

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Man must choose either of the two courses, the upward or the downward; but as he has the brute in him, he will more easily choose the downward course than the upward, especially when the downward course is presented to him in a beautiful garb. Man easily capitulates when sin is presented in the garb of virtue, and that is what Marie Stopes and others are doing.

*Harijan*, 1-2-1935, p. 410

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This little globe of ours is not a toy of yesterday. It has not suffered from the weight of over-population through its age of countless millions. How can it be that the truth has suddenly dawned upon some people that it is in danger of perishing of shortage of food unless the birth-rate is checked through the use of contraceptives?

*Harijan*, 14-9-1935, p. 244

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I urge the advocates of artificial methods to consider the consequences. Any large use of the methods is likely to result in the dissolution of the marriage bond

and in free love. If a man may indulge in animal passion for the sake of it, what is he to do whilst he is, say, away from his home for any length of time, or when he is engaged as a soldier in a protracted war or when he is widowed, or when his wife is too ill to permit him the indulgence without injury to her health, notwithstanding the use of artificial methods?

*Young India*, 2-4-1925, P. 118

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To ask India's women to take to contraceptives is, to say the least, putting the cart before the horse. The first thing is to free her from mental slavery, to teach her the sacredness of her body, and to teach her the dignity of national service and the service of humanity.

*Harijan*, 2-5-1936, p. 93

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It is the philanthropic motive that no doubt impels many birth-control reformers to a whirlwind campaign in favour of the use of contraceptives. I invite them to contemplate the ruinous consequences of their misplaced philanthropy. Those whom they want to reach never use them in any appreciable numbers. Those who ought not to use them will, without doubt, use them to the undoing of themselves and their partners. This would not matter in the least if the use of contraceptives was incontestably proved to be right physically and morally.

*Harijan*, 12-9-1936, p. 244

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...I have felt that during the years still left to me if I can drive home to women's minds the truth that they are free, we will have no birth-control problem in India. If they will only learn to say 'no' to their husbands when they approach them carnally...all will be well... The real problem is that they do not want to resist them... I want woman to learn the primary right of resistance. She thinks now that she has not got it.

*Harijan*, 25-1-1936, p. 396

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It is a sin to bring forth unwanted children, but I think it is a greater sin to avoid the consequences of one's own action. It simply unmans man.

*Harijan*, 7-9-1935, p. 234

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And so is a woman guilty of criminal folly who will receive the seed in her life-producing field with the deliberate intention of letting it run to waste. Both he and she will be judged guilty of misuse of the talents given to them and they will be dispossessed of what they have been given.

*Harijan*, 28-3-1936, p. 53

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I suggest that it is cowardly to refuse to face the consequences of one's acts. Persons who use contraceptives will never learn the virtue of self-restraint. They will not need it. Self-indulgence with contraceptives may prevent the coming of children but will sap the vitality of both men and women, perhaps more of men than of women. It is unmanly to refuse battle with the devil.

*Harijan*, 17-4-1937, p. 77

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I know what havoc secret vice has played among school boys and school girls. The introduction of contraceptives under the name of science and the *imprimatur* of known leaders of society has intensified the complication and made the task of reformers who work for purity of social life well-nigh impossible...

*Harijan*, 28-3-1936, p. 53

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I know that there are modern women who advocate these methods. But I have little doubt that the vast majority of women will reject them as inconsistent with their dignity. If man means well by her, let him exercise control over himself. It is not she who tempts. In reality, man being the aggressor is the real culprit and the tempter.

*Young India*, 2-4-1925, p. 118

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And my plea based on positive experience is that even as truth and *Ahimsa* are not merely for the chosen few but for the whole of humanity, to be practised in daily life, so, exactly is self-control not merely for a few *Mahatamas*<sup>1</sup> but for the whole of humanity. And even as, because many people will be untruthful and violent, humanity may not lower its standard, so also, though many, even the majority, may not respond to the message of self-control, we may not lower our standard.

*Harijan*, 30-5-1936, p. 126

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1. Great Souls

## SECTION XI: BASIC EDUCATION AND STUDENTS

### CHAPTER 76: BASIC EDUCATION

The ancient aphorism,<sup>1</sup> "Education is that which liberates", is as true today as it was before. Education here does not mean mere spiritual knowledge, nor does not liberation signify only spiritual liberation after death. Knowledge includes all training that is useful for the service of mankind and liberation means freedom from all manner of servitude even in the present life. Servitude is of two kinds: slavery to domination from outside and to one's own artificial needs. The knowledge acquired in the pursuit of this ideal alone constitutes true study.

*Harijan*, 10-3-1946, p. 38

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Persistent questioning and healthy inquisitiveness are the first requisite for acquiring learning of any kind. Inquisitiveness should be tempered by humility and respectful regard for the teacher. It must not degenerate into impudence. The latter is the enemy of the receptivity of mind. There can be no knowledge without humility and the will to learn.

*Harijan*, 8-9-1946, p. 306

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Education must be of a new type for the sake of the creation of a new world.

*Harijan*, 19-1-1947, p. 494

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Every one of us has good inherent in the soul, it needs to be drawn out by the teachers, and only those teachers can perform this sacred function whose own character is unsullied, who are always ready to learn and to grow from perfection to perfection.

*Harijan*, 7-11-1936, p. 309

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Useful manual labour, intelligently performed is the means *par excellence* for developing the intellect... A balanced intellect presupposes a harmonious growth of body, mind and soul... An intellect that is developed through the medium of socially useful labour will be an instrument for service and will not easily be led astray or fall into devious paths.

*Harijan*, 8-9-1946, p. 306

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Craft, art, health and education should all be integrated into one scheme. *Nai Talim* is a beautiful blend of all the four and covers the whole education of the individual from the time of conception to the moment of death... Instead of regarding craft and industry as different from education, I will regard the former as the medium for the latter.

*Harijan*, 10-11-1946, p. 394

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Our system of (Basic) education leads to the development of the mind, body and soul. The ordinary system cares only for the mind.

*Harijan*, 9-11-1947, p. 401

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The teachers earn what they take. It stands for the art of living. Therefore, both the teacher and the pupil have no produce in the very act of teaching and learning. It enriches life from the commencement. It makes the nation independent of the search for employment.

*Harijan*, 11-5-1947, p. 145

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It is popularly and correctly described as education through handicrafts. This is part of the truth. The root of this new education goes much deeper. It lies in the application of truth and love in every variety of human activity, whether in individual life or a corporate one. The notion of education through handicrafts rises from the contemplation of truth and love permeating life's activities. Love requires that true education should be easily accessible to all, and should be of

use to every villager in his daily life. Such education is not derived from, nor does it depend upon books. It has no relation to sectional religion. If it can be called religious, it is universal religion from which all sectional religions are derived. Therefore, it is learnt from the Book of Life which costs nothing and which cannot be taken away from one by any force on earth.

*Harijan*, 21-12-1947, p. 480

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I hold that, as the largest part of our time is devoted to labour for earning our bread, our children must from their infancy be taught the dignity of such labour. Our children should not be so taught as to despise labour. There is no reason why a peasant's son, after having gone to school, should become useless as he does become, as an agricultural labourer.

*Young India*, 1-9-1921, p. 277

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Literary education should follow the education of the hand—the one gift that visibly distinguishes man from beast. It is a superstition to think that the fullest development of man is impossible without a knowledge of the art of reading and writing. That knowledge undoubtedly adds grace to life, but it is in no way indispensable for man's moral, physical, or material growth.

*Harijan*, 8-3-1935, p. 28

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Man is neither mere intellect, nor the gross animal body, nor the heart or soul alone. A proper and harmonious combination of all the three is required for the making of the whole man and constitutes the true economics of education...

I hold that true education of the intellect can only come through a proper exercise and training of the bodily organs, e.g., hands, feet, eyes, nose, etc. In other words an intelligent use of the bodily organs in a child provide the best and quickest way of developing his intellect. But unless the development of the mind and body goes hand in hand with a corresponding awakening of the soul, the former alone would prove to be poor lop-sided affair. By spiritual training I mean

education of the heart. A proper and all-round development of the mind, therefore, can take place only when it proceeds *pari passu* with the education of the physical and spiritual faculties of the child. They constitute an indivisible whole. According to this theory, therefore, it would be a gross fallacy to suppose that they can be developed piecemeal or independently of one another.

*Harijan*, 8-5-1937, p. 104

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By education I mean an all-round drawing out of the best in child and man-body, mind and spirit. Literacy is not the end of education nor even the beginning. It is only one of the means whereby man and woman can be educated. Literacy in itself is no education. I would therefore begin the child's education by teaching it a useful handicraft and enabling it to produce from moment it begins its training. Thus every school can be made self-supporting, the condition being that the State takes over the manufactures of these schools.

I hold that the highest development of the mind and the soul is possible under such a system of education. Only every handicraft has to be taught not merely mechanically as is done today but scientifically, i.e., the child should know the why and the wherefore of every process. I am not writing this without some confidence, because it has the backing of experience. This method is being adopted more or less completely wherever spinning is being taught to workers. I have myself taught sandal-making and even spinning on these lines with good results. This method does not exclude a knowledge of history and geography. But I find that this is the best taught by transmitting such general information by word of mouth. One imparts ten times as much in this manner as by regarding and writing. The signs of the alphabet may be taught later when the pupil has learnt to distinguish wheat from the chaff and when he has somewhat developed his or her tastes. This is a revolutionary proposal, but it saves immense labour and enables a student to acquire in one year what he may take much longer to learn. This means all round economy. Of course the pupil learns mathematics whilst he is learning his handicraft.

*Harijan*, 31-7-1937, p. 197

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Given the right kind of teachers, our children will be taught the dignity of labour and learn to regard it as an integral part and a means of their intellectual growth, and to realize that it is patriotic to pay for their training through their labour. The core of my suggestion is that handicrafts are to be taught, not merely for productive work, but for developing the intellect of the pupils. Surely, if the State takes charge of the children between seven and fourteen, and trains their bodies and minds through productive labour, the public schools must be frauds and teachers idiots, if they cannot become self-supporting.

*Harijan*, 11-9-1937, p. 256

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When it is remembered that the primary aim of all education is, or should be, the moulding of the character of pupils, a teacher who has a character to keep need not lose heart.

*Harijan*, 1-2-1933, p. 3

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In the schools I advocate, boys have all that boys learn in high schools less English but plus drill, music, drawing, and of course, a vocation.

*Harijan*, 18-9-1937, p. 265

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I am a firm believer in the principle of free and compulsory primary education for India. I also hold that we shall realize this only by teaching the children a useful vocation and utilizing it as a means for cultivating their mental, physical and spiritual faculties. Let no one consider these economic calculations in connection with education as sordid or out of place. There is nothing essentially sordid about economic calculations.

*Harijan*, 9-10-1937, p. 292

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If we want to impart education best suited to the needs of villagers, we should take the *Vidyapith*<sup>2</sup> to the villages. We should convert it into a training school in order that we might be able to give practical training to teachers in terms of the needs of villagers. You cannot instruct the teachers in the needs of villagers through a training school in a city. Nor can you so interest them in the condition of villages. To interest city-dwellers in villages and make them live in them is no easy task. I am finding daily confirmation of this in Segao. I cannot give you the assurance that our year's stay in Segao has made of us villagers or that we have become one with them for the common good.

Then as to primary education, my confirmed opinion is that the commencement of training by teaching the alphabet and reading and writing hampers their intellectual growth. I would not teach them the alphabet till they have had an elementary knowledge of history, geography, mental arithmetic and the art (say) of spinning. Through these three I should develop their intelligence. Question may be asked how intelligence can be developed through the *takli*<sup>3</sup> or the spinning wheel. It can to a marvellous degree if it is not taught merely mechanically. When you tell a child the reason for each process, when you explain the mechanism of the *takli* or the wheel, when you give him the history of cotton and its connection with civilization itself and take him to the village field where it is grown, and teach him to count the rounds he spins and the method of finding the evenness and strength of his yarn, you hold his interest and simultaneously train his hands, his eyes and his mind. I should give six months to this preliminary training. The child is probably now ready for learning how to read the alphabet, and when he is able to do so rapidly, he is ready to learn simple drawing, and when he has learnt to draw geometrical figures and the figures of the birds etc., he will draw, not scrawl the figures of the alphabet. I can recall the days of my childhood when I was being taught the alphabet. I know what a drag it was. Nobody cared why my intellect was rusting. I consider writing as a fine art. We kill it by imposing the alphabet on little children and making it the beginning of learning. Thus we do violence to the art of writing and stunt the growth of the child when we seek to teach him the alphabet before its time.

What kind of vocations are the fittest for being taught to children in urban schools? There is no hard and fast rule about it. But my reply is clear. I want to resuscitate the villages of India. Today our villages have become a mere appendage to the cities. They exist, as it were, to be exploited by the latter and depend on the latter's sufferance. This is unnatural. It is only when the cities realize the duty of making an adequate return to the villages for the strength and sustenance which they derive from them, instead of selfishly exploiting them that a healthy and moral relationship between the two will spring up. And if the city children are to play their part in this great and noble work of social reconstruction, the vocations, through which they are to receive their education ought to be directly related to the requirements of the villages. So far as I can see the various processes of cotton manufacture from ginning and cleaning of cotton to the spinning of yarn, answer this test as nothing else does. Even today cotton is grown in the villages and is ginned and spun and converted into cloth in the cities. But the chain of process which cotton undergoes in the mills from the beginning to the end constitutes a huge tragedy of waste in men, materials and mechanical power.

My plan to impart primary education through the medium of village handicrafts like spinning and carding, etc., is thus conceived as the spearhead of a silent social revolution fraught with the most far-reaching consequences. It will provide a healthy and moral basis of relationship between the city and the village and thus go a long way toward eradicating some of the worst evils of the present social insecurity and poisoned relationship between the classes. It will check the progressive decay of our villages and lay the foundation of a juster social order in which there is no unnatural division between the 'haves' and 'have-nots' and everybody is assured of a living wage and the right to freedom. And all this would be accomplished without the horrors of a bloody class war or a colossal capital expenditure such as would be involved in the mechanization of a vast continent like India. Nor would it entail a helpless dependence on foreign

imported machinery or technical skill. Lastly, by obviating the necessity for highly specialized talent, it would place the destiny of the masses, as it were, in their own hands. But who will bell the cat? Will the city-folk listen to me at all? Or, will mine remain a mere cry in the wilderness? Replies to these and similar questions will depend more on lovers of education living in cities than on me.

*Harijan*, 9-10-1937, p. 293

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As to the necessity and value of regarding the teaching of village handicrafts as the pivot and centre of education I have no manner of doubt. The method adopted in the institutions in India I do not call education, i.e., drawing out the best in the man, but a debauchery of the mind. It informs the mind anyhow, whereas the method of training the mind through village handicrafts from the very beginning as the central fact would promote the real, disciplined development of the mind resulting in conservation of the intellectual energy and indirectly also the spiritual.

*Harijan*, 5-6-1937, p. 131

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In my scheme of things the hand will handle tools before it draws or traces the writing. The eyes will read the pictures of letters and words as they will know other things in life, and the ears will catch the names and meanings of things and sentences. The whole training will be natural, responsive, and therefore the quickest and the cheapest in the land. The children of my school will therefore read much more quickly than they will write. And when they write they will not produce daubs as I do even now (thanks to my teachers) but they will trace correct letters even as they will trace correct figures of the objects they may see. If the schools of my conception ever come into being, I make bold to say that they will vie with the most advanced schools in quickness, so far as reading is concerned, and even writing if it is common ground that the writing must be correct and not incorrect as now is in the vast majority of cases.

*Harijan*, 28-8-1937, p. 225

The Basic education is meant to transform village children into model villagers. It is principally designed for them. The inspiration for it has come from the villages. Congressmen who want to build up the structure of Swaraj from its very foundation dare not neglect the children. Foreign rule has unconsciously, though none the less surely, begun with the children in the field of education. Primary education is a farce designed without regard to the wants of the India of the villages and for that matter even of the cities. Basic education links the children, whether of the cities or the villages, to all that is best and lasting in India. It develops both the body and the mind, and keeps the child rooted to the soil with a glorious vision of the future in the realization of which he or she begins to take his or her share from the very commencement of his or her career in school.

*Constructive Programme, (1961), p. 18*

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The utterly false idea that intelligence can be developed only through book-reading should give place to the truth that the quickest development of the mind can be achieved by artisan's work being learnt in a scientific manner. True development of the mind commences immediately the apprentice is taught at every step why a particular manipulation of the hand or a tool is required. The problem of the unemployment of students can be solved without difficulty, if they will rank themselves among the common labourers.

*Harijan, 9-1-1937, p. 386*

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We have up to now concentrated on stuffing children's minds with all kinds information, without ever thinking of stimulating and developing them. Let us now cry a halt and concentrate on educating the child properly through manual work, not as a side activity, but as the prime means of intellectual training....

You have to train the boys in one occupation or another. Round this special occupation you will train up his mind, his body, his handwriting, his artistic sense, and so on. He will be master of the craft he learns.

*Harijan*, 18-9-1937, p. 261

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Literary training by itself adds not an inch to one's moral height and that character-building is independent of literary training.

*Young India*, 1-6-1921, p. 172

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Let students realize that learning without courage is like a waxen statue beautiful to look at but bound to melt at the least touch of a hot substance.

*Young India*, 12-7-1928, p. 236

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Music should form part of the syllabus of primary education. I heartily endorse this proposition. The modulation of the voice is as necessary as the training of the hand. Physical drill, handicrafts, drawing and music should go hand in hand order to draw the best out of the boys and girls and create in them real interest in their tuition.

*Harijan*, 11-9-1937, p. 250

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A wise parent allows the children to make mistakes. It is good for them once in a while to burn their fingers.

*Mahatma Gandhi-The Last Phase*, Vol. 1, (1956), p. 44

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I attach the greatest importance to primary education which according to my conception should be equal to the present matriculation less English. If all the collegians were all of a sudden to forget their knowledge, the loss sustained by the sudden lapse of the memory of say a few lakhs of collegians would be as nothing compared to the loss that the nation has sustained and is sustaining through the ocean of darkness that surrounds three hundred millions.

*Harijan*, 31-7-1937, p. 197

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If such education is given, the direct result will be that it will be self-supporting. But the test of success is not its self-supporting character, but that the whole man has been drawn out through the teaching of the handicraft in a scientific manner. In fact I would reject a teacher who would promise to make it self-supporting under any circumstances. The self-supporting part will be the logical corollary of the fact that the pupil has learnt the use of every one of his faculties. If a boy who works at a handicraft for three hours a day will surely earn his keep, how much more a boy who adds to the work a development of his mind and soul!

*Harijan*, 11-6-1938, p. 143

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English is today admittedly the world language. I would therefore accord it a place as a second, optional language, not in the school, but in the university course. That can only be for the select few - not for the millions... It is our mental slavery that makes us feel that we cannot do without English. I can never subscribe to that defeatist creed.

*Harijan*, 25-8-1946, p. 284

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I must not be understood to decry English or its noble literature. The columns of the *Harijan* are sufficient evidence of my love of English. But the nobility of its literature cannot avail the Indian nation any more than the temperate climate or the scenery of England can avail her. India has to flourish in her own climate, and scenery, and her own literature, even though all the three may be inferior to the English climate, scenery and literature. We and our children must build on our own heritage. If we borrow another, we impoverish our own. We can never grow on foreign victuals. I want the nation to have the treasures contained in that language and, for that matter, in other languages of the world, through its own vernaculars. I do not need to learn Bengali in order to know the beauties of Rabindranath's matchless productions. I get them through good translations. Gujarati boys and girls do not need to learn Russian to appreciate Tolstoy's short stories. They learn them through good translations. It is the boast of Englishmen that the best of the world's literary output is in the hands of that nation in simple

English inside of a week of its publication. Why need I learn English to get at the best of what Shakespeare and Milton thought and wrote?

*Harijan*, 9-7-1938, p. 177

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I do not believe that the State can concern itself or cope with religious education. I believe that religious education must be the sole concern of religious associations. Do not mix up religion and ethics. I believe that fundamental ethics is common to all religions. Teaching of fundamental ethics is undoubtedly a function of the State. By religion I have not in mind fundamental ethics but what goes by the name of denominationalism. We have suffered enough from State-aided religion and a State Church. A society or a group, which depends party or wholly on State aid for the existence of its religion, does not deserve or, better still, does not have any religion worth the name.

*Harijan*, 23-3-1947, p. 76

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"Should religious instruction form part of the school curriculum as approved by the State? Do you favour separate schools for children belonging to different denominations for facility of religious instruction? Or should religious instructor be left in the hands of private bodies? If so, do you think it is right for the State to subsidize such bodies?"

I do not believe in State religion even though the whole community has one religion. The State interference would probably always be unwelcome. Religion is purely a personal matter. There are in reality as many religions as minds. Each mind has a different conception of God from that of the other.

I am also opposed to State aid, partly or wholly, to religious bodies. For I know that an institution or group which does not manage to finance its own religious teaching, is a stranger to true religion. This does not mean that the State schools would not give ethical teaching. The fundamental ethics are common to all religions.

*Harijan*, 16-3-1947, p. 63

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A curriculum of religious instruction should include a study of the tenets of faiths other than one's own. For this purpose the students should be trained to cultivate the habit of understanding and appreciating the doctrines of various great religions of the world in a spirit of reverence and broad-minded tolerance. This if properly done would help to give them a spiritual assurance and a better appreciation of their own religion. There is one rule, however, which should always be kept in mind while studying all great religions and that is, that one should study them only through the writings of known votaries of the respective religions.

*Young India*, 6-12-1928, p. 406

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Real education has to draw out the best from the boys and girls to be educated. This can never be done by packing ill-assorted and unwanted information into the heads of the pupils. It becomes a dead weight crushing all originality in them and turning them into mere automata.

*Harijan*, 1-12-1933, p. 3

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The suggestion has often been made that in order to make education compulsory, or even available to every boy or girl wishing to receive education, our schools and colleges should become almost, if not wholly, self-supporting, not through donations or State aid or fees exacted from students, but through remunerative work done by the students themselves. This is only be done by making industrial training compulsory. Apart from the necessity which is daily being more and more recognized of students having an industrial training side by side with literary training, there is in this country, the additional necessity of pursuing industrial training in order to make education directly self-supporting. This can only be done when our students begin to recognize the dignity of labour and when the convention is established of regarding ignorance of manual occupation a mark of disgrace. In America, which is the richest country in the world and where,

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therefore, perhaps there is the least need for making education self-supporting, it is the most usual thing for students to pay their way wholly or partially...

If America has to model her schools and colleges so as to enable students to earn their scholastic expenses, how much more necessary it must be for our schools and colleges? Is it not far better that we find work for poor students than that we pauperize them by providing free studentships? It is impossible to exaggerate the harm we do to India's youth by filling their minds with the false notion that it is ungentlemanly to labour with one's hands and feet for one's livelihood or schooling. The harm done is both moral and material, indeed much more moral than material. A free scholarship lies and should lie like a load upon a conscientious lad's mind throughout his whole life. No one likes to be reminded in after life that he had to depend upon charity for his education. Contrarily where is the person who will not recall with pride those days if he had the good fortune to have had them when he worked in a carpentry-shop or the like for the sake of educating himself-mind, body and soul?

*Young India*, 2-8-1928, p. 259

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The aim of university education should be to turn out true servants of the people who will live and die for the country's freedom. I am therefore of opinion that university education should be coordinated and brought into line with basic education.

*Harijan*, 25-8-1946, p. 283

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I would revolutionize college education and relate it to national necessities. There would be degrees for mechanical and other engineers. They would be attached to the different industries which should pay for the training of the graduates they need. Thus the Tatas would be expected to run a college for training engineers under the supervision of the State, the mill associations would run among them a college for training graduates whom they need. Similarly for the other industries that may be named. Commerce will have its college. There remain arts, medicine and agriculture. Several private arts colleges are today

self-supporting. The State would, therefore, cease to run its own. Medical colleges would be attached to certified hospitals. As they are popular among moneyed men they may be expected by voluntary contributions to support medical colleges. And agricultural colleges to be worthy of the name must be self-supporting. I have a painful experience of some agricultural graduates. Their knowledge is superficial. They lack practical experience. But if they had their apprenticeship on farms which are self-sustained and answer the requirements of the country, they would not have to gain experience after getting their degrees and at the expense of their employers.

*Harijan*, 31-7-1937, p. 197

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There seems to be a mania for establishing new universities in the provinces. Gujarat wants one for Gujarati, Maharashtra for Marathi, Carnatic for Kannad, Orissa for Oriya, Assam for Assami and what not. I do believe that there should be such universities if these rich provincial languages and the people who speak them are to attain their full height.

At the same time I fear that we betray ourselves into undue haste in accomplishing the object. The first step should be linguistic political redistribution of provinces. Their separate administration will naturally lead to the establishment of universities where there are none...

There should be a proper background for new universities. They should have feeders in the shape of schools and colleges which will impart instruction through the medium of their respective provincial languages. Then only can there be a proper *milieu*. University is at the top. A majestic top can only be sustained if there is a sound foundation.

Though we are politically free, we are hardly free from the subtle domination of the West. I have nothing to say to that school of politicians who believe that knowledge can only come from the West. Nor do I subscribe to the belief that nothing good can come out of the West. I do fear, however, that we are unable as yet to come to a correct decision in the matter. It is to be hoped that no one contends that because we seem to be politically free from foreign domination,

the mere fact gives us freedom from the more subtle influence of the foreign language and foreign thought. Is it not wisdom, does not duty to the country dictate, that before we embark on new universities we should stop and fill our own lungs first with the ozone of our newly got freedom? A university never needs a pile of majestic buildings and treasures of gold and silver. What it does need most of all is the intelligent backing of public opinion. It should have a large reservoir of teachers to draw upon. Its founders should be far-seeing.

In my opinion it is not for a democratic State to find money for founding universities. If the people want them they will supply the funds. Universities so founded will adorn the country which they represent. Where administration is in foreign hands, whatever comes to the people comes from top and thus they become more and more dependent. Where it is broad-based on popular will, everything goes from bottom upward and hence it lasts. It is good-looking and strengthens the people. In such a democratic scheme money invested in the promotion of learning gives a tenfold return to the people even as a seed sown in good soil returns a luxuriant crop. Universities founded under foreign domination have run in the reverse direction. Any other result was perhaps impossible. Therefore, there is every reason for being cautious about founding new universities till India has digested the newly-acquired freedom.

*Harijan*, 2-11-1947, p.392

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I have never been an advocate of our students going abroad. My experience tells me that such, on return, find themselves to be square pegs in round holes. That experience is the richest and contributes most to growth which springs from the soil.

*Harijan*, 8-9-1946, p. 308

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The dry knowledge of the three R's is not even now, it can never be, a permanent part of the villagers' life. They must have knowledge given to them which they must use daily. It must not be thrust upon them. They should have the appetite for it. What they have today is something they neither want nor appreciate. Give

the villagers village arithmetic, village geography, village history, and the literary knowledge that they must use daily, i.e. reading and writing letters, etc. They will treasure such knowledge and pass on to the other stages. They have no use for books which give them nothing of daily use.

*Harijan*, 22-6-1940, p.173

1. सा विधा या विमुक्तये |

2. Literally seat of learning; University

3. Spindle used in spinning with the fingers without the use of the spinning wheel.

## CHAPTER 77: MEDIUM OF EDUCATION

I find daily proof of increasing and continuing wrong being done to the millions by our false de-Indianizing education...

We seem to have come to think that no one can hope to be like a Bose unless he knows English. I cannot conceive a grosser superstition than this. No Japanese feels so helpless as we seem to do...

The medium of instruction should be altered at once, and, at any cost, the provincial languages being given their rightful place. I would prefer temporary chaos in higher education to the criminal waste that is daily accumulating.

*Harijan*, 9-7-1938, p.177

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Education through a foreign language entails a certain degree of strain, and our boys have to pay dearly for it. To a large extent, they lose the capacity of shouldering any other burden afterwards, for, they become a useless lot who are weak of body, without any zest for work and mere imitators of the West. They have little interest in original research or deep thinking, and the qualities of courage, perseverance, bravery and fearlessness are lacking. That is why we are unable to make new plans or carry out projects to meet our problems. In case we make them we fail to implement them. A few who do show promise usually die young...

We, the English-educated people, alone are unable to assess the great loss that this factor has caused. Some idea of its immensity would be had if we could estimate how little we have influenced the general mass of our people.

The school must be an extension of home; there must be concordance between the impressions which a child gathers at home and at school, -if the best results are to be obtained. Education through the medium of a strange tongue breaks the concordance which should exist. Those who break this relationship are the enemies of the people even though their motives may be honest. To be a voluntary victim of this system of education is as good as the betrayal of our duty

to our mothers. The harm done by this alien type of education does not stop here; it goes much further. It has produced a gulf between the educated classes and the masses. The people look on us as beings apart from them.

*True education*, (1962), pp. 12-13

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It is my considered opinion that English education in the manner it has been given has emasculated the English-educated Indian, it has put a severe strain upon the Indian students' nervous energy, and has made of us imitators. The process of displacing the vernaculars has been one of the saddest chapters in the British connection. Rammohan Rai would have been a greater reformer, and Lokmanya Tilak would have been a greater scholar if they had not to start with the handicap of having to think in English and transmit their thoughts chiefly in English. Their effect on their own people, marvellous as it was, would have been greater if they had been brought up under a less unnatural system. No doubt they both gained from their knowledge of the rich treasures of English literature. But these should have been accessible to them through their own vernaculars. No country can become a nation by producing a race of imitators.

*Young India*, 27-4-1921, p. 130

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English is today studied because of its commercial and so-called political value. Our boys think, and rightly in the present circumstances, that without English they cannot get Government service. Girls are taught English as a passport to marriage. I know several instances of women wanting to learn English so that they may be able to talk to Englishmen in English. I know husbands who are sorry that their wives cannot talk to them and their friends in English. I know families in which English is being made the mother tongue. Hundreds of youth believe that without a knowledge of English, freedom for India is practically impossible. The cancer has so eaten into the society that in many cases, the only meaning of education is a knowledge of English. All these are for me signs of our slavery and degradation. It is unbearable to me that the vernaculars should be crushed and starved as they have been. I cannot tolerate the idea of parents writing to their

children, or husbands writing to their wives, not in their own vernaculars but in English.

*Young India*, 1-6-1921, p. 177

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The foreign medium has caused brain fag, put an undue strain upon the nerves of our children, made them crammers and imitators, unfitted them for original work and thought, and disabled them for filtrating their learning to the family or the masses. The foreign medium has made our children practically foreigners in their own lands. It is the greatest tragedy of the existing system. The foreign medium has prevented the growth of our vernaculars. If I had the powers of a despot, I would today stop the tuition of our boys and girls through a foreign medium, and require all the teachers and professors on pain of dismissal to introduce the change forthwith. I would not wait for the preparation of textbooks. They will follow the change. It is an evil that needs a summary remedy.

*Young India*, 1-9-1921, p. 277

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Among the many evils of foreign rule, this blighting imposition of a foreign medium upon the youth of the country will be counted by history as one of the greatest. It has sapped the energy of the nation, it has shortened the lives of the pupils. It has estranged them from the masses, it has made education unnecessarily expensive. If this process is still persisted in, it bids fair to rob the nation of its soul. The sooner, therefore, educated India shakes itself free from the hypnotic spell of the foreign medium, the better it would be for them and the people.

*Young India*, 5-7-1928, p. 224

## CHAPTER 78: TO STUDENTS

**Character** cannot be built with mortar and stone. It cannot be built by hands other than your own. The Principal and the Professor cannot give you character from the pages of books. Character-building comes from their very lives and really speaking, it must come from within yourselves.

*With Gandhiji in Ceylon, (1928), pp. 89-90*

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Put all your knowledge, learning, and scholarship in one scale and truth and purity in the other and the latter will by far outweigh the other. The miasma of moral impurity has today spread among our school-going children and like a hidden epidemic is working havoc among them. All your scholarship, all your study of the scriptures will be in vain if you fail to translate their teachings into your daily life...

If teachers impart all the knowledge in the world to their students but inculcate not truth and purity among them, they will have betrayed them and instead of raising them set them on the downward road to perdition. Knowledge without character is a power for evil only, as seen in the instances of so many talented thieves and 'gentlemen rascals' in the world.

*Young India, 21-2-1929, p. 58*

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As to the use of the vacation by students, if will they approach the work with zeal, they can undoubtedly do many things. I enumerate a few of them:

1. Conduct night and day schools with just a short course, well-conceived, to last for the period of the vacation.
2. Visit Harijan quarters and clean them, talking the assistance of Harijans if they would give it.
3. Taking Harijan children for excursions, showing them sights near their villages and teaching them how to study Nature, and generally interesting

them in their surroundings, giving them by the way a working knowledge of geography and history.

4. Reading to them simple stories from the Ramayana and the Mahabharata.
5. Teaching them simple *Bhajans*.<sup>1</sup>
6. Cleaning the Harijan boys of all the dirt that they would find about their persons and giving both the grown-ups and the children simple lessons in hygiene.
7. Taking a detailed census in selected areas of the condition of Harijans
8. Taking medical aid to the ailing Harijans.

This is but a sample of what is possible to do among the Harijans. It is a list hurriedly made, but a thoughtful student will, I have no doubt, add many other items.

*Harijan*, 1-4-1933, p. 5

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You are the hope of the future. You will be called upon, when you are discharged from your colleges and schools, to enter upon public life to lead the poor people of this country. I would, therefore, like you, students, to have a sense of your responsibility and show it in a much more tangible manner. It is a remarkable fact, and a regrettable fact, that in the case of the vast majority of students, whilst they entertain noble impulses during their student days, these disappear when they finish their studies. The vast majority of them look out for loaves and fishes. Surely, there is something wrong in this. There is one reason which is obvious. Every educationalist, everyone who has had anything to do with the students, has realized that our educational system is faulty. It does not correspond to the requirements of the country, certainly not to the requirements of pauper India. There is no correspondence between the education that is given and the home life and the village life.

*Young India*, 8-9-1927, p. 297

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These are not necessities of life. There are some who manage to take ten cups of coffee a day. Is it necessary for their healthy development and for keeping

them awake for the performance of their duties? If it is necessary to take coffee or tea to keep them awake, let them not drink coffee or tea but go to sleep. We must not become slaves to these things. But the majority of the people who drink coffee or tea are slaves to them. Cigars and cigarettes, whether foreign or indigenous must be avoided.

Cigarette smoking is like an opiate and the cigars that you smoke have a touch of opium about them.

They get to your nerves and you cannot leave them afterwards. How can a single student foul his mouth by converting it into a chimney? If you give up these habits of smoking cigars and cigarettes and drinking coffee and tea you will find out for yourselves how much you are able to save.

A drunkard in Tolstoy's story is hesitating to execute his design of murder so long as he has not smoked his cigar. But he puffs it, and then gets up smiling and saying, "What a coward am I!" takes the dagger and does the deed. Tolstoy spoke from experience. He has written nothing without having had personal experience of it. And he is much more against cigars and cigarettes than against drink. But do not make the mistake that between drink and tobacco, drink is a lesser evil. No. If cigarette is Beelzebub then drink is Satan.

*Young India*, 15-9-1927, p. 315

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The students should be, above all, humble and correct... The greatest to remain great has to be the lowliest by choice. If I can speak from my knowledge of Hindu belief, the life of a student is to correspond to the life of a *Sannyasi* up to the time his studies end. He is to be under the strictest discipline. He cannot marry, nor indulge in dissipation. He cannot indulge in drinks and the like. His behaviour is to be a pattern of exemplary self-restraint.

*Harijan*, 7-9-1947, p. 314

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#### 1. Devotional songs

## SECTION XII: UNTO THIS LAST

### CHAPTER 79: UNTO THIS LAST

I stand by what is implied in the phrase, 'Unto This Last'. That book marked the turning point in my life. We must do even unto this last as we would have the world do by us.

*Harijan*, 17-11-1946, p. 404

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And I know that God is found more often in the lowliest of His creatures than in the high and mighty. I am struggling to reach the status of these. I cannot do so without their service. Hence my passion for the service of the suppressed classes. And as I cannot render this service without entering politics I find myself in them. Thus I am no master. I am but a struggling, erring, humble servant of India and therethrough of humanity.

*Harijan*, 11-9-1924, p. 298

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And He hath His footstool where live 'the humble, the lowliest and lost'. Spinning, therefore, for such is the greatest prayer, the greatest worship, the greatest sacrifice.

*Young India*, 24-9-1925, p. 331

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God alone is great. We his creatures are but dust. Let us be humble and recognize the place of the lowliest of His creatures. Krishna honoured Sudama in his rags as he honoured no one else.

*Young India*, 26-12-1924, p. 423

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*Daridranarayan* is one of millions of names by which humanity knows God who is unnameable and unfathomable by human understanding, and it means God of the poor, God appearing in the hearts of the poor.

*Young India*, 4-4-1929, p. 110

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I read Ruskin's *Unto This Last* during a train journey to Durban and it gripped me immediately. I saw clearly that, if mankind was to progress and to realize the ideal of equality and brotherhood, it must adopt and act on the principle of 'Unto This Last'. It must take along with it even the dumb, the halt and the lame.

*Harijan* 25-8-1946, p. 281

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I have always held that social justice, even unto the least and the lowliest, is impossible of attainment by force. I have further believed that it is possible by proper training of the lowliest by non-violent means to secure redress of the wrongs suffered by them. That means is non-violent none-co-operation.

*Harijan*, 20-4-1940, p. 97

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I am working for winning Swaraj... for those toiling and unemployed millions who do not get even a square meal a day and have to scratch along with a piece of stale *roti* and a pinch of salt.

*Young India*, 26-3-1931, p. 53

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I think of the poor of India every time I draw a thread on the wheel. The poor of India today have lost faith in God, more so in the middle classes or the rich. For a person suffering from the pangs of hunger, and desiring nothing but to fill his belly, his belly is his God. To him anyone who gives him bread is his Master. Through him he may even see God. To give alms to such persons, who are sound in all their limbs, is to debase oneself and them. What they need is some kind of occupation, and the occupation that will give employment to millions can only be hand-spinning... I have described my spinning as a penance or sacrament. And, since I believe that where there is pure and active love for the poor there is God also. I see God in every thread that I draw on the spinning-wheel.

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

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

Then you will find your doubts and your self-melting away.

*This Was Bapu*, (1959), p. 46

## CHAPTER 80: ADIVASIS

The *Adivasis* are the original inhabitants whose material position is perhaps no better than that of Harijans and who have long been victims of neglect on the part of the so-called high classes. And *Adivasis* should have found a special place in the constructive programme. Non-mention was an oversight.... The Christian missionary has been more or less in sole occupation of the field. Great as his labour has been it has not proposed as it might have because of his ultimate aim being the *Adivasis'* conversion to his fold and their becoming de-Indianized. Anyway no one who hopes to construct *Swaraj* on the foundation of non-violence can afford to neglect even the least of India's sons. *Adivasis* are too numerous to be counted among the least.

*Harijan*, 18-1-1942, p. 5

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*Adivasis* have become the fourteenth item in the constructive programme. But they are not the least in point of importance. Our country is so vast and the races so varied that the best of us in spite of every effort cannot know all there is to know of men and their condition. As one comes upon layer after layer of things one ought to know as a national servant, one realize how difficult it is to make good our claim to be one nation whose every unit has a living consciousness of being one with every other.

*Harijan*, 15-2-1942, p. 38

## CHAPTER 81: LANDLESS LABOUR AND HARIJANS

The *Kisan* or the peasant whether as a landless labourer or a labouring proprietor comes first. He is the salt or the earth which rightly belongs or should belong to him, not to the absentee landlord or *Zamindar*. But in the non-violent way the labourers cannot forcibly eject the absentee landlord. He has so to work as to make it impossible for the landlord to exploit him.

*Mahatma*, Vol. VI, (1953), p. 364

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Harijan means 'a man of God'. All the religions of the world describe God pre-eminently as the Friend of the friendless, Help of the helpless and Protector of the weak. The rest of the world apart, in India who can be more friendless, helpless or weaker than the forty million or more Hindus of India who are classified as 'untouchables'? If therefore, anybody of people can be fitly described as men of God they are surely these helpless, friendless and despised people.

*Harijan*, 11-2-1933, p. 7

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*Swaraj* for me means freedom for the meanest of our countrymen. If the lot of the *Panchama*<sup>1</sup> is not improved when we are all suffering it is not likely to be better under the intoxication of *Swaraj*.

*Young India*, 12-6-1924, p. 195

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It is idle to talk of *Swaraj* so long as we do not protect the weak and the helpless or so long as it is possible for a single *Swarajist* to injure the feelings of any individual. *Swaraj* means that not a single Hindu or Muslim shall for a moment arrogantly think that he can crush with impunity meek Hindus or Muslims. Unless this condition is fulfilled we will gain *Swaraj* only to lose it the next moment. We are no better than the brutes until we have purged ourselves of the sins we have committed against our weaker brethren.

So long as the Hindus wilfully regard untouchability as part of their religion, so long as the mass of Hindus consider it a sin to touch a section of their brethren, *Swaraj* is impossible of attainment.

*Young India*, 4-5-1921, p. 143

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Untouchability is not a sanction of religion, it is a device of Satan. The devil has always quoted scriptures. But scriptures cannot transcend reason and truth. They are intended to purify reason and illuminate truth.

*Young India*, 19-1-1921, p. 22

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A man's *Karma*<sup>2</sup> is responsible for what he is, they say. But my *Karma* does not compel me to throw stones at a sinner. Religion is made to uplift and not to keep a man crushed under the weight of his *Karma*.

*Young India*, 22-9-1921, p. 302

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A religion that establishes the worship of the cow cannot possibly countenance or warrant a cruel and inhuman boycott of human beings. And I should be content to be torn to pieces rather than disown the suppressed classes. Hindus will certainly never deserve freedom, nor get it if they allow their noble religion to be disgraced by the retention of the taint of untouchability. And as I love Hinduism dearer than life itself, the taint has become for me an intolerable burden. Let us not deny God by denying to a fifth of our race the right of association on an equal footing.

*Young India*, 6-1-1921, p. 319

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The moment we have restored real living equality between man and man, we shall be able to establish equality between man and the whole creation. When that day comes we shall have peace on earth and goodwill to men.

*Harijan*, 28-3-1936, p. 51

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The *Bhangis* have hitherto done their work uncomplainingly, and therefore the caste men have not cared to know how these have served society for centuries. If we had not regarded these servants of society as 'untouchables', we would not have shut our eyes upon them or their work. Having chosen to do so and having confined them to infernos, we ourselves daily descend to these infernos called privies and do not care to look at the dirt about us or to notice the stink that pervades these places.

*Harijan*, 18-3-1933, p. 4

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The ideal *Bhangi* of my conception would be a *Brahmin par excellence*, possibly even excel him. It is possible to envisage the existence of a *Bhangi* without a *Brahmin*. But without the former the latter could not be. It is the *Bhangi* who enables society to live. A *Bhangi* does for society what a mother does for her baby. A mother washes her baby of the dirt and insures his health. Even so the *Bhangi* protects and safeguards the health of the entire community by maintaining sanitation for it. The *Brahmin's* duty is to look after the sanitation of the soul, the *Bhangi's* that of the body of society. But there is a difference in practice; the *Brahmin* generally does not live up to his duty, the *Bhangi* does willy-nilly no doubt. Society is sustained by several services. The *Bhangi* constitutes the foundation of all services.

And yet our woebegone Indian society has branded the *Bhangis* as a social *pariah*,<sup>3</sup> set him down at the bottom of the scale, held him fit only to receive kicks and abuse, a creature who must subsist on the leavings of the caste-people and dwell on the dung-heap. He is without a friend, his very name has become a term of reproach. This is shocking. It is perhaps useless to seek the why and wherefore of it. I certainly am unaware of the origin of the inhuman conduct, but I know this much that by looking down upon the *Bhangi* we-Hindus, Mussalmans, Christians and all have deserved the contempt of the whole world. Our villages have today become seats of dirt and insanitation, and the villages

come to an early and untimely death. If only we had given due recognition to the status of the *Bhangi* as equal to that of a *Brahmin* as in fact and justice he deserves, our villages today no less than their inhabitants would have looked a picture of cleanliness and order. We would have to a large extent been free from the ravages of a host of diseases which directly spring from our uncleanliness and lack of sanitary habits.

I therefore make bold to state without any manner of hesitation or doubt that not till the invidious distinction between the *Brahmin* and the *Bhangi* is removed, will our society enjoy health, prosperity and peace, and be happy.

*Harijan*, 28-11-1936, p. 336

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1. Literally, belonging to the fifth caste; an outcaste
  2. Action
  3. Outcaste

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