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COMMUNAL UNITY

M. K. GANDHI

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FOREWORD

In a country like India which is inhabited by people following different religions, speaking various languages and observing customs which are not common to all, communal unity is an absolute necessity if we have to live in peace and amity. Communal unity requires that the people belonging to any particular group should have toleration, if not respect, for the religion, language and customs of others. Mahatma Gandhi realized the essential truth of this at a very early stage of his public life in South Africa and he held fast to it till the moment of his death. During the days of the Khilafat Movement and the agitation against what came to be known as the Punjab wrongs, he laid utmost emphasis on Hindu-Muslim unity by which expression he meant communal unity in its widest sense. His writings and his speeches of those days were full of passionate appeal for strengthening communal harmony and communal unity which were then manifesting themselves and for making them a permanent feature of our national life. It seemed in those days as if complete and permanent unity had been established at least between the Hindus and the Mussalmans but Mahatma Gandhi did not have any such illusion and in spite of apparent signs he went on harping on the subject and emphasizing the necessity of making the peace lasting and permanent. It was on account of his intense desire to establish this unity that he went for an all out effort to help the Khilafat Movement which he regarded as a movement for the redress of a very genuine grievance of the Muslims and he hoped that by rendering them assistance in this time of their trial, the Hindus would be winning their lasting goodwill. His policy always was to ask the Hindus to leave it to the Mussalmans not to do anything which would hurt their religious susceptibility and to ask the Hindus to see to it that nothing was done by them which would hurt the Mussalmans. One cause of conflict between the Hindus

and Mussalmans, particularly in Northern India, used to be the slaughter of cows, particularly on the day of *Bakrid*. Mahatma Gandhi in the hey-day of the Khilafat Movement used to say that it was for the Mussalmans to protect the cow and it so happened that in 1921, when the Non-co-operation Movement was at its height, cow sacrifice on the day of *Bakrid* was almost negligible in the country as a whole. This naturally led people to hope that the Hindu-Muslim tangle would be solved, particularly because another cause which used to stir up feelings and lead to trouble between the two communities was the question of music accompanying processions in front of mosques, and the appeal of Mahatma Gandhi to the Hindus was not to insist upon playing music near mosques which disturbed Muslims in their prayers.

Unfortunately the communal concord achieved during the period of non-co-operation proved shortlived and there were riots between Hindus and Mussalmans in different parts of the country Mahatma Gandhi, however, never lost faith in the absolute necessity of Hindu-Muslim unity or in the method which he had been pursuing to establish it. There were Hindus who never accepted his principle or his method at any time and they feared that his effort in connection with the Khilafat Movement would only result in strengthening the fanatical elements amongst Mussalmans without ultimately bringing about communal unity on which Mahatmaji was so keen, and when these riots occurred they were able to point out that they had foreseen and foretold the consequences of the movement which Gandhiji had led. It was not, however, till several years later that what appeared to be a complete break between the Hindus and the Mussalmans on the political front actually took place. As the movement for Swarajya gained in momentum and it seemed that power would pass into Indian hands, the political elements amongst Mussalmans conceived the idea of securing for their community their share, if not a dominant position, in the Indian polity. This movement was started long before but it gained momentum particularly after the Simon Commission's advent. The

British Government was interested in encouraging a fissiparous tendency. It ultimately led to the formulation by the Muslim League of its separate demands which would put the Muslim community in a position of parity as against all the rest of the people although they were less than 25% of the population The theory that Hindus and Muslims constituted two separate nations was sedulously propagated and when it was accepted by the Muslim League, it led to the demand for a partition of the country and the establishment of Pakistan There were some Mussalmans who were opposed to this but it cannot be denied that the Muslim community as a whole supported this movement for partition and the country ultimately had to yield

Throughout this period of more than two decades Mahatma Gandhi held fast to his views about Hindu-Muslim unity and his opposition to the theory of two nations. In the days of the Khilafat Movement he was regarded as a National Leader of the country as a whole by the bulk of the Muslim community but in course of time Muslims as a body ceased to look upon him as their leader and a time came when he was looked upon as enemy No 1 by many of the most prominent amongst them In the midst of this misunderstanding of his actions and motives, he never wavered in his faith The Hindus, on the other hand as a body, followed him but there were groups amongst them also who regarded his activities as prejudicial to the Hindus because he yielded too much to the Muslims This group never trusted the Muslims and never felt that the policy of appeasement which Mahatma Gandhi had been following would ever bear fruit Some of these people did not hesitate even to accuse him of treachery to the Hindus. Of course, there was no foundation for any such charge Mahatma Gandhi's policy and programme had been conceived in the spirit of *ahimsa* for the good of the country as a whole including all its inhabitants whatever religion they belonged to. Holding the views he did, Mahatma Gandhi could not and did not approve of the partition of the country which was based upon the theory of two nations He described it as a vivisection and he would have

yielded to the Muslims much if he could secure their lasting trust and goodwill. But unfortunately that was not to be. When the other leaders, who had followed Mahatma Gandhi and his programme through all the vicissitudes for nearly 30 years from 1917 onwards when he first took up big work in India after his return from South Africa, felt compelled by circumstances and the march of events to agree to partition, Mahatma Gandhi did not approve of that action, although he reconciled himself to it and tried his best to minimize the evil consequences which, he apprehended, would follow.

After the great killing in Calcutta and the atrocities that were committed in Noakhali and other places in East Bengal followed by the terrible happenings in Bihar in 1946, he felt the agony and rushed to Bengal and subsequently to Bihar to stem the tide of communal hatred that had manifested itself in such ugly form. It may be said truly that his heart broke when the disaster following the partition overtook the country. History will record, how this little great man bestrode this subcontinent trying successfully to stem the waves and to heal the wounds. He wrought miracles in Bihar, in Calcutta and in Delhi and succeeded in stopping what would have resulted in a large scale slaughter. It may not be realized that had it not been for him, there would have been an emigration of Muslims from India on a tremendously big scale. As it is, Western Pakistan is more or less completely free from any appreciable element of Hindus and Sikhs in its population. There has been emigration of over 55,00,000 of Hindus and Sikhs from Western Pakistan to India and above 23,00,000 of Hindus from Eastern Pakistan to Western Bengal. It was not only possible but would have actually happened, that as communal problem has been solved in Western Pakistan by either the slaughter or forcible eviction of almost all Hindus and Sikhs from those parts, there would have been a similar solution by a similar treatment of the Muslims from the greater part of India. But Mahatma Gandhi and, under his inspiration, the Government of India set their foot against any such movement, and the great

exodus of Mussalmans from India was stopped and today India has a Muslim population of something like 40 millions spread all over its provinces. There is no province except East Punjab which has not got a large element of Muslim population after the partition. The exodus from the Punjab was almost completed before Mahatma Gandhi's movement to stem it could gather strength.

The happenings of these times had so soared his heart that he had almost ceased to have any interest in life. He expressed it publicly on many occasions that he had no desire to live and be a helpless witness to what had been going on in the country. But with all this he had never lost faith and he was hoping and working for the day when relations of concord and harmony could again be established between the Hindus and the Mussalmans and when those who had migrated to the other side would not only find it possible to return to their old homes but would actually be welcomed by the members of the other community. He was, therefore, opposed to anything being done which would make the return of those who had migrated impossible. His whole policy had been based on an unalterable faith in human nature and a firm belief in *ahimsa*. Some among those who could not reconcile themselves to his views conceived the idea of removing his body from the scene of his activity and achieved success in their design. Mussalmans as a body did not fully appreciate the value of his good services till his tragic death, but he bore witness to the truth that was in him by smilingly laying down his life for it. No man can do more. Let us hope that what he was not able to achieve by his words and acts while he walked on this earth will be achieved by his immortal spirit that lives and works unseen.

This volume has, therefore, a tragic significance of its own in that it records in burning words the faith that was in him — a faith that alone can ensure peace, happiness and prosperity of all the inhabitants of this land.

New Delhi, July 7, 1949 RAJENDRA PRASAD

EDITOR'S NOTE

The Hindu-Muslim question has acquired unique importance in that it was in connection with it that Gandhiji was destined to lay down his life on the fateful 30th of January, 1948, when he was shot dead by a Hindu assassin.

Gandhiji realized from the earliest period of his public career that Hindu-Muslim unity was more important for our development as a nation than even political freedom. Foreign rule was after all a temporary phase in the history of our people. It would go sooner or later and with it the foreigner; not so the Hindu-Muslim question, for both Hindus and Muslims were sons of the soil. They had to live together for all time willy-nilly. It was essential, therefore, that they should learn to live as brothers in peace and amity. Unlike political independence which could be had immediately the foreigner left, Hindu-Muslim unity demanded careful cultivation and nurturing through the years. It involved nothing less than a fundamental change in men's notions of religion and morality — the most conservative of all human spheres. It was, therefore, no mean undertaking.

Further, India was a huge country with a population of 400,000,000. The Hindu-Muslim question in the broader aspect in which Gandhiji understood it, meant nothing less than welding all these people into one. They had been divided not only by religion, but also by caste, language and now provincialism. Though in the past, in spite of lack of speedy means of communication, the printed word or the radio, Hinduism had achieved a remarkable cultural unity throughout the length and breadth of the country, politically and socially the people were still divided into almost water-tight compartments: the Bengali looked upon the Madrasi as a foreigner, the Madrasi, the Punjabi, the Parsi. the Hindu, the Muslim, the Tamil, the Marathi,

the Gujarati, the Brahmin the "untouchable" and so on. They had lived apart for centuries and did not know each other. How were they to develop kinship or a feeling of oneness as between members of one nation?

As though this problem were not big enough in itself, the British added to it by letting loose on the country disintegrating forces which set up rivalry and dissension between these various groups, as the foreigner found in this disruption the consolidation and security of his own alien rule. He broke up the indigenous self-sufficient village economy which unified the people of the village, and in the interests of his own trade threw the villager, unaided and unprotected, into the storm and stress of international competition This brought about economic dislocation and chaos, leading to unemployment and insecurity. Under the circumstances, the only steady source of income being that obtainable from Government service, there was an unseemly scramble for Government jobs and offices. The British Government saw in this a wonderful opportunity for winning for itself the goodwill of all communities and doled out its favours now to one community now to another with an air of even handed justice, and at the same time saw that no one community became so strong as to threaten its own supremacy It introduced communal electorates which heightened communal consciousness, and made each community seek to advance itself as against all other communities Such was the origin of communal conflict brought about, be it noted, not by the masses but by the British rulers and a handful of educated and disgruntled communal leaders who found no opportunity for economic advancement or status except in Government service or political leadership. Hence it is that after several years of working in the cause of Hindu-Muslim unity Gandhiji latterly came to the conclusion that communal unity could not be established so long as the British remained. Whether the British intended in this manner to set up one group or community against another or not, Gandhiji was convinced that the effect of the presence of the British in India was precisely for one group to seek to

advance itself at the expense of another through British aid and patronage.

But, it may be asked, if the British were then the chief cause of communal conflict in India, why did this conflict not cease the moment they quit on August 15, 1947, why, on the other hand, did the conflict become infinitely worse soon after, leading to wholesale massacres and lawlessness? The answer to this question is that the communal poison systematically injected by communal leaders, more especially during the last few years and the programme of direct action launched by them, could not but bear fruit in the shape of communal hatred and enmity. Sow the wind and you reap the whirlwind. Communal leaders—Hindus and Muslims—put distrust and suspicion in the minds of their followers against members of the opposite community. The result was the shameful fratricide which broke out in certain parts of the country most affected by the partition. Pakistan and Hindustan were born out of hatred and jealousy sedulously fostered during the years preceding. Could the hatred cease overnight with the dawn of freedom from British rule? It had to find an outlet, and the occasion came with the partitioning, when members of the minority community were in places deprived of their belongings, driven out of their home-lands, slain, abducted or forcibly converted by members of the majority community. This naturally led to counter-measures of retaliation and terrible vengeance by members of the oppressed community in parts of the country where they were in a majority.

Gandhiji, who all his life preached non-violence and Hindu-Muslim unity, was overwhelmed with the violence and communal hatred all around him. His soul was sick unto death, and he wished often that rather than be a helpless witness to Hindu-Muslim atrocities, he should be removed from this earth. He threw himself into the flames of communal frenzy in Bengal, Bihar and Delhi. He went on foot from village to village preaching love and friendship, instilling courage and hope in the hearts of those cowed down by violence, and telling all to turn from narrow

fanaticism to true Religion, which he was convinced, consisted in love and service of man, irrespective of race, caste or creed. Muslims regarded him at first with suspicion, but later realized that he was their best friend.

His preaching love for the Muslims was more than could be borne by a certain section of Hindus. They believed that Hinduism could survive only if Muslims were driven out of the country or exterminated. They feared that if Muslims were permitted to remain in India, they would overrun the country and put an end to Hindu religion and culture by the sword. Gandhiji loved and respected Hinduism no less. But he saw that fanaticism and intolerance were alien to the genius of Hinduism, which through the centuries welcomed the good from every quarter and gave shelter to men of all races and creeds. To inject Hinduism now with narrowness and intolerance, Gandhiji was sure, was no way to protect it. On the other hand it was the surest way to kill its very soul. For Hinduism in its ancient purity and at its best, stood for universalism which embraced not only all humanity but also every living creature and regarded all as equally pervaded by the one World-Soul. It preached not only love of man, as other great religions had done, but also love of animals (of which cow-protection was a symbol and vegetarianism a result), and even of minute insects and other forms of life. If one were to preserve such a religion, it could only be by practice of universal love.

Unfortunately, however, as happens in the history of every religion, this sublime teaching of Hinduism was soon forgotten by its followers. Its priests set up a hierarchy, with themselves at the top followed by innumerable castes and sub-castes. Hinduism thus degenerated from being a religion of all inclusive love and universal tolerance into a religion of caste exclusiveness, pride and bigoted intolerance. So intolerant indeed had Hinduism become through caste that the Hindu-Muslim problem may in a very real sense be said to be due not merely to British diplomacy but also to Hindu exclusiveness. The Hindus shunned Muslims and other non-Hindus and would rather die than

take water or food from the latters' hands Naturally the Muslims reacted by shunning Hindus and demanding a separate home-land So Gandhiji saw that caste pride, finding its culmination in untouchability, was also responsible for the Hindu-Muslim question, and declared that if Hindu-Muslim unity was to be established, untouchability in every form must go, and Hindus must be prepared to embrace Muslims as their own blood-brothers

There is no doubt that besides the British and the Hindus, the Muslims were also to blame for the Hindu-Muslim conflict The Muslim League, headed by Mr. Jinnah had filled the minds of Muslims during the last few years with unadulterated poison against Hindus in order thus to induce Muslims to take Pakistan by the sword Thus the Muslims had become in recent years more fanatic and aggressively communal in outlook than ever before Gandhiji did not, in his desire to woo them, wish to minimize the part so played by them But he held that if one party to the conflict did the right thing, the other was bound to follow suit It takes two to make quarrel So he appealed to the Hindus — his own community — to cease communal warfare, and to replace hate by love Besides, he always worked on the principle that before removing the mote out of one's neighbour's eye, one must remove the beam out of one's own eye His first duty, he believed accordingly, was to reform his own community rather than try to reform others So he preached against the evils that had crept into Hinduism and appealed to Hindus to befriend Muslims

But this brought him inevitably into conflict, as already pointed out, with such Hindus as thought that Hindu culture should be defended at all costs, right or wrong, and could not survive except by exterminating Muslims It was a fight between the broad spiritual Hinduism of old, *sanatani* (ancient) Hinduism as Gandhiji often called it, and present-day fanaticism and caste exclusiveness into which that religion had degenerated The assassin thought that by putting an end to Gandhiji he would save Hinduism Little did he realize that by his fell act he only helped to give

the death blow to his own degenerate form of Hinduism So far as Gandhiji himself went, the assassin only freed him from the limitations of the body, and liberated his soul the better to quicken the conscience of his countrymen and of humanity at large His spirit can never die It will mould the thought and lives of generations yet to be

Gandhiji's life and teachings are now no more merely for India and Pakistan, but for all the world Stripped of their local colouring, they challenge man of whatever clime, race or religion, to be done with narrowness, pride and arrogance and to love his fellow beings irrespective of all distinctions, for this is Religion, pure and undefiled In his life and teachings there is great wisdom such as alone can make for the healing of the nations Is humanity prepared to learn of him?

The remarkable feature of Gandhiji's writings is that they spring out of action They are not the speculations of an academician in his library or the dreams of an armchair philosopher They throb with life just because they are the outpourings of a heart plunged in the midst of a crusade against human weakness, selfishness, greed and violence. His words are full of life, for they are forged in the fire of experience They reach the innermost recesses of one's being, for they come from the depths of his own soul They appeal to the highest in us, for it is the Highest in him that speaks through them

The writings here included are from the earliest period of Gandhiji s public activities in India to his death. It was not possible to find a place for everything he said on the Hindu-Muslim question, for that would make the volume too bulky. At the same time it may be claimed that nothing of importance has here been omitted Some readers may complain against what appear like repetitions. These have been retained because it was felt that the truths they embody were worth being repeated and dinned into us. During the days of his pilgrimage through Bengal and Bihar in the cause of Hindu-Muslim unity, he had no time to write; but his doings and his speeches to prayer-gatherings were recorded by others These also necessarily find a place in

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NON-ENGLISH WORDS WITH MEANINGS

Abala [abalaa] : void of strength, weak; a woman
Ahimsa [ahimsaa] : non-violence
Akhada [akhaadaa] : physical culture institute
Akhanda [akhanda] : undivided
Allah [allaah] : Muslim name of God
Altar ego: second self
Amrit [amrut] : nectar
Anathalaya [anaathaalaya] : an orphanage
Arati [aaratee] : a form of worship
Asura [asura] : a devil, a monster
Avatar [avataar] : an incarnation of God
Azadi [aazaadee] : freedom
Azan [azaan] : call to prayer

Badi [baadee] : compound
Bakr Id [bakra eed] : a Muslim festival
Bania [baniya] : a member of the Hindu trader caste
Bhajan [bhajana] : hymn
Bhangi [bhangee] : scavenger
Bharatbhushan [bhaaratbhooshan] : ornament of India
Bharatmata [bhaaratamaataa] : Mother India
Brahmacharya [brahmacharya] : chastity
Brahmana [braahmana] : a member of the Hindu priest class
Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh [Brahmaa, Vishnoo, Mahesha] : names of the triune God

Chakki [chakkee] : grinding stone
Chamar [chamaar] : a member of the leather working sect of Harijans or "untouchables"
Chandal [chaandaal] : a member of the Hindu low caste
Charkha [charkhaa] : a spinning wheel
Chirag [chiraag] : a little oil lamp

Darshan [darshana] : view of oneself, sight
Dar-ul-Harb [dar-ul-Harb] : a battle-field

Devasur-sangram [devaasur sangraam] : a fight between the forces of Good and Evil
Dharma [dharma] : religious duty, religion
Dhobi [dhobee] : a washerman
Divali [divaalee] : a Hindu festival of illuminations
Doha [dohaa] : stanza
Dukkhi [dukkhee] : unhappy, sufferer
Duragraha [duraagraha] : clinging to untruth, obstinacy
Dussehra [dasheharaa] : a Hindu festival

Fakir [fakeer] : a Muslim ascetic
Fatwa [fatwaa] : decree

Gadi [gadee] : throne
Gita [Geeta] : a Hindu sacred book
Goonda [gundaa] : rowdy
Go-mata [go-maataa] : cow-mother
Gopi [gopee] : shepherdess
Go-shala [go-shaalaa] : dairy, literally, cow-house
Granth Saheb [Grantha saaheb] : the sacred book of the Sikhs
Gurudwara [gurudwaara] : Sikh place of worship
Guruji [gurujee] : a religious teacher, director
Guruka Langar [gurukaa langar] : a house where Sikhs are freely fed

Halal [halaal] sanctioned by the Quran
Hijrat [hijrat] : mass migration
Himsa [himsaa] : violence
Holi [holee] : a Hindu festival
Hookah [hukkaa] : a tobacco pipe

Jai Hind [Jay Hind] : Victory be to India!
Jamiat-ul-Ulema-e-Islam [Jamiyat-ul-ulemaa-e-Islaam] : association of learned men versed in the religion of Islam
Jehad [jehaad] : a religious war
Jhatka [jhatkaa] : killing by a single stroke

Kachcha [kachchaa] : temporarily built, raw
Kafir, Kaffir [kafeer] : an unbeliever
Kalma [kalamaa] : a Muslim formula of prayer or incantation
Kamadhuk [kaamadhuk] : fulfiller of every desire
Khoja [Khojaa] : a Muslim sect of the followers of Agakhan

Khudai Khidmatgars [khudaai khidmatgaars] Servants of God as the Congress volunteers working under Khan-saheb Abdul Gafar Khan of the North West Frontier Province are known

Kshatriya [kshatriya] a member of the warrior caste

Lathi [laathee] a thick stick

Lipi [lipi] script

Mahajan [mahaajan] a guild

Mahatma [mahaatmaa] saint, literally, a great soul

Maidan [maidaan] open ground

Malkana [malkaanaa] a Hindu convert to Islam

Mandir [mandir] a Hindu temple

Mantra [mantra] magic name of God, an incantation, a formula (of prayer) sacred to any deity

Manzil [manzeel] residence

Masjid [masjid] a Muslim temple, a mosque

Maulvi [maulvee] a Muslim priest

Mawali [mawaalee] rowdy

Moplah [Moplaah] a Muslim of Malabar

Namaz [namaaz] daily Muslim prayer

Nandi [nandee] the sacred bull belonging to Lord Shiva

Pagri [pagree] a lump sum to be paid to the landlord, over and above rent, for letting out his house

Pan [paan] betel leaf

Panchayat [panchaayat] a council of five members

Pani [panee] water

Panjrapole } [paanjraapol, pinjraapol] an institution for
Pinjrapole } sheltering crippled and aged cows

Poorna Swaraj [poorna swaraaj] complete independence

Pro tanto for that much

Pucca [pakkaa] well-built, ripe

Purdah [paradaa] veil

Purdanashin [paradaanasheen] . veiled

Raj [raaj] : rule

Ramadhun [Raamadhoon] : chanting God's name

Ramanama [Raamanaama] . name of God

Ramaraj [Raamaraaj] : Kingdom of God

Ramzan [ramzaan] . the ninth Arabian month, which the Muslims observe as a fast

Rishi [rushee] : seer
Sadhana [saadhanaa] : dedication, adoration
Salaam Alaikum [salaam alaikum] : Peace be with you!
Sanatani Hindu [sanaatanee Hindu] : orthodox Hindu, literally, a follower of ancient Hinduism
Sangathan [sangathan] : organization
Satyagraha [satyaagraha] : clinging to Truth; civil or non-violent disobedience
Shariat [shariyat] . Muslim Law
Sharanarthi [sharanaarthee] . refugee
Shastra [shaastra] · scripture
Shastri [shaastree] . one versed in Hindu scriptures
Shloka [shloka] : verse
Shuddhi [shuddhee] : conversion
Shudra [shoodra] . a member of the menial caste
Sutra [sootra] : aphorism
Swadesh [swadesha] · one's own country
Swadeshi [swadeshee] the principle of using goods of only local manufacture
Swaraj [swaraaj] self-government, self-rule, home-rule
Tabligh [tabaligh] religious propaganda and conversion
Talmud [Talmud] · Jewish scripture
Tapashcharya } [tapashcharyaa, tapasyaa] . penance, aus-
Tapasya } terities
Tejas [tejas] moral brilliance
Thana [thaanaa] · police-station
Tongawala [taangaawaalaa] . horse-cart man
Vaid [vaid] a doctor of indigenous medicine
Vaishnava [vaishnava] a sect of Hindus worshipping Vishnu
Vaishya [vaishya] . a member of the Hindu trader caste
Vanavasa [vanavaasa] . forest hermitage
Varna [varna] : caste
Yajna [yajna] : religious sacrifice
Yavana [yavana] : barbarian
Zamindar [zamindaar] : landlord
Zanana [zanaanaa] : veiled
Zend Avesta [Zenda Avestaa]: Zoroastrian scripture

COMMUNAL UNITY

1

HINDU-MUSLIM UNITY

The union that we want is not a patched up thing but a union of hearts based upon a definite recognition of the indubitable proposition that Swaraj for India must be an impossible dream without an indissoluble union between the Hindus and the Muslims of India. It must not be a mere truce. It cannot be based upon mutual fear. It must be a partnership between equals each respecting the religion of the other.

I would frankly despair of reaching such union if there was anything in the *Holy Quran* enjoining upon the followers of Islam to treat the Hindus as their natural enemies or if there was anything in Hinduism to warrant a belief in the eternal enmity between the two.

We would ill learn our history if we conclude that because we have quarrelled in the past, we are destined so to continue unless some such strong power like the British keep us by force of arms from flying at each other's throats. But I am convinced that there is no warrant in Islam or Hinduism for any such belief. True it is that interested or fanatical priests in both religions have set the one against the other. It is equally true that Muslim rulers like Christian rulers have used the sword for the propagation of their respective faiths. But in spite of many dark things of the modern times, the world's opinion today will as little tolerate forcible conversions as it will tolerate forcible slavery. That probably is the most effective contribution of the scientific spirit of the age. That spirit has revolutionized many a false notion about Christianity as it has about Islam. I do not know a single writer on Islam who defends the use of force in the proselytizing process. The influences exerted in our times are far more subtle than that of the sword.

I believe that in the midst of all the bloodshed, chicane and fraud being resorted to on a colossal scale in the West, the whole of humanity is silently but surely making progress towards a better age. And India by finding true independence and self-expression through an imperishable Hindu-Muslim unity and through non-violent means, i. e. unadulterated self-sacrifice can point a way out of the prevailing darkness.

Young India, 6-10-1920

2

DIVIDED WE FALL

That unity is strength is not merely a copy-book maxim but a rule of life, is in no case so clearly illustrated as in the problem of Hindu-Muslim unity. Divided we must fall. Any third power may easily enslave India so long as we Hindus and Mussalmans are ready to cut each other's throats. Hindu-Muslim unity means not unity only between Hindus and Mussalmans but between all those who believe India to be their home, no matter to what faith they belong.

I am fully aware that we have not yet attained that unity to such an extent as to bear any strain. It is a daily growing plant, as yet in delicate infancy, requiring special care and attention. The thing became clear in Nellore when the problem confronted me in a concrete shape. The relations between the two were none too happy. They fought only about two years ago over what appeared to me to be a small matter. It was the eternal question of playing music whilst passing mosques. I hold that we may not dignify every trifle into a matter of deep religious importance. Therefore a Hindu may not insist on playing music whilst passing a mosque. He may not even quote precedents in his own or any other place for the sake of playing music. It is not a matter of vital importance for him to play music whilst passing a mosque. One can easily appreciate the Mussalman sentiment of having solemn silence near a mosque the whole of the twentyfour hours. What is a

non-essential to a Hindu may be an essential to a Mussalman. And in all non-essential matters a Hindu must yield for the asking. It is criminal folly to quarrel over trivialities. The unity we desire will last only if we cultivate a yielding and a charitable disposition towards one another. The cow is as dear as life to a Hindu. The Mussalman should, therefore, voluntarily accommodate his Hindu brother. Silence at his prayer is a precious thing for a Mussalman. Every Hindu should voluntarily respect his Mussalman brother's sentiment. This however is a counsel of perfection. There are nasty Hindus as there are nasty Mussalmans who would pick a quarrel for nothing. For these we must provide panchayats of unimpeachable probity and imperturbability whose decisions must be binding on both parties. Public opinion should be cultivated in favour of the decisions of such panchayats so that no one would question them.

I know that there is much, too much distrust of one another as yet. Many Hindus distrust Mussalmans' honesty. They believe that Swaraj means Mussalman Raj, for they argue that without the British, Mussalmans of India will aid Mussalman power to build a Mussalman empire in India. Mussalmans, on the other hand, fear that the Hindus being in an overwhelming majority will smother them. Such an attitude of mind betokens impotence on either's part. If not their nobility, their desire to live in peace would dictate a policy of mutual trust and mutual forbearance. There is nothing in either religion to keep the two apart. The days of forcible conversion are gone. Save for the cow Hindus can have no ground for quarrel with Mussalmans. The latter are under no religious obligation to slaughter a cow. The fact is we have never before now endeavoured to come together, to adjust our differences and to live as friends, bound to one another as children of the same sacred soil. We both have now an opportunity of a lifetime. The Khilafat question* will not recur for another

The Caliph, who was the Sultan of Turkey, was the spiritual and temporal head of Muslim countries like Turkey, Thrace, Mesopotamia, Arabia, Syria and Palestine. During the First World War, Mr. Lloyd George, the British Premier, obtained the co-operation of Indian Muslims

hundred years If the Hindus wish to cultivate eternal friendship with the Mussalmans, they must perish with them in the attempt to vindicate the honour of Islam.

Young India 11-5-1921

3

INTERMARRIAGE AND INTERDINING

Mr. Candler some time ago asked me in an imaginary interview whether if I was sincere in my professions of Hindu-Mohammedan unity, I would eat and drink with a Mohammedan and give my daughter in marriage to a Mohammedan This question has been asked again by some friends in another form Is it necessary for Hindu-Mohammedan unity that there should be interdining and intermarrying? The questioners say that if the two are necessary, real unity can never take place because crores of *sanatanis* would never reconcile themselves to interdining, much less to intermarriage

I am one of those who do not consider caste to be a harmful institution In its origin caste was a wholesome custom and promoted national wellbeing In my opinion the idea that interdining or intermarrying is necessary for national growth, is a superstition borrowed from the West Eating is a process just as vital as the other sanitary necessities of life And if mankind had not, much to its harm, made of eating a fetish and indulgence, we would have performed the operation of eating in private even as one performs the other necessary functions of life in private Indeed the highest culture in Hinduism regards eating in that light and there are thousands of Hindus still

in the war against Turkey, by solemnly promising the Indian Muslims that the Khilafat, or the suzerainty of the Caliph over the Muslim countries will not in any way be impaired But after the War, this promise was completely ignored, and Asiatic portions of the Turkish empire were divided between Britain and France under the guise of Mandatories Such was the origin of the Khilafat question which greatly agitated Indian Muslims and in regard to which Gandhiji sought to win the co-operation and sympathy of Hindus and other non-Muslim Indians for the Muslims -Ed

living who will not eat their food in the presence of anybody. I can recall the names of several cultured men and women who ate their food in entire privacy but who never had any ill-will against anybody and who lived on the friendliest terms with all.

Intermarriage is a still more difficult question. If brothers and sisters can live on the friendliest footing without ever thinking of marrying each other, I can see no difficulty in my daughter regarding every Mohammedan as a brother and vice versa. I hold strong views on religion and on marriage. The greater the restraint we exercise with regard to our appetites whether about eating or marrying, the better we become from a religious standpoint. I should despair of ever cultivating amicable relations with the world, if I had to recognize the right or the propriety of any young man offering his hand in marriage to my daughter or to regard it as necessary for me to dine with anybody and everybody. I claim that I am living on terms of friendliness with the whole world, I have never quarrelled with a single Mohammedan or Christian, but for years I have taken nothing but fruit in Mohammedan or Christian households. I would most certainly decline to eat cooked food from the same plate with my son or to drink water out of a cup which his lips have touched and which has not been washed. But the restraint or the exclusiveness exercised in these matters by me has never affected the closest companionship with the Mohammedan or the Christian friends or my sons.

But interdining and intermarriage have never been a bar to disunion, quarrels and worse. The Pandavas and the Kauravas flew at one another's throats without compunction although they interdined and intermarried. The bitterness between the English and the Germans has not yet died out.

The fact is that intermarriage and interdining are not necessary factors in friendship and unity though they are often emblems thereof. But insistence on either the one or the other can easily become and is today a bar to Hindu-Mohammedan unity. If we make ourselves believe that the Hindus and Mohammedans cannot be one unless they interdine or intermarry, we would be creating an artificial

barrier between us which it might be almost impossible to remove. And it would seriously interfere with the growing unity between the Hindus and the Mohammedans if, for example, Mohammedan youths consider it lawful to court Hindu girls. The Hindu parents will not, even if they suspected any such thing, freely admit Mohammedans to their homes as they have begun to do now. In my opinion it is necessary for Hindu and Mohammedan young men to recognize this limitation.

I hold it to be utterly impossible for the Hindus and Mohammedans to intermarry and yet retain intact each other's religion. And the true beauty of Hindu-Mohammedan unity lies in each remaining true to his own religion and yet being true to each other. For, we are thinking of Hindus and Mohammedans even of the most orthodox type being able to regard one another as natural friends instead of regarding one another as natural enemies as they have done hitherto.

What then does the Hindu-Mohammedan unity consist in and how can it be best promoted ? The answer is simple. It consists in our having a common purpose, a common goal and common sorrows. It is best promoted by co-operating to reach the common goal, by sharing one another's sorrows and by mutual toleration. A common goal we have. We wish this great country of ours to be greater and self-governing. We have enough sorrows to share. And today seeing that the Mohammedans are deeply touched on the question of Khilafat and their case is just, nothing can be so powerful for winning Mohammedan friendship for the Hindu as to give his whole-hearted support to the Mohammedan claim. No amount of drinking out of the same cup or dining out of the same bowl can bind the two as this help in the Khilafat question.

And mutual toleration is a necessity for all time and for all races. We cannot live in peace if the Hindu will not tolerate the Mohammedan form of worship of God and his manners and customs, or if the Mohammedan will be impatient of Hindu idolatry or cow-worship. It is not necessary for toleration that I must approve of what I tolerate. I heartily dislike drinking, meat-eating and smoking, but I

tolerate all these in Hindus, Mohammedans and Christians even as I expect them to tolerate my abstinence from all these although they may dislike it All the quarrels between the Hindus and Mohammedans have arisen from each wanting to *force* the other to his view.

Young India, 25-2-1920

4

INTERMARRIAGE AND INTERDINING

So long as each is free to observe his or her religion, I can see no moral objection to intermarriage. But I do not believe that these unions can bring peace They may follow peace. I can see nothing but disaster following any attempt to advocate Hindu-Muslim unions so long as the relations between the two remain strained That such unions may be happy in exceptional circumstances can be no reason for their general advocacy Interdining between Hindus and Muslims does take place even now on a large scale. But that again has not resulted in promoting peace. It is my settled conviction, that intermarriage and interdining have no bearing on communal unity The causes of discord are economic and political, and it is these that have to be removed. There is intermarriage and interdining in Europe, but the Europeans have fought amongst themselves as we Hindus and Mussalmans have never fought in all history. Our masses have stood aside.

Young India, 4-6-1931

5
LET HINDUS BEWARE

Bihar is the land of promise for non-co-operation. For the Hindu-Muslim unity of Bihar is proverbial. I was therefore distressed to find that the unity was suffering a strain which might almost prove unbearable. I was told by all responsible leaders — both Hindu and Mohammedan — who are not given to being panicky — that it was taxing their resources to the utmost to avoid a Hindu-Mussalman disturbance. They informed me that certain Hindus, by name Gangaram Sharma, Bhutanath and Vidyanand for instance, had told the people that I had prohibited the use of meat to any Hindus or Mussalmans, and that meat and fish were even forcibly taken away from people by over-zealous vegetarians. I know that unlawful use is being made of my name in many places, but this is the most novel method of misusing it. It is generally known that I am a staunch vegetarian and food reformer. But it is not equally generally known that *ahimsa* extends as much to human beings as to lower animals and that I freely associate with meat-eaters.

I would not kill a human being for protecting a cow, as I will not kill a cow for saving a human life, be it ever so precious. Needless to say I have authorized no one to preach vegetarianism as part of non-co-operation. I do not know the persons named above. I am sure that our purpose will be defeated if propaganda of any kind is accompanied by violence. Hindus may not compel Mussalmans to abstain from meat or even beef-eating. Vegetarian Hindus may not compel other Hindus to abstain from fish, flesh or fowl. I would not make India sober at the point of the sword. Nothing has lowered the morale of the nation so much as violence. Fear has become a part of the national character. Non-co-operators will make a serious mistake, if they seek to convert people to their creed by violence. They will play into the hands of the Government, if they use the slightest coercion towards anybody in the course of their propaganda.

The cow question is a big question, the greatest for a Hindu. I yield to no one in my regard for the cow. Hindus do not fulfil their trust so long as they do not possess the ability to protect the cow. That ability can be derived either from body-force or soul-force. To attempt cow-protection by violence is to reduce Hinduism to Satanism and to prostitute to a base end the grand significance of cow-protection. As a Mussalman friend writes, beef-eating which is merely permissible in Islam will become a duty, if compulsion is resorted to by Hindus. The latter can protect the cow only by developing the faculty for dying, for suffering. The only chance Hindus have, of saving the cow in India from the butcher's knife, is by trying to save Islam from the impending peril, and trusting their Mussalman countrymen to return nobility, i. e. voluntarily to protect the cow out of regard for their Hindu countrymen. The Hindus must scrupulously refrain from using any violence against Mussalmans. Suffering and trust are attributes of soul-force. I have heard that at big fairs if a Mussalman is found in possession of cows or even goats, he is at times forcibly dispossessed. Those who, claiming to be Hindus, thus resort to violence, are enemies of the cow and of Hinduism. The best and the only way to save the cow is to save the Khilafat. I hope therefore that every non-co-operator will strain himself to the utmost to prevent the slightest tendency to violence in any shape or form whether to protect the cow or any other animal, or to effect any other purpose.

Young India, 18-5-1921

6

SAVE THE COW

Professor Vaswani has unfurled the banner of the cow's freedom. The danger has come sooner than I had expected. I had hoped that it would come when India could regard it with equanimity. In my humble opinion, Professor Vaswani might have started the movement under better auspices. Any movement started by Hindus for protecting the cow, without whole-hearted Mussalman co-operation, is doomed to failure.

The Hindus' participation in the Khilafat is the greatest and the best movement for cow-protection. I have therefore called Khilafat our *kamadhuk*.

The Mussalmans are striving their utmost to respect Hindu susceptibilities in this matter of life and death to the Hindu. The Muslim League under Hakimji Ajmalkhan's presidentship, carried a cow-protection resolution at Amritsar, two years ago. Maulana Abdul Bari has written upon it. The Ali Brothers, for the sake of their Hindu countrymen, have given up the use of beef in their house. Mian Chhotani saved hundreds of cows in Bombay alone during the last *Bakr Id*. We could not accuse our Mussalman countrymen of apathy in the matter.

The surest way of defeating our object is to rush Mussalmans. I do not know that Mussalman honour has ever been found wanting. With them as with every one, prejudices die hard. We have got enlightened Mussalman opinion with us. It must take time for it to react upon the Mussalman masses. The Hindus must therefore be patient.

There is nothing strange about all the Shikarpur Hindus having voted unanimously in favour of the prohibition of cow-slaughter. Is there a Hindu who will not vote for it? The use of that unanimous opinion for bearing down Mussalman opposition is the way to stiffen it. The Hindu members must have known, must have ascertained, Mussalman feeling. And they should have refrained from going to a division, so long as Mussalman opinion was against them.

Let us recognize that there is an interest actively working to keep us — Hindus and Mussalmans — divided. That very interest is quite capable of developing regard for Hindu susceptibilities in it. I strongly advise the Shikarpur friends to wait for their Mussalman brethren.

Let them by all means abstain from all meat, so that their Mussalman brethren may have other meat cheaper than beef. Let them consider it a shame to have a single cow or her progeny in distress, or undergoing ill-treatment at the hands of Hindus themselves. Let them develop their *goshala* so as to make it a model dairy-farm as well as a home for the aged and infirm cattle. Let them breed the finest cattle in their *goshala*. They will do real service to *gomata*. Let the Shikarpuris one and all become true non-co-operators, and hasten the redress of the Khilafat wrong. I promise, they will save the cow, when they have done their utmost to save the Khilafat.

It must be an article of faith for every Hindu that the cow can only be saved by Mussalman friendship. Let us recognize frankly, that complete protection of the cow depends purely upon Mussalman goodwill. It is as impossible to bend the Mussalmans to our will, as it would be for them to bend us to theirs. We are evolving the doctrine of equal and free partnership. We are fighting Dyerism — the doctrine of frightfulness.

Cow-protection is the dearest possession of the Hindu heart. It is the one concrete belief common to all Hindus. No one who does not believe in cow-protection, can possibly be a Hindu. It is a noble belief. I endorse every word of what Professor Vaswani has said in praise of the cow. Cow-worship means to me worship of innocence. For me, the cow is the personification of innocence. Cow-protection means the protection of the weak and the helpless. As Professor Vaswani truly remarks, cow-protection means brotherhood between man and beast. It is a noble sentiment that must grow by patient toil and *tapasya*. It cannot be imposed upon any one. To carry cow-protection at the point of the sword, is a contradiction in terms. *Rishis* of old are said to have performed penance for the

sake of the cow. Let us follow in the footsteps of the *rishis*, and ourselves do penance, so that we may be pure enough to protect the cow and all that the doctrine means and implies.

Young India, 8-6-1921

7

SAVE THE COW

The way to save the cow is not to kill or quarrel with the Mussalman. The way to save the cow is to die in the act of saving the Khilafat without mentioning the cow. Cow-protection is a process of purification. It is *tapasya*, i. e. self-suffering. When we suffer voluntarily and therefore without expectation of reward, the cry of suffering (one might say) literally ascends to heaven, and God above hears it and responds. That is the path of religion, and it has answered even if one man has adopted it *in its entirety*. I make bold to assert without fear of contradiction, that it is not Hinduism to kill a fellowman even to save the cow. Hinduism requires its votaries to immolate themselves for the sake of their religion, i. e. for the sake of saving the cow. The question is how many Hindus are ready without bargaining with the Mussalmans to die for them and for their religion? If the Hindus can answer it in the religious spirit, they will not only have secured Mussalman friendship for eternity, but they will have saved the cow for all time from the Mussalmans. Let us not swear even by the greatest among them. They can but help. They cannot undertake to change the hearts of millions of men who have hitherto given no thought to the feeling of their Hindu neighbours when they slaughter the cow. But God Almighty can in a moment change them and move them to pity. Prayer accompanied by adequate suffering is a prayer of the heart. That alone counts with God. To my Mussalman friends I would but say one word. They must not be irritated by the acts of irresponsible or ignorant but fanatical Hindus. He who exercises restraint under

provocation wins the battle. Let them know and *feel* sure that responsible Hindus are not on their side in their trial in any bargaining spirit. They are helping because they know that the Khilafat is a just cause and that to help them in a good cause is to serve India, for they are even as blood-brothers, born of the same mother — Bharata Mata.

Young India, 28-6-1921

8

COW-PROTECTION

Once, while in Champaran, I was asked to expound my views regarding cow-protection. I told my Champaran friends then that if anybody was really anxious to save the cow, he ought once for all to disabuse his mind of the notion that he had to make the Christians and Mussalmans to desist from cow-killing. Unfortunately today we seem to believe that the problem of cow-protection consists merely in preventing non-Hindus especially Mussalmans from beef-eating and cow-killing. That seems to be absurd. Let no one, however, conclude from this that I am indifferent when a non-Hindu kills a cow or that I can bear the practice of cow-killing. On the contrary, no one probably experiences a greater agony of the soul when a cow is killed. But what am I to do ? Am I to fulfil my dharma myself or am I to get it fulfilled by proxy? Of what avail would be my preaching *brahmacharya* to others if I am at the same time steeped in vice myself ? How can I ask Mussalmans to desist from eating beef when I eat myself? But supposing even that I myself do not kill the cow, is it any part of my duty to make the Mussalman, against his will, to do likewise ? The Mussalmans claim that Islam permits them to kill the cow. To make a Mussalman, therefore, to abstain from cow-killing under compulsion, would amount in my opinion to converting him to Hinduism by force. Even in India under Swarajya, in my opinion, it would be unwise and improper for a Hindu majority to coerce by legislation a Mussalman minority into submission to statutory

prohibition of cow-slaughter. When I pledge myself to save the cow, I do not mean merely the Indian cow, but the cow all the world over. My religion teaches me that I should by my personal conduct instil into the minds of those who might hold different views, the conviction that cow-killing is a sin and that therefore it ought to be abandoned. My ambition is no less than to see the principle of cow-protection established throughout the world. But that requires that I should set my own house thoroughly in order first.

If, therefore, I am asked how to save the cow, my first advice will be, "Dismiss from your minds the Mussalmans and Christians altogether and mind your own duty first." I have been telling Maulana Shaukat Ali all along that I was helping him to save his cow, i. e. the Khilafat. because I hoped to save my cow thereby. I am prepared to place my life in the hands of the Mussalmans, to live merely on their sufferance. Why? Simply that I might be able to protect the cow. I hope to achieve the end not by entering into a bargain with the Mussalmans but by bringing about a change of heart in them. So long as this is not done I hold my soul in patience. For I have not a shadow of doubt in my mind that such a change of heart can be brought about only by our own correct conduct towards them and by our personal example.

Cow-slaughter and man-slaughter are in my opinion the two sides of the same coin. And the remedy for both is identical, i. e. that we develop the *ahimsa* principle and endeavour to win over our opponents by love. The test of love is *tapasya* which means suffering. I offered to share with the Mussalmans their suffering to the best of my capacity not merely because I wanted their co-operation for winning Swaraj but also because I had in mind the object of saving the cow. The *Quran*, so far as I have been able to understand it, declares it to be a sin to take the life of any living being without cause. I want to develop the capacity to convince the Mussalmans that to kill the cow is practically to kill their fellow countrymen and friends—the Hindus. The *Quran* says that there can be no heaven

for one who sheds the blood of an innocent neighbour Therefore, I am anxious to establish the best 'neighbourly relations with the Mussalmans. I scrupulously avoid doing anything that might hurt their feelings. I even try to respect their prejudices. But I do this not in a spirit of bargain, I ask them for no reward. For that I look to God only. My *Gita* tells me that evil can never result from a good action. Therefore, I must help the Mussalmans from a pure sense of duty—without making any terms with them For more cows are killed today for the sake of Englishmen in India than for the Mussalmans. I want to convert the former also. I would like to convince them that whilst they are in our midst their duty lies in getting rid of their Western culture to the extent that it comes in conflict with ours. You will thus see that even our self-interest requires us to observe *ahimsa* By *ahimsa* we shall be able to save the cow and also to win the friendship of the English. I want to purchase the friendship of all by sacrifice. But if I do not approach the English on bent knees, as I do the Mussalmans, it is because the former are intoxicated with power. The Mussalman is a fellow sufferer in slavery. We can therefore speak to him as a friend and a comrade. The Englishman on the contrary is unable to appreciate our friendly advances. He would spurn them He does not care for our friendship, he wants to patronize us. We want neither his insults nor his patronage. We therefore let him alone. Our shastras have laid down that charity should be given only to a deserving person, that knowledge should be imparted only to one who is desirous of having it So we content ourselves with non-co-operating with our rulers, not out of hatred but in a spirit of love. It was because love was the motive force behind non-co-operation that I advised suspension of civil disobedience when violence broke out in Bombay and Chauri Chaura. I wanted to make it clear to Englishmen that I wanted to win Swaraj not by shedding their blood but by making them feel absolutely at ease as regards the safety of their persons. What profit would it be if I succeed in saving a few cows from death by using force against persons who do not regard cow-killing as sinful? Cow-

protection then can only be secured by cultivating universal friendliness, i e *ahimsa* Now you will understand why I regard the question of cow-protection as greater even than that of Swaraj The fact is that the capacity to achieve the former will suffice for the latter purpose as well.

Young India 29-1-1925

9

APPEAL TO STOP COW-SLAUGHTER

I know what would spare the Hindus' feeling in the matter of the cow It is nothing short of complete voluntary stoppage of cow-slaughter by Mussalmans whether for sacrifice or for food. The Hindu Dharma will not be satisfied if some tyrant secured by force of arms immunity of the cow from the slaughter. Islam in India cannot make a better gift to the Hindus than this voluntary self-denial. And I know enough of Islam to be able to assert that Islam does not compel cow-slaughter and it does compel its followers to spare and respect to the full the feelings of their neighbours whenever it is humanly possible For me, music before mosques is not on a par with cow-slaughter. But it has assumed an importance which it would be folly to ignore. It is for the Mussalmans to say what would spare Mussalman feelings. And if complete stoppage of music before mosques will be the only thing that will spare the Mussalman feelings, it is the duty of the Hindus to do so without a moment's thought. If we are to reach unity of hearts, we must each be prepared to perform an adequate measure of sacrifice.

Young India, 5-1-1928

10

A PERTINENT QUESTION

I paraphraze below what a friend writes regarding the influence of the Moplah outbreak on Hindu-Muslim unity.

> I am a staunch believer in Hindu-Muslim unity. But this Moplah outbreak has raised doubts in me. Success in the Khilafat means strength to Islam. Strength to Islam means attempts at conversion. Have we not often been given the choice between Islam and the sword? Can people such as Moplahs learn the beauty of non-violence? And even if they appreciate non-violence for the sake of their faith, will they not use violence for the sake of spreading their faith? My belief in the necessity of Hindu-Muslim unity is there. But do you not think that the questions I have raised are relevant?

The questions are indeed relevant, if only because they occurred to one so sane as the writer is. But in my opinion there is a misunderstanding about the whole question. Our advocacy of the Khilafat would be wrong if Islam were based on force. There is nothing in the *Quran* to warrant the use of force for conversion. The holy book says in the clearest language possible, 'There is no compulsion in religion.' The Prophet's whole life is a repudiation of compulsion in religion. No Mussalman, to my knowledge, has ever approved of compulsion. Islam would cease to be a world religion if it were to rely upon force for its propagation.

Secondly, historically speaking, the charge of conversion to Islam by force cannot be proved against its followers as a body. And whenever attempts have been made to convert by force, responsible Mussalmans have repudiated such conversions.

Thirdly, the conception of Hindu-Muslim unity does not presuppose a total absence, for all time, of wrong by any of the parties. On the contrary it assumes, that our loyalty to the unity will survive shocks such as the forcible conversions by Moplahs, that in every such case we shall not blame the whole body of the followers but seek relief against individuals by way of arbitration and not by way of reprisals.

Fourthly, acceptance of non-violence for organizing India's freedom involves acceptance of non-violence for Hindu-Muslim solidarity. The Moplahs have certainly broken the rule. But they were prevented from having access to the new manifestation. Whilst they had heard something about the Khilafat vaguely, they knew nothing of non-violence.

Fifthly, we need not suspect any evil befalling India under Swaraj; for it is tolerably certain that had the Congress and the Khilafat workers been permitted to Moplah territories, they would have been able to nip the evil in the bud. As it was, it is a matter capable of proof that wherever Khilafat workers could go, they were able to exercise great restraining influence. To me the Moplah madness is proof of Hindu-Muslim solidarity, because we kept calm. As members of a family, we shall sometimes fight, but we shall always have leaders who will compose our differences and keep us under check.

Sixthly, in the face of possibilities of such madness in future, what is the alternative to Hindu-Muslim unity? A perpetuation of slavery? If we regard one another as natural enemies, is there any escape from eternal foreign domination for either of us? Is not the present domination worse than the possibility of forcible conversions or worse? Is Hinduism worth anything if it cannot survive force? Cannot the Mussalmans too ask the same question as the friend has asked? Is there no possibility of a repetition of pillage and murder on the part of Hindus as happened in Shahabad three years ago? Is not the remedy therefore clearly Hindu-Muslim unity at all hazards? The Hindus as also the Mussalmans, whenever one of them goes mad, have two courses left open. Either to die valiantly without retaliation, that will at once arrest the progress of mischief; or to retaliate and live or die. For individuals both the courses will abide as long as the world lasts. All questionings arise, because we have become helpless. We have forgotten the divine art of dying for our faiths without retaliation, and we have equally forgotten the art of using force in self-defence at the peril of our lives. And Hindu-Muslim unity

is nothing, if it is not a partnership between brave men and women. We must trust each other always, but in the last resort we must trust ourselves and our God.

Young India, 29-9-1921

11

HINDUS AND MOPLAHS

Though the letters on the Moplah trouble and the Mussalman attitude by Messrs. Keshav Menon and others have already appeared in the Press, contrary to my wont I publish the two communications for the importance that attaches to them Possibly the fact of their publication in the pages of *Young India* will be some balm for the wounds that the Moplah madness has inflicted on the Hindu heart. The writers were entitled to give vent to their pent-up feelings.

Maulana Hasrat Mohani is one of our most courageous men. He is strong and unbending. He is frank to a fault. In his insensate hatred of the English Government and possibly even of Englishmen in general he has seen nothing wrong in anything that the Moplahs have done. Everything is fair in love and war with the Maulana. He has made up his mind that the Moplahs have fought for their religion. And that fact (in his estimation) practically absolves the Moplah from all blame. That is no doubt a travesty of religion and morality. But to do irreligion for the sake of religion is the religious creed of Maulana Hasrat Mohani. I know it has no warrant in Islam. I have talked to several learned Mussalmans. They do not defend Hasrat Mohani's attitude.

I advise my Malabar friends not to mind the Maulana. In spite of his amazingly crude views about religion, there is no greater nationalist nor a greater lover of Hindu-Muslim unity than the Maulana. His heart is sound and superior to his intellect, which, in my humble opinion, has suffered aberration.

The Malabar friends are wrong in thinking that the Mussalmans in general have not condemned or have in any

way approved of the various crimes committed by the Moplahs. Islam protects even in war women, children and old men from molestation. Islam does not justify jehad except under well-defined conditions. So far as I know the law of Islam, the Moplahs could not, on their own initiative declare jehad. Maulana Abdul Bari has certainly condemned the Moplah excesses

But what though the Mussalmans did not condemn them? Hindu-Muslim friendship is not a bargain The very word friendship excludes any such idea. If we have acquired the national habit, the Moplah is every whit a countryman as a Hindu Hindus may not attach greater weight to Moplah fanaticism than to Hindu fanaticism. If instead o the Moplahs, Hindus had violated Hindu homes in Malabar, against whom would the complaint be lodged? Hindus have to find out a remedy against such occurrences, as much as the Mussalmans When a Hindu or a Mussalman does evil it is evil done by an Indian to an Indian, and each one of us must personally share the blame and try to remove the evil. There is no other meaning to unity than this. Nationalism is nothing, if it is not at least this. Nationalism is greater than sectarianism And in that sense we are Indians first and Hindus, Mussalmans, Parsis, and Christians after

Whilst, therefore, we may regret Maulana Hasrat Mohani's attitude on the Moplah question, we must not blame the Mussalmans as a whole, nor must we blame the Maulana as a Mussalman. We should deplore the fact that one Indian does not see the obvious wrong that our other brethren have done There is no unity, if we must continuously look at things communally.

Critics may say, 'All this is sheer nonsense, because it is so inconsistent with facts It is visionary.' But my contention is that we shall never achieve solidarity unless new facts are *made* to suit the principle, instead of performing the impossible feat of changing the principle to suit existing facts. I see nothing impossible in the Hindus, as Indians, trying to wean the Moplahs, as Indians, from their error. I see nothing impossible in asking the Hindus to develop courage and strength to die before accepting forced conversion I

was delighted to be told that there were Hindus who did prefer the Moplah hatchet to forced conversion. If these have died without anger or malice they have died as truest Hindus because they were truest among Indians and men. And thus would these men have died even if their prosecutors had been Hindus instead of Mussalmans. Hindu-Muslim unity will be a very cheap and tawdry affair, if it has to depend upon mere reciprocation. Is a husband's loyalty dependent upon the wife's, or may a wife be faithless because the husband is a rake ? Marriage will be a sordid thing when the partners treat their conduct as a matter of exchange, pure and simple. Unity is like marriage. It is more necessary for a husband to draw closer to his wife when she is about to fall. Then is the time for a double outpouring of love. Even so it is more necessary for a Hindu to love the Moplah and the Mussalman more, when the latter is likely to injure him or has already injured him. Unity to be real must stand the severest strain without breaking. It must be an indissoluble tie.

And I hold that what I have put before the country in the foregoing lines is a simple selfish idea. Does a Hindu love his religion and country more than himself ? *If* he does, it follows that he must not quarrel with an ignorant Mussalman, who knows neither country nor religion. The process is like that of the world-famed woman who professed to give up her child to her rival instead of dividing it with the latter—a performance that would have suited the latter admirably.

Let us assume (which is not the fact) that the Mussalmans really approve of all that the Moplahs have done. Is the compact, then, to be dissolved? And when it is dissolved, will the Hindus be any better off for the dissolution ? Will they revenge themselves upon the Moplahs by getting foreign assistance to destroy them and their fellow Mussalmans, and be content to be for ever slaves ?

Non-co-operation is a universal doctrine, because it is as applicable to family relations as to any other. It is a process of evolving strength and self-reliance. Both the Hindus and Mussalmans must learn to stand alone and

against the whole world, before they become really united. This unity is not to be between weak parties, but between men who are conscious of their strength. It will be an evil day for Mussalmans if, where they are in a minority, they have to depend for the observance of their religion upon Hindu goodwill and vice versa. Non-co-operation is a process of self-realization

But this self-realization is impossible, if the strong become brutes and tread upon the weak. Then, they must be trodden under by the stronger. Hence, if the Hindus and Mussalmans really wish to live as men of religion, they must develop strength from within. They must be both strong and humble. The Hindus must find out the causes of Moplah fanaticism. They will find that they are not without blame. They have hitherto not cared for the Moplah. They have either treated him as a serf or dreaded him. They have not treated him as a friend and neighbour, to be reformed and respected. It is no use now becoming angry with the Moplahs or the Mussalmans in general. Whilst Hindus have a right to expect Mussalman aid and sympathy, the problem is essentially one of self-help, i. e. development of strength from within. It would be a sad day for Islam if the defence of the Khilafat was to depend upon Hindu help. Hindu help is at the disposal of the Mussalmans, because it is the duty of the Hindus, as neighbours, to give it. And whilst Mussalmans accept help so ungrudgingly given, their final reliance is and must be upon God. He is the never-failing and sole Help of the helpless. And so let it be with the Hindus of Malabar.

Young India, 26-1-1922

12

HINDU-MUSLIM UNITY, A CAMOUFLAGE?

The editorial notes in the current number of the *Modern Review* contain reflections on Hindu-Muslim unity, which deserve a reply. The talented editor has headed them with the word 'Camouflage', and has evidently come to the conclusion that the unity is only so-called. In my opinion, however, it is not only not a camouflage but is fast becoming a permanent reality. I have made the admission in these pages that it is still a sapling requiring delicate handling. But it is certainly not a pretension or make-believe if only because both communities realize the truth of the common danger.

It is unfortunately still true, that the communal or the sectarian spirit is predominant. Mutual distrust is still there. Old memories are still alive. It is still true that at elections considerations, not of fitness, but of religion prevail. But to recognize these facts is to recognize the difficulty of union. When both parties know them and are honestly trying to achieve unity in spite of them, it is hardly just to call the attempt or the limited achievement a camouflage.

It is not correct to say that the appeal of the Khilafat associations against cow-killing leaves the Mussalmans cold and unresponsive. In the first place, is it not a cheering phenomenon that Khilafat workers, themselves Mussalmans, are working to prevent cow-killing? In the second place, I venture to assure the editor that the appeal has had wonderful success in almost all parts of India Is it a small matter that the burden of cow-protection has been taken over almost entirely by Mussalman workers? Was it not a soul-stirring thing for Hindus to witness Messrs. Chhotani and Khatri of Bombay rescuing hundreds of cows from their co-religionists and presenting them to the grateful Hindus?

It is certainly true that both Maulana Mahomed Ali and I are careful enough 'not to tread on each other's corns'. But for frankness of treatment it would be difficult to beat us. For us the unity is not 'a house of cards' as the

writer cruelly suggests, but it is such a substantial fact that we would die to keep it intact. Let me inform the reader that throughout all our journeyings there has never been a jar between us, never any mental reservations. The cruellest cut however is given in the following sentence 'Reading between the lines of their speeches, it is not difficult to see that with one of them the sad plight of the Khilafat in distant Turkey is the central fact, while with the other the attainment of Swaraj here in India is the primary object in view.' I claim that with us both the Khilafat is the central fact; with Maulana Mahomed Ali because it is his religion, with me because in laying down my life for the Khilafat I ensure the safety of the cow, that is my religion, from the Mussalman knife. Both hold Swaraj equally dear because only by Swaraj is the safety of our respective faiths possible. This may seem a lower ideal But there is no concealment in it. For me the attainment of the Khilafat through India's power is the attainment of Swaraj. Love is the basis of our friendship as it is of religion. I seek to gain Mussalman friendship by right of love. And if love persists even on the part of one community, unity will become a settled fact in our national life. It is unjust to suggest of Maulana Mahomed Ali that he speaks in elegant Urdu ununderstandable by the majority of Bengali Mussalmans. I know that he has been trying his best to introduce into his Urdu speech as much simplicity as possible.

It is unfortunately true that there are still Hindus and Mussalmans who out of fear of one another consider foreign domination a necessity. And that has not a little to do with the delay in the attainment of our goal. We do not yet clearly perceive that the possibility of a free fight between the two communities is a lesser evil than the existence of foreign domination. And if it is the interposition of the British Government which keeps us from fighting one another, the sooner we are left free to fight, the better for our manhood, our respective religions and our country. It will not be a new phenomenon if we fought ourselves into sanity The English carried on internecine warfare for

twentyone years before they settled down to peaceful work. The French fought among themselves with a savage ferocity hardly excelled during recent times. The Americans did nothing better before they evolved their commonwealth. Let us not hug our unmanliness for fear of fighting amongst ourselves. The able writer of the notes loves unity as much as any of us and suggests that there must be 'a root and branch change, a radical transformation and reconstruction from the foundation'. But he leaves the reader to guess the remedy. It would have been better if he had made concrete suggestions. He would evidently have us intermarry and interdine if only by way of a beginning. If that is the radical transformation desired by him and if it is a condition precedent to the attainment of Swaraj, I very much fear that we would have to wait at least for a century. It is tantamount to asking the Hindus to give up their religion. I do not say that it is wrong to do so, but I do suggest that it is reformation outside practical politics. And when that transformation comes, if it is ever to come, it will not be Hindu-Muslim unity. And what the present movement is aiming at is to achieve unity even whilst a devout Mussalman retains his faith intact and a devout Hindu his. I have therefore often said to my audiences, that the Ali Brothers and I serve as an object lesson to all the Hindus and Mussalmans in Hindu-Muslim unity. We both claim to be devoted to our respective faiths. In spite of the greatest regard for the Brothers I would not give my daughter in marriage to one of their sons, and I know that they would not give theirs to my son, assuming that in spite of his being a Hindu, he so far reformed himself as to covet the hand of their daughter. I do not partake of their meat foods, and they scrupulously respect my bigotry, if my self-denial may be so named. And yet I do not know three persons whose hearts are more united than those of the Ali Brothers and myself. And yet I wish to assure the reader, that the unity is not a camouflage but is a lasting friendship based upon exquisitely delicate regard and toleration of one another's views and habits. And I have no manner to fear that when the protecting hand of the British

is withdrawn from me, either the Brothers or their friends would violate my freedom or attack my religion. And I base this security from fear first upon God and His promise of safety to every creature of His who endeavours to walk in His fear, and then upon the honourable conduct of the Brothers and their friends, although I am aware that physically any one of them is more than a match for twelve like me put together And so from the particular instance I have generalized for the whole of India, and shown that Hindu-Muslim unity is possible if only we have mutual toleration, and faith in ourselves and therefore in the ultimate goodness of human nature.

Young India 20-10-1921

13

TO BOMBAY CITIZENS

Men and Women of Bombay,

It is not possible to describe to you the agony I have suffered during the past two days. I am writing this now at 3-30 a m. in perfect peace. After two hours' prayer and meditation I have found it.

I must refuse to eat or drink anything but water till the Hindus and Mussalmans of Bombay have made peace with the Parsis, Christians and Jews, and till the non-co-operators have made peace with the co-operators.

The Swaraj that I have witnessed during the last two days has stunk in my nostrils. The Hindu-Muslim unity has been a menace to the handful of Parsis, Christians and Jews The non-violence of the non-co-operators has been worse than the violence of co-operators. For with non-violence on our lips we have terrorized those who have differed from us and in so doing we have denied our God. There is only one God for us all, whether we find Him through the *Quran*, the Bible, the *Zend Avesta*, the *Talmud* or the *Gita* And He is God of truth and love. I have no interest in living save for proving this faith in me. I cannot hate an Englishman

or any one else. I have spoken and written much against his institutions, especially the one he has set up in India. I shall continue to do so if I live. But you must not mistake my condemnation of the system for that of the man. My religion requires me to love him as I love myself. I would deny God if I did not attempt to prove it at this critical moment.

And the Parsis? I have meant every word I have said about them. The Hindus and Mussalmans will be unworthy of freedom if they do not defend them and their honour with their lives. They have only recently proved their liberality and friendship. The Mussalmans are especially beholden to them, for the Parsis have, compared to their numbers, given more than they themselves to the Khilafat funds. Unless the Hindus and Mussalmans have expressed full and free repentance, I cannot face again the appealing eyes of the Parsi men and women that I saw on the 17th instant as I passed through them. Nor can I face Andrews when he returns from East Africa if we have done no reparation to the Indian Christians whom we are bound to protect as our own brothers and sisters. We may not think of what they or the Parsis, in self-defence or by way of reprisals, have done to some of us.

You can see quite clearly that I must do the utmost reparation to this handful of men and women who have been the victims of forces that have come into being largely through my instrumentality. I invite every Hindu and Mussalman to do likewise. But I do not want any one to fast. Fasting is always good when it comes in answer to prayer and as a felt yearning of the soul. I invite every Hindu and Mussalman to retire to his home, ask God for forgiveness and to befriend the injured communities from the bottom of his heart.

I invite my fellow workers not to waste a single word of sympathy for me. I need or deserve none. But I invite them to make a ceaseless effort to regain control over the turbulent elements. This is a terribly true struggle. There is no room for sham or humbug in it. Before we can make any further progress with our struggle we must cleanse our hearts.

One special word to my Mussalman brothers. I have approached the Khilafat as a sacred cause. I have striven for Hindu-Muslim unity because India cannot live free without it, and because we would both deny God if we considered one another as natural enemies. I have thrown myself into the arms of the Ali Brothers because I believe them to be true and God-fearing men. The Mussalmans have to my knowledge played the leading part during the two days of carnage. It has deeply hurt me. I ask every Mussalman worker to rise to his full height to realize his duty to his faith and see that the carnage stops.

May God bless every one of us with wisdom and courage to do the right at any cost.

19th November '21

I am,
Your servant,
M. K. Gandhi

Young India, 24-11-1921

14

TO THE MAVALIS

To the *Mavalis* of Bombay,

The most terrible mistake I have made is, that I thought non-co-operators had acquired influence over you and that you had understood the relative value, the political wisdom of non-violence, though not the moral necessity of it. I had thought that you had sufficiently understood the interests of your country not to meddle with the movement to its detriment, and that therefore you would have wisdom enough not to give way to your worst passions. But it cuts me to the quick to find that you have used the mass awakening for your own lust for plunder, rapine and even indulging in your worst animal appetite. Whether you call yourself a Hindu, Mussalman, Parsi, Christian or Jew, you have certainly failed to consider even your own religious interests. Some of my friends would, I know, accuse me of ignorance of human nature. If I believe the charge, I would plead guilty and retire from human assemblies and return only after acquiring

knowledge of human nature. But I know that I had no difficulty in controlling even the Indian *mavalis* in South Africa I was able because I had succeeded in approaching them through co-workers where I had no personal contact with them In your case I see now that we have failed to reach you. I do not believe you to be incapable of responding to the noble call of religion and country

See what you have done! The Hindu and Mussalman *mavalis* have violated the sanctity of Parsi temples, and they have exposed their own to similar risk from the wrath of Parsi *mavalis*. Because some Parsis have chosen to partake in the welcome to the Prince of Wales, the Hindu and Mussalman *mavalis* have roughly handled every Parsi they have met The result has been, that the Parsi *mavalis* have now turned their attention to the Hindus and Mussalmans. Certainly the Parsi *mavalis* are less to blame The Hindu and Mussalman *mavalis* have rudely, roughly and insolently removed the foreign cloth worn by some Parsis and Christians, forgetting that not all Hindus and all Mussalmans, nor by any means even a majority of them, have religiously discarded the use of foreign cloth The Parsi and Christian *mavalis* are therefore interfering with the Hindu and Mussalman wearers of *khadi* Thus we are all moving in a vicious circle, and the country suffers

I write this not to blame but to warn you and to confess that we have grievously neglected you I am doing the penance in one way. The other workers are doing it in another way. Messrs. Azad Sobani, Jayakar, Jamnadas Mehta, Sathe, Moazam Ali and many others have been risking their lives in bringing under control this unfortunate ebullition. Shrimati Sarojini Naidu has fearlessly gone in your midst to reason with you and appeal to you. Our work in your midst has only just begun Will you not give us a chance by stopping the mad process of retaliation? The Hindus and Mussalmans should be ashamed to take reprisals against the Parsis or Christians. The latter must know it to be suicidal to battle against the Hindu and Mussalman ferocity by brute strength The result is that they must seek the assistance of an alien Government, i. e.

sell their freedom Surely the best course for them is to realize their nationality and believe that the reasoning Hindus and Mussalmans must and will protect the interests of minorities before their own Any way the problem before Bombay is to ensure the absolute protection of the minorities and the acquisition of control over the rowdy element And I shall trust, that you, the *mavalis* of Bombay, will now restrain your hand and give a chance to the workers who are desirous of serving you. May God help you

I am
Your friend
M. K. Gandhi

Young India 24-11-1921

15

TO CO-WORKERS

Comrades,

The past few days have been a fiery ordeal for us, and God is to be thanked that some of us have not been found wanting. The broken heads before me and the dead bodies of which I have heard on unimpeachable authority are sufficient evidence of the fact Workers have lost their lives or limbs, or have suffered bruises in the act of preserving peace, and of weaning mad countrymen from their wrath These deaths and injuries show, that in spite of the error of many of our countrymen, some of us were prepared to die for the attainment of our goal If all of us had imbibed the spirit of non-violence, or if some had and the others had remained passive, no blood need have been split But it was not to be Some must therefore voluntarily give their blood in order that a bloodless atmosphere may be created. So long as there are people weak enough to do violence, there will be others weak enough to seek the aid of those who have superior skill or means for doing it And that is why the Parsis and Christians sought and received the assistance of the Government such that the Government openly took sides, and armed and aided the latter in

retaliatory madness, and criminally neglected to protect a single life among those, who, though undoubtedly guilty in the first instance, were the victims of the pardonable wrath of the Parsis, Christians and Jews The Government has thus appeared in its nakedness as a party doing violence not merely to preserve peace but to sustain the aggressive violence of its injured supporters Its police and military looked on with callous indifference while the Christians in their justifiable indignation deprived innocent men of their white caps and hammered those who would not surrender them, or whilst the Parsis assaulted or shot, not in self-defence but because the victims happened to be Hindus or Mussalmans or non-co-operators I can excuse the aggrieved Parsis and Christians, but can find no excuse for the criminal conduct of the police and the military in taking sides.

So the task before the workers is to take the blows from the Government and our erring countrymen This is the only way open to us of sterilizing the forces of violence The way to immediate Swaraj lies through our gaining control over the forces of violence, and that not by greater violence but by moral influence We must see as clearly as daylight, that it is impossible for us to be trained and armed for violence effective enough for displacing the existing Government

Some people imagine that after all we could not have better advertised our indignation against the welcome to the Prince than by letting loose the mob frenzy on the fateful 17th. This reasoning betrays at once ignorance and weakness, ignorance of the fact that our goal was not injury to the welcome, and weakness because we still hanker after advertising our strength to others instead of being satisfied with the consciousness of its possession I wish I could convince every one, that we materially retarded our progress to our triple goal

But all is not lost if the workers realize and act up to their responsibility. We must secure the full co-operation of the rowdies of Bombay We must know the mill-hands. They must either work for the Government or for us, i e. for violence or against it There is no middle way. They

must not interfere with us. They must either be amenable to our love or helplessly submit to the bayonet. They may not seek shelter under the banner of non-violence for the purpose of doing violence. And in order to carry our message to them, we must reach every mill-hand individually and let him understand and appreciate the struggle. Similarly we must reach the rowdy element, befriend them and help them to understand the religious character of the struggle. We must neither neglect them nor pander to them. We must become their servants.

The peace we are aiming at is not a patched up peace. We must have fair guarantees of its continuance without the aid of the Government, sometimes even in spite of its activity to the contrary. There must be a heart union between Hindus, Mussalmans, Parsis, Christians and Jews. The three latter communities may and will distrust the other two. The recent occurrences must strengthen that distrust. We must go out of our way to conquer their distrust. We must not molest them if they do not become full non-co-operators or do not adopt Swadeshi or the white *khadi* cap which has become its symbol. We must not be irritated against them even if they side with the Government on every occasion. We have to make them ours by right of loving service. This is the necessity of our situation. The alternative is a civil war. And a civil war, with a third power only too happy to consolidate itself by siding now with the one and then with the other, must be held an impossibility for the near future.

And what is true of the smaller communities is also true of the co-operators. We must not be impatient with or intolerant to them. We are bound to recognize their freedom to co-operate with the Government if we claim the freedom to non-co-operate. What would we have felt if we were in a minority and the co-operators being in a majority had used violence against us? Non-co-operation *cum* non-violence is the most expeditious method known to the world of winning over opponents. And our struggle consists in winning opponents including Englishmen over to our side. We can do so only by being free from ill-will against the

weakest or the strongest of them. And this we can do only by being prepared to die for the faith within us and not by killing those who do not see the truth we enunciate.

I am,

22nd November, 1921 *Your faithful comrade,*
M. K. GANDHI

Young India, 24-11-1921

16
THE FAST BROKEN

Gandhiji broke his fast in the midst of a gathering of co-operators, non-co-operators, Hindus, Mussalmans, Christians and Parsis. There were speeches of good-will by a representative of each community. The members of the Working Committee were also present. Gandhiji made a statement in Gujarati before breaking his fast. The following is its translation:

Friends,

It delights my heart to see Hindus, Mussalmans, Parsis and Christians met together in this little assembly. I hope that our frugal fruit repast of this morning will be a sign of our permanent friendship. Though a born optimist, I am not in the habit of building castles in the air. This meeting, therefore, cannot deceive me. We shall be able to realize the hope of permanent friendship between all communites, only if we who have assembled together will incessantly strive to build it up. I am breaking my fast upon the strength of your assurances. I have not been unmindful of the affection with which innumerable friends have surrounded me during these four days. I shall ever remain grateful to them. Being drawn by them I am plunging into this stormy ocean out of the haven of peace in which I have been during these few days. I assure you that in spite of the tales of misery that have been poured into my ears, I have enjoyed peace because of a hungry stomach. I know that I cannot enjoy it after breaking the fast. I am too human not to be touched by the sorrows of others, and when I find no remedy for alleviating them, my human

nature so agitates me that I pine to embrace death like a long lost dear friend. Therefore, I warn all the friends here that if real peace is not established in Bombay, and if disturbances break out again, and if as a result they find me driven to a still severer ordeal, they must not be surprised or troubled. If they have any doubt about peace having been established, if each community has still bitterness of feeling and suspicion, and if we all are not prepared to forget and forgive past wrongs, I would much rather that they did not press me to break the fast. Such a restraint I would regard as a test of true friendship.

I venture to saddle special responsibility upon Hindus and Mussalmans. The majority of them are non-co-operators. Non-violence is the creed they have accepted for the time being. They have the strength of numbers. They can stand in spite of the opposition of the smaller communities without Government aid. If, therefore, they will remain friendly and charitable towards the smaller communities, all will be well. I will beseech the Parsis, Christians and Jews to bear in mind the new awakening in India. They will see many-coloured waters in the ocean of Hindu and Mussalman humanity. They will see dirty waters on the shore. I would ask them to bear with their Hindu or Mussalman neighbours who may misbehave with them, and immediately report to the Hindu and Mussalman leaders through their own leaders with a view to getting justice. Indeed I am hoping that as a result of the unfortunate discord a *mahajan* will come into being for the disposal of all inter-racial disputes.

The value of this assembly, in my opinion, consists in the fact that, worshippers of the same one God, we are enabled to partake of this harmless repast together in spite of our differences of opinion. We have not assembled today with the object of reducing such differences, certainly not of surrendering a single principle we may hold dear, but we have met in order to demonstrate that we can remain true to our principles and yet also remain free from ill-will towards one another.

May God bless our effort.

Young India, 24-11-1921

17

WAY TO PEACE

To the Citizens of Bombay,

By God's grace we are once more at peace. We are no longer engaged in the occupation of breaking one another's heads, throwing stones or burning buildings. Nevertheless some of us still have anger, bitterness and fear in us This is evident from the language of numerous visitors and correspondents We can call it a real peace only when our minds are free from these impurities The first step towards such a consummation is that Hindus and Mussalmans make a clean confession of their guilt Those who cast the first stone must be held guilty If I begin by using an abusive word I must take the consequences of all that may follow. If Hindus and Mussalmans made the beginning by forcibly removing foreign caps or by throwing stones, they were the guilty party Moreover, they are in an overwhelming majority. And it is largely Hindus and Mussalmans who have taken the pledge of non-violence Therefore, it is they who should realize their responsibility in the first instance.

I am not here considering the responsibility in law I am simply thinking of it as between man and man If the Parsis and Christians do not feel their share of the guilt, it is difficult to establish a lasting peace If the Parsis and Christians had not retaliated when the Hindus and Mussalmans began violence, they would have been considered angels, and they would have given to the world an astonishing proof of their soul-force But they not only defended themselves, which was quite right, but they were also angered and went beyond the limits of self-defence Some of them used greater violence than was necessary And if they do not admit as much, it would be difficult to attain immediate heart-peace, because the Hindus and Mussalmans will not acknowledge their complete innocence even after provocation. If only one party were to continue its guilt and the other consistently remained patient and suffering, the guilty party would be exhausted in the effort. If there was no reaction following action, the world would attain salvation And generally we

answer abuse with a slap. A slap is returned with a double slap. The latter is followed by a kick, the kick by a bullet, and so the circle of sin ever widens. But generally those who believe in taking a tooth for a tooth, after a time forgive one another and become friends. Is it impossible for us to follow this common rule? I do not therefore hesitate to ask the Parsi and Christian friends to recognize this rule of mutual forgiveness and forget one another's wrongs.

But I do lay stress upon the special responsibility that rests upon Hindus and Mussalmans. Whether the Parsis and Christians forgive or not, Hindus and Mussalmans are bound to purify themselves by confessing their guilt, asking God for forgiveness and by remaining peaceful. Those who have suffered losses or are deprived of their dear ones are bound to feel the effect of the injury received. Some of them are too poor to bear the losses. We must appreciate their position. And I trust that there will be an impartial non-official committee appointed to investigate the losses suffered by those who cannot bear them and to collect the funds necessary for assisting them. At the same time, I hope, no one will seek the assistance of law or Government. This advice I tender not merely as a non-co-operator, but also from my wide experience that such matters are more truly and more expeditiously adjudicated by private arbitration. That is also the way to avoid acerbities. The easiest method of achieving peace is to give up the idea of complaining against one another in a court of law and to concentrate our attention upon taking preventive measures, so that there is no recurrence of such madness. And I hope that Bombay will retrieve her lost reputation by adopting such measures.

Bombay, 26-11-'21
(*Translated from the original in Gujarati*)

I remain,
Your Servant,
M. K. GANDHI

Young India, 1-12-1921

18

UNITY OUR CREED*

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

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

We all now realize, as we have never before realized that without that unity we cannot attain our freedom, and I make bold to say that without that unity the Mussalmans of India cannot render the Khilafat all the aid they wish. Divided, we must ever remain slaves. That unity, therefore, cannot be a mere policy to be discarded when it does not suit us. We can discard it only when we are tired of Swaraj. Hindu-Muslim unity must be our creed to last for all time and under all circumstances.

Nor must that unity be a menace to the minorities — the Parsis, Christians, Jews or the powerful Sikhs. If we seek to crush any of them, we shall some day want to fight each other.

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

This unity, in my opinion, is unattainable without our adopting non-violence as a firm policy. I call it a policy because it is limited to the preservation of that unity. But it follows that thirty crores of Hindus and Mussalmas, united not for a time but for all time, can defy all the powers of the world and should consider it a cowardly act to resort to violence in their dealings with the English administrators. We have hitherto feared them and their guns in our

* From a letter written by Gandhiji to Hakim Ajmalkhan from Sabarmati Jail.

simplicity. The moment we realize our combined strength, we shall consider it unmanly to fear them and, therefore, ever to think of striking them. Hence am I anxious and impatient to persuade my countrymen to be non-violent, not out of our weakness but out of our strength. But you and I know that we have not yet evolved the non-violence of the strong. And we have not done so, because the Hindu-Muslim union has not gone much beyond the stage of policy. There is still too much mutual distrust and consequent fear. I am not disappointed. The progress we have made in that direction is indeed phenomenal. We seem to have covered in eighteen months' time the work of a generation. But infinitely more is necessary. Neither the classes nor the masses feel instinctively that our union is necessary as the breath of our nostrils.

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

Sabarmati Jail, 12-3-'22

Young India, 16-3-1922

19

HINDU-MUSLIM TENSION

ITS CAUSE AND CURE

Hindu Indictment

Pandit Banarasidas Chaturvedi brought a message from a Hindu residing in Tanganayika to the following effect: "Tell Gandhi he is responsible for the Muslim atrocities in Multan." I did not print the message before, as I was not ready to write then upon the question of questions. But many letters have since been received by me, some from well-known friends telling me that I was responsible even for the alleged Moplah atrocities, in fact for all the riots in which Hindus have, or are said to have, suffered since the Khilafat agitation. The argument is somewhat like this: 'You asked the Hindus to make common cause with the Mussalmans in the Khilafat question. Your being identified with it gave it an importance it would never have otherwise received. It unified and awakened the Mussalmans. It gave a prestige to the *maulvis* which they never had before. And now that the Khilafat question is over, the awakened Mussalmans have proclaimed a kind of jehad against us Hindus.' I have given the purport of the charge in readable language. Some letters contain unprintable abuse.

So much for the Hindu part of the indictment against me.

Mussalman Indictment

A Mussalman friend says:

> "The Muslim community being a very simple and religious community were led to believe that the Khilafat was in danger and that it could be saved by the united voice of Hindus and Mohammedans; these innocent people believing your very eloquent words showed great enthusiasm with the result that they were the first to boycott schools, law-courts, councils, etc. The most famous institution of Aligarh, which Sir Syed had built by the labour of his lifetime, and which was justly the first institution of its kind, was utterly spoilt. I shall be very much obliged, if

you will kindly point out whether the Hindu community had a similar institution, and it met with the same fate. I know of scores of boys who could have taken the university degree with credit to themselves and the community to which they belonged, but they were induced to leave their studies on religious grounds, with the result that they were utterly ruined. On the contrary very few Hindu boys left and those who did so for the time being instantly joined as soon as they found that the movement was tottering to pieces. Similar was the case with lawyers. In those days, you brought about a sort of unity between the two communities and advertised it far and near that it was a solid one. The simple-minded Mohammedans again believed it with the result that they were brutally treated at Ajmer Lucknow, Meerut, Agra, Saharanpur, Labore and other places. Mr. Mahomed Ali, who was a born journalist of a very high type, and whose wonderful paper, the *Comrade*, was doing such solid work for the Muslim community, was won over to your side, and he is now a loss to the community. Your Hindu leaders in the guise of *shuddhi* and *sangathan* are trying to weaken the Muslim community. Your short-sighted decision to prevent people from entering the councils has acted most unfairly on this community as the majority of able men refrained from entering the councils because of the so-called *fatwa*. Under the circumstances, do you not honestly think that you are doing great harm to this community by keeping the Mohammedans, a few of them of course, still in your camp?"

I have not given the whole of the letter. But the extract represents the gist of the Muslim indictment against me.

Not Guilty

I must plead not guilty to both the charges, and add that I am totally unrepentant. Had I been a prophet and foreseen all that has happened, I should have still thrown myself into the Khilafat agitation. In spite of the present strained relations between the two communities, both have gained. The awakening among the masses was a necessary part of the training. It is itself a tremendous gain. I would

do nothing to put the people to sleep again Our wisdom consists now in directing the awakening in the proper channel What we see before us is sad but not disheartening if we have faith in ourselves The storm is but the forerunner of the coming calm that comes from a consciousness of strength, not from the stupor of exhaustion and disappointment

The public will not expect me to give judgment upon the riots in the different places I have no desire for giving judgments And even if I had, I have not the facts before me

Moplahs

I will say a word as to the causes

The Malabar happenings undoubtedly disquieted the Hindu mind What the truth is, no one knows The Hindus say that the Moplah atrocities were indescribable Dr. Mahmud tells me that these have been grossly exaggerated, that the Moplahs too had a grievance against the Hindus, and that he could find no cases of forcible conversion The one case that was reported to him was at least 'non-proven' In his findings, Dr Mahmud says, he is supported by Hindu testimony I merely mention the two versions to ask the public to conclude with me that it is impossible to arrive at the exact truth, and that it is unnecessary for the purpose of regulating our future conduct

Multan etc.

In Multan, Saharanpur, Agra, Ajmer etc. it is agreed that the Hindus suffered most In Palawal it is stated that the Hindus prevented the Mussalmans from turning a *kachcha* mosque into a *pucca* one They are said to have pulled down part of the *pucca* wall, driven the Muslims out of the village, and stated that the Muslims could not live in the village unless they promised not to build any mosque and say *azan*. This state of things is said to have continued for over a year The driven Mussalmans are said to be living in temporary huts near Rohtak

* In Byade in Dharwar district, my informant tells me, on Muslims objecting to music being played before their

mosque, the Hindus desecrated the mosque, beat the Mussalmans, and then got them persecuted.

Here again I cite these two instances, not as proved facts, but to show that the Mussalmans too claim to have much to complain of against the Hindus.

And it can certainly be fairly added that where they were manifestly weak and the Hindus strong, as in Kartarpur and Arrah years ago, they were mercilessly treated by their Hindu neighbours. The fact is that when blood boils, prejudice reigns supreme; man, whether he labels himself a Hindu, Mussalman, Christian or what not, becomes a beast and acts as such.

The Seat of the Trouble

The seat of the trouble however is in the Punjab. The Mussalmans complain that the Hindus have raised a storm of protest on Mr. Fazl Hussain trying very timidly to give a fair proportion of Government employment to Mussalmans. The letter, from which I have already quoted, complains bitterly that wherever a Hindu has been the head of a department, he has carefully excluded Mussalmans from Government posts.

The causes for the tension are thus more than merely religious. The charges I have quoted are individual. But the mass mind is a reflection of individual opinion.

Tired of Non-violence

The immediate cause is the most dangerous. The thinking portion seems to be tired of non-violence. It has not as yet understood my suspension of satyagraha after the Ahmedabad and Viramgam tragedies, then after the Bombay rowdyism, and lastly after the Chauri-Chaura outrage. The last was the last straw. Thinking men imagined that all hope of satyagraha, and therefore of Swaraj too in the near future, was at an end. Their faith in non-violence was skin-deep. Two years ago a Mussalman friend said to me in all sincerity, "I do not believe your non-violence. At least I would not have my Mussalmans to learn it. Violence is the law of life. I would not have Swaraj by non-violence as you define the latter. I must hate my enemy." This

friend is an honest man. I entertain great ragard for him. Much the same has been reported of another very great Mussalman friend of mine. The report may be untrue, but the reporter himself is not an untrue man.

Hindu Repugnance

Nor is this repugnance to non-violence confined to Mussalmans. Hindu friends have said the same thing, if possible with greater vehemence. My claim to Hinduism has been rejected by some, because I believe and advocate non-violence in its extreme form. They say that I am a Christian in disguise. I have been even seriously told that I am distorting the meaning of the *Gita*, when I ascribe to that great poem the teaching of unadulterated non-violence. Some of my Hindu friends tell me that killing is a duty enjoined by the *Gita* under certain circumstances. A very learned *shastri* only the other day scornfully rejected my interprêtation of the *Gita* and said that there was no warrant for the opinion held by some commentators that the *Gita* represented the eternal duel between forces of evil and good, and inculcated the duty of eradicating evil within us without hesitation, without tenderness.

I state these opinions against non-violence in detail, because it is necessary to understand them, if we would understand the solution I have to offer.

What I see around me today is, therefore, a reaction against the spread of non-violence. I feel the wave of violence coming. The Hindu-Muslim tension is an acute phase of this tiredness.

I must be dismissed out of consideration. My religion is a matter solely between my Maker and myself. If I am a Hindu, I cannot cease to be one even though I may be disowned by the whole of the Hindu population. I do however suggest that non-violence is the end of all religions.

Limited Non-violence

But I have never presented to India that extreme form of non-violence, if only because I do not regard myself fit enough to redeliver that ancient message. Though my intellect has fully understood and grasped it, it has not as

yet become part of my whole being. My strength lies in my asking people to do nothing that I have not tried repeatedly in my own life. I am then asking my countrymen today to adopt non-violence as their final creed, only for the purpose of regulating the relations between the different races, and for the purpose of attaining Swaraj. Hindus and Mussalmans, Christians, Sikhs and Parsis must not settle their differences by resort to violence, and the means for the attainment of Swaraj must be non-violent. This I venture to place before India, not as a weapon of the weak, but of the strong. Hindus and Mussalmans prate about no compulsion in religion. What is it but compulsion, if Hindus will kill a Mussalman for saving a cow? It is like wanting to convert a Mussalman to Hinduism by force. And similarly what is it but compulsion, if Mussalmans seek to prevent by force Hindus from playing music before mosques? Virtue lies in being absorbed in one's prayers in the presence of din and noise. We shall both be voted irreligious savages by posterity if we continue to make a futile attempt to compel one another to respect our religious wishes. Again, a nation of three hundred million people should be ashamed to have to resort to force to bring to book one hundred thousand Englishmen. To convert them, or, if you will, even to drive them out of the country, we need, not force of arms, but force of will. If we have not the latter, we shall never get the former. If we develop the force of will, we shall find that we do not need the force of arms.

Acceptance of non-violence, therefore, for the purposes mentioned by me, is the most natural and the most necessary condition of our national existence. It will teach us to husband our corporate physical strength for a better purpose, instead of dissipating it, as now, in a useless fratricidal strife, in which each party is exhausted after the effort. And every armed rebellion must be an insane act unless it is backed by the nation. But almost any item of non-co-operation fully backed by the nation can achieve the aim without shedding a single drop of blood.

I do not say 'eschew violence in your dealing with robbers or thieves or with nations that may invade India.

But in order that we are better able to do so, we must learn to restrain ourselves. It is a sign not of strength but of weakness to take up the pistol on the slightest pretext. Mutual fisticuffs are a training not in violence but in emasculation. My method of non-violence can never lead to loss of strength, but it alone will make it possible, if the nation wills it, to offer disciplined and concerted violence in time of danger.

Not truly Non-violent

If those who believe that we were becoming supine and inert because of the training in non-violence, will but reflect a little, they will discover that we have never been non-violent in the only sense in which the word must be understood. Whilst we have refrained from causing actual physical hurt, we have harboured violence in our breast. If we had honestly regulated our thought and speech in the strictest harmony with our outward act, we would never have experienced the fatigue we are doing. Had we been true to ourselves we would have by this time evolved matchless strength of purpose and will.

I have dwelt at length upon the mistaken view of non-violence, because I am sure that if we can but revert to our faith, if we ever had any, in non-violence limited only to the two purposes above referred to, the present tension between the two communities will largely subside. For, in my opinion, an attitude of non-violence in our mutual relations is an indispensable condition prior to a discussion of the remedies for the removal of the tension. It must be common cause between the two communities that neither party shall take the law into its own hands, but that all points in dispute, wherever and whenever they arise, shall be decided by reference either to private arbitration, or to the law courts if they wish. This is the whole meaning of non-violence, so far as communal matters are concerned. To put it another way, just as we do not break one another's heads in respect of civil matters, so may we not do even in respect of religious matters. This is the only pact that is immediately necessary between the parties, and I am sure that everything else will follow.

The Bully and the Coward

Unless this elementary condition is recognized, we have no atmosphere for considering the ways and means of removing misunderstanding and arriving at an honourable, lasting settlement But, assuming that the acceptance of the elementary condition will be common cause between the two communities, let us consider the constant disturbing factors There is no doubt in my mind that in the majority of quarrels the Hindus come out second best My own experience but confirms the opinion that the Mussalman as a rule is a bully, and the Hindu as a rule is a coward I have noticed this in railway trains, on public roads and in the quarrels which I have had the privilege of settling Need the Hindu blame the Mussalman for his cowardice? Where there are cowards, there will always be bullies They say that in Saharanpur the Mussalmans looted houses, broke open safes and in one case a Hindu woman's modesty was outraged Whose fault was this? The Mussalmans can offer no defence for the execrable conduct, it is true But I as a Hindu am more ashamed of Hindu cowardice than I am angry at the Mussalman bullying .Why did not the owners of the houses looted die in the attempt to defend their possessions? Where were the relatives of the outraged sister at the time of the outrage? Have they no account to render of themselves? My non-violence does not admit of running away from danger and leaving dear ones unprotected Between violence and cowardly flight, I can only prefer violence to cowardice I can no more preach non-violence to a coward than I can tempt a blind man to enjoy healthy scenes Non-violence is the summit of bravery And in my own experience, I have had no difficulty in demonstrating to men trained in the school of violence the superiority of non-violence. As a coward, which I was for years, I harboured violence. I began to prize non-violence only when I began to shed cowardice Those Hindus who ran away from the post of duty when it was attended with danger did so, not because they were non-violent, or because they were afraid to strike, but because they were unwilling to die or even suffer any injury. A rabbit that runs away

from the bull terrier is not particularly non-violent The poor thing trembles at the sight of the terrier and runs for very life Those Hindus who ran away to save their lives would have been truly non-violent and would have covered themselves with glory and added lustre to their faith and won the friendship of their Mussalman assailants, if they had stood bare breast with smiles on their lips, and died at their post They would have done less well though still well, if they had stood at their post and returned blow for blow If the Hindus wish to convert the Mussalman bully into a respecting friend, they have to learn to die in the face of the heaviest odds.

The Way

The way, however, does not lie through *akhadas*, not that I mind them. On the contrary, I want them for physical culture. Then they should be for all. But if they are meant as a preparation for self-defence in Hindu-Mussalman conflicts, they are foredoomed to failure Mussalmans can play the same game, and such preparations secret or open do but cause suspicion and irritation. They can provide no present remedy. It is for the thoughtful few to make quarrels impossible by making arbitration popular and obligatory.

The remedy against cowardice is not physical culture but the braving of dangers So long as the parents of the middle class Hindus, themselves timid, continue to transmit their timidity by keeping their grown up children in cotton-wool, so long will there be the desire to shun danger and and run no risks. They will have to dare to leave their children alone, let them run risks and even at times get killed in so doing. The puniest individual may have a stout heart. The most muscular Zulus cower before English lads. Each village has to find out its stout hearts.

The Goondas

It is a mistake to blame the *goondas*. They never do mischief unless we create an atmosphere for them. I was an eye-witness to what happened in Bombay on the Prince's day in 1921. We sowed the seed and the *goondas* reaped

the harvest Our men were at their back I have no hesitation in holding the respectable Mussalmans (not all in any single case) responsible for the misdeeds in Multan, Saharanpur and elsewhere, as I have none in holding respectable Hindus responsible for the misdeeds in Katarpur and Arrah If it is true that at Palwal we have prevented the erection of a *pucca* mosque in the place of a *kachcha* one, it is not the *goondas* who are doing it, it is the respectable Hindus who must be held accountable We must resolutely discountenance the practice of absolving the respectable class from blame

Therefore I hold that the Hindus will commit a grave blunder, if they organize Hindu *goondas* for defence From the frying pan they will jump into the fire. The *bania* and the brahmana must learn to defend himself even violently, if not non-violently, or surrender his womenfolk and possessions to the *goondas* They are a class apart, whether they are labelled Mussalman or Hindu It was said with gusto that protected by "untouchables" (for they feared not death) a Hindu procession (playing triumphant music) quite recently passed a mosque unhurt

It is a very mundane use to make of a sacred cause Such exploitation of our "untouchable" brothers can neither serve Hinduism in general nor the suppressed classes in particular A few processions so doubtfully protected may pass a few mosques safely But it can only aggravate the growing tension, and degrade Hinduism The middle class people must be prepared for a beating, if they wish to play music in the teeth of opposition, or they must befriend Mussalmans in a self-respecting manner

The Hindus have to do penance for the past and for still continuing disabilities imposed by them upon the suppressed brothers There can be no question, therefore, of expecting any return from them for a debt we owe them If we use them to cover our cowardice, we shall raise in them false hopes we shall never be able to fulfil, and if the retribution comes, it will be a just punishment for our inhuman treatment of them If I have any influence with the Hindus, I would beseech them not to use them as a shield against anticipated Mussalman attack

Growing Distrust

Another potent cause of the tension is the growing distrust even among the best of us I have been warned against Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviyaji He is suspected of secret motives It is said that he is no friend of the Mussalmans He is even credited with being jealous of my influence I have the privilege of knowing him intimately ever since my return to India in 1915 I have had the privilege of closest communion with him I regard him as one of the best among Hindus, who, though orthodox, holds most liberal views He is no enemy of Mussalmans He is incapable of jealousy of any one He has a heart large enough to accommodate even his enemies He has never aimed at power And what he has, is due to a long period of unbroken service of the motherland, such as very few of us can boast He and I are temperamently different but love each other like brothers There never has been even so much as a jar between us Our ways being different, there can be no question of rivalry and, therefore, of jealousy either.

Another one distrusted is Lala Lajpatrai I have found him to be frank as a child His record of sacrifice is almost unequalled I have had not one but many a chat on the Hindu-Muslim question with him He is no enemy of the Mussalman But I confess that he has his doubts about the immediate attainment of unity He is seeking light from on High He believes in that unity in spite of himself because, as he told me, he believes in Swaraj He recognizes that without that unity there can be no Swaraj He only does not know how and when it can be attained He likes my solution but he doubts if the Hindus will understand and appreciate its nobility (as he calls it) Let me say in passing that I do not call my solution noble I hold it to be strictly just and the only feasible solution

Swami Shraddhanandji is also distrusted. His speeches I know are often irritating But even he wants Hindu-Muslim unity Unfortunately he believes in the possibility of bringing every Muslim into the Aryan fold, just as perhaps most Mussalmans think that every non-Muslim will some day become a convert to Islam Swami Shraddhanandji is intrepid

and brave Single-handed he turned a wilderness into a magnificent boarding college on the banks of the sacred Ganges He has faith in himself and his mission But he is hasty and easily ruffled He inherits the traditions of the Arya Samaj I have profound respect for Swami Dayanand Saraswati I think that he has rendered great service to Hinduism His bravery was unquestioned But he made his Hinduism narrow I have read the *Satyartha Prakash*—the Arya Samaj Bible Friends sent me three copies of it whilst I was resting in the Yeravda Jail. I have not read a more disappointing book from a reformer so great. He has claimed to stand for truth and nothing less But he has unconsciously misrepresented Jainism, Islam. Christianity and Hinduism itself One having even a cursory acquaintance with these faiths could easily discover the errors into which the great reformer was betrayed. He has tried to make narrow one of the most tolerant and liberal of the faiths on the face of the earth And an iconoclast though he was, he has succeeded in enthroning idolatry in the subtlest form For he has idolized the letter of the *Vedas* and tried to prove the existence in the *Vedas* of everything known to science The Arya Samaj flourishes, in my humble opinion not because of the inherent merit of the teachings of the *Satyartha Prakash* but because of the grand and lofty character of the founder. Wherever you find Arya Samajists, there is life and energy. But having the narrow outlook and a pugnacious habit they either quarrel with people of other denominations and failing them, with one another Swami Shraddhanandji has a fair share of that spirit. But in spite of all these drawbacks, I do not regard him as past praying for. It is possible that this sketch of the Arya Samaj and the Swamiji will anger them. Needless to say, I mean no offence I love the Samajists for I have many co-workers from among them. And I learnt to love the Swamiji, even while I was in South Africa. And though I know him better now, I love him no less. It is my love that has spoken.

The last among the Hindus against whom I have been warned are Shri Jairamdas and Dr. Choithram. I swear by

Shri Jairamdas Truer man I have not had the honour of meeting His conduct in the jail was the envy of us all. He was true to a fault He is not anti-Mussalman. Dr Choithram, though I began to know him earlier, I do not know so well But from what I do know of him, I decline to think of him as anything but a promoter of Hindu-Muslim unity I have by no means exhausted the list All I feel is that if all these Hindus and Samajists have still to be won over to the side of unity, the word unity has no meaning for me, and I should despair of achieving unity in my lifetime

Bari Saheb

But the suspicion against these friends is not its worst part I have been warned against Mussalmans just as much as I have been warned against Hindus Let me take only three names Maulana Abdul Bari Saheb has been represented to me as an anti-Hindu fanatic I have been shown some writings of his which I do not understand. I have not even worried him about them For, he is a simple child of God I have discovered no guile in him. He often speaks without thinking and often embarrasses his best friends But he is as quick to apologize as he is ready to say things offensive He means all he says for the time being. He is as sincere in his anger as he is in his apology He once flared up at Maulana Mahomed Ali without just cause I was then his guest He thought he had said something offensive to me also. Maulana Mahomed Ali and I were just then leaving his place to entrain for Cawnpore After our departure, he felt he had wronged us He had certainly wronged Maulana Mahomed Ali, not me But he sent a deputation to us at Cawnpore asking us to forgive him. He rose in my estimation by this act. I admit, however, that the Maulana Saheb can become a dangerous friend. But my point is that he is a friend. He does not say one thing and mean another There are no mental reservations with him. I would trust such a friend with my life because I know that he will never stab me in the dark.

The Ali Brothers

A similar warning has been given to me about the Ali Brothers. Maulana Shaukat Ali is one of the bravest of men capable of immense sacrifice and equally capable of loving the meanest of God's creatures. He is passionately fond of Islam but he is no hater of other religions. Mahomed Ali is his brother's *alter ego*. I have not seen such implicit faithfulness to an elder brother as in Maulana Mahomed Ali. He has reasoned out for himself that there is no salvation for India without Hindu-Muslim unity. Their pan-Islamism is not anti-Hindu. Who shall quarrel with their intense desire to see Islam united against attack from without and purified from within? One passage in Maulana Mahomed Ali's Cocanada address was pointed out to me as highly objectionable. I drew his attention to it. He immediately acknowledged that it was an error. Friends have told me that there is something to object to even in Maulana Shaukat Ali's address to the Khilafat Conference. I have the address by me but I have not had time to study it. I know that if there is anything offensive in it, he is the man the readiest to make amends. The Brothers are not faultless. Being full of faults myself, I have not hesitated to seek and cherish their friendship. If they have some faults, they have many virtues. And I love them in spite of their faults. Just as I cannot forsake the Hindu friends I have mentioned above and effectively worked with among Hindus for Hindu-Muslim unity, neither can I work to that end among the Mussalmans without the Mussalman friends, such as I have mentioned. If so many of us were perfect beings, there would be no quarrels. Imperfect as we are, we have to discover points of contact, and with faith in God work away for the common end.

In order to purify the atmosphere of distrust of even the best of us, I had to deal with some of the principal characters. I may not have convinced the reader of the correctness of my estimate. Anyway it was necessary that he knew mine even if his was different from it.

Illustration from Sind

This intense distrust makes it almost impossible to know the truth I have received from Dr Choithram the alleged facts of an attempted forcible conversion of a Hindu in Sind The man is said to have been done to death by his Mussalman companions because he would not accept Islam The facts are ghastly if they are true I straightway wired to Sheth Haji Abdulla Harun inquiring about the matter He very kindly and promptly wired to say that it was reported to be a case of suicide but that he was making further inquiries I hope that we shall succeed in knowing the truth about it I simply point out the difficulty of work in the midst of suspicion There is one other Sind incident which I hesitate to report till I have fuller and more authentic particulars I simply beseech those who hear about any such incidents, whether against Hindus or Mussalmans, to keep themselves cool and pass on simply facts which can be sustained I promise on my part to inquire into the most trifling of cases and do whatever is possible for a single individual to do Before long I hope we shall have an army of workers whose one business will be to investigate all such complaints, and do whatever is necessary to see that justice is satisfied and causes for future trouble are avoided

From Bengal

The tales that are reported from Bengal of outrages upon Hindu women are the most disquieting if they are even half true It is difficult to understand the cause of eruption of such crimes at the present moment It is equally difficult to speak with restraint of the cowardice of Hindu protectors of these outraged sisters Nor is it easy to characterize the lust of those who become so mad with it as to take liberties with innocent women It is up to the local Mussalmans and the leading Mussalmans in general of Bengal to find out the miscreants, not necessarily with a view to getting them punished but with a view to preventing a recurrence of such crimes It is easy enough to dig out a few criminals from their hiding places and hand them

over to the police, but it does not protect society against the repetition of them. It is necessary to remove the causes by undertaking a thorough process of reform. There must arise in Islam as well as in Hinduism men who, being comparatively pure in character, would work among such men. Much the same may be said of the Kabuli terror. This has no bearing on the Hindu-Muslim tension. But we have to deal with such cases too if we are not to be helplessly relying purely upon the police.

Shuddhi and Tabligh

That, however, which is keeping up the tension is the manner in which the *shuddhi* or conversion movement is being conducted. In my opinion, there is no such thing as proselytism in Hinduism as it is understood in Christianity or to a lesser extent in Islam. The Arya Samaj has, I think, copied the Christians in planning its propaganda. The modern method does not appeal to me. It has done more harm than good. Though regarded as a matter of the heart purely and one between the Maker and oneself, it has degenerated into an appeal to the selfish instinct. The Arya Samaj preacher is never so happy as when he is reviling other religions. My Hindu instinct tells me that all religions are more or less true. All proceed from the same God but all are imperfect because they have come down to us through imperfect human instrumentality. The real *shuddhi* movement should consist in each one trying to arrive at perfection in his or her own faith. In such a plan character would be the only test. What is the use of crossing from one compartment to another, if it does not mean a moral rise? What is the meaning of my trying to convert to the service of God (for that must be the implication of *shuddhi* or *tabligh*) when those who are in my fold are every day denying God by their actions? "Physician heal thyself" is more true in matters religious than mundane. But these are my views. If the Arya Samajists think that they have a call from their conscience, they have a perfect right to conduct the movement. Such a burning call recognizes no time limit, no checks of experience. If Hindu-Muslim unity is endangered because

an Arya Samaj preacher or a Mussalman preacher preaches his faith in obedience to a call from within, that unity is only skin-deep Why should we be ruffled by such movements? Only they must be genuine If the Malkanas wanted to return to the Hindu fold, they had a perfect right to do so whenever they liked But no propaganda can be allowed which reviled other religions For that would be negation of toleration The best way of dealing with such propaganda is to publicly condemn it Every movement attempts to put on the cloak of respectability. As soon as the public tear that cloak down, it dies for want of respectability. I am told that both Arya Samajists and Mussalmans virtually kidnap women and try to convert them. I have before me volumes of Agakhani literature which I have not yet had the time to study carefully, but I am assured that it is a distortion of Hinduism. I have seen enough of it to know that it describes H H the Agakhan as a Hindu *avatar* It would be interesting to learn what the Agakhan himself thinks of all this literature I have many Khoja friends I commend this literature to their attention A gentleman told me that some agents of the Agakhani movement lend money to poor illiterate Hindus and then tell them that the debt would be wiped out if the debtor would accept Islam. I would regard this as conversion by unlawful inducements. But the worst form is that preached by a gentleman of Delhi. I have read his pamphlet from cover to cover. It gives detailed instructions to preachers how to carry on propaganda. It starts with a lofty proposition that Islam is merely preaching of the unity of God. This grand truth is to be preached, according to the writer, by every Mussalman irrespective of character. A secret department of spies is advocated whose one business is to be to pry into the privacy of non-Muslim households. Prostitutes, professional singers, mendicants, Government servants, lawyers, doctors, artisans are pressed into the service. If this kind of propaganda becomes popular, no Hindu household would be safe from the secret attention of disguised misinterpreters (I cannot call them missionaries) of the great message of the Prophet of Islam. I am told by respectable Hindus that this pamphlet

is widely read in the Nizam's dominions and that the methods advocated in it are extensively practised there

As a Hindu I feel sorry that methods of such doubtful morality should have been seriously advocated by a gentleman who is a well-known Urdu author and has a large circle of readers. My Mussalman friends tell me that no respectable Mussalman approved of the methods advocated The point, however, is not what the respectable Mussalmans think. The point is whether a considerable number of Mussalman masses accept and follow them. A portion of the Punjab Press is simply scurrilous. It is at times even filthy I have gone through the torture of reading many extracts. These sheets are conducted by Arya Samajists or Hindu and Mussalman writers. Each vies with the other in using abusive language and reviling the religion of the opponent. These papers have, I understand, a fairly large circulation. They find place even in respectable reading rooms

I have heard it said that the Government emissaries are at the back of this campaign of calumny. I hesitate to believe it But even assuming the truth of it, the public of the Punjab should be able to cope with the growing disgrace

I think I have now examined all the causes, both original and continuing, of the tension between the two communities It is now time to examine the treatment of two constant causes of friction.

Cow-Slaughter

The first is cow-slaughter. Though I regard cow-protection as the central fact of Hinduism, central because it is common to the classes as well as the masses, I have never been able to understand the antipathy towards the Mussalmans on that score. We say nothing about the slaughter that daily takes place on behalf of Englishmen. Our anger becomes red-hot when a Mussalman slaughters a cow All the riots that have taken place in the name of the cow have been an insane waste of effort. They have not saved a single cow, but they have, on the contrary stiffened the backs of the Mussalmans and resulted in more

slaughter I am satisfied that during 1921 more cows were saved through the voluntary and generous efforts of the Mussalmans than through Hindu effort during all the previous twenty years (say). Cow-protection should commence with ourselves. In no part of the world perhaps are cattle worse treated than in India I have wept to see Hindu drivers goading their jaded oxen with the iron points of their cruel sticks The half-starved condition of the majority of our cattle are a disgrace to us The cows find their necks under the butcher's knife because Hindus sell them The only effective and honourable way is to befriend the Mussalmans and leave it to their honour to save the cow. Cow-protection societies must turn their attention to the feeding of cattle, prevention of cruelty, preservation of the fast disappearing pasture land, improving the breed of cattle, buying from poor shepherds and turning *pinjrapoles* into model self-supporting dairies. Hindus do sin against God and man when they omit to do any of the things I have described above. They commit no sin, if they cannot prevent cow-slaughter at the hands of Mussalmans, they do sin grievously when in order to save the cow, they quarrel with the Mussalmans.

Music

The question of music before mosques and now even *aratı* in Hindu temples, has occupied my prayerful attention This is a sore point with the Mussalmans as cow-slaughter is with the Hindus. And just as the Hindus cannot compel the Mussalmans to refrain from killing cows, so can the Mussalmans not compel the Hindus to stop music or *aratı* at the point of the sword. They must trust to the good sense of the Hindus. As a Hindu, I would certainly advise Hindus, without any bargaining spirit, to consult the sentiment of their Mussalman neighbour, and wherever they can, accommodate him. I have heard that in some places, the Hindus purposely and with the deliberate intention of irritating the Mussalmans, perform *aratı* just when the Mussalman prayers commence This is an insensate and unfriendly act Friendship presupposes the utmost attention to the feelings of a friend It never requires

consideration. But the Mussalmans should never expect to stop Hindu music by force To yield to the threat or actual use of violence is a surrender of one's self-respect and religious conviction. But a person, who never will yield to threat, would always minimize and, if possible, even avoid occasions for causing irritation.

Pact

In view of what I have said above, it is clear that we have not arrived at the stage when a pact is even a possibility There can be, it is clear to me, no question of bargain about cow-slaughter and music On either side it must be a voluntary effort and therefore can never be the basis of a pact.

For political matters a pact or an understanding is certainly necessary But, in my opinion, the restoration of friendly feeling is a condition precedent to any effectual pact Are both parties sincerely willing to accept the proposition that no dispute, religious or otherwise, between the communities should ever be decided by an appeal to force, i e. violence ? I am convinced that the masses do not want to fight, if the leaders do not If, therefore, the leaders agree that mutual rows should be, as in all advanced countries, erazed out of our public life as being barbarous and irreligious, I have no doubt that the masses will quickly follow them

So far as political matters are concerned, as a non-co-operator I am quite uninterested in them, but for the future understanding I hold that it is up to the Hindus as the major party not to bargain but leave the pen in the hands of, say, Hakim Saheb Ajmal Khan and abide by his decision I would similarly deal with the Sikhs, Christians and Parsis and be satisfied with the residue. It is, in my opinion, the only just, equitable, honourable and dignified solution. The Hindus, if they want unity among different races, must have the courage to trust the minorities Any other adjustment must leave a nasty taste in the mouth. Surely the millions do not want to become legislators and municipal councillors. And if we have understood the

proper use of satyagraha, we should know that it can be and should be used against an unjust administrator whether he be a Hindu, Mussalman or of any other race or denomination, whereas a just administrator or representative is always and equally good whether he be a Hindu or Mussalman. We want to do away with the communal spirit. The majority must, therefore, make the beginning and thus inspire the minorities with confidence in their bona fides. Adjustment is possible only when the more powerful take the initiative without waiting for response from the weaker.

So far as employment in Government departments is concerned, I think it will be fatal to good government, if we introduce the communal spirit there. For administration to be efficient, it must always be in the hands of the fittest. There should be certainly no favouritism. But if we want five engineers we must not take one from each community but we must take the fittest five even if they were all Mussalmans or all Parsis. The lowest post must, if need be, be filled by examination by an impartial board consisting of men belonging to different communities. But distribution of posts should never be according to the proportion of the numbers of each community. The educationally backward communities will have a right to receive favoured treatment in the matter of education at the hands of the national government. This can be secured in an effective manner. But those who aspire to occupy responsible posts in the government of the country, can only do so if they pass the required test.

Trust begets Trust

For me the only question for immediate solution before the country is the Hindu-Mussalman question. I agree with Mr. Jinnah that Hindu-Muslim unity means Swaraj. I see no way of achieving anything in this afflicted country without a lasting heart-unity between the Hindus and Mussalmans of India. I believe in the immediate possibility of achieving it, because it is so natural, so necessary for both and because I believe in human nature. The Mussalmans may have much to answer for. I have come in closest touch with even what may be considered a 'bad lot'. I cannot recall

a single occasion when I had to regret it The Mussalmans are brave, they are generous and trusting, the moment their suspicion is disarmed The Hindus living as they do in glass houses have no right to throw stones at their Mussalman neighbours See what we have done are still doing, to the suppressed classes ! If *kafir* is a term of opprobrium, how much more so is *chandala* ? In the history of the world religions, there is perhaps nothing like our treatment of the suppressed classes The pity of it is that the treatment still continues What a fight in Vaikom for a most elementary human right ! God does not punish directly His ways are inscrutable Who knows that all our woes are not due to that one black sin ? The history of Islam, if it betrays aberrations from the moral height, has many a brilliant page In its glorious days it was not intolerant It commanded the admiration of the world When the West was sunk in darkness a bright star rose in the Eastern firmament and gave light and comfort to a groaning world Islam is not a false religion Let the Hindus study it reverently and they will love it even as I do If it has become gross and fanatical here, let us admit that we have had no small share in making it so If the Hindus set their house in order, I have not a shadow of doubt that Islam will respond in a manner worthy of its past liberal traditions The key to the situation lies with the Hindus We must shed timidity or cowardice. We must be brave enough to trust and all will be well

Young India, 29-5-1924

* The right of ' untouchables " or " unapproachables" to pass along certain streets from which they were prohibited, in Vaikom in Travancore — Ed

20

HINDU MUSLIM UNITY

Let me summarize the long statement issued last week on this the greatest of all questions for the Indian patriot. Posterity will judge both the faiths by the manner in which the followers of each acquit themselves in the matter. However good Hinduism or Islam may be in the abstract, the only way each can be judged is by the effect produced by each on its votaries considered as a whole.

The following then is the summary of the statement:

Causes

1. The remote cause of the tension is the Moplah rebellion.

2. The attempt of Mr. Fazal Hussain to rearrange the distribution of posts in the education department consistently with the number of Mussalmans in the Punjab, and consequent Hindu opposition.

3 The *shuddhi* movment.

4. The most potent cause being tiredness of non-violence and the fear that the communities might, by a long course of training in non-violence, forget the law of retaliation and self-defence.

5. Mussalman cow-slaughter and Hindu music.

6. Hindu cowardice and consequent Hindu distrust of Mussalmans.

7. Mussalman bullying.

8. Mussalman distrust of Hindu fairplay.

Cure

1. The master-key to the solution is the replacement of the rule of the sword by that of arbitration.

Honest public opinion should make it impossible for aggrieved parties to take the law into their own hands, and every case must be referred to private arbitration or to law courts if the parties do not believe in non-co-operation.

2. Ignorant fear of cowardly non-violence, falsely so called, taking the place of violence should be dispelled.

3. Growing mutual distrust among the leaders must, if they believe in unity, give place to trust.

4. Hindus must cease to fear the Mussalman bully, and the Mussalmans should consider it beneath their dignity to bully their Hindu brothers

5. Hindus must not imagine that they can force Mussalmans to give up cow-sacrifice. They must trust by befriending Mussalmans, that the latter will, of their own accord give up cow-sacrifice out of regard for their Hindu neighbours

6 Nor must Mussalmans imagine they can force Hindus to stop music or *aratı* before mosques. They must befriend the Hindus and trust them to pay heed to reasonable Mussalman sentiment.

7. The Hindus must leave to the Mussalmans and the other minorities the question of representation on elected bodies, and gracefully and whole-heartedly give effect to the findings of such referee. If I had my way I should appoint Hakim Saheb Ajmal Khan as the sole referee leaving him free to consult the Mussalmans, Sikhs Christians, Parsis, etc , as he considers bes .

8 Employment under national Government must be according to merit to be decided by a board of examiners representing different communities.

9 *Shuddhi* or *tablıgh* as such must not be disturbed, but either must be conducted honestly and by men of proved character It should avoid all attack on other religions There should be no secret propaganda and no offer of material rewards.

10. Public opinion should be so cultivated as to put under ban all the scurrilous writings principally in a section of the Punjab Press.

11. Nothing is possible without the Hindus shedding their timidity. Theirs is the largest stake and they must be prepared to sacrifice the most.

But how is the cure to be effected ? Who will convince the Hindu maniac that the best way to save the cow is for him to do his duty by her and not goad his Mussalman brother ? Who will convince the Mussalman fanatic that it is not religion but irreligion to break the head of his Hindu brother

when he plays music in front of his mosque? Or again who will make the Hindu see that he will lose nothing by the minorities being even over-represented on the elective public secular bodies? These are fair questions and show the difficulty of working out the solution

But if the solution is the only true solution, all difficulties must be overcome In reality, the difficulty is only apparent. If there are even a few Hindus and a few Mussalmans who have a living faith in the solution, the rest is easy. Indeed, even if there are a few Hindus only, or a few Mussalmans only with that faith, the solution would be still easy They have but to work away single-heartedly and the others will follow them And the conversion of only one party is enough because the solution requires no bargains For instance, the Hindus should cease to worry the Mussalmans about the cow without expecting any consideration from the latter They should yield to the Mussalman demand whatever it may be regarding representation, again without requiring any return And if the Mussalmans insist on stopping the Hindu music or *aratı* by force, the Hindus will continue playing it although every single Hindu should die at his post but without retaliation. The Mussalmans will then be shamed into doing the right thing in an incredibly short space of time The Mussalmans can do likewise, if they choose, and shame the Hindus into doing the right thing. One has to dare to believe

But in practice it will not be thus, on the contrary both will act simultaneously as soon as the workers become true to themselves Unfortunately they are not They are mostly ruled by passion and prejudice. Each tries to hide the shortcomings of his co-religionists and so the circle of distrust and suspicion ever widens

I hope that at the forthcoming meeting of the All India Congress Committee, it will be possible to find out a method of work which will bring a speedy end to the tension.

It has been suggested to me that the Government are fomenting these dissensions. I should hope not. But assuming that they are, surely it is up to us to neutralize such efforts by ourselves acting truly and faithfully.

Young India, 5-6 1924

21

WHAT MAY HINDUS DO?

I have received many communications on the Hindu-Muslim statement, but there being nothing new or striking in them, I have not published them. But I gladly print Babu Bhagwandas's letter and answer his questions.

Regarding the first two questions the writer has answered them himself. In my opinion, they are only partly true. Though the majority of the Mussalmans of India and the Hindus belong to the same 'stock', the religious environment has made them different. I believe and I have noticed too that thought transforms man's features as well as character. The Sikhs are the most recent illustration of the fact. The Mussalman being generally in a minority has as a class developed into a bully. Moreover being heir to fresh traditions he exhibits the virility of a comparatively new system of life. Though, in my opinion, non-violence has a predominant place in the *Quran*, the thirteen hundred years of imperialistic expansion has made the Mussalmans fighters as a body. They are therefore aggressive. Bullying is the natural excrescence of an aggressive spirit. The Hindu has an ages-old civilization. He is essentially non-violent. His civilization has passed through the experiences that the two recent ones are still passing through. If Hinduism was ever imperialistic in the modern sense of the term, it has outlived its imperialism and has either deliberately or as a matter of course given it up. Predominance of the non-violent spirit has restricted the use of arms to a small minority which must always be subordinate to a civil power highly spiritual, learned and selfless. The Hindus as a body are, therefore, not equipped for fighting. But not having retained their spiritual training they have forgotten the use of an effective substitute for arms, and not knowing their use nor having an aptitude for them they have become docile to the point of timidity or cowardice. This vice is therefore a natural excrescence of gentleness. Holding this view, I do

not think that the Hindu exclusiveness, bad as it undoubtedly is, has much to do with the Hindu timidity. Hence also my disbelief in *akhadas* as a means of self-defence. I prize them for physical culture but, for self-defence I would restore the spiritual culture. The best and most lasting self-defence is self-purification. I refuse to be lifted off my feet because of the scares that haunt us today. If the Hindus would but believe in themselves and work in accordance with their traditions, they will have no reason to fear bullying. The moment they recommence the real spiritual training the Mussalman will respond. He cannot help it. If I can get together a band of young Hindus with faith in themselves and therefore faith in the Mussalmans, the band will become a shield for the weaker ones. They (the young Hindus) will teach how to die without killing. I know no other way. When our ancestors saw affliction surrounding them, they went in for *tapasya* — purification. They realized the helplessness of the flesh and in their helplessness they prayed till they compelled the Maker to obey their call. 'Oh yes', says my Hindu friend, 'but then God sent some one to wield arms'. I am not concerned with denying the truth of the retort. All I say to the friend is that as a Hindu he may not ignore the cause and secure the result. It will be time to fight, when we have done enough *tapasya*. Are we purified enough? I ask. Have we even done willing penance for the sin of untouchability, let alone the personal purity of individuals? Are our religious preceptors all that they should be? We are beating the air whilst we simply concentrate our attention upon picking holes in the Mussalman conduct. As with the Englishman, so with the Mussalman. If our professions are true, we should find it infinitely less difficult to conquer the Mussalman than the English. But the Hindus whisper to me that they have hope of the Englishman but none of the Mussalman. I say to them, 'If you have no hope of the Mussalman, your hope of the Englishman is foredoomed to failure'.

The other questions can be briefly answered. The *goondas* came on the scene because the leaders wanted them. The leaders distrusted one another. Distrust never

valued Mussalman friends and myself. I would love to call it an alliance between the Mussalmans and the Hindus — not myself. But that seems to have been a daydream. In truth, therefore, one may say, there is an alliance between some Mussalmans including the Ali Brothers, and some Hindus including myself. How far it carries us, the future will show. There is no vagueness about the alliance. It is the most natural thing in the world. It is tragic that it excites wonder and even apprehension. What can be more natural than that Hindus and Mussalmans, born and bred in India, having the same adversities and the same hopes, should be permanent friends, brothers born of the same Mother-India? The surprise is that we should fight, not that we should unite. And why should the combination be a menace to the world? The greatest menace to the world today is the growing, exploiting, irresponsible imperialism which through the enslavement of India is threatening the independent existence and expansion of the weaker races of the world. That imperialism is a negation of God. It does ungodly acts in the name of God. It covers its inhumanities, Dyerisms and O'Dwyerisms under the cover of humanity, justice and righteousness. And the pity of it is that the majority of Englishmen do not know that their name is being exploited. The great pity of it is that sober, God-fearing Englishmen are beguiled into the belief that all is well when all is ill with India, that all is well with the African races when they are being exploited and degraded in their name. If the defeat of Germany and the central powers ended the German peril, the victory of the Allies has brought into being a peril no less deadly for the peace of the world. I wish therefore that the so-called alliance between the Mussalmans and the Hindus will become a permanent reality based on a frank recognition of enlightened self-interest. It will then transmute the iron of sordid imperialism into the gold of humanitarianism. The Hindu-Muslim alliance is intended to be a blessing to India and to the world for it is conceived in a spirit of peace and goodwill to all. It has adopted non-violence and truth as the indispensable means for achieving Swaraj in India. Its symbol — the charkha — the

spinning wheel is a symbol of simplicity, self-reliance, self-control, voluntary co-operation among millions. If such an alliance proves a menace to the world, then there is no God, or God is asleep.

Young India, 21-8-1924

23

GULBARGA GONE MAD

I hinted last week that there was evidently an organization at the back of the mania for desecrating Hindu temples. Gulbarga is the latest instance in point. Whatever the Hindu provocation, if there was any, the Mussalman outburst has an ominous look about it. The desecration of temples cannot be justified in any circumstance whatsoever. Maulana Shaukat Ali when he heard of the Shambhar and Amethi desecrations exclaimed in a fit of temper that the Mussalmans should not be surprised if the Hindus retaliate and some day find that their mosques have been desecrated. The Hindus may feel flattered or pleased over the Maulana's indignant exclamation. But I do not, and I advise the Hindus not to be. Let them understand that I feel, perhaps more keenly than most of them, every fanatic ourburst on the part of Mussalmans. I am fully aware of my responsibility in the matter. I know that many Hindus feel that I am responsible for many of these outbursts. For, they argue, I contributed the largest share to the awakening of the Mussalman masses. I appreciate the charge. Though I do not repent of my contribution, I feel the force of the objection. Therefore, if for no other reason, for this at least of greater responsibility, I must feel, more keenly than most Hindus can, these desecrations. I am both an idolator and an iconoclast in what I conceive to be the true sense of the terms. I value the spirit behind idol worship. It plays a most important part in the uplift of the human race. And I would like to possess the ability to defend with my life the thousands of holy temples which sanctify this land of ours. My alliance with the Mussalmans presupposes their perfect

tolerance for my idols and my temples. I am an iconoclast in the sense that I break down the subtle form of idolatry in the shape of fanaticism that refuses to see any virtue in any other form of worshipping the deity save one's own. This form of idolatry is more deadly for being more fine and evasive than the tangible and gross form of worship that identifies the deity with a little bit of a stone or a golden image.

Hindu-Muslim unity requires the Mussalmans to tolerate, not as a virtue of necessity, not as a policy, but as a part of their religion, the religion of others so long as they, the latter, believe it to be true. Even so is it expected of the Hindus to extend the same tolerance as a matter of faith and religion to the religions of others, no matter how repugnant they may appear to their (the Hindus') sense of religion. The Hindus must therefore reject the idea of retaliation. The law of retaliation we have been trying since the day of Adam and we know from experience that it has hopelessly failed. We are groaning under its poisonous effect. Above all the Hindus may not break mosques against temples. That way lies slavery and worse. Even though a thousand temples may be reduced to bits, I would not touch a single mosque and expect thus to prove the superiority of my faith to the so-called faith of fanatics. I would love to hear of priests dying at their posts in defence of their temples and their idols. Let them learn to suffer and to die in the defence of their temples even as God allows Himself to be insulted and broken up in the insult and damage done to the idols in which, being omnipresent, He undoubtedly resides. Hindus will not defend their religion or their temples by seeking to destroy mosques and thus proving themselves as fanatical as the fanatics who have been desecrating temples.

To the unknown Mussalmans who are undoubtedly behind these desecrations I submit: "Remember that Islam is being judged by your conduct. I have not found a single Mussalman defending these outbursts not even under provocation. There seems to me to have been little, if any, provocation offered by the Hindus. But let us assume that it was otherwise, that the Hindus played music near mosques to

exasperate the Mussalmans, that they even removed a stone from a minaret. Yet I venture to say that the Mussalmans ought not to have desecrated the Hindu temples. Even retaliation has its limits. The Hindus prize their temples above their lives. It is possible to comtemplate with some degree of equanimity injury to life but not to temples. Religion is more than life. Remember that his own religion is the truest to every man even if it stand low in the scales of philosophic comparison. But presumption is against such Hindu provocation. The desecration in Multan was an unprovoked act. I have been trying to find proof for the allegations about Hindu desecration in the places referred to in my article on the Hindu-Muslim tension. I have failed to receive any proof in support of them. You will not enhance the reputation of Islam by the acts reported about Amethi, Shambhar, and Gulbarga. If you will permit me to say so, I feel about the honour of Islam as much as I feel about my own religion. This I do because I desire to live in perfect, open and hearty friendship with the Mussalmans. I cannot help saying that these desecrations are cutting a deep wound in my heart."

To the Hindus and Mussalmans of Delhi, I say: "Yours is a golden opportunity, if you desire amity between the two communities. In the light of what seems to have happened at Amethi, Shambhar and Gulbarga, it is doubly your duty to solve the question. You have had the rare good fortune of having amongst you two Mussalmans Hakim Saheb Ajmal Khan and Dr. Ansari who have hitherto enjoyed the confidence of both the communities. You have therefore noble traditions behind you. You can turn your quarrels to good account by closing the ranks and establishing a heart-friendship that will not break under any strain whatsoever. I have placed my services at your disposal. If you will have me to act as a mediator between you, I am prepared to bury myself in Delhi and in collaboration with any others whom you may appoint endeavour to find out the true facts. An authentic story of the events of July last and the circumstances that led to them is a necessary preliminary to a lasting solution. I ask you to come to

a decision quickly. The Hindu-Muslim question is the question on the proper solution of which hangs the destiny of India in the immediate future. Delhi can solve the question, for the others are likely to follow what Delhi might do

Young India, 28-8-1924

24

AN EXPLANATION

Some Mussalman friends of Delhi have been to me and expressed their surprise at my saying in *Young India* of August 21 that there was a Mussalman organization at the back of the desecration of Hindu temples, and that these desecrations were unprovoked. The friends tell me that my statement about organization has been interpreted to mean an organization on behalf of Mussalmans as a community, and that about provocation to mean provocation of any kind whatsoever. I told my visitors that by an organization I did not mean an organization formed or instigated by the Mussalman community, but an organization of some individuals. I had no data to say how many.

These friends told me, as Hakim Saheb and Maulana Mahomed Ali had told me on my arrival in Delhi, that they knew of no such organization and that, had there been any, they should know it. I told them that, whilst their repudiation shook my confidence in my statement, I was not prepared to dismiss from my mind the idea of an organization of the kind mentioned by me. So many informants, including Mussalmans, had told me about it before the recent desecrations. When they happened, I could not but come to the conclusion that they were not the chance work of frenzy, but that they took that particular shape by reason of organized instigation. I should be glad to find that I was totally mistaken, and as soon as I was convinced of my error of judgment, I should readily make the needed correction. It has been suggested that the organization might well be from a Government agency. I said I was not prepared to deny the Government's share

in these disturbances. I should certainly not be surprised to discover that the directing mind was Government agency.

As for provocation, the *Young India* writing, I told my visitors, quite clearly showed that I had referred to provocation in kind. It says, "Presumption is against such provocation. The desecration in Multan was an unprovoked act. I have been trying to find proof for the allegations about Hindu desecration in the places referred to in my article on Hindu-Muslim tension, but I have failed to receive any proof in support of them."

My visitors produced before me a Hyderabad journal which is said to hold that there was such Hindu provocation. If it could be proved, whilst I would still hold, under every conceivable circumstance, desecration of temples and equally of mosques to be unjustified from my point of view, I admitted that my condemnation would lose much of its force. I should be deeply hurt and ashamed, if the alleged Hindu desecration in Gulbarga was found to be true.

My visitors next asked me whether there was not a counter-organization on the part of the Hindus. I told them I know of no Hindu organization instigating desecration of mosques, but I did see that there was an organization of some Hindus, not an inconsiderable number, who were bent on provoking, writing insultingly of Islam and grossly exaggerating Mussalman misdeeds. This was unpardonable. In this respect, however, both parties were equally to blame. The business of every well-wisher of the country was to condemn those parties who promoted mischief and to leave no stone unturned to stop it. I told my visitors that, if I was permitted and assisted whole-heartedly by both the sections, I was prepared, singly if necessary and assisted if possible by colleagues, to conduct an inquiry and find out who started the mischief, how it spread and how it could be remedied.

Young India, 18-9-1924

25

HINDU-MUSLIM UNITY

I had occasion whilst addressing a public meeting at Surat to refer to the question of Hindu-Muslim unity in detail, as some friend there wanted to know my views about *sangathan*. After the meeting I had a letter from a Mussalman friend offering suggestions for the solution of the question. I now see that even Gujarat is not quite free from the dangers of communal disturbances. The Visnagar affair can hardly be said to be yet settled. There is some trouble in Mandal. There was fear of a little disturbance in Ahmedabad. Some trouble is apprehended in Umreth. Other parts (e. g. Bhagalpur in Bihar) are also in the same plight.

The question of Hindu-Muslim unity is getting more and more serious every day. One thing should be made clear at the outset. In the case of many of these disturbances, we hear of Government agents being at the back of them. The allegation, if true, would be painful to me, not surprising. It should not be surprising if the Government fomented the troubles, it being their policy to divide us. It would be painful because of the necessary implication that neither of the communities realizes wherein lies its interest. Only those can be set by the ears by a third party, who are in the habit of quarrelling. The Government has never been heard of having fomented a quarrel, say, between the brahmanas and *banias*, nor amongst the *Sunni* Mussalmans. The suspicion or fear of their having set the Hindus and Mussalmans by the ears is always entertained, because both have quarrelled so often. It is this habit of quarrelling that needs to be abandoned if we want to have Swaraj and retain it.

Quarrels must break out so long as the Hindus continue to be seized with fear. Bullies are always to be found where there are cowards. The Hindus must understand that no one can afford them protection, if they go on hugging fear.

Fear of man argues want of faith in God. Only he trusts to his physical strength who has no faith or very little faith in God's omnipresence. The Hindu must cultivate either of these two — faith in God, or faith in one's physical might. If he does neither, it will spell the ruin of the community.

The first, viz. reliance on God and shaking off the fear of man, is the way of non-violence and is the best way. The second, viz. reliance on one's physical might, is the way of violence. Both have a place in the world. It is open to us to choose either. One man cannot try both at the same time. If all the Hindus and Mussalmans both elect the way of violence, we had better cease to talk of winning Swaraj in the immediate future. Armed peace means not a little fighting that will end with the breaking of a few heads or of a dozen temples. It must mean prolonged fighting and rivers of blood. I am against *sangathan*, and I am not. If *sangathan* means opening *akhadas* and organizing the Hindu hooligans through them, I would regard it as a pitiable condition. You cannot defend yourself and your religion with the help of hooligans. It is substituting one peril for another, and even adding another. I would have nothing to say against *akhadas*, if they were used by the brahmanas, *banias* and others for the development of their physique. *Akhadas* as *akhadas* are unexceptionable. But I have no doubt that they are no good for giving training to fight the Mussalmans. It will take years to acquire the physical strength to fight.

The *akhada* is therefore not the way. We will have to go in for *tapasya*, for self-purification, if we want to win the hearts of the Mussalmans. We shall have to cast off all the evil in us. If they attack us, we shall have to learn not to return blow for blow, but bravely to face death — not to die a craven death leaving wife and children behind, but to receive their blows and meet death cheerfully.

I would tender the same advice to the Mussalmans. But it is unnecessary, as the average Mussalman has been assumed to be a bully. The general impression is that the Mussalmans can fight and fight well. I do not, therefore,

need to tell them how they should defend themselves from the attacks of the Hindus; on the contrary I have to appeal to them to forbear. I have to appeal to them to get the *goonda* element under control and to behave peaceably. The Mussalmans may regard the Hindus as a menace in other matters. They do regard them as an economic menace. They do dread the Hindus' interference with their religious rites on the *Bakr Id* day. But they are in no fear of being beaten by the Hindus. I will therefore tell them only this: 'You cannot protect Islam with the *lathi* or the sword. The age of the *lathi* is gone. A religion will be tested by the purity of its adherents. If you leave it to the *goondas* to defend your religion, you will do serious harm to Islam. Islam will, in that case, no longer remain the faith of the fakirs and worshippers of Allah.'

I have up to now confined myself to giving general advice. Maulana Hasrat Mohani told me that the Mussalmans ought to protect the cow for the sake of the Hindus, and the Hindus should cease to regard the Mussalmans as untouchables, as he said they are regarded in North India. I told him: 'I will not bargain with you in this matter. If the Mussalmans think it their duty to protect the cow for the sake of the Hindus, they may do so, irrespective of how the Hindus behave towards them. I think it a sin for a Hindu to look upon a Mussalman as an untouchable, and the Hindu ought not to do so, irrespective of a Mussalman killing or sparing the cow. The Mussalman ought to be no more untouchable to a Hindu than a Hindu of any of the four castes is to one of the other. I regard these things as axiomatic. If Hinduism teaches hatred of Islam or of non-Hindus, it is doomed to destruction. Each community should then put its house in order without bargaining with the other. To nurse enmity against the Mussalman, for the sake of saving the cow, is a sure way to kill the cow and is doubly sinful. Hinduism will not be destroyed by a non-Hindu killing a cow. The Hindu's religion consists in saving the cow, but it can never be his religion to save the cow by a resort to force towards a non-Hindu. The Hindus want Swaraj in India, and not a Hindu Raj. Even

if there was a Hindu Raj, and toleration one of its features, there would be place in it for the Mussalmans as well as the Christians; it would redound to the credit of Hinduism, if stopping of cow-slaughter was brought about not by force, but as a deliberate voluntary act of self-denial on the part of the Mussalmans and others. I would therefore deem it unpatriotic even to nurse a dream of Hindu Raj.'

Then there is the trouble about music. It is fast growing every day. A letter I had in Surat says that, as it is not obligatory on a Hindu to play music, he should stop it before mosques to spare the feelings of the Mussalmans. I wish the question was as simple as the correspondent thinks. But it is the opposite of simple. Not a single Hindu religious ceremony can be performed without the accompaniment of music. Some ceremonies require the accompaniment of continuous music. No doubt, even here due regard ought to be had for the feelings of the Mussalmans. The music may in such cases be less noisy. But all this can be and ought to be done on the basis of 'give and take'. Having talked with a number of Mussalmans in the matter, I know that Islam does not make it obligatory for a Mussalman to prevent a non-Mussalman from playing music near mosques. Nor is such a thing on the part of a non-Mussalman calculated to injure Islam. Music should never, therefore, be a bone of contention.

In many places, however, the Mussalmans have forcibly sought to stop Hindus from playing music. This is clearly intolerable. What is readily yielded to courtesy is never yielded to force. Submission to a courteous request is religion, submission to force is irreligion. If the Hindus stop music for fear of a beating from the Mussalmans, they cease to be Hindus. The general rule in this respect may be said to be this, that where the Hindus have long been deliberately observing the custom to stop music before mosques they must not break it. But where they have been playing music without interference, the practice should continue. Where trouble is apprehended and facts are disputed, both communities ought to refer the matter to arbitration.

Where a court of law has prohibited music, the Hindus should not take the law in their own hands. And the Mussalmans should not insist on stopping music by force.

Where the Mussalmans refuse to yield, or where the Hindus apprehend violence, and where there is no prohibition by a court of law, the Hindus must take out their processions with music accompanying, and put up with all the beating inflicted on them. All those who join such processions or who form the musical band must thus sacrifice themselves. They will thereby defend their faith and their self-respect.

Where the Hindus are unequal to this soul-force, it is open to them to resort to force in self-defence. Where death without resistance or death after resistance is the only way, neither party should think of resorting to law courts or help from the Government. Even if one of the parties resorts to such aid, the other should refrain. If resort to law courts cannot be avoided there ought to be at least no resort to false evidence.

It is the rule of honourable combat that, after having heartily given and taken blows, both the parties quiet down, and seek no reinforcement from outside. There should be no bitterness or feeling of revenge left behind.

A quarrel should in no case be carried from one street to another. The fair sex, the aged and the infirm, children and all non-combatants ought to be free from molestation. Fighting would be regarded as sportsman-like if these rules are observed.

I hope that the Hindus and Mussalmans in Gujarat will keep their head cool and keep the peace. I hope also that the fear of a possible trouble in Umreth is unjustified. Let both the communities there hold mutual consultations and settle their differences amicably.

Running away for fear of death, leaving one's dear ones, temples or music to take care of themselves, is irreligion; it is cowardice. It is not manly, it is unmanly. Non-violence is the virtue of the manly. The coward is innocent of it.

It will take some time before the average Hindu ceases to be a coward and the average Mussalman ceases to be a bully. In the meantime, the thinking section of both the communities should try their best, on all occasions of trouble, to refer matters to arbitration.. Their position is delicate, but they should expend all their energy in keeping the peace.

[*Translated from Navajivan, 11-9-1924*]

Young India, 18-9-1924

26

SHUDDHI AND SANGATHAN

For my own part I still remain unconvinced about the necessity of the *Shuddhi* movement, taking '*Shuddhi*' in the sense it is generally understood. *Shuddhi* of sinners is a perpetual inward performance. *Shuddhi* of those who can be identified neither as Hindus nor as Mussalmans, or who have been recently declared converts but who do not know even the meaning of conversion and who want to be known definitely as Hindus, is not conversion but *prayashchitta* or penance. The third aspect of *Shuddhi* is conversion properly so-called. And I question its use in this age of growing toleration and enlightenment. I am against conversion whether it is known as *Shuddhi* by Hindus, *Tabligh* by Mussalmans, or proselytizing by Christians. Conversion is a heart-process known only to and by God. It must be left to itself. But this is no place for airing my views on conversion. Those who believe in it have a perfect right to follow their own course without let or hindrance, so long as it is kept within proper limits, i. e. so long as there is no force or fraud or material inducement, and so long as the parties are free agents and of mature age and understanding.

Sangathan is really a sound movement. Every community is entitled, indeed bound, to organize itself if it is to live as a separate entity. I have kept myself aloof from it because of my peculiar ideas of organization. I believe in

quality rather than quantity The fashion nowadays is to rely upon quantity even at the cost of quality Quantity has its place no doubt in social and political economy Only I am ill-fitted for organizing quantity in the way it is done at present Therefore for me the appeal only for funds for the removal of untouchability has a value It comes with a force all its own For reform of Hinduism and for its real protection, removal of untouchability is the greatest thing It is all-inclusive, and therefore if this, the blackest spot on Hinduism is removed, you have automatically all that *Shuddhi* and *Sangathan* can be expected to yield And I say this, not because of the vast number of "untouchables" whom every Hindu should seek to embrace as one of his own, but because consciousness of having broken down a barbarous and ancient custom and the consequent purity it necessarily implies gives a strength which is irresistible Removal of untouchability therefore is a spiritual process

Young India 6-1-1927

27

THE QUESTION OF QUESTIONS

Mine is at the present moment a most pitiable position Thousands, it may be said in truth, look to me for guidance at this time of trial for the nation. I have taken a leading part in the Khilafat agitation. I have unhesitatingly and fearlessly propounded the doctrine of giving without the stipulation of receiving anything in return There is no flaw in my reasoning But the correspondent's question is, 'Is my reasoning relevant to the situation? Have Hindus anything to give? One can give without taking, only out of the fulness of possession.'

Let us see.

It is common cause between the correspondent and myself that the average Hindu is a coward. How is he to be turned into a brave man? Is he to become brave by muscular development or by developing the bravery of the soul? My correspondent says, 'The world has no place for

the weak'. He means, I imagine, 'physically weak'. If so, the proposition is unsound. There are many animals physically stronger than man and yet man lives. Many muscular races have died out and some of them are even now in the process of dying out. The proposition should therefore be, so far as man is concerned, 'The world has no place for the weak in spirit'.

The die is cast for me. The common factor of all religions is non-violence. Some inculcate more of it than others, all agree that you can never have too much of it. We must be sure, however, that it is non-violence and not a cloak for cowardice.

Now in order to arrive at a solution we must not think of the man in the street. We must think of ourselves who are behind the man in the street and pulling the strings. Let us take care that *we* do nothing out of fear. I hate duelling, but it has a romantic side to it. I am engaged in bringing that side of it to the fore. I would love to engage in a duel with the Big Brother. When we are both satisfied that there is no chance of unity without bloodshed, and that even we two cannot agree to live in peace, I must then invite the Big Brother to a duel with me. I know that he can twist me round his thick fingers and dash me to pieces. That day Hinduism will be free. Or, if he lets me kill him in spite of the strength of a giant, Islam in India will be free. He will have atoned for all the bullying by the average Mussalman. What I detest is the match between the *goondas* of both the parties. Any peace based upon such a trial of strength will turn to bitterness in the end. The way to get rid of the Hindu cowardice is for the educated portion to fight the *goondas*. We may use sticks and other clean weapons. My *ahimsa* will allow the use of them. We shall be killed in the fight. But that will chasten both the Hindus and the Mussalmans. That would remove the Hindu cowardice in a moment. As things are going, each party will be the slaves of their own *goondas*. That means dominance of the military power. England fought for the predominance of the civil power and won and lived. Lord Curzon did much harm to us. But he was certainly brave and right when he

stood out for the predominance of civil authority. When Rome passed into the hands of the soldiery, it fell. My whole soul rises against the very idea of the custody of my religion passing into the hands of *goondas*. Confining myself, therefore, for the present to the Hindus, I must respectfully but earnestly warn the thinking Hindus against relying upon the assistance of *goondas* for the protection of their temples, themselves and their wives and children. With the weak bodies they have, they must be determined to stand at their post and to die fighting or without fighting. It would have been a glorious death for Jamnalalji and his colleagues, if they had died in the act of securing peace. It will be a glorious death for Dr. Moonje or me, when we defend temples single-handed. That were bravery of the spirit indeed.

But there are many less heroic things to do. We must find out the true facts about Nagpur. I am in correspondence with Dr. Moonje about it. I am wooing the Hindus and Mussalmans of Delhi to let me know the root causes of the trouble there. I have offered to arbitrate singly or in company. They have not yet repelled my advances. There is no authentic story of the unfortunate trouble. I must refuse to lose my head. I am not satisfied that the Mussalmans alone are to blame for everything in every place. I do not know what was the first cause. I do know that an unscrupulous press on either side is today poisoning the minds of the simple Hindus and the simple Mussalmans. I do know also that more poison is being spread in private conversations, and incidents are exaggerated beyond all recognition. I am going to leave no stone unturned to reach the bottom of this sea of darkness, doubt and despair. A true statement of facts to date is the preliminary indispensable to a correct solution of the tension that threatens to paralyse all healthy public activity. My intense desire to reach a solution of the trouble is not the least among the causes that have impelled me to a complete surrender to the Swarajists and all concerned.

Young India, 18-9-1924

28

ALL ABOUT THE FAST

I wish to assure the reader that the fast has not been undertaken without deliberation. As a matter of fact my life has been a stake ever since the birth of non-co-operation. I did not blindly embark upon it. I had ample warning of the dangers attendant upon it. No act of mine is done without prayer. Man is a fallible being. He can never be sure of his steps. What he may regard as answer to prayer may be an echo of his pride. For infallible guidance man has to have a perfectly innocent heart incapable of evil. I can lay no such claim. Mine is a struggling, striving, erring, imperfect soul. But I can rise only by experimenting upon myself and others. I believe in absolute oneness of God and therefore also of humanity. What though we have many bodies? We have but one soul. The rays of the sun are many through refraction. But they have the same source. I cannot therefore detach myself from the wickedest soul (nor may I be denied identity with the most virtuous). Whether therefore I will or no, I must involve in my experiment the whole of my kind. Nor can I do without experiment. Life is but an endless series of experiments.

I knew that non-co-operation was a dangerous experiment. Non-co-operation in itself is unnatural, vicious and sinful. But non-violent non-co-operation, I am convinced, is a sacred duty at times. I have proved it in many cases. But there was every possibility of mistake in its application to large masses. But desperate diseases call for desperate remedies. Non-violent non-co-operation was the only alternative to anarchy and worse. Since it was to be non-violent, I had to put my life in the scales.

The fact that the Hindus and Mussalmans, who were only two years ago apparently working together as friends, are now fighting like cats and dogs in some places, shows conclusively that the non-co-operation they offered was not non-violent. I saw the symptoms in Bombay, Chauri Chaura

and in a host of minor cases I did penance then It had its effect *pro tanto* But this Hindu-Muslim tension was unthinkable It became unbearable on hearing the Kohat tragedy On the eve of my departure from Sabarmati for Delhi, Sarojini Devi wrote to me that speeches and homilies on peace would not do I must find out an effective remedy. She was right in saddling the responsibility on me Had I not been instrumental in bringing into being the vast energy of the people ? I must find the remedy if the energy proved self-destructive I wrote to say that I should find it only by plodding Empty prayer is, 'as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal' I little knew then that the remedy was to be this prolonged fast And yet I know that the fast is not prolonged enough for quenching the agony of my soul Have I erred have I been impatient, have I compromised with evil ? I may have done all these things or none of them All I know is what I see before me If real non-violence and truth had been practised by the people who are now fighting, the gory duelling that is now going on would have been impossible My responsibility is clearly somewhere

I was violently shaken by Amethi, Shambhar and Gulbarga I had read the reports about Amethi and Shambhar prepared by Hindu and Mahommedan friends I had learnt the joint finding of Hindu and Mussalman friends who went to Gulbarga. I was writhing in deep pain and yet I had no remedy. The news of Kohat set the smouldering mass aflame. Something had got to be done I passed two nights in restlessness and pain On Wednesday I knew the remedy. I must do penance In the Satyagrah-ashram at the time of morning prayer we ask Shiva, God of Mercy, to forgive our sins knowingly or unknowingly committed. My penance is the prayer of a bleeding heart for forgiveness for sins unwittingly committed.

It is warning to the Hindus and Mussalmans who have professed to love me. If they have loved me truly and if I have been deserving of their love, they will do penance with me for the grave sin of denying God in their hearts To revile one another's religion, to make reckless statements, to utter untruth, to break the heads of innocent men, to

desecrate temples or mosques, *is* a denial of God. The world is watching — some with glee and some with sorrow — the dogfight that is proceeding in our midst. We have listened to Satan. Religion — call it by what name you like — is made of sterner stuff. The penance of the Hindus and Mussalmans is not fasting but retracing their steps. It is true penance for a Mussalman to harbour no ill for his Hindu brother, and an equally true penance for a Hindu to harbour none for his Mussalman brother.

I ask of no Hindu or Mussalman to surrender an iota of his religious principle. Only let him be sure that it is religion. But I do ask of every Hindu and Mussalman not to fight for an earthly gain. I should be deeply hurt if my fast made either community surrender on a matter of principle. My fast is a matter between God and myself.

I did not consult friends — not even Hakim Saheb who was closeted with me for a long time on Wednesday — nor Maulana Mahomed Ali under whose roof I am enjoying the privilege of hospitality. When a man wants to make up with his Maker, he does not consult a third party. He ought not to. If he has any doubt about it, he certainly must. But I had no doubt in my mind about the necessity of my step. Friends would deem it their duty to prevent me from undertaking the fast. Such things are not matters for consultation or argument. They are matters of feeling. When Rama decided to fulfil his obligation, he did not swerve from his resolve either by the weepings and wailings of his dear mother or the advice of his preceptors, or the entreaty of his people, or even the certainty of his father's death if he carried out his resolve. These things are momentary. Hinduism would not have been much of a religion, if Rama had not steeled his heart against every temptation. He knew that he had to pass through every travail, if he was to serve humanity and become a model for future generations.

But was it right for me to go through the fast under a Mussalman roof? Yes, it was. The fast is not born out of ill-will against a single soul. My being under a Mussalman roof ensures it against any such interpretation. It is in the

fitness of things that this fast should be taken up and completed in a Mussalman house.

And who is Mahomed Ali? Only two days before the fast we had a discussion about a private matter in which I told him, what was mine was his, and what was his was mine. Let me gratefully tell the public that I have never received warmer or better treatment than under Mahomed Ali's roof. Every want of mine is anticipated. The dominant thought of every one of his household is to make me and mine happy and comfortable. Doctors Ansari and Abdur Rahman have constituted themselves my medical advisers. They examine me daily. I have had many a happy occasion in my life. This is no less happy than the previous ones. Bread is not everything. I am experiencing here the richest love. It is more than bread for me.

It has been whispered that by being so much with Mussalman friends, I make myself unfit to know the Hindu mind. The Hindu mind is myself. Surely I do not need to live amidst Hindus to know the Hindu mind when every fibre of my being is Hindu. My Hinduism must be very poor thing, if it cannot flourish under influences the most adverse. I know instinctively what is necessary for Hinduism. But I must labour to discover the Mussalman mind. The closer I come to the best of Mussalmans, the truer I am likely to be in my estimate of the Mussalmans and their doings. I am striving to become the best cement between the two communities. My longing is to be able to cement the two with my blood, if necessary. But, before I can do so, I must prove to the Mussalmans that I love them as well as I love the Hindus. My religion teaches me to love all equally. May God help me to do so. My fast is among other things meant to qualify me for achieving that equal and selfless love.

Young India, 25-9-1924

29

MY REFUGE

Today is the twentieth day of my penance and prayer. Presently from the world of peace I shall enter the world of strife. The more I think of it the more helpless I feel. So many look to me to finish the work begun by the Unity Conference. So many expect me to bring together the political parties. I know that I can do nothing. God can do everything. Oh God! make me Thy fit instrument and use me as Thou wilt.

Man is nothing. Napoleon planned much and found himself a prisoner in St Helena. The mighty Kaiser aimed at the crown of Europe and is reduced to the status of a private gentleman. God had so willed it. Let us contemplate such examples and be humble.

During these days of grace, privilege and peace, I have hummed to myself a hymn we often sing at the Satyagrah-ashram. It is so good that I cannot resist the pleasure of sharing a free rendering of it with the reader. The words of the hymn better express my state than anything else I can write.

Here they are:

My honour, Oh God! is in Thy keeping
Thou art ever my Refuge,
For Thou art Protector of the weak.
It is Thy promise to listen to the wail of sinners;
I am a sinner of old, help me
Thou to cross this ocean of darkness.
It is Thine to remove the sin
And the misery of mankind.
Be gracious to Tulsidas
And make him Thy devotee.*

Delhi, 6-10-1924

Young India, 9-10-1924

* The original text of the hymn of Tulsidas is 'रघुवीर तुमको मेरी लाज . . . . .'

30

THE INNER MEANING OF THE FAST

(By Mahadev Desai)

We, who were privileged to be with Gandhiji, when he took that momentous decision to fast for 21 days, were also privileged to engage him in long discussions during the first week of the fast and my article produces the substance of two important conversations—one with me and one with Maulana Shaukat Ali.

'Do you see the meaning of my fast on account of the Bombay and Chauri Chaura incidents?,' he asked me. 'Yes,' said I 'Then why cannot you see the meaning of this fast?

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

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

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

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

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

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

It was a torrent that I could hardly catch, much less reproduce. I asked at the end: 'But, Bapu, should the penance take only this shape, and no other? Is fasting prescribed by our religion?' 'Certainly,' said he, 'what did the Rishis of old do? It is unthinkable that they ate anything during their penances, in some cases gone through in caves, and for hundreds of years. Parvati who did

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

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

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

Gandhiji replied: 'It is for me a pure matter of religion. I looked around me, and questioned myself, and found that I was powerless. What could I effect even by means of a long tour? The masses suspect us today. Pray do not believe that the Hindus in Delhi fully trust me. They were not unanimous in asking me to arbitrate. And naturally. There have been murders. How can I hope to be heard by those who have suffered? I would ask them to forgive those who have murdered their dearest ones. Who would listen to me? The Anjuman refuses to listen to Hakimji. When we were in the midst of negotiations about their arbitration I heard of Kohat. I asked myself. 'What are you

going to do now?' I am an irrepressible optimist, but I always base my optimism on solid facts. You are also an irrepressible optimist, but you at times base yours on sand. No one will listen to you today. In Visnagar in Gujarat they gave a cold shoulder to Mr. Abbas Tyebji and Mahadev. In Ahmedabad a storm was nipped in the bud. Some trouble was brewing in Umreth when I left Gujarat. That I should be a passive witness of all these, shows the depth of my incapacity. There are hundreds of sisters whose love and affection I still possess. They are in mortal fear today. To them I want to show by my own example the way to die.

'Fight I do not mind, if it be fair, honourable, brave fighting between the two communities. But today it is all a story of unmitigated cowardice They would throw stones and run away, murder and run away, go to court, put up false witnesses and cite false evidence. What a woeful record! How am I to make them brave? You are trying your best But I should also try my best. I must recover the power to react on them.'

'No' rejoined Shaukat Ali, 'You have not failed. They listened to you; they were listening to you. In your absence they had other advisers They listened to their advice and took to evil ways They will still see the folly of their ways, I am sure. You have done much to reduce the poison in the popular mind. I would not bother about these disturbances at all. I would simply go and tell them, "Devils, play this game to your heart's content. God is still there. You may kill one another. You cannot kill Him" Do not, Sir, come in the way of the Lord You are wrestling with Him. Let Him have His way.'

'I wrestling with Him!' exclaimed Gandhiji in surprise. 'If there is pride or defiance in me it is all over with me. Dear man, this fast is the result of several days' continued prayer. I have got up from sleep at 3 o'clock in the night and have asked Him what to do. On the 17th of September the answer came like a flash! If I have erred, He will forgive me. All I have done, all I am doing, is done in a fully God-fearing spirit, and in the house of a God-fearing Mussalman at that. My religion says that only he who is

prepared to suffer can pray to God. Fasting and prayer are common injunctions in my religion. But I know of this sort of penance even in Islam. In the life of the Prophet I have read that the Prophet often fasted and prayed, and forbade others to copy him. Some one asked him why he did not allow others to do the thing he himself was doing. 'Because I live on food divine,' he said. He achieved most of his great things by fasting and prayer. I learnt from him that only he can fast who has inexhaustible faith in God. The Prophet had revelations not in moments of ease and luxurious living. He fasted and prayed, kept awake for nights together and would be on his feet at all hours of the night as he received the revelations. Even at this moment I see before me the picture of the Prophet thus fasting and praying. My dear Shaukat, I cannot bear the people accusing you and your brother of having broken your promises to me. I cannot bear the thought of such an accusation. I must die for it. This fast is but to purify myself, to strengthen myself. Let me not be misunderstood. I am speaking to you as though I was a Mussalman, because I have cultivated that respect for Islam which you have for it. After I have fasted and prayed I shall be all the stronger, with all my reverence for Islam, to appeal to both the communities. It is my own firm belief that the strength of the soul grows in proportion as you subdue the flesh. We have to fight hooliganism and we are not sufficiently spiritually strong to fight it.'

At this point Shaukat Ali changed the line of his argument, 'Are you not,' said he, 'even bound to consider what a shock it will be to the country, this long fast of yours?'

'No! For man so often deceives himself! He often does things to please others, which he should have avoided. Religion therefore teaches him to stand before the world after having taken a particular resolve. What vanity, to think that the world would be shocked at one's own great penance! And whose wishes are we to consider? There would be no limit. Had Rama stopped to consult and argue, he would never have gone on *Vanavasa* and rid the

earth of its suffering. He waited for no one's advice. He went forth. For he prized his plighted word more than his life. Only he can take great resolves who has indomitable faith in God and has fear of God.'

'One more question' said Shaukat Ali as he stood up to go, 'Do you need to consult no one before arriving at such a decision? You need not even take into consideration the effect it would have on your health or body?'

'No. It is a matter between me and my Maker. And if I must consult some one, I had better not take the vow at all. You talk of the effect on my health and body. Well, if I am too weak to stand it I may die. What is the body worth? Whilst I was in jail I read with rapturous delight the lives of the Companions of the Prophet. There is a story that Hazrat Umar sent a present of 500 *dinars* to some one. He shrank from it, and began to cry. His wife asked him why he was crying. He said, '*Maya*, unreality, has come to me. What will happen to me?' The *dinars* were a present from such a holy man as Hazrat Umar. But he shrank from it because it was unreal, evanescent. And so is life. Let God keep this body if He has still to make some use of it. Let it perish if it has fulfilled His purpose. In fact I had thought of going on a permanent vow of fasting if matters did not improve after the fast terminated. Hakimji asked me not to think of it. 'How can I cast it out of my mind?' said I, 'It is in my bones, it is part of my very being. I would ask Mussalmans to befriend the Hindus, if they think it is not contrary to their religion. If they think and tell me it is contrary to their religion, then I am sure I should have no cause to live any more. I should die. I had a plain talk with Khwaja Hassan Nizami Saheb also the other day. I told him, 'Why do you try to convert the waifs and strays and the untouchables? Better convert me, so that after I am converted many more might follow me. If those poor people embrace Islam, they will not do so because they understand the beauty of Islam, but for other reasons. Islam will not be a whit richer for them.'

It was an impressive dialogue. I have not even done bare justice to it. Shaukat Ali seemed quite overpowered. As he rose he said, 'Three things I prayed for every day: the first, is Hindu-Muslim Unity; the second, that my mother may live to see Islam and India free; the third, that Mahatma Gandhi's mission may be fulfilled.'

Young India, 23-10-1924

31

GOD IS ONE

" Who can name Him, and knowing what he says,
Say, " I believe in Him " ? And who can feel,
And, with self-violence, to conscious wrong
Hardening his heart, say, " I believe Him not "
The All-embracing, All-sustaining one,
Say, does He not embrace, sustain, include
Thee ? — Me — Himself ? Bends not the sky above ?
And earth, on which we are, is it not firm ?
And over us, with constant kindly smile,
The sleepless stars keep everlasting watch !
Am I not here gazing into thine eyes ?
And does not All, that is,
— Seen and unseen — mysterious all —
Around thee, and within,
Untiring agency,
Press on thy heart and mind ?
— Fill thy whole heart with it — and, when thou art
Lost in the consciousness of happiness,
Then call it what thou wilt
Happiness ! — Heart ! — Love ! — God !
I have no name for it !
Feeling is all in all !
Name is but sound and reek
A mist around the glow of Heaven."

— Goethe's *Faust*

Last Thursday night, some Mussalman friends called on me by appointment. They appeared to me to be earnest and sincere. They had much to say against *Shuddhi* and *Sangathan*. I have said my say about these movements already. So far as possible I do not wish during the privileged weeks to say anything on matters of controversy. I wish to engage the attention of the reader on the solution they offered. They said: "We believe in the divinity of the *Vedas*. We believe in Shri Krishnaji Maharaj and Ramchandraji Maharaj (the adjectives are theirs). Why cannot the Hindus believe in the divinity of the *Quran* and say with us that there is no god but God and Mahomed is His Prophet? Ours is not an exclusive religion, but it is essentially inclusive."

I told them that the solution was not quite so simple as they put it. The formula they suggested might be good enough for the cultured few, but it would prove ineffective for the man in the street. For the Hindus cow-protection and the playing of music even near the mosque was the substance of Hinduism, and for the Mussalmans cow-killing and prohibition of music was the substance of Islam. It was, therefore, necessary that the Hindus abandon the idea of compelling Mussalmans to stop cow-killing, and the Mussalmans the idea of compelling the Hindus to stop music. The regulation of cow-slaughter and playing of music must be left to the goodwill of the respective communities. Each practice would assume a becoming proportion with the growth of the tolerant spirit. But I do not propose to elaborate here this ticklish question.

I wish to examine the attractive formula presented by the Mussalman friends and state what is at least acceptable to me; and as my instinct is wholly Hindu, I know that what I am about to say will be acceptable to the vast mass of the Hindus.

In fact it is the average Mussalman who will not accept the divinity of the *Vedas* and the other Hindu scriptures, or Krishna or Rama as prophets or incarnations of the Deity. With the Hindu it is a new-fangled notion to revile the *Quran* and the Prophet. I have known the

Prophet spoken of with reverence in Hindu circles. There are even Hindu songs paying tribute to Islam.

Take the first half of the formula. God is certainly one. He has no second. He is unfathomable, unknowable and unknown to the vast majority of mankind. He is everywhere. He sees without eyes, and hears without ears. He is the formless and indivisible. He is uncreate, has no father, mother or child; and yet He allows Himself to be worshipped as father, mother, wife and child. He allows Himself even to be worshipped as stock and stone, although He is none of these things. He is the most elusive. He is the nearest to us if we would but know the fact. But He is farthest from us when we do not want to realize His omnipresence. There are many gods in the *Vedas*. Other scriptures call them angels. But the *Vedas* sing of only one God.

I have no hesitation in regarding the *Quran* as revealed, as I have none in regarding the Bible, the *Zend Avesta*, the *Granth Saheb* and any other clean scriptures as revealed. Revelation is the exclusive property of no nation, no tribe. If I know Hinduism at all, it is essentially inclusive and ever-growing, ever-responsive. It gives the freest scope to imagination, speculation and reason. I have found not the slightest difficulty in Hindu circles about evoking reverence for the *Quran* and the Prophet. But I have found difficulty in Mussalman circles about evoking the same reverence for the *Vedas* or the incarnations. I had a very good Mussalman client in South Africa. He is, alas, dead now. The relation of client and counsel developed into one of close companionship and mutual regard. We often had religious discussions. My friend, though not learned in any sense of the term, had an intellect as sharp as a razor. He knew everything of the *Quran*. He knew something of other religions also. He was interested in my accepting Islam. I said to him, "I can pay full respect to the *Quran* and the Prophet, why do you ask me to reject the *Vedas* and the incarnations? They have helped me to be what I am. I find the greatest consolation from the *Bhagawad Gita* and Tulsidas' *Ramayan*. I frankly confess that the *Quran*, the

Bible and the other scriptures of the world, in spite of my great regard for them, do not move me as do the *Gita* of Krishna and the *Ramayan* of Tulsidas." The friend despaired of me and had no hesitation in saying that there must be something wrong with me. His, however, is not an exceptional case because I have since met many Mussalman friends who have held the same view. I do, however, believe that this is a passing phase. I share Justice Ameer Ali's view that Islam in the days of Harun-al-Rashid and Mamun was the most tolerant amongst the world's religions. But there was a reaction against the liberalism of the teachers of their times. The reactionaries had many learned, able and influential men amongst them and they very nearly overwhelmed the liberal and tolerant teachers and philosophers of Islam. We in India are still suffering from the effect of that reaction. But I have not a shadow of doubt that Islam has sufficient in itself to become purged of illiberalism and intolerance. We are fast reaching the time when the acceptance of the formula suggested by the friends will be a common thing among mankind. The need of the moment is not one religion, but mutual respect and tolerance of the devotees of the different religions. We want to reach not the dead level, but unity in diversity. Any attempt to root out traditions, effects of heredity, climate and other surroundings is not only bound to fail, but is a sacrilege. The soul of religions is one, but it is encased in a multitude of forms. The latter will persist to the end of time. Wise men will ignore the outward crust and see the same soul living under a variety of crusts. For the Hindus to expect Islam, Christianity or Zoroastrianism to be driven out of India is as idle a dream as it would be for the Mussalmans to have only Islam of their imagination rule the world. But if belief in One God and the race of His Prophets in a never-ending chain is sufficient for Islam, then we are all Mussalmans, but we are also Hindus and Christians. Truth is the exclusive property of no single scripture.

19-9-24

Young India, 25-9-1924

32

CHANGE OF HEART

Hitherto it has been a struggle and a yearning for a change of heart among Englishmen who compose the Government of India. That change has still to come. But the struggle must for the moment be transferred to a change of heart among the Hindus and the Mussalmans. Before they dare think of freedom they must be brave enough to love one another, to tolerate one another's religion, even prejudices and superstitions and to trust one another. This requires faith in oneself. And faith in oneself is faith in God. If we have that faith we shall cease to fear one another.
29-9-'24

Young India, 2-10-1924

33

THE KOHAT TRAGEDY

The Government of India has rung down the curtain upon the Kohat tragedy. In the Viceregal reply to Pandit Malaviyaji the Government had prepared the public for some such resolution as is now before the public. The resolution is a demonstration of the Government's unchallengeable supremacy and disregard of public opinion, as it is also a demonstration of national impotence. To me the Kohat tragedy is not so much a result of Hindu-Muslim tension as of the utter worthlessness and incompetence of the local administration Had they performed their elementary duty of protecting life and property, the wanton destruction begun and continued in broad daylight could have been easily prevented. But like Nero the authority watched and danced while Rome was burning. The authority cannot plead helplessness. It had ample resources at its disposal. It was at no time overwhelmed except by its own criminal indifference and callousness.

And now the Government of India has become partner in the crime by whitewashing the local officials and even covering their neglect or worse into 'coolness and courage'.

One would have expected a full, open and independent inquiry. But nothing beyond a departmental inquiry at which the public was unrepresented took place Its finding can command no public confidence. The refugees from Rai Bahadur Sardar Makhansingh downward whom my Mussalman colleagues and I saw, whilst admitting that a pamphlet containing the highly insulting verses was published by Lala Jiwandas, said that ample amends were made for the publication by the Hindus, and that the Hindu firing was in self-defence and after the destruction had been started by the Mussalmans. On behalf of the Kohat Mussalmans it was contended that sufficient amends were not made with regard to the pamphlet, and that the Mussalman destruction and firing took place after the Hindus had opened fire and taken Mussalman life. Unfortunately the Mussalmans of Kohat not having come to Rawalpindi, we were unable to find out the real truth It is therefore difficult to say that the Government of India's distribution of blame is erroneous But its finding cannot be accepted as an impartial or acceptable judgment. The Hindus of Kohat cannot be expected to accept and submit to the finding. Nor can such a finding, because it seems to favour the Mussalman contention, be any consolation to the Mussalmans of Kohat For it would be wrong for the Mussalman public to applaud the Government of India's finding, because it, for the moment, seems to support the Mussalman contention Any finding to be satisfactory must be joint and arrived at by the Hindus and Mussalmans of proved impartiality The Government of India's resolution is therefore a challenge to both the communities. It tells the Hindu refugees to return to Kohat on pain of submission to humiliating conditions. It bribes the Mussalmans to impose humiliation on their Hindu brethren. I hope that the Hindus will prefer a life of penury outside Kohat but without humiliation, to a life of plenty in Kohat with humiliation. I hope that the Mussalmans will be manly enough to refuse the bait offered by the Government, and decline to be a party to imposing humiliation on their Hindu brethren who are in a hopeless minority in Kohat. Whose-

soever the initial blunder and provocation, the fact stands that the Hindus were practically forced out of Kohat. It is up to the Mussalmans therefore to go to Rawalpindi and take the refugees back to Kohat with friendliness and with full guarantee for the safety of their lives and property. The Hindus outside Kohat should make it easy for the Mussalmans to make the approach. The Mussalmans outside should insist upon those in Kohat recognizing their primary obligation to the Hindu minority. On a proper and honourable solution of this delicate problem lies in a large measure the success of efforts to bring about Hindu-Muslim unity.

The sooner we, both co-operators and non-co-operators, cease to rely upon Government protection against one another, the better it will be for us and the quicker and more lasting will be the solution. Viewed in that light, the indifference of the Kohat officials is to be welcomed. History would have been differently and more honourably written if the Hindus had not sought the protection of officials, had stuck to their homes and without offering any defence, or even in the act of forcibly defending themselves and their property and their dependents had been reduced to cinders. I would welcome a resolution by the Government that no one need look to them for protection in inter-communal quarrels. If each party would learn to defend itself against encroachment upon its liberty by the other, we would be well on the road to Swaraj. It would be a fine training in self-defence and self-respect, or which is the same thing, Swaraj. There are two ways of defence. The best and the most effective is not to defend at all, but to remain at one's post risking every danger. The next best but equally honourable method is to strike bravely in self-defence and put one's life in the most dangerous position. A few pitched battles between the two will soon teach them the uselessness of breaking one another's heads. It will teach them that to fight thus is not to serve God but to serve Satan.

I conclude this article by repeating the promise I made to the refugees in Rawalpindi. If they will not return to

Kohat till they receive a cordial invitation from the Kohat Mussalmans I shall be prepared, as soon as the engagements already taken up are finished, to go to Rawalpindi in company with Maulana Shaukat Ali and attempt to smooth the relations between the two, or failing that to help them to find suitable occupation in life.

Young India, 18-12-1924

34

HINDU-MUSLIM UNITY

Hindu-Muslim unity is not less important than the spinning wheel. It is the breath of our life. I do not need to occupy much of your time on this question, because the necessity of it for Swaraj is almost universally accepted. I say 'almost' because I know some Hindus and some Mussalmans, who prefer the present condition of dependence on Great Britain if they cannot have either wholly Hindu or wholly Mussalman India. Happily their number is small.

I share Maulana Shaukat Ali's robust optimism that the present tension is a mere temporary distemper. The Khilafat agitation in which the Hindus made common cause with their Mussalman brethren and the non-co-operation that followed it caused an awakening among the hitherto slumbering masses. It has given a new consciousness to the classes as well as the masses. Interested persons who were disappointed during the palmy days of non-co-operation, now that it has lost the charm of novelty, have found their opportunity and are trading upon the religious bigotry or the selfishness of both the communities. The result is written in the history of the feuds of the past two years. Religion has been travestied. Trifles have been dignified by the name of religious tenets which, the fanatics claim, must be observed at any cost. Economic and political causes have been brought into play for the sake of fomenting trouble. The culminating point was reached in Kohat. The tragedy was aggravated by the callous indifference of the local authority. I must not tarry to examine

the causes or to distribute the blame. I have not the material for the task even if I was minded for it. Suffice it to say that the Hindu refugees fled for fear of their lives. There is in Kohat an overwhelming Mussalman majority. They have in so far as is possible under a foreign domination effective political control. It is up to them, therefore, to show that the Hindus are as safe in the midst of their majority, as they would be if the whole population of Kohat was Hindu. The Mussalmans of Kohat may not rest satisfied till they have brought back to Kohat every one of the refugees. I hope that the Hindus would not fall into the trap laid for them by the Government, and would resolutely decline to go back till the Mussalmans of Kohat have given them full assurances as to their lives and property.

The Hindus can live in the midst of an overwhelming Mussalman majority only if the latter are willing to receive and treat them as friends and equals, just as Mussalmans, if in a minority, must depend for honourable existence in the midst of a Hindu majority on the latter's friendliness. A Government can give protection against thieves and robbers, but not even a Swaraj Government will be able to protect people against a wholesale boycott by one community of another. Governments can deal with abnormal situations. When quarrels become a normal thing of life, it is called civil war and parties must fight it out themselves. The present Government being foreign and in reality a veiled military rule, has resources at its command for its protection against any combination we can make and has, therefore, the power, if it has the will, to deal with our class feuds. But no Swaraj Government with any pretension to being a popular Government can possibly be organized and maintained on a war footing. A Swaraj Government means a Government established by the free joint will of the Hindus, Mussalmans and others. The Hindus and Mussalmans if they desire Swaraj, have perforce to settle their differences amicably.

The Unity Conference at Delhi has paved the way for a settlement of religious differences. The Committee of the

All Parties' Conference is among other things expected to find a workable and just solution of the political differences not only between the Hindus and Mussalmans but between all classes and all castes, sects or denominations. Our goal must be the removal, at the earliest possible moment, of communal or sectional representation. A common electorate must impartially elect its representatives on the sole ground of merit. Our services must be likewise impartially manned by the most qualified men and women. But till that time comes and communal jealousies or preferences become a thing of the past, minorities who suspect the motives of majorities must be allowed their way. The majorities must set the example of self-sacrifice.

(From the Presidential Address of the 39th Indian National Congress, Belgaum, 1924)

Young India, 26-12-1924

35

HINDU-MUSLIM QUESTION

A correspondent writes:

"You have entertained in the columns of *Young India* an attempt made by one of your correspondents to show up the shibboleth of the Muslims' extreme backwardness in education. That emboldens me, if you will permit an humble worker in the country's cause, to put before you one more of these shibboleths which has been ruling our political life for long, but which is palpably more absurd than the one as regards the Muslim backwardness to which I am glad your attention has at last been drawn.

"'The Muslims are a minority in India.' How often such a statement is made, and how many times more is it tacitly assumed in political argument! But are they really a minority? Even taking one sect of them, viz. the Sunni Hanafi, for comparison, do we not find that it is numerically stronger by far than any single community amongst the Hindus, or even than each of the other religious

groups in India, as the Christians, Parsis, Sikhs, Jains, Jews and Buddhists? And is it not the case that the Hindus are divided into communities and sects which are in most cases farther apart from one another socially than the Muslims are from the Non-Muslims? Then, what about the Hindu Untouchables? Is not their number equal to, if not greater than, that of the Muslim 'minority'? If Muslims as a 'minority' in India may claim separate and special treatment, protection and guarantees, how much stronger must the claim of this untouchable section of Hindus be allowed to be, since they not only are by their numbers as important a 'minority'— and a claimant one too, since the date of the Lucknow Pact — but have been suffering for ages from *actual present disabilities* with which no Muslim or any other touchable minority's *apprehensions for the future* may possibly bear comparison? As witness the Vaikom Satyagraha, the Palghat dispute, the Bombay 'lynchers'. I leave alone the innumerable backward castes and the aborigines so far reckoned within the Hindu fold. Are the Muslims then **the** minority?"

The italics and the black types are the writer's. I have given the letter for its undoubted earnestness. And yet to me, an observer untouched, I hope, by any bias one way or the other, the reasoning appears to be specious when it is used to demonstrate that the Mussalmans are not a minority in India. The writer forgets that the claim is that of all Mussalmans against all Hindus. The latter cannot both have the cake and eat it too. Though divided among themselves, the Hindus do present a more or less united front not only to the Mussalmans but to all non-Hindus, even as the Mussalmans though divided among themselves present naturally a united front to all non-Muslims. We shall never solve the question by ignoring facts or re-arranging them to suit our plans. The facts are that the Mussalmans are seven crores against twentytwo crores of the Hindus. The latter have never denied it. Let us also know the issues. A minority does not always fear a majority, because it is a majority. The Mussalmans fear the Hindu majority because the Hindus, they say, have not always treated them

with justice, have not respected their religious prejudices and because, they say, the Hindus are superior to them in education and wealth Whether these are facts or not is irrelevant for our purpose. It is enough that Mussalmans believe them and, therefore, are afraid of the Hindu majority. The Mussalmans expect to meet this fear only partially by means of separate electorates and special representation even in excess of their numbers in some cases. The Mussalmans charge the Hindus of injustice. This must be verified. I have not known Hindus to deny the statement that they are superior to Mussalmans in education and wealth.

The Hindus on their part fear the Mussalmans because they (the Hindus) say that the Mussalmans wherever they have held power have treated them with great harshness, and contend that though they were in a majority they were *non-plussed* by a handful of Mussalman invaders, that the danger of repetition of the experience is ever present before the Hindus, and that in spite of the sincerity of the leading Mussalmans the Mussalman masses are bound to make common cause with any Mussalman adventurer. The Hindus therefore reject the plea of weakness on the part of the Mussalmans and refuse to entertain the idea of extending the doctrine of the Lucknow pact. It is again beside the question whether the Hindu fear is justified. The fear is a fact to be reckoned with. It would be wrong to impute motives to any community or leaders. To distrust Malaviyaji or Mian Fazl-i-Hussain is to postpone a proper solution. Both honestly state what they feel. Wisdom lies therefore in brushing aside all side issues and facing the situation as it is, not as we would like it to be.

In my opinion, therefore, the writer has tried, be it ever so unconsciously, to overprove his case. He is right in saying that the Hindus are divided into many antagonistic sects or parties each setting up a claim for separate treatment. He is right also in stating that the "untouchables" have even a stronger case than the Mussalmans for separate representation and separate electorates. He has shown that any extension of the doctrine of the Lucknow Pact must inevitably lead to communal representation for innumerable

sub-castes and other denominations, thus indefinitely postponing the early advent of Swaraj.

To extend the Lucknow Pact doctrine or even to retain it is fraught with danger. To ignore the Mussalman grievance as if it was not felt is also to postpone Swaraj. Lovers of Swaraj cannot therefore rest till a solution is found which would allay Mussalman apprehension and yet not endanger Swaraj. Such a solution is not impossible.

Here is one.

In my opinion the Mussalman claim for majority in Bengal and the Punjab in accordance with their numbers is irresistible. That claim cannot be resisted for the fear from the North or the North West. The Hindus, if they want Swaraj, must take the chance. So long as we fear the outside world, we must cease to think of Swaraj. But Swaraj we must have. I would therefore rule out the Hindu fear in considering the just claim of the Mussalmans. We must dare to do justice even at the cost of future safety.

What the Mussalmans want is not separate electorate for its own sake but they want their own real representatives to be sent to the legislatures and other elective bodies. This can be done by private arrangement rather than legal imposition. There is flexibility about private arrangement. A legal imposition tends to become more and more rigid. Private arrangement will continually test the honour and good faith of each party. Legal imposition avoids the necessity of honour and good faith. Private arrangement means a domestic settlement of domestic quarrels and a solid wall of united opposition against a common enemy—the foreign rule. I am told that the law prevents the working of the private arrangement I have in view. If it is so, we must seek to remove the legal obstacle and not create and add a new one. My plan therefore is to do away with separate electorates but secure the election of the desired and agreed number of Mussalman and other candidates in a given constituency under a joint ticket, Mussalman candidates to be nominated by previously known Mussalman associations. I need not enter into the question of representation in excess of numbers at the present stage.

It can be considered and all difficulties in that direction can be met when the principle of private arrangement is accepted by all.

No doubt my proposal presupposes a sincere desire on the part of all concerned to reach a solution in terms of Swaraj. If communalism is the goal, then any private arrangement must break down. If, however, Swaraj is the goal and the parties approach the question purely from a national standpoint, there need be no fear of a breakdown. On the contrary every party will be interested in its faithful working.

What the law should, however, provide is a just franchise whereby every community can have, if it wishes, voters on the roll in proportion to its numbers. Our voters' rolls should answer the number of representatives in proportion to its population. But that question requires a critical examination of the working of the existing franchise. For me the existing franchise is wholly untenable for any Swaraj scheme.

Young India, 19-2-1925

36

A SUPERSTITION

A Bengal zamindar sends me a long letter dealing with Hindu-Muslim Unity, Untouchability and Swaraj. The letter is too long for publication and covers no new ground. I cull, however, one typical sentence from it. It is:

> "For over five hundred years the relation between Hindus and Mussalmans was that of foes. After the advent of British rule both the Mussalmans and Hindus were compelled out of policy to forget that racial hatred, and the acrimony of that bitter enmity is now no more. But the permanent difference in the constitution of these two races does even now exist. I believe the present cordial relation is due to British rule and not to the catholicity of modern Hinduism."

I regard this statement as pure superstition. The two races lived at peace among themselves during the Muslim rule. Let it be remembered that many Hindus embraced Islam before the advent of Muslim rule in India. It is my belief that had there been no Muslim rule, there would still have been Mussalmans in India even as there would have been Christians had there been no British rule. There is nothing to prove that the Hindus and the Mussalmans lived at war with one another before the British rule. My belief is that the British policy of 'divide and rule' has accentuated our differences and will continue to do so, till we recognize that we must unite in spite of the policy. This cannot and will not happen unless we refrain from a scramble for place and power. The beginning must be made by the Hindus.

Young India, 26-2-1925

37

CONUNDRUMS

A Mussalman lawyer handed me the following questions for answer. I am omitting argumentative matter from two questions.

Q. How far do you approve of the contention of Muslims like Mr. Jinnah and his school of thought that the Indian National Congress which has a large Hindu majority in it cannot adequately and justly represent and safeguard the interests of the Muslim minority and that, therefore, a separate and communal organization like the Muslim League is absolutely necessary ?

A. I do not agree with the contention imputed to Mr. Jinnah. In my opinion the Congress has from its birth gone out of its way to solicit Mussalman co-operation, even patronage. The existence of the League must therefore be justified on other grounds.

Q. How far do you give countenance to the contention of eminent Hindus like Lala Lajpat Rai and Pandit

Madan Mohan Malaviya and their school of thought that the same Indian National Congress, although it consists of a large Hindu majority, cannot also be taken to represent and safeguard the interests of the Hindu community, and that therefore separate and communal organizations like the Hindu Mahasabha and the *Sangathan* are absolutely necessary and essential to protect Hindu interests?

A. I do not think that the Congress has failed to represent the Hindu interest in so far as it was consistent with the national interest, i.e. the interests of all communities considered as one nation. The existence therefore of the Hindu Mahasabha, too, must be justified on other grounds. It is obvious that the Congress cannot represent mutually antagonistic interests. Its existence presupposes mutuality of interest and effort.

Q. What is your honest belief and conviction as to the real cause, whether remote or immediate, of the frequent riots and differences between Mussalmans and Hindus in North India and of their absence or infrequency in South India?

A. I can only guess and my guess is that the two communities quarrel more frequently in the North because they are more equally balanced than in South. Where riots do take place, they occur because both think communally and because either fears and distrusts the other, and because neither has the courage or the foresight to forego the present for the sake of the future, or the communal interests for the sake of the national.

Q. Do you really hope to solve the problem of Hindu-Muslim unity, placing as you do reliance upon the present day orthodox ulema of the Theological School of Deoband and of the Jamiat-ul-ulema-i-Hind, who condemn in season and out of season as kafirs, infidels, apostates, and as deserving of no other punishment than being stoned to death, a considerable section of the Muslim community, popularly known as Qadianies, Mrinais, or better as Ahmediahs; or will you seek assistance for the solution of the mighty problem from the Ahmediah community who seem really to hold the key to the situation, and who have

already solved the question of Hindu-Muslim unity by their writings and their conduct?

A. I must woo the orthodox ulema as well as the Ahmediah community. It is impossible even if it were desirable to disregard the 'Orthodox Ulema'. What one must, however, do is not to truckle to any person or party. Having fixed one's minimum from which one may not recede, one may stoop to conquer the whole world.

Q. Have you ever inquired as to why, while the Muslim community in India as a whole is so keenly interested in the affairs of the Muslim countries abroad, not the least appreciable proportion of it takes any active interest in the internal political life and advancement of the country and especially in the Presidency of Madras?

A. In so far as the charge is correct, the Mussalmans take less interest because they do not yet regard India as their home of which they must feel proud. Many regard themselves, quite wrongly, I think, as belonging to a race of conquerors. We Hindus are in a measure to blame for this aloofness on the part of the Mussalmans. We have not come to regard them as an integral part of the nation. We have not set out to win their hearts. The causes for this unfortunate state of things are historic and were in their origin inevitable. The blame of the Hindus therefore can be felt only *now*. The consciousness being of recent growth is naturally not universal and the physical fear of the Mussalmans in a vast number of cases makes it constitutionally difficult for the Hindus to adopt the blame and proceed to win the Mussalman heart. But I must own to the reader that I no longer regard myself as an expert on the Hindu-Muslim question. My opinion has therefore only an academic value. I still hold to my own view even though I admit that I have found it difficult to make it acceptable to either party.

Q. What is your remedy for the unfortunate turn the politics of this country have ever since taken, viz. that while politics and political life in this country have from the beginning attracted successfully only a few of the rich and well-to-do classes, it has become almost an impossible

thing for men of the middle and the poor classes to lead anything like an active and successful political life in this country, especially during the last four years?

A. Politics have taken no unfortunate turn. We are passing through a necessary stage. The immense self-consciousness among the poorer classes has upset old calculations and formulae. We have not yet adjusted ourselves to the new state of things. But I see signs everywhere of settling down to the new order of things. Taking even the Hindu-Muslim disturbances in that light, I do not despair of the future. Order must come out of the present chaos. We would expedite the advent of order by watching, waiting and praying. If we do so, the evil that has come to the surface will disappear much quicker than if in our haste and impatience we would disturb the surface and thus send the dirt to the bottom again instead of allowing it to throw itself out.

Young India, 2-4-1925

38

A PLEA FOR TRUTH

I have not worried the readers of *Young India* with an account of the Kidderpore Hindu-Muslim riot on the *Bakr Id* day, although I happened to be on the scene of the riot only a few hours after it had taken place. I did, however, give a long interview to the Associated Press almost after my return to Russa Road from Kidderpore. In the interview I gave it as my deliberate opinion that the Hindu labourers were wholly in the wrong. This statement has enraged some of my Hindu correspondents who have favoured me with most abusive and offensive letters protesting against my having found fault with the Hindus. One of them would have me adopt a Muslim name. I take notice of this correspondence in order to show to what pass some of us have come in our blind zeal for our respective faiths. We refuse to see anything wrong in ourselves. When such becomes the normal state

of a majority of people belonging to a particular faith, that faith is dying. For nothing based on a lie can persist for any length of time.

I venture to suggest that I have rendered a service to Hinduism by exposing without any reservation the wrong done by the Hindu labourers in question. They, the labourers themselves, did not resent my plain speaking. On the contrary, they seemed to be grateful for it. They felt penitent, admitted the wrong done and sincerely apologized for it.

What was I to do, if I was not to speak out about what I saw with my own eyes and felt within me? Was I to prevaricate for the sake of protecting the guilty? Was I to refuse to give the interview when the ubiquitous press man sought me out at midnight? I would have forfeited the right to call myself a Hindu, been unworthy of holding the office of the President of the Congress and sullied my name as a satyagrahi if I had hesitated to tell the truth when the telling of it had become relevant. Let the Hindus not be guilty of the charge they do not hesitate to bring against Mussalmans viz. that of committing a wrong and then seeking to hide it.

One correspondent says that when the Hindus sought help in Delhi, I pleaded helplessness, when my presence is sought in Lucknow I evade it, but when it is a matter of condemning Hindus, I hasten to the scene of action and thoughtlessly judge them Let it be known that I went to Kidderpore on the strength of an invitation received from a Hindu on behalf of the Hindus and upon a call from Mr. J. M. Sen Gupta who had preceded me. In spite of my helplessness, if I heard of an actual fight and especially if I found that I was wanted by either party, I should hasten to the rescue. It is when one party only calls me to adjust a quarrel or prevent it, I should plead helplessness because of the loss of influence among a certain class of Hindus and Mussalmans. The difference between the two positions is too obvious to need pointing out.

But it is urged by the correspondents, as it was urged by a deputation that waited on me, that by my severe

condemnation of the Hindus, I had encouraged the Mussalmans to commit assaults on innocent men and exposed the Bazar Hindu shopkeepers to looting and worse by Mussalman *goondas* I should feel sorry if my condemnation of a Hindu misdeed should give rise to a Mussalman misdeed. But I could even then be not deterred from doing the right thing And why should Hindus be afraid of Mussalman reprisals ? Surely it would be right for Hindus, if they cannot follow my method of non-violence and resignation — and I admit that it is most difficult for propertied men to do so — to defend themselves by every means at their disposal To be men we must shed cowardice whether we are Hindus or Mussalmans, and learn the art of self-defence No amount of hide and seek can avert the certain danger that awaits those who will not learn to defend themselves, although they would like to be defended by others My condemnation of the Hindus of Kidderpore does not carry with it condemnation of those who defended themselves when attacked. Had the Hindus instead of being the aggressors been found defending themselves against heavy odds and had died in the attempt I would have praised their valour But at Kidderpore, so far as I know, they were in an overwhelming majority, and were the aggressors The Mussalmans had given them no cause for quarrel I would unhesitatingly condemn unprovoked violence as I had no difficulty about condemning the Mussalman misdeeds in Kohat and Gulbarga which, I thought, were utterly uncalled for. I can even understand two blows against one, but I cannot reconcile myself to any blow without the slightest provocation or provocation worked up for the occasion

Young India, 16 7-1925

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HINDU - MUSLIM QUESTION

From Patna we went to Bhagalpur. At Bhagalpur there was a very great public meeting at which I was obliged to make a somewhat lengthy reference to the Hindu-Muslim question. Though my influence over those who are agitating the question is gone, they continue to discuss with me the various problems arising from it. I felt, therefore, that I should redeclare my views for what they might be worth. Apart from merits I must confess that I have not liked this constant reference to the Government by both the parties on matters, which they, by mutual settlement or appeal to the sword, can adjust. I, therefore, told the audience, that since neither party was prepared to compromise and each was afraid of the other, the best way would be without seeking the intervention of the Government to settle the matters in dispute by the method of the *lathi*. Retreat out of fear was cowardice and cowardice would not hasten a settlement or the advent of non-violence. Cowardice was a species of violence which it was the most difficult to overcome. One could hope to persuade a violently inclined person to shed his violence and take up the superior force of non-violence, but since cowardice was a negation of all force, it was impossible to teach a mouse non-violence in respect of a cat. He would simply not understand what non-violence could be, because he had not the capacity for violence against the cat. Would it not be a mockery to ask a blind man not to look at ugly things? Maulana Shaukat Ali and I were at Bettia in 1921. The people of a village near Bettia told me that they had run away whilst the police were looting their houses and molesting their women folk. When they said that they had run away because I had told them to be non-violent, I hung my head in shame. I assured them that such was not the meaning of my non-violence. I expected them to intercept the mightiest power

that might be in the act of harming those who were under their protection, and draw without retaliation all harm upon their own heads even to the point of death, but never to run away from the storm centre. It was manly enough to defend one's property, honour or religion at the point of the sword. It was manlier and nobler to defend them without seeking to injure the wrongdoer. But it was unmanly, unnatural and dishonourable to forsake the post of duty, and in order to save one's skin to leave property, honour or religion to the mercy of the wrongdoer. I could see my way of successfully delivering the message of *ahimsa* to those who knew how to die, not to those who were afraid of death. I told the audience further that those like me, who deliberately did not want to fight and were powerless to effect a settlement, might follow the example of those Mussalmans who, during the time of the first four Caliphs, sought the refuge of the cave when brothers began to fight one against the other. The mountain cave in these days was a practical impossibility, but they could retire to the cave which each of us carried within himself. But such could be only those who had mutual regard for one another's religion and customs.

Young India, 15-10-1925

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THAT ETERNAL QUESTION

However much I may wish to avoid it the Hindu-Muslim question will not avoid me. The Muslim friends insist upon my intervention to solve it. The Hindu friends would have me discuss it with them, and some of them say that I have sown the wind and must reap the whirlwind. Whilst I was in Calcutta a Bihari friend had written to me in grief and anger telling me of the alleged kidnapping of Hindu boys and especially girls. I had written to him telling him point-blank that I did not believe those allegations but that if he had proof and gave it to me I would gladly examine it,

and if I was satisfied I would denounce it although I might not be able to do any tangible good Since then I have had cuttings from newspapers describing in harrowing detail cases of kidnapping I had told the friend that newspaper extracts could not be accepted as any evidence of the crime, that in many cases newspaper paragraphs were inflammatory, misleading and often absolutely false There are Hindu and Muslim sheets that delight in blackguarding Mussalmans and Hindus respectively, and if both of them could be accepted as true, both the parties were loathesome creatures. But I have proved to my own satisfaction that many of these reported cases are highly exaggerated if they are not false I have, therefore, asked for such incontestable proofs as would be accepted in any court of law The Titagarh case is certainly such a one A Hindu girl had been kidnapped. She is supposed to have embraced Islam, and in spite of the court's order he has not been yet produced so far as I am aware. What is more, respectable people are concerned in the non-production of the girl When I was in Titagarh nobody seemed prepared to shoulder the responsibility about the girl At Patna too some startling information was given to me with corroborative evidence. I refrain at the present moment from going into it because it is not before me in its completed form Such cases set one athinking and need the attention of all well-wishers of the country.

There is then the question of music in front of mosques I have heard of a peremptory demand for total cessation of music, soft or loud, at any time whatsoever in front of mosques There is too a demand for the stopping of *aratı* during prayer hours in temples in the neighbourhood of mosques. I heard in Calcutta that even boys passing by a mosque early in the morning and reciting *Ramanama* were stopped.

What is to be done? Recourse to law courts in such matters is a broken reed. If I allow my daughter to be kidnapped and then go to court for protection the latter would be powerless, or if the judge got angry over my cowardice he would dismiss me from his presence with deserved contempt. Courts deal with ordinary crimes.

General kidnapping of girls or boys is not an ordinary crime. People in such cases are expected to look after themselves. Courts help those who are largely able to help themselves. Theirs is supplementary protection. So long as there are weak people so long will there be some one to prey upon their weakness. The remedy therefore lies in organizing for self-defence. I could find it in me to justify the most violent defence in such cases unless the people concerned are capable of a non-violent defence. No doubt where girls or boys of poor and helpless parents are kidnapped, the case becomes much more complicated. There the remedy has to be found not by the individual but by a whole clan or caste. A presentation, however, of authentic cases of kidnapping is a prime necessity before public opinion can be well organized.

The question of music is much simpler than that of kidnapping. Either continuous music, *arati* or the repeating of *Ramanama* is a religious necessity or it is not. If it is a religious necessity no prohibition order by a court of law can be held obligatory. Music must be played, *arati* must be made and *Ramanama* repeated, cost what it may. If my formula were accepted a procession of the meekest men and women, unarmed even with *lathis* would march with *Ramanama* on their lips, supposing that that was the bone of contention, and draw down on their heads the whole of the Mussalman wrath. But if they would not accept that formula they would still proceed with the sacred name on their lips and fight every inch of the ground. But to stop music for fear of a row or because of an order of court is to deny one's religion.

But then there is the other side to the question. Is continuous playing of music even while passing mosques at prayer time always a religious necessity ? Is repeating of *Ramanama* a similar necessity? What about the charge that the fashion nowadays is to organize processions purely for the sake of irritating Mussalmans, and to make *arati* just at the time of the prayer, and to utter *Ramanama* not because it is held religiously necessary but in order to create an occasion for a fight ? If such be the case it will defeat its

own end and naturally the zest being wanting, a court's order, a military display or a shower of brick-bats would end the irreligious show.

A religious necessity must therefore be clearly established. Every semblance of irritation must be avoided. A mutual understanding should be sincerely sought. And where it is not possible, an irreducible minimum should be fixed making due allowance for the opposite sentiment, and then without seeking the intervention of courts or in spite of a prohibition order a fight must be put up for that minimum. Let no one charge me with ever having advised or encouraged weakness or surrender on matters of principle. But I have said, as I say again, that every trifle must not be dignified into a principle.

Young India, 22-10-1925

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MAULANA AZAD'S APPEAL

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad has very considerately sent me a copy of his press message on the Hindu-Muslim question. He is one of the very few men who may be said to be sincerely desirous to attain unity. He has asked me to call a meeting of the Working Committee in order to consider the question. I am not doing so before the Congress week at Cawnpore because the annual function is too near to warrant an earlier meeting of the Working Committee. I wish the Committee could discover a solution of the problem. But I must frankly confess that I despair. That is not to say that I despair of a solution altogether. I despair of the Congress discovering and enforcing a solution. Let us not conceal from ourselves the truth that the Congress does not represent the fighters in either camp. Not till those unseen ones who are behind the fighters are under the Congress influence, and the newspaper-editors who are fomenting dissensions are either converted to the unity doctrine or cease to have any influence, can the Congress do any useful work in the direction of unity. My

bitter experience has taught me that they who take the name of unity mean disunion The atmosphere around us is as false as was the atmosphere in Europe at the time of the last war The newspapers never told the truth The representatives of their respective nations had made of lying a fine art All was fair in war The old formula of Jehovah thirsting for the blood even of children was revived in all its nakedness. And so it is today in what may be called a miniature war between the Hindus and Muslims. We may lie and cheat for saving our faiths. This has been said to me not by one mouth but many

This, however, is no cause for the slightest despair I know that the demon of disunion is at his last gasp A lie has no bottom Disunion is a lie Even if it is sheer self-interest, it will bring about unity I had hoped for disinterested unity But I will welcome a unity based even on mutual interest Only it will not come in the way suggested by the Maulana Saheb It will come when it does come, in a way perhaps least expected by us God is the Master Trickster. He knows how to confound us, frustrate our 'knavish tricks' He sends death when one least expects it He sends life when we see no sign of it Let us admit our abject helplessness, let us own that we are utterly defeated. Out of the dust of our humility will, I feel sure, be built up an impregnable citadel of unity

I am sorry I am unable to return a more encouraging answer to the Maulana's appeal Let him take comfort from the fact that I share his desire for union with the same intensity that he will credit himself with What does it matter if I feel unable to share his faith in his plan of achieving unity? I shall do nothing to hinder it I shall pray for the success of every sincere effort in that direction. My ceasing to fret does not mean that unity is no longer an article of my creed. Let me redeclare my undying faith in it. For the sake of it I must renounce the privilege of being a maker of the unity that is coming. I have the wisdom to stand aside and wait when my interference can only disturb the wound without healing it.

Young India 26-11-1925

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ACTION IN INACTION

Nothing would have pleased me better than to have responded to the public appeal made by Dr. Syed Mahmud and other friends if it was at all possible or in my opinion advisable to do so. The signatories are mistaken in thinking that I have gone into retirement. I have imposed upon myself a year's abstention from all avoidable public engagements. The year is fast drawing to a close. The reasons for abstention were fully stated at the time. My health and the requirements of the Ashram necessitated rest from toilsome travelling and taxing public engagements. If I have not interfered in Council matters, it is because I have perhaps no aptitude for them — certainly, I have no faith in the Councils giving us Swaraj. I have ceased to meddle in Hindu-Muslim quarrels because my meddling at this juncture, I am convinced, can only do harm. Then there remain untouchability, national educational institutions and the spinning wheel. To these I am giving all the attention I am capable of giving.

Therefore I venture to suggest to the friends that what to them appears to be my inaction is really concentrated action.

I do not in the least share their pessimism. The Hindu-Muslim quarrels are in a way unknown to us as a fight for Swaraj. Each party is conscious of its impending coming. Each wants to be found ready and fit for Swaraj when it comes. The Hindus think that they are physically weaker than the Mussalmans. The latter consider themselves to be weak in educational and earthly equipment. They are now doing what all weak bodies have done hitherto. This fighting, therefore, however unfortunate it may be, is a sign of growth. It is like the Wars of the Roses. Out of it will rise a mighty nation. A better than the bloody way was opened out to us in 1920, but we could not assimilate it. But even a bloody way is better than utter helplessness and unmanliness.

Even the ugly duel between Motilalji and Lalaji is part of the same struggle. Let the enemies of India's freedom

gloat over their differences. These patriots will be working under the same flag long before the gloating is over. They are both lovers of their country. Lalaji sees no escape from communalism. Panditji cannot brook even the thought of it. Who shall say that only one is right? Both attitudes are a response to the prevailing atmosphere. Lalaji who was born to public life with Swaraj on his lips is no hater of it now. He proposes to mount to it through communalism which he considers to be an inevitable stage in our evolution. Panditji thinks that communalism blocks the way, and he therefore proposes to ignore it even as auto-suggestionists ignore disease seeing that health not 'illth' is the law of life. The nation can ill afford to do without Sir Abdur Rahim as without Hakim Saheb Ajmal Khan. Sir Abdur Rahim who wrote the weighty minute with Gokhale on the Islington Commission is no enemy of his country. Who shall blame him if he thinks that the country cannot progress without the Mussalmans competing with the Hindus on equal terms? He may be wrong in his methods. But he is none the less a lover of freedom. Whilst, therefore, I can make room in my mind for all these various schools of thought, for me there is only one way. I have no faith in communalism even as a stage; or perhaps, better still, I have no fitness for work on that stage. I must therefore hold myself in reserve till the storm is over and the work of rebuilding has commenced.

I can but watch from a safe distance the struggle that goes on in the Councils. I honour those who have faith in them for prosecuting the programme with zeal.

It is educated India which is split up into parties. I confess my incompetence to bring these parties together. Their method is not my method. I am trying to work from bottom upward. To an onlooker, it is exasperatingly slow work. They are working from top downward—a process more difficult and complicated than the former. The millions for whom the signatories have claimed to write are uninterested in party complications which are above their heads.

Young India, 9-9-1926

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HERO AMONG HEROES

The following is a free translation of Gandhiji's Hindi speech with which he moved the resolution on the death of Swami Shraddhanandji at the last session of the Indian National Congress :

You must have noticed that the resolution I have moved originally stood in Maulana Mahomed Ali's name. But I am here to move it in obedience to the President's summons. We see from the newspapers that the assassination of Swamiji has evoked grief and horror throughout the land. I said speaking on the same subject at the All India Congress Committee that we should not mourn over the Swamiji's death. He had died the death of a hero, and every one of us might wish for such a death. But I want to make a slight correction in that last statement. Every brave man welcomes such a death whenever it comes to him. He greets it as a friend. But let no one therefore invite or hanker after such a death; let no one desire that some one else should be in the wrong and err against God and man, so that he might become a martyr. It is wrong to wish any one to go astray. Let us all be brave enough to die the death of a martyr, but let no one lust for martyrdom.

Swamiji was hero among heroes, the bravest of the brave. He had astonished the nation with an unbroken record of bravery. I am witness of the pledge he had taken to sacrifice himself at the altar of the country.

But need any one speak at length on the Swamiji's services to the nation? Swamiji, as every one knew, was the help of the helpless, the friend of the weak and the oppressed, and the work he had done for the untouchables was unsurpassed. I well remember his having told me once that unless every Hindu member of the All India Congress Committee had an 'untouchable' servant in his home, the work of the Congress for the uplift of the untouchables would not be complete. This may sound as an

impracticable proposal, but it shows his unbounded love for the untouchables.

I shall not refer here to his many other services. Whilst the assassination of such a great hero and patriot, such a servant and devotee of God as the Swamiji, can be made to serve the country's cause, imperfect men as we are, it is natural for us to mourn over his sad death. And when one thinks of the circumstances under which he met his death one is naturally filled with horror and indignation. The assassin sought an interview with the Swamiji to have a discussion on Islam. His faithful servant refused to admit him as he had Dr Ansari's orders to allow no interviews so long as Swamiji was seriously ailing But God had evidently ordered otherwise Swamiji when he overheard the request asked Dharmasingh to let the man in. Brother Abdul Rashid was shown in I purposely call him brother, and if we are true Hindus you will understand why I call him so. Swamiji asked his servant to admit Abdul Rashid, because God had willed to show therethrough the greatness of Swamiji and the glory of Hinduism Swamiji was of course too ill to discuss religious topics and he asked the stranger to seek another occasion But he would not go. He said he was thirsty and asked for water Swamiji asked Dharmasingh to fetch water for him, and taking advantage of his absence, the man deposited bullet shots in Swamiji's breast

This is the thing which should not have happened in India—India, where both the Hindus and Mussalmans are proud of their faiths I have studied the *Quran* with the same reverent attention as I give to the *Gita*, and I say that the *Quran* nowhere sanctions or enjoins such murders The murder has been possible because the two communities look upon each other with feelings of hatred and enmity. Many Mussalmans believe that Lalaji and Malaviyaji are the sworn enemies of Islam as was Swamiji in their opinion. On the other hand, many Hindus regard Sir Abdur Rahim and other Mussalmans as the enemies of Hinduism. To my mind both are wholly wrong Swamiji was no enemy of Islam, nor are Lalaji and Malaviyaji. Lalaji and Malaviyaji

have a right to express their opinion freely, and even if we disagree with them no one may excite feelings of hatred against them. And yet what do we see today? There are few Mussalman papers today which do not use foul language against these patriots. Now I ask in all humility what is the wrong they have done. We may not see eye to eye with them in their methods of work. But I am sure that it is great service that has earned for Malaviyaji the name *Bharata-bhushan*. Lalaji too has a great record of service. Then take the Mussalman leaders. Sir Abdur Rahim may think that the Hindus are in advance of the Mussalmans in every respect, that they are rich, they are educated, and the Musslmans are poor and uneducated. Sir Abdur Rahim thinks that his community should have a preference in the services. It is open to us to feel and say that he is mistaken in his views, but why should we abuse him for his opinions? If Maulana Mahomed Ali says that although he has respect for Gandhi he holds that the faith of a Muslim who believes in the *Quran* is greater than the faith of Gandhi, why should we be angry? Do not some Christian clergymen say that a Christian regularly going to Church and serving Jesus is better than a Hindu however pious he may be? What does that matter to us? I therefore appeal to you that if you hold dear the memory of Swami Shraddhanandji you would help in purging the atmosphere of mutual hatred and calumny, you would help in boycotting papers which foment hatred and spread misrepresentation. I am sure that India would lose nothing if 90% of the papers were to cease today. Many Mussalman papers today subsist on hatred of the Hindu, and many Hindu papers subsist on hatred of the Mussalman. Swamiji has left for us a rich lesson written in his blood. 'Do you know the liberality of the Arya Samaj?' he once asked me. 'Do you know how Maharshi Dayanand forgave the man who poisoned him?' I knew it. How could I be ignorant of it, knowing as I did that the Maharshi had before him the example of Yudhishthira and the teaching of the *Gita* and the *Upanishads*? But Shraddhanandji in his overflowing reverence for

the Maharshi dilated upon his forgiveness. I tell you that the disciple had no less of that noble quality than his great master. Speaking once about the implications of *Shuddhi* he told me that his *Shuddhi* excluded any feeling of ill-will for the Mussalman, that it meant purification of self and the great community to which he belonged, and that his ideal was the ideal of the *Gita*—'See thyself in every one of the created beings.' But he emphasized that the Hindu also was no less a friend of his than the Mussalman and that it was his duty to serve him. Even if the whole Muslim world were to turn against me, I would declare that Malaviyaji is my friend and elder brother. I declare also in the same breath that none of the Mussalman leaders is an enemy of Hinduism. Sir Abdur Rahim is not an enemy of the Hindus, nor is Mian Fazli Hussain. When I met him he assured me that he was an old Congressman, that he loved the Hindus no less than the Mussalmans, but that as a Mussalman he wanted to serve the latter. We may disagree with him in his views, we may not like his demands for the Mussalmans, but why should we, therefore, swear at him and say that he is an enemy of the Hindus? Why should we not express our dissent from his views and fight them, if necessary, even as I do with Malaviyaji, in many respects, in a satyagrahi way? I repeat therefore with all the emphasis I can command that Sir Abdur Rahim or Mr. Jinnah, or the Ali Brothers are no enemies of the Hindus. Let not the lesson of Swami Shraddhanandji's death be lost on us. You will all be accepting this resolution standing, while at this moment perhaps there are Hindu-Muslim disturbances going on in Delhi. But I tell you that if every one of you understands and lays to his heart the lesson that Swami Shraddhanandji has left for us, it is again possible to win Swaraj in no time. I am a mad man, you will say, accustomed to giving rash promises. Well, I tell you I am not mad; I am still as much in earnest about my programme as I was in 1920, but those who made pledges in 1920 broke them and made Swaraj impossible then. We are all children of the same Father—whom the Hindu and the Mussalman and the

Christian know by different names What if Shankara declared his faith in one God in his formula *Ekamevadvitiyam*, (एकमेवाद्वितीयम् — One only without a second), or Ramanuja in his dual doctrine, or Mahomed in his *La Ilaha Illallaha* (no god but the one God) ? All meant one and the same thing. If we cleanse our hearts we shall be able to see that Swamiji has served us in his death as much as he served us when living. Let us purify our hearts with his blood, and fight, if need be, for our rights in a peaceful and satyagrahi way. Let every Mussalman also understand that Swami Shraddhanandji was no enemy of Islam, that his was a pure and unsullied life, and that he has left for us all the lesson of peace written in his blood.

Now you will perhaps understand why I have called Abdul Rashid a brother, and I repeat it I do not even regard him as guilty of Swami's murder Guilty indeed are all those who excited feelings of hatred against one another. For us, the Hindus, the *Gita* enjoins on us the lesson of equality, we are to cherish the same feelings towards a learned Brahmana, as towards a *chandala*, a dog, a cow and an elephant.

This is no occasion for mourning or tears, it is an occasion that should burn on our hearts the lesson of bravery. Bravery is not the exclusive quality of the Kshatriyas. It may be their special privilege. But in our battle for Swaraj bravery is essential as much for the Brahmana and the Vaishya and the Shudra as for the Kshatriya. Let us not therefore shed tears of sorrow, but chasten our hearts and steel them with some of the fire and faith that were Shraddhanandji's.

Young India, 13-1-1927

44

SHRADDHANANDJI

THE MARTYR

The expected has happened. Swami Shraddhanandji passed a day or two at the Satyagraha Ashram at Sabarmati, now about six months ago, and told me, in the course of his conversation that he often received letters threatening his life. Where is the reformer who has not a price put upon his head? There was, therefore, nothing untoward in his getting the letters. And there is nothing untoward in the assassination having taken place.

Swamiji was a reformer, he was a man of action not of words. His was a living belief. He had suffered for it. He was bravery personified. He never quailed before danger. He was a warrior. And a warrior loves to die, not on a sick-bed, but on the battlefield.

Shraddhanandji became seriously ill about a month ago. Dr. Ansari was, as his physician, giving him all the loving attention he was capable of giving. The telegram I received from his son, Indra, in reply to my inquiry at the beginning of the month, was that he was better and that he wanted my 'love and prayer' both of which he had before the asking.

God had willed for him a martyr's death and so though he was still on the sick-bed, he died at the hands of an assassin who had asked to be admitted to the Swamiji's presence for the purpose of holding a religious discourse on Islam, who was admitted at the Swamiji's instance, and who, under pretence of wanting water to quench his thirst, had Swamiji's faithful servant, Dharam Singh, sent out to fetch water, and who, in absence of the servant, deposited two death wounds in the patient's breast, as he was lying in his bed. We have not the last words of the Swamiji, but if I knew him at all, I have no doubt that he prayed to his God to forgive him who knew not that he was doing anything wrong. In the language of the *Gita*, therefore, 'happy the warrior who achieves such a blessed death.'

Death is at any time blessed, but it is twice blessed for a warrior who dies for his cause, i. e. truth. Death is no fiend, he is the truest of friends. He delivers us from agony. He helps us against ourselves. He ever gives us new chances, new hopes. He is like sleep a sweet restorer. Yet it is customary to mourn when a friend dies. The custom has no operation when the death is that of a martyr. I cannot, therefore, mourn over this death. He and his are to be envied.

For though Shraddhanandji is dead, he is yet living. He is living in a truer sense than when he moved about in our midst in his giant body. The family in which he was born, the nation to which he belonged are to be congratulated upon so glorious a death as this. He lived a hero. He has died a hero.

But there is another side to the shield. I regard myself as a friend of the Mussalmans. They are my blood brothers. Their wrongs are my wrongs. I share their sorrows and their joys. Any evil deed done by a Mussalman hurts me just as much as that done by a Hindu. This foul deed has been done by one who bears a Mussalman name. As a friend of the Mussalmans, therefore, I deeply regret the event. The joy of the death is thus tempered by the sorrow that an erring misguided brother has been the cause of it. Martyrdom can, therefore, never be wished for. It becomes a thing of joy only when it comes unsought. We may not gloat over the errors of the least of our fellows.

But the fact is that an error often refuses to become patent until it becomes atrocious. It dies only after being completely disgraced.

This tragedy has a national importance. It draws pointed attention to an evil that is eating into the vitals of the nation. Both Hindus and Mussalmans have the choice before them. We are both on our trial.

Hindus may, by being resentful, disgrace Hinduism and postpone the unity that must come. They can by self-restraint show themselves to be worthy of the message of the *Upanishads* and of Yudhishthira who was the embodiment of forgiveness. Let us not ascribe the crime of an individual

to a whole community. Let us not harbour the spirit of retaliation. Let us not think of the wrong as done by a Mussalman against a Hindu, but of an erring brother against a hero.

Mussalmans have an ordeal to pass through. There can be no doubt that they are too free with the knife and the pistol. The sword is no emblem of Islam. But Islam was born in an environment where the sword was and still remains the supreme law. The message of Jesus has proved ineffective because the environment was unready to receive it. So with the message of the Prophet. The sword is yet too much in evidence among the Mussalmans. It must be sheathed if Islam is to be what it means—peace. There is danger of Mussalmans secretly endorsing the mad deed. It will be a calamity for them and the world. For ours is after all a world problem. Reliance upon the sword is wholly inconsistent with reliance upon God. There should be, on their part, unequivocal mass condemnation of the atrocity.

I wish to plead for Abdul Rashid. I do not know who he is. It does not matter to me what prompted the deed. The fault is ours. The newspaper man has become a walking plague. He spreads the contagion of lies and calumnies. He exhausts the foul vocabulary of his dialect, and injects his virus into the unsuspecting, and often receptive minds of his readers. Leaders 'intoxicated with the exuberance of their own language' have not known to put a curb upon their tongues or pens. Secret and insidious propaganda has done its dark and horrible work, unchecked and unabashed. It is therefore we the educated and the semi-educated class, that are responsible for the hot fever which possessed Abdul Rashid.

It is unnecessary to discriminate and apportion the blame between the rival parties. Where both are to blame, who can arbitrate with golden scales and fix the exact ratio of blame? It is no part of self-defence to tell lies or exaggerate.

It is too much to hope, but Swamiji was great enough to warrant the hope that his blood may wash us of our

guilt, cleanse our hearts and cement these two mighty divisions of the human family.

I must deal with the life of Swamiji as I know him, in the next issue of *Young India*.

Young India, 30-12-1926

45

A CANDID CRITIC

I must not withhold the following letter from the readers:

> "I have perused your article 'Swamiji the Martyr' with the care and reverence it deserves. I have read it five times before attempting to criticize it. This is to avoid hasty criticism.
>
> "The article is undoubtedly written in fascinating language. I envy your style. It attracts, but to me it appears, that it is rather dangerously attractive.
>
> "My criticism is based on my estimation of your character. I have often debated with some friends on this subject. They hold that you are a statesman in the garb of a saint — ready to forego truth in the cause of your country. I have on the contrary maintained that you are a saint who has entered politics in fulfilment of your mission, to practise truth in the face of the most trying and perplexing circumstances. I shall be very obliged to know if my estimation is correct. For if it is not, the criticism that follows has little value. I am of the opinion that a man of policy is within his rights to write in the manner you have done.
>
> "You will agree with me that to suppress truth is a form of falsehood; to refuse to call a spade when you feel it like that is cowardice; and that fearlessness and truth go together.
>
> "Do you feel, Mahatmaji, that the murder of Swamiji was an inhuman, barbarous and cruel act of a Muslim ruffian and that the entire Muslim community should be ashamed of it? Why do you refuse to characterize it as

* See chap. 44.

such? Instead of condemning the deed and the doer, and those who are responsible for this act (those who describe the Hindu leaders as kafirs — the hot Muslim propagandists and the mad Muslim priests), you have begun to defend the murderer and hold an apology for the community. You never defended Dyer. Is not a European a brother too?

"You say further, Islam means peace. Is this truth? Islam as taught by the *Quran* and practised by the Muslims ever since its birth, never meant peace. What makes you write a thing so patently wrong? Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism of course teach peace, but not Islam. May I know what makes you think and write like this?

"You never minced matters when condemning the wrongs of the Government, you never minced matters when you condemned the Arya Samaj, why fear to condemn Muslims for even proved wrongs?

"I am sure if such a black act had been committed by a Hindu against a Muslim leader (which Heaven forbid!), you would have condemned the murderer and the community in unsparing terms. You would have asked the Hindus to repent in sack-cloth and ashes, to offer fasts, hold hartal, raise a memorial to the departed Muslim and many other things. Why do you accord preferential treatment to your 'blood brothers' the Muslims?

"A truth-teller knows no fear, not even of the sword of Islam, and I trust you will oblige me by giving reply to the above in the columns of your esteemed weekly."

The writer is frank and obviously in earnest and reflects the prevalent mood.

To clothe me with sainthood is too early even if it is possible. I myself do not feel a saint in any shape or form. But I do feel I am a votary of Truth in spite of all my errors of unconscious omission and commission. The correspondent has judged rightly that I am not "a statesman in the garb of a saint". But since Truth is the highest wisdom, sometimes my acts appear to be consistent with the highest statesmanship. But I hope I have no policy in me save the policy of truth and *ahimsa*. I will not sacrifice truth and *ahimsa* even for the deliverance of my country or religion.

This is as much as to say that neither can be so delivered.

In writing about the assassination of Swamiji, I have not suppressed truth. I do believe the act to be all that the correspondent describes. But I feel pity for the murderer even as I felt for General Dyer. Let not the correspondent forget that I refused to be party to any agitation for the prosecution of General Dyer. I do claim that a European is just as much a brother to me as a Mussalman Indian or a Hindu.

What I do feel about the assassin is that he is himself a victim of foul irreligious propaganda in the name of religion. Hence it is that I have held the newspapers that have corrupted the public mind to be responsible for the murder. I do hold the *maulvis* and all those who have indulged in exciting hatred against Swamiji to be responsible.

But I do regard Islam to be a religion of peace in the same sense as Christianity, Buddhism and Hinduism are. No doubt there are differences in degree but the object of these religions is peace. I know the passages that can be quoted from the *Quran* to the contrary. But so is it possible to quote passages from the *Vedas* to the contrary. What is the meaning of imprecations pronounced against the *anaryas*? Of course these passages bear today a different meaning but at one time they did wear a dreadful aspect. What is the meaning of the treatment of "untouchables" by us Hindus? Let not the pot call the kettle black. The fact is that we are growing. I have given my opinion that the followers of Islam are too free with the sword. But that is not due to the teaching of the *Quran*. That is due in my opinion to the environment in which Islam was born. Christianity has a bloody record against it not because Jesus was found wanting but because the environment in which it spread was not responsive to his lofty teaching.

These two, Christianity and Islam, are after all religions of but yesterday. They are yet in the course of being interpreted. I reject the claim of *maulvis* to give a final interpretation to the message of Mahomed as I reject that

of the Christian clergy to give a final interpretation to the message of Jesus. Both are being interpreted in the lives of those who are living these messages in silence and in perfect self-dedication. Bluster is no religion, nor is vast learning stored in capacious brains. The seat of religion is in the heart. We Hindus, Christians, Mussalmans and others have to write the interpretation of our respective faiths with our own crimson blood and not otherwise.

Young India, 20-1-1927

46

IN THE HANDS OF GOD

I dare not touch the problem of Hindu-Muslim unity. It has passed out of human hands, and has been transferred to God's hands alone. Even as Draupadi forsaken by her husbands, forsaken by men and gods alike, asked God and God alone to come to her help, and God gave her unfailing help, so it is with me and so should it be with every one of us. Let us ask for help from God, the All-Powerful and tell Him that we His tiny creatures have failed to do what we ought to do, we hate one another, we distrust one another, we fly at one another's throat and we even become assassins. Let our hearts' cry then ascend to His throne, and let us wash His feet with tears of blood and ask Him to purge our hearts of all hatred in us. We are disgracing His earth, His name and this sacred land by distrusting and fearing one another. Although we are sons and daughters of the same motherland, although we eat the same food, we have no room for one another. Let us ask God in all humility to give us sense, to give us wisdom.

Young India, 13-1-1927

47

PRAYER, THE ONLY WAY

[The following is a short summary of a Hindi speech delivered by Gandhiji at Sewan (Bihar) when challenged to say something on Hindu-Muslim unity]

I am glad you say that your sub-division is better than other parts so far as Hindu-Muslim unity is concerned But can you say that you are so united that your unity will stand the strain of anything happening elsewhere? I wish there can be at least one province, one district, one sub-division in this vast land which can proud say that no power on earth can foment a Hindu-Muslim quarrel there We may think we are living, but disunited we are worse than dead The Hindu thinks that in quarrelling with the Mussalman he is benefiting Hinduism, and the Mussalman thinks that in fighting a Hindu he is benefiting Islam But each is ruining his faith And the poison has spread as among the members of the communities themselves And no wonder For 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

I said at Comilla that the problem has passed out of human hands, and that God has taken it into His own May be the statement springs from my egotism But I do not think so I have ample reason for it With my hand on my breast I can say that not a minute in my life am I forgetful of God For over twenty years I have been doing everything that I have done as in the presence of God Hindu-Muslim unity I had made a mission of my life. I worked for it in South Africa, I toiled for it here, I did penance for it, but God was not satisfied, God did not want me to take any credit for the work. And so I have now washed my hands I am helpless. I have exhausted

all my effort. But as I am a believer in God, as I never for a moment lose faith in Him, as I content myself with the joy and sorrow that He wills for me, I may feel helpless, but I never lose hope. Something within me tells me that Hindu-Muslim unity must come and will come sooner than we might dare to hope, that God will one day force it on us, in spite of ourselves. That is why I said that it has passed into the hands of God. This, I said, might be taken to be an arrogant utterance—arrogant inasmuch as it implies that it is not in the power of any other man to achieve the work, as if no one has worked for it more than I. But there is no arrogance in the statement. Hundreds may have done the work, with the same earnestness, love and energy, but none with more. And I believe that all of them must be feeling as helpless as I. In 1920 I said that not even the British Empire with all the resources of its armed strength, diplomacy and organization could efface us, make us slaves, or divide Hindus from Mussalmans. But that was because I thought we were God-fearing then. We trusted one another and we relied on one another's strength. But how am I to prevail upon you today to cast off all fear, hatred and distrust? Shraddhanandji was not the enemy of Mussalmans. He was a warrior, he had the courage of his conviction. Assassination was not the way to fright him. Let us, Hindus and Mussalmans both, wash the sins of our heart with his blood.

And what is it that we should be fighting for? We Hindus may be idol-worshippers. We may be mistaken. But when God gave every man the right to make mistakes, when God suffers us to live although we are idol-worshippers, why should not the Mussalmans suffer us too? And if a Mussalman thinks that he must slaughter the cow, why should a Hindu stay his hands by force? Why should he not fall on bended knees before him and plead with him? But we will do no such thing. Well then, God will one day make the Mussalman and the Hindu do what we will not do today. If you are believers, I beseech you to retire into yourselves and pray to the Indweller to stay your

hands from wrong and to make them do the right thing. Let that be our prayer every-morning and evening. There is no other way.

Young India 27-1-1927

48

TO HINDUS

You may say I am partial to the Mussalmans So be it, though the Mussalmans do not admit it But my religion will not suffer by even an iota by reason of my partiality I shall have to answer my God and my Maker if I give any one less than his due, but I am sure that He will bless me if He knows that I gave some one more than his due I ask you to understand me. If my hand or heart has done anything more than was any one's due, you should be proud of it, rather than deplore it It should be a matter of pride to you as Hindus to think that there was amongst you at least one mad Gandhi who was not only just to the Mussalmans, but even went out of his way in giving them more than their due Hinduism is replete with instances of tolerance, sacrifice and forgiveness. Think of the sacrifice of the Pandavas, think of the forgiveness of Yudhishthira Should it be a matter for sorrow for you, that there is at least one man who has tried to carry out the precept of Hinduism to the letter?

Young India, 10-3-1927

49

TO MUSLIMS

Much as I would like to pour out my agony before you I know that it will be a cry in the wilderness. I therefore daily send out my prayer to God: 'Lord, do somehow deliver us from this conflagration.' But I should be untrue to my creed if as a believing and satyagrahi Hindu I disguised from you the feelings within me. When I went into the temple I was shown the spot where the idol was removed and the *Nandi* was desecrated. I tell you the sight pained me. You may call me an idolator if you will. I see God everywhere and in everything. I tell you God would never approve of those acts of desecration. Whilst in Yeravda Jail, I read Maulana Shibli's *Life of the Prophet*, I also read *Usva-e-Sahaba* and can say that those who did the acts were wrong, that Islam never sanctions such things and they were guilty before God and man. When I heard of these things I was convinced that the matter had passed out of human hands. If there were men who devoted all their time and energy to the cause of Hindu-Muslim unity, I at least was one of them, but when my efforts did not seem to bear any fruit I threw myself on God. When the saints and God-fearing people of Islam saw that there was discord and strife after the passing away of the Prophet, they dissociated themselves from them, migrated to Egypt, Persia and other lands and there retired into seclusion and sent up their prayers to God. It is these saints that have kept Islam alive. How often have I wished to retire thus into seclusion! And though I know that history will take note of my efforts as those of one who was a servant of God, who committed Himalayan blunders but who had also the courage to confess them and repent for them, I know that today I can do no better than be silent on this question.

Young India, 10-3-1927

50

HINDU-MUSLIM UNITY

When the President of the Congress wired that a unanimous resolution on the Hindu-Muslim question was reached by the All India Congress Committee, I could not enthuse over the information. The wire told me enough about the contents of the resolution. When the President paid me a visit at Nandi, he asked me whether I would write on it. I told him I did not think I could write anything helpful. A few days after the visit I got a message from a friend. Its purport was: 'You are responsible for the mischief that is going on in our midst. If you had not dragged the Hindus into the Khilafat agitation, the recent tragic events would not have happened. But you alone can now save us.'

In translating the message I have softened the bitterness of the language of the original. It seems to me to call for a reiteration of my belief about Hindu-Muslim unity.

I do not repent of my part in the Khilafat agitation. It was a duty I discharged towards my Mussalman countrymen. The Hindus would have been wrong, if they had not helped their brethren in their distress. However ugly the present look of things may be, future generations of the Mussalmans will recall with gratitude this great act of friendship on the part of the Hindus. But the future apart, as I believe in the proverb that virtue is its own reward, I should always defend my action on the Khilafat question. I therefore received the friend's message of rebuke with perfect calmness.

But I wish I could fulfil his expectations and assist immediately and materially in bringing about peace. For I am just as strong a believer as ever in unity and the necessity for it. If it could be achieved by giving my life,

I have the will to give it and I hope I have the strength for it. I should with the greatest joy undertake an indefinite fast, as I very nearly did at Delhi in 1924, if it would melt and change the stony hearts of the Hindus and Mussalmans. But I have no sign from God within to undertake the penance. If a penance is itself an act of purification, it has also to be preceded by an equal measure of initial purification. I am obviously not pure enough for that supreme penance.

If the reader does not see me now often refer to the question in these pages, it is because the sense of humiliation has gone too deep for words. It matters little to me whether the perpetrators of shameful deeds are Hindus or Mussalmans. It is enough to know that some of us are blaspheming a patient God and doing inhuman deeds in the sacred name of religion. I know too that neither assassination, nor fratricidal acts can possibly save religion. Religion worth the name can only be saved by purity, humility and fearlessness of the uttermost type among its professors. It is the only *Shuddhi* and only propaganda.

Hence has the resolution of the All India Congress Commitee left me unmoved. For I know that we have not yet changed our hearts. We have not shed fear of one another. Any compromise that is unaccompanied by these two conditions must be a mere make-shift.

Moreover, I feel that any agreement between the component parts of the nation must be voluntary and must remain so for all time. It must not, if it is conceived in terms of Swaraj, depend for its final ratification or enforcement upon a legal enactment. Ratification by our respective organizations must be held to be final and binding. Enforcement must depend upon the honour of the leaders of the respective parties and ultimately, in the absence of reliance on non-violence, on the arbitrament of civil war fought decently or indecently as the case may be. It is a sign of weakness, not of fitness for Swaraj to go to the foreign ruling power to arbitrate between us or to enforce the peace between us at the point of the bayonet.

If we the so-called leaders have no control over our fighting elements, our agreement must be held to be unreal and useless. Before we think of real Swaraj, we must gain control over the masses. We must learn to behave ourselves. The agreement had no effect on Delhi, and to our eternal shame the Government has been the keeper of the peace on *Bakr-Id*.

My creed of non-violence is an extremely active force. It has no room for cowardice or even weakness. There is hope for a violent man to be some day non-violent, but there is none for a coward. I have therefore said more than once in these pages that if we do not know how to defend ourselves, our women, and our places of worship by the force of suffering, i. e. non-violence, we must, if we are men, be at least able to defend all these by fighting. It is unmanly to ask or expect the Government to ensure the peace between rival parties or to defend our women against ourselves. And while we remain so unmanly it is hopeless to expect Swaraj. In well-ordered societies, Governments merely undertake the police work. But the recent elaborate preparations at Delhi or Lahore were no part of police work. Differences we shall always have. But we must learn to settle them all, whether religious or other, by arbitration. Before the rulers we must be able to present a united front and demonstrate to the world our capacity for regulating our own manners if we would have Swaraj.

If, however, we have no leaders whom we can elect as arbitrators who would give wise and impartial decisions, or, if we are too unruly and barbarous to wait for and abide by decisions of arbitration of our choice, we must fight till we are exhausted and come to our senses. The Government will no doubt always intervene, whether we will or no, either to keep the public peace or to preserve its own safety. But it will weaken us the least, if the rival factions will courageously and straightforwardly refrain from courting the protection or assistance of the Government. Why should a murderer in such warfare be defended? Let him seek the gallows. Let breakers of places of worship

come forth boldly and say, 'we have done this for the sake of religion, punish us if you like!' Let those who kill innocent passers-by deliver themselves to the police and say, 'we have done it all for God's sake!' All this may read heartless. But I have merely endeavoured to suggest a way that is straighter and less weak than the one we have hitherto adopted.

And if we cannot, after the manner of civilized men, resort to voluntary arbitration or, after the manner of brave, barbarous races, fight out differences without seeking the intervention of British justice or bayonets, all we may expect to get in the shape of reforms is an increased agent's share in the bureaucratic Government; in other words, an increasing share in the exploitation of the dumb millions. Let us take care that any agreement we may come to does not reduce us to that unenviable condition.

Young India, 16-6-1927

51

RANGILA RASUL

In spite of the goading of correspondents, wise and otherwise, I have hitherto resisted the temptation to be drawn into the controversy that has arisen over this pamphlet. I have endeavoured patiently to deal with these correspondents by private correspondence. But of late the correspondence has increased beyond my capacity to deal with it privately. The last letter is from a Muslim professor in Bihar. He sends me a newspaper cutting containing a letter rebuking me in that even I had chosen to join in the conspiracy of silence observed by the leading Hindus in general. The professor wants me to 'reply sharp'. I gladly do so in the hope that my correspondents will be satisfied with my good faith and understand the reason for my silence. As I do not read newspapers, save a local one, I know nothing about the 'conspiracy of silence' by Hindu

leaders. The newspaper I read most frequently just now is the *Hindu*, and I do remember having seen in it a strong article against the *Rangila Rasul*. So far as I am concerned, long before many Mussalmans knew even of the existence of the pamphlet, it came into my possession. In order to test the veracity of my informant, I read it and wrote the following note in *Young India*, dated 19th June, 1924:

"INFLAMMATORY LITERATURE

A friend has sent me a pamphlet called *Rangila Rasul*, written in Urdu. The author's name is not given. It is published by the manager, Arya Pustakalaya, Lahore. The very title is highly offensive. The contents are in keeping with the title. I cannot, without giving offence to the reader's sense of the fine, give the translation of some of the extracts. I have asked myself what the motive possibly could be in writing or printing such a book except to inflame passions. Abuse and caricature of the Prophet cannot wean a Mussalman from his faith, and it can do no good to a Hindu who may have doubts about his own belief. As a contribution therefore to the religious propaganda work, it has no value whatsoever. The harm it can do is obvious.

Another friend sends me a sheet called *Shaitan* printed at Public Printing Press, Lahore. It contains untranslatable abuse of Mussalmans. I am aware of similar abuse by Mussalman sheets. But that is no answer to or justification for the Hindu or the Arya Samaj abuse. I would not have even noticed these prints but for the information given to me that such writings command a fair patronage. The local leaders must find a way of stopping these publications or at least discrediting them and distributing clean literature instead, showing tolerance for each other's faiths."

Then followed the protests from Arya Samajists enclosing viler writing against Arya Samajists and the great founder Rishi Dayanand, telling me that *Rangila Rasul* and such writings were in answer to the Muslim writings referred to above. I wrote the following second note (Y. I. 10th July, 1924):

"HALF A DOZEN AND SIX

My remarks on the unreadable pamphlet on the Prophet and on the scurrilous sheet *Shaitan* have brought me a sheafful of letters from Arya Samajists, who, whilst admitting the force and truth of my remarks, say that some Mussalman sheets are no better, and that they began the abuse and the Arya Samajists followed by way of retaliation The writers have sent me some of these sheets. I have suffered the pain of going through a few of the extracts. The language in some parts is simply revolting I cannot disfigure these pages by reproducing it. I have also been favoured with a life by a Mussalman of Swami Dayanand. I am sorry to say it is largely a distortion of the great reformer. Nothing that he did has escaped the author's venom. One of my correspondents complains bitterly that my remarks have emboldened the Mussalman speakers and writers to become more abusive than before towards the Arya Samaj and the Samajists. One of them sends me an account of a recently held Lahore meeting where unmentionable abuse was heaped upon the Samaj. Needless to say such writings and speeches can have no sympathy from me. In spite of the opinion I have expressed, I claim to be one of the many humble admirers of the founder of the Samaj. He pointed out the many abuses that was corrupting Hindu society He inculcated a taste for Sanskrit learning. He challenged superstitious beliefs. By the chastity of his own life he raised the tone of the society in which he lived. He taught fearlessness, and he gave a new hope to many a despairing youth. Nor am I oblivious of his many services to the national cause. The Samaj has supplied it with many true and self-sacrificing workers It has encouraged education among Hindu girls as perhaps no other Hindu institution save the Brahmo Samaj has done. Ignorant critics have not hesitated to insinuate that my remarks about Shraddhanandji were due to his criticism of me. But the insinuation does not prevent me from reacknowledging the pioneer work done by him in the Gurukul. Whilst therefore I am unable to withdraw a single word of my criticism of the Samaj, the *Satyartha Prakash,* Rishi

Dayanand and Swami Shraddhanandji, I repeat that my criticism was that of a friend with the desire that the Samaj may render greater service by ridding itself of the shortcomings to which I drew attention. I want it to march with the times, give up the polemical spirit, and whilst adhering to its own opinions, extend that toleration to other faiths which it claims for itself. I want it to keep a watch on its workers and stop all discreditable writings. It is no answer in justification that Mussalmans commenced the campaign of calumny. I do not know whether they did or not. But I do know that they would have been tired of repetition, if there had been no retaliation. I have not even urged the Samajists to give up their *Suddhi*. But I do urge them as I would urge the Mussalmans to revise the present idea of the *Suddhi*.

To the Mussalman writers and speakers of whose conduct I have received the letters referred to, I venture to point out, that they neither enhance their own reputation nor that of the religion they profess by unrestrained abuse of the opponent. They can gain nothing, they cannot serve Islam, by swearing at the Samaj and the Samajists."

Thus I had anticipated the Mussalman wrath. But in the present agitation the meeting-point ends there. I could not approve of the turn the agitation took. I regarded it as excessive and inflammatory. The attack against Justice Duleepsingh was uncalled for, undeserved and hysterical. The Judiciary is by no means above being influenced by the Government, but it would be wholly unfit to render justice, if it was open to popular attacks, threats and insults. So far as the Judge's integrity was concerned, it should have satisfied any Mussalman that he condemned the pamphlet, as he did, *in unmeasured terms*. His reading of the section ought not to have been made a cause for virulent attack against him. That other judges have taken a different view from Justice Duleepsingh is irrelevant to the issue. Judges have been often known before now to have given honest and opposite interpretations of the same law. The agitation for strengthening the penal section may be wise. Personally I question the wisdom. Any

stiffening of the section will react against ourselves, and will be utilized, as such sections have been utilized before, for strengthening the hold of British authority over our necks. But if the Mussalmans or the Hindus want to agitate for unequivocally bringing such writings under the criminal law, they have a right to do so.

I hold strong views about Government protection. Time was when we knew better and disdained the protection of law-courts in such matters. To stop anti-Muslim writings like the *Rangila Rasul* is the work of the Hindus as to stop anti-Hindu writings is the work of the Mussalmans. The leaders have either lost control over mud-flingers or are in sympathy with them. In any case Government protection will not make us tolerant of one another. Each hater of the other's religion will under a stiffer law seek secret channels of making vicious attacks on his opponent's religion, or writing vilely enough to provoke anger but veiled enough to avoid the penal clauses of the law. But then I recognize that at the present moment we are not acting as sane nationalists or as men of religion. We are seeking under cover of religion to wreak mad vengeance upon one another.

My correspondents, both Hindu and Mussalman, should understand that I am just now out of tune with the prevailing atmosphere. I recognize fully that I have no power over the fighters whether Hindu or Muslim. My solution for removing the tension is, I admit, not suited to the times. I therefore best serve the nation by holding my peace. But my faith in my solution is as immoveable as my faith in the necessity and the possibility of real Hindu-Muslim unity. Though, therefore, my helplessness is patent, there is no hopelessness in me. And as I believe that silent prayer is often mightier than any overt act, in my helplessness I continuously pray in the faith that the prayer of a pure heart never goes unanswered. And with all the strength at my command, I try to become a pure instrument for acceptable prayer.

Young India, 22-9-1927

52

HINDU-MUSLIM UNITY

Dr. Ansari told me when I was recently in Delhi, that he heard in Calcutta from reliable men that I had lost faith and interest in Hindu-Muslim unity, and I was avoiding Mussalman friends such as the Ali Brothers. Dr. Ansari therefore proposed that in order to dispel any illusion and disarm suspicion, I should make a declaration of my faith before a public meeting in Delhi. I could not accept the proposal if only because the old Delhi of Hakim Saheb Ajmal Khan and Swami Shraddhanandji had become the new Delhi of hooligans where it was difficult for me to stay and much more so to address public meetings. I however promised Dr. Ansari that I would clear my position as early as I could through these pages. This I do now

My interest and faith in Hindu-Muslim unity and unity among all the communities remain as strong as ever My method of approach has changed. Whereas formerly I tried to achieve it by addressing meetings, joining in promoting and passing resolutions, now I have no faith in these devices. We have no atmosphere for them In an atmosphere which is surcharged with distrust, fear and hopelessness, in my opinion these devices rather hinder than help heart unity. I therefore rely upon prayer and such individual acts of friendship as are possible. Hence I have lost all desire to attend meetings held for achieving unity. This however does not mean that I disapprove of such attempts. On the contrary, those who have faith in such meetings must hold them. I should wish them all success

I am out of tune with the present temper of both the communities. From their own standpoint they are perhaps entitled to say that my method has failed. I recognize that among those whose opinions count, I am in a hopeless minority. By my taking part in meetings and the like I could not render any useful service. And as I have no other interest but to see real unity established,

where I cannot serve by my presence, I regard it as some service if I abstain.

For me there is no hope save through truth and non-violence. I know that they will triumph when everything else has failed. Whether therefore I am in the minority of one or I have a majority, I must go along the course that God seems to have shown me. Today non-violence as a mere policy is a broken reed. It answers well as a policy when there are no active forces working against it in your own camp. But when you have to reckon with those who believe in violence as a creed to be enforced under given circumstances the expedience of non-violence breaks down Then is the time for the out and out believer in non-violence to test his creed. Both my creed and I are, therefore, on our trial. And if we do not seem to succeed, let the critic or the onlooker blame not the creed but me I know I am often obliged to struggle against myself. I have not become incapable as yet of violence in thought at least. But I am striving with all the might God has given me.

Now perhaps the reader understands why I am not found in the company of the Ali Brothers as often as I was before. They still hold me in their pockets. They are still as dear to me as blood brothers. I am not sorry for having thrown in my lot with the Mussalmans in the hour of their need. I should do so again if the occasion arose. But though we have a common cause we have not common methods today. They would have had me at Simla and Calcutta Since the Kohat riots we have not been able to agree as to the reading of facts. But friendship that insists upon agreement on all matters is not worth the name. Friendship to be real must ever sustain the weight of honest differences, however sharp they may be. I regard our differences to be honest, and therefore let those who suspect a breach or even coolness between us know that my friendship with the Ali Brothers and other Mussalman friends, whom the reader can easily name, remains as firm as ever.

Young India, 1-12-1927

53

WHEN IS KILLING JUSTIFIED ?

Lala Shankarlal of Delhi tells me I am reported as having said that I advised Hindus to kill Mussalmans on certain occasions, e. g., when they were in the act of killing cows. I have not seen the report in question But as the matter is of the utmost importance, I cannot be too precise or definite I hold that it is no part of Hinduism to defend the cow against the whole world or against the Mussalmans. If the Hindu attempted any such thing, he would be guilty of forcible conversion His duty ends with his tender care of the cow. This duty, let me incidentally observe, he signally fails to discharge The only way the Hindus can convert the whole world to cow-protection is by giving an object lesson in cow-protection and all it means. But everyone and therefore every Hindu is bound to defend with his life, the honour of his mother, sister, wife or daughter, in fact all those who are under his exclusive or special protection. My dharma teaches me for the sake of others to give my life without even attempting to kill But my dharma also enables me to say that where choice lies between running away to the neglect of one's charge and killing the would-be ravisher, it is one's duty to kill and be killed, never to desert the post of duty I have had the humiliation of meeting tall, well-built fellows coming to me and innocently telling me they had witnessed the rape of Hindu women by dissolute Mussalmans In a society of brave men, evidence of completed rape should be almost impossible Not a man should be alive to report such a crime A simple *pujari* not knowing the meaning of non-violence told me with some glee that when a mob entered his temple to break his idols, he carefully hid himself away. Such a man I hold to be unfit to be a *pujari*. He should have died at his post. He would then have sanctified the idol with his blood. He would have been justified in killing the intruders, if he had not the

courage to die at his post with a prayer on his lips that God might have pity on the assailants. But it was unmanly for him to have hidden himself to save his perishable skin. The truth is that cowardice itself is violence of a subtle and therefore dangerous type, and far more difficult to eradicate than the habit of physical violence. A coward never risks his life. A man who would kill often risks it. A non-violent person's life is always at the disposal of him who would take it. For he knows that the soul within never dies. The encasing body is ever perishing. The more a man gives his life, the more he saves it. Thus non-violence requires more than the courage of the soldier of war. The *Gita* definition of a soldier is one who does not know what it is to run away from danger.

Young India, 18-12-1924

54

WHAT ARE WE TO DO ?

Two weeks ago I wrote in *Navajivan* a note on the tragedy in Godhra, where Sjt. Purshottam Shah bravely met his death at the hands of his assailants, and gave the note the heading 'Hindu-Muslim Fight in Godhra'. Several Hindus did not like the heading and addressed angry letters asking me to correct it. I found it impossible to accede to their demand. Whether there is one victim or more, whether there is a free fight between the two communities, or whether one assumes the offensive and the other simply suffers, I should describe the event as a fight if the whole series of happenings were the result of a state of war between the two communities. Whether in Godhra or in other places there is today a state of war between the two communities. Fortunately the countryside is still free from the war fever which is mainly confined to towns and cities, where, in some form or other, fighting is continually going on. Even the correspondents who have written to me about Godhra do not seem to deny the fact

that the happenings arose out of the communal antagonisms that existed there.

If the correspondents had simply addressed themselves to the heading, I should have satisfied myself with writing to them privately and written nothing in *Navajivan* about it. But there are other letters in which the correspondents have vented their ire on different counts. A volunteer from Ahmedabad who had been to Godhra writes:

> "You say that you must be silent over these quarrels. Why were you not silent over the Khilafat, and why did you exhort us to join the Muslims? Why are you not silent about your principles of *ahimsa*? How can you justify your silence when the two communities are running at each other's throats and the Hindus are being crushed to atoms? How does *ahimsa* come there? I invite your attention to two cases:
>
> "A Hindu shopkeeper thus complained to me: 'Mussalmans purchase bags of rice from my shop, often never paying for them. I cannot insist on payment, for fear of their looting my godowns. I have therefore to make an involuntary gift of about 50 to 75 maunds of rice every month.'
>
> "Others complained: 'Mussalmans invade our quarters and insult our women in our presence, and we have to sit still. If we dare to raise a protest, we are done for. We dare not even lodge a complaint against them.'
>
> "What would you advise in such cases? How would you bring your *ahimsa* into play? Or even here would you prefer to remain silent?"

These and similar questions have been answered in these pages over and over again, but as they are still being raised, I had better explain my views once more at the risk of repetition.

Ahimsa is not the way of the timid or the cowardly. It is the way of the brave ready to face death. He who perishes sword in hand is no doubt brave, but he who faces death without raising his little finger and without flinching is braver. But he who surrenders his rice bags for fear of being beaten is a coward and no votary of *ahimsa*.

He is innocent of *ahimsa*. He, who for fear of being beaten, suffers the women of his household to be insulted, is not manly but just the reverse. He is fit neither to be a husband nor a father, nor a brother. Such people have no right to complain

These cases have nothing to do with the inveterate enmity between the Hindus and Mussalmans. Where there are fools there are bound to be knaves, where there are cowards there are bound to be bullies, whether they are Hindus or Mussalmans. Such cases used to happen even before the outbreak of these communal hostilities. The question here, therefore, is not how to teach one of the two communities a lesson or how to humanize it, but how to teach a coward to be brave

If the thinking sections of both the communities realize the cowardice and folly at the back of the hostilities, we can easily end them Both have to be brave, both have to be wise. If both or either deliberately get wise, theirs will be the way of non-violence. If both fight and learn wisdom only by bitter experience, the way will be one of violence. Either way there is no room for cowards in a society of men, i. e., in a society which loves freedom. Swaraj is not for cowards

It is idle therefore to denounce *ahimsa* or to be angry with me on the strength of the cases cited. Ever since my experience of the distortion of *ahimsa* in Bettiah in 1921, I have been repeating over and over again that he, who cannot protect himself or his nearest and dearest or their honour by non-violently facing death, may and ought to do so by violently dealing with the oppressor. He who can do neither of the two is a burden. He has no business to be the head of a family He must either hide himself, or must rest content to live for ever in helplessness and be prepared to crawl like a worm at the bidding of a bully.

I know only one way—the way of *ahimsa*. The way of *himsa* (violence) goes against my grain. I do not want to cultivate the power to inculcate *himsa*. As *ahimsa* has no place in the atmosphere of cowardice prevailing today, I must needs be reticent over the riots we hear of from day

to day. This exhibition of my helplessness cannot be to my liking. But God never ordains that only things that we like should happen and things that we do not like should not happen. In spite of the helplessness, the faith sustains me that He is the Help of the helpless, that He comes to one's succour only when one throws himself on His mercy. It is because of this faith that I cherish the hope that God will one day show me a path which I may confidently commend to the people. With me the conviction is as strong as ever that willynilly the Hindus and Mussalmans must be friends one day. No one can say how and when that will happen. The future is entirely in the hands of God. But He has vouchsafed to us the ship of Faith which alone can enable us to cross the ocean of Doubt.

Young India, 11-10-1928

55

THE HINDU-MUSLIM QUESTION

The third question adverted to by 'A young heart' is that of Hindu-Muslim unity. I cull the following sentences from his observations:

> "Thinking that your efforts at establishing Hindu-Muslim unity have proved fruitless you are sitting with your lips almost sealed in this matter. That does not seem to me to be right. You may keep your silence on the question of unity, but do you not think that it is your duty to ascertain facts whenever there is a communal disturbance, and after full consideration to express your opinion on merits? You may not take an active part but how will it injure the interests of the country if after giving an impartial hearing to both the sides, you frankly speak to whomsoever might appear guilty in your eyes? The attitude that you have taken up with regard to the Godhra riot and Surat is, to be frank, hardly proper. Where is your valour gone now which you displayed abundantly on other occasions by calling a spade a spade? Good God!

I am really surprised at this attitude of yours I humbly ask you to advise the Hindus, if they cannot observe *ahimsa* as defined by you, to fight, in self-defence those who assault or murder them and their dear ones without cause."

I have already explained my position in this matter. I trust it is not out of fear that I do not air my views on this subject nowadays. But when it may be out of place for me to write, or when I have not sufficient material to form an opinion, or when the matter does not fall within my province, I consider it to be my duty to maintain silence. At present neither of the two parties is prepared to accept my solution of the Hindu-Muslim problem. There is, therefore, no occasion for me to express my opinion.

There remains the question of expressing opinion on the riots that have taken place or might take place in the future. When the subject itself, as I have already pointed out, has gone out of my province, there can be no question of my expressing an opinion on events that may arise. Again, if I proceed to express opinion on such matters before scrutinizing what both the parties might have to say on them, my conduct would be justly held to be improper and even impertinent. There would also be the danger of my misjudging. And how can I set out to make an inquiry into a question when I know that I have no ready solution for it?

Let no one however run away with the idea, from this, that I have washed my hands of this question for good. I am simply biding my time like an expert physician who has faith in his remedy. It is my firm belief that mine alone is the sovereign remedy for this seemingly incurable communal disease, and that in the end one or both the parties will willynilly accept my cure.

In the meantime those who want will fight, in spite of whatever I might say. Nor do they need any prompting from me. This I have said repeatedly, I do not want any cowardice in our midst The heroism of *ahimsa* cannot be developed from cowardice. Bravery is essential to both *himsa* and *ahimsa* In fact, it is even more essential in the latter, for *ahimsa* is nothing if it is not the acme of bravery.

Young India, 3-1-1929

56

WHAT IS COMMON?

'What is common to us except *Pax Britannica*?' is the question that has been often put to me. The last time it was put to me was by the editor of the *Daily Gazette* of Karachi I was sorry I had not the time to answer the question in full detail though my answer was comprehensive enough I suggested that birth, manners, distress and bondage were more common than *Pax Britannica*. But what is this *Pax Britannica*? Does it not mean that it more often keeps us from fighting against one another than protects us from foreign invasions? And do we not see that even that condition is more often observed in the breach than in the performance? *Pax Britannica* is unable to prevent Hindu-Muslim feuds What it successfully does is to ensure the protection by means of extraordinary military and other dispositions of the Europeans who are exploiting the country. *Pax Britannica*, therefore, in so far as it is common to the whole of the country, is not a blessing calculated to advance the nation either economically or politically It has emasculated the people and reduced them to a state of helplessness My suggestion therefore is that common birth, common distress, common manners and common bondage are, each in itself and all collectively, a real cohesive force, not *Pax Britannica*. Consciousness of distress and consciousness of bondage are unifying the people in a manner in which they have never before been unified. And when these become a thing of the past as they are bound to, common birth will prove a force that will make the nation irresistible.

Young India 14-2-1929

57

COMMUNAL QUESTION

Equally important is the communal resolution. Though it was adopted for the sake of the Sikhs, it was necessary

* The resolution referred to here is as follows

"In view of the lapse of the Nehru Report it is unnecessary to declare the policy of the Congress regarding communal questions, the Congress believing that in an Independent India communal questions can only be solved on strictly national lines But as the Sikhs in particular, and the Muslims and the other minorities in general had expressed dissatisfaction over the solution of communal questions proposed in the Nehru Report, this Congress assures the Sikhs the Muslims and the other minorities that no solution thereof in any future constitution will be acceptable to the Congress that does not give full satisfaction to the parties concerned.

"Hence the Congress is precluded from setting forth any communal solution of the communal problem But at this critical juncture in the history of the nation, it is felt that the Working Committee should suggest for adoption by the country a solution though communal in appearance, yet as nearly national as possible and generally acceptable to the communities concerned The Working Committee therefore after full and free discussion unanimously passed the following scheme -

"1 (a) The article in the constitution relating to Fundamental Rights shall include a guarantee to the communities concerned of the protection of their cultures languages scripts education profession and practice of religion, and religious endowments

"(b) Personal laws shall be protected by specific provisions to be embodied in the constitution

"(c) Protection of political and other rights of minority communities in the various provinces shall be the concern and be within the jurisdiction of the Federal Government

"2 The franchise shall be extended to all adult men and women

"(*Note* - The Working Committee is committed to adult franchise by the Karachi resolution of the Congress and cannot entertain any alternative franchise In view, however of misapprehensions in some quarters the Committee wishes to make it clear that in any event the franchise shall be uniform and so extensive as to reflect in the electoral roll the proportion in the population of every community)

"3. (a) Joint electorates shall form the basis of representation in the future constitution of India.

"(b) That for the Hindus in Sind, the Muslims in Assam and the Sikhs in the Punjab and N W F P, and for the Hindus and the Muslims in any province where they are less than 25% of the population, seats

58

IN COMMUNAL FIGHTS

No civil resister will intentionally become a cause of communal quarrels.

In the event of any such outbreak, he will not take sides, but he will assist only that party which is demonstrably in the right. Being a Hindu he will be generous towards Mussalmans and others, and will sacrifice himself in the attempt to save non-Hindus from a Hindu attack. And if the attack is from the other side, he will not participate in any retaliation but will give his life in protecting Hindus.

He will, to the best of his ability, avoid every occasion that may give rise to communal quarrels.

If there is a procession of satyagrahis they will do nothing that would wound the religious susceptibilities of any community, and they will not take part in any other processions that are likely to wound such susceptibilities.

Young India, 27-2-1930

59

WHAT IT IS NOT

Maulana Shaukat Ali is reported to have said that the Independence Movement is a movement not for Swaraj but for Hindu Raj and against Mussalmans, that therefore the latter should leave it alone. On reading the report I wired to the Maulana inquiring whether he was correctly reported. He has kindly replied confirming the report. The Maulana has launched a great charge against the movement. It needs to be repudiated once for all. Whatever the movement is, it certainly is not for Hindu Raj, nor is it against the Mussalmans. It bears within itself a complete answer to the charge. The Congress has

* From an article entitled *Some Rules of Satyagraha*

taken the first step in final non-cooperation. No Congressman can enter the legislatures, much less accept employment under the Government. No Congressman can seek or receive favours from the Government. Does not the Hindu-Muslim question centre round a division of political power - spoils of office? How can the movement be anti-Mussalman or for Hindu Raj, when no one identified with it has the slightest notion till independence is reached, of possessing any political power? True, the Congress has still left open the entrance to local boards. What is at present going on in Calcutta almost makes me think that instead of being weak, I should have pressed for the boycott even of these boards. The Congress is better without these temptations. They are just now mere snares for the unwary or the selfish rather than instruments of national service for the patriot. But I am sure the Maulana did not have the local boards in mind when he said that the movement was against Mussalmans. The only ground for the belief, in so far as I can fathom it, can be that those who are engaged in it, must by its very nature, become more self-reliant, more defiant and more capable of resisting any encroachment on their liberty than before, and that since the vast majority of them are Hindus, they will in course of time become more powerful than the Mussalmans. But such reasoning would be unworthy of the brave Maulana I have known him to be. He must therefore explain to the public what he means by his serious charge.

I grant that if till the end of the chapter only the Hindus join the movement in the right spirit, they will become an irresistible force of the right, i. e, non-violent type. But the obvious deduction from this fact is that all those who are keeping aloof, should join the movement at the earliest moment, and I prophesy that if the movement keeps the chalked path, the Maulana and the other Mussalmans, Sikhs, Christians, Parsis, Jews etc. will join it.

Surely all are equally interested in securing repeal of the salt tax. Do not all need and use salt equally? That is the one tax which is no respecter of persons.

Civil disobedience is a process of developing internal strength and therefore an organic growth. Resistance to the salt tax can hurt no single communal interest. On the contrary it must, if successful, help the abstainers equally with the participants.

As against this absolutely national method of gaining our end, put the unnatural, artificial and diplomatic method of a Round Table Conference in which conflicting interests will be represented by interested parties, and all the Indian groups together will be moved and dominated by the paramount and all-powerful British group. This conference without the power of the people behind it and composed of the powerful and the weak will bring anything but Swaraj. In the existing circumstances, therefore, it can only result in further consolidating the British power.

Civil resisters can have nothing to do with such a conference. Their business is merely to generate and conserve national strength. They have nothing to do with communalism. But if they are compelled by force of circumstances to countenance a communal solution, they are pledged only to consider such as may be satisfactory to the parties concerned. How the Maulana can call such a movement anti-Muslim or one for obtaining Hindu Raj, passes comprehension.

The fact that those taking part in the movement are preponderatingly Hindus is unfortunately true. By proclaiming a boycott the Maulana is helping the process. Even so, there can be no harm, if the Hindu civil resisters are fighting not for themselves but for all, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Parsis, and others, who will make the nation of the future free India.

Not much imagination is required to see that even when civil resisters have acquired sufficient influence to make themselves felt, it will still be open to any one at the time of framing a constitution to block the way. The only time, when abstainers, be they Mussalmans or Hindus, or any other, will be helpless against the civil resisters, is when they drive out the English or when the latter retire in a huff or in disgust. In the first place, however,

they can never do this if their means are uniformly peaceful Secondly, the Mussalmans above all can help themselves and the nation by joining the struggle Thirdly, if no violence on the part of the people is offered, civil resistance *must* result in complete conversion of the English. They will then consider it their duty, it will be their penance, to help us, at their own expense, to arrive at a solution of the many difficulties of which they will own themselves to have been the authors. They will help us as absolute equals and friends to inaugurate an independent organized Government

As for the irritation felt by the Maulana against me personally, I need not say much. Since I have no counter irritation in me, I prophesy that when his temper has cooled down and when he discovers that I am not guilty of many things he imagines against me, he will restore me to 'his pocket' in which I had the honour to be only the other day as it were. For it is not I who have gone out of his pocket. He has thrown me out of it. I am the same little man that I used to be in 1921. I can never be an enemy of the Mussalmans, no matter what any one or more of them may do to me or mine, even as I can never be an enemy of Englishmen, even though they may heap further wrongs upon the Everest of wrongs their representatives have already piled. I am too conscious of the imperfection of the species to which I belong to be irritated against any single member thereof. My remedy is to deal with the wrong whenever I see it, not to hurt the wrong-doer, even as I would not like to be hurt for the wrongs I continually do.

Young India, 12-3-1930

60

HINDU-MUSLIM UNITY

As so much misrepresentation is being made about my attitude on the communal question, without entering into any argument I would state my position as clearly as my knowledge of the language would enable me to do.

1. The views that I have held for the last 40 years remain unchanged.

2. I hold that there is no Swaraj without communal unity as without several other things I have repeatedly mentioned.

3. The present campaign is not designed to establish Independence but to arm the people with the power to do so.

4. When the power has been generated and time has come for the establishment of Independence, the Mussalmans and all other minorities will have to be placated. If they are not, there must inevitably be civil war. But I live in the hope that if we succeed in generating the power, our differences and distrust will vanish. These are due to our weakness. When we have the power from within we shall shed our weakness.

5. The Nehru Constitution having lapsed the communal solution has naturally lapsed. The Lahore Congress resolution mentions in so many words that the communal solution not having given satisfaction either to the Sikhs or the Mussalmans, the question might have to be reconsidered so as to give satisfaction to all the parties concerned.

6. The only non-violent solution I know is for the Hindus to let the minority communities take what they like. I would not hesitate to let the minorities govern the country. This is no academic belief. The solution is attended with no risk. For under a free Government the real power will be held by the people.

Young India, 24-4-1930

61

GOD AND OUR BOND

[In response to a pressing invitation Gandhiji addressed a crowded gathering of the Sikhs of Delhi in the Sisgang *Gurudwara* on the 6th of March 1931 The speech though mainly devoted to the Sikh question presented in a nutshell Gandhiji's view on the question of the rights of minorities in general, and as such will repay careful perusal by all those who are interested in a solution of this vexed question The following is a condensed translation of it]

I have followed with painful interest the details of police firing into the sacred precincts of this *gurudwara* that have been narrated by the previous speaker, and I assure you that my grief and resentment at the outrage are not less than yours But as I told my Sikh brethren at the time of Nankana Sahib tragedy when I visited Nankana Sahib in company with Maulana Abul Kalam Azad in 1921, we are today fighting not for one *gurudwara* but for the bigger *gurudwara*, which is the common sacred possession of all of us, viz *Purna Swaraj* — '*Purna*', complete, because it is as much for the prince as for the peasant, as much for the rich landowner as for the landless tiller of the soil, as much for the Hindus as for the Mussalmans, 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 some one than for the other, being partial to some one and prejudicial to the other. Truth and non-violence leave no room for fraud or falsehood The Congress has attracted the attention of the world for the simple reason that it is pledged to win freedom by means unemployed by nations heretofore. The world has so far been familiar with only one method of achieving freedom and that by the use of physical force. But luckily for itself and the world,

India has launched on the method of non-violence and truth for the attainment of its independence. It is a unique thing in history, and the world which began by regarding it with scepticism is today watching India's great non-violent experiment with bated breath. In physical warfare even chicanery and fraud have a place, but non-violence precludes the use of all other weapons except that of truth and justice. 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. That being so, can the Congress want to keep even a child out of its own?

The beauty of non-violence is that it carries within it its own security.

I venture to suggest that the non-violence creed of the Congress is the surest guarantee of good faith, and our Sikh friends have no reason to fear that it would betray them. For, the moment it did so, the Congress would not only thereby seal its own doom but that of the country too. Moreover the Sikhs are a brave people. They will know how to safeguard their rights by the exercise of arms if it should ever come to that.

Sardar Madhusudan Singh in his speech has asked for an assurance that the Congress would do nothing that might alienate the sympathies of the Sikhs from the Congress. Well, the Congress in its Lahore session passed a resolution that it would not endorse any settlement with regard to the minority question that failed to satisfy any of the minorities concerned. What further assurance can the Congress give you to set you at ease I really fail to understand.

Then there is the controversy about the inclusion of the Sikh colour in the national flag. No blame can possibly attach to the Congress in this respect. The present design was suggested by me. The Congress has not even formally adopted it. I had offered to the Sikh friends to place before the A. I. C. C. their viewpoint if they could apprise me of it. But as it turned out, the A. I. C. C. could not meet after that and no one knows as to when it will be

able to meet at all. Even the Working Committee is out today on sufferance. To raise this controversy at this time, the time when the Congress is fighting for its very existence, would be, to say the least, an unseemly act. You may not obstruct if you cannot help.

The Sikhs have given their loyal and unstinted cooperation to the Congress in many parts of India like Bombay, Delhi etc. But these brave people have never bothered themselves about the flag question. The flag controversy is being conducted mostly by those who have held aloof from the present movement. A brave man always gives credit to the other party for its *bona fides*. Why won't you have faith ? If the Congress should play false afterwards, you can well settle scores with it, for you hold the sword. I would ask you therefore to cast out suspicion and distrust from your mind and to plunge into this sacred *yajna* of freedom whole-heartedly. You will find that when you are ready to make the extreme sacrifice you will disdain to ask for guarantees. It will be for others to look up to you as the champions of their rights as it will be for you to fulfil their expectations. I hold the *Granth Sahib* in high reverence. Several parts of it have passed into our daily speech. So far as my reading of it goes it inculcates faith, valour and an invincible belief in the ultimate triumph of right and justice. I would like you to derive your inspiration and guidance from it.

I ask you to accept my word and the resolution of the Congress that it will not betray a single individual much less a community. If it ever thinks of doing so, it will only hasten its own doom. No nation, determined to immolate itself at the altar of freedom, can be guilty of breach of faith. My life has been an open book. I have no secrets and I encourage no secrets. I pray you, therefore, to unbosom yourselves of all your doubts and apprehensions and I shall try to meet you as best I can. What more shall I say ? What more can I say than this, 'let God be witness of the bond that binds me and the Congress with you' ?

Young India, 19-3-1931

62

JOIN THE CONGRESS

It is not right to say that the Congress is a Hindu organization What is the Congress to do if the Muslims do not care to go into it? The Congress is based on adult franchise, and any adult Hindu or Mussalman can join the Congress No community is excluded Ask the Muslim friends who are members of the Congress, and they will tell you that they have not come to grief by having joined the Congress I ask you therefore not to suspect that the Congress is a Hindu organization I ask every one of you to join the Congress and to take charge of it But one cannot take charge of it by force It can be done only by willing service Ever since the Congress was started, those who have served it have had charge of it And yet the Congress does not belong only to them, does not stand only for them, it belongs to and stands for all It is th Swaraj Government in embryo Its prestige is ever so much superior to that of the British Government, and the Congress President is greater than the Viceroy Only monied people and men in high places know the Viceroy One needs a motor car to reach the Viceregal House But the poorest man knows the Congress President (at present Sardar Vallabhbhai) and can walk up to him. The Sardar has dedicated himself to the service of the country, and he who serves the poor is great in the eyes of God. If you want to be in power under Swaraj, I invite you to assume the reins of the Congress now by joining it in large numbers It is the most powerful organization in the country, join it We will welcome you.*

Young India 16-4-1931

* From a speech Gandhiji delivered at the Ulema's conference at Karachi

63

QUESTIONS ANSWERED

Professor Syed Rauf Pasha caught hold of me when last I was in Bulsar and asked me some pertinent questions on Hindu-Muslim unity. At my request he reduced the questions to writing so that I could give precise answers. The reader will find the questions and the answers below:

Q. 1. You say that the present campaign is intended only to create the necessary strength among the people to gain independence. If you feel that Dominion Status on the basis of the Nehru Report will create that strength, will you accept it when the Muslims feel that it would be only Hindu strength rather than national strength that would be gained thereby?

A. I should never feel that any *grant* can give us strength In no case could the Nehru Scheme be revived or accepted if only because the communal solution suggested therein does not satisfy those concerned in it, and also because it does not stipulate for independence as it obviously could not at the time.

Q. 2. Do you consider the Ali Brothers to be sincere in differing from you over the time of starting the disobedience of the salt law and over the question of participation in the Round Table Conference, and that they were in no way influenced by the British Government in the adoption of such an attitude?

A. I certainly consider the Ali Brothers to be sincere in what they say. If I believed them to be insincere or capable of being influenced by the British Government, I should never hope of their being weaned from what to me appears to be a grievous error as my action appears to them to be.

Q 3. Do you realize or not that the Ali Brothers still have a great following among the Muslim masses throughout India, and that they would swell your ranks tomorrow only if the Ali Brothers assure them that such a step will not be detrimental to their interests?

Further, don't you think that even the Ali Brothers with all their influence were and still are powerless to dispel their suspicion of the Mahasabha Hindus just as you were and still are powerless to carry the Hindu community with you in the settlement of the communal question although your leadership in other matters is not questioned?

A. How can it be otherwise? Their record of service will always secure for the Ali Brothers a following among the Muslim masses. There is no doubt therefore that their coming would mean additional strength to the cause.

Deep-rooted suspicions cannot be dispelled by leaders however influential they may be.

Q. 4. Do you think that the Muslims specially of the N. W. F. Province and Malabar are sufficiently trained for non-violent fight as the Hindus specially of Gujarat are, and do not past recent occurrences in these provinces impress on you the necessity of stopping such unprepared provinces from immediate participation until such organization is complete, and that otherwise there would be an unnecessary loss of Muslim life?

A. I have repeatedly warned those provinces that are unprepared for strict non-violence against participation in this struggle. It is quite enough if they can give their sympathy.

Young India, 1-5-1930

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NEED OF HEART UNITY

[Addressing a mass meeting attended by over 50,000 people at Delhi on the 7th March 1931, Gandhiji delivered a speech in Hindi of which the following is a condensed rendering.

M. D.]

SHAUKATALI'S ABSENCE

Before I begin, I must tell you how much I miss Maulana Shaukatali here. He arrived this morning and it is a matter of inexpressible sorrow to me that he should not be here, and I have no doubt you also will share my sorrow. But I may assure you that I shall miss no opportunity, leave no stone unturned, to persuade the Maulana and other Mussalmans to work with us on the same platform. It is a matter of shame that the 'Big Brother' with whom I travelled through the country for over two years and whom I took particular pleasure in describing as capable of carrying me in his pocket should not be here with me today But if it is a matter of shame, I do not know how far I am responsible for it. I have spared no effort to remove that shame, but I have not succeeded. In this there is nothing surprising, inasmuch as we find even blood-brothers divided by sharp differences of opinion But our differences have not in the least affected our friendship. I regard him, even today, as my friend and brother, and I have no doubt that he also has the same regard for me. But that affords me little consolation, for I want him to work shoulder to shoulder with me for the welfare of India, and I want his co-operation on my terms, as indeed he once used to give me. But that work ceased to appeal to him at a certain stage and he left the Congress platform.

NEED OF THE HOUR

That preamble will give you an inkling of what I am about to say today. The settlement that has been just arrived at will fail of effect without a real heart-unity

between the Hindus and Mussalmans. Without that unity our going to the Conference will be of no avail. No one will pretend that the Conference can help us to achieve that unity. A heart-unity can be achieved between pure hearts purged of distrust, and that can be achieved only outside the Conference. In this I seek your co-operation and ask you to count on my doing my utmost.

In a letter I received yesterday the correspondent asks me why I should not make the same advances to the Mussalmans as I did to the Viceroy. Why, he asks, should I not wait on esteemed Mussalman friends who are desirous of unity and beg on bended knees for their co-operation? I like the suggestion and the correspondent may be sure that I shall leave nothing undone to plead with my Mussalman friends. But you must understand that there are limits to the capacity of an individual, and the moment he flatters himself that he can undertake all tasks, God is there to humble his pride. For myself, I am gifted with enough humility to look even to babes and sucklings for help. And that reminds me that in this mission of mine I can count on the hearty and active co-operation of my sisters who beat all previous records of suffering and sacrifice during the last heroic campaign. To them I say. If you are convinced that the Hindu-Muslim unity is a *sine qua non* I ask you to use against your own countrymen the same weapon of satyagraha that you used so effectively against the Government. Tell your men that you will non-co-operate with them, you will not cook for them, you will starve yourselves and them so long as they do not wash their hands of these dirty communal squabbles. Assure me of your co-operation, and you will add tremendously to my strength and to my power of pleading.

We Hindus are described, to a certain extent rightly, as the majority community. Well, to them I would say the same thing as I used to do in 1921, viz. that voluntary surrender on the part of either community—preferably by the majority community—of all rights and privileges would immediately effect this unity. It would be a great thing, a brave thing, for the Hindus to achieve this act of

self-denial. Let them say to the Mussalmans. 'Have as big a share of the spoils as you want. we will be content to serve you.' What after all are the things you are quarrelling for ? Not indeed for air and water. It is for seats on legislatures and local bodies. What has the vast majority of you got-to do with them ? How many of you can go there ? And what can you do there ? Outside the legislatures you did wonderful things; you defied the ordinances, you defied *lathi* charges and 'firing' orders, because you were conscious of your strength. If you retain the same consciousness, what would it matter to you if your Parliament had all Mussalmans in it and no Hindu ? I am sick of these squabbles for seats, this scramble for the shadow of power. How I wish I could bring home to all Congressmen that they should have nothing to do with these legislatures ! The very act of voluntary surrender will clothe you with a power undreamt of before.

Young India, 12-3-1931

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CAWNPORE AND ITS LESSON

Cawnpore has been a scene of carnage. This is due largely to the violence we had harboured against one another. It is the handwriting on the wall. Though we have shown ourselves capable of limited non-violence, we have harboured violence in our hearts, we have been guilty of using coercion. The papers allege that the Cawnpore Hindus went mad over Bhagatsing's martyrdom and started with intimidating the Mussalmans who would not close their shops in Bhagatsing's honour. You know the sequel. I am quite sure that if the spirit of Bhagatsing is watching what is happening in Cawnpore today, he would feel deeply humiliated and ashamed. I say this for I have heard him described as a man of honour. And what havoc we have done ! Women insulted ! Children done to death ! Let no Hindu comfort himself with the thought that they were Mussalman children. Let no Mussalman feel happy in the

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GANESH SHANKAR VIDYARTHI

The death of Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi was one to be envied by us all. His blood is the cement that will ultimately bind the two communities. No pact will bind our hearts. But heroism such as Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi showed is bound in the end to melt the stoniest hearts, melt them into one. The poison has however gone so deep that the blood even of a man so great, so self-sacrificing and so utterly brave as Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi may today not be enough to wash us of it. Let his noble example stimulate us all to similar effort should the occasion arise again. I tender to the bereaved widow and her children not my condolences but my congratulations for having deserved Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi. He is not dead. He lives today far more truly than when we saw him in the body and knew him not.

Young India, 9-4-1931

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WHY I CANNOT DECIDE

When Sardar Vallabhbhai and Pandit Jawaharlal saw Gandhiji in the afternoon of the 8th and asked him whether he would be available for the evening sitting, as he was expected to make a statement on the question of his going to London, Gandhiji was reading an inflammatory leaflet issued by some of the rowdy agencies in Bombay. It was so full of grossly false statements and deliberate incitement to violence that it made even Gandhiji's blood boil. In deep sorrow he said: "I do not feel like going anywhere. How I wish I could shut myself up here and cry out my grief. There is so much violence in the air, so much falsehood, that I often wonder if it is worthwhile my going, even if other circumstances made it possible." "But," said Pandit

Jawaharlal, "if a communal riot, which, we are told, is being engineered, were to break out, how is your presence needed here? Can't we cope with it?" Gandhiji smiled a faint smile. It was close upon three, and the Sardar and Panditji left for the meeting. I am giving these details here in order that what appeared to be a sudden breakdown on that momentous evening may be presented in its true setting. If he could have avoided making that statement, when he was summoned to do so by the Sardar, he would gladly have avoided it. It was a moment when he felt it "half a sin

To express in words the grief I feel,
For words like Nature half reveal
And half conceal the soul within."

The remarks of a Bombay paper on that evening's incident showed, that so far as that paper was concerned, his words did "half conceal the soul within."

Here is how he began in Hindi:

"I may tell you that I am doing all that is humanly possible to enable me to go to London. The settlement commits the Congress to participate in the R. T. C. to place the Congress point of view before it. But without the necessary atmosphere my going there would be futile. I therefore declared that I could not go unless there was a solution of the Hindu-Muslim-Sikh problem. The Working Committee discussed my declaration, my reasoning did not appeal to it, and I had to bow to its decision that I must go even though a solution could not be attained before my going. But that did not mean that I should go there as a mere Hindu. If I went there as a mere Hindu, I should cease to be a representative of the Congress. The Congress belongs to all communities, and the Working Committee decided that I had no reason to absent myself from the R. T. C. even though I might have to go there with less strength and less self-confidence. That meant a step forward in the direction of London.

"But do not be sure that I am sailing until I have actually boarded the ship. For who knows what happens between today and the fifteenth? Ours is a vast country,

there are all sorts of rumours in the air and anything may lead to a conflagration. You know what happened in the Jinnah Memorial Hall. Those are things that make me tremble, and may even unnerve me. Would you send a nervous wreck to the Conference? My decision would shock Lord Irwin who might well doubt whether I was in my senses, but even at the risk of annoying him I would prefer to stay here, if something that may happen between now and the fifteenth shook me to the marrow. I have the same love for the Mussalman as for the Hindu. My heart feels for the Mussalman as much as for the Hindu. If I could tear it open, you would discover that there are no compartments in it, one reserved for the Hindus, another for the Mussalmans and so on. And therefore I hold myself responsible, when I find a Mussalman running at a Hindu's throat and vice versa. I have endured these things up to now, but there is a limit to human endurance. I am laying bare my heart to you as a man pledged to truth. I do not think any man can present a full record of what he feels, but I do know that I am keeping nothing from you. I hear rumblings of the storm, and I want you not to be surprised if you find me quail before it. That moment my strength may entirely fail me and render me completely impotent. Having elected me your sole representative, I want you to accept me with all my limitations and weaknesses. I have revealed to you my true self in all my weakness and impotence. May be I may conquer that weakness; may be a single Mussalman may be able to disabuse me of my fears and my impotence.

(At this stage, he was so overwhelmed with emotion that he broke down, and could not proceed for a minute or two. But he soon composed himself, and proceeded to give in English a gist of what he said in Hindi.)

"I did not really come here to pour out my feelings before you, but as I was proceeding, it was impossible for me to choke the rising emotions. I have gone through a heart-training which enables me to keep outwardly smiling while a storm may be raging in my breast. That storm has reached a crisis and I am feeling unnerved and seem to

have lost all power. And therefore I say, that although the atmosphere may be clear so far as the Government are concerned, I may not be able to go because there is a doubt lurking in my breast, that when the moment comes, it may find me unprepared. Think of the disgraceful scenes in the Jinnah Memorial Hall the other day. People who had done no wrong to anybody were pounced upon and belaboured without any provocation. I saw a man, who, if he chose to use his strength, would be a match for ten, profusely bleeding because of the brutal blows he had received that evening. It was a pitiable sight for me. Then I had a graphic account of the incident. It shot into me like an arrow. But that is not all. I am studying and trying to understand what is lying concealed under the surface, and I must to a certain extent hold myself responsible for what is happening. God used me as an instrument for creating that great awakening in the country in 1919. Naturally passions were aroused, but as all regarded themselves as Indians fighting for a common cause, there was no internecine conflict. But that was only a momentary dream soon to vanish like smoke, and now we find that we are all at war against one another. That makes me unfit for the work for Swaraj. And so I say, that although the atmosphere may otherwise be clear, something might happen which might make me mad and absolutely powerless. Surely you would not then want to send to London a man who was so unnerved. You must send some one with faith, and I find myself fast losing faith. That produced the collapse that you saw a moment ago."

Young India, 13-8-1931 M. D.

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HINDU-MUSLIM UNITY AND ARABS

All who desire peace must join together to perpetuate peace This great peninsula, the birth place of Mahomed and of Islam, can help to solve the Hindu-Muslim problem It is a matter of shame to me to confess, that we are a house divided against itself. We fly at each other's throats in cowardice and fear The Hindu distrusts the Mussalman through cowardice and fear, and the Mussalman distrusts the Hindu through equal cowardice and imaginary fears Islam throughout history has stood for matchless bravery and peace It can therefore be no matter for pride to the Mussalmans, that they should fear the Hindus. Similarly it can be no matter for pride to the Hindus that they should fear the Mussalmans, even if they are aided by the Mussalmans of the world Are we so fallen, that we should be afraid of our own shadows? You will be surprised to hear that the Pathans are living in peace with us They stood side by side with us in the last struggle, and sacrificed their young men on the altar of liberty. I want you, who belong to the country of the Prophet's birth, to make your contribution to the restoration of peace between the Hindus and Muslims in India. I cannot tell you how you are to do it, but I may remind you that where there is a will, there is a way. I want the Arabs of Arabia to come to our rescue and help to bring about a condition of things when the Mussalman will consider it a point of honour to help the Hindu and vice versa.*

Young India, 24-9-1931

* Extract from an address to Arabs at Aden on his way to London for the Round Table Conference.

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A QUESTION

[Some of the most interesting questions were asked by Indian students (in London) at a meeting where until late in the night Gandhiji regaled them with banter and urbane sarcasm. I may not reproduce them all, but take the most important ones. M. D.]

Q. Is not your demand of unity from the Mussalmans as absurd as the demand of unity that our Government makes of us? Why not give up everything rather than prevent the solution of such a big question?

A. You have made a double mistake. First, in comparing what I have said to the Mussalmans with what Government are saying to us. Seemingly, one would think, it was a substantial analogy, but if you look deeper you will find that there is no point of comparison. The British attitude is backed by the bayonet, whereas, what I say proceeds from the heart and has nothing but affection to back it. The surgeon and the tyrant-assassin use the same instruments with contrary results. What I have said is that I could not possibly carry any demand which has not the backing of all Mussalman parties. How can I be guided by a mere majority? The deeper question is that whilst there are one set of friends asking for one thing I have got another set of comrades with whom I have worked at this very thing and who some time ago were introduced by the other set of friends as the most estimable co-workers. Am I to be guilty of disloyalty to them?

And you must understand that there is nothing in my power to grant. I only told them that I would champion their demand if it had a unanimous backing. As for my position of surrender to those who ask for rights, it has been a conviction of a lifetime. If I could persuade the Hindus to adopt my attitude there would be an immediate solution of the question, but there I have a Mount Everest to climb, so what I have said is not so foolish as you

may imagine. If I alone had anything in my power, I should not have allowed the miserable question to hang on and make us an object of humiliation before the whole world.

Lastly, I have no religion so far as this question is concerned. That does not mean that I am not a Hindu, but my Hinduism is not tarnished or harmed by the surrender I propose. When I took upon myself alone to represent the Congress I said to myself that I could not consider the question in terms of Hinduism but in terms of nationalism, in terms of the rights and interests of all Indians. I have, therefore, no hesitation in saying that the Congress claims to be the custodian of all interests — even of English interests, in so far as they would regard India as their home and not claim any interests in conflict with those of the dumb millions.

Young India, 15-10-1931

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THE CONGRESS AND THE MINORITIES

[The following is the full text of Gandhiji's speech at the Minorities Committee of the R. T. C. in London.]

Prime Minister and friends, it is with deep sorrow and deeper humiliation that I have to announce utter failure on my part to secure an agreed solution of the communal question through informal conversations among and with the representatives of different groups. I apologize to you, Mr. Prime Minister, and the other colleagues for the waste of a precious week. My only consolation lies in the fact that when I accepted the burden of carrying on these talks, I knew that there was not much hope of success, and still more in the fact that I am not aware of having spared any effort to reach a solution.

But to say that the conversations have to our utter shame failed is not to say the whole truth. Causes of failure were inherent in the composition of the Indian delegation. We are almost all not elected representatives of the parties or groups whom we are presumed to represent; we are here by nomination of the Government. Nor are

those whose presence was absolutely necessary for an agreed solution to be found here Further, you will allow me to say that this was hardly the time to summon the Minorities Committee. It lacks the sense of reality in that we do not know what it is that we are going to get. If we knew in a definite manner that we are going to get the thing we want, we should hesitate fifty times before we threw it away in a sinful wrangle, as it would be if we are told that the getting of it would depend upon the ability of the present delegation to produce an agreed solution of the communal tangle. The solution can be the crown of the Swaraj constitution, not its foundation if only because our differences have hardened, if they have not arisen, by reason of the foreign domination I have not a shadow of doubt that the iceberg of communal differences will melt under the warmth of the sun of freedom

I therefore venture to suggest that the Minorities Committee be adjourned *sine die* and that the fundamentals of the Constitution be hammered into shape as quickly as may be. Meanwhile, the informal work of discovering a true solution of the communal problem will and must continue, only it must not balk or be allowed to block the progress of Constitution building. Attention must be diverted from it and concentrated on the main part of the structure.

I hardly need point out to the Committee that my failure does not mean the end of all hope of arriving at an agreed solution. My failure does not even mean my utter defeat; there is no such word in my dictionary. My confession merely means failure of the special effort for which I presumed to ask for a week's indulgence, which you so generously gave.

I propose to use the failure as a stepping stone to success, and I invite you all to do likewise; but should all effort at agreement fail, when the Round Table Conference reaches the end of its labours, I would suggest the addition of a clause to the expected Constitution appointing a judicial tribunal that would examine all claims and give its final decision on all the points that may be left unsettled.

Nor need this Committee think that the time given for enabling informal conversations to be carried on has been altogether wasted. You will be glad to learn that many friends, not members of the delegation, have been giving their attention to the question. Among these I would mention Sir Geoffrey Corbett. He has produced a scheme of distribution of the Punjab which, though it has not found acceptance, is in my opinion, well worth studying. I am asking Sir Geoffrey if he will kindly elaborate and circulate it among the members. Our Sikh colleagues have also produced another, which is at least worthy of study. Sir Hubert Carr produced last night an ingenious and novel proposal to set up for the Punjab two Legislatures, the lower to satisfy the Mussalman claim and the upper nearly satisfying the Sikh claim. Though I am not a believer in a bicameral legislature, I am much attracted by Sir Hubert's proposal, and I would invite him to pursue it further with the same zeal with which, I gratefully admit, he followed and contributed to the informal deliberations.

Lastly, in as much as the only reason for my appearance at these deliberations is that I represent the Indian National Congress, I must clearly set forth its position. In spite of appearances to the contrary, especially in England, the Congress claims to represent the whole nation, and most decidedly the dumb millions, among whom are included the numberless "Untouchables," who are more suppressed than depressed, as also in a way the more unfortunate and neglected classes known as Backward Races.

Here is the Congress position in a nutshell. I am reading the Congress resolution; the Congress has, since its inception, set up pure nationalism as its ideal. It has endeavoured to break down communal barriers. The following Lahore resolution was the culminating point in its advance towards nationalism:

[For the text of the resolution see footnote of Chapter 57 above.]

This is the Congress resolution.

If, however, a national solution is impossible and the Congress scheme proves unacceptable, I am not precluded

from endorsing any other reasonable scheme which may be acceptable to the parties concerned. The Congress position on this question, therefore, is one of the greatest possible accommodation. Where it cannot help it will not obstruct. Needless to say that the Congress will wholeheartedly support any scheme of private arbitration. It seems to have been represented that I am opposed to any representation of the "Untouchables" on the legislatures. This is a travesty of the truth. What I have said and what I must repeat is that I am opposed to their special representation. I am convinced that this can do them no good and may do much harm; but the Congress is wedded to adult franchise. Therefore, millions of them can be placed on the voters' roll. It is impossible to conceive that with untouchability fast disappearing nominees of these voters can be boycotted by the others. But what these people need more than election to the legislatures is protection from social and religious persecution. Custom which is often more powerful than law, has brought them to a degradation of which every thinking Hindu has need to feel ashamed and to do penance. I should, therefore, have the most drastic legislation rendering criminal all the special persecution to which these fellow-countrymen of mine are subjected by the so-called superior classes. Thank God the conscience of the Hindus has been stirred, and untouchability will soon be a relic of our sinful past.

Young India, 29-10-1931

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THE COMMUNAL PROBLEM

Here is a series of questions and answers:

Q. If the communal problem should not predominate over all the rest, why should you yourself have said, at one stage, that you would not think of going to the Round Table Conference, unless the communal question was settled?

A. You are right. But you forget that I was borne down by the extreme pressure of the English and other friends in India who said that it was imperative that I should go. I was also persuaded that, if only to keep my word of honour with Lord Irwin, I should go. Now, here I find myself face to face with men who are not nationalists, and who were selected only because they were communalists. Therefore, though I said that it was a matte of humiliation for us all not to have been able to come to a decision, the principal cause was the very composition of the Committee itself. It is too unreal for words. There are men who claim to represent communities which, if they were in India, and if a referendum were to be taken, would disown them.

Q. From this point of view it would be interesting to hear you about the Mussalmans too. You do not say that the Mussalmans here do not represent their community?

A. Well, they are not duly elected, and I may tell you that I asked so many of the real nationalist Mussalmans to stay away. There is a vast majority of the younger leaders — Mr. Khwaja, Mr. Sherwani, to name only two — whom I came to know only through the friends who are today ranged against the Congress, and who are opposed to any communal solution of the problem. Personally, I would give the Mussalmans all that they want and I have been sitting up late after midnight persuading the Hindus and the Sikhs to go with me, but I have failed. Do you think I would have failed if the Sikhs were elected by the Sikhs and not nominated by the Government? Master Tara

Singh would have been here. I know his views and he has his 17 points to pit against Mr. Jinnah's 14, but I am quite sure I could bear him down, as he is after all a comrade-in-arms. Is it surprising then that we should fail to achieve a settlement in the present atmosphere? It is, therefore, I said, having already handicapped us, do not handicap us more by saying that the solution of the communal problem must precede any decision on the Constitutional question. I told them, let us know what we are going to get, so that on that basis I might endeavour to bring about unity even in the present ill-assorted group. Let us for God's sake have something tangible. It would be another string to the bow and help us to arrive at a solution. For I could tell them that they were dashing a precious thing to pieces. But today, I have nothing to present them with. And even if there were no solution I have suggested various ways—private arbitration, judicial tribunal, etc. That is the situation. I am a slave to my friends, and it is because I honour Lord Irwin as a friend that I came. But I now see that it is an impossible situation.

Q. Is it quite impossible? You think you should not have come?

A. Not quite, and I am not going to give up my efforts until the last. As for my visit I do not at all feel sorry for having come, for I know that indirectly, out of the Conference the work that I am doing is wholly satisfactory and I am establishing contacts which I shall treasure.

Q. May I take it then that you do not attach much importance to the communal question?

A. I have never said so. I say that the question has been allowed to overshadow the main thing, which needs to be specially emphasized.

Q. Is there no way out of the difficulty?

A. There are many ways, but whether they will be adopted by the parties concerned, I do not know. We have been told that the solution of the Constitutional question depends on the solution of the communal question. It is not true, and I am afraid, it is the very presentation of the question in this inverted form that has made the

question more difficult and given it an altogether artificial importance, and because it has been made the fulcrum the parties concerned feel that they can pitch their demands as high as possible. And thus, we are moving in a hideously vicious circle and the task of peace becomes more and more difficult But I, for the life of me, see no vital connection at all between the two questions India will have freedom whether the communal question is solved or not solved. No doubt we would have difficult times after the attainment of freedom, but freedom itself cannot be held up by the question, for we can get freedom as soon as we are worthy of it and being worthy of it means suffering enough for it, paying a rich price for the rich prize of freedom. But if we have not suffered, if we have not paid the price, even a solution of the question would be of no help to us. If we have suffered enough, and offered sufficient sacrifices, no argument or negotiation would be necessary. But who am I to determine that we have suffered enough? In the hope that we had suffered enough I came here.

Young India, 29–10–1931

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THE COMMUNAL QUESTION

One of the questions that were put to Gandhiji at the end of his speech was whether settlement was not made impossible by Indian representatives not agreeing among themselves on the communal question. Gandhiji while emphatically repudiating the suggestion said:

"I know you have been taught to think like that. You cannot shake off the spell of that hypnotic suggestion. My case is that alien rulers have ruled India on the principle of Divide and Rule. No alien imperial rule could go on in India unless the rulers coquetted now with one and then with the other party. We will continue to be divided so long as the wedge of the foreign rule remains there, and sinks deeper and deeper. That is the way of the wedge. But

take out the wedge and the split parts will instantly come together and unite. Again, the attainment of unity has been rendered a task of Herculean difficulty by the composition of the Conference itself as all the delegates here are nominated, none of them is duly elected. If, for instance, the Nationalist Muslims had been asked to elect their representative they would have elected Dr. Ansari. Lastly, we should not forget that even if the present delegates had been elected they would have acted with a better sense of responsibility. We, on the other hand, are here on the sufferance of the British Prime Minister. We are responsible to nobody, we have no constituency to appeal to. Again, we are reminded that unless we agree among ourselves on the communal issue no progress is possible. In the very nature of things, therefore, each pulls in a different way and tries to exact the utmost he can. Again while the delegates are called upon to present an agreed communal solution, they are not told what they would get if they agreed, and so the incentive that would have made agreement beforehand possible is killed at the very start, rendering agreement very nearly impossible. Let the Government declare that they are going to withdraw from India whether Indians agreed or not, and you will see that we shall then soon agree. The fact of the matter is that no one feels that he is going to get real live liberty. What is offered is simply a share in the power of the bureaucracy to exploit India, and this sets up an apple of discord in our midst. Further, the Government having made constitution-making dependent upon the solution of the communal question, every party is tempted to pitch its demand as high as possible. If the Government at all meant business it would unhesitatingly accept my suggestion, viz. to appoint a judicial tribunal to decide the communal question at issue. If this is done there is every possibility of an agreed solution being reached without the intervention of the judicial tribunal."

Young India, 5-11-1931 M. D.

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THE MINORITIES QUESTION

And what is this bugbear of the minorities question? I cannot for the life of me understand it. You call Congress one of many organizations or the biggest organization. I say to you that the Congress is not only the biggest organization, but it is the most predominant organization, an organization which alone has fought for freedom. It was at the call of the Congress that hundreds of villagers were nearly swept out of existence, crops worth thousands burnt or sold for a song, and lands worth lakhs confiscated and sold. Do you suppose we have gone through all this agony for a mess of pottage? The Congress, says the fable, is a Hindu organization. Do you suppose all that fought and went to prison and died last year were only Hindus? There were several thousands of Mussalmans amongst them, and there were also Sikhs and Christians, and Parsis. Do not talk of a majority or a minority community. The Congress alone is the biggest majority community. You want us to have regard to the claims of minorities. Do you want the Congress to parcel out India in small sections for Anglo-Indians and Indian Christians, and among them I suppose, Protestants and Catholics and Europeans, and among them also Protestants and Catholics, and then as many subsections of Hindus as you please — Jains and Buddhists, Sanatanists and Samajists, and so on? I, for one, will be no party to this heartless process of vivisection. Is that how you propose to make a nation by your policy of Divide and Rule? The small minorities have a perfect right to demand full civic rights. But don't encourage them to ask for separate representation. They can enter the legislatures by the open door of election. Why are Anglo-Indians afraid of their interests being neglected? Because they are Anglo-Indians? No, they are afraid because they have not served India. Let them follow the example of the Parsis, who have served India and who will

Hindu Mahasabha representatives who claim to represent the Hindu mind, but who, in my opinion, do not do so. They will have a national solution of the question, not because they are nationalists but because it suits them. I call that destructive tactics, and am pleading with them that, representing as they do the great majority, they must step out and give to the smaller communities what they want, and the atmosphere would be clear as if by magic. What the vast mass of the Hindus feel and want nobody knows, but claiming as I do to have moved amongst them all these years, I think they do not care for these petty-fogging things, they are not troubled by the question of loaves and fishes in the shape of electoral seats and administrative posts This bugbear of communalism is confined largely to the cities which are not India, but which are the blotting sheets of London and other Western cities which consciously or unconsciously prey upon villages and share with you in exploiting them by becoming the commission agents of England. This communal question is of no importance before the great question of Indian freedom of which the British ministers are studiously fighting shy. They forget that they cannot go on for long with a discontented rebellious India — true, ours is a non-violent rebellion, but it is rebellion none the less. Freedom of India is superior to the disease which for the time is corroding some portions of the community, and if the constitutional question is satisfactorily solved the communal distemper will immediately vanish. The moment the alien wedge is removed the divided communities are bound to unite. There is therefore no Hindu case, and if there is one it must go by the board. If you study this question it will profit you nothing, and when you go into its exasperating details you will, very likely, prefer to see us drowned in the Thames.*

Young India, 12-11-1931

* From an address to English students at Eton.

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THE COMMUNAL QUESTION

Q How far is the British attitude towards the communal question an obstacle in your path?

A. Largely, or I should say half and half There has been consciously or unconsciously that policy of Divide and Rule working here as in India The British officials have sometimes coquetted with one party, sometimes with another. Of course, if I were a British official, I would probably do the same and take advantage of dissensions to consolidate the rule Our share of responsibility lies in the fact that we fall easy victims to the game

Q. You think the British Government should suggest a solution of the communal question?

A No! But I am the only party to say no It is a humiliating thing, and neither the Congress nor I can be a party to it But I have suggested a judicial tribunal There are some committals on the side of the Government in the Government of India and Provincial Government dispatches, though all Government solutions are tinged by political considerations. As for us, each party, though talking of justice, fights shy of arbitration, which shows that there is a good deal of expediency and it is a question of degree who is wrong and who is right The judicial tribunal can certainly be trusted to adjudicate between the various claims

Q Could you tell us anything about the personnel?

A They may be non-Hindu and non-Muslim judges of Indian High Courts or judges from the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council

Q Would their decision be accepted?

A. There can be no question of accepting the decision of a Court. I may confess that there is a trick at the back of the suggestion. If the Government will play the game and adopt my suggestion, the whole atmosphere will change, and before the Judicial Committee comes into being the

communities will come out with a solution. For, there is sufficient material in the advances already made to satisfy the politically minded, and each one knows the flaws in his own claim.

Young India, 12-11-1931

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NEGATION OF RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT

[Gandhiji's speech at the last meeting of the Minorities Committee, which was adjourned *sine die* on the 13th November 1931.]

THE CENTRAL FULCRUM

Prime Minister, and fellow delegates, it is not without very considerable hesitation and shame that I take part in the discussion on the minorities question. I have not been able to read with the care and attention that it deserves the memorandum, sent to the delegates on behalf of certain minorities, and received this morning. Before I offer a few remarks on the memorandum, with your permission and with all the deference and respect that are your due, I would express my dissent from the view that you put before this Committee, that the inability to solve the communal question was hampering the progress of constitution-building, and that it was an indispensable condition prior to the building of any such constitution. I expressed at an early stage of the sitting of this Committee that I did not share that view. The experience that I have since gained has confirmed me in that view and, if you will pardon me for saying so, it was because of the emphasis that was laid last year and repeated this year upon this difficulty, that the different communities were encouraged to press with all the vehemence at their command their own respective views. It would have been against human nature if they had done otherwise. All of them thought that this was the time to press forward their claims for all they were worth, and I venture to suggest again that

this very emphasis has defeated the purpose which I have no doubt it had in view Having received that encouragement, we have failed to arrive at an agreement. I, therefore, associate myself entirely with the view expressed by Sir Chimanlal Setalvad, that it is not this question which is the fulcrum. The central fact is constitution-building.

I am quite certain that you did not convene this Round Table Conference and bring us all 6,000 miles away from our homes and occupations to settle the communal question, but you convened us, you made deliberate declarations that we were invited to come here, to share the process of constitution-building, and that, before we went away from your hospitable shores, we should have the certain conviction that we had built up an honourable and a respectable framework for the freedom of India, and that it awaited only the *imprimatur* of the approval of the House of Commons and the House of Lords.

Now, at the present moment, we are face to face with a wholly different situation, namely, that, because there is no communal settlement agreed to by us, there is to be no building of the constitution, and that, as the last resort and as the last touch, you will announce the policy of His Majesty's Government in connection with the constitution and all the matters that may arise from it. I cannot help feeling that it would be a sorry ending to a Conference which was brought into being with so much trumpeting and with so much hope excited in the minds and in the breasts of many people.

DISSECTING THE CARCASE

Coming to this document,* I accept the thanks that have been given to me by Sir Hubert Carr. Had it not been for the remarks that I made when I shouldered that burden, and had it not been for my utter failure to bring about a solution, Sir Hubert Carr rightly says he would

* The so-called agreed scheme between the smaller minorities and the Mussalmans Sir H. Carr in his speech sarcastically thanked Gandhiji's failure to bring about a solution of the minorities question, which, he said, had resulted in bringing the minorities together.

M. D.

not have found the very admirable solution that he had been able, in common with the other minorities, to present to this Committee for consideration and finally for the consideration and approval of His Majesty's Government.

I will not deprive Sir Hubert Carr and his associates of the feeling of satisfaction that evidently actuates them, but, in my opinion, what they have done is to sit by the carcase, and they have performed the laudable feat of dissecting that carcase

As representing the predominant political organization in India, I have no hesitation in saying to His Majesty's Government, to those friends who seek to represent the minorities mentioned against their names, and indeed to the whole world, that this scheme is not one designed to achieve responsible government, but, is, undoubtedly a scheme designed to share power with the bureaucracy

If that is the intention — and it is the intention running through the whole of that document - I wish them well, and Congress is entirely out of it The Congress will wander, no matter how many years, in the wilderness rather than lend itself to a proposal under which the hardy tree of freedom and responsible government can never grow

I am astonished that Sir Hubert Carr should tell us that they have evolved a scheme which, being designed only for a temporary period, would not damage the cause of nationalism, but at the end of ten years we would all find ourselves hugging one another and throwing ourselves into one another's laps. My political experience teaches me a wholly different lesson If this responsible government, whenever it comes, is to be inaugurated under happy auspices, it should not undergo the process of vivisection to which this scheme subjects it, it is a strain which no government can possibly bear.

There is the coping stone to this structure, and I am surprised, Mr. Prime Minister, that you allowed yourself to mention this as if it was an indisputable fact, namely, that the proposals may be taken as being acceptable to well over 115 millions of people, or about 46 per cent of the population of India. You had a striking demonstration of

the inaccuracy of this figure. You have had, on behalf of the women, a complete repudiation of special representation, and as they happen to be one-half of the population of India, this 46 per cent is somewhat reduced — (laughter). But not only that. the Congress may be a very insignificant organization, but I have not hesitated to make the claim, and I am not ashamed to repeat the claim, that the Congress claims to represent 85 per cent or 95 per cent of the population not merely of British India but of the whole of India

GANDHIJI CHALLENGES REFERENDUM

Dr. Ambedkar. Who are the 5 per cent that the Congress does not represent?

Gandhiji Subject to all the questions that may be raised, I repeat the claim with all the emphasis at my command that the Congress, by right of service, claims to represent that population which is called the agricultural population of India, and I would accept the challenge, if the Government were to issue the challenge, that we should have a referendum in India and you would immediately find whether the Congress represents them But I go a step further. At the present moment, if you were to examine the records of the prisons of India, you would find that the Congress represented and represents on its register a very large number of Mussalmans, several thousand Mussalmans went to gaol last year under the banner of the Congress. The Congress today has several thousand Mussalmans on its register. The Congress has Indian Christians also on its register. I do not know that there is a single community which is not represented on the Congress register. With all deference to the Nawab Sahib of Chhatari, even landlords and even mill-owners and millionaires are represented there. I admit that they are coming to the Congress slowly, cautiously, but the Congress is trying to serve them also. The Congress undoubtedly represents labour. Therefore, this claim that the proposals set forth in this memorandum are acceptable to well over 115,000,000 of people needs to be taken with a very great deal of reservation and caution.

One word more and I shall have done. You have had presented to you and circulated to the members, I hope, the Congress proposal in connection with the communal problem. I venture to submit that of all the schemes that I have seen it is the most workable scheme, but I may be in error there. I admit that it has not commended itself to the representatives of the communities at this table, but it has commended itself to the representatives of these very classes in India. It is not the creation of one brain, but it is the creation of a committee on which various important parties were represented. Therefore, you have got on behalf of the Congress that scheme; but the Congress has also suggested that there should be an impartial arbitration. Through arbitration all over the world people have adjusted their differences, and the Congress is always open to accept any decision of an arbitration court. I have myself ventured to suggest that there might be appointed by the Government a judicial tribunal which would examine this case and give its decision. But, if none of these things are acceptable to any of us, and if this is the *sine qua non* of any constitution-building, then, I say, it will be much better for us that we should remain without the so-called responsible government than that we should accept this claim.

No Special Representation for Small Minorities

I would like to repeat what I have said before, that, while the Congress will always accept any solution that may be acceptable to the Hindus, the Mussalmans and the Sikhs, the Congress will be no party to special reservation or special electorates for any other minorities. The Congress will always endorse clauses or reservations as to fundamental rights and civil liberty. It will be open to everybody to be placed on the voters' roll and to appeal to the common body of the electorates. In my humble opinion, the proposition enunciated by Sir Hubert Carr is the very negation of responsible government, the very negation of nationalism. He says that if you want a live European representative on the Legislature then he must be elected

by the Europeans themselves. Well, Heaven help India if India has to have representatives elected by these several special, cut up groups. That European, and that European only, who commands the approval of the common electorate and not that of the mere Europeans will serve India as a whole. This very idea suggests that responsible government will always have to contend against these interests which will always be in conflict with the national spirit — with this body of 85 per cent of agricultural population. To me, it is an unthinkable thing. If we are going to bring into being responsible government and if we are going to get real freedom, then, I venture to suggest, that it should be the proud privilege and the duty of every one of these so-called special classes to seek entry into the Legislatures through this open door, through the election and approval of the common body of electorates. You know that the Congress is wedded to adult suffrage, and under adult suffrage it will be open to all to be placed on the voters' list. More than that nobody can ask.

Young India, 26-11-1931

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COMMUNAL DISSENSIONS AND FOREIGN RULE

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 Mussalman also, by contact for good or evil with the Hindu, has himself become mild. And that mention of the Mussalman 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 that; I realize it; and yet I came here in the hope that perchance 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 the Hindus and Mussalmans and Sikhs always at war with one another when there was no British rule, when there was no English face seen in India? We have chapter and verse given to us by Hindu historians and by Mussalman historians to say that we were living in comparative peace even then. And the Hindus and Mussalmans in the villages are not even today quarrelling. In those days they were not known to quarrel at all. The late Maulana Mahomed Ali often used to tell me, and he was himself a bit of a historian, "If God" — Allah, as he called God — "gives me life, I propose to write the history of Mussalman 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 Moghul 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 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 the Hindus, Mussalmans, Sikhs, Europeans, Anglo-Indians, Christians, and 'untouchables', will all live together as one man.

Young India, 24-12-1931

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NO ACCEPTANCE OF 'AWARD'

One thing I must make clear. The satisfactory ending of the Depressed Classes question, if it is to come, should in no way mean that I would be committed to the acceptance of His Majesty's Government's decision on the other parts of the communal question. I am personally opposed to many other parts of it, which to my mind make the working of any free and democratic constitution well nigh impossible; nor would a satisfactory solution of this question in any way bind me to accept the constitution that may be framed. These are political questions for the National Congress to consider and determine. They are utterly outside my province in my individual capacity. Nor may I as a prisoner air my individual views on these questions.*

21-9-1932

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DAWN OF A NEW ERA

I wish too that the almost ideal solution that has been arrived at may be followed by the other communities and that we might see a dawn of a new era of mutual trust, mutual give and take, and a recognition of the fundamental unity of all communities.

I would here single out the Hindu-Moslem-Sikh question. I am the same to the Mussalman today that I was in 1920-1922. I should be just as prepared to lay down my life as I was in Delhi to achieve an organic unity and permanent peace between them, and I hope and pray that there will be, as a result of this upheaval, a spontaneous move in this direction, and then surely the other communities can no longer stand out.†

26-9-1932

* *The Epic Fast*, page 116.

† Ibid page 144.

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PROPAGANDA BY VILIFICATION

A correspondent sends me a proselytizing pamphlet being a Gujarati version of the original in Urdu. The Gujarati translator and publisher is Shekh Umarbhai Mohmedbhai and the pamphlet is printed in Ahmedabad. I take the following from the correspondent's letter:

> "Permit me to send you a copy of a pamphlet published by a local Muslim apparently with a view to induce Harijans for conversion to Islam and create hatred among them against Hindus. This pamphlet is full of such remarks about the Hindu Religion and the Hindu rites as are not only false but are likely to intensify the communal tension.
>
> Recently I have tried to save two boys of Upper India. They were found out and were sent back with their relatives who had come down in search of them. Even Harijan girls have recently been induced to accept Islam.
>
> You will kindly go through this pamphlet and suggest the courses to be adopted so that these poor and illiterate Harijan people may not be entrapped by such false and inflammatory pamphlets."

I had the pain of going through the pamphlet. It is as mischievous as it has been described by the correspondent. It is in the form of a dialogue between two Harijans, father and son. At the instance of the father the son reads Hindu scriptures and ridicules them. Everything held sacred by the Hindus is caricatured so as to excite disgust towards Hinduism and *savarna* (caste) Hindus. Even the sacred name of Swami Shraddhanandji has been dragged in the discussion, and words have been put into his mouth which I hold him to be incapable of having uttered. Here is a sentence which no gentleman would write of his fellowmen: "Some Hindus sit in squares smeared with cow-dung as if they were sitting to evacuate themselves. Cursed be such eaters." The pamphlet is full of distortions. And it holds out material hopes to Harijans which can hardly be fulfilled

especially about the mass of Harijans if they are ever tempted to forsake their ancestral faith Thus the Maulvi who is responsible for the conversion of the Harijan son is represented to be a convert from being a *chamar* and having married a girl belonging to a noble Muslim family The new convert drinks from the same cup as the Maulvi and the remains of the water are drunk by the company He is treated to a feast at a Munshi's palatial house The feast fills the dining hall with fragrance "Every morsel was a nectar, every potion was the water of life," and this erstwhile Harijan is treated to the inhalation of a *hookah* which goes the round of the whole company.

It is tragic to see that religion is dragged down to the low level of crude materialism to lure people into which the most cherished sentiments of millions of human beings are trodden under foot

I hope that the pamphlet has no support from thoughtful Mussalmans who should read it to realize the mischief such pamphlets can create

My correspondent asks me how to deal with the menace. One remedy I have applied, viz. to bring hereby the vilifying propaganda to the notice of the responsible Muslim world He himself can claim the attention of the local Mussalman leaders to the publication. The second and the most important thing to do is purification from within. So long as the poison of untouchability remains in the Hindu body it will be liable to attacks from outside. It will be proof against such attacks only when a solid and impregnable wall of purification is erected in the shape of complete removal of untouchability

Harijan, 8-8-1936

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GANDHI-JINNAH CORRESPONDENCE

Tithal, May 22, 1937

Dear Shri Jinnah,

Kher has given me your message. I wish I could do something but I am utterly helpless. My faith in unity is as bright as ever; only I see no daylight out of the impenetrable darkness, and in such distress I cry out to God for light.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

Letter from Mr. Gandhi to Mr. Jinnah

Dated Segaon, October 19, 1937

I carefully went through your speech at Lucknow, and I felt deeply hurt over your misunderstanding of my attitude. My letter was in answer to a specially private message you had sent to me. It represented my deepest feeling. The letter was purely personal, were you right in using it as you did ?

As I read it, the whole of your speech is a declaration of war. Only, I had hoped you would reserve poor me as a bridge between the two. I see that you want no bridge. I am sorry. It takes two to make a quarrel. You won't find me one, even if I cannot become a peace-maker.

This is not for publication, unless you desire it. It is written in all good faith and out of an anguished heart.

Letter from Mr. Jinnah to Mr. Gandhi

Dated Bombay, November 5, 1937

I am of opinion that I was fully justified in publishing your letter from Teethal last May; I am of opinion that I was fully justified in doing so; but your letter means something different from what I understand it to mean. Surely it was open to you to offer your explanation to the public. The letter was not marked as it is usual to do so when its publication is not desired by the writer, and my message to you

was not private Even now you do not indicate how I have misunderstood your attitude or the contents of that letter.

I am sorry you think my speech at Lucknow is a declaration of war. It is purely in self-defence Kindly read it again and try and understand it. Evidently you have not been following the course of events of the last twelve months.

As to reserving you as a 'bridge' and 'peace-maker', don't you think your complete silence for all these months has indentified you with the Congress leadership, although I know that you are not even a four-anna member of that body?

I regret to say that I find nothing definite or any constructive proposal in your letter under reply, except that it is written in all good faith and out of an anguished heart which I reciprocate

Letter from Mr Gandhi to Mr. Jinnah

Dated Segaon, February 3, 1938

Pandit Nehru told me yesterday that you were complaining to the Maulana Sahib about the absence of any reply from me to your letter of November 5 in reply to mine of October 19. The letter was received by me when I was pronounced by the doctors to be seriously ill in Calcutta. The letter was shown to me three days after its receipt. Had I thought it necessarily called for a reply, even though I was ill I would have sent one I have re-read the letter. I still think that there was nothing useful that I could have said in reply. But, in a way, I am glad that you awaited a reply Here it is

Mr. Kher told me definitely that he had a private message from you. He delivered it to me when I was alone. I could have sent you a verbal message in reply; but, in order to give you a true picture of my mental state, I sent you the short note. There was nothing to hide in it; but I did feel, as I still do, that the way in which you used it came upon me as a painful surprise.

You complain of my silence. The reason for my silence is literally and truly in my note. Believe me, the moment I can do something that can bring the two communities

together, nothing in the world can prevent me from so doing.

You seem to deny that your speech was a declaration of war, but your later pronouncements too confirm the first impression. How can I prove what is a matter of feeling? In your speeches I miss the old nationalist. When in 1915 I returned from the self-imposed exile in South Africa, everybody spoke of you as one of the staunchest of nationalists and the hope of both Hindus and Muslims. Are you still the same Mr. Jinnah? If you say you are, in spite of your speeches, I shall accept your word.

Lastly, you want me to come forward with some proposal. What proposal can I make except to ask you on bended knees to be what I had thought you were. But the proposals, to form a basis of unity between the two communities, has surely got to come from you.

This is again not for publication, but for your eyes. It is the cry of a friend, not of an opponent.

Letter from Mr. Jinnah to Mr. Gandhi

Dated New Delhi, February 15, 1938

I did not complain to the Maulana Sahib about the absence of any reply from you. I only mentioned the facts, as he was anxious that we two should meet. Anyhow, I am glad to hear from you.

My message to you through Mr. Kher, as I informed you in my last letter, was not private. It was only when Mr. Kher went to see you at Wardha that I did say that he should not mention the matter to any one except you, and that if you yourself were inclined in the first instance to take up the matter, then it would be more than half the battle won. On his return to Bombay Mr. Kher told me that it was difficult for you to give a reply as you were restricted not to disclose it to any one or consult anybody else.

Thereupon I said that it was not intended to be a secret and that he was free and you were free to put your heads together and let me know whether at that juncture you were inclined to take up this matter with the power-

ful and overwhelming influence which you exercise over the Congress

He saw you again at Teethal and from that moment it ceased to be a private matter between two individuals; and he brought me your reply in writing which I had to publish, because you know of the controversy between me and Babu Rajendraprasad and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in the Press where it was sought to make out that I was putting every obstacle in the way of a Hindu-Muslim settlement.

As your letter was not marked confidential, I used it. Besides, what is wrong in my saying that I had approached you on my own accord and that was the reply I received from you? I cannot understand why you feel so much about it.

You say that I complained of your silence. Well, I do. But you further proceed to say . 'Believe me the moment I can do something that can bring the two communities together, nothing in the world can prevent me from so doing.' Now, what am I to gather from this? Am I right in interpreting that the moment is not come?

With regard to your opinion about my speech at the Lucknow session and my later pronouncements, which you are pleased to call a declaration of war, I can only repeat that it was in self-defence. Evidently you are not acquainted with what is going on in the Congress press—the amount of vilification, misrepresentation and falsehood that is daily spread about me. Otherwise, I am sure, you would not blame me.

You say that when in 1915 you returned from South Africa everybody spoke of me as one of the staunchest of nationalists and the hope of both the Hindus and Muslims, and you ask me a question, 'Are you still the same Jinnah?' And proceed further to say, 'If you say you are, in spite of your speeches, I shall accept your word'. And you say that in my speeches you miss the old nationalist. Do you think that you are justified in saying that? I would not like to say what people spoke of you in 1915 and what they speak and think of you today. Nationalism is not the monopoly of any single individual, and in these days it is

very difficult to define it; but I don't wish to pursue this line of controversy any further.

You conclude by saying, 'Lastly you want me to come forward with some proposal. What proposal can I make except to ask you on bended knees to be what I had thought you were; but the proposals, to form the basis of unity between the two communities, have surely got to come from you.' I think you might have spared your appeal and need not have preached to me on your bended knees to be what you had thought I was.

As regards the formulation of proposals which would form the basis of unity, do you think that this can be done by correspondence? Surely you know as much as I do what are the fundamental points in dispute. In my opinion, it is as much up to you to suggest ways and means of tackling the problem. If you genuinely and sincerely desire and you feel that the moment has come for you to step in, and with your position and influence you are prepared to take the matter up earnestly, I will not fail to render all the assistance I can.

Letter from Mr. Gandhi to Mr. Jinnah

Dated Segaon, February 24, 1938

I have read your letter to Jawaharlal; also I observe that both the letters invite not written replies but a personal discussion. I do not know whether it will take place in the first instance between you and Jawaharlal or, now that Subhas Bose succeeds him, between you and the latter. If you desire that before this there should be a talk between you and me, I would be delighted to see you in Segaon any time which is convenient to you before March 10, after which, if health permits, I might have to go to Bengal. So far as I am concerned, just as on the Hindu-Muslim question I was guided by Dr. Ansari, now that he is no more in our midst, I have accepted Maulana Abul Kalam Azad as my guide. My suggestion, therefore, to you is that conversation should be opened in the first instance as between you and the Maulana Sahib. But in every case regard me as at your disposal.

Letter from Mr. Jinnah to Mr. Gandhi

Dated New Delhi, March 3, 1938

In your letter I missed the note of response: First, whether you are of opinion that you see light now and the moment has come, and, secondly, if so, whether you are prepared to take the matter up in right earnest.

I find that there is no change in your attitude and mentality when you say you would be guided by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad as Dr. Ansari is no more. If you pursue this line you will be repeating the same tragedy as you did when you expressed your helplessness because Dr. Ansari, holding pronounced and die-hard views, did not agree, and you had to say that you were willing, but what could you do. This happened, as you know, before you went to the Round Table Conference.

At the Round Table Conference the tragedy was repeated by you when you seemed to be willing to accept provisionally certain terms: but you, there also, expressed that you were helpless as the Hindus were unwilling and you, as a representative of the Congress, would have no objection if the Hindus and Muslims came to an agreement.

We have reached a stage when no doubt should be left that you recognize the All India Muslim League as the one authoritative and representative organization of the Muslims of India and, on the other hand, you represent the Congress and other Hindus throughout the country. It is only on that basis that we can proceed further and devise a machinery of approach.

Of course, I shall be glad to see you, although I shall be equally glad to see Pandit Jawaharlal or Mr. Bose as you may desire. The matter, as you know, will not be clinched without reference again to you by either of them. Therefore, I will prefer to see you first. In any case, I am sorry to say that I cannot come to Segaon to see you before March 10. I have to go to Bombay and also I have fixed various other engagements of my tour; but we can fix up the time and place that may suit us both.

Letter from Mr. Gandhi to Mr. Jinnah

Dated Segaon, March 8, 1938

Your letter revives painful memories. I will not discuss at this stage, at any rate, the various debatable points raised in your letter. Suffice it to say that I am at your disposal. If you cannot come to Segaon and my health permits, I will gladly go to Bombay to meet you when you are there. At present I have to go to Bengal and then for a while to Orissa. This will take me through the whole of this month. The earliest, therefore, that we can meet will be in April.

Two questions arising from your letter demand a reply You ask me whether I have now seen the light. Much to my regret, I have to say, 'No.' If I had, I would proclaim the news from the house tops; but that limitation does not debar me from taking advantage of the slightest opportunity of finding a way out of the present difficulty.

You expect me to be able to speak on behalf of 'the Congress and other Hindus throughout the country.' I am afraid I cannot fulfil the test. I cannot represent either the Congress or the Hindus in the sense you mean; but I would exert to the utmost all the moral influence I could have with them in order to secure an honourable settlement.

Letter from Mr. Jinnah to Mr. Gandhi

Dated New Delhi, March 17, 1938

As you do not wish to discuss the various points mentioned in my letter and the two questions which you have answered are far from hopeful, I am helpless. However, as you say, 'Suffice it to say that I am at your disposal,' I gather, you would nevertheless like to take advantage of the slightest opportunity of finding a way out of the present difficulty. In these circumstances, I beg to inform you that I shall be glad to see you in Bombay some time in April as suggested by you.

Letter from Mr. Gandhi to Mr. Jinnah

Dated Calcutta, March 24, 1938

Many thanks for your note. As soon as I reach Segaon I shall seek the first opportunity of waiting on you in Bombay.

Letter from Mr. Jinnah to Mr Gandhi

Dated New Delhi, March 26, 1938

I thank you for your letter of March 24, 1938, and I shall be very glad to see you after my return from Calcutta about April 25, at Bombay

Telegram from Mr Gandhi to Mr Jinnah

Dated Delhi, April 15, 1938

If on your return to Bombay you can break journey at Wardha for one day, you will spare me the strain of undertaking a journey to Bombay. I need some uninterrupted physical rest if possible. In any event, could Maulana Abul Kalam Azad accompany me at the interview? Please wire to Wardha which place I am reaching tomorrow

Telegram from Mr. Jinnah to Mr. Gandhi

Dated Calcutta, April 16, 1938

I am extremely sorry I am unable to change my programme now. I will receive you at Bombay on the 25th or thereafter as arranged. I would prefer to see you alone.

Telegram from Mr. Gandhi to Mr. Jinnah

Dated Wardha, April 18, 1938

Thanks. The 25th happens to be Monday. I will reach Bombay on the 28th if it is not inconvenient to you.

Telegram from Mr. Jinnah to Mr. Gandhi

Dated Calcutta, April 19, 1938

Thanks I will gladly receive you on the 28th at my house.

Mr. Gandhi's letter to Mr Jinnah

Dated January 16, 1940

Dear Mr. Qaid-e-Azam,

I hate to write 'Mr. before any Indian name. It is so unnatural. Hence I have been writing of you as 'Janab Jinnah Sahib', according to the usage taught me by the late Hakim Sahib. But Abul Kalam tells me that in the League circles you are always called "Qaid-e-Azam". And you will see from the enclosed how the finishing touch was given by a telegram I received from Gulbarga.

I hope you will accept my assurance that what I have done has been done in good faith and out of regard for you. If, however, you would have me address you otherwise, I shall respect your wishes.

The purpose of writing this letter is to send you the enclosed advance copy of the article I have sent to the *Harijan*. I have written it to further the end I have read in your recent messages and actions. I know that you are quite capable of rising to the height required for the noble motive attributed to you. I do not mind your opposition to the Congress. But your plan to amalgamate all the parties opposed to the Congress at once gives your movement a national character. If you succeed you will free the country from communal incubus, and in my humble opinion give a lead to the Muslims and others for which you will deserve the gratitude not only of the Muslims but of all the other communities. I hope that my interpretation is correct. If I am mistaken you will please correct me.

It is a purely personal, private, friendly letter. But you are free to make public use of it if you think it necessary.

Yours sincerely,
(Sd.) M. K. Gandhi

1 *Enclosed Article*:

A WELCOME MOVE

On the Deliverance Thanksgiving Day, declared by Jinnah Sahib, I had the following wire from Gulbarga Muslims.

"Deliverance Day greetings. Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah Zindabad".

I took it as a message sent to ruffle my feelings. The senders little knew that the wire could not serve its purpose. When I received it, I silently joined the senders in the wish, 'Long Live Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah.' The Qaid-e-Azam is an old comrade. What does it matter that today we do not see eye to eye in some matters? That can make no difference in my goodwill towards him.

But the Qaid-e-Azam has given me special reason for congratulating him. I had the pleasure of wiring him

congratulation on his excellent Id-day broadcast. And now he commands further congratulations on forming pacts with parties who are opposed to the Congress policies and politics He is thus lifting the Muslim League out of the communal rut and giving it a national character I regard his step as perfectly legitimate. I observe that the Justice Party and Dr Ambedkar's party have already joined Jinnah Sahib The papers report too, that Shree Savaikar, the President of the Hindu Mahasabha is to see him presently Jinnah Sahib himself has informed the public that many non-Congress Hindus have expressed their sympathy with him. I regard this development as thoroughly healthy Nothing can be better than that we should have in the country mainly two parties — the Congress and the non-Congress, or anti-Congress, if the latter expression is preferred Jinnah Sahib is giving the word 'minority' a new and good content The Congress majority is made up of a combination of caste Hindus, non-caste Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Parsis and Jews. Therefore, it is a majority drawn from all classes, representing a particular body of opinion, and the proposed combination becomes a minority representing another body of opinion. This may any day convert itself into a majority by commending itself to the electorate. Such an alignment of parties is a consummation devoutly to be wished. If the Qaid-e-Azam can bring about the combination, not only I but the whole of India will shout with one acclamation. "Long live Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah" For he will have brought about permanent and living unity for which, I am sure, the whole nation is thirsting

Letter from Mr M. A. Jinnah to Mr Gandhi

Mount Pleasant Road,
Malabar Hill,
Bombay,
January 21, 1940

Dear Mr. Gandhi,

I am in receipt of your letter of 16th January and the advance copy of the article you have sent to the *Harijan*.

I not only thank you for your courtesy but also for your anxiety to further the end you have been reading in my messages and actions. I, however, regret to have to say that your premises are wrong as you start with the theory of an Indian Nation that does not exist, and naturally, therefore, your conclusions are wrong. I should have thought, however, that you at least would not be led away by one-sided newspaper reports and canards. There is so much in your article which is the result of imagination. It is due partly to the fact that you are living a secluded life at Segaon, and partly because all your thoughts and actions are guided by the "inner voice". You have very little concern with realities, or what might be termed by an ordinary mortal "practical politics". I sometimes wonder what can be common between practical politics and yourself, between democracy and a dictator of a political organization of which he is not even a four-anna member. But that is, I suppose, because you do not consider the Congress worthy of your membership.

I am glad to learn that you were not ruffled by the "Deliverance Day" greetings sent to you from Gulbarga. It was indeed noble of you to join in the silent prayer "Long live Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah". Although these are trivial matters, I nevertheless appreciate that you have realized the true inward meaning and significance of the "Deliverance Day."

It is true that many non-Congress Hindus expressed their sympathy with the Deliverance Day in justice to our cause, so also the leaders of the Justice Party and the Scheduled Castes, and the Parsis who had suffered. But I am afraid that the meaning which you have tried to give to this alignment shows that you have not appreciated the true significance of it. It was partly a case of "adversity bringing strange bedfellows together," and partly because common interesr may lead Muslims and minorities to combine. I have no illusions in the matter, and let me say again that India is not a nation, nor a country. It is a sub-continent composed of nationalities, Hindus and Muslims being the two major nations. Today you deny

that religion can be a main factor in determining a nation, but you yourself, when asked what your motive in life was, "the thing that leads us to do what we do," whether it was religious, or social, or political, said "Purely religious! This was the question asked me by the late Mr Montagu when I accompanied a deputation which was purely political 'How you, a social reformer' he exclaimed, 'have found your way into this crowd?' My reply was that it was only an extension of my social activity I could not be leading a religious life unless I identified myself with the whole of mankind, and that I could not do unless I took part in politics The gamut of man's activities today constitutes an indivisible whole You cannot divide social, economic, political and purely religious work into water-tight compartments I do not know any religion apart from human activity It provides a moral basis to all other activities which they would otherwise lack, reducing life to a maze of 'sound and fury signifying nothing'."

More than any one else, you happen to be the man today who commands the confidence of Hindu India and are in a position to deliver the goods on their behalf. Is it too much to hope and expect that you might play your legitimate role and abandon your chase after a mirage? Events are moving fast, a campaign of polemics, or your weekly discourse in the *Harijan* on metaphysics, philosophy and ethics, or your peculiar doctrines regarding khaddar, *ahimsa* and spinning are not going to win India's freedom Action and statesmanship alone will help us in our forward march I believe that you might still rise to your stature in the service of our country and make your proper contribution towards leading India to contentment and happiness

Lastly, I thank you for your anxiety to respect my wishes in the matter of the prefix you should use with my name. What is in a prefix after all, a rose called by any other name smells just as sweet. So I leave the matter entirely to you, and have no particular wish in the matter. I really do not know why you are worried so much about it. I, however, notice that the present prefix you are using

is according to the usage taught to you by the late Hakim Sahib. But surprisingly enough during his lifetime and till long after his death, you addressed me as "Mr.", then quite recently you addressed me as "Shree", and in between as "friend", but please do not bother about this matter.

M. K. Gandhi, Esq.
Segaon

Yours sincerely,
M. A Jinnah

82 · COMMUNAL UNITY

Gandhiji issued the following statement to the Press on the 22nd inst.

I observe that the forthcoming interview between Shree Jinnah and myself is not only attracting very wide attention, but is also inducing high hopes among some. Then there are friends who gravely warn me against this visit and against building any hope on the interview. It is better, therefore, for me to take the public into my confidence and tell them why and how I am waiting upon Shree Jinnah on April 28

He has himself published my first letter to him, showing my attitude on the question of communal unity, which is as dear to me as life itself. In that letter I clearly stated that all before me was darkness and that I was praying for light. If anything, the darkness has deepened and the prayer become more intense Add to this the fact that for causes, some of which I know and some which I do not, for the first time in my public and private life I seem to have lost self-confidence. I seem to have detected a flaw in me which is unworthy of a votary of truth and *ahimsa*. I am going through a process of self-introspection, the results of which I cannot foresee. I find myself for the first time during the past 50 years in a slough of despond. I do not consider myself fit for negotiations or any such thing for the moment.

There is no need for any speculation as to the cause of my despondency It is purely internal It comes from within It must be now clear that if I regarded the forthcoming interview as between two politicians, I should not entertain it in my present depression But I approach it in no political spirit I approach it in a prayerful and religious spirit, using the adjective in its broadest sense

My Hinduism is not sectarian It includes all that I know to be best in Islam, Christianity, Buddhism and Zoroastrianism I approach politics as everything else in a religious spirit Truth is my religion and *ahimsa* is the only way of its realization I have rejected once and for all the doctrine of the sword The secret stabbings of innocent persons and the speeches I read in the papers are hardly the thing leading to peace or an honourable settlement

Again I am not approaching the forthcoming interview in any representative capacity I have purposely divested myself of any such If there are to be any formal negotiations, they will be between the President of the Congress and the President of the Muslim League I go as a lifelong worker in the cause of Hindu-Muslim unity It has been my passion from early youth I count some of the noblest of Muslims as my friends I have a devout daughter of Islam as more than a daughter to me She lives for that unity and would cheerfully die for it I had the son of the late Muazzin of the Juma Masjid of Bombay as a staunch inmate of the Ashram I have not met a nobler man. His morning *Azan* in the Ashram rings in my ears as I write these lines during midnight It is for such reasons that I wait on Shree Jinnah

I may not leave a single stone untuined to achieve Hindu-Muslim unity God fulfils Himself in strange ways He may, in a manner least known to us, both fulfil Himself through the interview and open a way to an honourable understanding between the two communities. It is in that hope that I am looking forward to the forthcoming talk. We are friends, not strangers. It does not matter to me that we see things from different angles of vision. I ask the public not to attach any exaggerated importance to the

interview. But I ask all lovers of communal peace to pray that the God of truth and love may give us both the right spirit and the right word and use us for the good of the dumb millions of India

Harijan 30-4-1938

83

OUR FAILURE

The communal riots in Allahabad—the headquarters of the Congress, and the necessity of summoning the assistance of the police and even the military show that the Congress has not yet become fit to substitute the British authority It is best to face this naked truth however unpleasant it may be

The Congress claims to represent the whole of India not merely those few who are on the Congress register It should represent even those who are hostile to it and who will even crush it, if they could Not until we make good that claim, shall we be in a position to displace the British Government and function as an independent nation

This proposition holds good whether we seek to displace British rule by violent action or non-violent

Most probably by the time these lines appear in print peace would have been established in Allahabad and the other parts That, however, will not take us further in our examination of the fitness of the Congress as an organization ready to displace British authority in its entirety

No Congressman will seriously doubt that the Congress is not at the present moment capable of delivering the goods if it was called upon to do so If it was capable, it would not wait for the call. But every Congressman believes that the Congress is fast becoming such a body The brilliant success at Haripura will be cited as the most conclusive proof of the fact.

The riots and certain other things I can mention should make us pause and ask ourselves whether the Congress is really growing from strength to strength. I must own that

I have been guilty of laying that claim. Have I been overhasty in doing so?

It is my conviction that the phenomenal growth of the Congress is due to its acceptance and enforcement, however imperfect, of the policy of non-violence. Time has arrived to consider the nature of Congress non-violence. Is it non-violence of the weak and the helpless or of the strong and the powerful? If it is the former, it will never take us to our goal and, if long practised, may even render us for ever unfit for self-government The weak and helpless are non-violent in action because they must be. But in reality they harbour violence in their breasts and simply await opportunity for its display It is necessary for Congressmen individually and collectively to examine the quality of their non-violence If it does not come out of real strength, it would be best and honest for the Congress to make such a declaration and make the necessary changes in its behaviour

By this time, i e. after seventeen years' practice of non-violence, the Congress should be able to put forth a non-violent army of volunteers numbering not a few thousands but lakhs who would be equal to every occasion where the police and the military are required. Thus, instead of one brave Pashupatinath Gupta who died in the attempt to secure peace, we should be able to produce hundreds. And a non-violent army acts, unlike armed men, as well in times of peace as of disturbances They would be constantly engaged in constructive activities that make riots impossible. Theirs will be the duty of seeking occasions for bringing warring communities together, carrying on peace propaganda, engaging in activities that would bring and keep them in touch with every single person, male and female, adult and child, in their parish or division. Such an army should be ready to cope with any emergency, and in order to still the frenzy of mobs should risk their lives in numbers sufficient for the purpose. A few hundred, may be a few thousand, such spotless deaths will once for all put an end to the riots. Surely a few hundred young men and women giving themselves deliberately to mob

fury will be any day a cheap and braver method of dealing with such madness than the display and use of the police and the military.

It has been suggested that when we have our independence, riots and the like will not occur. This seems to me to be an empty hope, if in the course of the struggle for freedom we do not understand and use the technique of non-violent action in every conceivable circumstance. To the extent that the Congress ministers have been obliged to make use of the police and the military, to that extent, in my opinion, we must admit our failure. That the ministers could not have done otherwise is unfortunately only too true. I should like every Congressman, I should like the Working Committee, to ask themselves why we have failed, if they think with me that we have.

Harijan 26-3-1938

84

AN APPEAL FOR SELF-EXAMINATION

[I give below a condensed summary of Gandhiji's opening address to the Gandhi Seva Sangh on the afternoon of the 25th. —M. D.]

THE CREED

Kishorlalbhai, our President, who is more ill than I, has prepared a long and well thought out address. He has dealt at great length with our mutual misunderstandings, bickerings, our refusal to understand and bear with one another and so on, and asked whether our faith is anything worth, if it does not reflect itself more and more in our daily lives. Do we feel that we are marching further forward every day towards our goal? Do we feel that we are more non-violent today than we were when we met a year ago? Have there been fewer occasions when we gave way to irritation and anger? Such questions we have to ask ourselves again and again. For 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 satiation. I have to be conscious every moment that I am pursuing the goal and have to examine myself in terms of that goal.

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 is pitted against violence, then one realizes the difference between the two. This we cannot do unless we are ever wakeful, ever vigilant, ever striving

THE RIOTS

The riots in U. P affected me deeply. I discussed them with Maulana Azad and the Bose brothers in terms of non-violence I felt that we were getting not nearer towards our goal but farther away from it. Haripura gave me reason to hope that we were growing in strength, and that in spite of our shortcomings we should be able to see Swaraj in my lifetime. I had thought that we should in the course of the year acquire that strength. But the riots in Allahabad and elsewhere came as a rude shock. We were to our shame compelled to seek the aid of the police and the military.

Supposing the Viceroy were to invite the President of the Congress to meet him and to state the Congress terms, do you think he would have the strength to say 'The Congress is capable of taking charge of the administration, the British may go'? Do you think we could tell him that we should be able to do without the police and the military, that we should be able to come to terms with

the Princes, the zamindars and with the Mussalmans? I am afraid we could not honestly say that we should easily be able to come to terms with these. And yet if we had real non-violence in us we should be able to say and do these things

NOT THE WEAPON OF THE WEAK

I therefore ask you and myself whether our non-violence is of the weak instead of the strong as it should be. That it 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 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 Have we the non-violence of the strong? It is open to discard it as an impossible ideal and choose instead the method of violence But the choice has to be made

And if it is a weapon of the strong, then there are some inescapable conclusions. We should be able to deal with riots and stop the increasing tension between the Hindus and Mussalmans What, you will ask, we as votaries of non-violence should have done to quell these riots? Well, it was primarily the work of the Congress Committee to quell the riots. We should have thousands of volunteers ready to serve in a crisis of this kind. In 1921 we drew up a pledge for volunteers wherein it was provided that a volunteer should be non-violent in thought, word and deed. Hakimsaheb Ajmal Khan, who was then President, had the same pledge accepted by the Khilafat volunteers

It was not without difficulty that the pledge was accepted by the Khilafat Conference For a volunteer to be non-violent in word and deed was right, some of the Maulanas said. But to expect them to be non-violent in thought was a tall order I was seeking, they said, to be master of their minds I said, 'No The mastery is to be of *ahimsa*, not of any single individual. Ultimately they accepted the pledge. But in spite of our having accepted the pledge seventeen years ago, we have not developed the irresistible strength that such acceptance of *ahimsa* means The reason is that we have not troubled, we have not laboured, to organize such a non-violent volunteer army If we cannot do so, if we cannot carry out the pledge, it would be well to reconsider our position The tragedy is that the pledge is still in existence but it exists on paper If we had on a sufficient scale such a non-violent army as the pledge contemplates, we should not have had these riots, and if there had been, they would have quelled the riots or immolated themselves in the attempt We have heard of only one who met his death. I admire his self-immolation. But my breast would have swelled with joy if there had been several Guptas

Do you think this is an empty dream? Do you think we cannot quell the riots even with such a non-violent army? If you really think so, if that is the conclusion that you arrived at after calm and dispassionate thinking, you must also conclude that Swaraj cannot be attained by means of non-violence.

Harijan, 2-4-1938

85

QUALIFICATIONS OF A PEACE BRIGADE

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 Communal riots are engineered by politically minded men Many of those who take part in them are under the influence of the latter Surely it should not be beyond the wit of Congressmen to devise a method or methods of avoiding ugly communal situations by peaceful means I say this irrespective of whether there is or there is not a communal pact It cannot be that any party seeks to force a pact by violent means Even if such a pact were a possibility, it would not be worth the paper on which it might be written For behind such a pact there will be no common understanding What is more, even after a pact is arrived at, it would be too much to expect that there would never be any communal riots

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 the mastery over him

(2) This messenger of peace must have equal regard for all the principal 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 wholetime 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 the 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.

Lest false hopes may be raised, I must warn workers

against entertaining the hope that I can play any active part in the formation of a Peace Brigade. I have not the health, energy or time for it. I find it hard enough to cope with the tasks I dare not shirk. I can only guide and make suggestions through correspondence or these columns. Therefore let those who appreciate the idea and feel they have the ability, take the initiative themselves. I know that the proposed Brigade has great possibilities and that the idea behind it is quite capable of being worked out in practice.

Harijan, 18-6-1938

86

HINDU-MUSLIM CLASHES

If proof were wanted to show that the non-violence of the Congress was in effect violence in suspension or inactive violence, it is furnished by the effective though quite indisciplined violence exhibited in Hindu-Muslim clashes. Had the thousands of Hindus and Muslims who took part in the Khilafat agitation been non-violent at heart, they could never have been violent towards one another as they are continually found to be. Nor can it be said that those who take part in the clashes are not Congressmen. If we rule out all those who resort to violence as non-Congressmen, the Congress will cease to be a mass organization. For the combatants in these clashes are derived from the masses. Moreover one finds today violence resorted to by rival Congressmen at Congress meetings. The gross indiscipline and fraud practised at Congress elections are all illustrations of Congress violence. It is difficult to say, therefore, who, if any, are non-violent Congressmen. If they were in a majority in the Congress and if they played an effective part in Hindu-Muslim clashes, they could stop them or at least give their lives in stopping them. If the bulk of Congressmen were truly non-violent, Muslims would be obliged to confess that Congressmen could not be accused of anti-Muslim bias. It

is not enough for Congressmen to say that they have not been found guilty of incorrect attitude I may be proved to be legally correct but may fail miserably if my action was examined in non-violent scales But this non-violence has to be non-violence of the brave and the strong It must come from inward conviction. I have, therefore, not hesitated to say that it is better to be violent if there is violence in our breasts than to put on the cloak of non-violence to cover impotence Violence is any day preferable to impotence There is hope for a violent man to become non-violent There is no such hope for the impotent

Harijan 21-10-1939

87

NON-VIOLENCE DURING RIOTS

A friend writes

> "How can non-violence be efficacious during riots? By self-immolation we can influence only those with whom we have already established living contacts But the hooligans who perpetrate violence during riots are, as a rule, hirelings imported from outside How can they have any scruples about hurting those whom they have never known before and for whom they can have no regard or consideration?"

The question deserves careful consideration The friend who has put it is a valiant worker who nearly lost his life in trying to do his duty during a riot I have often written on this question before The pity of it is that Congressmen have never seriously thought over the question of finding a non-violent way of quelling riots Their non-violence was restricted to the sole purpose of offering civil resistance to the authorities. In my opinion the non-violence that goes so far and no further scarcely deserves the name '*ahimsa*'. You may, if you like, call it unarmed resistance. So far as it is a device for embarrassing the Government it is a species of *himsa*. 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 adopted. 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. So far we have not even attempted a proper beginning. But it is never too late to mend. It is enough that we are at last alive to the necessity of it. We have now to follow it up with prompt action. Let everyone who is interested make a prompt beginning in his own neighbourhood. The difficulty mentioned by my correspondent will automatically resolve itself, if we proceed with our effort in the right spirit.

Harijan, 15-9-1940

88

IS IT RECEDING?

Referring next to the communal situation, Mr. Steel asked whether, in Gandhiji's opinion, the Hindu-Muslim situation was getting worse.

"Apparently yes, perhaps," answered Gandhiji. "But I have every hope that ultimately we are bound to come together. The interests that are common to us and that bind us together are so tremendous that the leaders of both the sections must come to terms. Force of circumstances will compel them to do so. That we appear to be farthest apart from one another today is a natural outcome of the awakening that has taken place. It has

emphasized the points of difference and accentuated prejudices, mutual suspicions and jealousies. Fresh demands that are coming into being everyday with the new leadership have further made confusion worse confounded. But I hope that out of chaos order is going to emerge.

Mr. Steel: "Are not the differences between the Muslim League and the Congress unbridgable?"

Gandhiji: "The differences are insubstantial."

PYARELAL

Harijan, 24-6-1939

89

COMMUNAL UNITY

I have more than once heard the complaint that the establishment of Hindu-Muslim unity is being delayed owing to lack of sufficient effort in its behalf on my part, that if only I would concentrate myself on it exclusively it could be realized today. May I assure you that if I do not *seem* to be doing that today, it is not because my passion for Hindu-Muslim unity has grown less. But I have realized, as I had never done before, my own imperfection as an instrument for this high mission and the inadequacy of mere external means for the attainment of big objects. I have learnt more and more to resign myself utterly to His grace.

If you could dissect my heart, you would find that the prayer and spiritual striving for the attainment of Hindu-Muslim unity goes on there unceasingly all the twentyfour hours without even a moment's interruption, whether I am awake or asleep. I want Hindu-Muslim unity if only because I know that without it there can be no Swaraj. Let no one imagine that because the Hindus constitute the majority community they can win Swaraj for India or even for themselves by organizing civil disobedience without the backing or support of the other communities. Civil

* From an article, 'No Quarrel about Words'.

disobedience of the purest type, as I have often repeated, can be effective even if it is confined to a few But then these few must represent in their persons the united will and strength of the whole nation Is it not the same in armed warfare? The fighting forces need the backing and co-operation of the entire civil population Without it they would be crippled I must be impatient for Hindu-Muslim unity because I am impatient for Swaraj And I have full faith that true and lasting heart unity between the Hindus and Mussalmans, not a merely patched up political compromise, will come sooner or later, sooner perhaps than later. That dream has filled my being since my earliest childhood I have the vividest recollection of my father's days, how the Hindus and Mussalmans of Rajkot used to mix together and participate in one another's domestic functions and ceremonies like blood-brothers. I believe that those days will dawn once again over this country. The present bickerings and petty recriminations between the communities are an unnatural aberration. They cannot last for ever

The greatest of things in this world are accomplished not through unaided human effort. They come in their own good time. God has His own way of choosing His instruments Who knows, in spite of my incessant heart prayer I may not be found worthy for this great work? We must all keep our loins girt and our lamps well trimmed, we do not know when or on whom His choice may fall. You may not shirk your responsibility by shoving it all on me. Pray for me that my dream may be fulfilled in my lifetime. We must never give way to despair or pessimism. God's ways are more than man's arithmetic.

Harijan, 5-8-1939

90

HINDU-MUSLIM UNITY

During my last journey to Simla my attention was drawn to the bitterness with which, it was alleged, the Muslim League and its doings were being criticized in some Congress organs. I have not seen any such criticism for the simple reason that I do not see the papers except for a few moments daily. But if there is any ground for such complaint, it should certainly be removed. The Muslim League is a great organization. Its president was at one time an ardent Congressman. He was the rising hope of the Congress. His battles with Lord Willingdon cannot be forgotten. The Jinnah Hall of the Bombay Congress is a standing monument of the president's labours for the Congress and a mark of Congressmen's generous appreciation of his services. The League contains many members who were whole-heartedly with the Congress during the memorable Khilafat days. I refuse to think that these erstwhile comrades can be as bitter in their hearts towards their fellow workers of yesterday as their speeches and writings of today will show. It is therefore wrong of the Congressmen and the Congress organs if they are bitter against the League or its individual members. The Congress policy of non-violence should put an easy restraint upon the speeches, writings and actions of Congressmen in their dealings with the League and its members. They must resolutely believe and hope that sooner or later, and sooner rather than later, there is to be communal unity, not superficial but real and lasting.

Zahid, the late Big Brother's son, who met me in Simla said, "We must not quarrel. Blood is thicker than water. We are of the same blood. You must work for unity." Other Muslim friends who met me during the journey said: "You must bring about unity. You alone can do it. Heaven help us if unity is not achieved in your lifetime." I have a similar message from a great Muslim.

All this flatters my vanity But I know that it does humble me I wish God had given me the power to realize the hope genuinely expressed by so many Muslim friends I assure them that not a day passes but I think of and pray for the unity It is neither for want of will nor effort that I have to be a helpless witness of so much bitterness and quarrelling between the two I have not lost hope that I shall live to see real unity established between not only Hindus and Muslims but all the communities that make India a nation If I knew the way to achieve it today, I know that I have the will and the strength to take it, however difficult or thorny it may be. I know too that the shortest and the surest way lies through non-violence Some Muslim friends tell me that Muslims will never subscribe to unadulterated non-violence With them, they say, violence is as lawful and necessary as non-violence The use of either depends upon circumstances It does not need *Quranic* authority to justify the lawfulness of both That is the well-known path the world has traversed through the ages There is no such thing as unadulterated violence in the world But I have heard it from many Muslim friends that the *Quran* teaches the use of non-violence It regards forbearance as superior to vengeance The very word Islam means peace, which is non-violence Badshahkhan, a staunch Muslim who never misses his *namaz* and *ramzan*, has accepted out and out non-violence as his creed It would be no answer to say that he does not live up to his creed, even as I know to my shame that I do not If there is a difference in our actions, the difference is not one of kind, it is of degree But argument about non-violence in the *Holy Quran* is an interpolation, not necessary for my thesis

I hold that for the full play of non-violence only one party need believe in it. Indeed if both believe in it and live up to it, there is no appreciation or demonstration of it. To live at peace with one another is the most natural thing to do. But neither party gains the merit that the exercise of non-violence carries with it Unfortunately, at the present moment, those Hindus who do not know the

use of violence, though they have it in their hearts, are sorry for their incapacity and would fain learn the trick — I won't call it the art — of violence, so as to be able to match what they describe as Muslim violence. And if peace is to be brought about by both parties being equally matched in the use of violence both offensive and defensive, I know that that peace will not come in my lifetime and, if it came, I should not care to be a witness of it. It will be an armed peace to be broken at any moment. Such has been the peace in Europe. Is not the present war enough to make one sick of such peace?

Muslim friends who hope much from me will perhaps now recognize my agony for the unattainment of peace in spite of the travail that I have gone through and am still going through. They should also see that my principal work lies through teaching at least the Hindus to learn the art of non-violence, unless I can bring the Muslims to the position the Ali Brothers and their associates took up during the Khilafat days. They used to say. "Even if our Hindu brethren cut us to pieces, yet will we love them. They are our kith and kin." The late Maulana Abdul Bari used to say: "Muslims of India will never forget the ungrudging and unconditional support that Hindus have given to us at this critical period of our history." I am sure that both Hindus and Muslims of those days are the same today that they were then. But times have changed and with them have changed our manners. I have no shadow of doubt that our hearts will meet some day. What seems impossible today for us God will make possible tomorrow. For that day I work, live and pray.

On the train to Wardha, 28-9-'39

Harijan 7-10-1939

91

AM I A MESSENGER OF GOD ?

A Muslim friend writes a long letter which pruned down reads as follows :

" The chief difficulty that stands in your way of right thinking is that your heart has so hardened by looking at and interpreting things in the light of your self-assumed principles, that you cannot bring to bear an open mind on anything, howsoever valuable it may be.

If God has not appointed you as his messenger, what you say or teach cannot be claimed to be a word of God. No one would contest the truthfulness of truth and non-violence as teachings of the prophets and principles of very high spiritual value, but their true understanding and application require a soul that is in direct communion with God. Any person who has only polished his soul by suppressing or acting against the desires and cravings of the flesh and the self is not a prophet.

The fact that you stand as a teacher of the world and claim to have diagnosed the disease from which the world is suffering, and proclaim that the truth of your choice and practice and the non-violence of your conviction and application are the only cures for the afflicted world, betrays your utter disregard and misconception of the truth. You admit you make mistakes. Your non-violence is actually a concealed violence as it is not based on actual spiritual life and is not the earnest of true inspiration from God.

As a true believer, and in pursuance of that teaching of Islam which enjoins on every Muslim to convey the truth to every human being, I would request you to clear your mind of all complexes, to place yourself in the position of an ordinary human being who wants to learn and not to teach, and to become a real seeker after truth.

If you wish to find out the truth, I would request you to study the *Quran* and the life of the Prophet Mahomed (Peace of God be upon him) written by Shebli Nowani and M. Sulaiman Nadwi with an open mind.

As for unity among the different communities inhabiting India, it can never come in terms of a single nation Broad-minded toleration of each other's religion and practices, and an agreement based on the recognition of the Muslims as a nation with their own complete code of life and culture to guide them and an equality of status in political life, shall bring harmony and peace to India'

I have omitted no argument used by the writer.

I have not hardened my heart. I have never claimed to be a messenger of God except in the sense in which all human beings are. I am a mortal as liable to err as any other. Nor have I claimed to be a teacher. But I cannot prevent admirers from calling me a teacher or a *Mahatma*, as I cannot prevent traducers from calling me all sorts of names and ascribing to me vices to which I am a stranger. I lay both praise and blame at the feet of the Almighty and go my way.

For the information of my correspondent, who is a schoolmaster in a high school, I may say that I have reverently studied the works he mentions and also many other works on Islam. I have more than once read the *Quran*. My religion enables me, obliges me, to imbibe all that is good in all the great religions of the earth This does not mean that I must accept the interpretation that my correspondent may put upon the message of the Prophet of Islam or any other Prophet. I must use the limited intelligence that God has given me to interpret the teachings bequeathed to mankind by the Prophets of the world. I am glad to find that my correspondent agrees that truth and non-violence are taught by the *Holy Quran*. Surely it is for him, as for every one of us, to apply these principles to daily life according to the light given to us by God.

The last paragraph in the letter lays down a dangerous doctrine. Why is India not one nation? Was it not one during, say, the Moghul period? Is India composed of two nations? If it is, why only two? Are not Christians a third, Parsis a fourth, and so on? Are the Muslims of China a nation separate from the other Chinese? Are the Muslims

of England a different nation from the other English? How are the Muslims of the Punjab different from the Hindus and the Sikhs? Are they not all Punjabis, drinking the same water, breathing the same air and deriving sustenance from the same soil? What is there to prevent them from following their respective religious practices? Are Muslims all the world over a separate nation? Or are the Muslims of India only to be a separate nation distinct from the others? Is India to be vivisected into two parts, one Muslim and the other non-Muslim? And what is to happen to the handful of Muslims living in the numerous villages where the population is predominantly Hindu, and conversely to the Hindus where, as in the Frontier Province or Sind, they are a handful? The way suggested by the correspondent is the way of strife. Live and let live or mutual forbearance and toleration is the law of life. That is the lesson I have learnt from the *Quran*, the Bible, the *Zend Avesta* and the *Gita*.

Segaon, 21-10-'39

Harijan, 28-10-1939

92

THE FICTION OF MAJORITY

It is painful to find the British Press and Britishers advancing the minority claim to prevent the declaration suggested by the Congress, if I may say so, in the common interest. If the force of the Congress suggestion has not been overwhelmingly felt, the declaration will not come. There need be no dejection among Congressmen if it does not. We shall get our independence when it is deserved. But it would be well for the British Government and the Allied cause, if the minority argument were not flung in the face of a credulous world. It would be honest to say that the British desire to hold India yet awhile. There will be nothing wrong in such a desire. India is a conquest. Conquests are not surrendered except when the conquered successfully rebel, or under an awakened conscience the

conqueror repents of the conquest, or when the conquered territory ceases to be a profitable concern. I had hoped and still hope that the British, having become war-weary and sickened over the mad slaughter involved in the present war, would want to close it at the earliest possible moment by being above board in every respect and therefore in respect of India. This they can never be, so long as they hold India in bondage.

I know that many have been angry with me for claiming an exclusive right for the Congress to speak for the people of India as a whole. It is not an arrogant pretension. It is explicit in the first article of the Congress. It wants and works for independence for the whole of India. It speaks neither for majority nor minority. It seeks to represent all Indians without any distinction. Therefore those who oppose it should not count, if the claim for independence is admitted. Those who support the claim simply give added strength to the Congress claim.

Britain has hitherto held India by producing before the world Indians who want Britain to remain in India as ruler and arbiter between rival claimants. These will always exist. The question is whether it is right for Britain to plead these rivalries in defence of holding India under subjection, or whether she should now recognize the mistake and leave India to decide upon the method of her own government.

And who are the minorities? They are religious, political and social: thus Mussalmans (religious); Depressed Classes (social); Liberals (political); Princes (social); Brahmins (social); Non-Brahmins (social); Lingayats (social); Sikhs (social?); Christians — Protestants and Catholics (religious); Jains (social?); Zamindars (political?). I have a letter from the Secretary of the All India Shiah Conference registering their claim for separate existence. Who are the majority in this medley? Unfortunately for unhappy India even Muslims are somewhat divided and so are the Christians. It is the policy of the British Government to recognize every group that becomes sufficiently vocal and troublesome. I have

drawn no fanciful picture of the minorities. It is true to life. The Congress itself has been obliged to deal with every one of the groups I have mentioned. My list is not exhaustive. It is illustrative. It can be increased *ad libitum.*

I know that the fashion is to talk of the Hindus as forming the majority community. But Hinduism is an elastic, indefinable term, and the Hindus are not a homogeneous whole like the Muslims and Christians. And when one analyses the majority in any provincial legislature it will be found to consist of a combination of the so-called minorities. In other words and in reality so far as India is concerned, there can only be political parties and no majority or minority communities. The cry of the tyranny of the majority is a fictitious cry.

I observe that Janab Jinnah Saheb had said, in reply to Shree Rajenbabu's letter offering to refer the League's grievances against the Congress Governments to an arbitration tribunal, that he has "already placed the whole case before the Viceroy and Governor-General and requested him to take up the matter without delay as he and the Governors of the Provinces have been expressly authorized under the Constitution and are entrusted with the responsibility to protect the rights and the interests of the minorities.

"The matter is now under His Excellency's consideration, and he is the proper authority to take such action and adopt such measures as would meet our requirements and would restore complete sense of security and satisfaction amongst the Mussalmans in those Provinces where the Congress Ministries are in charge of the administration."

It is unfortunate that he has rejected Shree Rajenbabu's reasonable proposal. Is it rejection of the proffered hand of friendship? Be that as it may, nobody can have anything to say against the Viceroy investigating and adjudicating upon the charges brought against Congress ministries. Let us hope he will soon conduct the investigation. Whether the Muslims are regarded as minorities or otherwise, their as well as any other community's rights and privileges, religious, social, cultural and political, must be regarded as

a sacred trust to be jealously guarded And the independence of India will make no difference to the protection of those rights In fact they will be better protected in every way, if only because in the framing of the Charter of Independence by the nation's representatives the Muslims and other minorities, real or so-called, will have an effective voice.

Consider for one moment what can happen if the English were to withdraw all of a sudden and there was no foreign usurper to rule. It may be said that the Punjabis, be they Muslims, Sikhs or others, will overrun India It is highly likely that the Gurkhas will throw in their lot with the Punjabis. Assume further that non-Punjabi Muslims will make common cause with the Punjabis. Where will the Congressmen composed chiefly of Hindus be? If they are still truly non-violent, they will be left unmolested by the warriors. Congressmen won't want to divide power with the warriors but will refuse to let them exploit their unarmed countrymen. Thus if anybody has cause to keep the British rule for protection from the stronger element, it is the Congressmen and those Hindus and others who are represented by the Congress. The question, therefore, resolves itself into not who is numerically superior but who is stronger. Surely there is only one answer. Those who raise the cry of minority in danger have nothing to fear from the so-called majority which is merely a paper majority and which in any event is ineffective because it is weak in the military sense. Paradoxical as it may appear, it is literally true that the so-called minorities' fear has some bottom only so long as the weak majority has the backing of the British bayonets to enable it to play at democracy. But the British power will, so long as it so chooses, successfully play one against the other calling the parties by whatever names it pleases. And this process need not be dishonest. They may honestly believe that so long as there are rival claims put up, they must remain in India in response to a call from God to hold the balance evenly between them. Only that way lies not Democracy but Fascism, Nazism, Bolshevism and Imperialism, all facets of the doctrine of 'Might is Right'.

I would fain hope that this war will change values. It can only do so, if India is recognized as independent and if that India represents unadulterated non-violence on the political field.

Segaon, 16-10-'39

Harijan, 21-10-1939

93

THE QUESTION OF MINORITIES

Sir Samuel talks of the Communal Award as a meritorious act of the British Government. I am sorry he mentioned it. I have very bitter memories of the Award which was being hatched during the Round Table Conference time. I am unable to regard it as a proud British achievement. I know how miserably the parties themselves failed. I regard the Award as discreditable for all parties. I say this apart from its merits which do not bear close scrutiny. But the Congress has loyally accepted it because I was party to the request made to the late Mr. Macdonald to arbitrate.

When the protection of minorities is pleaded against the declaration required by the Congress, the great pronouncement made by Sir Samuel Hoare sounds unreal. What the Congress has asked is not any sounding of Indian opinion but a declaration of Britain's intention. I have endeavoured to show that there is no such thing as real minorities in India whose rights can be endangered by India becoming independent. With the exception of the Depressed Classes there is no minority which is not able to take care of itself. I observe that Sir Samuel Hoare has mentioned the Europeans also as a minority. The very mention of Europeans, in my opinion, condemns the cry of the interest of minorities But the protection of minorities, whatever they are, is common cause between the British Government and the Congress. I would like the British Government to remember that there is every prospect of Congress India, to use Sir Samuel's phrase, being a hopeless minority. I like Sir Samuel's division of India into Congress and non-Congress.

And if non-Congress India contains not merely the Princes but the people of Princes' India, all the Mussalmans, all those who might be represented by the Hindu Mahasabha and others who refuse to be classified as part of Congress India, it is Congress India which will be in danger of a non-Congress majority. And the Congress has got to make good its position even though it may represent a minority wholly unarmed, partly by outside force but largely by its own will.

Harijan, 4-11-1939

94

AWARD OR DECISION ?

Protests against an innocent sentence in my article (just quoted above) are being showered upon me from all sides. The writers pay me an unintended compliment for accuracy when they detect and severely criticize a hasty inaccuracy in my writings. I admit that what I have described as an award was after all not an award but a decision of the British Government. And if it was not an award, there could be no question of my being party to it. But apart from that my "being party" requires an explanation. I was a signatory to no application to the late Mr. Ramsay MacDonald. But having refused to sign the reference that was placed before me, I wrote to the deceased Prime Minister to the effect that whatever all parties agreed to in the matter of communal adjustment would be accepted by the Congress. That project, however, fell through and there was no award but a decision given by the British Government in the absence of an agreed reference A lapse of memory on my part cannot alter facts. But I am sorry for the trouble so many correspondents have been put to owing to my inaccuracy. Beyond however expressing my sorrow, I am afraid I shall not be able to mend my ways. Working under double pressure the slip like the one that has angered so many correspondents is likely to recur. But would-be correspondents

will find me always ready to correct inaccuracies whenever they occur. And let my critics remember that of the neutral formula of the Congress too, for which they have suddenly developed a liking, I was the author. They may also feel assured that if the time came during my lifetime for an agreed revision of the decision, which has many glaring defects, they will find me among the workers helping to evolve an equitable adjustment. What I will not do is to make an appeal to the British Government to revise it over the heads of the parties affected. It stands till the parties agree to purge it of its absurdities.

Segaon, 14-11-'39

Harijan, 18-11-1939

95

COMMUNAL DECISION AGAIN

I gladly publish the following from Shri Radhakant Malaviya:

> "In your article you have stated, '. . . I have very bitter memories of the Award which was being hatched during the Round Table Conference . . . . . I regard the Award as discreditable for all parties, but the Congress has loyally accepted it because I was party to the request made to the late Mr. MacDonald to arbitrate.' Is it that, as immediately after your return from the Round Table Conference you were imprisoned, you are not aware of the subsequent developments in connection with the negotiations for the settlement of the communal question? The Communal Decision by Mr. J. Ramsay MacDonald is dated 17th August 1932. That there was not to be an award but a decision by Mr. Ramsay MacDonald was made clear by His Excellency the Viceroy on 24th February 1932. The proceedings of the Consultative Committee of the Round Table Conference held at the Viceroy's House at Delhi on 22nd and 24th February 1932 should be looked into.
>
> There in the proceedings you will find that in the Committee meeting held on 22nd February 1932 Mr. (now

Sir) Zafarullah Khan stated, '. . . . . that the difficulty could only be solved by a decision by the British Government itself . . . . Your Excellency might well press upon the British Government the necessity of pronouncing an immediate decision upon those questions . . . . . ' Dr. Shafat Ahmad Khan stated, ' . . . . I have urged Your Excellency to ask the Prime Minister to give us a decision. ' Again in the meeting held on 24th February, Dr. Shafat Ahmad Khan stated, 'The Muslim delegation never mentioned the word " arbitration ". We have said all along that it is for His Majesty's Government to give a decision. Of course we have never asked for arbitration. ' Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru stated: ' What was said was that the Prime Minister would give a decision. ' Dr. Shafat Ahmad Khan again stated, '. . . . . He (Prime Minister) will give a decision. . . . . We are not asking for his arbitration; we request the decision of His Majesty's Government. ' Sardar Ujjal Singh stated, '. . . . . In the Minorities Sub-Committee the Prime Minister undertook to decide that question if all the communities submitted it to him for arbitration. That was entirely a different thing. Some members did send him letters on behalf of their respective communities, but the offer was not accepted by all . . . . There is no question of arbitration now. ' At the end His Excellency the Viceroy as Chairman stated, ' I am advised that at the time the Prime Minister made an offer as Chairman of the Committee, but that was not accepted. '

If you think it proper, you may publish this in an early issue of *Harijan* so that the wrong impression which has been created by your above remarks may be removed."

I have admitted my lapse of memory. It does one good to record the facts which Shri Radhakant has narrated. They cannot be altered by any error I may have committed. It is fortunate that my error does not in any way weaken the force of my complaint against Sir Samuel Hoare.

Harijan, 2-12-1939

96

COMMUNAL DECISION

During my brief stay in Bengal I have been overwhelmed with questions on the Communal Decision. I have been told that neither the Working Committee nor I have pronounced decisive opinion on it. The Working Committee's decision is written in its records and has been published It has neither accepted nor rejected the Decision. There can be neither acceptance nor rejection of any imposed thing. A prisoner is not required to accept the sentence pronounced against him His rejection would be meaningless For he would soon find himself undeceived The Communal Decision has been imposed upon India not for her own good but for strengthening the British imperial hold on India The Working Committee has, therefore as much accepted and as much rejected the Decision as Bengal has There is this difference, however, that the Working Committee has not agitated against it like Bengal

For me, I detest the Decision It has benefited no single party in India but the British If the Muslims flatter themselves with the belief that they have profited by it, they will soon find that they were sadly mistaken If I could alter the Decision and make it what it should be, I should do so this very moment. But I have no such power The power can only come if there is unity. Bengal is the most glaring instance of injustice I can conceive of no just reason for putting the wedge of the tremendous European vote between the two major communities. Their number is insignificant Their interest is protected by the British bayonet. Why should that interest have added strength given to it by its introduction in the legislature? I can understand its representation without vote so as to enable it to put its case before the legislature. So long as it has the protection of the British bayonet, its over-representation on the legislature is a wholly unjust imposition The whole face of the Bengal legislature would be changed if the European vote was

withdrawn Today that legislature is not wholly responsible to the people, the real voters The European bloc gives peace neither to the Muslims nor the Hindus. Muslim ministers may flatter themselves with the belief that they are safe with the European vote They may be safe as individuals, but the national interest cannot be safe if a body of persons who are numerically insignificant are given an artificially decisive voting strength in a democratic assembly. It deprives the latter of its democratic character.

Thus the evil contained in the Decision I know. But I do not know how to deal with it except by patient endeavour. This I do know that there can be no real Swaraj so long as that Decision stands Bengal is a glaring instance of the inequity Assam is another. A critical examination of the Decision would show that it has very little to recommend itself from the national standpoint. It can be altered either by the British Government redressing the wrong or by successful rebellion. I was going to add 'by mutual agreement'. But that seems an impossibility even if the Hindus and Muslims agreed. Europeans have also to agree, and they have to agree to self-abnegation — an event unknown in politics. If there was self-abnegation, there would be no European interest in India which is hostile to the national interest. He will be a bold man who will assert and hope to prove that there was in India no European interest hostile to the nation.

On the train to Calcutta, 19-2-'40

Harijan, 24-2-1940

97

HINDU-MUSLIM UNITY

Hindu-Muslim unity means communal unity. No pact seems to be in front of us. Janab Jinnah Saheb looks to the British power to safeguard the Muslim rights. Nothing that the Congress can do or concede will satisfy him. For he can always, and naturally from his own standpoint, ask for more than the British can give or guarantee. Therefore there can be no limit to the Muslim League demands. So far as the Congress is concerned, it does not represent all Hindus or all of any single community except in the sense that the Congress represents all because all are believed to desire independence for the country and the Congress is without a rival in fighting for that goal. In fact, the Congress is the only national army the country possesses. It is not the less but all the more an army for its being non-violent. It has been the unbroken tradition of the Congress to refuse to represent any but the national interest. It has certainly never represented the Hindus as such. That function is claimed by the Hindu Mahasabha just as that of solely representing Muslim interests is claimed by the Muslim League.

The only course left open to the Congress, therefore, is to state its own communal policy for the guidance of Congressmen, no matter to which community they belong. The Congress should have no quarrel with the League for getting all it can through the British power. An institution that is fighting that power will never put itself in the wrong by fighting the Muslims.

Segaon, 30-10-'39

Harijan, 4-11-1939

98

UNFAIR

The London Times editorial seems to me to be unfair. The minorities question has invariably been brought up whenever the question of India's freedom has come to the fore. To represent the Congress and its demand as totalitarian is to misrepresent facts. This misrepresentation is not less serious because it is unconscious. The Congress has deliberately discarded the use of force. It has no military backing or tradition. It has from its inception believed in communal unity. It seeks to represent non-Hindus as well as Hindus. It has had Parsis, Muslims and Christians leading it. It has gone out of its way to placate all communities. It could not do otherwise as its only sanction was constitutional agitation till it forged non-co-operation and civil disobedience as an addition to constitutional agitation, and as an effective substitute for violence. Communal differences have been used by the British Government to thwart India's aspiration. That the process is likely to have been unconscious does not make it less mischievous. That the Congress has no desire for loaves and fishes must be crystal clear from wholesale resignations of Congress ministries. The Congress will never be party to communal quarrels. It will rather stand aside and wander in the wilderness and wait for a better day. Even now the ugly spectacle of playing off the League against the Congress seems to be going on. I had expected that the stupendous European crisis would bring better perception to British statesmen.

The Times wants the Congress record of dealings with Muslims and Depressed Classes during the last two years. All that I can say is, 'Let governors of provinces speak.' That the Muslim League and some Depressed Class leaders complain is nothing strange. Some discontent is inevitable in democracy. The Congress has made a handsome and sporting offer.. Let a Constituent Assembly of elected

representatives frame a constitution for the future government of India subject to safeguards for protection of the rights of minorities to their satisfaction. Will British statesmen play the game?

Segaon, 6-11-'39

Harijan, 11-11-1939

99

END THE GAME OF SEE-SAW

Once a declaration to free India from bondage, not in stages but at once, is made, an interim solution will be found to be easy. Protection of rights of minorities will then become simple. The game of see-saw will cease. The minorities are entitled to protection, not in stages but to the fullest extent and in one single step. No charter of freedom will be worth looking at which does not ensure the same measure of freedom for the minorities as for the majority. The minorities will be full-fledged partners in the framing of the constitution. How that can be attained will depend upon the wisdom of the representatives charged with the sacred duty of preparing the constitution. Britain has hitherto held power – this is inevitable in any system of imperialism — by playing the minorities against the so-called majority and has thus made an agreed solution among the component parts wellnigh impossible. The burden of finding a formula for the protection of minorities should be thrown on the parties themselves. So long as Britain considers it her mission to bear this burden, so long will she continue to feel the necessity of holding India as a dependency. And patriots impatient for deliverance will fight, non-violently if I can guide them and violently if I fail and perish in the attempt. God's curse of war, I had hoped and still hope, would be turned into a blessing by Britain realizing that the one thing needful for her to justify and hasten the end of this war was to free a great and ancient country like India from her yoke.

Believing as I do in the Viceroy's sincerity I would urge fellow-workers not to lose patience. There can be no civil resistance so long as, first, the Viceroy is exploring the possibilities of a settlement, secondly, the Muslim League blocks the way, and, thirdly, there is indiscipline and disunity in Congress ranks.

The second condition should not offend Muslim friends. So long as there is no workable arrangement with the Muslim League, civil resistance must involve resistance against the League. No Congressman can be party to it. I observe that my note in the *Harijan* has shocked Jinnah Saheb. I am sorry for it. But at this stage I would not defend myself. I do not want to mar in any way the negotiations between him and Pandit Nehru which I hope will be resumed soon and pray, will lead to communal peace.

Segaon, 8-11-'39

Harijan 11 11-1939

100

IS CONGRESS A HINDU ORGANIZATION ?

Evidently we have not heard the last of Lord Zetland's charge that the National Congress is an organization representing Hindus and therefore national only in name but in reality communal. There cannot be a grosser libel on the Congress than this. From its inception it has been national. Its originator was an Englishman. The late A. O. Hume was long its Secretary. It has always had one or two Muslim Secretaries. It has had Muslim, English, Christian and Parsi Presidents. Dadabhai was, till he became invalided, the soul of the Congress His was the guiding hand and the directing brain in everything. Sir Pherozeshah Mehta was the uncrowned king of the Bombay Presidency. He was the maker of Presidents both of the Congress and of the Bombay Corporation. Badruddin Tyabji was for years a decisive factor in the deliberations of the Congress. Who does not know that whilst Hakimsaheb Ajmalkhan was alive nothing could be done by the Congress if

it had not his *imprimatur*? Dr Ansari was for years Joint General Secretary The readers know the influence that the Ali Brothers exercised over the Congress during the Khilafat days. Today the Working Committee does not move without Maulana Abul Kalam Azad's co-operation and wise guidance. His is the decisive voice on Hindu-Muslim questions. Through its whole history now running into the second half of a century the Congress has ever striven to represent the whole of India in a manner no other organization has done. Every victory scored by the Congress has benefited all communities.

"If such is really the case, why has the Congress usurped the function that belongs to the All-India Hindu Mahasabha?" ask some angry correspondents. *The Tribune* has also pointed out what has appeared to the Editor the illogicality of the Congress. The illogicality has to be admitted. But neither life nor institutions are governed by logic. Obviously the Congress felt that necessity of a communal adjustment for the political advancement of the country, and the Congress-League Pact of 1916 was born. Ever since that time the Congress has made communal unity a plank in the Congress programme. Though the function should logically belong to communal organizations, a mass organization like the Congress cannot look on if communities quarrel and when in the national interest a solution becomes necessary. Thus the Congress could not shirk what came to it as a clear call to duty. The Congress is and should be *the* organization to take a purely nationalistic and impartial view on communal questions. Whatever may be said to the contrary, I maintain that the Congress embodies the hope and aspirations of India. It can conclude no pact with any person if it does not represent the whole of India in so far as her political aspirations are concerned. Its traditions unfit it to represent Hindus as against Muslims or vice versa. It is fit to represent the common interest of all the sons of Hindustan. I can see nothing wrong in the Congress trying to arrange pacts with men or their organizations for the furtherance of the common interest. Needless to say, they must be all mutually

helpful, never contradictory. It is a difficult task no doubt. But if people and organizations extend their goodwill to the Congress, the task is not beyond its scope or capacity. It does not inspire that all-round trust today. It may therefore have to wait for that day. If some other organization does it, Congressmen will welcome it.

Segaon, 13-11-'39

Harijan, 18-11 1939

101

WHY NOT HINDU MAHASABHA ?

A correspondent writes:

"I have read your comments on the speech delivered by Lord Zetland in the Lords' debate on India in which he declared the Congress to be a Hindu organization. I cannot help saying that the attitude of the Congress itself is partly responsible for the mistake into which Lord Zetland has fallen. If the Congress is a national organization, as it undoubtedly is, with what propriety did it enter into a discussion with the Muslim League alone, which is a purely communal organization, for solving the communal question generally and the Hindu-Muslim question particularly? The Congress ought to have remained neutral and permitted Jinnah Saheb to negotiate with Shri Savarkar, the President of the Hindu Mahasabha, or, if it was not practicable, to convene a conference of the representatives of the several communal organizations in the country and to play the role of umpire at such a conference. Any attempt on the part of the Congress leaders to have direct and exclusive talks with the leaders of a single community with a view to the solution of the Hindu-Muslim problem was bound to give a handle to the opponents of the Congress, of which they could not be expected to be slow to take full advantage. In my opinion this step on the part of the Congress has lowered the status of the Congress as a national organization."

I have already admitted the force of the correspondent's argument. I have also shown how the Congress could not shirk a duty devolving upon it. I must dissent from the view that the status of the Congress has been lowered by its attempt to solve a difficult national problem. I invite all well-wishers to refrain from doing anything to hinder the progress of the talks that are about to take place between Jinnah Saheb and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.

Harijan, 2-12-1939

102

MUSLIM LEAGUE AND CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE

As to the Muslim League, it seems to me to be self-evident that, whilst we are quarrelling among ourselves, we cannot resort to civil disobedience on any large scale. This is obvious. Moreover, we cannot come to a true settlement by hiding the truth from ourselves or others. I refuse to believe that Muslims can possibly hold up for any length of time the progress of the country which is as much theirs as others'. I see no harm in making the admission that, if the crores of Muslims do not desire freedom, they can at least for a time prevent it for the others, unless the latter are prepared to fight the former. I have eliminated that possibility so far as the Congress is concerned. The admission of the obvious is a gesture of goodwill towards the Muslim League. It throws also the onus on the League of blocking the country's progress. The admission should improve the prospect of a settlement.

Harijan, 18-11-1939

103

THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY

The Constituent Assembly provides the easiest method of arriving at a just solution of the communal problem. Today we are unable to say with mathematical precision who represents whom. Though the Congress is admittedly the oldest representative organization on the widest scale, it is open to political and semi-political organizations to question, as they do question, its overwhelmingly representative character. The Muslim League is undoubtedly the largest organization representing Muslims, but several Muslim bodies — by no means all insignificant — deny its claim to represent them. But the Constituent Assembly will represent all communities in their exact proportion. Excepting it there is no other way of doing full justice to rival claims. Without it there can be no finality to communal and other claims.

Harijan, 25-11-1939

104

OFFER OF TRIBUNAL

Let me make this a little clearer. The provision of safeguards for the rights of the minorities is not only common cause between the British Government and the Congress, but the Representative Assembly of Indians cannot evolve a stable constitution without fullest satisfaction being given to the *legitimate* minorities. I use the word 'legitimate' advisedly because I see that minorities crop up like mushrooms, till there will be no majority left. By 'fullest satisfaction' I mean 'satisfaction which will not militate against the progress of the nation as a whole'. I will therefore, in the event of difference, refer the question to the highest and most impartial tribunal that can be conceived by human ingenuity. Its voice shall be final as to what will amount to the fullest satisfaction of minority interests.

Harijan, 10-2-1940

105

CONGRESS AND THE COMMUNAL QUESTION

An English critic condemns the Congress for not coming to terms with the Muslim League. It is a pity that even responsible Englishmen will not take the trouble to study questions which they judge freely. The Congress has never given up the effort to solve the communal question. It is even now engaged in the difficult task. But it is wrong to use Congress inability to reach a solution for keeping India from her destined goal. British officials including Viceroys have admitted that they have ruled by following the policy of 'Divide and Rule'. The British established themselves by taking advantage of our internal quarrels and have remained by keeping them alive. It is unnecessary for my argument to prove that the policy is being followed deliberately.

The British have made themselves believe that they are ruling because of our quarrels, and that they will gladly retire when we have ceased to quarrel. Thus they are moving in a vicious circle. British rule must be permanent if the adjustment of the communal quarrel is a condition precedent to India becoming independent. It is a purely domestic problem which we are bound to solve if we are to live at peace with one another. May I remind the critic and those who argue like him that only a short while ago it was said that, if the British withdrew, the Hindus would be left to the mercy of the virile races from the north, that not a virgin would be safe or a moneyed man retain his wealth. Now Princes and Muslims, who are able enough to protect themselves against the unarmed millions whom the Congress claims specially to represent, are sought to be protected by the British bayonet against the latter! ! Be that as it may, the Congress must pursue its even course. It must work for communal unity in spite of odds against it. It is a plank in its programme. It is a part of the non-violent technique.

Another English critic has put the problem in a truer way. He says among many other things: "British people feel that Great Britain needs to carry the Muslim world with her at this time of immense struggle." I have no difficulty in sympathizing with this position. Only let us clear the issues. Great Britain cannot afford to risk defeat for the sake of doing justice. This is just what an overwhelming number of Indians feel. The Congress, before it can offer ungrudging support to Britain, wants to feel sure that hers is an absolutely just cause. The recent events have created a grave doubt about it. Absolute protection of the rights of minorities is a greater concern of the Congress than it ever can be of Great Britain. The Congress dare not seek and cannot get justice, if it is not prepared to do it itself. To be above suspicion is the only way open to non-violent organizations. But British policy may make a just solution impossible at the present moment.

Segaon, 28-11-'39

Harijan, 2-12-1939

106

CONGRESS AND MUSLIMS

There is no mistaking the fact that many non-Congress Muslims honestly think that the Congress ministers did not pay enough heed to Muslim complaints. Congressmen wedded to non-violence have to give special heed to the complaints of non-Congress Muslims. It is no use saying that they are frivolous. I know myself that many complaints have been frivolous. But we have to be patient and courteous enough to take them seriously and endeavour to show clearly that they are frivolous. I do not wish to suggest that pains were not taken to deal with them. I am just now concerned with the phenomenon that the complaints persist. We must, therefore, give time to demonstrating that there never has been anything in the complaints. If in the course of further investigation we discover errors, we must make amends. We must prove to the Muslim countrymen

and to the world that the Congress does not want independence at the sacrifice of a single legitimate interest, be it Muslim or other We may leave no stone unturned to carry the minorities with us. This meticulous care for the rights of the least among us is the *sine qua non* of non-violence

If it is true that for the British Government to plead want of communal unity as a bar to independence is wrong, it is equally true that this discord is, nevertheless, a serious handicap in our march towards Swaraj. If we had the Muslim League and others with us, our demand would become irresistible

Harijan, 2-12-1939

107

HINDU-MUSLIM UNITY

It was agreed that when a large section of the population was opposed to a direct programme it could not be launched in the teeth of their opposition. Part of the constructive work, if therefore followed, must be the building up of that unity Apart from the various bones of contention about which a detailed programme will be taken up at the next meeting of the Working Committee, there was the eternal question of communal riots, no matter what their occasion or cause 'What is the duty of Congressmen when there is a riot going on?' was one of the questions

'To die in quelling it,' said Gandhiji 'We had one Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi in 1931, and have had none to copy his example since So many die during the riots, but they do not offer of themselves willing sacrifices Those who do not accept this programme should leave me'

Q But must we allow them to hold up the movement assuming that there will be Hindu-Muslim riots?

A They cannot indefinitely do so. I have enough faith in Mussalmans to hope that they would rebel against being an obstacle in the way of independence. There is enough love of freedom and democracy in them to make them ashamed of that state of things.

Harijan 2-12-1939

108

COMMUNAL FELLOWSHIP

What do I mean by communal fellowship? How is it to be obtained when the Jinnah-Nehru talks have failed? They may or may not have failed Pacts are meant for big people They do not affect men in the street, the groundd-down millions In cultivating fellowship among these, written pacts are not needed Do Congressmen cultivate goodwill towards all without political motive? This fellow-feeling should be natural, not born out of fear or expedience, even as fellowship between blood-brothers, not being born out of any ulterior motive, is natural and lasting Nor is it to be applied only as between Hindus and Muslims It has to be universal It must be extended to the least among us. It is to be extended to Englishmen It is to be extended to political opponents Removal of untouchability again has deep significance The very idea of high and low among Hindus should be rooted out Caste solidarity should give place to national solidarity In Congress ranks these distinctions should be relics of the past.

Harijan 30-12-1939

109

UNITY v. JUSTICE

A visitor came the other day and said, "You have done an irreparable injury to India by saying that there is no Swaraj without communal unity You should say instead that there is no Swaraj without justice between and to the different communities" I reasoned with my visitor but he would not be consoled He said, "You have offered to sell your soul to win the favour of your Muslim friends" I protested and said, "Surely you know, the world knows, that I would not sell my soul to buy India's freedom And if I want Muslim friendship, it is not for personal gratification but for India's sake. You are

unjust to me." My visitor retorted with some passion, "I know your love for the country. If I had not known it, I would not have come to you specially. But your love has blinded you to the mistake you have made and are making. You do not know what Hindus say and do. For fear of offending Muslims, they suffer because they believe in you. I do beseech you to replace 'unity' with 'justice'." It was no use my arguing with my friend. And I had no time. I promised to deal with the question in these columns. The promise soothed him. I do not know that my answer will.

My belief is unshaken that without communal unity Swaraj cannot be attained through non-violence. But unity cannot be reached without justice between communities. Muslim or any other friendship cannot be bought with bribery. Bribery would itself mean cowardice and therefore violence. But if I give more than his due to my brother, I do not bribe him nor do I do any injustice. I can disarm suspicion only by being generous. Justice without generosity may easily become Shylock's justice. I must, however, take care that the generosity is not done at the expense of the very cause for which it is sought to be done.

I cannot, therefore, drop the idea of unity or the effort for it. But what is wanted is not so much justice as right action. Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah's reply to me, as published in the press, however, dashes to the ground all hope of unity if he represents the Muslim mind. His repudiation of the natural meaning I put upon his action in making common cause with the different political groups has created a unique situation. His picture of India as a continent containing nations counted according to their religions, if it is realized, would undo the effort the Congress has been making for over half a century. But I hope that Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah's opinion is a temporary phase in the history of the Muslim League. Muslims of the different provinces can never cut themselves away from their Hindu or Christian brethren. Both Muslims and Christians are converts from Hinduism or are descendants of converts. They do not cease to belong to their provinces because of change of faith. Englishmen who become converts to Islam do not

change their nationality. I hope Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah does not represent the considered opinion even of his colleagues.

Segaon, 23-1-'40

Harijan, 27-1-1940

110

QUESTION BOX

UNITY V. JUSTICE

Q. In your article 'Unity v. Justice' you say that, if you give more than his due to your brother, you neither bribe him nor do you do an injustice. You say: "I can disarm suspicion only by being generous. Justice without generosity is done at the expense of the very cause for which it is sought to be done." I submit that justice and generosity cannot go hand in hand. As Dryden has rightly observed, "Justice is blind, it knows nobody." Besides you can be generous to the weak, meek and the humble, not to one who in the arrogance of his strength seeks to coerce you into submission. To give more than his due to such a person is not generosity but cowardly surrender. Though Hindus are numerically stronger, their majority, as you yourself have pointed out, is only fictitious and actually they are the weaker party. Besides, if generosity is to be shown to the Muslims, the only organization that is competent to offer it is the Hindu Mahasabha. What right has a third party to be generous to one of the two parties to a dispute at the other party's expense?

A. In my article referred to by you I have dealt with general principles, not with particular minorities. Even as justice to be justice has to be generous, generosity in order to justify itself has got to be strictly just. Therefore it should not be at the expense of any single interest. Hence there cannot be any question of sacrificing some minority or minorities, for the benefit of any minority. You are right again in contending that generosity has to be shown to the weak and the humble, and not to the bully. Nevertheless I would say, on behalf of the bully, that even he is

entitled to justice, for immediately you brush aside the bully and be unjust to him you justify his bullying Thus the only safe—not to put it higher—rule of conduct is to do generous justice, irrespective of the character of the minority. I am quite sure that where there is strictest justice the question of majority and minority would not arise The bully is a portent and is an answer to some existing circumstance, as for instance cowardice It is often forgotten that cowardice can be unjust The fact is that cowards have no sense of justice They yield only to threat, or actual use, of force I do not know that there is any question of choice between a coward and a bully. The one is as bad as the other, with this difference that the bully always follows the coward in point of time.

In a previous issue I have admitted that the proper organization to enter into settlement is the Hindu Mahasabha, *so far as Hindus are concerned, or any such organization* The Congress endeavours to represent all communities It is not by design, but by the accident of Hindus being practically more conscious than the others, that the Congress contains a majority of Hindus As history proves the Congress is a joint creation of Muslims, Christians, Parsis, Hindus, led by Englishmen, be it said to the credit of the latter. And the Congress, in spite of all that may be said to the contrary, retains that character At the present moment a Muslim divine is the unquestioned leader of the Congress and for the second time becomes its president The constant endeavour of Congressmen has been to have as many members as possible drawn from the various communities, and therefore the Congress has entered into pacts for the purpose of securing national solidarity It cannot, therefore, divest itself of that function, and therefore, although I have made the admission that the Hindu Mahasabha or a similar Hindu organization can properly make communal settlements, the Congress cannot and must not plead incapacity for entering into political pacts so long as it commands general confidence.

On the train to Calcutta, 16-2-'40

Harijan 24-2-1940

111

OPINIONS DIFFER

An M. A. of Aligarh writes:

"You have said on many occasions that your study of the *Holy Quran* has revealed to you that Islam enjoins non-violence upon its followers. You again say that your study of the life of the Holy Prophet confirms you in this belief. Allow me to say that it must be only a sort of 'wishful' reading that you have done. The simple fact is that your philosophy of *ahimsa* eschews the use of force altogether. Islam, on the contrary, does allow the use of force on certain occasions. Did not the Prophet meet force with force at Badr? I dare not cite any authority because you have refused to accept any interpretation except your own. Yet I hope you will show some respect to what your own hypnotized Maulana Saheb said so long ago as during the first non-co-operation movement. He said in his statement to the court: 'I do not agree with Mahatma Gandhi that the use of force should not be allowed in any case. Because I am a Muslim I believe that the use of force is allowed on the particular occasions specified by Islam.' Again he said in the same statement to the court during his trial. 'Against the non-Muslim Government, Islam prescribes only sword, protracted battle and the cutting of throats.' I am sure Maulana Saheb cannot deny it even today.

So much for non-violence in Islam. As to the question whether the Muslims are a separate nation or not, I would say that the Muslims have been a separate nation ever since the beginning of Islam. They were so when Mahomed bin Kasim first set foot on Indian soil, they were so during the days of the Moghul Empire, they are so even today, and they will remain the same for ever if they are true to their religion. Akbar attempted to evolve not only a common religion but also a common social system, but were not his attempts doomed to failure? The Muslims are a separate nation in the sense that they cannot merge their

identity with any other community. But this need not frighten the champions of unity at all Co-operation in some particular sphere for some particular goal is always possible Breathing the same air and inhabiting the same land does not make a nation. It is the unity of thought that really matters. It is religion which moulds the mind A Muslim may be the next door neighbour of a Sikh. But their viewpoints, their modes of thought and their modes of life will always differ from each other. The air is the same all round the globe. Is the air of England in any way different from that of India? Physical surroundings affect only the physical features. The mind is not affected by them. Of course, the Christians are also a separate nation, and so are the Parsis. India is a land of nationalities It will be a red-letter day in the history of India when the Indian National Congress is transformed into a 'Federation of Indian Nations'

Yes, the Muslims are a separate nation in China If the insinuation is that they merged themselves with the other Chinese, then I can only say that they stand as an object lesson before the whole Islamic world. Islamic brotherhood will be reduced to a mere farce if the same process continues. Islam has definitely laid down that the Muslims should have some distinction even in their dress Does not Maulana Saheb stand prominent among the members of the Congress Working Committee?"

I have no doubt that this letter represents the present mood of many educated Muslims I do not propose to enter into any long argument about the interpretation of the *Quran* Being a non-Muslim I am at a disadvantage If I began an argument, the natural retort would be "How can you, a non-Muslim, interpret Muslim scriptures?" It would serve no purpose to answer back that I have the same reverence for Islam and the other faiths as I have for my own

I may, however, inform my correspondent that I had before my mind the battle of Badr and similar incidents in the Prophet's life I was aware of verses in the *Quran* itself contradicting my interpretation. I suggest, nevertheless, that it is possible that the teaching of a book or a man's life may be different from isolated texts in a book or

incidents in a life, however many the latter may be The *Mahabharat* is the story of a bloody war But I have maintained in the teeth of orthodox Hindu opposition that it is a book written to establish the futility of war and violence

I have no right to speak for the Maulana Saheb He is well able to take care of himself I must confess that I have no recollection of the Maulana Saheb having given the evidence quoted I do not question the veracity of my correspondent. Only that evidence does not affect the opinion I have held for many years about the central teaching of the *Holy Quran* Opinions will differ to the end of time I plead for mutual forbearance

The proposition laid down by my correspondent about nations is startling There may be arguable grounds for maintaining that Muslims in India are a separate nation. But I have never heard it said that there are as many nations as there are religions on earth. If there are, it would follow that a man changes his nationality when he changes his faith According to my correspondent English, Egyptians, Americans, Japanese, etc , are not nations, but Muslims, Parsis, Sikhs, Hindus, Christians, Jews, Buddhists are different nations, no matter where born. I am afraid my correspondent occupies very weak ground in maintaining that nations are or should be divided according to their religions In his zeal to maintain an untenable position he has overproved his case

I must deny that the Muslim dynasties divided India into two nations Akbar's example is irrelevant He aimed at a fusion of religions It was a dream not to be realized. But the other Muslim emperors and kings surely regarded India as one indivisible whole That is how I learnt history as a boy

If we Hindus, Muslims and others are to evolve democracy, we shall do so only by the representatives elected under the broadest franchise possible, and that either through British goodwill or in the teeth of its opposition. The pronouncements made on behalf of the British Government give no promise of British goodwill. British imperialism is still vigorous and, in spite of Sir Samuel Hoare's decla-

ration to the contrary, it will die hard. The proposal to vivisect India is a contribution to imperialistic growth. For vivisection can only be made by the aid of the British bayonet or through a deadly civil war. I hope the Congress will be party to neither game. British refusal to make the required declaration of Britain's war aims about India has perhaps come as a blessing in disguise. It removes the Congress out of the way to enable the Muslim League to make its choice, unfettered by the Congress administration in eight provinces, as to whether it will keep the British yoke by vivisecting India or whether it will fight for the independence of an undivided India. I hope that the League does not want to vivisect India. I hope that my correspondent does not represent a large body of Muslim opinion in India. Presently the talks between Janab Jinnah Saheb and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru will be resumed. Let us hope that they will result in producing a basis for a lasting solution of the communal tangle.

Segaon, 7-11-'39

Harijan, 11-11-1939

112

I WONDER

"For some time you seem to have made it a point to strengthen your arguments in favour of non-violence by frequent but invariably vague references to the *Holy Quran* and the teachings of Islam. It is quite obvious that you only seek to impress the Muslims thereby. No doubt your right to preach your cherished doctrine is beyond all question. Similarly, it is quite understandable that you should pat fifth columnist Mussalmans like Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan and Abul Kalam Azad on the back. But can't you realize that nothing can offend the religious susceptibilities of a Mussalman more than to see a non-Muslim citing the scripture for his own purpose? Well, the Mussalmans have had thirteen centuries to know what the *Quran* teaches and to practise what it means. The Muslims,

of course, do not need a *mahatma* to interpret their own holy book It would be better, indeed, if you take it from the Muslims what they have, throughout the last thirteen centuries, believed to be the teachings of their religion, rather than indulge in your own wishful interpretation. I hope you realize full well that you as well as your Muslim satellites have entirely forfeited the confidence of the Mussalmans Your references to the *Quran* are futile except that they cause the greatest provocation to the Muslims The Muslims have always shown themselves self-respecting enough not to allow their holy book becoming an instrument in non-Muslim hands. Your flattering words about Islam are of no avail The fact stands out that you are a non-Muslim. Hence the *Quran* cannot be the source of your ideas or ideals You only turn to the *Quran* afterwards in order to popularize them among the Muslims. It is my friendly advice to you to stop forthwith all reference to the *Quran* In the meantime I would ask you to read what Abul Kalam wrote before he reconciled himself to be the quisling of Muslim India"

This letter is from an M A (Aligarh). He is a research scholar in the Muslim University The letter was received some time ago I kept it in my file so long, for I was debating whether it would serve the cause of unity to publish it But having received another from the same friend more unbalanced than this one, I decided to publish the foregoing in order to enable me to expostulate with those who in Aligarh or outside hold views similar to the writer's.

I have sweet memories of Aligarh I have more than once visited the great University I have still associations with it. I think I am an honorary member of their club. I received the honour at the hands of the late Dr. Sir Ross Masood when he was the Vice-Chancellor of the University. As for the *Holy Quran*, it was my Muslim clients and friends in South Africa who invited me to read it. They furnished me with Islamic literature On my return to India, Muslim friends sent me copies of translations of the holy book. Among the senders was Dr. Mahomed Ali himself a translator, and the late Mr. Pickthall also a translator

of the book. I was presented by the late Hakimsaheb Ajmalkhan with Maulana Shibli's translation. Have I changed or have the times so changed that it has become a crime for a non-Muslim like me to read and even dare to put his own interpretation upon the *Quran*? Many pious Muslims have remarked that I am a better Muslim than most Muslims in that I act in the spirit of the *Quran* and know more of the life of the Prophet than most Muslims. Whose testimony am I to accept — these Muslim friends' or the research scholar's and of those who think like him? I wonder.

The research scholar is right in imputing to me the desire to read my meaning into the *Quran*. Surely there is no harm in it so long as I remain absolutely faithful to the text and approach my task with a prayerful and open mind. My correspondent should know as a scholar that an interpretation of a life or a book is not necessarily correct because it has been handed down for generations. An error does not cease to be one after a given number of repetitions by a given number of men for a given number of years. The Biblical texts are still being corrected. And many good Christians believe that the Christianity of the West is a negation of Christ's central teaching. It is just possible that the research scholar's views about the qualifications required for reading and interpreting the *Quran* and his own interpretation are wrong, and that my being a non-Muslim is no bar to my reading the *Quran* or interpreting it. And it is not at all impossible that my interpretation may be found to be right. It will be an evil day if the reading and interpreting of religious books are to be confined only to those who wear particular religious labels. I ask my correspondent and his companions, as their friend, to shed what in my opinion is their gross intolerance and give the same credit to others for seeing truth as they claim for themselves. No one has a monopoly of truth. All truth represented by imperfect humans that we are is relative. We can each act according to our lights. God alone knows the reality. That being so, it behoves research scholars at least to be humble and tolerant.

Fanaticism and intolerance can neither conduce to research work nor advance the cause they represent.

Sevagram, 25-9-'40

Harijan, 29-9-1940

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QUESTION BOX

A MUSLIM'S DILEMMA

Q. We Muslims believe that the Prophet's life was wholly directed by God and truly non-violent, though not in your sense of the term He never waged an offensive war, and he had the tenderest regard for the feelings of others, but when he was driven to a defensive war he drew his sword for a holy war, and he permits the use of the sword under conditions he has laid down. But your non-violence is different. You prescribe it under all conditions and circumstances I do not think the Prophet would permit this Whom are we to follow — you or the Prophet? If we follow you, we cease to be Muslims. If we follow the Prophet, we cannot join the Congress with its creed of extreme non-violence Will you solve this dilemma?

A. I can only answer that, since you notice the difference, you should unhesitatingly follow the Prophet, not me. Only I would like to say that I claim to have studied the life of the Prophet and the *Quran* as a detached student of religions. And I have come to the conclusion that the teaching of the *Quran* is essentially in favour of non-violence. Non-violence is better than violence, it is said in the *Quran* Non-violence is enjoined as a duty, violence is permitted as a necessity. I must refuse to sit in judgment on what the Prophet did I must base my conduct on what the great teachers of the earth said, not on what they did. Prophethood came not from the wielding of the sword, it came from years of wrestling with God to know the truth. Erase these precious years of the great life, and you will have robbed the Prophet of his prophethood. It is these years of his life which made Mahomed a prophet. A prophet's

life, after he is acknowledged as one, cannot be our guide. Only prophets can weigh the works of prophets. If a civilian can judge the merits of a soldier, a layman of a scientist, an ordinary man may judge a prophet, much less imitate him. If I handled a motor car, I should surely run it and me into the danger zone and probably into the jaws of death. How much more dangerous would it be then for me to imitate a prophet? When the Prophet was asked why, if he could fast more than the prescribed times, the companions also could not, he promptly replied "God gives me spiritual food which satisfies even the bodily wants, for you He has ordained the *Ramzan* You may not copy me" I quote from memory.

Harijan, 13-7-1940

114

IS ISLAM INSPIRED?

A writer in a Muslim paper 1 is suggested that, if I regard Islam as an inspired religion and Mahomed as the Prophet of God, I should declare my belief, so that Mussalmans' doubts may be dispelled and Hindu-Muslim unity may possibly be more easily achieved I read the suggestion about a month ago, but I did not think it necessary to respond to it. But as nowadays I read as many Muslim papers as I can, in order to acquaint myself with the Muslim mind, and as I find them so full of poison and conscious or unconscious untruths, I feel it necessary to redeclare my opinion about Islam, though I think it is well-known I certainly regard Islam as one of the inspired religions, and therefore the *Holy Quran* as an inspired book and Mahomed as one of the prophets. But even so I regard Hinduism, Christianity, Zoroastrianism as inspired religions. The names of many of them have been already forgotten, for the simple reason that those religions and those prophets related to the particular ages for which and peoples for whom they flourished. Some principal religions are still extant. After a study of those religions to the

extent it was possible for me, I have come to the conclusion that, if it is proper and necessary to discover an underlying unity among all religions, a master key is needed. That master key is that of truth and non-violence. When I unlock the chest of a religion with this master key, I do not find it difficult to discover its likeness with other religions. When you look at these religions as so many leaves of a tree they seem so different, but at the trunk they are one. Unless and until we realize this fundamental unity, wars in the name of religion will not cease. These are not confined to Hindus and Mussalmans alone. The pages of world history are soiled with the bloody accounts of these religious wars. Religion can be defended only by the purity of its adherents and their good deeds, never by their quarrels with those of other faiths.

On the train to Wardha, 8-7-'40

Harijan, 13-7-1940

115

SIND RIOTS

I have been following the riots in Sind with painful interest. Many people delude themselves with the belief that I possess powers to remedy all wrongs. I wish I had them, though I am not sure that such possession will be an unmixed blessing. I should make people helpless if I made an indiscriminate use of such powers. And they would be of no use, if I might not use them freely. As it is, I use what powers I have to the fullest extent. Thank God, they are too limited to be harmful. My chief work, however, is to teach people to help themselves.

Here is a pathetic wire from Shikarpur:

> "Riots, loot, incendiarism. Sukkur district villages Hindus mercilessly butchered, women and girls raped and kidnapped. Hindu life, property unsafe. Situation most critical. Government policy not firm. Pray send Inquiry Committee immediately to see situation personally.
> — President Hindu General Panchayat."

It is the third of its kind from Sind. I took no notice of the first two mainly because I was preoccupied in Allahabad and I had no concrete consolation to offer. The Shikarpur Panchayat has come to the wrong person for help. For I am myself helpless. The Congress has not yet sufficiently advanced in non-violence to deal with riots and the like. It must develop it enough to deal with such situations if it is to retain its prestige. I suggested 'peace brigades', but the suggestion proved premature if not unworkable. No doubt the Sind Government should be able to protect life and property of the people within their jurisdiction. Evidently the matter has gone beyond their control Sind is nominally autonomous and to that extent less able to protect life and property than the preceding Government For it has never had previous training in the policing or the military arts I have shown in previous writings that the Central Government is impotent to prevent loss of life, property and worse during riots. It is able to check their spread and punish the wrong doers when it wishes. It is organized solely for the protection of imperial trade and therefore for the maintenance of peace in so far as it is necessary for the safety of that trade Hence it is ill-equipped for real protection of the people. Such protection involves the training of the people in the art of self-defence and securing their co-operation in quelling riots, etc This would be putting imperial rule in jeopardy.

Now the only effective way in which I can help the Sindhis is to show them the way of non-violence. But that cannot be learnt in a day. The other way is the way the world has followed hitherto, i. e. armed defence of life and property. God helps only those who help themselves The Sindhis are no exception. They must learn the art of defending themselves against robbers, raiders and the like. If they do not feel safe and are too weak to defend themselves, they should leave the place which has proved too inhospitable to live in.

Segaon, 28-11-'39

Harijan 2-12-1939

116

SIND TRAGEDY

I

I have before me several letters from Sind and a longish report from Dr. Choithram over the recent riots in Sukkur and Shikarpur. The Sind Hindus should remember that Sind has a National Government. Though for the sake of brevity I have often used the term Congress Government, the proper expression is National Democratic Government as distinguished from foreign bureaucratic Government, which it replaces. Whilst in discussing domestic differences and party politics we have to speak of Congress and Muslim League Governments, we must for all other purposes think and speak in terms of National Government. And so those who feel aggrieved must appeal to their Provincial National Governments and cultivate public opinion in favour of justice and public tranquility. It would be wrong always to think in communal terms. I know that we may not shut our eyes to hard facts. But to attribute everything to the communal spirit is a sign of inferiority complex. It may well perpetuate what is yet a temporary distemper in the national life.

But as I have already suggested, contrasted with irresponsible bureaucracy, National Governments would be found to be weak in action because of their responsibility to the people in whose name and by whose goodwill alone they can rule. They can, therefore, deal with crimes with more or less success, but they will be found to be powerless to deal with popular upheavals which communal riots are. British military aid will not always be at their disposal. National Governments will cease to be national if they have to depend on British military aid. Moreover, if the Congress policy of non-violence becomes universal among all parties, military and even police aid must become taboo. Before the other parties can be expected to become non-violent, Congressmen have to express non-violence in ample measure in their daily conduct. Be that, however, as it

may, I can only advise the afflicted people of Sind in terms of non-violence.

The question in Sind is not really one between Hindus and Muslims. It is essentially one between weak people and strong. Muslims fight among themselves as badly as with Hindus. Hindus have also been known to fight among themselves. It will be wrong to weigh ferocity in golden scales.

Hinduism has become a synonym for weakness and Islam for physical strength. Hindus, although they have been taught to believe in *ahimsa*, have not shown *en masse* the strength of *ahimsa*, have never shown its superiority, when matched against physical strength. I have maintained that superiority over physical strength, however overwhelming, is the core of *ahimsa*, and I have further maintained that this non-violence can be exercised as well by individuals as by groups of them, yea, even by millions together. The experiment is still in the making. Sufficient evidence has accumulated during the past twenty years to show that the experiment is worth making. Nothing can possibly be lost by continuing it, provided of course that the non-violence is of the standard brand.

Nothing has come under my observation to show that there was in Sukkur or Shikarpur even one person who believed in and practised non-violence of the strong. Had there been one, we would surely have known of him as we know of Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi. One such person can any day give a better account of himself than one armed to the teeth.

There are many Congressmen in Sukkur and Shikarpur but they are not non-violently organized. It is not their fault. They know no better As I have been repeatedly saying nowadays, our non-violence has not been of the strong. Weak people cannot develop it all of a sudden. But I have no other drug in my chest. I can only prescribe what I have and what has never failed. I can only, therefore, say: 'Try and try again until you succeed.' In the composition of the truly brave there should be no malice, no anger, no distrust, no fear of death or physical hurt. Non-violence is certainly not for those who lack these

essential qualities. Wherever there are such persons they should be able to cover the weak ones, provided of course that they would listen to their helpers.

Let the weak ones never rely upon armed help. Such help will only make them weaker. If they have not the capacity for non-violent resistance, they should learn the art of defending themselves. It does not require a strong body; it requires a stout heart. The African Negroes have become, or were 25 years ago, so terror-stricken that they could not face a white lad – a pigmy compared to the giant-framed Negroes White children were trained from their infancy not to fear the Negroes. The first lesson, therefore, for those who will learn how to defend themselves is to shed the fear of being hurt or being killed. I would like them to observe the laws of the game. Just as there is such a thing as honour among thieves, there should surely be honour between combatants. One hears so often of children and old men being butchered, women being outraged. If men must become beasts, there might even then be some decency observed. Religion is outraged when an outrage is perpetrated in its name. Almost all the riots in this unhappy land take place in the name of religion, though they might have a political motive behind them. My chief point is that the existing situation is intolerable. Cowardice should have no place in the national dictionary.

I have suggested *hijrat* I repeat the suggestion. It is not unpractical. People do not know its value. High and mighty have been known to have resorted to it before now. Planned *hijrat* requires courage and forethought. The second book of the Old Testament is known as Exodus. It is an account of the planned flight of the Israelites. In exile they prepared for a military career. In modern times we have the example of the flight of the Doukhobors from Russia owing to persecution. Theirs was no military career. On the contrary they were non-violent. There is, therefore, nothing wrong, dishonourable or cowardly in self-imposed exile. India is a vast country. Though poor, it is well able to admit of inter-migration especially of those who are capable, hard-working and honest. The people of Sukkur

and Shikarpur have all the three qualities. They must appeal to the Government. Only they can give very little help. Apart from political pacts local heads among Hindus and Muslims may meet with mutual profit. It can do nobody or party any good to promote mutual slaughter and consequent increase in the existing ill-will. But if no honourable local settlement is arrived at, and if the local residents do not feel able to defend themselves and their families and possessions non-violently or violently, I have no doubt that they should vacate the place in which they live in perpetual fear of their lives and the honour of their womenfolk.

Segaon, 1-1-'40

Harijan, 6-1-1940

117

THE SIND TRAGEDY

II

Q. In your article "Sind Tragedy"* you have advised the oppressed Hindus of Sind to perform *hijrat* if they cannot protect their honour and self-respect by remaining in Sind. Where do you expect them to go? Who will provide them the wherewithal in their place of refuge? May I further ask you if the remedy of *hijrat* is meant for the Hindus only? Why do you not advise *hijrat* to the Mussalmans in the Congress provinces who complain so loudly of 'oppression'? As it is you have given them weightage in provinces in which they are in a minority and a statutory majority in the Punjab where they are numerically superior.

A. My advice to migrate is for all who feel oppressed and cannot live without loss of self-respect in a particular place. If the Muslims where they are in a minority were really oppressed and they sought my advice, I should give them the same advice that I have given to the Sind Hindus. But as a general rule, they are capable of holding their own even when they are in a minority. I have already told

* See the article in the previous chapter.

the Sindhis that, if they have the bravery to defend themselves even though they are a handful, they should not leave the places where they are settled. My advice is meant for those who, though they are conscious of self-respect, lack the strength that comes from non-violence or the capacity to return blow for blow.

The question what the refugees should do after migration is surely secondary. A few thousand of them can be easily absorbed in a vast country like India. Sindhis are enterprising. They are scattered all over the world. I hardly think any public appeal will be necessary. Let them know that there are refugees from Limbdi who are bravely and silently bearing their exile. A keen sense of honour turns every privation into a joy. But perhaps migration will be unnecessary. I see signs of Muslim leaders realizing their responsibility and making arrangements to create among the Hindus concerned a sense of security. If this happens, it would be as it should be.

You are wrong in holding me responsible for the Communal Decision. It has nothing to commend itself to any community except the solid fact that we are living under it and that we have not yet found an agreed formula to replace it.

Segaon, 29-1-'40

Harijan, 3-2-1940

118

MORE CALUMNY

Q. You did not hesitate to join the Ali Brothers in their intrigue to invite Amanulla Khan to invade India and set up Muslim Raj. You drafted a wire for Maulana Mahomed Ali advising the then Amir not to enter into a treaty with the British. The late Swami Shraddhanandji is reported to have seen the draft. And now you want the Hindus of Sind to make a present of their hearths and homes to their Mussalman oppressors instead of demanding the re-amalgamation of Sind with the Bombay Province, which alone can restore the reign of law to Sind. Why won't you realize that in this age of enlightenment and progress what the minorities expect is effective protection of their due rights, not mere pious counsels of perfection?

A. I have several such letters. Hitherto I have ignored them. But now I see that the news has gone through a revised and enlarged edition in the Hindu Mahasabha. An angry correspondent threatens that persons like him will begin to believe what has been stated so authoritatively. For the sake of my reputation, therefore, I must answer the question. But my correspondents should know that life for me would be a burden if I were to make it a point of controverting every false report about me or distortion of my writing. A reputation that requires such a mud wall of protection is not worth keeping. So far as the charge of my intriguing with the Amir is concerned I can say that there is no truth whatsoever in it. Further, I know that the Brothers stoutly denied the charge when it was brought to their notice. And I believed them implicitly. I do not remember having drafted any telegram on behalf of Maulana Mahomed Ali to the then Amir. The alleged telegram is harmless in itself and does not warrant the deduction drawn from it. The late Swamiji never referred the matter to me for confirmation. It is wrong to say anything against dead men unless one has positive proof and stating it is relevant.

The romance has been woven round my writings in *Young India.* * Deductions drawn from them are wholly unjustified. I would not be guilty of inviting any power to invade India for the purpose of expelling the English. For one thing, it would be contrary to my creed of non-violence. For another, I have too great a respect for English bravery and arms to think that an invasion of India can be successful without a strong combination of different powers. In any case, I have no desire to substitute British Rule with any other foreign rule. I want unadulterated Home Rule, however inferior in quality it may be. My position remains today what it was when I wrote the *Young India* paragraphs now sought to be used against me. Let me further remind the readers that I do not believe in secret methods.

As for Sind my advice stands. Reincorporation of Sind in the Bombay Province may or may not be a good proposition on other grounds, but certainly it is not for the purpose of greater protection of life and property. Every Indian, be he Hindu or any other, must learn the art of protecting himself. It is the condition of real democracy. The State has a duty. But no State can protect those who will not share with it the duty of protecting themselves.

On the way to Delhi, 4-2-'40

Harijan, 10-2-1940

* See chapters 3 to 6 of Gandhiji's *Non-violence in Peace and War.*

119

SIND

The position of Congressmen in Sind is by no means enviable. They have a most difficult time before them. Their non-violence, if they have it in them, has not benefited those who live in fear of their lives. It is true that no one else has helped them. I warned them at the very outset that they must learn the art of helping themselves as others do, or by non-violence as Congressmen are supposed or expected to do. In some places they are organizing national guards. Those who do, look up to Congressmen for help and guidance. For the latter have been their helpers and guides hitherto. Some Congressmen feel that without any intention of themselves taking up arms they can put courage into the people, if they train them in the art of self-defence whether with or without arms. The question has attained importance and demands immediate answer in view of the unequivocal resolution of the A. I. C. C. recently held at Poona. I am quite clear that no Congressman, so long as he is even a four anna member of the Congress, can take part in organizing or aiding self-defence groups without committing a breach of the Poona resolution. But I am equally clear that it is the duty of those Congressmen who feel the need for helping self-defence groups and have the capacity for doing so, to go to the rescue of the terror-stricken men. This they can do by resigning their membership of the Congress. By doing so they will enhance the prestige of the Congress and their own usefulness. The fact that they feel the call to help is the decisive factor in determining their course of action.

Harijan, 1-9-1940

120

ECONOMIC RUIN IN SIND

The following printed letter has been circulated by Shri Tarachand D. Gajra and Shri C. T. Valecha:

"We trust you received our previous communication, 'A note on the present state of lawlessness in Sind'. Herewith follows another one, 'Economic ruin due to the lawlessness in Sind'. It is a sad story of silent misery that has befallen those who are migrating without any financial aid from the public or the authorities. Elsewhere such a thing would evoke wide international public support and sympathy. We hope your interest in our province will grow."

I take the following from the statement referred to in the letter:

"Great havoc has been wrought in the economic life of the province by the present lawlessness in Sind. The village life is almost at the brink of total ruin. The peasantry, whose only property and means of sustenance are the bulls and the milch cattle, find themselves without both on account of depredations by thieves, as thefts of cattle have risen to abnormal proportions. The lot of the cultivator has come to this that he passes the day of toil followed by a night of vigil.

The Hindus in the villages do not feel themselves strong enough to face thieves and dacoits. Hence they have taken to migrating from smaller villages to bigger villages, and those who are in bigger villages are leaving for urban areas.

With a view to having some idea of this migratory movement, herein below are given figures about one of the sixtyone tahsils in Sind, namely Hyderabad Taluka. These have been collected by Prof. Ghanshyam M. L. A. (Congress-Hyderabad Rural Constituency). From several villages almost all Hindu-families have left, and from most of the remaining ones nearly fifty per cent of the Hindus have migrated."

Then follow the figures about the migration from 42 villages in the single tahsil of Hyderabad. Of these all the Hindu families in 17 villages have migrated. Of the rest some villages had only one family left. More than 50 per cent of the families had left all the other villages.

The framers of the statement thus comment on the figures:

> "To fully grasp the significance of the above figures it should be borne in mind that Hyderabad tahsil is in one of the best situated parts of the province. It is immediately round the district headquarters, while the Hyderabad District itself is the central district of the province — both the eastern desert boundary and the hilly western border of the province lying far away. Even the Sukkur District, which witnessed the recent abominable atrocities, is far distant from Hyderabad. If that is the state of affairs in the safest part of the province, the extent of migration from villages in the tahsils in other districts such as Dadu, Jacobabad, Larkana and Sukkur can easily be imagined."

I need not reproduce the other paragraphs of the statement. The whole of it is a dignified and dispassionate narrative of the calamity that has overtaken the Hindus. The narrative shows that it has begun to affect the Muslims also. The Hindus of Sind are enterprising. They supply the felt wants of the Muslim agriculturists. The two are closely intertwined. Communalism of the virulent type is a recent growth. The lawlessness is a monster with many faces. It hurts all in the end including those who are primarily responsible for it.

The writers of the covering letter are right in saying that the Sind calamity is an all-India concern. It is as much the duty of the Congress as of the Muslim League and the Hindu Mahasabha to deal with the situation in the right spirit. The Government of Sind will be judged by the manner in which they handle the situation. Nor can the Central Government look on indifferently while a province of India, which is watered by the mighty Indus and which contains the remains of our proud and ancient past, is being devastated by lawlessness which, if not checked in

time, may travel beyond the imaginary boundary of Sind. For what happens in India, whether good or bad, in one part, must ultimately affect the whole of India.

On the train to Bombay, 11-9-'40

Harijan, 15-9-1940

121

SIND HINDUS

Shri Shamlal Gidwani writes a letter on the situation in Sind from which I quote the following:

> "Most of us Sind Hindus have not been able to follow the advice you thought fit to tender regarding non-violence. We find that this advice is in direct conflict with the teaching of Lord Shri Krishna. We have also been advised by you to migrate somewhere else if we are not able to protect ourselves. This advice again we are unable to follow for practical reasons.
>
> You know several of the reasons, and you have yourself mentioned some of them in your recent article in *Harijan* which we all greatly appreciate. You also know that Hindus in Sind, though only 27 per cent of the population, own fifty per cent of the land. We are scattered all over the province, and our population in some of the villages is between two to ten per cent. We pay nearly the whole of the income-tax revenue in the province; we contribute fifty per cent of land revenue and nearly the whole of the customs revenue. If we follow your advice, we shall not only be cowards but become landless and countryless. There is also a danger in our migrating to other provinces, for it will mean a public confession of the failure of our community to protect itself merely because an aggressive community thought fit to tyrannize over us and the protecting arms of law and order were not made available for us. That would again be a confession of the failure of democracy. On the other hand, what we feel is that, if you had advised the people of Sind — particularly the Hindus — to train themselves in the use of arms, they

would have been able to better protect themselves and would have been saved all the series of murders that had been wantonly committed on the Hindus in recent months."

At the same time that I received this letter, I saw in the papers that five Hindus were shot dead openly while they were pursuing their normal business. As usual the murderers have not been traced. Is this a plan of terrorism to drive the Hindus out of Sind, or is it something else? Someone in Sind ought to be able to answer the question.

Shri Gidwani does not subscribe to non-violence. He thinks that my advice is contrary to the teachings of Lord Krishna. He thinks for (himself) very good reasons, that the Hindus cannot act non-violently. For equally good reasons he thinks they cannot migrate. But he would like me to advise them to defend themselves by arms. This is like asking a nature cure physician to prescribe allopathic drugs. Can he be trusted to prescribe the right drugs? And what will my advice be worth when my own hands are incapable of wielding arms? Shri Gidwani should go to a physician who knows the business and will, on due occasion, run to the rescue and always be ready to give the necessary training. I have said that for those who do not believe in non-violence armed defence is the only remedy. But if I am asked to advise how it can be done, I can only say, "I do not know."

But Shri Gidwani is trifling with the crisis when he lazily looks up to me to guide Sind Hindus on impossible terms. If he sincerely believes in the solution he has proposed, he must himself take the training at once and lead the terrified Hindus of Sind along the path of armed defence. It is wrong for the leaders of Sind to look for outside help. They should cease to write. They should seriously think out a plan of action, violent or non-violent, and follow it up firmly and bravely.

I venture also to suggest to the responsible Muslims of Sind that their reputation is at stake. If they cannot stop those senseless murders of innocent people, history will find them guilty. They will never persuade anybody that they are helpless to deal with the mischief. Such acts

are impossible without the silent sympathy of the society to which the perpetrators of murders belong.

Simla, 28-9-'40

Harijan 6-10-1940

122

MY ADVICE TO NOAKHALI HINDUS

Manoranjan Babu and other friends from Noakhali came to see me during my stay in Malikanda about the difficulties of the Hindus in their locality Manoranjan Babu has been in correspondence with me in the matter for some time I have not examined the grievances I had neither the time nor the wish to do so That is the special province of the Provincial Congress Committee and finally the central body But I had no difficulty in giving general advice Their case is more or less like the Sukkur case There is a great difference in degree But I feel sure that no popularly elected Government can successfully cope with widespread goondaism as it is alleged to be in Noakhali It is essentially a case of self-defence Self-respect and honour cannot be protected by others They are for each individual himself or herself to guard Governments can at best punish offenders after the offence has been committed They cannot assure prevention except in so far as punishment acts as a deterrent Self-defence can be violent or non-violent. I have always advised and insisted on non-violent defence. But I recognize that it has to be learnt like violent defence It requires a different training from that which is required for violent-defence. Therefore, if the capacity for non-violent self-defence is lacking, there need be no hesitation in using violent means. But Manoranjan Babu being an old Congressman said, "You say I cannot retaliate even in self-defence?" "That is certainly my view," I replied. "There was, however, a resolution passed by the Gaya Congress that the use of force in self-defence was permissible to Congressmen. I have never justified the resolution. Non-violence becomes meaningless if violence is permitted for self-defence What is it but self-defence in national resistance against an

aggressor nation? I would therefore advise secession from the Congress, if you contemplate the use of force in defending yourselves in the circumstances described by you."

"But", said Manoranjan Babu, supposing I adopt the Gaya resolution, would I be accused of communalism if I defended the aggrieved Hindus?" "Certainly not," I replied. "In the first place, you do not cease to be Hindu because you are a Congressman. You will, however, be guilty of communalism, if you side with Hindus right or wrong. In the case in point you will defend Hindus not because they are Hindus but because they are afflicted. I would expect you to defend Muslims if you found them molested by Hindus. A Congressman recognizes or should recognize no communal distinction."

The interviewers then discussed the Congress dissensions and told me that many Hindus despairing of Congress aid had joined the Hindu Mahasabha, and asked whether they could do likewise. I told them that in theory I could see no objection. Whether the local circumstances justified the step or not I could not judge. But if I was a Congressman and found that as such I could not act effectively, I should not hesitate to join an organization which could render effective assistance. I added, however, that no responsible Congressman could hold office in a Congress organization and yet be a member of the Hindu Mahasabha which is frankly a communal organization. The whole question bristles with difficulties. The occasion demands calmness, truthfulness, and boldness. Communalism is bound to win, if the Congress cannot become effectively non-violent. It will itself become communal in action if it plays with non-violence. For the majority of Congressmen who are Hindus are bound to drift into violence, if they do not know the effective use of non-violence. I am quite clear in my mind that the Congress can remain non-communal only if it becomes truly non-violent in all matters. It cannot be non-violent only towards the rulers and violent towards others. That way lie disgrace and disaster.

Calcutta, 26-2-'40

Harijan, 2-3-1940

123

A TICKLISH QUESTION

Q. I am a Hindu student. I have been great friends with a Muslim, but we have fallen out over the question of idol worship. I find solace in idol worship, but I cannot give an answer to my Muslim friend in terms of what may be called convincing. Will you say something on idol worship in the *Harijan*?

A. My sympathies are both with you and your Muslim friend. I suggest your reading my writings on the question in *Young India* and, if you feel at all satisfied, let your Muslim friend read them too. If your friend has real love for you, he will conquer his prejudice against idol-worship. A friendship which exacts oneness of opinion and conduct is not worth much. Friends have to tolerate one another's ways of life even though they may be different, except where the difference is fundamental Maybe your friend has come to think that it is sinful to associate with you as you are an idolator. Idolatry is bad, not so idol-worship. An idolator makes a fetish of his idol An idol-worshipper sees God even in a stone and therefore takes the help of an idol to establish his union with God. Every Hindu child knows that the stone in the famous temple in Benares is not Kashi Vishwanath. But he believes that the Lord of the Universe does reside specially in that stone. This play of the imagination is permissible and healthy. Every edition of the *Gita* on a bookstall has not that sanctity which I ascribe to my own copy. Logic tells me there is no more sanctity in my copy than in any another. The sanctity is in my imagination. But that imagination brings about marvellous concrete results. It changes men's lives. I am of opinion that whether we admit it or not, we are all idol-worshippers or idolators, if the distinction I have drawn is not allowed. A book, a building, a picture, a carving are surely all images in which God does reside, but they are not God. He who says they are errs.

Harijan, 9-3-1940

124

USE OF FORCE AGAINST MUSLIMS

Q. You talk of complete independence from Britain and at the same time of settling the question of minorities through a Constituent Assembly. This means that, if Muslims do not listen to you, you would want to use British forces to compel them to submit to your will.

A. This question simply ignores my own position and, so far as I know, the Congress position. The Congress cannot want independence and the use of British forces at the same time. But that is not all. The Congress will not coerce Muslims or any minority. That would not be a non-violent approach The greatest coercion is British coercion And the Congress is impatient to get out of that coercion My hope in desiring a Constituent Assembly is that whether the Muslims are represented by the Muslim League mentality or any other, the representatives when they are face to face with the reality will not think of cutting up India according to religions but will regard India as an indivisible whole and discover a national, i e Indian, solution of even specifically Muslim questions But if the hope is frustrated, the Congress cannot forcibly resist the express will of the Muslims of India. Needless to say the Congress can never seek the assistance of British forces to resist the vivisection. It is the Muslims who will impose their will by force singly or with British assistance on an unresisting India. If I can carry the Congress with me, I would not put the Muslims to the trouble of using force. I would be ruled by them for it would still be Indian rule. In other words, the Congress will have only a non-violent approach to every question and difficulty arising. But just as it is possible that Muslim representatives to the Constituent Assembly may wear another hue than that of the Muslim League, it is also possible that the others may be non-Congressmen. In that event, the British will be where they are, only they will

be wooed by both the parties alternately and will remain the architects of India's destiny For then, with the Congress swept away, non-violence will be blown to the winds and naturally the infinitely superior violence or the British aided by the willing co-operation of the wooing party will easily rule India For the only force matched against British force is that of non-violence, incomplete though it is, of the Congress

Harijan, 23 3-1940

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MY ANSWFR TO QAID-E-AZAM

Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah is reported to have said

"Mr Gandhi has been saying for the last 20 years that there cannot be any Swaraj without Hindu-Muslim unity Mr Gandhi is fighting for a Constituent Assembly May I point out to Mr Gandhi and the Congress that they are fighting for a Constituent Assembly, which we cannot accept? Therefore, the idea of Constituent Assembly is impracticable and unacceptable Mr Gandhi wants a Constituent Assembly for purposes of ascertaining the views of Muslims, and if they do not agree, he would then give up all hope and then will agree with us If there exists the will to come to a settlement with the Muslim League, then why does not Mr Gandhi, as I have said more than once, honestly agree that the Congress is a Hindu organization and that it does not represent anything but the solid body of Hindus? Why should Mr Gandhi not be proud to say 'I am a Hindu and the Congress is a Hindu body'? I am not ashamed of saying that I am a Muslim and that the Muslim League is the representative of Muslims Why all this camouflage, why this threat of civil disobedience, and why this fight for a Constituent Assembly? Why should not Mr. Gandhi come as a Hindu leader and let me meet him proudly representing the Mussalmans?"

My position is and has been clear. I am proud of being a Hindu, but I have never gone to anybody as a Hindu

to secure Hindu-Muslim unity. My Hinduism demands no pacts. My support of the Khilafat was unconditional. I am no politician in the accepted sense. But whatever talks I had with Qaid-e-Azam or any other have been on behalf of the Congress which is not a Hindu organization. Can a Hindu organization have a Muslim divine as President, and can its Working Committee have 4 Muslim members out of 15? I still maintain that there is no Swaraj without Hindu-Muslim unity. I can never be party to the coercion of Muslims or any other minority. The Constituent Assembly as conceived by me is not intended to coerce anybody. Its sole sanction will be an agreed solution of communal questions. If there is no agreement, the Constituent Assembly will be automatically dissolved The Constituent Assembly or any body of elected representatives can alone have a fully representative status. The Congress representative capacity has been and can be questioned But who can question the sole representative capacity of the elected delegates to the Constituent Assembly? I cannot understand the Muslim opposition to the proposed Constituent Assembly. Are the opponents afraid that the Muslim League will not be elected by Muslim voters? Do they not realize that any Muslim demand made by the Muslim delegates will be irresistible? If the vast majority of Indian Muslims feel that they are not one nation with their Hindu and other brethren, who will be able to resist them? But surely it is permissible to dispute the authority of the 50,000 Muslims who listened to Qaid-e-Azam, to represent the feelings of eight crores of Indian Muslims.

Sevagram, 26-3-'40

Harijan, 30-3-1940

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MY POSITION

Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan has, in his criticism of my reply to Qaid-e-Azam, put some questions which I gladly answer. I must adhere to my statement that I have never spoken to anybody on the communal question as a Hindu. I have no authority. Whenever I have spoken to anybody I have spoken as a Congressman, but often only as an individual. No Congressman, not even the President, can always speak as a representative. Big things have always been transacted on this planet by persons belonging to different organizations coming together and talking informally in their non-representative capacity. I fear that even the answer I am about to give must be taken as representing nobody but myself. In the present instance I have reason to say that probably I do not represent any single member of the Working Committee. I am answering as a peace-maker, as a friend (and may I say brother) of the Mussalmans.

As a man of non-violence I cannot forcibly resist the proposed partition if the Muslims of India really insist upon it. But I can never be a willing party to the vivisection. I would employ every non-violent means to prevent it. For it means the undoing of centuries of work done by numberless Hindus and Muslims to live together as one nation. Partition means a patent untruth. My whole soul rebels against the idea that Hinduism and Islam represent two antagonistic cultures and doctrines. To assent to such a doctrine is for me denial of God. For I believe with my whole soul that the God of the *Quran* is also the God of the *Gita*, and that we are all, no matter by what name designated, children of the same God. I must rebel against the idea that millions of Indians who were Hindus the other day changed their nationality on adopting Islam as their religion.

But that is my belief. I cannot thrust it down the throats of the Muslims who think that they are a different

nation. I refuse, however, to believe that the eight crores of Muslims will say that they have nothing in common with their Hindu and other brethren. Their mind can only be known by a referendum duly made to them on that clear issue. The contemplated Constituent Assembly can easily decide the question. Naturally on an issue such as this there can be no arbitration. It is purely and simply a matter of self-determination. I know of no other conclusive method of ascertaining the mind of the eight crores of Muslims.

But the contemplated Constituent Assembly will have the framing of a constitution as its main function. It cannot do this until the communal question is settled.

I still believe that there can be no Swaraj by non-violent means without communal unity. And eight crores of Muslims can certainly bar the way to peaceful freedom. If then I still talk of civil disobedience, it is because I believe that the Muslim masses want freedom as much as the rest of the population of this country. And assuming that they do not, civil disobedience will be a powerful means of educating public opinion whether Muslim, Hindu or any other. It will also be an education of world opinion. But I will not embark upon it unless I am, as far as is humanly possible, sure that non-violence will be observed both in spirit and in the letter. I hope that Nawabzada has no difficulty in believing that whatever is gained by civil disobedience will be gained for all. When India gets the power to frame her own constitution, the Muslims will surely have a decisive voice in shaping their own future. It will not be, cannot be, decided by the vote of the majority.

Lastly, I suggest to the Nawabzada that he wrote in haste the lines about the President of the Congress. For they are contrary to the history of our own times. And he was equally in haste in suggesting that "the sole objective of the Congress under Mr. Gandhi's fostering care has been the revival of Hinduism and the imposition of Hindu culture on all and sundry." My own objective is not the issue in the terrible indictment. The objective

of the Congress is wholly political Nothing is to be gained by making statements that are incapable of proof. So far as my own objective is concerned, my life is an open book. I claim to represent all the cultures, for my religion, whatever it may be called, demands the fulfilment of all cultures. I am at home wherever I go, for I regard all religions with the same respect as my own.

Sevagram, 9-4-'40

Harijan, 13 4 1940

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WE ARE ALL BROTHERS

We are all equal before our Maker — Hindus, Mussalmans, Parsis, Christians, worshippers of one God Why then do we fight among ourselves ?

We are all brothers — even the Qaid-e-Azam is my brother I have meant all that I have said about him, never has a frivolous word escaped my lips, and I say that I want to win him over A speaker said that I would not fight until I had won him over, and he was right. There was a time when there was not a Muslim whose confidence I did not enjoy Today I have forfeited that confidence and most of the Urdu press pours abuse on me But I am not sorry for it It only confirms me in my belief that there is no Swaraj without a settlement with the Mussalmans.

You will perhaps ask, in that case, why am I talking of a fight. I do so in order to have a Constituent Assembly which means agreement and settlement But if the Mussalmans will have nothing to do with it, I will understand that there is no settlement. I am also a reader of the *Quran* like them, and I will tell them that the *Quran* makes no distinction between Hindus and Mussalmans. But if they feel that they should have Heaven without the Hindus, I will not grudge it to them.

Harijan, 30-3-1940

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CONFUSION OF THOUGHT

Q. You will be responsible for a gross injustice if you persist in giving to India a majority Government with only 'safeguards' for the minorities. The latter ought to have an effective part in the actual government of the country.

A. You have evidently confused majority rule with Hindu rule implying that the Hindu majority is irremovable. The fact is that the majority in all the provinces is a mixed majority. The parties are not Muslims and Hindus; they are Congressmen, Independents, Muslim Leaguers, Muslim Independents, Labourites, etc. The Congress majority everywhere is a mixed majority and could be better balanced if there was no tension. The tension is a distemper. A distemper can never be a permanent feature of any growing society which India is. Whatever the outcome of the Muslim League demonstration and its claim, some day or other there will be a solution of the issues raised. The outcome will never be pure Muslim or Hindu majorities in any single province. The parties will be mixed and aligned according to different policies, unless democracy is crushed and autocracy reigns supreme in India as a whole or India is vivisected into two or more dead parts. If you have followed my argument, it must be clear to you that there will never be a denial of power to any party or group so far as the Congress is concerned. Minorities are entitled to full protection of their rights, for so long as they have to divide power with others, they run the risk of their special rights being adulterated.

Harijan, 6-4-1940

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A BAFFLING SITUATION

A question has been put to me: "Do you intend to start general civil disobedience although Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah has declared war against Hindus and has got the Muslim League to pass a resolution favouring vivisection of India into two? If you do, what becomes of your formula that there is no Swaraj without communal unity?"

I admit that the step taken by the Muslim League at Lahore creates a baffling situation. But I do not regard it so baffling as to make civil disobedience an impossibility. Supposing that the Congress is reduced to a hopeless minority, it will still be open to it, indeed it may be its duty, to resort to civil disobedience. The struggle will not be against the majority, it will be against the foreign ruler. If the struggle succeeds, the fruits thereof will be reaped as well by the Congress as by the opposing majority. Let me, however, say in parenthesis that, until the conditions I have mentioned for starting civil disobedience are fulfilled, civil disobedience cannot be started in any case. In the present instance there is nothing to prevent the imperial rulers from declaring their will in unequivocal terms that henceforth India will govern herself according to her own will, not that of the rulers as has happened hitherto. Neither the Muslim League nor any other party can oppose such a declaration. For the Muslims will be entitled to dictate their own terms. Unless the rest of India wishes to engage in internal fratricide, the others will have to submit to Muslim dictation if the Muslims will resort to it. I know no non-violent method of compelling the obedience of eight crores of Muslims to the will of the rest of India, however powerful a majority the rest may represent. The Muslims must have the same right of self-determination that the rest of India has. We are at present a joint family. Any member may claim a division.

Thus, so far as I am concerned, my proposition that there is no Swaraj without communal unity holds as good today as when I first enunciated it in 1919.

But civil disobedience stands on a different footing. It is open even to one single person to offer it, if he feels the call. It will not be offered for the Congress alone or for any particular group. Whatever benefit accrues from it will belong to the whole of India. The injury, if there is any, will belong only to the civil disobedience party.

But I do not believe that Muslims, when it comes to a matter of actual decision, will ever want vivisection. Their good sense will prevent them Their self-interest will deter them. Their religion will forbid the obvious suicide which the partition would mean. The 'two-nation' theory is an untruth. The vast majority of Muslims of India are converts to Islam or are descendants of converts They did not become a separate nation as soon as they became converts. A Bengali Muslim speaks the same tongue that a Bengali Hindu does, eats the same food, has the same amusements as his Hindu neighbour They dress alike I have often found it difficult to distinguish by outward sign between a Bengali Hindu and a Bengali Muslim The same phenomenon is observable more or less in the South among the poor who constitute the masses of India. When I first met the late Sir Ali Imam I did not know that he was not a Hindu. His speech, his dress, his manners, his food were the same as of the majority of the Hindus in whose midst I found him. His name alone betrayed him Not even that with Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah. For his name could be that of any Hindu. When I first met him, I did not know that he was a Muslim. I came to know his religion when I had his full name given to me His Indian nationality was written in his face and manner. The reader will be surprised to know that for days, if not months, I used to think of the late Vithalbhai Patel as a Muslim as he used to sport a beard and a Turkish cap. The Hindu law of inheritance governs many Muslim groups Sir Mahomad Iqbal used to speak with pride of his Brahmanical descent Iqbal and Kitchlew are names common to Hindus

and Muslims. The Hindus and Muslims of India are not two nations. Those whom God has made one, man will never be able to divide.

And is Islam such an exclusive religion as Qaid-e-Azam would have it? Is there nothing in common between Islam and Hinduism or any other religion? Or is Islam merely an enemy of Hinduism? Were the Ali Brothers and their associates wrong when they hugged Hindus as blood-brothers and saw so much in common between the two? I am not now thinking of individual Hindus who may have disillusioned the Muslim friends. Qaid-e-Azam has, however, raised a fundamental issue. This is his thesis:

> "It is extremely difficult to appreciate why our Hindu friends fail to understand the real nature of Islam and Hinduism. They are not religions in the strict sense of the word, but are, in fact, different and distinct social orders, and it is a dream that the Hindus and the Muslims can ever evolve a common nationality. This misconception of one Indian nation has gone far beyond the limits and is the cause of most of our troubles and will lead India to destruction if we fail to revise our notions in time.
>
> The Hindus and Muslims have two different religious philosophies, social customs, literatures. They neither intermarry, nor interdine together, and indeed, they belong to two different civilizations which are based mainly on conflicting ideas and conceptions. Their aspects on life and of life are different. It is quite clear that the Hindus and Mussalmans derive their inspiration from different sources of history. They have different epics, their heroes are different and they have different episodes. Very often the hero of one is a foe of the other and, likewise, their victories and defeats overlap. To yoke together two such nations under a single State, one as a numerical minority and the other as majority, must lead to growing discontent and final destruction of any fabric that may be so built up for the government of such a State."

He does not say some Hindus are bad; he says Hindus as such have nothing in common with Muslims. I make bold to say that he and those who think like him are

rendering no service to Islam; they are misinterpreting the message inherent in the very word Islam. I say this because I feel deeply hurt over what is now going on in the name of the Muslim League. I should be failing in my duty, if I did not warn the Muslims of India against the untruth that is being propagated amongst them. This warning is a duty because I have faithfully served them in their hour of need and because Hindu-Muslim unity has been and is my life's mission.

Sevagram, 1-4-'40

Harijan, 6-4-1940

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HINDU-MUSLIM

Thus writes a Khan Bahadur from Delhi:

"In your article in *Harijan* of April 6, you observe as follows:

'I should be failing in my duty if I did not warn the Mussalmans against the untruth that is being propagated amongst them. This warning is a duty because I have faithfully served them in their hour of need and because Hindu-Muslim unity has been and is my life's mission.'

I will request you to consider the Hindu-Muslim problem from our point of view. The stumbling block to any negotiations for a settlement of the communal question has been the refusal of the Congress to recognize the All India Muslim League as the authoritative and sole representative body of the Indian Mussalmans. The Congress claims that it speaks for whole India and that it has on its rolls a considerable number of Mussalmans. The very fact that the Congress has made several attempts to come to terms with Mr. Jinnah shows that it is not fully confident of its representative character, as far as the Mussalmans are concerned. But do you not honestly feel that the Congress Mussalmans are the real stumbling block in the way of Hindu-Muslim

unity, and that it is for their sake that the Congress is not making a serious effort to solve the problem? Believe me, they are a lazy lot who are enjoying their present position because they are in the Congress.

You know what the Muslim masses did to your President in Calcutta where for years he had been leading Id prayer. You also know that they have no courage to address a Muslim meeting to convert the Mussalmans to their point of view. You blame the British for creating Princes, Moderates and Khan Bahadurs like me. You blame the British for trying to create another Ulster in India. Has not the Congress created equivalent Moderates and Khan Bahadurs in Azads, Asaf Alis and Kidwais? Is not the action of the Congress tantamount to creation of a Muslim Ulster?

Yon may cite the cases of Mr. Asaf Ali succeeding in the Municipal elections of Delhi. I may inform you that but for a division in the Provincial League and bad handling of the situation Mr. Asaf Ali would have never won the election. I may inform you that even as it is, when Delhi Congress wanted to contest the Municipal elections as a party, Mr. Asaf Ali, who is now a member of the Congress Working Committee, had declined to take a Congress ticket. Therefore, Mr. Asaf Ali's election was not a test case; and if you pardon my saying so, even now let Mr. Asaf Ali re-seek election on a Congress ticket, and I am confident that any League candidate would defeat him. You will thus realize that your being baffled by the Lahore resolution of the League is not justified when Mussalmans have ceased to trust in your life s mission regarding Hindu-Muslim unity. On the other hand they are convinced that the sole aim of the Congress, for the last ten years at least, has been to divide and rule the Mussalmans. I will beg of you to reconsider your attitude towards the League. Please don't trust the Congressite Mussalmans, for they are not only 'Mir Jafars' amongst us, but the enemies of Hindu-Muslim accord and India's freedom."

Just now I am inundated with letters of protest from Muslim friends. Most writers do not argue. They give

themselves satisfaction by abusing Shree Pyarelal, who opens and deals with the daily post, gives me only those letters which, he thinks, I should see Of these I take notice of those I think I must. In some cases I answer them privately. Therefore correspondents who never receive acknowledgement either through *Harijan* or the post should know the reason.

There are some Muslim letters of sympathy too. One of them says that in his house he has to listen to the wildest criticism of me. No adjective is too bad to use. Much of the criticism he knows to be false. What is he to do, he asks. Is he to leave the house, or is he to engage in endless disputation and convert his house into a bear garden? I have advised my correspondent neither to leave the house nor to engage in a discussion. If he can, he may put in a mild word when he knows that a manifest falsehood is being uttered and believed.

The correspondence in my possession and the Urdu press cuttings and even some English cuttings from journals owned by Muslims go to show that I am believed to be the arch-enemy of Islam and Indian Muslims. If I was at one time acclaimed as their greatest friend and suffered the praise, I must suffer too to be described as an enemy Truth is known only to God. I am confident that in nothing that I am doing, saying or thinking I am their enemy. They are blood-brothers and will remain so, though they may disown me ever so much.

Now for the Khan Bahadur's letter.

I have never understood the reason behind the demand for the recognition by the Congress of the All India Muslim League as the sole and authoritative Muslim body Why should such an admission be demanded or expected? How is it compatible with a genuine desire for a settlement?

The Congress attempts to represent all. But it has never demanded recognition as such from anybody. The all India status has to be deserved. But whether it be deserved or not, admission thereof is a superfluity. The Congress has never claimed that it represents the whole of Indian Muslims. It has not claimed to represent any single

community wholly. But it does claim to represent every single national interest irrespective of class, caste, colour or creed. Even that claim need not be admitted by those who deal with it. It should be sufficient consolation to each party that it is considered by the other important enough to seek friendship with.

The Congress has always frankly admitted that it has not on its register as many Muslims as it would like. But it has been proud to have had the support of many eminent Muslims. Hakimsaheb Ajmalkhan was the tallest among them. Qaid-e-Azam himself was a great Congressman. It was only after non-co-operation that he, like many other Congressmen belonging to several communities, left it. Their defection was purely political. They disliked direct action.

It is wrong to swear at the nationalist Muslims simply because they are attached to the Congress. If they become members of the League, they will become worthy Muslims ! !! My correspondent simply does not know how much Congress Muslims are trying to bring about unity. When unity is reestablished, as it must be, I have no doubt that nationalist Muslims will get their due both from Hindus and Muslims.

It is torture of truth to suggest that they are so many Mir Jafars. They are betraying neither Islam nor India. They are as true Muslims according to their lights as members of the League claim to be. It is equal torture of truth to suggest that the Congress is following the British method of divide and rule. The Congress is a political party with one single aim. It would be a bad day for India if the Congress could be proved to have mean motives. Is it mean to woo Muslim opinion by the fairest means imaginable? Rightly or wrongly the Congress does not believe in watertight compartments on a communal basis. If religion is allowed to be as it is, a personal concern and a matter between God and man, there are many dominating common factors between the two which will compel common life and common action. Religions are not for separating men from one another, they are meant to bind them. It is

a misfortune that today they are so distorted that they have become a potent cause of strife and mutual slaughter.

It will perhaps now be clear why I can have no concern with Asaf Ali Saheb's case. I would grant that he would be beaten in a contest between him and a Leaguer. Let it be further granted that such will be the case in the majority of such contests. It will in no way weaken my position. It will prove the superior organizing ability of the League and its popularity among the Muslims. I have not doubted either. My case is incredibly simple. I must not be called upon to make any admissions about the status of the League before thinking of unity through the League. I must not be disloyal to the Muslim nationalists however insignificant they may be considered to be. I ask the Khan Bahadur, the writer of the letter under discussion, to exert his influence to bring the two communities together.

Sevagram, 4-6-'40

Harijan, 8-6-1940

131

ALL ON TRIAL

"My immediate object in writing to you is to draw your attention to the activities of the Khaksars. What has been taking place in Lahore is well-known to you. The Khaksar movement has been declared to be an unlawful association. I enclose a synopsis of the writings and speeches of Alama Mashriqui. They must have been brought to your notice before. But I have marked the portions which show that it is a movement directly opposed to non-violence of which you are an apostle. It is feared that the ban may be removed. If that happens, we will attribute it to what appears to us to be an impossible attitude adopted by the Congress — creating deadlock in seven provinces out of eleven. The British have no doubt from the very beginning adopted the policy of divide and rule, but the policy adopted by the Congress has contributed no less to the

British relying solely on the support of the Muslims. The suppression of a violent movement like that of the Khaksars falls within the special responsibilities of the Governor under Section 52 (1) (a), but the Governor may refrain from adopting such a course for the simple reason that it may lead to the resignation of the present ministry and the addition of an eighth province to the seven in which the constitution has already been suspended If the ban is removed, Hindu and Sikh organizations will be formed on the same lines as that of the Khaksars. The Akalis assembled at Attari the other day resolved to enlist a lakh of men to the ranks of their *Dal* If that plan materializes, there will be bloodshed in the land Can you remain a quiet and inactive observer of the carnage which will be the necessary result of these movements? What do you propose to do to prevent such a catastrophe?"

This is an extract from a well-known Punjabi. He is right in surmising that I must have received Khaksar literature I am not publishing what my correspondent has sent. I am studying the papers and hope to be able as soon as possible to give a *resume* of the literature in my possession. There is no doubt that it is a military and militant organization. No Government can allow private military organizations to function without endangering public peace. I am quite sure that the Punjab Government will not permit the Khaksar organization to be revived in its original form. I quite agree with my correspondent that, if the Khaksars are permitted to function as before, the Sikhs and others will have to be treated likewise. This cannot but lead to a clash.

My correspondent, however, suggests that, if the ban is removed, "we will attribute it to what appears to us to be an impossible attitude adopted by the Congress — creating a deadlock in seven provinces out of eleven." I am unable to subscribe to the view. The Congress resignations had nothing to do with the communal tension. They were an honourable protest against the British Government making India a belligerent country over the responsible heads of

the eleven provinces which were supposed to be autonomous, and resorting to other arbitrary acts in connection with the war The resignations were the least and the mildest step the Congress could have taken. But events have justified the step on other grounds too. Communal bitterness would have increased if the Congress ministries had continued So long as the Congress retains its non-violent policy, it cannot administer the affairs of the country except with the willing consent of the vast majority of the people Mere majority through the ballot-box does not count. If I have my way with the Congress, I would not allow it to hold power with the aid of the British bayonet I did not hesitate to express my dissent publicly when the Congress ministers were obliged to make use of the police and even the military to suppress public violence. They were bound to use them if they were to remain in power. My point was that, having suppressed violence as they were bound to, the Congress might have made a public declaration that it had not attained non-violent control over the people and that therefore, consistently with its policy, it should abdicate

But I fear that in holding this view I am in a minority of one My non-violence is not exhausted with the effort to displace the British Government. Such non-violence would be poor stuff, hardly deserving the name. Therefore, if I can help it, there will be no Congress ministry without a substantial communal settlement I am quite clear that real independence is impossible without a consistent non-violent technique. I am equally clear that there is hope of India gaining real independence if the Congress will refuse to compromise on it and will adhere to the means and for so doing dare to wander in the wilderness

The Khaksar menace is no menace in itself. As a symptom of a deeper disease it is a portent. To bring into being rival organizations is a simple thing, but it is no remedy. It merely multiplies the evil. If I had my way I would ask the people to meet the Khaksar violence with non-violence. But from the papers and the correspondence before me, I observe that the people seek outside

protection against the danger, real or imaginary. That means the consolidation of existing authority, supplemented perhaps by private defensive preparations. I am interested in neither.

I have not discussed the terrible toll of deaths the Khaksars had to pay. My sympathies are wholly with the bereaved families. I say nothing about the shooting. A special tribunal is inquiring into the whole affair. If the tragedy leads to a searching of hearts, whatever the finding of the Committee, it will not have been enacted in vain.

Sevagram, 8-4-'40

Harijan, 13-4-1940

132

QUESTION BOX

CONGRESS NOT RESPONSIBLE

Q. Many people believe that the attitude of the Congress has precipitated the Muslim League resolution about partitioning India.

A. I do not think so. But if it has, it is a distinct gain. It is good that what was in should come out. It is easier now to deal with the problem. It will solve itself. One distinct gain is that nationalist Muslims have become awakened to a sense of their duty.

MUSLIM RULE=INDIAN RULE

Q. Would you prefer Muslim rule to British rule?

A. The question is badly put. You, being British, cannot get out of the habit of thinking that India is fit only to be ruled by someone. Muslim rule is equivalent to Indian rule. You might as well ask me whether I would prefer Bengali or Maratha to British rule. Maratha, Bengali, Sikh, Dravidian, Parsi, Christian (Indian), Muslim—all will be Indian rule. It makes no difference, to me that some Muslims regard themselves as a separate nation. It is enough for me that I do not consider them as such. They are sons of the soil. Muslims considered separately have

eight crores of unarmed Muslims scattered over India to look to. But you have the whole British nation and your army of occupation to look to. You belong to the ruling race. You are less than one hundred thousand in the midst of 350 millions over whom you rule. It is a matter of shame both for you and us. I need not weigh whose is the greater shame. The sooner we get out of it the better for both of us.

You will now understand my answer when I say that I would any day prefer Muslim rule to British rule. I have no doubt that, if British rule, which divides us by favouring one or the other as it suits the Britishers, were withdrawn today, Hindu and Muslims would forget their quarrels and live like brothers which they are. But supposing the worst happened and we had a civil war, it would last for a few days or months and we would settle down to business. In status we are equal. With you, it is different. You have disarmed us. Those of us who have been trained by you really belong to you rather than to us. We are no match for you in military power. You do not know how the rule has stunted the nation. Immediately British rule is really ended, we shall grow as never before, in spite of all forebodings.

Harijan 4-5-1940

133

AN ENGLISH SUGGESTION

An English friend writes thus:

"It is still reasonable at present to proceed on the assumption that the Muslims would accept something a good deal less than 'Pakistan'. But the trouble is that the longer the time that elapses without any compromise solution being reached, the stronger and more insistent will be the cry for 'Pakistan', so that in the end civil war or partition will be the only alternatives. I think the view held by some that there is nothing to be done but to wait upon events is fatal. It is up to the British now to use

all their powers of persuasion and statesmanship to *compel* the parties to settle.

The crux of the matter is who is to control power at the Centre — Hindus or Muslims ? Over this the Congress must be prepared to make great concessions. The principles of Parliamentary democracy and majority rule must be jettisoned. They are not applicable when two distinct civilizations have got to lie down together. Majority rule from the Muslim point of view will mean or, at any rate, contain the menace of the dominance of one civilization over the other. If the Congress do not recognize this quickly, I am afraid that partition will become, if not the only alternative, the best one — which will give you an idea of how bad the other alternatives will be !

If the Congress can be brought to see the need for great concessions on this point, I am sure compromise solutions can be found. I hold this necessity to be vital."

Of course the British Government can do much. They have done much by force. They can make the parties come to a solution by force. But they need not go so far. What they have done hitherto is to prevent a proper solution. In proof of my statement I commend the esteemed correspondent to the columns of *Harijan*. The only thing the British Government have to do is to change their attitude. Will they ? They can retain their hold on India only by a policy of divide and rule. A living unity between Muslims and Hindus is fraught with danger to their rule. It would mean an end of it. Therefore it seems to me that a true solution will come with the end of the rule, potentially if not in fact.

What can be done under the threat of Pakistan ? If it is not a threat but a desirable goal, why should it be prevented ? If it is undesirable and meant only for the Muslims to get more under its shadow, any solution would be an unjust solution. It would be worse than no solution. Therefore I am entirely for waiting till the menace is gone; India's independence is a living thing. No make-believe will suit. The whole world is in the throes of a new birth. Anything done for a temporary gain would be tantamount to an abortion.

I cannot think in terms of narrow Hinduism or narrow Islam. I am wholly uninterested in a patchwork solution. India is a big country, a big nation composed of different cultures, which are tending to blend with one another, each complementing the rest. If I must wait for the completion of the process, I must wait. It may not be completed in my day. I should love to die in the faith that it must come in the fullness of time. I should be happy to think that I had done nothing to hamper the process. Subject to this condition, I would do anything to bring about harmony. My life is made up of compromises, but they have been compromises that have brought me nearer the goal. Pakistan cannot be worse than foreign domination. I have lived under the latter though not willingly. If God so desires it, I may have to become a helpless witness to the undoing of my dream. But I do not believe that the Muslims really want to dismember India.

Sevagram, 29-4-'40

Harijan, 4-5-1940

134

WANTON DESTRUCTION IN BIDAR

A correspondent is grieved that I have been silent about the shocking tragedy in Bidar (Hyderabad State). I have before now said in another connection that because I say nothing in public about certain wrongs it is not to be thought that I am oblivious to them or that I am doing nothing. I must be allowed to judge what is best under given circumstances. If all I have heard about Bidar (not all has been published in the papers) is true, nothing quite like it has happened anywhere in all India. If Hyderabad State is not to be given over to lawlessness and Hindu life and property not rendered valueless, there should be a thorough and impartial judicial inquiry commanding confidence, and full compensation should be given to those who are rendered suddenly homeless. It is to be hoped that

Muslim opinion outside Hyderabad will ask for full investigation into the happenings.

Sevagram, 30-4-'40

Harijan 4-5-1940

135

BIDAR AND BIHAR

Q You feel keenly about Bidar. You ask for justice about it and you want Muslims outside Hyderabad to see that justice is done Do you feel equally keenly if Muslims are ill-treated as they were in Bihar?

A I do not know what the exact reference to Bihar is. All I can say is that not one single case of maltreatment of Muslims by Hindus having been reported to me has remained without investigation by me. This has been my practice since the days of the Khilafat I have not always succeeded in finding the truth or of giving satisfaction to the aggrieved parties that I had done my best. The Bihar charge is too vague to be answered more fully If a particular instance were mentioned, I should be able to say what I had done about it But supposing that I had failed in my duty to do justice, supposing further that I did not "feel equally keenly about Hindu injustice to Muslims', would that justify indifference about Bidar? I have said that there is nothing like Bidar in all the previous cases of Hindu-Muslim clashes, assuming of course that the allegations made were true. All I have asked is that full justice and reparation should be made through a tribunal *admittedly* impartial. My proposal in the case of Bidar should be applicable to all such cases.

Sevagram, 6-5-'40

Harijan, 11-5-1940

136

BIDAR

Five gentlemen from Hyderabad Deccan have sent me an offer to which there is a long preface containing all kinds of innuendoes against me. I need not burden these columns with their preface. If the adjectives used against me are deserved, they will stand whether I advertise them or not. If they are due to the ignorance of the authors, as I know they are, it is well for me not to notice them. Here is the offer :

> "Will Gandhiji agree that the whole Samajist movement which led to this and many other incidents should be thoroughly investigated by a commission, whose head should be a Parsi or a Christian, with an equal number of Hindu and Muslim members ? We are even prepared if Gandhiji agrees to arbitrate himself, as we are confident that the evidence with us will prove the case. As a preliminary, congenial atmosphere to conduct such an enquiry is all that is required. We, therefore, suggest that Gandhiji will not hesitate to demand that all the cases pending in court in connection with the Bidar conflagration should be withdrawn. We do not, of course, plead that cases of a serious nature, as that of murder or cases having no connection with the conflagration, should be included.
>
> Gandhiji is also of opinion that compensation should be given to those who have suffered. We fail to understand the logic behind it. If communal incidents are to be compensated, what would be the burden on the Exchequer ? Would the riots not be employed as a weapon to bring financial failure upon the Government ? Is it a remedy or an encouragement ? It is a novel demand indeed. We hope Gandhiji will accept our offer."

I have no difficulty about accepting the offer unreservedly. If the writers succeed in persuading the Government of His Exalted Highness likewise to accept the offer, they will have established a precedent which may well be

followed in all such cases Needless to say, if the court suggested by my correspondents comes into being, the composition and terms of reference will have to be by agreement.

I am asked to demand the withdrawal of the cases instituted against persons suspected of complicity. They were not instituted at my instance, and I presume they will not be withdrawn on my demand But I should have no hesitation in approving of all withdrawals if the court of inquiry is appointed I assure my friends that I am interested in elucidation of truth, not in the punishment of the guilty

But I am sorry I cannot forego the suggestion for compensation Compensation has been asked because it is alleged that the authorities failed to do their duty. The question of compensation has naturally to be referred to the proposed tribunal. My correspondents assure me of the sincerity of their proposal. I do not doubt it I shall await the results of their efforts to have the offer accepted by the State I wish them every success.

Sevagram, 28-5-'40

Harijan, 1-6-1940

137

HINDU-MUSLIM TANGLE

The partition proposal has altered the face of the Hindu-Muslim problem. I have called it an untruth. There can be no compromise with it. At the same time I have said that, if the eight crores of Muslims desire it, no power on earth can prevent it, notwithstanding opposition violent or non-violent It cannot come by honourable agreement.

That is the political aspect of it. But what about the religious and the moral which are greater than the political? For at the bottom of the cry for partition is the belief that Islam is an exclusive brotherhood, and anti-Hindu. Whether it is against other religions it is not stated. The newspaper cuttings in which partition is preached describe Hindus as practically untouchable. Nothing good can come

out of Hindus or Hinduism. To live under Hindu rule is a sin. Even joint Hindu-Muslim rule is not to be thought of. The cuttings show that Hindus and Muslims are already at war with one another and that they must prepare for the final tussle.

Time was when Hindus thought that Muslims were the natural enemies of Hindus. But as is the case with Hinduism, ultimately it comes to terms with the enemy and makes friends with it. The process had not been completed. As if nemesis had overtaken Hinduism, the Muslim League started the same game and taught that there could be no blending of the two cultures. In this connection I have just read a booklet by Shri Atulanand Chakrabarti which shows that ever since the contact of Islam with Hinduism there has been an attempt on the part of the best minds of both to see the good points of each other, and to emphasize inherent similarities rather than seeming dissimilarities. The author has shown Islamic history in a favourable light. If he has stated the truth and nothing but the truth, it is a revealing booklet which all Hindus and Muslims may read with profit. He has secured a very favourable and reasoned preface from Sir Shafaat Ahmed Khan and several other Muslim testimonials If the evidence collected there reflects the true evolution of Islam in India. then the partition propaganda is anti-Islamic.

Religion binds man to God and man to man. Does Islam bind Muslim only to Muslim and antagonize the Hindu ? Was the message of the Prophet peace only for and between Muslims and war against Hindus or non-Muslims ? Are eight crores of Muslims to be fed with this which I can only describe as poison ? Those who are instilling this poison into the Muslim mind are rendering the greatest disservice to Islam. I know that it is not Islam. I have lived with and among Muslims not for one day but closely and almost uninterruptedly for twenty years. Not one Muslim taught me that Islam was an anti-Hindu religion.

Sevagram, 29-4-'40

Harijan, 4-5-1940

138

HINDU-MUSLIM UNITY

Q. You can do Harijan work, you can organize *khadi* and village industries, but when it comes to Hindu-Muslim unity, you find many excuses for not organizing it.

A This charge has been brought against me by several Muslim correspondents unknown to me. But latterly it has been repeated with considerable vehemence by one who knows me intimately. The complainant challenges me to deal with the charge in *Harijan*. There can be no comparison between Harijans and Muslims I owe a debt to Harijans in need of any assistance that can be given to them. Harijan work is humanitarian work Muslims stand in no need of my humanitarianism They are a powerful community standing in no such need. Any work done for Muslims after the Harijan style will be resented. To cite *khadi* and village industries against me is thoughtless. These can be organized and are organized for all who will care to profit by them. As a matter of fact both Hindus and Muslims, and indeed others too, profit by these activities. Hindu-Muslim unity stands on its own footing. I have tried and am still trying to do my share of the work. I may have achieved no visible success, but I have no doubt that the direction in which I am working is the right one and is bound to lead us to the goal.

Harijan, 11-5 1940

139

SELF-DETERMINATION

Q. Are you right in conceding the right of self-determination to Muslims in a matter so vitally affecting others also, viz. Hindus, Sikhs, etc. ? Supposing that the majority of Muslims decide in favour of partition in terms of the Muslim League resolution, what happens to the self-

determination of Hindus, Sikhs, etc., who will be minorities in the Muslim States? If you go on like this, where will be the end to it?

A. Of course Hindus and Sikhs will have the same right. I have simply said that there is no other non-violent method of dealing with the problem. If every component part of the nation claims the right of self-determination for itself, there is no one nation and there is no independence. I have already said that Pakistan is such an untruth that it cannot stand. As soon as the authors begin to work it out, they will find that it is not practicable. In any case mine is a personal opinion. What the vast Hindu masses and the others will say or do I do not know. My mission is to work for the unity of all, for the sake of the equal good of all.

Harijan, 18-5-1940

140

PARTITION AND NON-MUSLIMS

Q. You have said in *Harijan* that "if the eight crores of Muslims desire partition, no power on earth can prevent it." Does it not strike you that 25 crores of non-Muslims too might have a say in the matter? Does not your statement imply that you put a premium on the opinion of the Muslims while underrating that of the Hindus?

A. I have only given my opinion. If the majority of Hindus or Christians or Sikhs or even Parsis, small though their number is, stubbornly resist the express wish of the duly elected representatives of eight crores of Muslims, they will do so at the peril of a civil war. This is not a question of majority or minority. If we are to solve our problems non-violently, there is no other way. I say this not because the eight crores happen to be Muslims. I would say the same if the eight crores were any other community.

Harijan, 25-5-1940

141

CURSE OF UNTOUCHABILITY

Several correspondents protest against my referring to the arguments advanced in favour of partition. They say that Islam is not exclusive, and that it teaches universal brotherhood and toleration. I have never denied this claim. It was because of my knowledge of Islam that I felt grieved over the arguments which go to prove the contrary. Almost every Muslim writing I take up nowadays contains disparagement of Hindus and Hinduism It cannot be otherwise if the case for partition is to be proved. But my correspondents are angry when I point out the anomaly They say I have hastily come to the conclusion from isolated writings of unimportant Muslims Unfortunately, the arguments referred to by me have proceeded from important Muslims.

But where the writers score over me is in regard to Hindu untouchability. They say in effect "You should be ashamed of bringing the charge of untouchability against the Muslim League. First cast out the beam from the Hindu eye before you attempt to deal with the mote in the Muslim eye. Has not the Hindu maintained for a thousand years complete boycott of Muslims? He will not drink or eat with him. He will not intermarry. He will not even let his house to him. Can you conceive a more effective isolation of a whole community than the Hindu has carried out? Will it not be a just nemesis if the Muslim now turns round and pays you in your own coin?"

I have admitted as much Whatever the Muslims do by way of retaliation will be richly deserved by Hindus. My question was and is, should they do so? Does it behove a great political party to play upon religious prejudices?

Whatever the Muslim League does or does not do, it behoves thoughtful Hindus to take note of the deserved taunt and purge Hinduism of its exclusiveness. It would not be protected by artificial barriers which have no sanction in ancient Hinduism or reason. Well did Maulana

Abul Kalam Azad say the other day how sick he was of hearing the cry at railway stations of Hindu or Muslim tea or water. I know this touch-me-not-ism is deep-rooted in Hinduism as it is practised today. But there is no reason why it should be tolerated by Congressmen. If they will be correct in their behaviour, they will pave the way for a radical transformation of Hindu society. The message of anti-untouchability does not end in merely touching the so-called untouchables. It has a much deeper meaning.

Sevagram, 28-5-'40

Harijan, 1-6-1940

142

PAKISTAN AND CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY

Q. The two-nation theory is by way of a counterblast to the demand for a Constituent Assembly which is about as absurd as the other thing. To me the idea of a Constituent Assembly ignores the existing conditions. 95 per cent of our people are illiterate, and nearly cent per cent are swayed by religious prejudices; and then there is the additional factor of corruption. And the fatal objection to a Constituent Assembly is that without a genuine desire on the part of the majority to give effect to safeguards the best of these are bound to prove unreal.

A. Surely you cannot speak of the Constituent Assembly side by side with Pakistan. The latter is wrong as I conceive it, in every way. There is nothing wrong in the idea of a Constituent Assembly. At its worst dangers surround its formation. Every big experiment is beset with dangers. These risks must be taken. Every effort should be made to minimize them. But there seems to me to be nothing like a Constituent Assembly for achieving the common purpose. I admit the difficulty of illiteracy. Indeed adult suffrage was introduced at the instance of Muslim nationalists including the late Ali Brothers. The danger of corruption is also there. The greater the organization the less felt is the effect of corruption because it is so widely distributed. Thus in the Congress there are much corruption

and jealousy, but they are confined to those few who run the machinery. But the vast body of Congressmen are untouched by these defects, though they profit by the good the Congress does. The danger you mention about safeguards will be reduced to the vanishing point if they come through a Constituent Assembly. For safeguards laid down by the representatives elected by the adult Muslim population will depend for their safety not on the goodwill or honesty of the majority but on the strength of the awakened Muslim masses. Fatality really attaches to your wrong conception of the majority, not to a Constituent Assembly. There is a majority of Hindus undoubtedly, but we observe that in popular political assemblies parties are not rigidly divided according to religious opinions, but they are according to political and other opinions. The curse of communalism became intensified by the introduction of separate electorates. The cry for partition is the logical outcome, but it is also the strongest condemnation, of separate electorates. When we have learnt wisdom we shall cease to think in terms of separate electorates and two nations. I believe in the innate goodness of human nature I therefore swear by the Constituent Assembly. The Muslim vote will surely decide the issue so far as their special interest is concerned. Arguing communally, therefore, the fear, if there is any, about a Constituent Assembly should surely be on the part of the Hindus. For if the Muslim vote goes in favour of partition, they have either to submit not to one but many partitions or to a civil war. As things are, all satisfy themselves by passing resolutions and seeing their names in print. In practice all of us remain where we are in a state of subjection A Constituent Assembly is a reality. It will not be a debating or legislative irresponsible body. By registering its final decision it will decide the fate of millions of human beings. You may oppose it. 'If you are successful in your opposition, there is the dread prospect of anarchy, not an orderly civil war. There seems to me to be no solution of the painful deadlock except through a Constituent Assembly.

Sevagram, 24-6-'40

Harijan, 29-6-1940

143

PAKISTAN AND AHIMSA

Q. A Gujarati Mussalman correspondent writes: I am a believer in *ahimsa* as well as Pakistan. How can I use the *ahimsa* principle for the realization of my ideal?

A. It is not possible to attain an iniquitous end by non-violent means. For instance, you cannot commit theft non-violently. As I understand Pakistan I do not regard it as a worthy ideal. But since you consider it to be a worthy end, you can certainly carry on a non-violent movement on its behalf. This means that you will always strive to convert your opponents by patient reasoning. You will impress everybody by your selfless devotion to your ideal. You will give a respectful hearing to what your opponents might have to say, and respectfully point out to them their mistake if they are in the wrong. Finally, if you feel that the people do not listen to you out of sheer bigotry and prejudice although your cause is absolutely just, you can non-violently non-co-operate with the obstructionists. But you may not injure or seek to injure anybody and must, on your part, patiently endure any injury that might be done to you. All this you will be able to do if impartial persons endorse the justice of your cause.

Harijan, 4-8-1940

144

THE HINDU-MUSLIM QUESTION

In his closing speech Gandhiji referred to the Hindu-Muslim question, as it had been raised during the debate. He said: "If a conflict is there in store for us, who can prevent it? We have to be prepared even for anarchy and chaos, but we must have the faith that non-violence cannot result in chaos. But if somehow disorders take place, they will be a test of our non-violence. Non-violence is a force

that gains in intensity with the increase in the violence that it has to deal with. I hope that you will get that power of non-violence before I die. But there is a message I should like to reach the ears of every Mussalman. India cannot win independence if eight or more crores of Mussalmans are opposed to it. But I cannot believe that all of them are so opposed, until it is proved to me by the vote of every adult Mussalman. Let them declare that they want to have their political salvation apart from that of the Hindus. India is a poor country full of Hindus and Mussalmans and others staying in every corner of it. To divide it into two is worse than anarchy. It is vivisection which cannot be tolerated—not because I am a Hindu, for I am speaking from this platform as a representative of Hindus, Muslims, Parsis and all else. But I will say to them, 'Vivisect me before you vivisect India. You shall not do what even the Moghuls, who ruled over India for over two centuries, did not do.' What I have said about the Muslims applies equally to Sikhs. If thirty lakhs of Sikhs willl obstruct Indian independence, we shall deal with them non-violently. Non-violent Swaraj cannot be won except by non-violence. There are other obstacles too imposed by the existence of an alien power. But we must strain every nerve to achieve communal peace. Islam means peace. That peace cannot be confined to the Muslims. It must mean peace for the whole world."

Harijan, 28-9-1940

145

SIR AKBAR HYDARI

The late Sir Akbar Hydari was a rare combination. He was a great scholar, philosopher and reformer. He was a devout Muslim, but he saw nothing antagonistic to Islam in Hinduism. He was a student of various religions. He was catholic in the choice of his friends. On the return voyage from the Second Round Table Conference we found ourselves in the same boat. He was a regular attendant at the evening prayers I used to have on board. He was so interested in the *Gita* verses and the *bhajans* we sang that he had got them all translated for him by Mahadev Desai. He had made me promise that we should labour together in India in the interest of communal unity But God had willed otherwise. The late Lord Willingdon had a different programme for me I was plunged into the Civil Disobedience fight. Sir Akbar and I could never carry out the programme. He had come under the influence of Shri Aurobindo Ghose. He was almost invariably in Pondicherry during the days when the sage of Pondicherry gave the quarterly *darshan* to his devotees. Sir Akbar's death is a great loss to the country. My respectful condolences to the deceased's family.

Sevagram, 14-1-'42

Harijan 18-1-1942

146

COMMUNAL UNITY

Freedom will not come through parliamentary effort. Therefore communal pacts, whilst they are good if they can be had, are valueless unless they are backed by the union of hearts. Without it there can be no peace in the land. Even Pakistan can bring no peace, if there is no union of hearts. This union can come only by mutual service and co-operative work.

Separate electorates have resulted in the separation of hearts. They presupposed mutual distrust and conflict of interests They have tended to perpetuate differences and deepen the distrust.

How to get out of the tangle is the question. I want just now to confine myself to the four Muslim majority provinces. In them there is natural Pakistan in the sense that the permanent majority can rule the minority. I hold it to be utterly wrong thus to divide man from man by reason of religion which is liable to change. What conflict of interest can there be between Hindus and Muslims in the matter of revenue, sanitation, police, justice, or the use of public conveniences? The difference can only be in religious usage and observances with which a secular State has no concern.

Congressmen, if they are not to merge in the Hindus as Hindus, must rigidly abstain from the legislatures and local bodies governed by separate electorates In these provinces the separate electorates must be taken to have come from the Hindu demand and in the supposed Hindu interest But a Congress Hindu has no interest apart from his Muslim brother. Therefore he must not enter the electoral bodies where Hindu and Muslim interests are falsely regarded as separate and even antagonistic If he enters these bodies, he can do so only to divide the majority members, i e. to take sides with one Muslim party or another. If I could make all Hindus Congress-minded, I would withdraw every Hindu member from these bodies and put the Muslim members on their honour. I would seek to influence them from outside these bodies by being friends with them and rendering disinterested service I would be indifferent to their manning all the services. At the most an infinitesimal percentage can have a share in them. And it is a superstition to suppose that these services can oppress a people who have become conscious of human dignity and human rights and know how to enforce them Since the vast majority of Congressmen are Hindus in at least three Muslim majority provinces, they have a rare opportunity of showing their non-violent

strength, their disinterestedness, their utter freedom from the communal taint, and their ability to submit to the rule of their Muslim fellow countrymen. They will do this not in a huff but as true nationalists and friends of the Muslims. Remaining outside they will probably better protect the just interests of the Hindus as citizens. For a Congress Hindu is not any the less a Hindu because he claims to represent equally, as he must, all the other faiths in himself. For as I have said, so far as the State is concerned, its capacity for service stops short of the service of the different faiths, and the services it can render apply to all irrespective of their faiths. Therefore Congressmen have a rare opportunity of showing undefiled nationalism in these provinces. They will incidentally show the other minorities that they have nothing to fear from the majorities if they know the true way. We must get out of the miasma of religious majorities and minorities. Why is a Parsi's interest different from a Hindu's or Muslim's so far as the State is concerned? Did not Dadabhai and Pherozeshah rule the Congress while they lived, not by Congress grace or patronage, but by right of service and merit? Did their rule injure any Hindu or Muslim interest? Were these interests ever in conflict on the Congress platform? And is not the Congress a voluntary State?

On the way to Kashi, 20-1-'42

Harijan, 25-1-1942

147

UNITARY METHOD

Q. You seem to be advocating what you call the unitary method in the solution of many questions. Will you explain it a little more fully than you have done?

A. It is as simple as it is sure. A contract or pact is between two parties. There is also consideration passing from one to the other. Such was the Lucknow Pact between the Congress and the Muslim League. The same thing could have been accomplished by the unitary method. Only

then there would have been no compromise dictated by fear and distrust. The Congress could have done, according to its notion, absolute justice, i. e. yielded the maximum consistent with the welfare of the whole nation without the expectation of any consideration from the League. In a well-regulated family the relations are governed by the unitary method. Thus a father gives to his children not as a result of a pact. He gives out of love, a sense of justice without expecting any return therefor. Not that there is none. But everything is natural, nothing is forced. Nothing is done out of fear or distrust. What is true of a well-regulated family is equally true of a well-regulated society which is but an extended family. My advice about the adoption of two scripts by Hindus and Muslims is based on the unitary method. My equal love for all communities dictates its adoption. Properly applied the method never fails. It disarms criticism and opposition. It presupposes a clean conscience and clean action. I propose to unfold in these columns the application of the method in all our communal relations. The views will be personal to me, as are all such since the Bardoli resolution. They will be addressed to Congressmen for adoption only in so far as they appeal to their reason.

Harijan, 1-2-1942

148

WHY NOT IN HINDU MAJORITY PROVINCES?

Q. Why not advise Congressmen to withdraw from the provincial legislatures too where the Hindus are in a majority?

A. Because I do not want the non-Muslim minority parties to act as if they were the majority and carry on the government in these provinces. It would be a false position to which the Congress would be a willing party, if the Congress members withdrew. In these provinces, therefore, abstention cannot solve the communal tangle, and will bring about an unintended and undesirable state o things.

Harijan, 15-2-1942

149

HINDU-MUSLIM PUZZLE

Q. In your proposed solution of the Hindu-Muslim puzzle, do you expect all the Hindus to abstain from the legislatures or only a part? If only a part, will not the most reactionary Hindus get in and make things worse than now? And if you expect Congressmen to affect the Muslim mind from outside, why can't you do the same and perhaps more effectively by being inside?

A. I do not expect all the Hindus to abstain. I know that all Hindu seats will be filled by non-Congress Hindus. Congress Hindus, if they go in, will be ground down between the two stones of the communal *chakki* without doing any good to any body I do not approach the question as a Hindu. I approach it as a Congressman seeking to represent equally all communities. But for the artificial system introduced in the composition of the Indian legislatures all the members would be representing not communities but their parties grouped according to their non-communal shibboleths. As one representing all communities I would expect not only Hindus but Congress-minded Muslims and others too to avoid the legislatures and elective bodies. These abstainers will hold the scales evenly between all communities and seek to affect the legislatures from outside. Whether they are many or only a few, they will play the role of wise men. If all listened to me, the communal question would disappear from our midst. By entering the legislatures the Congress Hindus become interlopers, and act weakly for fear of offending one party or the other. This I know, that at the present moment the legislatures are, and must become, part of the war machinery. They have no choice. They will not be allowed to function, if they obstruct the war effort. How could the rulers whose sole occupation is to prosecute the war do otherwise?

Harijan, 15-2-1942

150

AN APPEAL TO QAID-E-AZAM

I have been painfully but regularly going through the English weeklies that come to me and that are devoted to the cause of the Muslim League. I read them so as to keep myself informed of what the Muslim mind as influenced by the Muslim League thinks. Not a week passes but these weeklies contain what to me appear to be distortions of truth and vilification of the Congress and Congressmen and Hindus. What has prompted me to write these lines is a virulent attack on Hinduism in one of the weeklies. Here is an extract from the article

> "Hinduism is the greatest curse of India, and it is based on intolerance and inequality To call oneself a 'Hindu' is to confess that one is reactionary and narrow-minded No decent, civilized, honest and sincere human being who knows what Hinduism is and what it stands for, would like to be known as a Hindu or join this faith of primitive barbarians. For it is on barbarity that this so-called religion is based. No other word can describe the state of 97 per cent of the population who have been decreed by the gods and goddesses of this precious religion as impure and unclean beings fit only to serve the remaining 3 per cent of the population . . . . . We would far rather suggest to the students to prepare in their laboratories of the mind deadly bombs which would completely smash and destroy Hinduism, the greatest menace to India's welfare and well-being."

I hope I shall not be told that the article in question is taken from another newspaper. It has been taken in order to hold up Hinduism to scorn. Though the founder of this paper is Qaid-e-Azam himself and it is issued under the direction of Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan, Hon. Secretary of the League, I fancy that they have not seen the article in question.

What will be the state of Hindus under Pakistan? Will they be suppressed as barbarians? There is no attempt in the papers at looking at the other side. The policy adopted in the papers must lead to the promotion of bitterness and strife between the two communities. If the end is to be attained through strife and force and not by persuasion and argument, I can have nothing to say. But I observe from Qaid-e-Azam's speeches that he has no quarrel with the Hindus. He wants to live at peace with them I plead, therefore, for a juster estimate of men and things in papers representing the policy and programme of the Muslim League.

Sevagram, 2-3-'42

Harijan, 8-3-1942

151

DEFENDING THE INDEFENSIBLE

I have read Qaid-e-Azam's answer to my appeal It has caused me deep pain. I had expected a better response. The reproduction of the offending article would make worse reading. For the whole of it is venomous Qaid-e-Azam knows that I do not hesitate to criticize any party or person whenever the occasion demands criticism I have more than once criticized unbecoming writings in the non-Muslim Press.

I do not know the writer of the offending article. If he is a Hindu, it makes Qaid-e-Azam's defence of it all the worse for it. I am sorry that Qaid-e-Azam has resorted to special pleading for defending the indefensible. This unexpected defence of an article designed to wound deep susceptibilities makes ominous reading.

Sevagram, 17-3-'42

Harijan, 22-3-1942

152

ROTATORY GOVERNMENT

Q. In order to solve the communal tangle, why not divide India into two sections as far as population goes, e. g. Mussalmans, Christians and Parsis in one, and Hindus, Sikhs and Depressed Classes in the other? Let the first section rule for a period of five years by means of elected representatives and the second section come in similarly later. Would this not allay the present mistrust? As for Princes' India, could a Committee of elected Princes be entrusted with the work of governing all the States?

A. Your question reads well on paper; but your suggestion, if acted upon, must break down in practice. The act of government is not the simple thing you seem to imagine. What you suggest may work as a toy when the strings are pulled by armed authority. It won't be our government. The puller of the strings will govern. That is the old way. I have presented the better way — the non-violent method. In either case the first condition is that every trace of foreign authority should be removed from the land. Then and then only shall we know our real selves — our strength as well as our weaknesses. When we are untrammelled by foreign or other authority and free, we shall know how to deal with the day-to-day problems. We won't then be governed in the neat way mentioned by you. The arbiter then will be either the sword or reason.

Sevagram, 4-5-'42

Harijan, 10-5-1942

153

CONGRESS AND LEAGUE

Q. Maulana Saheb has made what I consider a very wise and patriotic suggestion that the Congress Working Committee will nominate five representatives to meet the representatives of the Muslim League when the latter so desire to do. I trust it will commend itself to you. If it does, I should like you publicly to support it. It will go a long way to bring the Hindus and the Muslims together.

A. I have no hesitation in endorsing Maulana Saheb's suggestion. No one would be more glad than I if, with or without my endorsement, the two can come together. I have always felt that there is something radically wrong with both that the most obvious thing, viz. the coming together of the wise men of both with a will to find a solution of the deadlock, has not happened.

Harijan, 17-5-1942

154

ARBITRATION

Q. Would you review the situation created by the Allahabad A. I. C. C. meeting? What would you say regarding Rajaji's quoting your words regarding Pakistan in support of his latest move?

A. I would leave the Allahabad resolutions to themselves. C. R. has quoted me correctly, and I repeat that, if Muslims want anything—no matter what it is—no power on earth can prevent them from having it. For the condition of refusal will be to fight. Supposing Muslims ask for something which non-Muslims do not want to give or could not give, it means a fight. This applies to both the communities. If the Hindus want a thing and if they are all united in the demand, no non-Hindus can resist them, unless they want to fight. But my hope is that some day

or other all parties will come to their senses and not insist on their demands being accepted, and consent to go to arbitration. It is an agelong method and a civilized method, and I hope it will be accepted.

But it is from the frustration of every effort made to bring about unity by me among many others, that has arisen the, for me, logical step that not until British power is wholly withdrawn from India can there be any real unity, because all parties will be looking to the foreign power. For the time being it is British, but it may be French, Russian, Chinese, even then it would be the same thing. I have, therefore, come to the conclusion that real heart-unity, genuine unity, is almost an impossibility unless and until British power is withdrawn and no other power takes its place, that is to say, when India not only feels but is actually independent without a master in any shape or form Nevertheless I shall try and welcome every effort for peace, well knowing that it is likely to be fruitless.

Harijan, 24-5-1942

155

THE DIFFERENCE

Q You have repeated in your interview to the Press in Bombay what you have said often that nothing can prevent the Muslims from having what they want unless the objectors would fight over the issue. What is the difference between you and Shri C. Rajagopalachari's attitude?

A. Though he has quoted me in his support I see the same difference between him and me that there is between chalk and cheese. He yields the right of secession now to buy unity in the hope of keeping away the Japanese. I consider the vivisection of India to be a sin. My statement amounts to the enunciation of the proposition that I cannot prevent my neighbour from committing a sin. Shri Rajagopalachari would be party to the sin, if the neighbour chooses to commit it. I cannot be party. What

is more, I am firmly of opinion that there is no unity whilst the third party is there to prevent it. It created the artificial division and it keeps it up. In its presence both Hindus and Muslims and for that matter all seemingly conflicting or disgruntled interests and elements will look to it for support and will get it. Their interest is greater than the independence of their country. No one need throw my other statement in my face viz., that there is no independence without unity. I do not withdraw a word of it. It is an obvious truth. From its contemplation I have discovered the formula of inviting the British power to withdraw. Their withdrawal does not by itself bring independence. It may induce unity or it may lead to chaos. There is also the risk of another power filling in the vacancy if it is there. If, however, the withdrawal is orderly and voluntary the British not only gain a moral height but secure the ungrudging friendship of a great nation. I wish all conflicting elements and interests will make a combined effort to rid India of foreign domination. If they do not, any understanding with them will be like a house built on sand. Fear of the Japanese occupation of India has blinded C. R. to the obvious truth. Independence sheds all fear — fear of the Japanese, of anarchy, and of the wrath of the British lion.

Sevagram, 18-5-'42

Harijan, 24 5-1942

156

FOR RAJAJI

There is no doubt that Rajaji is handling a cause which has isolated him from his colleagues. But his worst enemy will not accuse him of any selfish motive behind the extraordinary energy with which he has thrown himself into the controversy of which he is the author. It reflects the greatest credit on him. He is entitled to a respectful hearing. His motive is lofty. It is a noble thing to strive for Hindu-Muslim unity, equally noble to strive to ward

off the Japanese intrusion. In his opinion the two are intertwined.

Hooliganism is no answer to his argument. The disturbances at his meetings are a sign of great intolerance. Evolution of democracy is not possible if we are not prepared to hear the other side. We shut the doors of reason when we refuse to listen to our opponents or having listened make fun of them. If intolerance becomes a habit, we run the risk of missing the truth. Whilst with the limits that nature has put upon our understanding, we must act fearlessly according to the light vouchsafed to us, we must always keep an open mind and be ever ready to find that what we believed to be truth was, after all, untruth. This openness of mind strengthens the truth in us and removes the dross from it, if there is any. I plead therefore with all who are disturbing Rajaji's meetings not to do so but to give him a patient and respectful hearing to which he is entitled.

The reader knows that I hold Rajaji to be in the wrong. He is creating a false atmosphere. He does not believe in Pakistan nor do the nationalist Muslims and others who concede the right of separation or secession. They and Rajaji say that that is the way to wean the Muslim League from the demand for separation. I am surprised that many Muslims rejoice over a concession of doubtful value. I see nothing but seeds of further quarrel in it. It should be enough to state the proposition that nothing can prevent the Muslim League from having it if the Muslims really want it. They will take it by the vote or the sword unless they will submit to arbitration. But all this can only happen when the British power is entirely withdrawn and the Japanese menace has abated. Till then there is neither Pakistan nor Hindustan or any other 'stan'. It is today Englistan and may be tomorrow Japanistan, if we do not take care. If all who consider India to be their home now and for ever wi l pull their full weight to deliver it from the present and he impending peril, and when both the perils are finally removed, it will be time to talk of Pakistan and other 'stans' and to come to an amicable decision or fight. No third

party will or should decide our fate. It should be reason or the sword. Rajaji's method leads us to a blind alley unless his admirable and patriotic persistence opens a way unknown to him or any of us Whatever the fate of different opinions, my plea is for mutual toleration and respect.

Sevagram, 24-5-'42

Harijan, 31-5-1942

157

DIFFERENCES VERY REAL

As for communal unity, the third party being removed unity will follow as day follows night. Unity will not precede but will succeed freedom Today we do not even know that the goal of the Congress and the League is one. And you cannot bribe the League to co-operate for independence. Either the League believes that India is as much the home of Muslims as of non-Muslims, or it does not. If it does, it must first free the home from bondage before partitioning it. Today there is nothing to partition. After ridding the home of the foreign occupant, it can demand partition if it wishes and get it by negotiation or force However, if it does not believe in India being the home of the Muslims, there is no question of negotiations for freeing India from bondage.

Rajaji's plan is, in my opinion, wholly unnatural. He wants to thrust himself on the British power which does not want him, for as the possessor by right of conquest it gets all it wants In order to thrust himself on the British he gives the League the right of self-determination which every single individual has whether the others recognize it or not. Rajaji does not like partition and hugs the belief that his superfluous recognition of the inherent right will enable him to avoid partition.

I advise my correspondent not to worry over our differences. We know and love each other enough to let time correct the error, whether it lies on my side or his. Meanwhile a frank and bold admission of differences and their exact nature makes for healthy education of public

opinion. What is needed is avoidance of anger and intolerance, the twin enemies of correct understanding.

Sevagram, 29-5-'42

Harijan 7-6-1942

158

WHAT ABOUT MUSLIMS ?

Q. But what does a free India mean, if, as Mr. Jinnah said, Muslims will not accept Hindu rule ?

A. I have not asked the British to hand over India to the Congress or to the Hindus. Let them entrust India to God or in modern parlance to anarchy. Then all the parties will fight one another like dogs, or will, when real responsibility faces them, come to a reasonable agreement. I shall expect non-violence to arise out of that chaos.

Harijan, 14-6-1942

159

ONLY IF THEY WITHDRAW

"Till the last day you said there can be no Swaraj without Hindu-Muslim unity. Now why is it that you say that there will be no unity until India has achieved independence?", the Nagpur correspondent of the *Hindu* asked Gandhiji the other day.

Gandhiji replied, "Time is a merciless enemy, if it is also a merciful friend and healer I claim to be amongst the oldest lovers of Hindu-Muslim unity and I remain one even today. I have been asking myself why every wholehearted attempt made by all including myself to reach unity has failed, and failed so completely that I have entirely fallen from grace and am described by some Muslim papers as the greatest enemy of Islam in India. It is a phenomenon I can account for only by the fact that the third power, even without deliberately wishing it, will not allow real

unity to take place. Therefore I have come to the reluctant conclusion that the two communities will come together almost immediately after the British power comes to a final end in India. If independence is the immediate goal of the Congress and the League then, without needing to come to any terms, all will fight together to be free from bondage. When the bondage is done away with, not merely the two organizations but all parties will find it to their interest to come together and make the fullest use of the liberty in order to evolve a national government suited to the genius of India. I do not care what it is called. Whatever it is, in order to be stable, it has to represent the masses in the fullest sense of the term. And, if it is to be broad-based upon the will of the people, it must be predominantly non-violent. Anyway, up to my last breath, I hope I shall be found working to that end, for I see no hope for humanity without the acceptance of non-violence. We are witnessing the bankruptcy of violence from day to day. There is no hope for humanity if the senseless fierce mutual slaughter is to continue."

Sevagram 11-6-'42

Harijan 21-6-1942

160

A CHALLENGE

I have before me three letters rebuking me for not going to Sind to face the Hurs personally. Two are friendly. The third comes from a critic who has no faith in non-violence. His letter demands an answer. Its main part runs as follows :

> "I am deeply interested in your writings and in the effect that they make upon the minds of the ignorant masses and your blind followers. I would therefore feel obliged if you enlighten me on the following points, especially because points nos. 3 & 4 raise novel and fundamental issues about non-violence.

"You have been training a number of satyagrahis in your *ashram* and they must have had the advantage of your supervision and instructions You have been proclaiming that violence could be effectively met by non violent means Japan is now attacking India in the East and Hurs are creating trouble in the West Is this not then the long-awaited opportunity when you can practise what you have so long preached ?

'Instead of doing that, you are contenting yourself by writing articles in the *Harijan* Imagine Hitler or Stalin, without sending their armies to the front line, writing such articles in the *Pravda* or such other paper Instead of asking the Sind M L A s to resign and go to the Hurs, why should you not send a 'Company of your trained satyagrahis and try the luck of your doctrine ?

'Is it not the duty and business of a satyagrahi to go and meet the danger where it exists and threatens the country ? Or is it your case that your satyagrahis will meet it only when it reaches the *ashram* and not before ? If so, is not your doctrine a doctrine of inaction ?"

I have no doubt that if I could have gone to Sind, I might have been able to do something I have done such things before, not without success But I am too old for such missions What little energy I have, I am storing up for what promises to be the last fight of my life

I have not conceived my mission to be that of a knight-errant wandering everywhere to deliver people from difficult situations My humble occupation has been to show people how they can solve their own difficulties. So far as Sind is concerned, I maintain that my advice was perfect It was clearly Congressmen's duty to proceed to the infested areas and spend themselves in the effort to convert the Hurs to the way of peace Indeed they could have used arms if they had no faith in non-violence. They should have resigned from the Congress to free themselves from the obligation to observe non-violence. If we are to be fit for independence, we have to learn the art of self-defence either non-violently or violently. Every citizen should consider himself liable to render help to his neighbour in distress.

If I had adopted the role my critic has suggested, I would have helped people to become parasites. Therefore, it is well that I have not trained myself to defend others. I shall be satisfied if at my death it could be said of me that I had devoted the best part of my life to showing the way to become self-reliant and cultivate the capacity to defend oneself under every conceivable circumstance.

My correspondent has committed the grave error of thinking that my mission is to deliver people from calamities. That is an arrogation only claimed by dictators. But no dictator has ever succeeded in proving the claim.

Indeed if I could say, as the correspondent thinks I could, that if the menaces of the kind described by him face the *ashram*, it will give a good account of itself, I should be quite content and feel that my mission was wholly successful. But I can lay no such claim. The *ashram* at Sevagram is only so-called. The visitors gave it the name and it has passed current. The *ashram* is a medley of people come together for different purposes. There are hardly half a dozen permanent residents having a common ideal How these few will discharge themselves when the test comes remains to be seen.

The fact is that non-violence does not work in the same way as violence. It works in the opposite way. An armed man naturally relies upon his arms. A man who is intentionally unarmed relies upon the Unseen Force called God by poets, but called the Unknown by scientists. But that which is unknown is not necessarily non-existent. God is the Force among all forces known and unknown. Non-violence without reliance upon that Force is poor stuff to be thrown in the dust.

I hope now my critic realizes the error underlying his question and that he sees also that the doctrine that has guided my life is not one of inaction but of the highest action. His question should really have been put thus:

How is it that, in spite of your work in India for over twentytwo years, there are not sufficient satyagrahis who can cope with external and internal menaces? My answer then would be that twentytwo years are nothing in the

training of a nation for the development of non-violent strength. That is not to say that a large number of persons will not show that strength on due occasion That occasion seems to have come now This war puts the civilian on his mettle no less than the military man, non-violent no less than the violent.

Sevagram, 18-6-'42

Harijan, 28-6-1942

161

TO MUSLIM CORRESPONDENTS

"How can you think of a mass movement for liberation without first closing in with Muslims?" ask Muslim correspondents whose letters fill my file. I used at one time to think like my correspondents. But I see that for the moment I cannot reach the Muslim mind. The Muslim League blocks my way. I try to read the League newspapers. They give me a peep into the League mind in so far as they represent it. In their opinion I am thoroughly untrustworthy Even my services during the Khilafat days wear for them a sinister meaning. I am quite clear in my mind that this is a passing phase. I am not aware of having done a single disservice to any Muslim cause or a Muslim person. Thank God, even today I claim numerous Muslim friends.

I do not know how to get rid of the distrust. "Give Pakistan", say my critics. I answer, "It is not in my giving." If I felt convinced of the rightness of the demand, I should certainly work for it side by side with the League. But I do not. I would like to be convinced Nobody has yet told me all its implications Those that are described in the anti-Pakistan Press are too terrible to contemplate. But I cannot take them from the opposition. Only the protagonists know what they want and mean. I plead for such an exposition. Surely Pakistanis want to convert the opposition, not to force them. Has an attempt been ever made to meet the opposition in a friendly manner and to convert them? I am sure the Congress is willing to be converted, let alone me.

But what am I to do meanwhile? I feel that now is the time for India to play an effective part in the fortunes of the war, if she becomes free from British servitude. I am convinced too that nothing stands in the way of that freedom except British unwillingness to give up India as the happy hunting ground for the British that she has been for three centuries. If she gives up India, she might as well give up fighting, says the imperialist. If such is the case, what is all this war for? The original fighters are Great Britain and Germany. Was India the hidden stake between the two? This is all speculation I know. The truth will be known presently. Thinking Indians cannot idle away their time. I think that even a large number, if not all of us, prepared to undergo any sacrifice that may fall to our lot, would impress the British rulers that they can no longer hold India as a British possession. I believe too that such a number is available. Needless to say, their action must be non-violent, irrespective of their belief, as even a military man's has often to be, on behalf of his cause. The fight has been conceived in the interest of the whole of India. The fighters will gain no more than the poorest Indian. They will fight, not to seize power but to end the foreign domination, cost what it may.

What will happen thereafter, if ever we reach that stage, will depend upon how we act when the all-powerful British hand is withdrawn. We may quarrel among ourselves or we may adjust our quarrels and agree to set up ordered rule on behalf of the people. It may be a democratic constitution or unadulterated autocracy or oligarchy. The conception is not that of a settlement with the British Government. That could happen only if there is a settlement between the principal parties, and as a preliminary the Congress and the League. But that, so far as I can see, is not to be.

Therefore the only settlement with the British Government can be that their rule should end leaving India to her fate. Thus assuming that the British leave, there is no government and no constitution, British or other. Therefore there is no central Government. Militarily the most

powerful party may set up its rule and impose it on India, if the people submit. Muslims may declare Pakistan and nobody may resist them. Hindus may do likewise, Sikhs may set up their rule in territories inhabited by them. There is no end to the possibilities. And to all this idle speculation let me suggest one more addition. The Congress and the League being the best organized parties in the country may come to terms and set up a provisional government acceptable to all. And this may be followed by a duly elected Constituent Assembly.

The movement has only one aim — that is of displacing the British power. If that happy event comes about and if it is followed by a stable government, it will most assuredly decide the fate of the war — I shall hope, in a non-violent manner. India can show no other strength during this war at any rate. Why should not the Muslims who believe in Pakistan but also believe in Independent India join such a struggle? If on the other hand, they believe in Pakistan through British aid and under British aegis, it is a different story. I have no place in it.

Sevagram, 6-7-'42

Harijan, 12-7-1942

162

FOR MUSLIM FRIENDS

I have read with attention Qaid-e-Azam's reply to my article in the *Harijan*. "Pakistan" according to him "in a nutshell, is a demand for carving out of India a portion to be wholly treated as an independent and sovereign State." This sovereign State can conceivably go to war against the one of which it was but yesterday a part. It can also equally conceivably make treaties with other States. All this can certainly be had, but surely not by the willing consent of the rest.

But it seems he does not want it by consent. For he says, "Pakistan is an article of faith with Muslim India

and we depend upon nobody except ourselves for the achievement of our goal." How is one to offer one's service in these circumstances?

But later he gives me hope, for he says: "Show your sincerity and frankness for an honourable settlement." In order to show both, I wrote the article to which the Qaid-e-Azam has objected. How else is one to show sincerity and frankness except through one's action and speech or pen?

Let me state my limitations. I cannot speak as a mere Hindu, for my Hinduism includes all religions. I can speak only as an Indian. If Pakistan as defined above is an article of faith with him, indivisible India is equally an article of faith with me Hence there is a stalemate.

But today there is neither Pakistan nor Hindustan. It is Englistan. So I say to all India, 'let us first convert it into the original Hindustan and then adjust all rival claims' This is surely clear After the restoration of India to the nation, there will be no Central Government. The representatives will have to construct it It may be one Hindustan or many Pakistans

If the Qaid-e-Azam really wants a settlement, I am more than willing and so is the Congress. He will forgive me for suggesting that his reply leaves on one the impression that he does not want a settlement. If he wants one why not accept the Congress President's offer that Congress and League representatives should put their heads together and never part until they have reached a settlement? Is there any flaw or want of sincerity in the offer?

Sevagram, 20-7-'42

Harijan, 26-7-1942

163

DISGRACEFUL

The Punjab Press reports a deliberate and unprovoked attack on Pandit Sundarlal and Lala Jagannath of the Servants of People Society by four young Hindus at 11 o'clock at night while they were on their way to Lajpatrai Bhavan. The attack is said to have been made because of Pandit Sundarlal having delivered addresses in Lahore on Hindu-Muslim unity in which all offensive language was studiously avoided. One can understand, though never pardon, an attack on some provocation. But an attack such as was delivered on Pandit Sundarlal has no extenuating circumstances. These young men are reported to be members of the Hindu Mahasabha. I hope that the responsible officials will repudiate the action of the youths. Public opinion should make such hooliganism impossible. As for Pandit Sundarlal his cause will prosper for the savagery, and more so because of his dignified disregard and forgiveness of it.

Sevagram, 1-3-'42

Harijan, 8-3-1942

164

UNSEEMLY IF TRUE

Asaf Ali Saheb, President of the Delhi P. C. C. writes:

"The enclosed complaint was first brought up before the Delhi Provincial Congress Committee. The writer has now secured two supporters. I knew the writer personally as a truthful and unbiased nationalist and I believe his word.

"I had heard of the Rastriya Swayam Sevak Sangh and its activities; and I also knew that it was a communal organization. The slogan and the speeches complained of have been brought to my notice for the first time. I can think of no means of counteracting the effect of such

slogans and speeches on other communities, except inviting your attention to them Perhaps you will take notice of it in the *Harijan*'

The complainant's letter is in Urdu Its purport is that the organization referred to in Asaf Ali Saheb's letter consisting of 3,000 members goes through a daily lathi drill which is followed by reciting the slogan, 'Hindustan belongs to Hindus and to nobody else' This recital is followed by a brief discourse in which speakers say 'Drive out the English first and then we shall subjugate the Muslims If they do not listen, we shall kill them' Taking the evidence at its face value, the slogan is wrong and the central theme of the discourse is worse I can only hope that the slogan is unauthorized and that the speaker who is reported to have uttered the sentiments ascribed to him was no responsible person The slogan is wrong and absurd, for Hindustan belongs to all those who are born and bred here and who have no other country to look to Therefore it belongs to Parsis, Beni Israels, to Indian Christians, Muslims and other non-Hindus as much as to Hindus Free India will be no Hindu raj, it will be Indian raj based not on the majority of any religious sect or community but on the representatives of the whole people without distinction of religion I can conceive a mixed majority putting the Hindus in a minority They would be elected for their record of service and merits Religion is a personal matter which should have no place in politics. It is in the unnatural condition of foreign domination that we have unnatural divisions according to religion Foreign domination going, we shall laugh at our folly in having clung to false ideals and slogans

The discourse referred to is surely vulgar There is no question of 'driving out' the English. They cannot be driven out except by violence superior to theirs The idea of killing the Muslims if they do not remain in subjection may have been all right in bygone days, it has no meaning today There is no force in the cry of driving out the English if the substitute is to be Hindu or any other domination. That will be no Swaraj Self-government

necessarily means government by the free and intelligent will of the people. I add the word 'intelligent' because, I hope that India will be predominantly non-violent Members of society based on non-violence must all be so educated as to be able to think and act for themselves. If their thought and action be one, it will be because they are directed both to a common goal and a common result even as the thought and action of a hundred men pulling a rope in one direction would be one.

I hope that those in charge of the Swayam Sevak Sangh will inquire into the complaint and take the necessary steps

Harijan, 9-8 1942

165

NON-VIOLENCE AND MOLESTATION OF WOMEN

On the night of 29th December 1945, Gandhiji met about 200 men and women of Mahishadal and the near about villages They included local workers and victims of police and military atrocities during the 1942 upheaval. Gandhiji invited questions. The first question was whether they were expected to remain non-violent even in the face of their women being dishonoured. They believed in suffering for Swaraj. They believed that any departure from non-violence would delay the coming of Swaraj Then, what could they do in cases of molestation of their womenfolk?

Gandhiji replied that he had been asked the same question in 1920 and 1921 and he could only repeat the reply which he gave then. The question betrayed ignorance of non-violence and also of Swaraj of his conception. He did not want Swaraj at the cost of women's honour. If what passed as non-violence did not enable them to protect the honour of women or if it did not enable the women to protect their own honour, it was not non-violence. "Believe me, it is something quite different," and he described what he had written in "Hind Swaraj" in 1909. The reader should read the argument on pages 44 to 51

of the Navajivan Press edition. Gandhiji observed that experience had added force to the argument. "After all who protected Sita from Ravan? The Poet tells us that her purity was such that Ravan dared not compass his end without her consent."

He warned them in the end that if anybody came to him with the plea that they could not protect the honour of their womenfolk because they had taken the vow of non-violence, he would give them no quarter. Non-violence should never be used as a shield for cowardice. It was a weapon of the brave. He would rather they died fighting violently than became helpless witnesses to such atrocities A truly non-violent man would never live to tell the tale of such atrocities He would have laid down his life on the spot in non-violent resistance.

In this connection I am reminded of Gandhiji's Frontier tour where the *Khudai Khidmatgars* had asked him the same question. "What if the miscreant does not kill you but ties you up instead and gags you so that you are forced to be a silent witness of his misdeed?" they had asked after hearing his reply which was practically the same as he gave to the people at Mahishadal. "I will struggle," he had replied, "so that I will either break the bonds or break myself in the effort. In no case will I remain a helpless witness When that intensity of feeling is there God will come to your aid and somehow or other spare you the agony of being a witness to such a deed."

Mahishadal, 29-12-'45 S. N

Harijan, 10-2-1946

166

SATYAGRAHA IN FACE OF HOOLIGANISM

A friend has gently posed the question as to what a satyagrahi should do to prevent looting by *goondas*. If he had understood the secret of satyagraha he would not have put it.

To lay down one's life, even alone, for what one considers to be right, is the very core of satyagraha. More no man can do. If a man is armed with a sword he might lop off a few heads but ultimately he must surrender to superior force or else die fighting. The sword of the satyagrahi is love and the unshakable firmness that comes from it. He will regard as brothers the hundreds of *goondas* that confront him and instead of trying to kill them he will choose to die at their hands and thereby live. This is straight and simple. But how can a solitary satyagrahi succeed in the midst of a huge population? Hundreds of hooligans were let loose on the city of Bombay for arson and loot. A solitary satyagrahi will be like a drop in the ocean. Thus argues the correspondent.

My reply is that a satyagrahi may never run away from danger, irrespective of whether he is alone or in the company of many. He will have fully performed his duty if he dies fighting. The same holds good in armed warfare. It applies with greater force in satyagraha. Moreover, the sacrifice of one will evoke the sacrifice of many and may possibly produce big results. There is always this possibility. But one must scrupulously avoid the temptation of a desire for results.

I believe that every man and woman should learn the art of self-defence in this age. This is done through arms in the West. Every adult man is conscripted for army training for a definite period. The training for satyagraha is meant for all, irrespective of age or sex. The more important part of the training here is mental, not physical. There can be no compulsion in mental training. The

surrounding atmosphere no doubt acts on the mind but that cannot justify compulsion.

It follows that shopkeepers, traders, mill-hands, labourers, farmers, clerks, in short, everyone ought to consider it his or her duty to get the necessary training in satyagraha.

Satyagraha is always superior to armed resistance. This can only be effectively proved by demonstration, not by argument. It is the weapon that adorns the strong. It can never adorn the weak. By weak is meant the weak in mind and spirit, not in body. That limitation is a quality to be prized and not a defect to be deplored.

One ought also to understand one of its other limitations. It can never be used to defend a wrong cause.

Satyagraha brigades can be organized in every village and in every block of buildings in the cities. Each brigade should be composed of those persons who are well known to the organizers. In this respect satyagraha differs from armed defence. For the latter the State impresses the service of everybody. For a satyagraha brigade only those are eligible who believe in *ahimsa* and *satya*. Therefore, an intimate knowledge of the persons enlisted is necessary for the organizers.

Poona, 6-3-'46 (From *Harijanbandhu*)

Harijan, 17-3-1946

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SATYAGRAHA — THE ART OF LIVING AND DYING

At the mammoth gathering numbering over two lakhs in Shivaji Park on 14-3-'46, Gandhiji delivered an important address in Hindustani, of a part of which the following is the gist:

"I introduced the practice of having congregational prayer some time before the commencement of the South African Satyagraha struggle. The Indian community there was faced with a grave peril. We did all that was humanly possible. All methods of seeking redress, agitation through the Press and the platform, petitions and deputations, were tried but proved of no avail. What was the Indian community consisting of a mere handful of illiterate indentured labourers mostly, with a sprinkling of free merchants, hawkers etc. to do in the midst of an overwhelming majority of Negroes and Whites? The Whites were fully armed. It was clear that if the Indians were to come into their own, they must forge a weapon which would be different from and infinitely superior to the force which the White settlers commanded in such ample measure. It was then that I introduced congregational prayer in Phœnix and Tolstoy Farm as a means for a training in the use of the weapon of satyagraha or soul force.

The root of satyagraha is in prayer. A satyagrahi relies upon God for protection against the tyranny of brute force. Why should you then be always afraid of the British or anybody playing you false? If someone deceives you he will be the loser. The fight of satyagraha is for the strong in spirit, not the doubter or the timid. Satyagraha teaches us the art of living as well as dying. Birth and death are inevitable among mortals. What distinguishes the man from the brute is his conscious striving to realize the spirit within. The last eighteen verses of the second chapter of the *Gita* which are recited at the prayer give in a nutshell the secret of the art of living. It is given there in the form

of a description of a *sthitaprajna* or the man of steady wisdom i.e. a satyagrahi, in reply to Arjuna's query to Lord Krishna.

"The art of dying follows as a corollary from the art of living. Death must come to all. A man may die of a lightning stroke or as a result of heart failure or failure of respiration. But that is not the death that a satyagrahi can wish for or pray for himself. The art of dying for a satyagrahi consists in facing death cheerfully in the performance of one's duty. That is an art which the people of Bombay apparently have not yet learnt. It is not enough not to want to hurt or take the life of your enemy. You are no satyagrahis if you remain silent or passive spectators while your enemy is being done to death. You must protect him even at the cost of your life. If thousands in India learnt that art, the face of India would be changed and no one would be able to point his finger of scorn at her non-violence as being a cloak for weakness. We would not then try to shift blame for ugly happenings on the hooligan elements. We would convert and control the hooligan elements too.

"We are passing through a crisis in our history. Danger besets us on all sides. But we shall convert it into our opportunity if we realize the power of satyagraha than which there is nothing more potent on earth."

Uruli, 24-3-'46 PYARELAL

Harijan, 7-4-1946

168

COMMUNAL UNITY AND NON-UNTOUCHABILITY IN THE I. N. A.

The Azad Hind movement in East Asia solved many problems. And one of them was the major and intricate problem of communal unity. Although efforts towards this direction were made ever since the inception of the movement in 1942, it became a reality only after the arrival of Netaji Subash Chandra Bose. There was another question and that was of untouchability, though on a minor scale. In East Asia, the question of untouchability did not confront us so much as it did or does in india. Anyhow, this ill too was remedied as a result of universal training of Indians in the I. N. A. camps and offices after Netaji's arrival.

What were the ways and means adopted to achieve these objects may be a long story. But the achievement can be attributed to three main factors : Firstly, absence of the third power; secondly, Netaji's direct approach to the problems and thirdly, Netaji's apparent ignoring of the problems.

Now, what the people may be interested in, is how this achievement of communal unity and eradication of untouchability was evident. For that, I may pen the following, covering both the combatant and non-combatant sections of the militant organization of Azad Hind.

With the elimination of the British power from East Asia, the communal differences among Indians also started fading away. The first scene of communal harmony was observed in Bangkok in June 1942, when about 120 representatives of the Indian community in East Asia gathered there for Conference. There were among them Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians and others. They stayed together, ate together, and resolved together to organize the Indian community into one body and under one banner.

Then came February 1943, and Gandhiji's historic fast Throughout East Asia, rallies were held where all Indians

belonging to different religions and of different castes and creeds gathered and demanded release of the Mahatma Prayers were held in temples, mosques, *gurudwaras* and churches for the long life of Gandhiji That presented an admirable and thrilling scene of communal unity

Then came the advent of Netaji, and along with that a revolutionary change in society and in the organization Netaji had asked for 'Total Mobilization' for the coming armed struggle for India's freedom To this call of Netaji, the response was universal from all sections of the community—from Hindus, Muslims Sikhs, Christians and others They offered their services as combatant and non combatant volunteers.

Some of these volunteers were absorbed in the Azad Hind Sangh, the party behind the Azad Hind Fauj and the Azad Hind Government Others—a majority of the volunteers—joined the ranks of the Azad Fauj The Sangh had a network of branches throughout East Asia In every branch workers consisting of Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and Christians worked together Wherever there were large numbers of workers, as was the case in places like Bangkok, Singapore, Rangoon, Saigon, Hongkong, they used to live in messes These were joint There was no separate Hindu, Muslim, Sikh or Christian mess There used to be one kitchen for all members of all religions. Hindus, Muslims Sikhs and Christians lived together, ate at the same table and worked together

The same was the case in the I N A Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians used to live in the same barracks There were Brahmins, as well as Harijans, there were Maulvis as well as Ahirs, there were caste Hindus as well as the so-called untouchables in the same barracks There were no separate *langars*. All the soldiers ate together The same rations were supplied to the soldiers and officers Beef and pork were prohibited in the messes of the Azad Hind Sangh and the Azad Hind Fauj There was no problem of *jhatka* and *halal*

RAMSINGH RAWAL

[Note : Except for repetitions, the foregoing is published as it was received. The information is revealing. The natural question is , now that these soldiers have returned, will the same comradeship persist? It ought to. M. K. G.]

Bombay, 14-3-'46

Harijan, 31-3-1946

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THE SACRED WEEK

The following is a part of the text of Gandhiji's Hindustani speech at the prayer gathering on the evening of the 6th of April.

"Twentyseven years ago when the late Swami Shraddhanandji was alive, satyagraha against the Rowlatt Act was inaugurated on this day. History was made during the following week. For the first time the entire masses of India from one end to the other rose like one man. It was an entirely spontaneous demonstration

"That was the time when Hindus and Muslims for the time forgot all their differences The Ali Brothers and I used to go all over the country together like blood-brothers. We spoke with one voice and delivered the message of Hindu-Muslim unity and Swaraj to the masses. We resolved that thereafter we should address our prayers to God alone instead of the British Government, and so satyagraha was born in India The Ali Brothers readily fell in with the programme of a national day of fasting and prayer. People fasted on the 6th and 13th of April. They realized that they were all children of the one God, destined to live together and die together in the land of their birth, which was India. They assembled together in their thousands and offered prayers in temples, churches and mosques. The climax was reached when in Delhi a monster gathering consisting of both Hindus and Mussalmans was held in the Jumma mosque and was addressed by the late Swami Shraddhanand. It was a glorious day in India's history, the memory of which we shall always treasure."

Now they had fallen upon evil times, proceeded Gandhiji The hearts of Hindus and Mussalmans were sundered The air was poisoned with communal bitterness and rancour A section of the Mussalmans had begun to claim that they are a separate nation Into the logic of that claim he would not go at present, he said. He confessed that it baffled his understanding

Delhi, 15-4-'46 PYARELAL

Harijan 21-4-1946

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A PILGRIMAGE

A number of students and some members of the staff from Jamia Millia came and requested Gandhiji, when he was in Delhi, to pay a visit, some time, to their institution too

"Some time must mean now," replied Gandhiji "Having come so far I cannot go back without going to you" The Jamia Millia group were overjoyed They ran ahead of him to carry the happy tidings to their colleagues and returned with petromax lanterns to lead the way. The unexpected visit put the whole place in a flutter of excitement Dr Zakir Hussain was away at Bhawalpur But Moujeeb Saheb was there with other members of the staff Carpets were spread on the lawn and a happy family gathering was held there under the sky Jamia Millia, founded at the commencement of the non-cooperation movement in 1920 is shortly to celebrate its silver jubilee The seedling planted by the late Hakim Ajmalkhan Saheb, Dr Ansari and the Ali Brothers has grown into a stately tree under the loving care of Dr Zakir Hussain and his colleagues It has now 200 students attending the primary classes, 100 in the secondary section and 28 in the college. Sixty teachers are besides undergoing training. The institution is running a day school and a *Maktaba* or a publishing house in Karol Bagh

"I have proved my claim to being a member of the family by coming without previous notice' Gandhiji

remarked touched by the spontaneous welcome. He then invited questions.

One student asked, "What can students do to bring about Hindu-Muslim unity?" It was a question after Gandhiji's heart. "The way is simple," he replied. "Even if all the Hindus turn rowdies and abuse you, you may not cease to regard them as your blood-brothers and vice versa. Is it impossible? No, rather the contrary. And what is possible for the individual is possible for the mass.

"Today the whole atmosphere is poisoned. All kinds of wild rumours are circulated by the Press and are indiscriminately swallowed by the people. Panic results and both Hindus and Mussalmans forget their humanity and behave towards one another like wild brutes. It behoves man to act decently, irrespective of what the other party might or might not do. If one returns decency for decency, it is a bargain. Even thieves and dacoits do that. There is no merit in it. Humanity disdains to calculate profits and losses. It enjoins on one a unilateral obligation to put up decent behaviour If all the Hindus listened to my advice, or in the alternative the Muslims listened to me, there would be peace in India which neither daggers nor lathis would be able to shatter The mischief-maker will soon be weary of the sorry business of stabbing, when there is no retaliation or counter provocation. An Unseen Power will arrest his uplifted arm and it will refuse to obey his wicked will. You may throw dust at the sun, it won't dim his lustre. All it needs is to hold one's soul in faith and patience. God is good and does not allow wickedness to proceed beyond a certain length

"I had a hand in the building up of this institution. It therefore gives me much pleasure to be able to pour out my heart before you. I have said the same thing to the Hindus. May yours be a shining example to India and the world."

New Delhi, 23-4-'46 PYARELAL

Harijan, 28-4-1946

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FALLEN FROM GRACE

Ahmedabad, the pride of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, where he had rendered yeoman service to the Municipality has fallen from grace. Hindus and Muslims had lived always together in peace there. But madness seems to have seized its inhabitants of late. It distressed Gandhiji beyond measure. "The Hindus and Muslims of Ahmedabad seem to be dehumanized," he observed in one of his prayer addresses All the deaths in Ahmedabad were not the result of stabbing and the like. It was a shame that they should have to take the help of the police and the military to prevent them from flying at each other's throats. If one side ceased to retaliate, the riots would not go on. What did it matter if even a few lakhs were killed in the right manner out of the 40 crores of India? If they could learn the lesson of dying without killing, India, which was celebrated in legend and history as *karmabhoomi*—the land of duty—would become a virtual Eden—the image of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth.

He had told Shri Morarji Desai, the Home Minister who had seen him before proceeding to Ahmedabad that he must go to meet the flames under the sole protection of God, not that of the police or the military. If need be he must perish in the flames in the attempt to quell them as the late Shri Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi had done. Shri Morarji had invited the representatives of Muslims, Hindus and others to a joint conference at Ahmedabad and had told them that he was prepared to withdraw the police and the military if they so desired. But the latter had unanimously replied that they were not prepared to take the risk. The result was that the police and the military remained there. "The disturbances have been arrested," remarked Gandhiji in agony "but the peace that is seen in Ahmedabad today is the peace of the grave. It is not something of which one can be proud. How I wish that both the Hindus and the

Muslims would combine and dispense with the help of the police and the military for purposes of keeping them from mutual fight." He warned them that so long as they depended upon the help of the police and the military for maintaining law and order, real independence must remain mere idle talk.

Poona, 9-7-'46 PYARELAL

Harijan, 14-7-1946

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VARIETIES OF RELIGION

Referring to the riots in Ahmedabad Gandhiji said to his prayer audience that the Hindus and Muslims in Ahmedabad had not yet got over their insanity. Islam meant peace. Hindus claimed to follow the path of *ahimsa*. They both swore by God but in practice they followed Satan. The Muslim stabbed the innocent Hindu and the Hindu stabbed the innocent Muslim. Of the three workers who were killed in Ahmedabad some days ago one was a Muslim. It was a Muslim's dagger that killed him. He was in the company of Hindus. No one even knew that he was a Muslim. One of his companions Vasantrao was well known to and commanded the respect of both Hindus and Muslims. While in jail one of his Muslim companions went on a fast. There was an overwhelming majority of Hindus amongst the satyagrahi prisoners. Vasantrao felt that he ought to give his moral support to the Muslim brother and went on a sympathetic fast. His senior companions in jail tried to dissuade him. "Are you wiser than all of us? You know the Muslim friend's fast is not justified. If it was, we would all have fasted with him." His reply was: "I do not claim to be wise. I prefer to be a fool. I seek your blessing. If this Muslim friend dies in jail in the midst of all of us Hindus, with what face shall I return to my Muslim friends outside? Therefore, I would far rather die with him, whatever the issue of his fast." Neither died in

the end, but Vasantrao proved by his action that he was a true Hindu and a true Muslim combined into one."

Gandhiji concluded by exhorting the audience to cultivate that mentality. He was sure that if they prayed to God to restore to sanity the Hindus and Muslims of Ahmedabad, their prayer would not go unheeded, but leap across space and melt the hearts of the deluded rioters in Ahmedabad.

Panchgani, 21-7-'46

Harijan, 28-7-1946

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BUTCHERY IN AHMEDABAD

Butchery has been going on in Ahmedabad for several days. It is difficult to say who is at fault. The policy of the Government is not to let the public know as to who has knifed whom. The Congress Government has adhered to this policy So we should believe that there is good reason behind this hush-hush. It may be that this is on a par with a thief's mother feigning grief over her son's theft In Ahmedabad everyone must know who is the aggressor or who is more at fault. My job is not to find that out Mine is comparatively an easier work.

The golden path is that one of the parties to the mutual slaughter should desist. Then alone can true peace be established and madness come to an end.

Is it not enough that three young men have laid down their lives in the attempt to put down the flames ? Several friends have written to me about the three martyrs. If we were wise, these sacrifices would have quenched the fire. But that has not happened. It does not mean that the sacrifices have gone in vain. It only means that many more are necessary to extinguish such flames.

The alternative is that both must exhaust themselves, they must face police bullets. Some may be sent to jail and some mount the gallows before peace is restored. This is the wrong way. Fire put out in this fashion is bound to flare up again. This process does not reduce the poison.

It is simply suppressed It spreads through the whole body and causes more mischief

Peace restored with the help of the police and its elder brother the military will strengthen the hold of the foreign Government and emasculate us still further Poet Iqbal has written the immortal line

मज़हब नहीं सिखाता आपसमें बैर रखना ।

" Religion does not inculcate mutual strife " Could there be a greater proof of our cowardice than fighting amongst ourselves ?

There is a method about everything — even mutual fight If we must fight, why should we seek the help of the police and the military ? The Government should clearly say that the military, whilst it is in India, will only be used for maintaining cleanliness, cultivating unused land and the like The police will be used to catch *bona fide* thieves. Neither will be used to put down communal riots.

Let Ahmedabad folk be brave enough to eschew the help of the police and the military, let them not be cowards. Rioters are mostly hooligans who do their nefarious deeds in the dark I am told that most of the stabbings have been in the back Seldom or never have they been in the chest Why should one be frightened of such people ? One should rather brave death at their hands in the hope that the sacrifice will bring them to sanity If one has not the requisite courage to face death, one must defend oneself by putting up a fight The question may be asked as to how one should fight against those who stab you unawares from behind It may not be possible to prevent such stabbing, but if the onlookers are not in collusion with the evil-doers and are not devoid of courage, they will catch hold of the culprit and hand him over to the police or to the community to which he belongs. Or they can bring him before the people's panchayat. Only they may not take the law into their own hands

Panchgani, 22-7-'46 (From *Harijanbandhu*)

Harijan 28-7-1946

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HEAL THYSELF

A correspondent has written to me about the butchery that is going on in Ahmedabad. I give below the relevant portion from his letter:

> "I wish to write to you about the means to be employed for putting down riots. About two months ago you wrote an article on *Ahimsak Seva Dal*—non-violent volunteer corps. But looking to the situation in the country, the suggestion will not do. Just as you have taught us how to fight against the British Government non-violently, you should go to some place of riot and show us the way of quelling riots in a non-violent manner by personal example. Supposing you were in Ahmedabad today and went out to quell the riots, any number of volunteers will join you. Two of our Congress workers, Shri Vasantrao and Shri Rajabali, went out in such a quest and fell a prey to the *goonda*'s knife. They laid down their lives in the pursuit of an ideal and they deserve all praise. But no one else had the courage to follow in their footsteps. They have not the same self-confidence. If they had it, there would be no riots and, even if riots broke out, they would never assume the proportion and the form that the present day riots do. But the fact remains that such a state is merely an imaginary thing today.
>
> "Your guidance and example can inspire many like me with courage and self-confidence. Once you have shown the way, the local workers will be able to follow it whenever occasion demands it. I feel that unless you set an example in action, your writings and utterances will not be of any use to the ordinary people, and even Congressmen, in organizing non-violent protection of society."

I like the suggestion mentioned above. People followed my advice and took to non-violent resistance against the British Government, because they wanted to offer some

sort of resistance. But their non-violence, I must confess, was born of their helplessness. Therefore, it was the weapon of the weak. That is why, today we worship Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose and his Azad Hind Fauj. We forget that Netaji himself had told his soldiers that on going to India, they must follow the way of non-violence. This I have from the leaders of the I N. A. But we have lost all sense of discrimination To restore it, the I. N. A. men will have to live up to the ideal placed before them by Netaji The work of those who believe in non-violence is very difficult in this atmosphere which is full of violence But the path of true non-violence requires much more courage than violence. We have not been able to give proof of such non-violence. We might look upon the action of Shri Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi, Shri Vasantrao and Shri Rajabali as examples of the non-violence of the brave. But when communal feelings run high, we are unable to demonstrate any effect of the sacrifices mentioned above. For that, many like Shri Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi will have to lay down their lives. The fact that no one else in Ahmedabad has followed the example, set by Shri Vasantrao and Shri Rajabali shows that we have not yet developed the spirit of sacrifice to the extent of laying down our lives in a non-violent action The correspondent has rightly said that under these circumstances, I should act myself whether others join me or not. It will be disgraceful on my part to sit at home and tell others to go and lay down their lives. Such a thing cannot be an indication of non-violence. I have never had the chance to test my non-violence in the face of communal riots. It might be argued that it was my cowardice which prevented me from seeking such a chance. Be that as it may, God willing, the chance will still come to me, and by throwing me in the fire, He will purify me and make the path of non-violence clear. No one should take it to mean that sacrifice of my life will arrest all violence. Several lives like mine, will have to be given if the terrible violence that has spread all over, is to stop and non-violence reign supreme in its place. The poet has sung·

"हरिनो मारग छे शूरानो, नहीं कायरनुं काम जोने।"

"The path of Truth is for the brave, never for the coward." The path of Truth is the path of non-violence.

Panchgani, 26-6-'46 (From *Harijansevak*)

Harijan, 4-8-1946

175

COMPENSATION FOR MURDER

I have been asked whether the brother or other near relatives of the late Bhai Rajabali should demand compensation in money from Government for his murder. The deceased himself would not have counted such a death as loss As a matter of fact, it is murders such as this which, if wholly unavenged, will ultimately put an end to murder The moment any compensation or revenge is sought, the good of the willing sacrifice is wiped out. And how then could the spirit of the deceased rest in peace?

Murder can never be avenged by either murder or taking compensation The only way to avenge murder is to offer oneself as a willing sacrifice, with no desire for retaliation Those who believe in this premise will never dream of demanding or taking any compensation for the loss of their dear ones The principle of taking life for life will, on the contrary, only lead to an increase of murders This is apparent to all today. Revenge or compensation may furnish some satisfaction to the individual, but I am quite definite that it can never restore peace to or uplift society

The question arises as to what the individual should do in a society where revenge is the rule The answer lies not in precept but in example. And those alone can set the example who have been wronged. Therefore, the final decision must rest with Bhai Rajabali's relatives. My duty lay in pointing them the way of *ahimsa* as I know it.

Sevagram, 9-8-'46 (From *Harijanbandhu*)

Harijan, 18-8-1946

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WHAT CAN VIOLENCE DO?

If newspaper reports are to be believed, responsible Ministers in Sind and other equally responsible Leaguers almost all over, are preaching violence in naked language. Nakedness is itself a virtue as distinguished from hypocrisy. But when it is a hymn of obscenity, it is a vice to be shunned, whether it resides in a Leaguer or any other person. Any Muslim who is not in the League is a traitor, says one. The Hindu is a kafir deserving the fate of such, says another.

Calcutta has given an ocular demonstration of what direct action is and how it is to be done.

Who is the gainer? Certainly not the Muslim masses nor the sober follower of Islam which itself means sobriety and peace. The very salute '*salam alaikum*' means 'peace be unto you'.

Violence may have its place in life but not that which we have witnessed in Calcutta, assuming of course, that newspaper accounts are to be trusted. Pakistan of whatever hue does not lie through senseless violence. When I write of senseless violence, I naturally assume the possibility of sensible violence, whatever the latter may be. The Calcutta demonstration was not an illustration of sensible violence.

What senseless violence does is to prolong the lease of the life of British or foreign rule. I believe that the authors of the State Paper issued by the Cabinet Mission desire peaceful transfer of power to representative Indian hands. But if *we* need the use of the British gun and bayonet, the British will not go or, if they do, some other foreign power will take their place. We shall make a serious mistake, if, every time the British bayonet is used, we trot out the *agent provocateur*. No doubt he has been at work. Let us not ride that horse to death.

Calcutta has earned a bad repute of late. It has seen too many wild demonstrations during the past few months.

If the evil reputation is sustained for some time longer, it will cease to be the City of Palaces, it will become the City of the Dead.

Would that the violence of Calcutta were sterilized and did not become a signal for its spread all over! It depends upon the leaders of the Muslim League of course, but the rest will not be free from responsibility. They can retaliate or refrain Refraining is easy and simple, if there is the will Retaliation is complicated. Will it be tooth against tooth or many against one?

Sevagram, 19-8-'46

Harijan, 25-8-1946

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ANTIDOTE

After giving a graphic description of the recent unfortunate and disgraceful happenings in Calcutta, a writer asks "What is our duty in such circumstances? The Congress gives no clear instructions to the rank and file in such crises Sermons on non-violence from afar are of little use To have offered non-violent resistance would have meant allowing all property to be destroyed and every Hindu to be killed."

The Congress Working Committee has given the clearest possible lead in the last sentence of its resolution published in the newspapers Fratricide will not abate by "intimidation and violence but by mutual understanding, friendly discussion and, if necessary, by agreed arbitration" One does not need to believe in non-violence as a creed to perceive the truth of this practical proposition. If through deliberate courage the Hindus had died to a man, that would have been deliverance of Hinduism and India and purification of Islam in this land.

As it was, a third party had to intervene in order to still mutual savagery. Neither the Muslims nor the Hindus concerned have gained by the intervention. Supposing that

the Calcutta virus extends to the whole of India and British gunpowder keeps the two from stabbing one another, the British power or its substitute will be in possession of India for a long time to come. The length will be measured by the period required by the parties coming to sanity. It will come either by an exhausting mutual fight, independent of the foreign element or by one party eschewing violence in spite of heaviest odds. Successful mutual strife is obviously impossible in the present state of general ignorance of the use of modern weapons and their inaccessibility. Non-violence does not require any outside or outward training. It simply requires the will not to kill even in retaliation and the courage to face death without revenge. This is no sermon on *ahimsa* but cold reason and the statement of a universal law Given the unquenchable faith in the law, no provocation should prove too great for the exercise of forbearance. This I have described as the non-violence of the brave.

Unfortunately for us, we are strangers to the non-violence of the brave on a mass scale Some even doubt the possibility of the exercise of non-violence by groups, much less by masses of people. They restrict its exercise to exceptional individuals. Only, mankind can have no use for it if it is always reserved only for individuals.

Be that as it may, this much is clear that if the people are probably not ready for the exercise of non-violence of the brave, they must be ready for the use of force in self-defence. There should be no camouflage. Self-defence must be pure and simple. Then too it must never be cowardly or crude. It must, therefore, never be secret. Such is stabbing in the back and evading detection. I am conscious of the fact that we are a people unarmed and untrained in the use of arms. Opinions will differ as to whether it is good that we are in that position. There can be no denying the fact that no one needs training in the use of arms in self-defence. What is wanted for the purpose is strong arms and stronger will.

Doing injury to another is obviously violence but harbouring injury to another and yet unwillingness from

cowardice to defend oneself or one's neighbour is also violence and probably worse than the first.

What then are the leaders to do? What are the new Ministers to do? They must ever seek to attain communal harmony — never under threats, ever for its own sake. I regard a Muslim or any non-Hindu as my blood-brother, not in order to please him but because he is born of the same mother Hind as I am. He does not cease to be my brother because he may hate or disown me. I must woo him even, it may be, in spite of himself. The new Ministers must resolve never to use British troops, no matter what their hue is, not even the police trained by them. They are not our enemies. But they have been hitherto used not to help the people but to keep them under the foreign yoke. They should now, as they can, be used for constructive purposes. The military are specially qualified for such work. They are trained and expected to bring into being canvas cities in a moment. They know what it is to procure and keep clean water and make perfect sanitary arrangements. No doubt, they know how to kill and be killed in the act. The public know this part of their work only too well. But it is by no means the most substantial part of their work. It is the background which should be prized, advertised and followed. The animal part of it is unhuman, the other part is essentially human and clean. Let us copy it and humanize the troops if we can. The attempt is worth making. It can only be made by those who are not deceived by the glamour that hangs round them and the awe they inspire. This is possible only when we have the courage to face death without revenge or retaliation in mind or deed.

New Delhi, 2-9-'46

Harijan, 8-9-1946

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NO TIME FOR JUBILATION

Gandhiji in his prayer address hailed the auspicious day of the 2nd of September for which India had so long waited as a red-letter day in India's history But he reminded them that it was not a day for rejoicing or jubilation Their Ministers had reluctantly agreed to accept responsibility for the Interim Government without the Muslim League which was undeniably a powerful organization of the Muslims The League had refused to come in. The Muslims were their brothers Both Hindus and Muslims were sons of India Our mortal mother who gives us birth is entitled to our reverence and worship Such worship purifies the soul How much more worthy of our common allegiance and reverence must be our Motherland then, the Imperishable Mother on whose breast we are borne and will die, he asked? ' All those who are born in this country and claim her as their Motherland, whether they be Hindu, Muslim, Parsi, Christian, Jain or Sikh are equally her children and are, therefore, brothers, united together with a bond stronger than that of blood "

Today the Mussalmans, continued Gandhiji, looked askance at the Hindus Rightly or wrongly, the League had come to believe that the Hindus had bypassed and deceived it and was therefore angry The Mussalmans were observing the day as a day of mourning They did not cease to be their brothers on that account One could not return one's brother's anger with anger Whilst, therefore, they could not join the Mussalmans in their mourning, it was up to them, the Hindus, to try to come as close to them as possible and spare them provocation by abstaining from jubilation, rejoicing and other exuberant manifestations, such as feasting, illuminations etc. Exuberant manifestations were hardly in keeping with the solemnity of the occasion. The proper way of observing solemn occasions as enjoined by Islam, Christianity and Hinduism alike was by fasting, rather

than feasting. They should utilize the occasion to turn the search-light inward and try to find out if they had really done their Muslim brothers any injustice If there was any, it should be openly admitted and remedied.

At the same time he would respectfully tell the League, added the speaker, that it was neither logical nor right to regard both the British and the Hindus as their enemies and to threaten them with direct action. It could not ride two horses at the same time. If it non-cooperated with the British, it should imply co-operation among themselves. Why then should they non-cooperate with their own brothers? The Congress could never ally itself with Britain against the Muslims. It had today accepted responsibility for the Interim Government for the sole purpose of attaining freedom for all alike, including the Muslim League, not for any particular section or community. If a Minister joined the Cabinet to serve a sectional interest to the detriment of the rest or with a desire to injure any particular section, he was unfit to be a Minister. It was wrong for the Mussalmans to regard the Hindus as their enemies and seek to forget that they had lived together as good neighbours for centuries, were born in the same land, were nourished by the same soil and were destined to be returned as dust to the same soil. He would go so far as to say that the League attitude was un-Islamic. The remedy for injustice, if there was any, was to reason together or refer the dispute to arbitration in the last resort, if mutual discussion failed.

The task before the Ministers was early realization of communal unity. That could not be done by a Government notification. The Ministers would have to live for it and die for it. If he had his way, remarked Gandhiji, he would declare that hereafter the military would not be used for the preservation of internal peace. Personally he would like to see even the use of the police banned for that purpose. People must find other means to prevent the communities from flying at each other's throat. If the worst came to the worst, they must have the guts to fight it out among themselves without external aid. He ventured to say that so

long as they needed the help of British arms for their security, their slavery would continue.

Gandhiji hoped fervently that the Interim Government would give the right lead and put India on the road to truth and purity and real Swaraj. In that endeavour he hoped, it would have the loyal co-operation of all Indians.

New Delhi, 3-9-'46 PYARELAL

Harijan, 8-9-1946

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INDEPENDENCE CELEBRATIONS

An Indian friend from Egypt writes:

"On the radio and from newspapers, we have heard the news that India is soon to get her Independence and that the event is to be celebrated all over the country. The Indian community here would like to join in the celebrations. But as we do not care to do so, unless you are wholly satisfied that the country really is independent, we will await hearing from you."

In reply, Gandhiji has written as follows:

"I have received your letter. You have done right to wait. What is there to celebrate until and unless we are really independent? The most that can be said today is that the door to Swaraj has been opened. But it would be wholly foolish to be content with this. Today Hindus and Muslims are fighting with each other in our cities. In these circumstances, Indians abroad can best help us on the road to freedom by standing for unity. You who live in Egypt, can make a valuable contribution in this matter."

New Delhi, 8-9-'46 (From *Harijanbandhu*)

Harijan, 15-9-1946

180

WHAT TO DO?

A friend sends the following questions :

Q. 1. You have all along held and expressed the view that persons should observe strict non-violence even when attacked by hooligans or others. Does this hold good when women are attacked or outraged? If people are unable to follow your lead regarding non-violence, would you advise them to die as cowards or resist aggression with violence?

Q. 2. Should you not unequivocally condemn the dual role that the Muslim League is playing today? While on the one hand, its leaders are openly preaching violence and jehad against Hindus, the same men continue, on the other hand, to hold office as ministers, having a controlling hand on all the threads of administration, including police and justice

Q. 3. Is there no constituted authority in India which can put a stop to this grave anomaly which is unprecedented in history?

Q. 4. Do you realize that if the present happenings are allowed to continue, civil war will become inevitable? How would you advise your countrymen to face such a catastrophe, if it comes?

A. 1. In a society of my imagination, outrage posited by the questioner cannot take place. But in the society in the midst of which we are living, such outrages do take place. My answer is unequivocal. A non-violent man or woman will and should die without retaliation, anger or malice, in self-defence or in defending the honour of his womenfolk. This is the highest form of bravery.

If an individual or a group of people are unable or unwilling to follow this great law of life, which is miscalled my lead, retaliation or resistance unto death is the second best, though a long way off from the first. Cowardice is impotence worse than violence. The coward desires revenge but being afraid to die, he looks to others, may be the Government of the day, to do the work of defence for him.

A coward is less than man He does not deserve to be a member of a society of men and women Lastly, let me add that if women had followed or would now follow my advice, every woman would protect herself without caring or waiting for aid from her brother or sister

A 2 Of course, the dual role adverted to is unequivocally bad It is a sad chapter in our national life. My condemnation is of universal application Fortunately it is so bad that it cannot last long

A. 3 The only constituted authority is the British. We are all puppets in their hands But it would be wrong and foolish to blame that authority It acts according to its nature That authority does not compel us to be puppets. We voluntarily run into their camp. It is, therefore, open to any and every one of us to refuse to play the British game

Let us also admit frankly that the British authority is struggling to quit India. It does not know how. It honestly wants to leave India but wants before leaving, to undo the wrong it has been doing for so long. Being in the position of the 'toad under the harrow', I must know where it hurts. I have been telling the authority, if it will undo the wrong quickly, to leave India to her fate But those who compose the British service cannot realize this obvious fact They flatter themselves with the belief that they know India better than we do ourselves. Having successfully kept us under subjection for over a century, they claim the right to constitute themselves judges of our destiny. We may not grumble, if we are to come into our own through the way of peace Satyagraha is never vindictive It believes not in destruction but in conversion Its failures are due to the weaknesses of the satyagrahi not to any defect in the law itself The British authority having decided to quit, (whatever the reason), will show growing defects and weaknesses. Parties will find that it is more and more a broken reed. And, when parties quarrel as Hindus and Muslims do, let one or the other or both realize that, if India is to be an independent nation, one or both must deliberately cease to look to British authority for protection

A. 4. This brings me to the last question. We are not yet in the midst of civil war. But we are nearing it. At present we are playing at it. War is a respectable term for *goondaism* practised on a mass or national scale. If the British are wise, they will keep clear of it. Appearances are to the contrary Even the English members in the Provincial Assemblies refuse to see that they were given seats by the Act of 1935, not because it was right but in order that they might protect British interest and keep Hindus and Muslims apart But they do not see this It is a small matter. Nevertheless it is a straw showing the way the wind is blowing. Lovers and makers of Swaraj must not be dismayed by these omens. My advice is satyagraha first and satyagraha last. There is no other or better road to freedom Whoever wants to drink the ozone of freedom must steel himself against seeking military or police aid He or they must ever rely upon their own strong arms or what is infinitely better, their strong mind and will which are independent of arms, their own or other.

New Delhi, 9-9-'46

Harijan, 15-9-1946

181

COMMUNAL STRIFE

Gandhiji in his prayer discourse turned with a heavy heart to the continued strife in Bombay. He did not know who killed whom. But it was tragic that some people even rejoiced that Hindus were now strong enough to kill in return those who tried to kill them. He would far rather that Hindus died without retaliation, for that was the only way to quench the fire of hatred. But today they had neither that valour nor that non-violence or love in their hearts. Demand for more and more military and police protection was pouring in from all sides. To quarrel among ourselves was bad enough. But far worse was to call in troops whom the British had trained and whose oath of allegiance was to the British king. He did not want the people to

ask the Government anywhere for military and police protection. They must generate their own strength and not rely on anyone else. If they insisted on being provided with military and police help, the Ministers should resign rather than comply with a request that would strangle independence at its very inception Instead, they and their leaders should be willing to go into the fray themselves and lay down their lives for the sake of Hindu and Muslim honour. As for the military, they should be harnessed to all kinds of constructive work at which they were adepts. Let them grow more food for the starving millions and do all kinds of other work that was waiting to be done.

The rising tide of communal hatred, passion and violence, and as a result, false propaganda in the country made Gandhiji open out his heart to his audience on the day following. It had hurt him to hear some of the recent pronouncements of the Qaid-e-Azam and his lieutenants. They go on saying that they will take what they want by force. He wondered where this was going to lead the ship of State. Congressmen may have the reins of power come into their hands but this has only increased their duties and responsibilities a hundredfold. While the Congress was in the wilderness, they were arrested, beaten and punished, even killed, but that is past history for the time being at any rate. If the Congress had resorted to violence, they would have fallen The only true suffering is that which does not retaliate, it alone can bear fruit. Moreover, the 40 crores of India, i. e village India did not think in terms of violence. They were slaves. The violence today was in the hearts of a handful of townspeople. Gandhiji said that as a villager, he became one with the ocean of Indian humanity and the Congress has taken office for the sake of this suffering humanity. He had espoused the Hindu-Muslim cause, long before he joined the Congress. Even as a boy at school he had many Muslim friends. He went to South Africa in charge of a case for Muslim friends of his brother. He went to South Africa to earn his living but he soon put service first. He became a

coolie barrister in order to serve his labourer friends* there and he really served Hindus through Muslims whose employee he was Hindu-Muslim unity was part of his very being The memory of those days, Gandhiji said, was full of fragrance for him Even today, although alas! communal differences have raised their head there too, all were fighting as one man for Indian rights He recalled stalwart Muslims who had joined the satyagraha movement, especially Sheth Cachalia now gone, who said he would rather die than remain a slave He, therefore, wondered and was hurt when the Qaid-e-Azam and his disciples called Hindus their enemies He was not a Muslim but he claimed that Islam did not teach enmity to any man If he was as he believed, a true Hindu, he was equally a good Christian and a good Sikh and a good Jain No religion teaches man to kill fellow man because he holds different opinions or is of another religion, and yet this was what was being done No one can look upon another as his enemy unless he first becomes his own enemy The Muslim League leaders talked of forcing the Congress and the Hindus and even the British to yield to their demands This surely was not the right way He recalled with pride the days of the Khilafat and related the incident when the Ali Brothers wept tears of joy Gandhiji was addressing a meeting of Hindus and said to them, 'If you want to save the cow, you must save the Khilafat, die for it if need be' This brought tears of joy to the eyes of the Ali Brothers What a sad change was there today! He longed for those days when Muslims and Hindus never did anything without consulting each other What could he do to bring that state of affairs back again, was the question that was worrying him all the time He made bold to say that for any Hindu or Mussalman to regard the other community as 'enemy' was not only disloyal but stupid too He appealed to Englishmen too not to imagine that they could keep them apart If they did, they were disloyal to both India and Britain. Hindus and Muslims were

* Literally, a wage-earning labourer, a term of contempt used in South Africa, for Indians

all one, of the same soil, blood-brothers who ate the same food, drank the same water and talked the same language. They have to live together. The Qaid-e-Azam says, 'all minorities will be safe in Pakistan.' There is already Muslim raj in the Punjab and Bengal and Sind. But does it augur well for future peace if things happen in these provinces as threatened? Does the Muslim League imagine they are going to keep Islam alive through the sword? If so, they are much mistaken. The very word Islam means peace. And Gandhiji maintained that no religion worthy of the name, could exist except on terms of peace.

New Delhi, 10-9-'46 PYARELAL

Harijan, 15-9-1946

182

THOU TOO BIHAR!

It is a grim irony of fate that Bihar, which did so well during the golden days of satyagraha, should now disgrace itself by criminal lawlessness. If the news published is authentic, chain-pulling and stopping trains without cause has become a common occurrence in Bihar with the result that the trains rarely run to time. Passengers consider it superfluous to buy tickets for train journeys. Under a national government, they argue, payment should be unnecessary. *Jai Hind* is regarded as a cry for loot and murder.

I do not know what truth there is in these charges which are as wild as they well can be. I know some parts of Bihar where persons do not distinguish between things lawful and unlawful. I have even heard the argument that I am largely responsible for the prevailing lawlessness, not only in Bihar, but throughout India. I need hardly say that it is a thoughtless charge. The lawlessness, if it can be so described, that I have advocated is like prescribing wholesome and necessary food for the body. Behind my 'lawlessness' there is discipline, construction and well being of society. It is an effective protest against unjust and injurious law or act. It can never take the form of selfish evasion

of a duty. It is a duty never to pull the alarm chain except in well-defined and rare emergencies and never to travel without due payment for the class in which we travel. Loot, arson and murder have never been part of my programme of so-called lawlessness. The answer to the argument that whilst my programme may be good enough for a select few, it can never be for the masses, lies in the question whether I am expected to starve the masses of good food for fear of their taking bad or poisonous food.

I have purposely entered upon what appears to be a personal note, not at all in self-defence, but in order to drive the point home that what is said to be going on in Bihar is administration of rank poison. That way lies not self-rule but licentiousness, not independence but helpless dependence, not life but suicide. Is Bihar of Brijkishoreprasad and Rajendraprasad that I have known and lived in, come to the pass described above? Let the public workers of Bihar not permit the senseless destruction of the fair work of construction done with patient toil. Bihar, beware!

New Delhi, 29-9-'46

Harijan, 6-10-1946

183

SOME POSERS

Q. Very few minorities' representatives have been returned at the elections. What remedy do you suggest?

A. Minorities being a minority, their representation in the Congress organization will naturally be proportionately less. If they feel dissatisfied, they can keep out of the Congress without ceasing to be Congressmen as I have done. It is my claim that I am not less a Congressmen but more by reason of my ceasing to be even a four-anna member of the Congress. At the Faizpur Congress the question was raised by Mrs. Anusuyabai Kale at a gathering at which I was present. On interrogation it was found that the number of those who were four-anna members was very small. But in reply to the question as to how many in

the gathering were not four-anna members, a forest of hands went up. These are real Congressmen seeking no reward but seeking ever to serve it. Bereft of them it would dwindle into a parlour show. The only worthy aim of a Congressman can be to belong wholly to the Congress, never to capture and dominate the Congress. If everbody took up the correct attitude there would be no minorities and majorities. To try to 'capture' the Congress would be to kill the Congress. And a Congressman who is worthy of his salt would die rather than be guilty of the murder.

Q. How should the Hindu-Muslim question be tackled?

A. I must own defeat on that point. I know that mine is today a voice in the wilderness and yet I claim that mine is the only practicable solution. I can never subscribe to the view that because certain members of a particular community have indulged in inhuman acts, therefore the whole community may be condemned outright and put beyond the pale. The Muslim League may call Hindus names and declare India to be *Dar-ul-Harb*, where the law of jehad operates, and all Muslims who co-operate with the Congress as Quislings fit only to be exterminated. But we must not cease to aspire, in spite of this wild talk, to befriend all Mussalmans and hold them fast as prisoners of our love. It would be a present possibility if Hindus in their lakhs offered themselves to be cut to pieces without retaliation or anger in their hearts. Non-violence is today rightly laughed out of court as Utopian. Nevertheless, I maintain that it is the only way to keep Hinduism alive and India undivided. The history of the Congress non-violence for the last twentyfive years has taught us nothing, if it has not taught us that.

Q. How can we counteract the activities of the Communists, who are openly opposing the Congress?

A. The principle which I have laid down vis-a-vis the Hindu-Muslim question also holds good in respect of the Communists. By "Muslim" I mean the Muslim League. For, not all the Muslims are Muslim Leaguers. The Muslim Leaguers have today raised the slogan that ten crores of Indian Muslims are in danger of being submerged and swept

out of existence, unless they constitute themselves into a separate State. I call that slogan scare-mongering pure and simple. It is nonsense to say that any people can permanently crush or swamp out of existence one fourth of its population, which the Mussalmans are in India. But I would have no hesitation in conceding the demand of Pakistan if I could be convinced of its righteousness or that it is good for Islam. But I am firmly convinced that the Pakistan demand as put forth by the Muslim League is un-Islamic and I have not hesitated to call it sinful. Islam stands for the unity and brotherhood of mankind, not for disrupting the oneness of the human family. Therefore, those who want to divide India into possibly warring groups are enemies alike of India and Islam. They may cut me to pieces but they cannot make me subscribe to something which I consider to be wrong.

New Delhi, 30-9-'46 PYARELAL

Harijan, 6-10-1946

184

THE DARKENING SHADOW

Reports of killings and stabbings everywhere continued to darken the horizon during the week. "We are passing through trying times," observed Gandhiji in the course of one of his prayer addresses. "There is news of stabbings in Calcutta, Dacca, Allahabad, Bombay and so on. What is more, all this is done in the name of religion. How stabbing and murder of the innocents, whether aggressive or retaliatory, can help the cause of religion, I fail to understand. The spirit of religion requires us to make Him witness of our littlest of little acts. In Mira's song that has just been sung at the prayer, the devotee prays to God to come to his aid and deliver him from distress. For He alone can do so, none else. Let us pray to God then to deliver us from our distress. If our prayer is sincere, we will rely on Him entirely and put away the sword. And if even one party did so, violence would cease."

An esteemed Bengali friend, continued Gandhiji, had put him some questions as to how they should act at such times as Calcutta had recently been through His reply was that the Hindus and Mussalmans should both cease to rely on the use of the knife and the stick for their protection and make suffering without retaliation their shield, and they will be safe Gandhiji said that he was daily receiving letters from friends to say that some relative or other had died. He wrote to all that they should not mourn, nor should they expect him to mourn with them. "If we have a living faith in God, we will realize that it is the mortal body that perishes, never the immortal spirit within. Man is born to die. Death is the natural corollary to birth." So whether God sent them natural death or whether they were killed by the assassin's knife, they must go smiling to their end. There would not then be knives or sticks in evidence everywhere as they were today. Gandhiji, therefore, asked all to pray to God to vouchsafe to them the living faith that enables one to put oneself entirely under His protection without reliance on any outside help and to remember that He never fails His devotees.

New Delhi, 1-10-'46 PYARELAL

Harijan, 6-10-1946

185

A DEED OF MERCY

A Pathan, an ex-I. N. A. man, now employed by a firm, tried to defend a lad of 10 years. His entreaty was in vain. The assailants stabbed both the boy and the Pathan. The boy died. The Pathan lives. The deceased boy's father offered Rs. 4,000 as a reward for his bravery. He refused saying he tried to do his duty and would not take the reward offered. Would that such instances were multiplied!

New Delhi, 28-9-'46

Harijan, 6-10 19 6

186

"COME THOU IN A SHOWER OF MERCY"

When will this orgy of madness end? Killings in Calcutta, stabbings in Dacca, Agra, Ahmedabad and Bombay. To it must now be added the technique of poisoning. Must India go in for this crowning infamy? Or, is India's destiny to illustrate to the world the truth of the old Indian saying that greatest corruption leads to greatest pessimism and crime? Gandhiji poured out his soul's anguish over these dark happenings in the course of his address at the evening prayer gathering on the 2nd October, his birthday according to the English Calendar. Mrs. Nandita Kripalani, the grand-niece of the Poet, had just sung in her melodious voice the Poet's song:

> When the heart is hard and parched up, come upon me with a shower of mercy.
>
> When grace is lost from life, come with a burst of song.
>
> When tumultuous work raises its din on all sides shutting me out, come to me, my lord of silence with thy peace and rest.
>
> When my beggarly heart sits crouched, shut up in a corner, break open the door, my king and come with thy regalities.
>
> When desire blinds the mind with delusion and dust, O thou holy one, thou wakeful, come with thy light and thy thunder.

"It is almost as if God has sent a special message to me and to us in this hymn today," he commented. "The springs of life in India appear to be dry today. We would be foolish to imagine that all is well because we have a Congress ministry at the Centre." It was, he proceeded, as if God has come to us with His awful light and His thunder to awaken us at a time when our minds are blinded with delusion and dust.

He was receiving, Gandhiji went on to say, letters of abuse saying that his doctrine of non-violence was

emasculating the Hindus, that he was no Mahatma, that he was injuring them and leading them astray. The speaker said, 'he never laid claim to being a Mahatma.' He was an ordinary mortal as any one of them He hoped he had never injured anyone. What he told them he told them for their own and the universal good He had said that if they could not act non-violently they should defend themselves violently rather than be cowards. But the ability to die smiling at the hands of a brother without retaliation, physical or mental, was the highest bravery. In no case was it right to spoil for a fight That was no self-defence. It was bad for them, bad for the country and utter disloyalty to their leaders. It was hindering them in their march towards Swaraj. Gandhiji reiterated that today no one had a right to feast and eat one morsel more than necessary. If they behaved in a disciplined manner India would live. If they did not, then India would die and they would be unable to hold their heads high.

AT LAST?

It is darkest before dawn. Things have a knack of growing worse before they become better. It would almost seem as if in answer to the prayers and good wishes of an aching world, dark clouds that have so long darkened the Indian sky are going to lift after all As this is being written there are indications that the last gap in the National Interim Government is going to be filled up by the Muslim League coming into the Cabinet. Conversations were going on, remarked Gandhiji at today's evening prayer in his written Monday message in Hindustani, which led one to hope that the Muslim League would join the Cabinet. He wanted all to pray that this time the union between the Congress and the Muslim League would be even deeper and more lasting than in 1916 and during the Khilafat movement, and brother would no longer abuse or kill brother and all would live in peace.

New Delhi, 7-10-'46 PYARELAL

Harijan, 13-10-1946

187

ROWDYISM RUN RIOT

A correspondent from Jubbulpore describes the rowdyism exhibited by a section of the Hindus at a benefit performance in aid of the local convent school for girls. A Hindu friend actually organized the show. The actors in the little drama were all girls from the convent. Towards the end there was a scene in which an orphaned girl, tired of the world, was praying to God. Angels appeared and advised her to have faith in her Christ and the play ended with a hymn in praise of Jesus. This was the signal for pandemonium. The Hindus who created the disturbance raised a hue and cry against Christianity, the organizer who tried to speak was unable to make himself heard and money for the tickets was demanded back. The writer asks whether this scene could have taken place if the hymn sung had been in praise of Shri Krishna instead of Jesus.

If what the correspondent says is true, the behaviour described was wholly unworthy. It betrayed extreme intolerance. Those who do not like things that do not coincide with their notions need not patronize them but it is ungentlemanly to behave like less than men when things are not to their taste.

New Delhi, 5-10-'46

Harijan, 13-10-1946

188

HINDU AND MUSSALMAN TEA ETC.

Hindu and Mussalman tea is sold at railway stations. Separate arrangements for meals for the two communities are sometimes made and none seem to be there for Harijans. All this is a sign of our pitiable condition and constitutes a blot on British administration. One can understand their not interfering in religious matters, but for them to allow

separate arrangements for tea, water etc. for the two communities is to set the seal of approval on separatism. Railways and railway travelling offer a golden opportunity which could be used for social reform and for educating the public in sanitation and hygiene, good manners and communal unity. Instead, however, an utter neglect of and indifference to these desiderata are shown. Railway travel serves to strengthen rather than mitigate evil customs and bad habits. First and second class passengers are pampered, luxurious habits encouraged. Third class passengers on whom the railway revenues largely depend are denied even elementary amenities and exposed to all kinds of hardship. In either case weakness is exploited. And when, in addition to this, separatism and untouchability are recognized by the Railway authorities, it is the very limit. If any passenger wishes to impose restrictions on himself he is at liberty to do so at his own expense and suffer, may be, even hunger and thirst. But let him not demand special facilities for himself from Railway authorities.

That vegetarians and non-vegetarians should be catered for is another matter. That is already being done.

Poona, 7-3-'46

Harijan, 17-3-1946

(From *Harijansevak*)

189

HINDU PANI AND MUSLIM PANI

A stranger travelling in Indian trains may well have a painful shock when he hears at railway stations for the first time in his life ridiculous sounds about *pani*, tea and the like being either Hindu or Muslim. It would be repulsive now that the Government at the Centre is wholly national and a well-known Indian in the person of Asaf Ali Saheb is in charge of Transport and Railways. It is to be hoped that we shall soon have the last of the shame that is peculiarly Indian. Let no one imagine that Railways being under a Muslim, Hindus may not get justice. In the

Central and Provincial Governments, there is or should be no Hindu, Muslim or any other communal distinctions. All are Indians. Religion is a personal matter. Moreover, the members of the Cabinet have set up a wholesome convention that they should always meet at the end of the day's work and take stock of what each member has done. It is team work in which the members are jointly and severally responsible for one another's work. It is not open to any member to say that a particular thing is not his work because it is no part of his portfolio. We have a right therefore to assume that this unholy practice of having separate everything for every community at railway stations will go. Scrupulous cleanliness is a desideratum for all. If taps are used for all liquids there need be no compunction felt by the most orthodox about helping themselves. A fastidious person may keep his own *lota* and cup and receive his milk, tea, coffee or water through a tap. In this there is no interference with religion. No one is compelled to buy anything at railway stations. As a matter of fact many orthodox persons fast for water and food during travel. Thanks we still breathe the same air, walk on the same mother earth.

All communal cries at least at railway stations should be unlawful.

As I have often said in these columns trains and steamers are the best media for the practical education of the millions of travellers in spotless cleanliness, hygiene, sanitation and camaraderie between the different communities of India. Let us hope that the Cabinet will have the courage to act up to their convictions, and may confidently expect the hearty co-operation of the Railway staff and the public in making this much-needed reform a thorough success.

New Delhi, 12-10-'46

Harijan, 20-10-1946

QUESTION BOX

ONENESS OF COSTUME A CURE?

Q "In these last four weeks, I have seen so much bloodshed and firing that it has left a bitter taste in my mouth. Every day since the riots started, I have been on duty as a magistrate trying to maintain the peace Now, more than ever before, I am convinced of the necessity that we should insist on every Indian wearing the same nationalist dress As you may remember I had broached the subject before but at the time you had not approved of the idea. Why is it that none of the stabbings have been of people wearing a shirt and pant? This should be conclusive proof that the dress causes the difference in religion, to be accentuated. Your reply to this through the *Harijan* for others like me who think that communal riots would disappear within a short time on our wearing the same kind of dress would be most appreciated"

A I publish this as from a well-versed, well-meaning friend These three qualities combined do not necessarily make for clearness of thought What is wanted is not oneness of costume but oneness of hearts We have only to look at Europe to demonstrate the emptiness of the idea that oneness of costume will enable us to get out of the mess we are in Ill will is like an ill wind It must go and be replaced by the fresh and bracing wind of good will

WHY THIS SECRECY?

Q Can you say why, when mutual slaughter between brother and brother is going on, the names of the respective communities should be withheld?

A I confess that the question has often occurred to me. There seems to me to be no reason for this hush-hush policy save that it is a legacy from the autocracy which, let us hope, the national governments have displaced. Those who ought not to know, know who stabs whom And those who should know are kept in the dark I am sure there are

many Hindus and Muslims and even members of other communities taking pride in being Indians first and last without ceasing to be devoted followers of their own religions and who love to do their best to dissuade blind fanatics from making mischief. I know many such. They have no means of ascertaining facts except through the Press. Let darkness be exposed to light. It will be dispelled quicker.

New Delhi, 12-10-'46

Harijan, 20-10-1946

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DEADLY EMBRACE

In Bombay a Hindu gave shelter to a Muslim friend the other day. This infuriated a Hindu mob who demanded the head of the Muslim friend. The Hindu would not surrender his friend. So both went down literally in deadly embrace. This was how it was described to me authentically. Nor is this the first instance of chivalry in the midst of frenzy. During the recent blood bath in Calcutta, stories of Muslims having, at the peril of their lives, sheltered their Hindu friends and vice versa were recorded. Mankind would die if there were no exhibition any time and anywhere of the divine in man.

Shri Balasaheb Kher, the Premier of Bombay, has described in glowing terms the instance of two youths rushing to still the wrath of a Muslim mob and meeting what they knew was certain death. They met Death as their true friend. Let no scoffer deny the inestimable value of such sacrifice — sacred deed. It would be mock sacrifice, if every such act ended in success, so-called. The certain moral is that, if such instances are sufficiently multiplied, the senseless slaughter on either side in the name of religion will stop. One indispensable condition is that there should be no hypocrisy, no mock heroism. Let us appear as we are.

New Delhi, 15-10-'46

Harijan, 20-10-1946

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THE TRAVAIL

A friend was discussing with Gandhiji the other day the recent gruesome happenings in Calcutta. His sensitive and refined spirit shrank from the very idea of narrow communalism. What filled him with anguish was not the loss of life so much, deplorable as it was, as the degradation of the human spirit that had resulted from the Calcutta happenings. "Even those who never thought in terms of communalism are now becoming communal-minded. But that was not all. The madness has spread."

As Gandhiji sat listening to the stories that came from Bengal, his mind was made up. "If I leave Delhi," he remarked, "it will not be in order to return to Sevagram but only to go to Bengal. Else, I would stay here and stew in my own juice."

He consulted two friends from Bengal that evening about it. "Allow us to go there first and report," said they. "Give us a chance to do our bit and then, if necessary, you can come." Gandhiji agreed.

In the course of the talk, one of them asked Gandhiji whether he would recommend fasting to check the orgy of communal madness that was spreading in Bengal. Gandhiji's reply was in the negative. He narrated how a valuable colleague from Ahmedabad had invited him to immolate himself. "We believe in the non-violent way but lack the strength. Your example would steady our wavering faith and fortify us." The logic was perfect and the temptation great. "But I resisted it and said 'no'. There is no inner call. When it comes, nothing will keep me back. I have reasoned with myself too about it. But I need not set forth my reasons. Let people call me a coward if they please. I have faith that when the hour arrives God will give me the strength to face it and I won't be found unready."

THE WAY OF THE CROSS

"Fasting cannot be undertaken mechanically," Gandhiji proceeded. "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"

"The idea is," he continued, "that you appropriate to yourself and assimilate the essence of his sacrifice symbolically represented by the bread and wine of the Eucharist A man who was completely innocent offered himself as a sacrifice for the good of others, including his enemies and became the ransom of the world It was a perfect act 'It is finished' were the last words of Jesus and we have the testimony of his four disciples as to its authenticity

But whether the Jesus tradition is historically true or not I do not care To me it is truer than history because I hold it to be possible and it enshrines an eternal law — the law of vicarious and innocent suffering taken in its true sense"

He then proceeded to show how the lesson of Jesus could be applied to the present situation "A Hindu and a Mussalman braved the fury of the maddened crowd in Bombay and went down together literally clasped in a fatal embrace but refused to desert each other Rajab Ali and Vasantrao Hegishte similarly fell a prey to mob frenzy in the attempt to quell it "What came out of it?" people might ask, "the fire still continues to rage" I do not think for a moment it has gone in vain We may not see the effect today Our non-violence is as yet a mixed affair. It limps. Nevertheless, it is there and it continues to work like a leaven in a silent and invisible way, least understood by most It is the only way" As a further illustration of his remarks he recalled the history of the Champaran Satyagraha There had been several bloody risings within half a century preceding it against the infamous compulsory

indigo plantation But each attempt had only resulted in fastening the rivets tighter than ever before. Then came the Champaran mass satyagraha, untainted by acts of violence, and a century-old evil was overthrown in less than six months.

"Go forth, therefore", he concluded. "I have done. I won't detain you for a day longer You have my blessings. And I tell you there will be no tears but only joy, if tomorrow I get the news that all the three of you are killed."

"It will be pure joy to be so killed," they echoed

"But mark my words," he resumed "Let there be no foolhardiness about it You should go because you feel you must and not because I ask you to."

"That goes without saying," they answered together as they took leave to go forth and face the flames.

In God's Hands

Remarked Gandhiji at the evening prayer gathering that day that he had received numerous messages from Bengal inviting him to go there and still the raging fury. Whilst he did not believe that he had any such capacity, he was anxious to go to Bengal. Only he thought it was his duty to wait till Pandit Nehru's return and the meeting of the Working Committee. But he was in God's hands. If he clearly felt that he should wait for nothing, he would not hesitate to anticipate the date. His heart was in Bengal.

New Delhi, 18-10-'46

Harijan, 27-10-1946

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THE ORGY OF MADNESS

The week's events were not calculated to lift the darkness that had descended on Gandhiji's spirit and to which I referred last week. "I am trying to take my bearings, to see where I stand," he casually remarked the other day in the course of a conversation. He has since been pouring out his anguish in a series of prayer gathering addresses. There was first the flood havoc in Assam. Thousands had been rendered homeless, property worth lakhs had been destroyed and many lives lost. That was an act of God. But far worse than the news from Assam was the fact that an orgy of madness had seized a section of humanity in Bengal Man had sunk lower than the brute. Reports were coming through that the Hindus, who are in a very small minority there, were being attacked by Mussalmans. Ever since he had heard of the happenings in Noakhali he had been furiously thinking as to what his own duty was God would show him the way He knew that his stock had gone down with the people so far as the teaching of non-violence was concerned. They still showered affection upon him. He appreciated their affection and felt thankful for it. But the only way in which he could express his thanks and appreciation was to place before them and through them the world the truth which God had vouchsafed to him and to the pursuit of which his whole life was devoted, even at the risk of forfeiting their affection and regard. At the moment, he felt prompted to tell them that it would be wrong on the part of the Hindus to think in terms of reprisals for what had happened in Noakhali and elsewhere in East Bengal. Non-violence was the creed of the Congress. It had brought them to their present strength. But it would be counted only as a coward's expedient if its use was to be limited only against the British power which was strong and while violence was to be freely used against our own brethren. He refused

to believe that they could ever adopt that as their creed. Although the Congress had an overwhelming majority of the Hindus on its membership rolls, he maintained that it was by no means a Hindu organization and that it belonged equally to all communities He had told Acharya Kripalani, who had succeeded Pandit Nehru in the Presidentship of the Congress, that it was going to prove no feather-bed for him. If the Chief Minister of the Cabinet had to wear a crown of thorns the Congress President would have to lie on a bed of thorns. The late Sir Syed Ahmed had called Hindus and Mussalmans the two eyes of India. The Congress President could not possibly discriminate between the two. He was pledged to equally serve both. He, the speaker, had therefore asked him to proceed on a mission of peace to East Bengal to teach people the art of dying without killing It should be his privilege to demonstrate it by his personal example He was going there with his wife not to protect one party but to stop the fratricide which threatened to overwhelm India. It was a good beginning for Acharya Kripalani and his wife. Shri Sarat Babu, the brother of the late Subhas Babu, was going with them. He knew no barriers of caste or creed.

The fair name of Bengal was being tarnished—Bengal that had given them so much, Bengal, the home of Gurudev whose *bhajan* they had just heard sung. That hymn asked God to make the devotee wide-hearted and fearless. It was with that hymn on their lips that they were going and it was the audience's duty to wish them every success.

New Delhi, 18-10-'46

Harijan, 27-10-1946

A WORD TO THE MUSLIM LEAGUE

He appealed to the Muslim League too to turn the searchlight inward. They had decided to come into the Interim Government. He hoped they were coming in to work as brothers. If they did so, all would be well And just as he had exhorted Hindus not to slay Mussalmans nor harbour ill-will towards them, so he appealed to the Muslim League, even if they wanted to fight for Pakistan, to fight cleanly and as brothers. The Qaid-e-Azam had said that minorities would be fully protected and everyone would receive justice in Pakistan. It was as good as Pakistan where they were in the majority and he implored them to treat Hindus as blood-brothers and not as enemies It boded ill for Pakistan if what was happening in East Bengal was an earnest of things to come He hoped both Hindus and Muslims respectively would stand mutually as surety and pledge themselves to see that not a hair of the head of the minority community in their midst was injured. Unless they learnt to do that, he would say that their assumption of the reins of power was a mere blind What was going on in Bengal was not worthy of human beings. They had to learn to be human beings first.

NOT STRAIGHT

Gandhiji's hope that the coming of the Muslim League into the Interim Government would prove to be a good augury was, however, destined soon to receive a rude shock by the inclusion of a Scheduled Caste name in the list of the Muslim League's nominees It might be supposed, Gandhiji remarked after the evening prayer on Wednesday last, that a man like himself ought to be glad that another seat had been given to a Harijan. But he would be deceiving himself and Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah if he said so. The latter had said that the Muslims and Hindus were two nations The League was a purely communal organization. How then could they nominate a Harijan to represent

them ? Gandhiji feared their whole mode of entrance into the Cabinet had not been straight. He could not sense any generosity in the nomination of a Harijan in their quota of five seats especially when he read what was happening in East Bengal. He was, therefore, forced to wonder whether they had come into the Cabinet also to fight. He hoped, nevertheless, that his fears would prove to be wrong and that they would work there as brothers, out to serve India as a whole. He hoped too that the Harijan member would prove a worthy son and servant of India.

New Delhi, 18-10-'46

Harijan, 27-10-1946

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WOMEN'S ORDEAL

"It is not death that matters but how you meet death," Gandhiji remarked on another occasion. To die at the hands of one's brother is a privilege, provided you die bravely. But what about women who were being abducted and forcibly converted ? That no one could be 'converted' forcibly was here beside the point. "And why should Indian women feel so helpless ? Is bravery the monopoly of men only ? Women of course do not generally carry swords though the Rani of Jhansi did and outdid all her contemporaries in the valour of the sword. Still all cannot become Ranis of Jhansi. But all women can emulate the example of Sita whom even the mighty Ravana dared not touch. Ranis of Jhansi could be subdued."

"Let no one dismiss the example of Sita as legendary," he proceeded and gave the example of Olive Doke who dared to go and live among the unclad primitive Negro tribes in the heart of Africa without fear of molestation. It was that higher type of valour which he wanted Indian womanhood to cultivate. The military and police might protect them from abduction, but what about those who

had already been abducted or who might be abducted in spite of the police and the military? They ought to learn to die before a hair of their head could be injured. He averred that it was possible for a woman to put an end to herself by choking or biting the tongue.

DEATH BEFORE DISHONOUR

The next evening he had to revise the technique suggested above. Dr. Sushila who had heard him the day before had told him—and Dr. B. C. Roy who saw him the next morning confirmed her statement—that one could not end his life by choking or biting one's tongue. The only way known to medicine for instant self-immolation was a strong, poisonous dose. If this was so, he, the speaker, would advise every one running the risk of dishonour to take poison before submission to dishonour. He had, however, heard from those given to *yogic* practices that it was possible by some *yogic* practice to end life. He would try to inquire. His was not an idle idea. He meant all he had said. The very fact of steeling oneself for death before dishonour braced one for the struggle. Woman in our country was brought up to think that she was well only with her husband or on the funeral pyre. He would far rather see India's women trained to wield arms, said the speaker, than that they should feel helpless. The vogue of carrying daggers and revolvers by women was on the increase. He knew, however, that arms were a poor weapon when it came to the matter of defending one's honour against odds. Arms were a symbol of one's helplessness, not strength. When one was deprived of them, generally there was nothing left but surrender.

New Delhi, 18-10-'46

Harijan, 27-10-1946

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ADVICE TO WOMEN

I

Tears trickled down their faces when a number of women met Gandhiji last evening in a corner of the paddy field where he was taking his evening walk, to tell him their sad tales and the present condition in which they were living.

One old lady while wiping her tears from her eyes said: "Mahatmaji, please tell us what we are to do. How can we live in our villages when we think our life and property are unsafe and insecure?"

Gandhiji told them that since his arrival in Noakhali he had been telling them all to be fearless. If they acted accordingly and were fearless in all their work, they could live in peace. Pointing his hand towards the sky, he said to those women, "Believe in Him. Pray and fear Him alone, and none in this world."

Harijan, 19-1-1947

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ADVICE TO WOMEN

II

Addressing a gathering of women who had assembled at the courtyard of the house where he is residing at Chandipur, Gandhiji said that women should depend on God and on their own strength and not on others. They should be more courageous and should have more confidence in their own strength. If they were afraid, they would fall easy victims to the onslaughts of the miscreants.

"Indian women are not *abalas*. They are famous for their heroic deeds of the past, which they did not achieve with the help of the sword, but of character. Even today they can help the nation in many ways. They can do some

useful work by which they can not only help themselves, but also the nation as a whole, thereby taking the country nearer her goal."

Gandhiji told them that not the men of Noakhali only were responsible for all that had happened, but women too were equally responsible. He asked them all to be fearless and have faith in God like Draupadi and Sita of the past.

Gandhiji also asked them to eschew untouchability. He said that if they still went on disowning the untouchables, more sorrow was in store for them. He asked the audience to invite a Harijan every day to dine with them. If they could not do so, they could call a Harijan before taking a meal and ask him to touch the drinking water or the food. This, Gandhiji said, would go a long way to cement the gulf created between different classes of people by artificial caste barriers. Unless they did penance for their sins in that way, more calamities and more severe ones would overtake them all.

Harijan, 26-1-1947

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A WOMAN'S DILEMMA

Q. What is a woman to do when attacked by miscreants ? To run away, or resist with violence ? To have boats in readiness to fly or prepare to defend with weapons ?

A. My answer to this question is very simple. For me there can be no preparation for violence. All preparation must be for non-violence if courage of the highest type is to be developed. Violence can only be tolerated as being preferable always to cowardice. Therefore I would have no boats ready for a flight in emergency. For a non-violent person there is no emergency, but quiet dignified preparation for death. Hence whether it is a man or a woman he or she will defy death even when he or she is unassisted; for the real assistence is from God. I can preach no other thing and I am here to practise what I preach. Whether such an opportunity will occur to me or be given to me I do not

know If there are women who, when assailed by miscreants, cannot resist themselves without arms they do not need to be advised to carry arms. They will do so. There is something wrong in this constant enquiry as to whether to bear arms or not. People have to learn to be naturally independent. If they will remember the central teaching, namely, that the real effective resistance lies in non-violence, they will model their conduct accordingly And that is what the world has been doing although unthinkingly. Since it is not the highest courage, namely, courage born of non-violece, it arms itself even unto the atom bomb. Those who do not see in it the futility of violence will naturally arm themselves to the best of their ability.

In India since my return from South Africa, there has been conscious and constant training in non-violence with the result we have seen.

Q Can a woman be advised to take her own life rather than surrender?

A. This question requires a definite answer I answered it in Delhi just before leaving for Noakhali. A woman would most certainly take her own life rather than surrender. In other words, surrender has no room in my plan of life But I was asked in what way to take one's own life. I promptly said it was not for me to prescribe the means, behind the approval of suicide under such circumstances was and is the belief that one whose mind is prepared for even suicide will have the requisite courage for such mental resistance and such internal purity that her assailant will be disarmed. I could not carry the argument any further because it does not admit of further development It requires positive proof which, I own, is lacking.

Q. If the choice is between taking one's own life or that of the assailant, which would you advise?

A. When it is a question of choice between killing oneself or the assailant, I have no doubt in my mind that the first should be the choice.

Palla, 27-1-'47

Harijan, 9-2-1947

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SIND BANS SATYARTH PRAKASH

One had thought that the ban on *Satyarth Prakash* had lapsed, never to be renewed. But the hope was a dupe. Here is the renewed ban:

> "Whereas it appears to the Government of Sind that Chapter XIV of the book in Sindhi entitled "Satyarth Prakash" contains matter which promotes feelings of enmity or hatred between different classes of His Majesty's subjects—
>
> "Now, therefore, in exercise of the powers conferred by Section 99 A of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898, the Government of Sind hereby declares to be forfeited to His Majesty every copy wherever found of the book in Sindhi entitled "Satyarth Prakash" written by Swami Dayananda Sarasvati and published by Professor Tarachand D. Gajra, M. A. on behalf of the Pratinidhi Sabha, Sind, Karachi, and all other documents containing copies, reprints or translations of, or extracts from Chapter XIV of the said book on the grounds that in the said chapter the author,
>
> (a) ridicules some of the religious beliefs of the Muslims;
>
> (b) misrepresents and reviles the teachings of the *Quran*;
>
> (c) attacks and belittles the authority of the Prophet Mohammed; and
>
> (d) generally contains matter calculated to hurt and which hurts, the religious susceptibilities of Muslims."

It is wider in application than before. The lapsed ban made it criminal to print or publish the book containing Chapter XIV. The renewed ban makes the possession of such a copy a crime. I cannot help feeling that the ban is senseless and is calculated to wound the susceptibilities of the Arya Samajists all the world over. *Satyarth Prakash* enjoys the same status for 40 lakhs of Arya Samajists as the *Quran* for the Muslims and the Bible for the Christians. It is possible to understand a ban on contemporaneous controversial literature, though at this time of the day popular Governments are reluctant even then to use their

power. But it seems to be mischievous to ban a scriptural book. I would, therefore, urge the Sind Government to withdraw the ban in question. The Sindhi translation of *Satyarth Prakash* is not a new publication. Is it to be contended that a book that has passed through so many editions and has been translated in most of the languages of the world has been now found to contain matter "which promotes feelings of enmity or hatred between different classes of His Majesty's subjects?" The virtue of toleration is never strained, especially in matters of religion. Differences of religious opinion will persist to the end of time; toleration is the only thing that will enable persons belonging to different religions to live as good neighbours and friends. Religion never suffers by reason of the criticism fair or foul of critics; it always suffers from the laxity or indifference of its followers.

New Delhi, 26-10-'46

Harijan, 3-11-1946

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A TIMELY INTERVIEW

[The following is the text (as published by the Associated Press of America) of an interview which Gandhiji gave to Mr. Preston Grover on October 21, 1946 at the Sweepers' Colony, New Delhi. Ed.]

Mahatma Gandhi declared in an interview today that the Muslim League Ministry in Bengal should be able to control the outbreak of disorders in East Bengal in which a good few thousands have been driven from their homes and an undetermined number killed or kidnapped.

He described the Bengal outbreak as "heart-breaking".

He announced again his intention of visiting the troubled areas in Bengal after his meeting on October 23 with Pandit Nehru and the Working Committee where they will discuss problems created by the entry of the Muslim Group into the Central Ministry.

"The fact that I go there will satisfy the soul and may be of some use," he said.

"Will the Muslims listen to you?" he was asked.

"I don't know," he said. "I don't go with any expectation, but I have the right to expect it. A man who goes to do his duty only expects to be given strength by God to do his duty"

To a question as to when this type of disturbances would end in India, he replied

"You may be certain that they will end If the British influence were withdrawn they would end much quicker While the British influence is here, both parties, I am sorry to confess, look to the British power for assistance"

Turning to the affairs of the Interim Government, Mahatma Gandhi regretted the statement of Raja Ghaznafar Ali Khan, Muslim League selection for the Central Government To Raja Ghaznafar Ali Khan's statement that the League was going into the Interim Government to fight for Pakistan, Mr. Gandhi said

"That is an extraordinary and inconsistent attitude The Interim Government is for the interim period only and may not last long While it is in office it is there to deal with the problems that face the country — starvation, nakedness, disease, bad communications, corruption, illiteracy. Any one of these problems would be enough to tax the best minds of India On these there is no question of Hindu or Muslim Both are naked Both are starving Both wished to drive out the demon of illiteracy and un-Indian education

There is not much time to elapse between this Government and that to be set up by the Constituent Assembly The time will be shortened if both apply their will to the completion of the work on the Constituent Assembly.

"The Constituent Assembly is based on the State Paper That Paper has put in cold storage the idea of Pakistan. It has recommended the device of "grouping", which the Congress interprets in one way, the League in another and the Cabinet Mission in a third way. No lawgiver can give an authoritative interpretation of his own

law. If then there is a dispute as to its interpretation, a duly constituted court of law must decide it."

"But if the Muslim League do not accept the court interpretation?"

"They cannot impose theirs on others. If they do, they put themselves in the wrong box. The alternative is to come to blows. We are all savages and come to blows often when we don't agree. Yet we are all gentlemen. This is so whether in America or Europe."

Harijan, 3-11-1946

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UN-ISLAMIC

Sheikh Saheb Hisam-ud-Din, former President of the All India Majlis-e-Ahrar has issued the following to the Press:

"The news of awful and inhuman occurrences which are coming from East Bengal cannot be welcomed by any true Muslim nor can these deeds be considered praiseworthy or Islamic. Compare the actions of the majority of the Muslims of this territory with the injunctions given to the Chief Commander at the time of leaving Medina by the first Caliph. In these the protection of the civil population, the respect for the chastity of the non-Muslim women and the veneration of the places of worship is dwelt upon. On the other hand abundance of slaughter, arson and forcible conversion of young women and their shutting up in the harems are such shameful actions as cannot be tolerated by any civilized people. I really feel a heart-felt sorrow that this state of affairs is the consequence of political dishonesty and bungling by which, for the attainment of a particular end, the emotions of a people have been infuriated, but eyes have been shut as to the responsibility regarding their control. Certainly no Government can tolerate such a state of affairs for any length of time.

"A question arises at this stage whether the power of the army and the police is its remedy or the mutual

respect, confidence and co-operation between the people living in a country. I consider that for the creation of a peaceful and tranquil atmosphere in Bengal, the Muslims of India generally and the Muslims of Bengal especially should come to the front as there is a Muslim majority in the province. To keep the minority satisfied and to prepare them for a life free from worry and tension is the first duty of the Muslim majority.

"Unfortunately in Bengal the leadership of the Muslims has fallen to the lot of a group dissociated from moral virtues and gentlemanliness. In the light of the golden principles inculcated by Islam, other Muslims should come forward and face all the dangers to wean the misled and excited brethren in this region into good and sympathetic neighbours. It is emphasized that the work cannot be accomplished by a free use of rifles and machine guns, nor by turning the non-Muslim houses into forts for protection in self-defence. The common people must be freed from the dominance of the *goonda* element and the people made to live a peaceful and gentle life by softening their hearts by reason. This can be accomplished better by the Muslims themselves.

"For this end the All-India Majlis-e-Ahrar-e-Islam is ready to send its parties of disciplined volunteers at once to the affected places so that the misguided brethren may be brought round to the right path as early as possible and the foundations of a permanent peace be laid in the province.

"I know that in this path there are various difficulties to be faced, but to true Muslims in the carrying out of the duty hardships and tribulations have never counted nor would now be any obstacles. For the accomplishment of necessary arrangements I have started talks with Maulana Ataullah Shah Bukhari, President, All India Majlis-e-Ahrar, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Maulana Hussain Ahmed Madni, President, All India Jamiat-ul-ulema-i-Hind. By the grace of God the first batch would be leaving Delhi very soon."

Maulana Saheb himself issued the following four days ago:

"Hopes that Bengal would be able to recover early from the tragedy of the Great Calcutta Killing have been shattered by the terrible events now taking place in Eastern Bengal. The non-official report of arson, murder, pillage and oppression makes horrible reading. The Government communique states that incidents have taken place but does not accept all the details contained in the non-official report.

"The Government account is bad enough, but if these details are proved, it constitutes a terrible indictment of the people responsible for the outrage. All civilized society is based on the protection of the life, property and faith of its members. This applies even more to the protection of the honour of women. Anybody who fails to respect women's honour condemns himself to the charge of bestiality. Minorities have a special claim in all these respects, and it is the duty of the majority so to act that all fears of the minority are allayed. There is neither bravery nor credit if a majority tyrannizes over a minority.

"What is most regrettable is that the name of religion has been dragged in for committing atrocious deeds. There are reports of forcible conversions and forced marriages. No religion, least of all Islam, permits the use of force and violence in matters of faith. The days of the early Caliphs who represented the spirit of Islam in its pristine purity were remarkable for toleration, security and protection guaranteed to minorities like the Jews and the Christians. In fact, the Jews who were prosecuted in all the Christian countries of Europe throughout the Middle Ages, could find safety and security in the Muslim kingdom of Spain and later in Turkey.

"Calumniators of Islam have at times tried to suggest that its phenomenal expansion was due to the use of compulsion and force, but they are refuted by the unequivocal injunction of the Quran that there shall be no compulsion in the matter of faith. Those who act against that teaching are, therefore, guilty of the worst possible disservice to the cause of Islam and the Mussalmans.

"I would urge all Mussalmans and Hindus who love their country and community to ponder calmly and dispas-

sionately on the situation They have to live together in this land and no Government can tolerate lawlessness and disorder for long If there are any communal riots, sooner or later the Government would put them down by the use of the police and if necessary the army But this would only suppress the disease, not cure it

"The only method of eradicating these evils is for the majority in an area to guarantee the security of the minority. If, instead of waiting for the police and the army to come and forcibly suppress disorder, responsible men of the major community stand against the miscreants and protect the life, property and honour of the minority in that area, the whole atmosphere of the country will change

"I would make a special appeal to Muslim brethren in East Bengal Islam enjoins the protection of one's neighbour as one's religious duty In Noakhali and other districts of Eastern Bengal, Muslims are in an overwhelming majority Let men of goodwill in these areas unite and declare that they will protect their neighbours with their lives, and that nobody shall harm a single Hindu except over their dead bodies"

The value of these statements lies not so much in the numbers of Muslims supporting it, but in the fact that these Muslims of undoubted repute in Islam have no hesitation in condemning in unmeasured terms the nefarious deeds of the Muslims in East Bengal. It would be wrong to stigmatize the doers as *goondas* These perpetrators of wrong are undoubtedly misled by men who should know better. There is little wonder that the atrocities have taken place when one bears in mind the poison that is instilled into the credulous minds of simple-minded Muslims.

In order to meet the evil, the sane element in Islam must not only speak out its mind, but act accordingly and promptly. It would be interesting to know whether the former President of the All India Majlis-e-Ahrar has been able to send the contemplated body of volunteers to undo the mischief.

New Delhi, 23-10-'46

Harijan, 3-11-1946

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FORCIBLE MARRIAGES AND CONVERSIONS

"What about those who have been abducted or forcibly converted or married under duress against their will?"—the question has been deeply exercising Gandhiji's mind as it must have been of thousands of people. Replying to questions that had been put to him on this subject during the last 24 hours Gandhiji in his prayer address on Sunday the 20th of October said that he had no hesitation in maintaining that forcible conversion was no conversion at all nor abduction a bar to the return to her home of the abducted girl. He held that no purification or penance was necessary in such cases. Hindu society was wrong when it imposed penance on such persons. They had not erred. He had lived for years among Muslims and Christians. They had all assured him that there could be no compulsion in religion. Those who resorted to it did not deserve to be called men of religion. In one sense he and his audience who believed that God was one and that there was no other, and who believed that Mohammed was one of His messengers were Muslims. But if any one forced them or him to recite the *Kalma* they would flatly refuse to obey and take the consequences.

It was his fervent hope that all good Muslims would stand up against the practices reported from the affected area in East Bengal.

A HYSTERICAL DEMONSTRATION

Excitement is natural when passion runs high. But let not our indignation, however righteous, get the better of our logic and reason and lead us into self-contradictory courses. Just before the evening prayer on Thursday last, a crowd of excited youngmen carrying placards and shouting slogans, came to demand redress for East Bengal and invaded the prayer ground in the Sweepers' Colony. They wished their voice to reach the members of the Working Committee which was meeting in Gandhiji's room. He told

them that it had already reached them. His own place, he knew, was in Bengal. He assured them that the heart of every man and woman who believed in God was bleeding for Bengal. He admonished them for creating a disturbance at prayer-time and asked them to be calm and join in the prayers.

Somebody shouted that they could not pray when their house was burning. Gandhiji made that the subject of his prayer address.

The regular prayer was not recited. Gandhiji said their minds were not calm enough for it. *Ramadhun* was sung and as usual had a calming effect on the gathering. Although the regular prayer had to be given up, it was in his heart, said Gandhiji, and he was sure it would reach God.

Referring to the remark of the young man who had used the metaphor of a house on fire, Gandhiji said that the duty of the owner of the house or his servant was that when the house was burning he should concentrate on putting out the fire and not lose his head. He alluded to the legend about King Janaka who remained calm and unperturbed when the report was brought to him that his capital was burning, because he had done all he possibly could before and after the accident, and therefore could rest secure in his faith in God. If he had lost his head and run to the place of accident he would only have assisted the flames by distracting attention. They were pained at the news of women's suffering in East Bengal, said Gandhiji. But they had so lost their heads that they had themselves failed to be considerate towards the women in the audience. They had scared them away from the prayer ground. They had occupied the place where women sat every day. It was a strange way of demonstrating their sympathy with the outraged womanhood of East Bengal. He hoped that they would see the irony and inconsistency of it.

Our women were easily scared away. It was so more or less all the world over. He wanted our women to learn to be brave. His advice to them to commit suicide rather than allow themselves to be dishonoured had been much misunderstood. They could keep a dagger for self-defence if they wished to. But a dagger was no use against

overwhelming odds. He had advised them to take poison and end their lives rather than submit to dishonour. Their very preparedness should make them brave. No one could dishonour a woman who was fearless of death. They had two ways of self-defence—to kill and be killed or to die without killing. He could teach them the latter, not the former. Above all he wanted them to be fearless. There was no sin like cowardice.

But there was a moral code even for those who believed in violence. He did not wish them to copy the methods said to have been adopted in East Bengal. They must have read Maulana Saheb's statement and the statement issued by the ex-President of the All-India Majlis-e-Ahrar. They had said that Islam did not permit forcible conversions or abduction and molestation of women.

New Delhi, 27-10-'46

Harijan, 3-11-1946

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A DARK DIVALI

The festival of *Divali* has come upon a people in mourning. Thousands of homes in Bengal have been darkened by arson, pillage, death of near and dear ones and worse. Fratricide has degenerated to a sub-human level. Things have been done in the name of religion which make one hang down one's head in shame and lose faith in human nature itself. How could there be feasting or illuminations when the atmosphere is rent with wailing, lamentation and woe of helpless and martyred innocence? Starvation and nakedness stalked the land, Gandhiji grimly remarked, in his written message to the prayer gathering on Monday last. On top of that they were quarrelling amongst themselves. He had written and said enough on the subject. Yet he could not help repeating that in these days those who were pure should become purer, those who were sinners should wash off their sins. All should save as much food as possible and spin as much as they could, so that

there might be more cloth. To save food was as good as producing it. To spin was to help reduce the nakedness of India. He who was truthful took the world a step forward. "Let these things engage all our energies," he concluded. "It should be clear to us that these are not days of festivity or merry-making."

A NEW YEAR'S MESSAGE

He followed it up with New Year's message on Friday following. "India is passing through a difficult time," he remarked. "As a matter of fact the whole world is passing through a crisis and India is no exception.

"What help do we need to meet this crisis?" he asked. According to the teaching of the *Gita* the first requisite for spiritual conduct was fearlessness. On New Year Day people made some good resolve. He wanted them to make a firm resolve to shed all fear. Without fearlessness all other virtues were turned into dust. Attainment of truth or non-violence was impossible without fearlessness.

Fearlessness did not mean arrogance or aggressiveness. That in itself was a sign of fear. Fearlessness presupposed calmness and peace of mind. For that it was necessary to have a living faith in God.

In the song that had been sung before them, Gandhiji concluded, the devotee says that divorced from God, he is the most worthless creature. God is his refuge all along. He who takes refuge in God has no fear.

"EKLA CHALO"

He again emphasized that moral after the evening prayer yesterday, the text for his discourse being provided by Mrs. Nandita Kripalani who tunefully sang Gurudev's celebrated song "*Ekla Chalo Re*". The burden of that hymn, commented Gandhiji, was that the devotee should have the strength to walk alone in the face of difficulties however great. If he realized that God was ever with him, he would not feel lonely. The *bhajan* was not meant for evil-doers. They could not walk alone.

New Delhi, 27-10-'46

Harijan, 3-11-1946

THE CALL

After much travail, deep thought and considerable argument, Gandhiji fixed the date of his departure for Bengal for the 28th of October. "I do not know what I shall be able to do there," he remarked in the course of an argument with a very esteemed friend, who made an eleventh hour effort to dissuade him from setting on such a long journey just then "All I know is that I won't be at peace with myself unless I go there" He then went on to describe the "power of thought" "There are two kinds of thoughts — idle and active. There may be myriads of the former swarming in one's brain They do not count" He likened them to unfertilized ova in a spawn "But one pure, active thought, proceeding from the depth and endowed with all the undivided intensity of one's being, becomes *dynamic and works like a fertilized ovum*" He was averse to put a curb on the spontaneous urge which he felt within him to go to the people of Noakhali Speaking before the evening prayer gathering on Sunday last at New Delhi, Gandhiji said that he was leaving for Calcutta the next morning He did not know when God would bring him again to Delhi He wanted to go to Noakhali from Calcutta. It was a difficult journey and he was in poor health. But one had to do one's duty and trust in God to make the way smooth It was not that God necessarily and always removed hardships from one's path, but He did always enable one to bear them.

He did not want anyone to come to the station, he continued India had given him enough affection. It needed no further demonstration

He was not going to Bengal to pass judgment on anybody. He was going there as a servant of the people and he would meet Hindus and Muslims alike. Some Muslims looked upon him as an enemy today. They had not done so always But he did not mind their anger. Were not his

own religionists angry with him at times ? From the age of seventeen he had learnt the lesson that all mankind, be they of any nationality, colour or country were his own kith and kin. If they were God's servants, they had to become servants of all His creation.

It was in that capacity that he was going to Bengal. He would tell them that Hindus and Muslims could never be enemies, one of the other. They were born and brought up in India and they had to live and die in India. Change of religion could not alter that fundamental fact. If some people liked to believe that change of religion changed one's nationality also, even they need not become enemies.

Sufferings of women had always melted his heart. He wanted to go to Bengal and wipe their tears and put heart into them, if he could. In Calcutta he would try to see the Governor and the Prime Minister Mr. Suhrawardy and then proceed to Noakhali.

He was proceeding under auspices none too happy. He referred to the ugly demonstrations before the Viceroy's House on the day before when Pandit Jawaharlalji and some of his colleagues in the Interim Government were abused and insulted. It was bad. Why should such things happen when the two parties, the Muslim League and the Congress, had formed a coalition at the Centre ? Praise or abuse made no difference to the leaders who wanted to serve them to the best of their ability. But the people had to behave.

"Let us all still pray and hope that all the Ministers will be able to work as a team. If India can speak with one voice, she will be the greatest country in the world and every true Indian must wish her to attain that status."

Sodepur, 1-11-'46

Harijan, 10-11-1946

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A FAINT RAY OF HOPE

Speaking on the third day of his arrival here, Gandhiji was able to tell his audience at the evening prayer meeting that he saw a faint ray of hope that peace might be established between the communities. He had met H. E. the Governor, and his Chief Minister twice. The visit to the former was more or less in the nature of a courtesy call. His main business was with the Chief Minister. As one drove through the deserted streets with garbage heaps, at places banked up nearly two feet high against the pavements, and entire rows of gutted shops and burnt-out houses in the side-streets and by-lanes as far as the eye could reach, one felt overcome with a sinking feeling at the mass madness that can turn man into less than the brute. By its very nature this state of things cannot last. Human nature won't stand it. As Abraham Lincoln said, 'You cannot fool all the people for all time." There seem to be indications that the people are already beginning to sicken of the carnival of blood and bestiality. They had been fighting amongst themselves like wild beasts. The fighting could do no good to Calcutta, Bengal, India, or the world.

To make peace between quarrelling parties, the speaker said, had been his vocation from his early youth. Even while he practised as a lawyer, he tried to bring the contending parties together. Why could not the two communities be brought together ? He was an optimist, he said.

From them he wanted only this help : that they should pray with him that this mutual slaughter might stop and the two communities might really become one at heart. Whether India was to become divided or remain one whole could not be decided by force. It had to be done through mutual understanding. Whether they decided to part or stay together, they must do so with goodwill and understanding.

He could never be party to anything which might mean humiliation or loss of self-respect for anyone. There-

fore any peace to be substantial must be honourable, never at the cost of honour.

In this he was only echoing the sentiment expressed to him by a prominent Muslim who had seen him. This friend had said "We must reach our goal, whatever it might be — Pakistan or Undivided India — without bloodshed or fighting. I go so far as to say that if it cannot be reached except through bloodshed and fighting amongst ourselves, it is not worth reaching."

Sodepur, 1-11-'46

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THE GRIM RESOLVE

"Why do you want to go to Noakhali? You did not go to Bombay, Ahmedabad or Chhapra, where things have happened that are infinitely worse than Noakhali Would not your going there only add to the existing tension?" Was it because in these places it was the Muslims who had been the sufferers that he did not go there and would go to Noakhali because the sufferers there were Hindus? he was asked by a Muslim friend the other day. Gandhiji's reply was that he made no distinction between a Hindu and a Muslim He would certainly have gone straight to any of the places mentioned by the friend, if anything approaching what had happened at Noakhali had happened there and if he felt that he could do nothing without being on the spot It was the cry of outraged womanhood that had peremptorily called him to Noakhali He felt he would find his bearings only on seeing things for himself at Noakhali. His technique of non-violence was on trial. It remained to be seen how it would answer in the face of the present crisis. If it had no validity it were better that he himself should declare his insolvency. He was not going to leave Bengal until the last embers of the trouble were stamped out. "I may stay on here for a whole year or more If necessary, I will die here. But I will not acquiesce

in failure If the only effect of my presence in the flesh is to make people look up to me in hope and expectation which I can do nothing to vindicate, it would be far better that my eyes were closed in death " He had mentally prepared himself, he added, for abstention from the Congress session, if necessary. He had similarly disengaged himself mentally from all his responsibilities in respect of Sevagram and Urulı — his latest love

But with all his impatience to get to Noakhalı he had to announce on the fourth day at the prayer gathering that he would not be able to leave for Noakhalı on the next day as he had intended to The Prime Minister had sent him word that the train for him could not be arranged so soon. He hoped to leave on Saturday or Sunday In the meantime he would try to render whatever service he could to the Metropolis.

Sodepur, 1-11-'46

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A DILEMMA

Four more days were to elapse before Gandhiji could actually leave for Noakhalı. As harrowing details of the happenings in Noakhalı trickled through, they added to the existing tension *Bakr Id* was close at hand and it was the wish of the Chief Minister of Bengal and his colleagues that Gandhiji should prolong his stay in the city at least till the *Id* festival was safely over The root of the trouble, it was represented to him, lay in Calcutta If the peace could be stabilized in the Metropolis, it would have a salutary effect all over Gandhiji acquiesced The whole of India was faced with a difficult situation, that of Bengal was still more so, he remarked in his after-prayer address on Friday last. He had been asked as to what their duty was under the circumstances According to the scriptures, that was dharma which was enjoined by the holy books, followed by the sages, interpreted by the learned and

which appealed to the heart. The first three conditions must be fulfilled before the fourth came into operation. Thus one had no right to follow the precepts of an ignorant man or a rascal even though they commended themselves to one. Rigorous observance of harmlessness, non-enmity and renunciation were the first requisites for a person to entitle him to lay down the law, i. e. dharma.

He had told them what he considered to be his duty. But they had to judge for themselves what their duty was. He did not ask them to follow him but he pointed out to them the way to discover what their duty was in the difficult position they found themselves in. The *Gita* had told them that if they only waited on God, they would know the way.

A Happy Inspiration

The visit of the four Ministers of the Interim Government to Calcutta to help further the peace efforts was a happy inspiration. It had a salutary effect and for the time being at least an impending crisis was averted. As their visit coincided with that of the Viceroy it gave rise to all kinds of speculation. Would they ask the Viceroy to intervene or would they exert pressure on the Bengal Governor to make the Bengal Ministry take more effective measures? In a series of after-prayer addresses Gandhiji impressed upon the people how the desire of retaliation and the tendency to look to the Viceroy or the Governor, the military and the police, for protection were incompatible with Independence to which they were all pledged. The Viceroy's powers vested in the Cabinet, the Governor's in the Bengal Ministers. If they wanted lasting peace, it must come from the people's hearts. He had been proclaiming from the housetops that no one could protect them except their own stout heart. No one could ever dishonour the brave. Retaliation was a vicious circle. If they wanted retaliation they could not have Independence. "Supposing someone kills me, you will gain nothing by killing someone else in retaliation. And, if you only think over it, who can kill Gandhi except Gandhi himself? No one can destroy

the soul. So let us dismiss all thought of revenge from our hearts. If we see this clearly we shall have taken a big stride towards Independence."

A PLEA FOR SANITY

The warning came none too early. Already there were rumblings of a storm in Bihar. The cry for reprisals had gone forth. Gandhiji devoted his next address to show the illogicality and irrationality of that cry.

From his earliest childhood he had learnt to dislike the wrong, never the wrong-doer. Therefore, even if the Muslims had done any wrong, they still remained his friends, but it was his duty to tell them that they had done wrong. He had always applied that rule in life with regard to his nearest and dearest. He held that to be the test of true friendship. He had told them on the previous day that revenge was not the way of peace, it was not humanity. The Hindu scriptures taught forgiveness as the highest virtue. Forgiveness became a brave man. A learned Muslim friend had come to see him on the day before. He had told the speaker that the teaching of the *Quran* was also similar. If a man kills one innocent person he brings upon his head the sin, as it were, of murdering the entire humanity. Islam never approves of but condemns murder, arson, forcible conversions, abductions and the like.

If they could not be generous enough to forgive a person who gave them a slap, remarked Gandhiji, they could give him one in return. He could understand that. But if the miscreant ran away and the injured party slapped his relation or co-religionist by way of retaliation, it was below human dignity.

If someone abducted his daughter, the speaker continued, was he to abduct the abductor's or the abductor's friend's daughter? He held it to be infamous. Muslim friends had condemned such acts in Noakhali. But what was he to say of Bihar, if what he was told was true? He was pained beyond measure to hear of the reported happenings in Bihar. He knew the Biharis well. The cry of blood for blood was barbarous. They could not take revenge in Bihar for the

happenings in Noakhali. He was told that some Muslims, who were running away from Bihar in panic, were murdered by Bihari Hindus. He was shocked to hear it. He hoped that the report was not true It was contended that the *Mahabharata* advocated the way of retaliation He did not agree with that interpretation The lesson of the *Mahabharata* was that the victory of the sword was no victory. That great book taught that victory of the Pandavas was an empty nothing

He told them of the talk he had with Saheed Saheb, their Prime Minister Years ago he had met him at Faridpur Saheed Saheb then took pride in calling himself the speaker's son He knew they had many grievances against their Prime Minister But the latter had given him his assurance that he wanted peace It had grieved him to alienate his Hindu friends He, the speaker, could not disbelieve that assurance till it was found to be untrue He had by giving that assurance put himself to test The golden way was to be friends with the world and to regard the whole human family like members of one family He who distinguished between one's own family and another's, miseducated the members of his own and opened the way for discord and irreligion

RUMBLINGS FROM BIHAR

Immediately on seeing the report of the conflagration in Bihar in the Press, Gandhiji sent a wire through the Chief Minister to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru who with his three colleagues had proceeded to Patna from Calcutta. The latter wired in reply that the situation was tense and grave in many parts but Government were doing their utmost to bring it under control He himself with his colleague Sardar Abdul Rab Nishtar had decided to stay on in Bihar as long as it might be necessary. "The Congress belongs to the people," commented Gandhiji in his silent day's written message to the prayer congregation. "The Muslim League belongs to our Muslim brothers and sisters. If Congressmen fail to protect Mussalmans where the Congress is in power, then what is the use of a Congress Premier? Similarly, if in a League Province the League

Premier cannot afford protection to the Hindus, then why is the League Premier there at all? If either of them have to take the aid of the military in order to protect the Muslim or Hindu minority in their respective provinces, then it only means that none of them actually exercises any control over the general population when a moment of crisis comes. If that is so, it only means that both of us are inviting the British to retain their sovereignty over India This is a matter over which each one of us should ponder deeply."

He deprecated the habit of procuring moral alibi for ourselves by blaming it all on the *goondas*. "We always put the blame on the *goondas*. But it is we who are responsible for their creation as well as encouragement. It is therefore not right to say that all the wrong that has been done is the work of the *goondas*."

QUIT INDEPENDENCE?

He repeated the warning on the next day even more forcefully. The Hindus might say. did not the Muslims start the trouble? He wanted them not to succumb to the temptation for retort but to think of their own duty and say firmly that whatever happened, they would not fight. He wanted to tell them that the Muslims who were with him in the course of the day had assured him that they wanted peace. They were all responsible men. They said clearly that Pakistan could not be achieved by fighting. If they continued quarrelling with each other, Independence would vanish into thin air and that would firmly implant the third power in India, be it the British or any other. India was a vast country, rich in minerals, metals and spices There was nothing in the world that India did not produce If they kept on quarrelling, any of the big powers of the world would feel tempted to come and save India from Indians and at the same time exploit her rich resources.

They wanted Independence. They were ready to sacrifice their all for the Congress, the organization which had done so much for India. Were they going to undo all that the Congress had done for more than the last 60 years?

He had told them they could return blow for blow if they were not brave enough to follow the path of non-violence. But there was a moral code for the use of violence also Otherwise, the very flames of violence would consume those who lighted them. He did not care if they were all destroyed. But he could not countenance the destruction of India's freedom.

The reports of the happenings in Bihar were awful if true. Pandit Jawaharlal had told the guilty parties that the Central Government would never tolerate such barbarism They would even use aerial bombing to put it down But that was the way of the British. The Congress was an organization of the people. Was the Congress to use the foreign mode of destruction against the people whose representative it was? By suppressing the riots with the aid of the military, they would be suppressing India's freedom. And yet what was Panditji to do if the Congress had lost conrol over the people? The better way, of course, was to give up the reins of Government, if the people were not amenable to discipline and reason

To retaliate against the relatives of the co-religionists of the wrong-doer was a cowardly act If they indulged in such acts, they should say goodbye to Independence.

TO BIHAR

Fallen upon evil times as we are, we have to be thankful even for small mercies. Everybody heaved a sigh of relief when it was known that the *Bakr Id* had passed off quietly all over India. But the news from Bihar had set Gandhiji at war with himself It was in Bihar that mass satyagraha in India was born It was in Bihar that his political career in India had practically commenced And now it was the people of Bihar, for whom he had indefatigably laboured and who had showered upon him such love and affection—Bihar of Brijkishore Babu and Rajendra Babu—that had gone mad and besmirched the fair name of India. He had declared times without number that if the people of India should run amok against the English, they might find him dead. How could he be a witness to

the same in regard to innocent Mussalmans who were after all our countrymen, our own kith and kin?" I went on spare, milkless diet, principally for reasons of health soon after coming to Calcutta. The happenings in the country induced me to prolong it. Now Bihar will send me to complete fast if things do not radically mend," he wrote in a letter to Rajkumari Amrit Kaur on Sunday the 4th. "There will be no time limit," he added. "Do not agitate yourself but be really glad that I feel I have the strength to go through the ordeal and live up to my creed." On the following day in a letter to Pandit Jawaharlal he wrote: "The news from Bihar has shaken me. My own duty seems to me to be clear. A deep bond unites me with Bihar. How can I forget that? If even half of what one hears is true, it shows that Bihar has forgotten humanity. To blame it all on the *goondas* would be an untruth. Although I have striven hard to avert a fast, I can do so no longer . . . . My inner voice tells me, 'You may not live to be a witness to this senseless slaughter. If people refuse to see what is clear as daylight and pay no heed to what you say, does it not mean that your day is over?' The logic of the argument is driving me irresistibly towards a fast. I, therefore, propose to issue a statement that unless this orgy of madness ceases, I must go on a fast unto death. The fast may have to be delayed for some time. When you asked me at Delhi about it, I had replied that I was not thinking of it at the time. All that has now changed. You can strive with me, if you think differently. Whatever you say will carry weight with me. But knowing as you do my temperament, I am sure you will approve of my proposed step. In any event you will go on with your work without a moment's thought about my possible death and leave me in God's good care. No worry allowed." But neither Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru nor the Sardar to whom he had caused a copy of the letter to be sent tried to dissuade him. They understood better the magnitude of the stake. It was nothing less than India's Independence. Pandit Jawaharlal sent him word from Patna over the telephone that he did not think it was necessary for him (Gandhiji) to go to

Bihar at present He added that his (Panditji's) own place was in Bihar rather than in Delhi "I am going to stay on here as long as it may be necessary." On the morning of the 6th, just before he was leaving for Noakhali, Gandhiji issued the statement* foreshadowed in the letter to Pandit Nehru that has since appeared in the Press.

Chaumuhani, 8-11-'46

Harijan, 17 11-1946

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TO BIHAR

To Bihar,

Bihar of my dreams seems to have falsified them I am not relying upon reports that might be prejudiced or exaggerated The continued presence of the Central Chief Minister and his colleague furnishes an eloquent tale of the tragedy of Bihar It is easy enough to retort that things under the Muslim League Government in Bengal were no better, if not worse and that Bihar is merely a result of the latter A bad act of one party is no justification for a similar act by the opposing party, more especially when it is rightly proud of its longest and largest political record I must confess, too, that although I have been in Calcutta for over a week, I do not yet know the magnitude of the Bengal tragedy Though Bihar calls me, I must not interrupt my programme for Noakhali And is counter-communalism any answer to the communalism of which Congressmen have accused the Muslim League? Is it nationalism to seek barbarously to crush the fourteen percent of the Muslims in Bihar?

I do not need to be told that I must not condemn the whole of Bihar for the sake of the sins of a few thousand Biharis. Does not Bihar take credit for one Brijkishore Prasad or one Rajendra Prasad? I am afraid, if the misconduct in Bihar continues, all the Hindus of

* For statement see the following chapter

India will be condemned by the world That is its way, and it is not a bad way either The misdeeds of Bihari Hindus may justify Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah's taunt that the Congress is a Hindu organization in spite of its boast that it has in its ranks a few Sikhs, Muslims, Christians, Parsis and others. Bihari Hindus are in honour bound to regard the minority Muslims as their brethren requiring protection, equal with the vast majority of Hindus Let not Bihar, which has done so much to raise the prestige of the Congress, be the first to dig its grave

I am in no way ashamed of my *ahimsa* I have come to Bengal to see how far in the nick of time my *ahimsa* is able to express itself in me But I do not want in this letter to talk of *ahimsa* to you I do want, however, to tell you that what you are reported to have done will never count as an act of bravery For thousands to do to death a few hundreds is no bravery It is worse than cowardice. It is unworthy of nationalism, of any religion If you had given a blow against a blow, no one would have dared to point a finger against you What you have done is to degrade yourselves and drag down India.

You should say to Pandit Jawaharlalji, Nishtar Saheb and Dr Rajendra Prasad to take away their military and themselves and attend to the affairs of India This they can only do, if you repent of your inhumanity and assure them that Muslims are as much your care as your own brothers and sisters

You should not rest till every Muslim refugee has come back to his home which you should undertake to rebuild and ask your ministers to help you to do so You do not know what critics have said to me about your ministers

I regard myself as a part of you Your affection has compelled that loyalty in me And since I claim to have better appreciation than you seem to have shown of what Bihari Hindus should do, I cannot rest till I have done some measure of penance. Predominantly for reasons of health, I had put myself on the lowest diet possible soon after my reaching Calcutta. That diet now continues as a penance after the knowledge of the Bihar tragedy. The low

diet will become a fast unto death, if the erring Biharis have not turned over a new leaf.

There is no danger of Bihar mistaking my act for anything other than pure penance as a matter of sacred duty.

No friend should run to me for assistance or to show sympathy. I am surrounded by loving friends. It would be wholly wrong and irrelevant for any other person to copy me. No sympathetic fast or semi-fast is called for. Such action can only do harm. What my penance should do is to quicken the conscience of those who know me and believe in my bona fides. Let no one be anxious for me. I am like all of us in God's keeping.

Nothing will happen to me so long as He wants service through the present tabernacle.

Your Servant
M. K. GANDHI

Sodepur, 6-11-'46

Harijan, 10-11-1946

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A CHALLENGE TO FAITH

[The following are questions put by the correspondent of the Associated Press of America, and Gandhiji's answers (6-11-'46).]

Q. 1. In view of recent Indian history — 1942 unrest, I. N. A. movement and unrest, R. I. N. mutiny, Calcutta-Bombay disturbances, movements in Indian States such as Kashmir, and recent communal riots — can it be said that your creed of non-violence has failed, insofar as non-violence has not taken roots in Indian life ?

A. This is a dangerous generalization. All you mention can certainly be called *himsa* but that can never mean that the creed of non-violence has failed. At best it may be said that I have not yet found the technique required for the conversion of the mass mind. But I claim that the millions of the 7,00,000 villages of India have not participated in the violence alluded to by you. Whether non-violence

has taken roots in Indian life is still an open question which can only be answered after my death.

Q. 2. What should one do in his day-to-day life — that is, what is the minimum programme — so that one can acquire non-violence of the brave ?

A. The minimum that is required of a person wishing to cultivate the *ahimsa* of the brave is first to clear one's thought of cowardice and in the light of the clearance regulate his conduct in every activity, great or small. Thus the votary must refuse to be cowed down by his superior, without being angry. He must, however, be ready to sacrifice his post, however remunerative it may be. Whilst sacrificing his all, if the votary has no sense of irritation against his employer, he has *ahimsa* of the brave in him. Assume that a fellow passenger threatens my son with assault and I reason with the would-be-assailant who then turns upon me. If then I take his blow with grace and dignity, without harbouring any ill-will against him I exhibit the *ahimsa* of the brave. Such instances are of every day occurrence and can be easily multiplied. If I succeed in curbing my temper every time and though able to give blow for blow I refrain, I shall develop the *ahimsa* of the brave which will never fail me and which will compel recognition from the most confirmed adversaries.

Harijan, 17-11-1946

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WEEKLY LETTER

Gandhiji would have liked to travel to Noakhali by ordinary third class, but the Bengal Government had arranged a special train for him. They had also deputed Shamsuddin Saheb, the Minister for Commerce, Nasrullah Khan Saheb, Parliamentary Secretary to the Chief Minister and Abdur Rashid Saheb to accompany him To look after his convenience and ensure Government help whenever it might be required, the Chief Minister had himself intended to accompany him, but was held up in Calcutta There were huge crowds at Kushtia, the Home of Shamsuddin Saheb, Hacpur and Goalando At all these places Gandhiji delivered brief addresses, explaining the object of his visit

From his early youth he had made friends with people of all communities He had never made any distinction between Hindu, Muslim, Parsi and others When as a boy he attended the High School at Rajkot, he did not remember a single occasion of a quarrel with a Muslim or Parsi boy in the school

During the Khilafat days he used to say that Maulana Shaukat Ali carried him in his pocket He did not wish to fight At the same time he could never countenance peace at the cost of honour or self-respect He stood for peace, honourable to both the parties If any party did wrong, he would not hesitate to tell it plainly to their face. That was the duty and privilege of friendship He had been a fighter all his life and he would fight oppression and wrong with his last breath, no matter who the wrong-doer was

He recalled his previous visit to East Bengal during the Khilafat days Those were the days of Hindu-Muslim unity, when the Muslims vied with the Hindus in claiming the Congress as their own Congress belonged to all But he was not going to East Bengal this time as a Congressman He was going there as a servant of God If he could wipe

away the tears of the outraged womanhood of Noakhali, he would be more than satisfied.

They were all Indians — Hindus and Mussalmans. They could not live in Independent India as enemies. They had to be friends and brothers. He would go to Noakhali and stay there till Hindus and Muslims again lived as blood-brothers that they were, and must always remain.

He was hopeful that his tour would have a good effect and the Hindu-Muslim unity of the Khilafat days would come back. In Khilafat days no one talked of dividing India. Now they did so. But partitioning, even if it was desirable, could not be so achieved. It could not be retained except by the goodwill of the people concerned. The Bengal Ministers had assured him that the Muslims did not believe in getting Pakistan through force.

At Goalando, Gandhiji took steamer and steaming down the Padma 80 miles reached Chandpur at evening. Chandpur, the native place of that superoctogenarian Congressman the late Babu Hardayal Nag, called up poignant memories. Two deputations, one of Muslim Leaguers and the other of Hindus, met Gandhiji here. At 2 p. m. the party reached Chaumuhani where Gandhiji has fixed up his headquarters for the present.

THE ALL-HEALING BALM

At Laksham there is a refugees' camp. And it was to the refugees that Gandhiji's words were addressed through the crowd that had assembled at the platform to hear him and have his *darshan*. "I have not come on a whirlwind propaganda visit. I have come to stay here with you as one of you. I have no provincialism in me. I claim to be an Indian and therefore a Bengali even as I am a Gujarati. I have vowed to myself that I will stay on here and die here if necessary, but I will not leave Bengal till the hatchet is finally buried and even a solitary Hindu girl is not afraid to move freely about in the midst of Mussalmans."

"The greatest help you can give me is to banish fear from your hearts," he told them. And what was the talisman

that could do that for them? It was his unfailing mantra of *Ramanama.* "You may say you do not believe in Him. You do not know that but for His will you could not draw a single breath. Call him Ishwar, Allah, God, Ahura Mazad. His names are as innumerable as there are men. He is one without a second. He alone is great. There is none greater than He. He is timeless, formless, stainless. Such is my Rama. He alone is my Lord and Master."

He touchingly described to them how as a little boy he used to be usually timid and afraid of even shadows and how his nurse Rambha had taught him the secret of *Ramanama* as an antidote to fear. "When in fear take *Ramanama.* He will protect you," she used to tell him. Ever since then *Ramanama* had been his unfailing refuge and shelter from all kinds of fear.

"He resided in the heart of the pure always. Tulsidas, that prince of devotees, whose name has become a household word among the Hindus from Kashmir to Cape Comorin, as Shri Chaitanya's and Shri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa's in Bengal, has presented the message of that name to us in his immortal *Ramayana.* If you walk in fear of that name, you need fear no man on earth, be he a prince or a pauper." Why should they be afraid of the cry of 'Allaho Akbar'? The Allah of Islam was the protector of innocence. What had been done in East Bengal had not the sanction of Islam as preached by its Prophet.

Who could dare to dishonour their wives or daughters, if they had faith in God? He, therefore, expected them to cease to be afraid of Mussalmans. If they believed in *Ramanama* they must not think of leaving East Bengal. They must live where they were born and brought up and die there if necessary, defending their honour as brave men and women. "To run away from danger, instead of facing it, is to deny one's faith in man and God and even one's own self. It were better for one to drown oneself than live to declare such bankruptcy of faith."

Why should they feel secure only under the protection of the police and the military? "If you ask the military,

they will tell you that 'God' is their protector I want you, therefore, to be able to tell Shamsuddin Saheb that you no longer need the protection of the police and the military which may be withdrawn, but would rather put yourselves under the protection of Him, whose protection they all seek."

CHAUMUHANI

Chaumuhani has normally a population of not more than 5,000. But at the evening prayer gathering that was held here in the compound of the Hindu Vidya Mandir on the first day of Gandhiji's arrival, there was a gathering of not less than 15,000 Large numbers had come from places round about Chaumuhani About eighty per cent of these were Muslims The town itself has remained free from the worst communal excesses, but round about it the whole area has been ablaze. Speaking after the prayer Gandhiji poured out his soul to the gathering, particularly to the Muslim section, for over twenty minutes. He told them how he had toured East Bengal in the company of the Ali Brothers during the Khilafat days. In those days the Muslims felt that all that he said was right. If the Ali Brothers went into a women's meeting they went blindfolded. He was allowed to go with his eyes open. Why should he blindfold himself when he went to his mothers and sisters? He had no desire to go among the purdah ladies But the Ali Brothers insisted that he must go. The women were eager to meet him and they were sure that his advice would do good to them In South Africa he had lived in the midst of Muslim friends for twenty years. They treated him as a member of their family and told their wives and sisters that they need not observe purdah with him. He had become a barrister in England but what was a dinner barrister worth? It was South Africa and the struggle that he had launched there that had made him. It was there that he discovered satyagraha and civil disobedience.

He had come to them in sadness. What sin had Mother India committed that her children, Hindus and Muslims,

were quarrelling with each other? He had learnt that no Hindu woman was safe today in some parts of East Bengal. Ever since he had come to Bengal, he was hearing awful tales of Muslim atrocities. Saheed Saheb, their Prime Minister, and Shamsuddin Saheb had admitted that there was some truth in the reports that one heard

"I have not come to excite the Hindus to fight the Mussalmans. I have no enemies. I have fought the British all my life. Yet they are my friends I have never wished them ill."

He heard of forcible conversions, forcible feeding of beef, abductions and forcible marriages, not to talk about murders, arson and loot. They had broken idols. The Muslims did not worship them nor did he. But why should they interfere with those who wished to worship them? These incidents are a blot on the name of Islam. "I have studied the *Quran*. The very word Islam means peace. The Muslim greeting '*Salaam Alaikum*' is the same for all whether Hindus or Muslims, or any other. Nowhere does Islam allow such things as had happened in Noakhali and Tipperah." Saheed Saheb and all the ministers and League leaders who met him in Calcutta had condemned such acts unequivocally. "The Muslims are in such overwhelming majority in East Bengal that I expect them to constitute themselves the guardians of the small Hindu minority. They should tell Hindu women that while they are there, no one dare cast an evil eye on them."

It was time for *namaz* when Gandhiji finished speaking. As usual his address was going to be explained to the gathering in Bengali when there was a clamour from the Muslim section of the audience for a brief recess to enable them to perform their *namaz* and come back in time to hear the translation in Bengali. This was done. The *namaz* was performed in one corner of the compound after which they all came and heard the address rendered into Bengali by Shri Satish Babu.

That night Shamsuddin Saheb with his colleagues from Calcutta and some local prominent Muslims saw Gandhiji and discussed the question of refugees, particularly the

question of persuading them to return to their respective villages. One of the friends suggested that in order to restore confidence Hindu leaders should reinforce the appeals of the Muslims to the refugees to go back to their villages. Gandhiji replied that that was not the right way to dispel the apprehension and distrust of the Hindus which was well-grounded. He would not be able to advise them to return to their homes unless there was at least one good Hindu and one good Mussalman for each village who would stand guarantee for their safety and security and who would be prepared to immolate himself before a hair of their head was touched. It was for the Muslim League leaders who were also members of the Government to say whether such men would be forthcoming. There was no other way to restore confidence after all that had happened. They all agreed with Gandhiji's suggestion and said that they would do their best to give effect to it.

Chaumuhani, 10-11-'46

Harijan, 24-11-1946

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A VENTURE IN FAITH

Early in the morning on Wednesday last Gandhiji announced to his party an important decision. He had decided to disperse his party detailing each member, including the ladies, to settle down in one affected village and make himself or herself hostage of the safety and security of the Hindu minority of that village. They must be pledged to protect with their lives, if necessary, the Hindu population of that village. His decision was not binding on any one of his party, he said. Those who wanted to, were free to go away and take up any of his other constructive activities. "Those who have ill-will against the Mussalmans or Islam in their hearts or cannot curb their indignation at what has happened should stay away. They will only misrepresent me by working under this plan."

So far as he was concerned, he added that his decision was final and irrevocable and left no room for discussion. He was going to bury himself in East Bengal until such time that the Hindus and Mussalmans learnt to live together in harmony and peace He would deprive himself of the services of all his companions and fend for himself with whatever assistance he could command locally

That evening he explained his idea further to the party A discussion followed in which Shri Thakkar Bapa and Shrimati Sucheta Kripalani also took part His *ahimsa* would be incomplete, he argued, unless he took that step Either *ahimsa* is the law of life or it is not A friend used to say that the *Ahimsa Sutra* in Patanjali, *Ahimsa pratishthayam tatsannidhau vairatyagah* (अहिंसा-प्रतिष्ठाया तत्सन्निधौ वैरत्यागः ।) was a mistake and needed to be amended and the saying *Ahimsa paramodharmah* (अहिंसा परमो धर्मः ।) ought to be read as *Himsa paramodharmah* (हिंसा परमो धर्मः ।), in other words, violence, not non-violence was the supreme law If at the crucial moment he lost faith in the law of non-violence, he must accept the deceased friend's amendment which appeared to him to be absurd

"I know the women of Bengal better than probably the Bengalis do Today they feel crushed and helpless The sacrifice of myself and my companions would at least teach them the art of dying with self-respect It might open too the eyes of the oppressors and melt their hearts. I do not say that the moment my eyes are closed theirs will open. But that will be the ultimate result, I have not the slightest doubt If *ahimsa* disappears, Hindu Dharma disappears "

"The issue is not religious but political It is not a movement against the Hindus, but against the Congress, ' remarked one member of the party.

"Do you not see that they think that the Congress is a purely Hindu body? And do not forget that I have no watertight compartments such as religious, political and others Let us not lose ourselves in a forest of words. How to solve the tangle—violently or non-violently—is the question. In other words, has my method efficacy today?"

"How can you reason with people who are thirsting for your blood? Only the other day one of our workers was murdered," said another of the company

"I know it," replied Gandhiji. "To quell the rage is our job"

Another member asked whether it was right to invite people to return to their villages under the prevailing conditions which involved a considerable amount of risk. Gandhiji's reply was that there was no harm in asking them to return to their villages if the Muslims of that village collectively guaranteed their safety and their guarantee was backed by one good Hindu and one good Mussalman, who would stay with them in that village and protect them by laying down their lives, if necessary. If there was that much guarantee, the refugees ought to return to their homes and face whatever risk there might be. If they had not the courage to live on these terms, Hinduism was doomed to disappear from East Bengal. The question of East Bengal is not one of Bengal alone. The battle for India is today being decided in East Bengal. Today Mussalmans are being taught by some that Hindu religion is an abomination and therefore forcible conversion of Hindus to Islam a merit It would save to Islam at least the descendants of those who were forcibly converted. If retaliation is to rule the day, the Hindus, in order to win, will have to outstrip the Mussalmans in the nefarious deeds that the latter are reported to have done. The United Nations set out to fight Hitler with his weapons and ended by out-Hitlering Hitler

"How can we reassure the people when the miscreants are still at large in these villages?" was the last question asked of Gandhiji.

"That is why," replied Gandhiji, "I have insisted upon one good Mussalman standing security alone with a good Hindu for the safety and security of those who might be returning. The former will have to be provided by the Muslim Leaguers who form the Bengal Government."

In a letter to a friend Gandhiji wrote from Dattapara: "The work I am engaged in here may be my last act. If

I return from here alive and unscathed, it will be like a new birth to me. My *ahimsa* is being tried here through and through as it was never before."

Khazirkhil, 16-11-'46

Harijan 24-11-1946

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OVERPROOF IS ADMISSION

It was at Chandpur too that Gandhiji first directly contacted the local Muslim mind in regard to the East Bengal happenings. A deputation consisting of several prominent Muslim Leaguers of Tipperah District met him at Chandpur on board the *Kuri* before he entrained for Chaumuhani on the morning of the 7th November

One of them remarked that no disturbances had taken place in Chandpur Sub-Division The rush of refugees to Chandpur was due to panic caused by false press propaganda The number of Hindus killed by the Muslims was only 15 while double that number of Muslims had died as a result of firing by the military who were mostly Hindus.

Another member of the deputation who is an M L A was even bitter about the fact that the Hindus were still evacuating and their rehabilitation was being 'obstructed' by the Hindu workers who encouraged them to migrate in order to discredit the Muslim League Government and paralyse the administration.

Shamsuddin Saheb who was present at the meeting along with Nasarullah Saheb and Abdul Rashid Saheb interposed that it was no use isolating Chandpur Sub-Division and ignoring what had taken place elsewhere in the district. Equally irrelevant to their present argument was their reference to the military firing.

When they had finished, Gandhiji replying remarked that if what they had said was to be taken at its face value, then it amounted to this: that the Muslims had committed no excesses. The mischief had all been provoked by the

excesses of the police and the military who were harassing the Mussalmans and it was they, therefore, who together with the panic-mongering Hindus were the real culprits. That was too big a pill for anybody to swallow. Why had it become necessary to call the military, if no disturbances had taken place? A deputation of 20 to 25 Hindus had a meeting with him in the morning. They had told him awful tales of what had happened in Tipperah and Noakhali. Similar tales have been pouring into his ears ever since he had set foot in Bengal. Even Muslim Leaguers had admitted that terrible things had been done. They disputed the figures which they feared were exaggerated. He was not concerned with numbers. Even if there was a single case of abduction forcible conversion or forcible marriage, it was enough to make every God-fearing man or woman hang down his or her head in shame.

He was not going to keep anything secret, Gandhiji proceeded. He would place all the information which he might receive before the ministers. He had come to promote mutual goodwill and confidence. In that he wanted their help. He did not want peace to be established with the help of the police and the military. An imposed peace was no peace. He did not wish to encourage people to flee from their homes in East Bengal either. If the mass flight of the refugees had been deliberately planned to discredit the Muslim League Ministry, it would recoil on the heads of those who had done so. To him it seemed hardly credible. He suggested that the right course would be to make a clean breast of the matter. "It is far better to magnify your own mistake and proclaim it to the whole world than leave it to the world to point the accusing finger at you. God never spares the evil-doer."

The gentleman who had spoken first thereupon admitted that he had heard of some cases of arson and looting but the looting had taken place after the occupants had fled. The deserted houses offered too strong a temptation to the hooligans.

"But why should people flee from their homes?" asked Gandhiji sharply. "People do not do so normally. Everybody knows that an unoccupied and unprotected house is bound to be looted by some one or the other. Would any one risk the loss of all he owns just to discredit the League?"

Still another member of the deputation remarked that only one per cent of the people had indulged in acts of hooliganism. The rest of the 99 per cent were really good people and in no way responsible for the happenings.

"That is not a correct way of looking at it", replied Gandhiji. If 99 per cent were good people and had actively disapproved of what had taken place, the one per cent would have been able to do nothing and could easily have been brought to book. Good people ought to actively combat the evil, to entitle them to that name. Sitting on the fence was no good. If they did not mean it, they should say so and openly tell all the Hindus in the Muslim majority areas to quit. But that was not their position as he understood it. The Qaid-e-Azam had said that the minorities in Pakistan would get unadulterated justice in Pakistan. Where was that justice? Today the Hindus asked him if Noakhali was an indication of what they were to expect in Pakistan. He had studied Islam. His Muslim friends in South Africa used to say to him: "Why not recite the *Kalma* and forget Hinduism?" The speaker used to say in reply that he would gladly recite the *Kalma* but forget Hinduism never. His respect and regard for Hazrat Mohammed was not less than theirs. But authoritarianism and compulsion was the way to corrupt religion, not to advance it.

Shamsuddin Saheb agreeing with Gandhiji quoted a verse from the *Quran* to the effect that there can be no compulsion in religion. He had told the Mussalmans, he said, that if they wanted Pakistan they must mete out justice to the minority community and win its confidence. "By doing what you have done you have killed Pakistan," he had told them.

" Mr. Mc.Inerny, the District Magistrate of Noakhali, in a leaflet he has issued," resumed Gandhiji, " has said that he will assume, unless the contrary is conclusively proved, that anyone who accepted Islam after the beginning of the recent disturbances was forcibly converted and in fact remained a Hindu. " If all the Muslims made that declaration it would go a long way to settle the question. " Why should there be a public show of it, if anybody genuinely felt inclined to recite the *Kalma*? A heart conversion needs no other witness than God." Mere recitation of the *Kalma* while one continued to indulge in acts which are contrary to elementary decency was not Islam but a travesty of it. That reminded him of the Plymouth Brothers who invited him to embrace Christianity because then he would be free to do anything he liked since Christ redeemed the sins of those who accepted Him. As against that there was the conclusive verse of the New Testament: " Not everyone who says Lord, Lord, with his lips comes to Me." It was therefore up to the leaders of the Muslims to declare that forcible repetition of a formula could not make a non-Muslim into a Muslim. It only shamed Islam.

" All that has happened is the result of false propaganda," argued one member of the deputation who had not hitherto spoken.

" Let us not make a scapegoat of false propaganda," replied Gandhiji. " False propaganda would fall flat if we were all right."

Finally one of the deputationists remarked that they were all prepared to go into the interior along with the Hindu leaders to restore peace and confidence but the latter distrusted them.

Gandhiji replied that that did not matter. He would gladly accept their offer. " You and I will visit every village and every home in the interior and restore peace and confidence."

Dattapara, 15-11-'46

Harijan, 24-11-1946

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PRESS STATEMENT

On the eve of his departure for Shrirampur Gandhiji issued the following statement to the Press :

I find myself in the midst of exaggeration and falsity. I am unable to discover the truth. There is terrible mutual distrust. Oldest friendships have snapped. Truth and *ahimsa* by which I swear, and which have to my knowledge sustained me for sixty years, seem to fail to show the attributes I have ascribed to them.

To test them, or better, to test myself, I am going to a village called Shrirampur, cutting myself away from those who have been with me all these years, and who have made life easy for me. I am taking Prof. Nirmal Kumar Bose as my Bengali teacher and interpreter and Shri Parsuram, who has been my most devoted, selfless and silent stenographer.

The other workers, whom I have brought with me will each distribute themselves in other villages of Noakhali to do the work of peace, if it is at all possible, between the two communities. They are, unfortunately, all non-Bengalis except little Abha. They will, therefore, be accompanied by one Bengali worker each as teacher and interpreter, even like Prof. N. K. Bose will be to me.

Distribution work and selection work will be done by Shri Satish Chandra Dasgupta of the Khadi Pratishthan. My ideal is to live in a local Muslim League family, but I see that I must not wait for that happy day. I must meanwhile establish such contacts with the Muslims as I can in their own villages. My suggestion to the League ministers is that they should give me one honest and brave Muslim to accompany one equally honest and brave Hindu for each affected village. They should guarantee at the cost of their lives if need be, the safety of the returning Hindu refugees. I am sorry to have to confess that without some such thing it seems to me difficult to induce them to return to their villages.

From all accounts received by me, life is not as yet smooth and safe for the minority community in the villages. They, therefore, prefer to live as exiles from their own homes, crops, plantations and surroundings, and live on inadequate and ill-balanced doles.

Many friends from outside Bengal have written to me to allow them to come for peace work, but I have strongly dissuaded them from coming. I would love to let them come if and when I see light through this impenetrable darkness.

In the meantime, both Pyarelal and I have decided to suspend all other activities in the shape of correspondence, including the heavy work of the *Harijan* and the allied weeklies. I have asked Shri Kishorlal, Shri Kakasaheb, Shri Vinoba and Shri Narhari Parikh to edit the weeklies jointly and severally. Pyarelal and I may, if our work permits, send stray contributions from our respective villages. Correspondence will be attended to from Sevagram.

How long this suspense will last, is more than I can say. This much, however, I can. I do not propose to leave East Bengal till I am satisfied that mutual trust has been established between the two communities and the two have resumed the even tenor of their life in their villages. Without this there is neither Pakistan nor Hindustan — only slavery awaits India, torn asunder by mutual strife and engrossed in barbarity.

No one need at present be disturbed about my low diet. On receipt of the following wire from Dr. Rajendra Prasad :

> Letter received. Have already wired quiet. There have been no incidents for a week now. Situation satisfactory. Most earnestly desire resumption of normal diet. Myself going Delhi 19th.,

I resumed goat's milk from yesterday and propose to revert to normal diet as early as the system permits. The future is in God's keeping.

Kazirkhil, 20-11-'46

Harijan, 1-12-1946

WEEKLY LETTER

Emerald green fields of paddy meet the eye just now in Noakhali District wherever you go. There has been a bumper crop this year such as has not been known for the last twelve years. But nature's bounty has been more than offset by the sadistic cruelty of man. The crop is in ear and about to ripen but a number of those who sowed them are not there to reap or garner. Some have been killed. Others have fled for safety to various refugee camps.

The question of the repatriation of the refugees is worrying the authorities as well as the various relief organizations. Unless they return to their homes early, they might lose the paddy and the betel-nut crop which in their absence might be bagged by others. The problem bristles with difficulties. They have lost their all, they have no houses to live in. Without means of subsistence and without even a roof over their heads for shelter, where are they to go? they ask. Above all, where is the guarantee that they would be safe if they returned to their villages? To clear the atmosphere of terror and re-establish mutual confidence and goodwill is the problem of problems.

TRAGEDY OF GOPAIRBAG

On the 8th instant Gandhiji accompanied by the Parliamentary Secretaries Janab Nasrullah Saheb and Abdur Rashid Saheb, Mr. McInerny the District Magistrate and the Superintendent of Police, Noakhali, motored from Chaumuhani to the village of Gopairbag. Here, buried deep in the midst of thick groves of slender arecanut and cocoa-nut palms whose tall tops seemed to meet overhead, are scattered five clusters of huts occupied by Hindu families, in the midst of nearly fifty times that number of Muslim families. One of these is a Patwari's house. Silken plantain leaves spread out in graceful arches under a sapphire blue sky. The loveliness of nature was spread all around. The air was delightfully fresh and cool. But the human scene that

met the eye froze one's blood. There had been murder and arson. The place of worship had been desecrated. The corpses of slaughtered men were piled up in a heap in one corner of the courtyard and burnt. Charred remains of what was once flesh and blood bore witness to the grim tragedy. There were blood stains on the doorsteps of some of the houses The *kutcha* floors in many houses had been dug up presumably in search of hidden cash or jewels. The odour of death still hung over the place. It was a picture of desolation. Three girls had been abducted from the house, two of whom were still missing.

DATTAPARA

On his way back at evening Gandhiji halted at Diwanbari at Dattapara where tact and presence of mind combined with good luck had enabled the Diwanji family to escape from the fate of the Patwari family at Gopairbag. The place itself has at present been turned into a refugee camp holding about 6000 refugees. Gandhiji discussed here with the district authorities the question of repatriation of the refugees to their respective homes. Some local Muslim League members had also been invited and took part in the discussion.

Addressing a meeting of Hindus and Muslims at evening, Gandhiji told them that it was a shame for both the Hindus and the Mussalmans that the Hindus should have to run away from their homes as they had done It was a shame for the Muslims because it was out of fear of the Muslims that the Hindus had run away Why should a human being inspire another with fear? It was no less a shame for the Hindus to have given way to craven fear. He had always said that man should fear none but God. The Government officials accompanying him were all anxious that they should return to their homes. To feed and clothe thousands in one place involved difficulties for the refugees as well as for the Government. The Government officials were ashamed of the fact that such things should have happened in their jurisdiction. He wanted them to forgive and forget what had happened in Noakhali and Tipperah. That did

not mean that they were to become cowards. But it served no useful purpose to keep on recalling the unpleasant past. He hoped and prayed that the Hindus and Muslims of these parts would become friends once more. He knew the Hindus had suffered a lot and were suffering still. He would not ask them to return to their homes till at least one good Muslim and one good Hindu came forward to accompany them and stand surety for their safety in each village. He was sure there were plenty of good Hindus and good Muslims in these parts who would give the necessary guarantee.

A Muslim friend from the audience said they had already given them the assurance that they would look after them but the Hindus would not listen to them Gandhiji replied that they should try to understand and appreciate the reasons of the Hindus' distrust and overcome their fear A Hindu refugee got up and asked how they could have confidence in the assurances of the Muslims any more. When the trouble was threatening they had promised to look after them but had failed to protect them afterwards. Besides where were they to go and stay? They had lost their all. Were they to go back and stay in the jungles? And when fifty good Muslims in the village had failed to save them on the previous occasion, how would one good Muslim do so now? Gandhiji replied that the Government would see that their huts were rebuilt and they had food and clothing when they returned to their homes. Whatever might have happened in the past, if now one good Muslim and one good Hindu took the responsibility for their safety in each village, they could rely on their word backed as it would be by the collective invitation of all the Muslims in the village. If they were still afraid they were cowards and not even God could help the cowardly.

The next day Gandhiji shifted his camp to Dattapara in order to be able to visit more affected villages in the interior. After the evening prayer he addressed a huge gathering in which about 80% were Muslims. It was a passionate appeal to their conscience. He talked to them

of the purifying alchemy of God's name which was more potent than even the proverbial philosopher's stone. He asked them to search their hearts and tell him whether they really wanted the Hindus to come back and live in their midst as friends and neighbours. If they wanted them back, they should stand guarantee for their safety and self-respect, assure them that their daughters, sisters, and mothers would be regarded like the Muslim's own daughters, sisters and mothers. If not, they should plainly tell him so and he would ask the unfortunate refugees to migrate. But he himself would stay in their midst till their hearts were converted, live on what they might provide him and die there if necessary. The full text of the speech is reproduced elsewhere* in this volume.

Several written questions were submitted to him at the end of the meeting. One of them was: how could the refugees have the confidence to go back when the hooligans who had harassed them were still at large? Gandhiji replied that it was the duty of the Government to round up the hooligans but his advice to the refugees was to leave the Government to attend to its duty. If the good Muslims invited them back whole-heartedly, they should return.

FURTHER INTO THE INTERIOR

The 11th was Gandhiji's day of silence. All the same he visited the villages Noakhola, Sonachak and Khilpara, all in the Lakhimpur Thana. The journey was partly by motor and partly by boats which were punted with difficulty in *khals* that were choked with thickly tangled masses of water hyacinth. At Noakhola 8 people were said to have been murdered including a schoolboy of 15. Four skulls and charred remains of the bones were scattered all over the place. The houses had almost all been burnt down. In the house where the boy was murdered his school books and freshly written excercise books were strewn over the floor. The betelnut and the cocoa-nut trees surrounding the houses were scorched. Those that were not killed or did not run away were said to have

*See Chapter 216.

been converted including a deaf-mute who by piteous signs showed the tuft of hair in a piece of cloth which had been removed from his head and to which he still clung The few women that remained were all weeping and wailing in a heart-rending manner. At Sonachak the place of worship had been desecrated and set fire to. Broken images lay on footpaths and in the debris inside the ruined temple In this village too the same piteous weeping and wailing of women met Gandhiji.

In a written message that was read out at the evening prayer gathering Gandhiji poured out the anguish with which the sights which he had seen had filled him Wherever he had gone he had seen burnt houses and heard stories of looting and forcible conversions. Hindu women were without the auspicious vermilion mark on their heads and foreheads and without their conchshell bangles How he wished that all Muslim brothers would condemn these atrocities with one voice so that the Hindus could go back to their homes and live there as they used to before the disturbances Their houses would be rebuilt before they could go back The Muslims should help in that Such he believed was the injunction of the *Holy Quran* too

The next day at the evening prayer gathering which mostly consisted of refugees, Gandhiji again referred to the question of repatriation The Maulvi Saheb, the vice-president of Union No. 6, who had addressed them before him had invited them in the name of the Mussalmans to return to their homes. But it was not so easy in action as it was in speech Everyone was anxious to see the two communities live in peace and harmony once again For that it was not necessary that they should have the same religion He had seen awful sights of destruction He had seen the terrorstricken faces of the sufferers. They had been forcibly converted once and they were afraid the same thing would be repeated. He wanted them to shed that fear. He alone deserved to live who refused to give up God's name. They must learn to face death rather than give up *Ramanama.* He was not enamoured of the military and the police

The function of the police was to arrest thieves and dacoits, that of the military to guard them against foreign aggression. The police and the military could not teach them to cease fighting among themselves and live as friends. He referred to the scheme for repatriation but it could work only if the Muslim League wished to have peace and fully co-operated. Shamsuddin Saheb was coming in two or three days. They would hear from him what the League Government wanted to do.

Visits to the village of Gomatoli and Nandigram completed Gandhiji's programme in the Lakhimpur Thana. In Nandigram the same scene of devastation that was seen in Noakhola and Khilpara confronted one. About 600 houses had been burnt down. Twisted and blackened pieces of corrugated sheets that once constituted roofings littered the ground among heaps of cinders and debris. A school building, a hostel and a hospital were reduced to ashes. Scorched cocoa-nut and arecanut palms marked the site of arson. The temple belonging to the leading family of the village had been desecrated here too.

A Cruel Joke

Gandhiji shifted his camp from Dattapara to Kazirkhil on the 14th afternoon. On the way he stopped at Shahpur where a public meeting had been arranged. Gandhiji had been told that there would be a big gathering at Shahpur. But someone had spread the rumour that he would be accompanied by the Superintendent of Police, the District Magistrate and an armed guard who would utilize the occasion for making arrests with the result that very few people were in evidence when Gandhiji arrived there. "It is a cruel joke," remarked Gandhiji. For so far as he was concerned he had never wanted any police or district authority to accompany him. But the authorities said they could not take the risk of letting him go about unprotected.

It has been brought to his notice that in several places, while the local Mussalmans professed to be anxious that peace should be re-established, they were not prepared to do anything for it or give any guarantee, unless the

Muslim League leaders asked them to. Gandhiji recognizing the reasonableness of their suggestion referred to a statement of Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah which he had read that morning. He did not like everything in that statement but there were some things in it which should commend themselves to all. In that statement Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah had said "If the Mussalmans lose their balance and give vent to the spirit of vengeance and retaliation and prove false to the highest codes of morality and preachings of our great religion Islam, you will not only lose your title to the claim of Pakistan but also it will start a most vicious circle of bloodshed and cruelty, which will at once put off the day of our freedom and we shall only be helping to prolong the period of slavery and bondage." He had further said "We must prove politically that we are brave, generous and trustworthy, . . . that in the Pakistan areas the minorities will enjoy the fullest security of life, property and honour just as the Mussalmans themselves, nay even greater." He would like them, remarked Gandhiji, to ponder over that statement, if on examination they found that his quotation was correct. Murder, loot, arson, abduction and forcible marriages and forcible conversions could not but prolong India's slavery. If they kept on quarrelling among themselves, if they looked to the police and the military for protection, they would be inciting the third party to rule over them

Heart Agony

At Kazirkhil Gandhiji's camp has been fixed up in a partially devastated house. The miscreants were not able to burn down the place completely. An advance party of Shri Satish Babu's men had cleaned it up and made it habitable. There was a small gathering for the prayers in the compound of the house. Addressing them after prayer on the first day Gandhiji said he found indescribable peace in the natural scenery around him but he found that peace missing on the faces of the men and women. And how could they have peace after all that they had been through? He found a number of guards standing there to protect

him and his party. Against whom were they to protect him? He was not used to go about with a guard. He had toured in Bengal unprotected before this. "But today the authorities would not let me do so. It is a matter of sorrow and shame for me, and more than me it should be a matter of shame for the Mussalmans of East Bengal."

Even the schools and temples had been destroyed, he proceeded. Shamsuddin Saheb, their Minister, did not like it. The happenings in East Bengal, he said, had hurt him deeply. The hearts of the people had to be purged of hatred. For that their (the Mussalmans') help and co-operation was necessary.

THIS FRATRICIDE

This fratricide was more awful than anything in his experience, he said. He had carried on a grim struggle for 20 years in South Africa and for the last 30 years in India. But this mutual slaughter had non-plussed him. He did not know how he could induce the two communities to live in peace and harmony again. He had come to Bengal to find a solution for the problem. Bengal was a big province. If the communal problem could be solved here, it would be solved elsewhere also. If he succeeded here, he would go away from Bengal with a new lease of life. If not, he wished God to remove him from this earth. He did not wish to leave Bengal empty handed. The word 'pessimism' was not to be found in his dictionary.

The Muslims butchered the Hindus and did worse things than butchery in Bengal, he proceeded, and the Hindus butchered the Muslims in Bihar. When both acted wickedly it was no use making comparisons or saying one was less wicked than the other or who started the trouble. If they wished to take revenge they should learn the art from him. He also took revenge, but it was of a different type. He had read a Gujarati poem in his childhood which said: "If to him who gives you a glass of water, you give two, there is no merit in it. Real merit lies in doing good

to him who does you evil" "That," concluded Gandhiji, "I consider noble revenge"

He had read a story about one of the earlier Caliphs. A man attacked the Caliph with a sword. The Caliph wrested the sword from the assailant's hands and was going to kill him when the assailant spat on his face. The Caliph thereupon let him go free because the indignity had filled him with personal anger. This produced a great impression upon the assailant and he embraced Islam One who was forcibly converted to Islam ceased to be a man To recite the *Kalma* through fear was meaningless.

A Call to Introspection

The prayer meeting of the fifteenth was held in the *maidan* in front of the school building at Ramganj In his address after the prayer Gandhiji reiterated and emphasized his previous day's appeal He could talk to them of nothing but sorrow and suffering these days Wherever he went he saw awful sights of destruction There were no tears in his eyes He who shed tears could not wipe those of others, but his heart did weep. He had come with the hope that he could have a frank talk with the Mussalmans and that they would repent of their misdeeds and request the Hindus not to leave their homes If the repentance was genuine, the Hindus would recognize their sincerity and regain lost confidence. But he could see that the Hindus and the Muslims of East Bengal had been embittered against one another He would not go into the reasons thereof But the Muslim brethren would permit him to say that so far as he knew, in East Bengal they had been the aggressors The Hindus were mortally afraid of them At Chaumuhani, continued Gandhiji, Muslims came to his meeting in large numbers, larger than the Hindus. But he did not know why they were avoiding him after the first meeting at Dattapara. It hurt him. He wanted the few Mussalmans who were present in the meeting to carry his message to the rest. A Muslim sister who had been going about meeting the leading Muslims in these parts had said that the Muslims told her

plainly that they wanted orders from the League leaders before they could promise to befriend the Hindus or attend Gandhiji's meetings. The exodus of the Hindus was still continuing If the Muslims assured them that they were neighbours, friends and brothers, sons of the same soil, breathing the same air and drinking the same water, that the Hindus had nothing to fear from them, the exodus would stop and even those who had left their homes would return. Even animals were friendly to those who befriended them. But man was made in the image of God. To justify his inheritance, man had to return good for evil. Whosesoever was the fault, this truth applied to both the parties. The Muslims wanted orders from the League. He could understand it. There was a League Government in the province. But that did not mean that the Government should be inimical to those outside the League.

He reiterated what he said about Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah Saheb's message on the previous day. They should search their hearts and ask themselves if they had lived up to that message. " So far as I know, Islam does not permit forcible conversion and atrocities on women. What good can a mere repetition of the *Kalma* do to one whose heart does not accept Islam? You should ask your leaders, therefore, whether you are to be friends with the Hindus or enemies and tell me. If you wish to be enemies, the Hindus should be asked to leave East Bengal. For myself, I have come to stay in East Bengal till there is reconciliation between the two."

Kazirkhil, 17-11-'46

Harijan 1-12-1946

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THE FIRST LESSON

Mr. Mclnerny, the District Magistrate of Noakhali, addressing Gandhiji's evening prayer gathering at Dibanbari (Dattapara) made a pithy remark. As after a natural calamity like an earthquake, floods or an epidemic involving large masses of people, so after riots, the first requisites of rehabilitation and relief are food, clothing, shelter and primary medical aid. But of far greater importance than these is courage which is the basis of all virtues. Nothing could have been more opportune, he added, than Gandhiji's visit to Noakhali in the present juncture. For, courage cannot be doled out like rice or other items of relief. It has to be evoked from within and who could do it better than Gandhiji?

THE ONLY WAY

He could have little idea at that time that Gandhiji had anticipated him in that regard even before he had set foot on the soil of the Tipperah District. The first lesson was delivered at Chandpur when a group of 20 to 25 workers including the son of the late Babu Hardayal Nag and several representatives of various relief organizations met him in the dining saloon of the *Kiwi* on the morning of the 7th November. "What goes against the grain in me," Gandhiji told them, "is that a single individual can be forcibly converted or a single woman can be kidnapped or raped. So long as we feel we can be subjected to these indignities, we shall continue to be so subjected. If we say we cannot do without police or military protection, we really confess defeat even before the battle has begun. No police or military in the world can protect people who are cowards. Today you say, thousands of people are terrorizing a mere handful, so what can the latter do? But even a few individuals are enough to terrorize the whole mass, if the latter feel helpless. Your

trouble is not numerical inferiority but the feeling of helplessness that has seized you and the habit of depending on others. The remedy lies with you That is too why I am opposed to the idea of your evacuating from East Bengal *en masse* It is no cure for impotence or helplessness."

"East Bengal is opposed to such a move," they replied. "They should not leave," Gandhiji resumed. "20,000 able-bodied men prepared to die like brave men non-violently might today be regarded as a fairy tale But it would be no fairy tale for every able-bodied man in a population of 20,000 to die like stalwart soldiers to a man in open fight. They will go down in history like the immortal five hundred of Leonidas who made Thermopylae " And he quoted the proud epitaph which marked the grave of the Thermopylae heroes

Stranger! Tell Sparta, here her sons are laid,
Such was her law and we that law obeyed

A False Cry

"I will proclaim from the housetops," he continued, "that it is the only condition under which you can live in East Bengal. You have asked for Hindu officers, Hindu police and Hindu military in the place of Muslim. It is a false cry. You forget that Hindu officers, Hindu police and Hindu military have in the past done all these things — looting, arson, abduction, rape I come from Kathiawad—the land of petty principalities. I cannot describe to you to what depths of depravity human nature can go No woman's honour is safe in some principalities and the chief is no hooligan but a duly annointed one."

"These are cases of individual depravity. Here we have got this on a mass scale "

"But the individual there is not alone. He is backed by the machinery of his little State "

A Poor Consolation

"He is condemned even by his compeers. Here such acts are not condemned by the Muslims."

"I have heard nothing but condemnation of these acts from Saheed Suhrawardy downwards since I have come here. Words of condemnation may tickle your ears. But they are no consolation to the unfortunate women whose houses have been laid desolate or who have been abducted, forcibly converted and forcibly married."

"What a shame for Hindus, what a disgrace for Islam," he exclaimed warming up. "No, I am not going to leave you in peace. Presently you will say to yourself, 'When will this man leave us and go?' But this man will not go. He did not come on your invitation and he will go on his own only, but with your blessings, when his mission in East Bengal is fulfilled."

"It is a part of their plan for Pakistan," put in one member of the deputation

"It is midsummer madness and they have realized it. They will soon sicken of it. They have already begun to."

"Why do they not come here then and set this right?"

"That stage will come. Sickness only marks the crisis. Convalescence must precede cure." "You see I am a nature-curist," he added with a sardonic laugh in which all joined

THE FALLACY OF NUMBERS

"But here we are a mere drop in the ocean," remarked another friend resuming the discussion.

Gandhiji replied that even if there was one Hindu in East Bengal, he wanted him to have the courage to go and live in the midst of the Mussalmans and die if he must like a hero. He should refuse to live as a serf and a slave He might not have the non-violent strength to die without fighting. But he could command their admiration if he had the courage not to submit to wrong and died fighting like a man. "There is not a man, however cruel and hard-hearted, but would give his admiration to a brave man A *goonda* is not the vile man he is imagined to be. He is not without his noble traits"

The friend who was leading the argument, however, was still sceptical. "A *goonda* does not understand reason,"

he said. "But he understands bravery," replied Gandhiji. "If he finds that you are braver than he, he will respect you."

ARMOURY RAID TRADITION

"You will note," continued Gandhiji, "that for the purposes of our present discussion I have not asked you to discard the use of arms. I can't provide you with arms. It is not for me to provide arms to the Chittagong Armoury Raid men," he remarked chaffing them "The most tragic thing about the Armoury Raid people," he added "is that they could not even multiply themselves Their bravery was lop-sided It did not infect others"

That started a discussion on the Chittagong Armoury Raid group

"No wonder it could not" answered one of the party. "They were condemned"

"By whom? I may have — that is a different thing."

"The people did do I am myself an Armoury Raid man."

"They did not. You are no Armoury Raid man or, you should not have been here to tell these things. That so many of them should have remained living witnesses of the things that have happened is in my eyes a tragedy of the first order. If they had shown the same fearlessness and courage to face death in the present crisis as they did when they made that raid, they would have gone down in history as heroes. As it is, they have only inscribed a small footnote in the page of history You will see, I am not, as I have already said, asking you just now to unlearn the use of arms or to follow my type of heroism. I have not made it good even in my own case. I have come here to test it in East Bengal. I want you to take up the conventional type of heroism. You should be able to infect others — both men and women — with courage and fearlessness to face death when the alternative is dishonour and humiliation. Then the Hindus can stay in East Bengal,

not otherwise. After all, the Mussalmans are blood of our blood and bone of our bone."

"Here the proportion of Mussalmans and Hindus is 6 to 1. How can you expect us to stand against such heavy odds?"

"When India was brought under British subjection, there were 70,000 European soldiers against 33 crores of Indians."

"We have no arms. The Government backs them with its bayonets."

"The odds were much heavier against the Indians in South Africa. The Indian community there was a mere handful in the midst of an overwhelming majority of Europeans and Negroes. The Europeans had arms. We had none. So we forged the weapon of satyagraha. Today the Indian is respected by the White man in South Africa, not so the Zulu with all his fine physique."

"So we are to fight with arms anyhow?" the friend finally asked.

"Not anyhow," replied Gandhiji. "Even violence has its code of ethics. For instance, to butcher helpless old men, women and children is not bravery but rank cowardice. Chivalry requires that they should be protected even at the cost of one's life. The history of early Islam is replete with such instances of chivalry and Islam is all the stronger for them."

BRAVERY OR BRUTALITY?

"Would you permit the Hindus to take the offensive?"

"The people of Bihar did and brought disgrace upon themselves and India. They have set the clock of India's independence back. I have a right to speak about Bihar. In a sense I feel closer to Bihar than to Bengal as fortune enabled me to give a striking demonstration of the non-violence technique in Champaran. I have heard it said that the retaliation in Bihar has 'cooled' the Muslims down. They mean it has cowed them down for the time being. They

forget that two can play at a game Bihar has forged a link in the chain of our slavery. If the Bihar performance is repeated or if the Bihar mentality does not mend, you may note down my words in your diary *Before long India will pass under the yoke of the Big Three with one of them probably as the mandatory power. The independence of India is today at stake in Bengal and Bihar* The British Government entrusted the Congress with power not because they are in love with the Congress but because they had faith that the Congress would use it wisely and well, not abuse it. Today Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru finds the ground slipping from under his feet. But he won't let that happen. That is why he is in Bihar. He has said he is going to stay there as long as it may be necessary."

"Biharis have behaved as cowards," he added with deep anguish. "Use your arms well, if you must. Do not ill-use them. Bihar has not used its arms well. If the Biharis wanted to retaliate, they could have gone to Noakhali and died to a man. But for a thousand Hindus to fall upon a handful of Mussalmans — men, women and children — living in their midst is no retaliation but just brutality It is the privilege of arms to protect the weak and helpless. The best succour that Bihar could have given to the Hindus of East Bengal would have been to guarantee with their own lives the absolute safety of the Muslim population living in their midst. Their example would have told. And I have faith that they will still do so with due repentance when the present madness has passed away. Anyway that is the price I have put upon my life, if they want me to live. Here ends the first lesson."

Kazirkhil, 18-11-'46

Harijan, 1-12-1946

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AN APPEAL TO CONSCIENCE

The following is the text of Gandhiji's speech delivered in Hindustani at the prayer meeting at Dattapara on the evening of the 10th November·

Whether you believe me or not, I want to assure you that I am a servant of both the Hindus and the Mussalmans. I have not come here to fight Pakistan. If India is destined to be partitioned, I cannot prevent it. But I wish to tell you that Pakistan cannot be established by force. In the *bhajan* that was just sung the poet has likened God to the philosopher's stone. The proverbial philosopher's stone is said to turn iron into gold. That is not always desirable. For instance, if all the rails of the railway track were turned into gold by the touch of the stone, the trains would not be able to run over them. But the touch of God purifies the soul. That is always desirable.

That philosopher's stone is within us all. All that I wish to tell my Muslim brethren is that, whether they live as one people or two, they should live as friends with the Hindus If they do not wish to do so, they should say so plainly. I would in that case confess myself defeated. The refugees cannot stay on as refugees for ever. The Government cannot go on feeding them. And what sort of feed are they getting? Less than half the daily ration of cereals to keep an able-bodied man alive, no fish, no vegetables, nor anything else to supplement it. It is not possible for them to exist like this for any length of time. If, therefore, the Muslims do not want them back in their villages, they must go elsewhere.

But even if every Hindu of East Bengal went away, I will still continue to live amidst the Muslims of East Bengal and eat what they give me and what I consider lawful for me to partake of. I will not bring my food from outside. I do not need fish or flesh. All that I need is a little fruit, vegetables and some goat's milk. As far as goat's milk and cereals are concerned, I would take them again only when it pleases God that I should do so. I have given

them up and would not resume them till the Hindus were really penitent of what they had done in Bihar.

For a thousand Hindus to surround a hundred Mussalmans or for a thousand Mussalmans to surround a hundred Hindus and oppress them is not bravery but cowardice A fair fight means even numbers and previous notice. That does not mean that I approve of their fighting. It has been said that the Hindus and the Muslims cannot stay together as friends or co-operate with each other. No one can make me believe that, but if that is your belief, you should say so I would in that case not ask the Hindus to return to their homes They would leave East Bengal and it would be a shame for both the Mussalmans and the Hindus If, on the other hand, you want the Hindus to stay in your midst, you should tell them that they need not look to the military for protection but to their Muslim brethren instead. Their daughters and sisters and mothers are your own daughters, sisters and mothers and you should protect them with your lives. I addressed them in the refugee camp yesterday. The District Magistrate Mr McInerny told them that all mankind being descended from Adam and Eve, they were all members of one family —relatives, whatever, their race or religion So they should live together as relatives

One man is said to have returned to his village last evening after the prayer meeting He found his house surrounded by Muslims They would not let him take his property How can I, under these circumstances (if they are true), ask anyone to go back? You should ponder over what I have said and let me know what you really wish I shall advise the Hindus accordingly.

I am told and I believe that there are many good Muslims who would welcome the Hindus back but the *goondas* stand in the way. I wish to tell you that if the good Muslims spoke out with one voice and acted according to their professions, the so-called *goondas* would become ineffective and would mend their ways.

Kazirkhil, 16-11-'46

Harijan, 1-12-1946

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THE "DO OR DIE" MISSION

On the road of satyagraha there is no stop, no resting place. One must always move on and onward or else retrogress. Gandhiji's decision which was described as *A venture in faith* in the last issue of the *Harijan* was taken at Dattapara. But soon he had moved another step forwards. He must live in a Muslim household, if a good Muslim Leaguer approved of by the Bengal Ministry would be prepared to receive him as a member of the family. He discussed the question with Goffran Saheb, the Minister for Civil Supplies, who saw him on the 16th and asked him if he could recommend him to any. The latter was taken aback at Gandhiji's living stripped of all his companions in the midst of those who would not know how to look after him "I shall look after myself I shall need nobody's service," argued Gandhiji. "Then, I am afraid, I must say that no Mussalman family is prepared to receive you," replied Goffran Saheb laughing But Gandhiji was not to be put away easily. He expatiated on it in his discourse after the evening prayer. He was in the midst of a Muslim population in Noakhali, he said He did not like the idea of staying with Hindu friends He would like to see if he could stay with a League Mussalman "My requirements are very few. All I want is cleanliness clean water, permissible food and the freedom to pray to God in my own way" The idea was that if the Hindus saw him living with a Muslim League friend, they would probably get back their confidence and return to their homes more readily. "The Muslim friends will have an opportunity to examine me at close quarters and find out whether I am an enemy or friend."

But he did not want to postpone his new "Venture in Faith" till a Muslim household was ready to receive him. "When I was in detention in the Aga Khan Palace," he remarked one day, "I once sat down to write a thesis

on India as a protagonist of Non-violence. But as I proceeded with my writing I could not go on. I had to stop. There are two aspects of Hinduism. There is on the one hand the historical Hinduism with its untouchability, superstitious worship of stocks and stones, animal sacrifice and so on. On the other, we have the Hinduism of the *Gita,* the *Upanishads* and Patanjali's *Yoga Sutra* which is the acme of *ahimsa* and oneness of all creation, pure worship of one immanent, formless, imperishable God. *Ahimsa* which to me is the chief glory of Hinduism has been sought to be explained away by our people as being meant for *sannyasis* only. I do not share that view. I have held that it is *the* way of life and India has to show it to the world Where do I stand? Do I represent this *ahimsa* in my person? If I do, then deceit and hatred that poison the atmosphere should dissolve. It is only by going into isolation from my companions, those on whose help I have relied all along, and standing on my own crutches that I shall find my bearings and also test my faith in God."

To Sevagram Ashram people he wrote

"I am afraid you must give up all hope of my early returning or returning at all to the Ashram. The same applies to my companions. It is a herculean task that faces me. I am being tested. Is the *Satyagraha* of my conception a weapon of the weak or really that of the strong? I must either realize the latter or lay down my life in the attempt to attain it. That is my quest. In pursuit of it I have come to bury myself in this devastated village. His will be done."

On the 20th Gandhiji broke up his camp at Kazirkhil, Columbus-like, to face the dark unknown, accompanied only by his stenotypist, Shri Parsuram and Prof. Nirmal Kumar Bose, his Bengali interpreter. Before embarking the little group round him held a short prayer when his favourite hymn "*Vaishnava jana to tene kahiye*" was sung. Many voices were husky, many eyes dim with tears as the tiny country boat bearing him disappeared beyond the bridge, in the direction of Shrirampur.

Following upon his departure the members of his party dispersed themselves one by one in various appointed places.

The hut where he was put up in Shrirampur is in an open sunny clearing in the midst of thick groves of stately arecanut and cocoanut palms. Round about it is spread out a grim scene of arson and devastation He has given up his warm immersion bath and for the first two days did his own massage. Since his arrival he has had several meetings with Shamsuddin Saheb and others and a conference with about 30 representatives of the Hindus and Muslims of Ramganj at Ramganj. As a result they were able to evolve a plan for the re-establishment of peace and communal harmony The Ministers gave a solemn word of honour that they meant to implement it The plan was put before the public at a public meeting that was held in the village of Chandipur on the 23rd November

Gandhiji speaking at the close of the meeting uttered the following significant words.

"Here are elected Muslims who are running the Government of the Province They have given you their word of honour They would not be silent witnesses to the repetition of shameful deeds My advice to the Hindus is to believe their word and give them a trial. This does not mean that there would not be a single bad Mussalman left in East Bengal There are good and bad men amongst all communities Dishonourable conduct could break any Ministry or organization in the end . . If you want real peace there is no other way except to have mutual trust and confidence. Bihar, they say, has avenged Noakhali. Supposing the Muslims of East Bengal or the Muslims all over India make up their minds to avenge Bihar, where would India be? . . . After all if the worst came to the worst, you can only lose your lives. Only, you must do so as brave men and women. . . If Shamsuddin Saheb and his companions do not mean what they have said, you will know. I for one would not wish to be a living witness to such a tragedy."

Kazirkhil, 24-11-'46

Harijan, 8-12-1946

WEEKLY LETTER

THE LESSON CONTINUED

The lesson in fearlessness which Gandhiji began at Chandpur, when a deputation of Hindu workers waited upon him, was continued even in more forceful language at Chaumuhani and elsewhere. In fact it has become the central theme of all his talks. "The tragedy is not that so many Muslims have gone mad," he remarked to a friend who saw him at Chaumuhani, "but that so many Hindus in East Bengal have been witnesses to these things. If every Hindu in East Bengal had been done to death, I would not have minded it. Do you know what the Rajputs did? They killed their womenfolk when they issued forth to sacrifice themselves on the battlefield. The surviving ones immolated themselves by mounting the funeral pyre before the fortress fell rather than allow themselves to be captured and dishonoured. There is nothing courageous in thousands of Mussalmans killing out a handful of Hindus in their midst, but that the Hindus should have degraded themselves by such cowardice, i.e. being witnesses to abduction and rape, forcible conversion and forcible marriage of their womenfolk, is heart-rending."

"How can we create a sense of security and self-confidence," asked the friend.

"By learning to die bravely. Let us turn our wrath against ourselves. I am not interested in getting the police substituted by the military or the Muslim police by the Hindu police. They are broken reeds."

"To whom should we appeal—the Congress, the League or the British Government?"

"To none of these. Appeal to yourselves, therefore, to God."

"We are men—made of flesh and blood. We need some material support," finally he asked.

"Then appeal to your own flesh and blood. Purify it of all dross," replied Gandhiji.

ANATOMY OF FEAR

He described the anatomy of fear in minute detail in the course of a written message which was read out to the prayer gathering at Kazirkhil on the evening of the 18th (Monday) In fact it has become the central theme of all his addresses these days. "The more I go about in these parts," he observed, "the more I find that your worst enemy is fear. It eats into the vitals of the terror-stricken as well as the terrorist. The latter fears something in his victim. It may be his different religion or his riches he fears. The second kind of fear is otherwise known as greed. If you search enough, you will find that greed is a variety of fear. But there has never been and will never be a man who is able to intimidate one who has cast out fear from his heart. Why can no one intimidate the fearless? You will find that God is always by the side of the fearless. Therefore, we should fear Him alone and seek His protection. All other fear will then by itself disappear. Till fearlessness is cultivated by the people there will never be any peace in these parts for the Hindus, or for the Mussalmans."

Addressing the meeting after Goffran Saheb, Gandhiji, began by referring to Shamsuddin Saheb's speech at Chaumuhani a few days ago. They had now heard Goffran Saheb. The Ministers wanted them to live together as friends. The police and the military could not protect them. God alone could protect them. They had, therefore, to look to each other for their safety. Goffran Saheb had told them that the Government did not wish the Hindus to leave East Bengal. Awful things had no doubt happened but they should let bygones be bygones. They must turn a new leaf. When one had suffered as they had, one was liable to become filled with suspicion. But that had to be overcome. A member from the audience had requested him, said Gandhiji, to allow him five minutes to reply to Goffran Saheb's speech which, he said, required correction in several places. But Gandhiji replied that he

was afraid he could not allow the meeting to be turned into a public debate Whatever was said at the meeting was said in good faith and to do his work. But if the friend in question sent him a letter, not couched offensively, he would gladly forward it to Goffran Saheb. He rebuked the audience for not observing pin-drop silence while the Muslim members of the audience were performing *Namaz.* Culture and good breeding required that they should observe silence when others said their prayers. There should be mutual respect All worshipped the same God, whatever their religion He was glad to see the Congress and the League flags flying together in the prayer ground Both had great significance They should realize as Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah Saheb had said that if they kept on quarrelling among themselves the country would remain a slave country and Pakistan would vanish into thin air He was receiving threatening letters, said Gandhiji. Some Muslims feared that he had come to suppress them He could assure them that he had never suppressed any one in all his life. They asked him why he had not gone to Bihar He had declared his resolve to fast if Bihar did not stop the madness. He was in constant touch with Bihar Pandit Jawaharlalji, Doctor Rajendra Prasad and others had assured him that his presence there was not required Bihar, he understood, was practically peaceful now Tension was still there, but it was going The Muslims were returning to their villages. The Government had taken the responsibility to build the houses of those who had been rendered homeless He was also receiving angry telegrams from Hindus asking why he did not fast against the Muslims for the happenings in Bengal He could not do so today If the Mussalmans realized that he was their friend, he would be entitled to fast against them also If he was to leave East Bengal he would go only after peace ruled the breasts of the Hindus and the Muslims. He had no desire to live any longer otherwise

DASGHARIA

On the morning of the 17th Gandhiji visited the village of Dasgharia, two miles from Kazirkhil, where he was met

by a large number of women. They had all been forcibly converted and now reverted to their own religion. The District Magistrate had issued orders and advertized the fact, remarked Gandhiji, that forcible conversions, i. e. conversions out of fear, would not be recognized by law. He, the speaker, did not know if everyone of those who had been converted forcibly had been restored to Hinduism. If not, it should be done, if they wanted to replace the present bitterness between the two communities by cordiality.

Some abducted girls were still missing. They should be returned without further delay. A *dhoby* had brought to him his boy of one year this afternoon. He had recovered the child after a month from a Muslim with police help. It was the duty of the Muslim brethren to put an end to such acts. They should make a frank confession of error in the past and promise to avoid it in future. He, who tried to hide his mistakes, could never rectify them. He himself was a votary of truth. Even when he practised law, he told his clients to tell him the truth if they wanted him to take up their case. He would not plead for a false case. The result was that only true and *bona fide* cases were brought to him. He had long ceased to practise law and had even been struck off the rolls of the Bar register for the offence of sedition. But he continued to follow the same principle. His advice to the Hindus and the Muslims was to get rid of all evil in themselves. Without that they would not be able to live in peace or have respect for one another.

Gandhiji's remarks at the prayer meeting which Goffran Saheb had addressed had some curious repercussions. At the prayer gathering on the 17th evening no woman came and very few Hindus, the majority of those present being Muslims. Speaking after the prayer, Gandhiji observed that he had heard that because he did not allow a gentleman to reply to Goffran Saheb's remarks there and then in the meeting, the Hindus were annoyed and had boycotted the meeting. He was unrepentant. He never said or did anything merely to please others. He had always taught that one should do one's duty irrespective of the reaction it

may have on others. A man who always did what he believed to be right never feared anyone.

Later the secretary of the Local Relief Organization came to him and told him that they had not boycotted the meeting, but as it was Sunday and the Bazaar-day the women were afraid to come out as there would be many Muslims including *goondas* about.

Speaking at the prayer meeting on the 19th evening which was held at Madhupur, Gandhiji observed that a friend had told him that the explanation was a make-believe. If they had boycotted the meeting he did not mind it They owed him no apology on that account. And if they had stayed away out of fear, certainly no apology was due to him But it was a shame for them to be so afraid Were the men also such cowards that they had stayed away out of fear? Were the Muslims going to eat them up? If they were such cowards, they were not worthy of living in this country The sister who had gone to him in the morning to request him to hold a women's meeting at Madhupur had put before him three questions. The first question was that in spite of all their efforts they were unable to rescue some of the abducted women. He had told her that she should write to him about it and he would forward the letter to Saheed Suhrawardy He could even write to the Prime Minister directly It was a matter which brooked no delay. Secondly she said there were some women in the villages who wanted to come away but they wanted a military escort He never could be a party to that. He had told the Prime Minister that he for one was not enamoured of the police and the military and that he could withdraw it at any time The Hindus and the Muslims should be free to break each other's heads if they wanted to. He would put up with that But if they continued to look to the police and the military for help, they would remain slaves for ever. Those who preferred security to freedom had no right to live. He wanted the women to become brave. To change one's religion under threat of force was no conversion but rather cowardice. A cowardly man or woman was a deadweight on any religion. Out of fear they might become

Muslims today, Christians tomorrow and pass into a third religion the day after. That was not worthy of human beings. It was up to the men workers to tell the women that they would be their escort and would protect them with their lives. If still the women were afraid to come away, there was no help for them. He had come to proclaim from the housetops that the women had to become brave or else die. They should make use of the calamity that had befallen them to cast out the demon of fear. Lastly the sister had asked as to how they could advise the refugees to go back to their homes. He would not ask them, replied Gandhiji, to go back under police or military protection They had run away out of the fear of the Muslims. Therefore, it was the Muslims who had to come forward and reassure them that they would regard them as their own mothers, daughters and sisters and protect them with their lives. Everybody, continued the speaker, must be entitled to retain his or her own religion without interference. All worshipped the same God although under different names. "If I see my God in this tree and worship it, why should the Muslims object?" It was wrong for anyone to say that his God was superior to that of another's. God was one and the same for all. Hence his formula that from every village one good Hindu and one good Muslim should stand surety for the peace of the village. Then and then alone would he ask the refugees to return and the Ministers had liked his suggestion.

Kazirkhil, 24-11-'46

Harijan, 8-12-1946

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THE CONGRESS RESOLUTION

[The following resolution was passed by the Indian National Congress at its 54th Session held at Meerut, on the 23rd and 24th November, 1946.]

COMMUNAL STRIFE

The Congress views with pain, horror and anxiety the tragedies of Calcutta, in East Bengal, in Bihar and in some parts of the Meerut District. The acts of brutality committed on men, women and children fill every decent person with shame and humiliation. These new developments in communal strife are different from any previous disturbances and have involved murders on a mass scale as also mass conversions enforced at the point of the dagger, abduction and violation of women and forcible marriage. These crimes, apparently for political purposes, put an end to all sense of security and are ominous to the peace, tranquility and progress of India.

The responsibility for this widespread brutality must rest with the preaching of hatred and violence for political purposes and the degradation and exploitation of religion for political ends. Responsibility must also rest with those who claim to possess special responsibilities and who, in spite of warning, failed to discharge them and allowed matters to proceed to the extreme limit of endurance.

The Congress would warn the country against all propaganda of violence and hatred. It is not by these methods that the differences between the various communities in India can be settled. They can only be settled by peaceful means. The attempts of the Congress to work out a peaceful and just solution of the communal problem have been repeatedly thwarted by the Muslim League. The advocacy and use of violence will injure the interest of the country as a whole as well as sectional interests. The Congress also warns all communities against revenge

and reprisals. The continuance of a vicious circle of reprisals would mean playing into the hands of the internal and external enemies of the nation.

The immediate problem is to produce a sense of security and rehabilitate homes and villages which have been broken up and destroyed. Women who have been abducted and forcibly married must be restored to their homes. Mass conversions which have taken place forcibly have no significance or validity, and the people affected by them should be given every opportunity to return to their homes and to the life of their choice.

The Congress reiterates its conviction that the only solution of the communal problem is complete independence from foreign control and appeals to the people not to allow communal passion to sidetrack the national struggle at this last stage of our march to freedom.

Harijan, 15-12-1946

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ADVICE TO ASSAM

Gandhiji's views on the Constituent Assembly and the situation created by H. M. G.'s statement of December 6, are contained in an account of an interview given by him to two Assam Congressmen, Messrs. Bijayachandra Bhagwat and Mohendra Mohan Chowdhury, who saw him on behalf of Mr. G. D. Bardoloi, the Premier of Assam on December 15.

Asked for guidance in regard to the question of Grouping, he replied:

I do not need a single minute to come to a decision, for, on this I have a mind. I am a Congressman to the very marrow, as I am mainly the framer of the constitution of the Congress as it stands today. I told Bardoloi that if there is no clear guidance from the Congress Committee, Assam should not go into the sections. It should lodge its protest and retire from the Constituent Assembly. It will be a kind of *Satyagraha* against the Congress for the good of the Congress.

Rightly or wrongly, the Congress has come to the decision that it will stand by the judgment of the Federal Court. The dice are heavily loaded. The decision of the Federal Court will go against the Congress interpretation of Grouping as far as I can make out, for the simple reason that the Cabinet has got legal advice which upholds their decision.

The Federal Court is the creation of the British. It is a packed court. To be consistent, the Congress must abide by its decision whatever it may be. If Assam keeps quiet, it is finished. No one can force Assam to do what it does not want to do. It is autonomous to a large extent today.

It must become fully independent and autonomous. Whether you have that courage, grit and the gumption, I do not know. You alone can say that. But if you can make that declaration, it will be a fine thing. As soon as the time comes for the Constituent Assembly to go into sections you will say, 'Gentlemen, Assam retires.' For the independence of India it is the only condition. Each unit must be able to decide and act for itself. I am hoping that in this, Assam will lead the way.

SAME FOR THE SIKHS

I have the same advice for the Sikhs. But your position is much happier than that of the Sikhs. You are a whole province. They are a community inside a province. But I feel every individual has the right to act for himself just as I have.

Q. But we are told that the framing of the constitution for the whole of India cannot be held up for the sake of Assam. Assam cannot be allowed to block the way.

A. There is no need to do that. That is why I say I am in utter darkness. Why are not these simple truths evident to all after so many years? If Assam retires, it does not block, but leads the way to India's independence.

Q. The British Government has said that the constitution framed by the Constituent Assembly cannot be

imposed on unwilling units. So, if some parts do not accept it, the British Parliament won't accept it.

A. Who is the British Government? If we think independence is going to descend on our heads from England or somewhere, we are greately mistaken. It won't be independence. We will be crushed to atoms. We are fluctuating between independence and helpless dependence. The Cabinet Mission's plan lies in between.

If we act rightly there will be the full blown flower of independence. If we react wrongly, the blossom will wither away. Mind you, the League standpoint is quite correct. If they stand out, the Constituent Assembly cannot impose its constitution on an unwilling party. The British Government has no say in the matter, one way or the other

The British cannot interfere with the working of the Constituent Assembly. Supposing the vast majority, including the Muslims and others form a constitution, you can defy the British Parliament if it seeks to interfere. Power is in your hands. Some such thing happened in Ireland only recently. And De Valera is no non-violent fighter The position of India is far better than that of Ireland If we have not the penetration, we will lose the advantage we have, as it is apparently being lost today.

If Assam takes care of itself, the rest of India will be able to look after itself What have you got to do with the constitution of the Union Government? You should form your own constitution. That is enough. You have the basis of a constitution all right even now.

I have never despised the 1935 constitution. It is based on provincial autonomy. It has the capacity for fullest growth, provided the people are worth it. The hill people are with you Many Muslims are also with you. The remainder can be too, if you act on the square.

You will have to forget petty jealousies and rivalries and overcome your weaknesses. Assam has many weaknesses as it has much strength, for I know my Assam.

"With your blessings we can even go outside the Congress and fight," the Assam Congressmen interposed.

Gandhiji replied that in 1939 when there was the question of giving up the Ministry, Subhas Babu opposed it as he thought Assam's was a special case I told Bardoloi that there was much in what Subhas Babu had said, and although I was the author of that scheme of boycott, I said Assam should not come out if it did not feel like it But Assam did come out It was wrong

The Assam Congressmen said that the Maulana Saheb had then said that exception could not be made in the case of Assam

Gandhiji replied " Here there is no question of exception Assam rebelled and that civilly But we have the slavish mentality We look to the Congress and then feel that if we do not follow it slavishly, something will go wrong with it I have said that not only a province but even an individual can rebel against the Congress and by doing so save it, assuming that he is in the right I have done so myself Congress has not attained the present stature without much travail

" I remember in 1918, I think, there was the Provincial Conference of the Congress workers of Gujarat at Ahmedabad The late Abbas Tyebji Saheb was in the chair All the old guards were there The Ali Brothers had not yet joined hands with me fully then, as they did later on. The late Shri Vitthalbhai Patel was there, and I moved the non-co-operation resolution I was a nonentity then. A constitutional question arose Could a provincial conference anticipate the decision of the Congress ? I said "yes". A provincial conference and even a single individual could anticipate the Congress for its own benefit In spite of opposition of the old hands, the resolution was carried That paved the way for the Congress to pass a similar resolution at Calcutta. India was dumbfounded at the audacity of a provincial conference passing the revolutionary resolution.

"We had formed a Satyagraha Sabha outside the Congress It was joined by Horniman, Sarojini Devi, Shankarlal, Umar Sobhani and Vallabhbhai I was ill. The Rowlatt Act was passed. I shook with rage I said to the

Sardar I could do nothing unless he helped me. Sardar was willing And the rest you know. It was rebellion, but a healthy one. We celebrate the 6th of April to the 13th. You have all these historical instances before you.

"I have given you all this time to steel your hearts, to give you courage. If you do not act correctly and now, Assam will be finished. Tell Bardoloi, I do not feel the least uneasiness. My mind is made up. Assam must not lose its soul. It must uphold it against the whole world. Else I will say that Assam had only manikins and no men. It is an impertinent suggestion that Bengal should dominate Assam in any way."

Asked if they could tell the people that they have rebelled against the Congress with Gandhiji's blessings he said, "Talk of God's blessings. They are much richer. Tell the people even if Gandhi tries to dissuade us, we won't listen."

Harijan, 29-12-1946

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ASSAM AGAIN

While in Narayanpur Gandhiji was asked how he could advise Assam and the Sikhs in the Punjab to stay out of groups if his aim was Hindu-Muslim unity and how, after this, it was possible for the Muslim League to join the Constituent Assembly? Gandhiji replied that there was no "if" about his aim. Hindu-Muslim unity had been his aim from his youth upward, that is for an unbroken period of 60 years. He saw no contradiction between his aim and his advice to the people of Assam, the Sikhs and, for that matter, the Frontier and those who felt like it, to stay out of groups or from the Constituent Assembly. The Cabinet Mission's Paper was of a voluntary nature and no party could be compelled to join the Constituent Assembly. They had no force to back their resolution or wishes except the force of public opinion.

CONGRESS STAND

He had, therefore, given no advice which should make it impossible for the Muslim League to join the Constituent Assembly. So far as he had read the resolution passed at the recent A. I. C. C. meeting, the Congress had completely identified itself with the Cabinet Mission's Paper.

Gandhiji hoped that the Muslim League would join the Constituent Assembly in which it was open to it to make good its position by an appeal to reason. Otherwise the Constituent Assembly, because it was a voluntary organization brought into being by the only party that had force behind it, was like a house of cards. It could only become a solid structure if it was backed by the opinion of the Indian masses. Staying out by certain provinces or groups could not and should not be a hindrance to the proceedings of the Constituent Assembly, if it was otherwise good.

Gandhiji would ask, "Why should Assam be absorbed in Bengal against its will, or the Frontier Province or the Sikhs into the Punjab and Sind?" The Congress or League, as the case may be, should make their programme and policy intrinsically attractive so as to appeal to the reason of the recalcitrant province or groups.

Harijan, 2-2-1947

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AT SHRIRAMPUR

Speaking after the prayer at Shrirampur to an audience of about a thousand persons, Gandhiji said that he had never imagined he would be able to come and settle down in a devastated village in Noakhali so soon. This had become possible through Satish Babu's efforts. He had come here alone, with two companions only. One was to act as his interpreter and teach him Bengali, while the other, Shri Parasuram, who was from Malabar, had been brought along because the latter knew no Bengali and also Hindustani only roughly and so could not be set up in a village alone. For all practical purposes he had thus come here alone. His companions had been left behind at Kazirkhil, and each of them was likewise to choose one village for himself. His idea was that every Hindu worker thus sent should be accompanied by a single Mussalman worker, and both of them together should mix with the local people and gradually create the necessary atmosphere for the refugees from here to shed their fear and to come back and live in peace and friendship once more. For a Mussalman worker he depended on Saheed Saheb and Shamsuddin Saheb. But he could not afford to wait until such a worker was available. He had therefore come here as soon as he found the opportunity. It was good that some Mussalmans were present in the meeting and two local Mussalman friends had already invited him to visit their homes. They had assured him that they also wanted the Hindus back in the village; but the Hindus were not yet in the proper frame of mind to do so.

Fear is a thing which he disliked; why should one man be afraid of another? Man should stand in fear of God alone, and then he can shed all other fears. Pyarelal had come to the meeting a short while ago. On his way, he met about 150 refugees who were going away from the village with their belongings. On

enquiry the refugees had told him that they were afraid when the military and police would leave, there would be fresh trouble Whilst, therefore, the roads were safe, they took the opportunity of moving away to some place of safety. But the man who is possessed by fear will not find safety anywhere What help can the military or the police give to such a man? To depend on military and police aid is to add to one's helplessness He would therefore like these refugees to develop personal courage so that they would consider it beneath their dignity to fly from fancied danger merely for fear of losing one's life Therefore, the better course for intending refugees would be to derive personal courage from men like him who went to the affected villages, assuming of course that these had the requisite courage

But whether such courage he could personally infuse in another man or not, he did not know So long he had lived amidst a number of companions But now he had begun to say to himself, "Now is the time If you want to know yourself, go forth alone" It was therefore that he had come practically alone like this to the present village With unquenchable faith in God he proposed to persevere so as to succeed in disarming all opposition and inspiring confidence

He would live here amidst the Muslim villagers, form intimate acquaintance with each family, know their mind, and help them also to know his mind When they thus knew one another intimately, then would perhaps come the time when the atmosphere would change and sweetness prevail in the relation betwe Hindus and Mussalmans, where sourness was prevailing today.

Shriampur, 24-11-'46

Harijan 5-1-1947

COURAGE IS INDISPENSABLE

Yesterday's (26th of November) prayer meeting took place in the small village of Shrirampur where Gandhiji had taken up his abode. He said that even if a solitary refugee had to return to his village populated by Muslims, he would unhesitatingly advise his return. Whether it was men or women, if they were to become brave people, this courage was indispensable. Numerous letters had been coming to him in which people had questioned the wisdom of thus tempting faith, but he held that this was necessary if they were to become a self-respecting nation. He made no distinction between men and women. The latter should feel just as independent as men. Bravery was not man's monopoly. The art of self-defence excluded all outside help. What he saw and heard showed him that people were apt to forget self-respect in order to save themselves. There was no *Swadesh* and *Swaraj* for persons who would not sacrifice themselves or their belongings for their honour. As his hearers knew, the Ministers and the Parliamentary Secretaries, who had come to Noakhali, had been proclaiming that for the sake of their honour and the influence of Islam they were anxious that the refugees should return to their villages and feel perfectly safe and serene in the midst of the majority of Muslims living there. The speaker had no hesitation in trusting their pledged word and asking the people to do likewise. Those who trusted were never the losers, deceivers ever were. There was no room for *goondaism* in any religion worth the name, be it Islam, Hinduism or any other. He was trying to become a Bengali in order that if God gave him strength, he might try to live the life in the midst of the people of East Bengal and induce them to do likewise.

Shrirampur, 28-11-'46

Harijan, 5-1-1947

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DEVELOPMENT OF THE ASHRAM PRAYER

At today's prayer meeting, Gandhiji related the story of how the Ashram prayer had taken its present shape. When he came to India in 1915 Gurudev invited him through the late Deenabandhu Andrews to stay at Santiniketan along with the inmates of the Phoenix Settlement. Kakasaheb and Harihar Sharma were there and so were the late Deenabandhu Andrews and Pearson. These friends had created a sort of South African group at the place. The prayer which was observed at that early time by the small group practically continues to this day so far as the Sanskrit part is concerned.

While on his Harijan tour in Travancore, the speaker added the first verse of the *Ishopanishad* to it, as, in his opinion, it contained the cream of Hindu spiritual thought. Later on, Raihana Tyebji, who is noted for her musical talents proposed the incorporation of a passage from the *Quran Shareef*, and this was done. Lastly, on Kasturba's death at the Aga Khan Palace, Dr. Gilder had recited a passage from the Zoroastrian scripture. Since then that prayer has been a part of the Ashram prayer. In addition there was a *bhajan* in an Indian language or an English hymn and *Ramadhun*.

The prayer which has thus taken shape can, on no account, be considered as belonging to any single community or religion. It is of universal appeal; and no one, whatever his denomination may be, should have hesitation in sharing it.

Shrirampur, 28-11-'46

Harijan, 5-1-1947

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DEPEND ON GOD ALONE

Speaking after prayer, Gandhiji chose as his theme the story referred to in the *bhajan* which had just been sung. The chief of the elephants had gone for a drink to the river when he was caught hold of by an alligator. A furious struggle ensued, but in spite of his strength, the elephant was dragged into deeper waters. When he was on the point of being drowned, the elephant realized that his huge strength was of no avail, and he prayed to God for succour. God, the help of the helpless, came to his rescue and saved him from the jaws of death.

The moral was obvious, continued Gandhiji. The strength of the strong without God's help had been often found to be useless. Therefore, he advised dependence not on outside sources but upon the inner strength which came to all who sincerely sought it from God. This was the lesson which the people in Noakhali sorely needed to learn.

Shrirampur, 2-12-'46

Haarijan, 5-1-1947

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THE ESSENCE OF RELIGION

Shortly before prayer, a group of people from the neighbouring villages arrived, singing the *namasankirtan* to the accompaniment of the *khol* (drum) and the *karatala* (cymbals). When the *Ramadhun* was being sung, they kept time by means of the *khol*. It was a delightful experience and, as Gandhiji began his daily discourse, he paid unstinted praise to the musicians. Indeed, he said that he had never heard the Bengal *mridanga* (drum) played so well as was done at the meeting. When played well it had a sweetness all its own.

He had also appreciated the *namasankirtan*; but he hoped it did not come merely from the throat but from their heart. For a parrot also can repeat what it learns from its master. There is hardly any virtue when we take the name of God when we live in safety. It becomes real only when in danger.

Continuing he said that he would never mind if a Hindu recited the *kalma* willingly and with a full heart. But if he did so out of fear of losing his life or possessions, then he took the name of God in vain, for it was the voice of Satan which then spoke through him. As he understood Islam, it had never prospered nor could prosper by means of force. Any man who pretended to serve Islam in that manner only did a disservice to the noble religion.

Every religion today had become tainted by unwanted accretions. In Hinduism we treated a large part of our brethren as untouchables, and Gandhiji said he had no doubt that we were paying sorrowfully for that sin.

The first verse of the *Ishopanishad*, in the opinion of the speaker, contained the essence of Hindu spiritual experience. The purport of the verse was that all that existed in the universe was pervaded by and had its being in God. Therefore, no man could claim anything as his own. He should dedicate his body, mind and all that he possessed to that Universal Being and use only what he received through His grace. The moral of it was that we should deprive no man of his wealth, whether it be in the shape of life, honour or religion. Gandhiji continued that a believer in this truth, living up to it, shed all fear and lived in perfect peace.

The verses of the *Shrimad Bhagawad Gita* (II 54-72) were then referred to, as they form the next item in the Ashram's evening prayer. They described the characteristics of one who had attained knowledge and brought his senses under full control. The lesson of the *Bhagawad Gita*, said Gandhiji, was meant not for those who had 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 could only be done if life was built on the rock of fearlessness.

Gandhiji referred to a writing by a Mussalman. In it the writer had rightly contended that a man of God was never afraid to die or to lose his possessions for the sake of his self-respect or religion. God had given us life and could take it away. That teaching was universal and applied to all, Hindu as well as Mussalman. Those who had in God their sole refuge cast out all fear. Then there could be lasting friendship between the two. He had been trying all these days to din this lesson into the ears of his listeners. There was a time when Mussalmans also listened to him; but now things seemed to have changed and even among Hindus there were not many who would follow his advice. But he felt sure, lasting peace could come only when men of whatever community refused to surrender to any fear save the holy fear of God.

Harijan, 5-1-1947

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AT SHRIRAMPUR AGAIN

"We believe your attempt is to raise humanity from the lowest level. But we are sceptical as to whether you will succeed," thus spoke a friend who paid Gandhiji a visit the other day at Shrirampur with a party of co-workers from Calcutta

"I myself am sceptical about it," replied Gandhiji. "I may succeed, I can perish in the attempt. Success or failure is not the final test."

"You are right," the interviewer remarked.

"And attempt up to the last is the only real test," added Gandhiji.

The friend next asked him if there was any change of mentality on the part of the authorities. He replied that there was a change in the Government policy for the

better. "But as for the change of heart, it is for you and me to make a contribution to that consummation."

The interviewer remarked that it was painful to see how listless the Hindus had become. Gandhiji replied: "It is no prerogative of the Hindus. Listlessness is common to us all. Even if I am the only one, I shall fight this listlessness that has come over the Hindus of East Bengal." He proceeded, "I have not come here to do a good turn to this community or that. I have come to do a good turn to myself. Non-violence is not meant to be practised by the individual only. It can be and has to be practised by society as a whole. I have come to test that for myself in Noakhali. Has my *ahimsa* become bankrupt? If I fail here, it won't be any proof that the theory is wrong. It will simply mean that my *sadhana* has been imperfect, that there is some fault somewhere in my technique."

Turning again to the Noakhali situation the friend proceeded: "If the League leaders were to take the Noakhali situation as seriously as you and Jawaharlal took Bihar, order will be restored in a day." Gandhiji replied that to make such comparisons was to degrade oneself. What was called for was self-introspection and more self-introspection. He proceeded with the same warmth. "I have come here not only to speak to the Mussalmans but to the Hindus as well. Why are they such cowards? The Harijans, the Namashudras, have been relatively better so far as courage and physical prowess is concerned. They are brave. But the other Hindus must shed utterly their caste distinctions. If this calamity would open the eyes of the Hindus and result in eradicating untouchability, root and branch, it will have served a good purpose."

Narrating his earlier experiences in India he recalled how during the Champaran Satyagraha, in Rajendra Babu's absence, he could only sit in the outhouse in Rajendra Babu's house and how Rajendra Babu's servant would not let the speaker bathe at the well. Things had improved, but much more remained to be done. The visitor agreed that Hinduism had still to go a long way to eradicate the evil.

Talking of forced conversions in Noakhali the interviewer remarked that unless those who had been converted were brought back to the Hindu fold quickly, the cleavage between the Hindus and the Muslims may become permanent. Gandhiji admitted the force of the argument "Many had returned But all must be I have of course, always believed in the principle of religious tolerance But I have even gone further I have advanced from tolerance to equal respect for all religions All religions are branches of the same mighty tree, but I must not change over from one branch to another for the sake of expediency By doing so, I cut the branch on which I am sitting. Therefore, I always feel the change over from one religion to another very keenly, unless it is a case of spontaneous urge, a result of inner growth Such conversions by their very nature cannot be on a mass scale and never to save one's life or property or for temporal gain."

He narrated his meeting with a South Indian Bishop who was a Harijan converted to Christianity and retained all his original weaknesses in spite of the change of religion He had told the late Shri Charlie Andrews that to his mind he was no bishop at all

"There is no end to the monstrosities that have been committed here and that too in the name of religion. It is enough to fill one with blank despair," remarked the friend. "I have met human monsters from my early youth," replied Gandhiji "I have found that even they are not beyond redemption, if we know how to touch the right chord in their soul" And he cited two instances within his recent experience of the milk of human kindness welling up in hard-boiled sun-baked functionaries at the sight of stark human misery and devastation

"The whole thing is so ghastly. You do not need to exaggerate it," he remarked. "I have told the authorities, I do not care for numbers. Has a single case of abduction, rape, forcible marriage, or forcible conversion occurred? If so, it is enough for me. It is admitted that such things have happened."

"What about the rescue of abducted women?" was the next question. It was complained that as soon as information was received about such cases and the rescue party with the military police set out on their assignment, the miscreants received intimation and removed the victim to some other place

"I have told our people," replied Gandhiji, "do not depend on military and police help You have to uphold democracy, and democracy and dependence on the military and the police are incompatible You cannot say it is good in one place and bad in another Military help will degrade you. In a democracy, if the electorate sets up a hooligan as the head of the Government, they then lie in the bed they have made or else convert the electorate through Satyagiaha if necessary That is democracy. Whether it is Bihar or Bengal, the people have to be brave and stand on their legs. I want every one to die at his post like a brave man and not to leave his home or his village."

Another interviewer asked Gandhiji why Pandit Jawaharlal went to Bihar and took such an active part in putting down disturbances there while he did nothing for Bengal If the Interim Government could not interfere in one province because of provincial autonomy, how could it do so in another? Gandhiji replied that they must not forget that besides being the Vice-President of the Interim Government, Jawaharlal was the first servant of the Congress. As the Vice-President of the Central Cabinet, he must act within the four corners of the constitution. It does not permit interference with provincial autonomy. But in Bihar Pandit Nehru and Rajendra Babu have a standing and responsibility as Congressmen.

One of the interviewers remarked that Bengal was being used as a pawn on the political chess-board. "No," replied Gandhiji. "Bengal is in the forefront today because Bengal is Bengal. It is Bengal that produced Tagore and Bankim Chandra. It was here that the heroes of the Chittagong Armoury Raid were born, however misguided their action might have been in my eyes. No, you must understand it. If Bengal plays the game, it will solve all India's

problem. That is why I have made myself a Bengali. Why should there be cowardice in the Bengal of such men?"

"Yes," remarked the visitor, "when I see these desecrated places of worship, I ask, why did not every man, woman and child of the house die there before those places were touched?"

"If they had done that," resumed Gandhiji, "you would not have required any other help Today Noakhali is bereft of its leading men. They refused to take the risk and have left their hearths and homes Poor Manoranjan Babu is in a fix Whom is he to put on the Peace Committees? I have told him the common man must rise to fill the vacuum There is no such thing as a vacuum in nature Nature abhors it Let him write to them, I have told him If they come back, well and good Otherwise, the common man must come forward It is his day"

"Mahatmaji, tell us in one word," said another member of the party, "whether it is war or peace? Peace Committees or War Committees?"

"Peace Committees," replied Gandhiji "War results when peace fails Our effort must always be directed towards peace. But it must be peace with honour and a fair security for life and property On these two conditions alone will the refugees return Of course, if they develop enongh courage, they will return without any safeguard. Today I have suggested one Hindu and one Muslim standing surety for each village If the people have the requisite courage, they would depend on none but God and their own strength of spirit for their defence If they did that, all the *goondas* in Noakhali will feel the change in the atmosphere and behave decently I know what I am saying. I come from Kathiawad, a province notorious for its bandits. I know that they are not beyond redemption. Nor do I believe that *goondas* are responsible for all that has happened."

A suggestion was next made as to why they should not have only Muslims on the Peace Committees as the Hindus had played no part in breaking the peace.

"No" replied Gandhiji "The Hindus must be there to play their part, else the Peace Committees will be a farce"

"Was it not possible to control Bihar with non-violence?" was the last question put by the friend.

"Yes", replied Gandhiji. "But Bihar has been having a lesson in organized violence since 1942 and before. Our weakness for the *goondas* rose to the highest in 1942. I know the merits of 1942. The people were not cowed down. But all the same I cannot shut my eyes to our mistakes. We have to learn to do better."

Bhatialpur, 14-12-'46

Harijan, 12-1-1947

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"DO OR DIE" AT WORK

"Come to me when you are well and I shall further explain the meaning of 'Do or Die,'" wrote Gandhiji in his final note which he sent to me during my initial illness. Accordingly I went to Shrirampur as soon as I could leave my bed. That day, in a heart-to-heart talk — it was thinking aloud on his part rather than a 'talk' — he poured out the whole of his mind. In spite of his exhortations to the contrary, the exodus of refugees from East Bengal continued. Everywhere there was a demand for more and more military and police protection. He, on the contrary, had asked them not to rely on the police or the military at all for their protection if they valued independence. What was the substitute for police and military protection? He had presented to them the *ahimsa* of the strong. It was a novel suggestion on his part and it only mystified them. He did not blame them for it, for he had yet to make it good in his own case. "Have faith and a heart that staggers not. And if then as Jesus has said you say to a mountain, 'Remove thyself into the sea,' it shall so happen," a friend had remarked to him sometime back. Had he that faith? He had come to live all alone in a devastated village but had not succeeded even in completely stripping himself of all company as he would have liked to do. He wanted to put his faith in God to test. If He wanted to get some

work out of him, He would surely see him through all vicissitudes. Why should he then be afraid of death?

Further outlining his plans, he mentioned that as soon as he had recouped sufficiently and the water in the rice fields dried up, he proposed to walk from village to village and knock at every door to deliver his message of fearlessness to the people. He would not return to the village from which he started. Thus he would share the life of the villager.

The late Mahadev Desai used often to remark to me in the course of intimate exchanges of confidence, "Take care of him, he is one day going to emulate Tolstoy and venture forth into the storm alone, giving all of us the slip." And lo, and behold, his prophesy has nearly come true.

At meal time Prof. Amiya Chakravarty of the Calcutta University, who had come to him on a visit, asked him the question as to what should be the technique for approaching wrong-doers so that their resistance may be dissolved. "The chief difficulty with the callous perpetrators of crime is," Dr. Chakravarty remarked, "that they are not only unrepentant but defiant and even jubilant over their misdeeds."

"Yes, they have their own reason to be jubilant and the only way to meet their attitude is not to succumb to it but to live in their midst and retain one's sense of truth. Goodness must be joined with knowledge. Mere goodness is not of much use as I have found in life. One must cultivate the fine discriminating quality which goes with spiritual courage and character. One must know, in a crucial situation, when to speak and when to be silent, when to act and when to refrain. Action and non-action in these circumstances become identical instead of being contradictory."

"I am groping for light," he added. "I am surrounded by darkness — but I must act or refrain as guided by truth. I find that I have not the patience and the technique needed in these tragic circumstances, — suffering and evil often overwhelm me and I stew in my own juice. Therefore, I

have told my friends that they should bear with me and work or refrain as guided by wisdom which is now utterly demanded of us."

"The new basis," continued Gandhiji, "has to be built here in the villages where the Hindus and the Muslims have lived and suffered together on the land of their forefathers and must live together in the future. For the time being I have become a Bengali and a Noakhali man. I have come to live and share their task, to cement the two together or to perish in the attempt I am in the midst of a raging fire and will stay here till it is put out. For this reason, I do not want to leave these parts. Life must be made livable for the sorely afflicted men and women. The work of organization must go on and the physical as well as moral rescue achieved"

Dr. Chakravarty next suggested that the reports from Gandhiji's associates who are now working separately in the different villages should be collected and collated so that fellow-workers could gain new light on the technique of the non-violence of the strong that was being evolved and experimented with in East Bengal. Gandhiji replied that the time for it was not yet. "They have gone with my best wishes but to an atmosphere which is still unhelpful. They are following not a beaten path but a trackless route. Their work lies in the midst of a sullen population. They do not know the language and are not familiar with local problems.

"I myself don't know what the next step is and cannot guide them. They are unable to send reports now. If I made a chart for them, they would be able to keep a log-book. Even the great Thakkar Bapa, as old as myself, a seasoned worker and utterly selfless, is working away without knowing what he is doing — a thing he has never done before in his life. But I am hopeful that order will come out of what is for us the necessary chaos. Then what you wish, and I also, will be forthcoming and will be the most valuable record for future workers."

"That is what all our people feel and also workers abroad. Noakhali has now become a laboratory where a

crucial test is being made, the remedy will apply to situations all the world over where disputes arise between communities and nationalities and a new technique is needed for peaceful adjustment," said Dr Chakravarty.

"From London too I have heard to the same effect," Gandhiji replied. "People are interested in what happens in Noakhali I feel that my responsibility is great and that our work has to bring true"

"That Bengal should be chosen for this great task, that you should have made this your centre," finally remarked Dr. Chakravarty, "is to us a supreme privilege though people have suffered and are suffering beyond description The whole of Bengal is conscious of your arrival and of the fact that you have come to live and work with the suffering men and women who need you so much at this hour."

"For me," replied Gandhiji, "if this thing is pulled through, it will be the crowning act of my life. I had to come down to the soil and to the people of East Bengal The first person to whom I mentioned this was Jawaharlal Without a moment's hesitation he replied 'Yes, your place is there Although we need you so much here, we need you more in Noakhali.' I asked him, 'When?' 'As soon as you feel like it,' he replied. In two days I started."

When I saw him a week later his only remark was "I am still groping." In a note to me he poured out all the pent-up anguish of his soul. "I see I have not the knack I have not yet quite found the key to *ahimsa*. Here I am out to perform a stupendous *yagna* but my unfitness for the task is being demonstrated at every step. There can, however, be no running away. And where can I run away? Success or failure is not in our hands. It is enough if we do our part well. I am leaving no stone unturned. Ours is but to strive. In the end it will be as He wishes."

To another friend he remarked: "I don't want to return from Bengal in a defeatist way. I would rather die, if need be, at the hands of an assassin. But I do not want to court it, much less wish it." And he made it clear that he

expected no less from his associates. Sometime later when I ran unawares into a nest of trouble in the course of my work from which I came out barely by the skin of my teeth, he wrote: "I have said from the very beginning that it is going to be a most hazardous task. A more hazardous task is not likely to fall to our lot in this life. Let us entirely resign ourselves to Him. His will be done.

". . . You are not to rush into danger unnecessarily but unflinchingly face whatever comes in the natural course. If, in this way, all of us are wiped out, I would not mind it in the least."

For himself, he added in another note: "I am going more and more in God's hands."

Bhatialpur, 14-12-'46 PYARELAL

Harijan, 12-1-1947

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SHRIRAMPUR DIARY

[This is prepared from Press messages appearing in various newspapers.]

EXCHANGE OF POPULATION

"The question of the exchange of population is unthinkable and impracticable," said Gandhiji replying to questions put to him by Press correspondents staying with him at Shrirampur.

"This question never crossed my mind," he said, and added: "In every Province, everyone is an Indian, be he a Hindu, a Muslim or of any other faith. It would not be otherwise even if Pakistan came in full."

"For me exchange of population will spell bankruptcy of Indian wisdom or statesmanship or both. The logical consequence of any such step is too dreadful to contemplate. Is it not that India should be artificially divided into so many religious zones?" he asked.

When asked if, in view of the unsettled situation, it was not better to adopt a migration policy, Gandhiji said,

"I see nothing to warrant such a policy It is one of despair and, therefore, to be adopted in rare cases as a last resort."

MESSAGE OF NOAKHALI

The next question was "You said the other day that there is no limit to your stay in East Bengal Do you think that by confining yourself at Shirampur you will be able to send your message of peace to other villages of Noakhali?"

He replied "Of course, I am not burying myself long in Shrirampur I am not idle here I am seeing people of the surrounding villages and others I am studying things and regaining lost physical strength meanwhile The idea ultimately is to go on foot, when possible and necessary, from village to village and induce the evacuees to return This I can only do with effect when I have seen things myself. It is quite clear to me that my mere word carries very little weight Distrust has gone too deep for exhortation"

"DARKNESS LIES WITHIN ME"

Gandhiji was next asked regarding the report that he finds himself in darkness, and why and when the darkness came over him and whether he saw any release from it

He said "I am afraid the report is substantial Outside circumstances have never overwhelmed me The reason for the present darkness lies within me. I find that my *ahimsa* does not seem to answer in the matter of Hindu-Muslim relations This struck me forcibly when I came to learn of the events in Noakhali.

"The reported forcible conversions and the distress of the Bengali sisters touched me deeply I could do nothing through pen or speech I argued to myself that I must be on the scene of action and test the soundness of the doctrine which has sustained me and made life worth living.

"Was it the weapon of the weak as it was often held by my critics or was it truly the weapon of the strong? The question arose in me when I had no ready-made solution for the distemper of which Noakhali was such a glaring symptom.

"And so setting aside all my activities, I hastened to Noakhali to find out where I stood. I know positively that

ahimsa is a perfect instrument. If it did not answer in my hands, the imperfection was in me. My technique was at fault. I could not discover the error from a distance. Hence I came here trying to make the discovery. I must, therefore, own myself in darkness till I see light. God only knows when it will come. More I cannot say."

MY AHIMSA PUT TO ACID TEST

"I have come here to put my *ahimsa* to the acid test in this atmosphere of rank distrust and suspicion," said Gandhiji replying to a question put by the correspondent of a Madras paper.

The question was: "Don't you think that Bengal Ministers may regard your very presence here as an oppression and that whatever they do out of their own sense of justice towards the rehabilitation of the refugees may be regarded by the outside world as being done under the pressure of your presence?"

Gandhiji replied: "In the first place your assumption is gratuitous. But if it is not, and the assumption were to accord with facts, your deduction would be correct and my stay here would not be consistent with *ahimsa.*

"I claim that I have come as much as a friend of the Muslims as of the Hindus in this part of the world. You may recall my visit to Champaran in the very early period of my return to the motherland. I was even served with a notice to quit. The conviction against me was cancelled on the orders of the then Viceroy, and the Magistrate was instructed to permit and even help in my unofficial enquiry with the result that I was invited to become a member of the official Sly Commission and a century old wrong was removed."

Harijan, 19-1-1947

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PRAYER SPEECHES

ADVICE TO REFUGEES

The following is the authorized version according to the A. P. I. of Gandhiji's prayer speech on December 21.

He began by saying that he held very strong views on the question of charity. It was wrong both to accept as well as to offer anyone a free gift. In our land irreligion often masqueraded in the name of religion. India was said to have a contingent of 56 lakhs of religious mendicants, not many of whom could be considered worthy in any sense. Even the hateful custom of untouchability had been given the sanction of religion in this land of sorrow.

The problem of relief and rehabilitation, Gandhiji went on to say, had become a serious one. People from all over India were eager to help the afflicted inhabitants of Noakhali with money or free gifts of all kinds, and there was a chance that the latter might slip into a mentality of willing dependence on public charity. This had to be combated as much as the self-complacence of those who might feel they were acquiring religious merit through charitable gifts.

Referring to the attitude which the Government should exercise with regard to the refugees in comparison with that held by public charitable bodies, Gandhiji proceeded to explain that it was true that people had gathered in the refugees' camps for no fault of theirs. Their homes had been burnt and they were without shelter; others had been robbed of all their belongings although their cottages might still be standing, while a third group had deserted their homes mainly from a feeling of insecurity. It should be the object of the Government to deal with each case on its merits and help the people to return home with a feeling of security.

Before necessary conditions were created, it would not be right for the authorities to stop rations unless the

evacuees went back home with their whole families. If the evacuees were expected to brave hardships and perhaps even death in order to reinstate themselves in their homes, then there would be no need of a State; it would be a condition of enlightened anarchy where every man would be able to protect himself by his own strength in the face of the greatest danger. But as things stood today, much of the necessary work of social service had to be conducted by Governmental organizations.

ADEQUATE PROTECTION MUST BE GIVEN

Adequate protection had to be given and an atmosphere created where the people might once more pursue their life's work in peace. So long as the conditions were not forthcoming arrangements for relief had to continue.

But the case of public charitable societies stood on an entirely different footing. Gandhiji held it was wrong for any man to live on public doles. While the South African Satyagraha was going on, large sums of money were donated to cover the expenses of the Satyagrahis. The Tolstoy Farm near Lawley in the Transvaal was established to accommodate the families and dependents of Satyagrahis who worked to the best of their ability against their upkeep. Consequently, the Satyagraha organization was able to refund large sums of money at the end of the campaign.

In accordance with the same principles the charitable institutions now working here should plainly tell the people that everyone should deem it a dishonour to eat a single meal without honest labour. If we could shed the aversion to labour and adapt ourselves to unexpected changes of fortune, we would go a long way towards the acquisition of fearlessness and thus towards an upliftment of our national character.

He would venture to tell the refugees that whether they were poor or rich, they should say to the authorities that they would consider it below human dignity to accept doles from the Government. Poor or rich had nothing left to them. They were in need of food, clothing, shelter and medical assistance. Therefore, they had a claim upon the

State for providing these vital necessities of life. But they would be robbing society if they accepted this aid without each healthy man, woman, boy or girl, labouring to the extent of his or her ability; therefore he would like the Government to provide such useful work for society as they were capable of doing.

Gandhiji began his prayer speech on 24th December by saying that complaints had been pouring in that people were unable to shed their fear because persons known to be guilty were freely moving about. He said that although this might be true, his advice to them would still be to take courage in their hands and return to their homes. When several persons had complained that the amounts offered by the Government for rebuilding was inadequate for the erection of any kind of shelter, he felt sure that the Government, which was determined on repatriation would extend their aid to the necessary extent.

What Gandhiji would personally prefer was that the refugees should be resourceful enough to tide over the present difficulty. He would honour a man who begged nothing for himself nor depended on any outsider's aid for protection. If any one depended on him for that purpose, he was depending on a broken reed.

The only effective protection came from reliance upon internal strength, i. e. on God. Everyone should realize the secret that oppression thrived only when the oppressed submitted to it. If they shed fear from their hearts, nobody would or could oppress them.

AIM OF STAY IN NOAKHALI

In his speech after prayer, on Monday the 23rd December, Gandhiji first referred to certain personal letters addressed to him as well as a number of articles or comments published in newspapers in which the opinion had been expressed that his continued presence in Noakhali was acting as a deterrent to the restoration of cordial relations between the Hindus and Muslims, for his intention was to bring discredit upon the League Ministry in Bengal.

Two days ago, Gandhiji said, he had tried to refute a rumour that a Satyagraha movement of an extensive character was secretly planned by him in Noakhali He had already said that nothing could be done by him in secret. If recourse were taken to secrecy and falsehood Satyagraha would degenerate into *duragraha*

Today, he found it necessary to answer the second charge levelled against him to which reference had already been made He would like to proclaim that he had come to Bengal solely with the object of establishing heart unity between the two communities, who had become estranged from one another When that object was satisfactorily achieved, there would no longer be any necessity for him to prolong his stay

His intention could never be to embarrass the League Government in Bengal, Gandhiji added On the other hand, his relations with the Ministry, as well as with the officials, had been very cordial and he had been able to gather the impression that all of them looked with favour upon his peace mission He had discovered no indication yet of his presence causing embarrassment to anyone It was open to the Government to ask the Magistrate and the Superintendent of Police to convince him of his error if they were themselves convinced As yet they had said not a word to such effect If he felt convinced of any error on his part, he would leave

Gandhiji said that he had enough work to do elsewhere which demanded his attention There was Uruli-Kanchan, the seat of his nature cure experiments, and Sevagram, and there was Delhi again where he might be of some service He would love to spare trouble to the leaders who had to come to this out-of-the way place in order to consult him. But personally he felt convinced that the work undertaken by him here was of the greatest importance for all India If he succeeded in his present mission, it was bound to have a profound influence on the future of India, and, if he might be permitted to say so, even on the future peace of the world, for it was to be a test of faith in non-violence.

A copy of the Bihar Provincial Muslim League report on the Bihar atrocities had been sent to him. He had gone through it with care and had felt that it bristled with over-statements. Nevertheless, he was making inquiries on the basis of the report. It was certainly true that much that had happened in Bihar was brutal enough and deserved the severest condemnation. The over-statement blurred the gruesomeness of the reality. He was assured that calm had been restored. It was on that assurance that normal diet was resumed by him.

The reason why he had not proceeded to Bihar, Gandhiji explained, was that he could exercise his personal influence effectively even from a distance But if there were any reason to suspect that things still continued in Bihar in the manner described in the League report and that he had been misled by false assurance of his friends, then his place would surely be in that province and he might even confess that this might imply that the life in the present body was now over and that there was no longer any room for him in the land of the living.

But he could not help uttering a word of warning that leaders of public opinion had a serious responsibility. Their word would be believed by the credulous public, and they all knew the tragic consequences. This he said irrespective of whether the leaders belonged to the Congress or the Muslim League.

Harijan, 19-1-1947

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MY MISSION

In the course of his post-prayer speech of the 26th December Gandhiji said that he had no doubt in his mind that the British would have to quit India. But if Indians were foolish enough to quarrel among themselves, he could very well visualize the destiny of the whole country. India would probably be placed under the United Nations, which would mean not one but many masters, and, hence, goodbye to independence.

Continuing, Gandhiji said that the task he had undertaken in Bengal was most serious Here a community which was friendly to him previously had now looked upon him as its enemy. He was out to prove that he was "a real friend of the Muslims". So he had chosen for his greatest experiment a place where the Muslims were in majority.

For the fulfilment of his mission it would suffice if he toured the countryside alone. The presence of the workers from outside soliciting his advice and directions raised fresh problems for him instead of assisting him to solve the already complicated task he had undertaken. Much of the misunderstanding could be removed if those really keen on serving the people of Noakhali would directly approach the Bengal Ministers with their plan of work and obtain not only their written permission to carry on their work but also their approval of the plan.

Gandhiji gave this advice to some doctors who came from Bombay yesterday for rendering medical aid to the refugees in affected areas. To some people who sent him letters and telegrams offering to come to Noakhali for service, Gandhiji had replied that they could serve the cause by carrying on constructive work around their own places. To those who sought directions as to how best to serve in Noakhali, Gandhiji said that he himself was groping in darkness, and therefore, a blind man could not be the best guide.

The speech was provoked by the fact that when he asked some people offering to serve in Noakhali whether

they would continue to serve if necessary for a life-time even after he had left, they were reluctant to commit themselves. This reluctance led him to believe that people were anxious to come and serve in a manner which would attract his attention and that such people were not keen on service for the sake of service.

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GROPING IN DARKNESS

Gandhiji in his address of the 27th December said that a friend had been telling him that his reference to "darkness" surrounding him was very confusing to many. The friend thought that people at a distance saw light shimmering through his plan, and there was enough proof that confidence was slowly returning in that affected area.

Gandhiji said he would tell this friend and others who thought like him that they had misunderstood him to some extent. The darkness in which he was surrounded was of a character the like of which had never faced him before. It was indeed now a vital test that his *ahimsa* was passing through. He would not be able to say that he had come out successful until the object was reached.

It was true that the night was darkest before the dawn. He himself felt that and although friends at a distance could see glimpses of the breaking dawn he himself felt that he was surrounded in complete darkness.

Gandhiji said that many years ago a friend of his used to carry Patanjali's *Yogasutra* constantly in his pocket. Although Gandhiji did not know Sanskrit yet the friend would often come to him to consult about the meaning of some of the sutras. In one of the sutras it was stated that when *ahimsa* had been fully established it would completely liquidate the forces of enmity and evil in the neighbourhood. Gandhiji felt that the stage had not been reached in the neighbourhood about him and this led him to infer that his *ahimsa* had not yet succeeded in the present test.

That was the reason why he was saying that there was still darkness all round him.

Gandhiji said that his plan was to proceed with the east number of companions on his march, and that he would prefer to stay in the houses of Muslim friends. He had reduced his needs and these could be met even by the poorest villagers. He would like to go absolutely unprotected if it was to prove that in his heart he had nothing but love and friendship for the Muslims.

Harijan, 26-1-1947

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WORK TOGETHER

Addressing the prayer gathering Gandhiji said that the Congress was not a Hindu organization It did not serve Hindu interests to the exclusion of the interests of the other communities.

Introducing the leaders to the congregation, he said that they had come to him to discuss questions, not from the point of view of one particular community, but purely from a non-communal angle. He pointed out that his mission was for the establishment of friendship between the sister communities living there and not to organize any one community against the rest. So long the non-violence which had been practised was the non-violence of the weak but the new experiment in which he had been engaged there was the non-violence of the strong. If it were to be successful it should succeed in creating a moral atmosphere helpful to both the communities round him. Only when the Hindus and Muslims shed their fear and mutual suspicion could real unity of heart come. There should not be any cause for hostility because their hearts were one.

Referring to the task of village reorganization Gandhiji said that East Bengal was a land of gold but unfortunately

the life of the people was not as it should be The water in the tanks was so dirty that he could not dare even wash his hands in them The villages were also unclean! The rich were growing richer and the poor were getting poorer That was not forced upon them by nature That was a *satanic* state of affairs But although the social arrangements were *satanic,* individuals were not so Individuals should raise their organization and shape it according to new ideas of equality and comradeship

Gandhiji continuing said that he would personally like to live for 125 years, not by the help of medicines but by natural ways, in which he would be able to serve the nation and humanity

Concluding, he asked all Hindus and Muslims to devote themselves to the noble task of reorganizing village life and in improving their economic condition. Through cottage industries they would find themselves working together in the common task and unity would thereby grow among them He exhorted the audience to carry on his eighteen-point constructive work which would spread like a life-giving influence over the entire country-side.

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SERVICE TO GOD

Gandhiji said in his prayer address on the 5th of January that it was continually being impressed upon him that his place was no longer in this province but in Bihar where infinitely worse things were alleged to have taken place The audience should be aware, Gandhiji said, that he had all along been in correspondence with the popular Government in Bihar and all influence possible was being exercised by him over that Government from where he was, but he did not want to leave Noakhali because his task there was of an entirely different order He had to prove by living among the Mussalmans that he was as much their

friend as of the Hindu or any other community. This could evidently not be done from a distance or by mere word of mouth

A Bihar Minister and several responsible officials who had come to him yesterday had placed before him all the facts within their knowledge without any reservation. They had admitted that brutal things had taken place in the course of one fateful week and that they were prepared to bear all justifiable censure passed on them on that account.

They knew their duty as a responsible Government. The charge of complicity or failure in doing all that was humanly possible was denied by them and they said they were prepared to undergo any ordeal in order to prove their innocence. They had been trying to answer the charges made by the Muslim League against them. Gandhiji said, he would like to assure the audience that he would not rest until he was satisfied personally about the Bihar case and had done all that was humanly possible.

He thought that the attendance of both Hindus and Muslims in prayer meetings was dwindling and one day he would be left without anybody to listen to him at all. But he said that even then there would be no reason for him to give up his mission in despair. He would then roam from village to village taking his spinning wheel. With him it was an act of service to God. Such labour undertaken with an unselfish mind would speak for itself among those who were round him. A worker, he said, who travelled from village to village teaching the people how to clean their ponds effectively and teaching them other arts and crafts so as to enrich the life of the villagers, should be able to make the villagers long for his company rather than shun him.

Continuing Gandhiji said that news had just reached him that the evacuees were now returning in fair numbers and the question of rehabilitation was becoming more and more acute. His advice to the evacuees would be that they should brave all hardships and return home quickly. By means of their own labour they must determine to rebuild their

ruined homes as well as their own lives Government should extend all necessary help and they should be approached by the evacuees He was aware of the fact that various relief organizations were prepared to help the evacuees with finance and other material assistance But why should they undertake a task which rightly belonged to the Government set up by the people themselves? If the Government failed to extend it either quickly enough or to a satisfactory extent, then it was for them to say so and seek supplementary aid of public charities in order to rehabilitate the people.

But whatever shape these arrangements might take, the evacuees must be prepared to return home in the face of all possible dangers and difficulties.

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ACCEPT GOD AS PROTECTOR

"Appeasement has become a word of bad odour. In no case can there be any appeasement at the cost of honour. Real appeasement is to shed all fear and to do what is right at any cost," said Gandhiji in reply to a question when he met members of the Chandipur-Chandirgaon Gram Seva Sangh on the 6th of January The question put to him was What should the Sangh do to appease the aggressive mentality of the majority community?

In answer to a question whether refugees should accept monetary assistance from the Government even if it was quite insufficient for the erection of temporary shelters, Gandhiji said, "Refugees must honestly find out what they need for the least kind of temporary shelter. If their basic requirements are not covered by the proposed Government grants, they should refuse to accept them but should still return to their homes even if it meant no cover over their heads. This has to be done in a spirit of sportsmanship."

Question: In the course of rehabilitation, should the members of the minority community be lodged together in sufficient numbers for the purpose of safety?

Answer: Such concentration of population is an unthinkable proposition. It would imply that the whole country would be divided into hostile sections, perhaps enjoying a sort of armed peace. The manly thing to do is for every individual, of whatever sect, whether young or old, to derive protection from one's inner strength which comes from God.

Asked what arrangements for the safety of the refugees could be made in view of the fact that miscreants were moving freely in the affected areas, Gandhiji said: "No place in the world today is free from miscreants. So villagers should fall back on their own strength for protection. The strength which will give them lasting protection is the strength of the heart." For those who accepted God as their protector, what did it matter if miscreants roamed about? People should do what was right for them and leave the rest to God.

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THE PURPOSE OF THE TOUR

[The following address was written out by Gandhiji at prayer time on 6th January, it being his day of silence. It was published in Bengali in the *Harijan Patrika* (which is the Bengali edition of the *Harijan*) of the 12th instant and has been translated into English from Bengali by Shri Nirmal Kumar Bose. — ED.]

As my weekly silence will not break before 7 p. m., I have written out my address. I pray to God, and request you all to join with me in praying that the tour which I commenced yesterday should go on uninterrupted till the end and be successful in achieving its purpose. But before praying, you should know that purpose. I have only one object in view and it is a clear one; namely, that God

should purify the hearts of Hindus and Muslims, and the two communities should be free from suspicion and fear towards each other. Please join with me in this prayer and say that God is the Lord of us both and that He may give us success.

You might well ask me why it is necessary to undertake a tour for this purpose; or how can one, who is not pure in heart himself, ask others to become pure; or how can one, who himself is subject to fear, give courage to others; one, who himself moves under armed escort, call upon others to cast away their arms. All these questions are relevant and have been put to me.

My answer is that during my tour I wish to assure the villagers to the best of my capacity that I bear not the least ill-will towards any. I can prove this only by living and moving among those, who distrust me. I admit that the third question is a little difficult for me to answer; for, I do happen to be moving under armed protection, I am surrounded by armed police and military, keenly alert to guard me from all danger. I am helpless in the matter as it is arranged by the Government which being responsible to the people feels that it is their duty to keep me guarded by the police and the military. How can I prevent them from doing so? Under the circumstances, I can declare only in words that I own no protector but God. I do not know whether you will believe my statement. God alone knows the mind of a person; and the duty of a man of God is to act as he is directed by his inner voice. I claim that I act accordingly.

You might here ask that there was at least no reason for the Sikhs to go with me. They have not been posted by the Government. Let me inform you, first, that they have obtained the permission of the Government for going with me. They have not come here to create quarrels. In testimony, they have come without their usual *kirpans* (swords). They have come to render service to both the communities impartially. The first lesson which the Netaji taught to the soldiers of his Indian National Army was that Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Parsis etc., should all

regard India as their common motherland, and they should all substantiate their unity by working for her jointly. The Sikhs here wish to serve both the communities under my guidance. How — on what ground — can I send away such friends? They have been giving me valuable assistance and that not for making a public show thereof, but in a spirit of genuine service. If I refused that service, I should fall in my own estimate and prove myself a coward. I request you, too, to trust these people, regard them as your brethren and accept their services. They are capable of rendering much help and have plenty of experience of this kind of work. God has blessed them with physical strength and also faith.

If I find that what I have said about them was incorrect, they would go back. If, on the other hand, I am keeping them with an ulterior motive, it will prove to be my own ruin, besides making my experiment a failure.

The particular object lessons, which I propose to give you during my tour, are how you can keep the village water and yourself clean; what use you can properly make of the earth, which our bodies are made of; how you can obtain the life-force from the infinite sky spreading over your heads; how you can reinforce your vital-energy from the air, which surrounds you; and how you can make proper use of the sun-light. This is to say that I shall try to teach you how we can convert our impoverished country into a land of gold by making the right use of the various elements around us. I pray to God that I may succeed in serving you in the manner set forth above.

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ONE NIGHT, ONE VILLAGE TOUR

Gandhiji's 'one night one village tour' commenced on Tuesday morning (7th January), when he left Chandipur for village Masimpur about two miles from there.

"During my journey I will eat whatever I get, and am even prepared to go without milk," said he to one interviewer.

Gandhiji is prepared to live any kind of rough life during his "pilgrimage". He will dispense with all secretarial work during his 'one village one day' journey. He would not have any interviewers during his journey. He will spend most of his time in meeting Hindus and Muslims, visiting houses destroyed and gathering social and economic facts about the villagers Wherever he goes he would ask all to live in peace and fear none in this world except God. He would ask them to reorganize and spend their time in village reconstruction and constructive work. During his journey he will meet deputations of Muslims, Hindus and women separately.

He will have very few bags with him. His narrow blanket, bed and a few other necessaries of daily life, his box *charkha* will be with him, and also a few of his favourite books including the *Gita*, the *Quran* and the Bible. His only walk-hour companion is his walking stick.

In this way Gandhiji will walk from village to village every day without spending more than one night in one village.

Addressing a meeting of the Masimpur — Keroa Gram Seva Sangh soon after his arrival at Masimpur, Gandhiji said that people should try to purify themselves and not indulge in outward show.

Replying to a question regarding the wearing of the sacred thread — which the questioner said the Arya Samaj wanted every Hindu to wear — Gandhiji said that anyone who liked might wear the sacred thread, but there should

not be any movement or propaganda in this behalf. No good would be done by wearing the sacred thread alone as it could not remove the defects of the Hindu religion.

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SOME MUSLIMS' QUESTIONS

Some Muslim young men who met him at Bhatialpur this evening asked him what his objection was to the setting up of a separate Muslim State after the events in Bihar.

Gandhiji replied he had no objection to the setting up of a separate Muslim State In fact, Bengal was so. But the question was what was going to be the character of such a separate Muslim State. That had not been made clear so far, and if a Muslim State implied freedom to make hostile treaties with foreign powers to the detriment of the country as a whole, then that could not be a matter for agreement.

Gandhiji thought that no one could be asked to sign an agreement granting liberty to others to launch hostilities against himself

"*Azadi*" Gandhiji said, and Pakistan require the exclusion of all foreign powers Until and unless India is free, there cannot be any other question "

Freedom as envisaged by him, said Gandhiji, was freedom not merely from British rule but from every foreign rule

The last question put by the Muslim young men was: Now that there was neither Pakistan nor peace, what would be Gandhiji's solution?

Gandhiji's reply was. "That is exactly what I am here for and what I am trying to find out in Noakhali." He assured the youths that the moment he found it, he would announce it to the world.

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THE PROPHET AND THE PURDAH

At the beginning of his prayer speech at Narayanpur Gandhiji expressed his happiness at having been able to spend another night under the roof of a Muslim friend in the course of his walking tour. In spite of the fact that he had been trying to reduce the size of his entourage, his efforts in that direction had so far not been very successful. And he was glad that his host had proved equal to the occasion and had not been baffled by the number of his party.

Then Gandhiji referred to an incident that had occurred a short while ago. The elders of the house wanted him to meet the *zanana* ladies. He had made an attempt, but without success. It was true, he continued, that Hindu women attended the prayer in a large number. In this respect they were more advanced. But as such it became their duty to fraternize with their Muslim sisters and rescue them from the thraldom of the *purdah*. If they neglected this neighbourly duty, there was obviously some defect on their part.

India, Gandhiji said, was aspiring to be free. But if half the population was to remain in a paralysed condition, the type of freedom the people would attain could never be perfect. Therefore, with utmost humility, he once more appealed to the elders among the audience to examine the effect of the *purdah* system and do away with it in the shortest possible time. For, in his opinion the system, as he saw in his peregrination, was quite contrary to what the Prophet had preached.

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GRAVE INTOLERANCE

In the prayer meeting at Hirapur Gandhiji alluded to two telegrams received from the *Jamat-ul-Ulema-e-Islam* in Madras and Bombay respectively. They said that he an unbeliever had no right of interference in the Islamic law. He submitted that the telegrams were based on ignorance of facts. He had not interfered at all in the practice of religion. He had neither the right nor the wish to do so. All he had done was to tender advice and that based on his reading of the Prophet's sayings etc. What was more, he had observed in many cultured Muslim families total disregard of the *purdah* as it is observed today. But that did not signify less observance of the *purdah* of the heart, which was the reality, in his opinion, aimed at by Islam. Whatever it was, it was open to the Muslim hearers to reject his advice if they felt that it was in conflict with the tenets of Islam. The critical telegrams received by him betrayed, in his opinion, grave intolerance of other opinion than that of the critics. Let them not forget that the Courts of Law including the Privy Council, which were often composed of non-Muslims, interpreted the Islamic law and imposed its interpretation on the Islamic world. He, on the contrary, sought merely to give an opinion. If he could not do so for fear of criticism or even physical punishment, he would be an unworthy representative of non-violence and truth.

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FRIEND OF BOTH COMMUNITIES

At Narayanpur, the following question was put to Gandhiji: He claimed to be a friend of both the communities, but he had been nursing back his own community for the last two months in Noakhali. What about the Muslims of Bihar, who have lost their all? Gandhiji said he would say the question ignored facts. He was not "nursing back" his own community. He had no community of his own except in the sense that he belonged to all communities. His record, Gandhiji said, spoke for itself. He freely admitted that he was trying to bring comfort to the Hindus of Noakhali, but not at the expense of the Muslims. If there was a sick member in his family and he seemed to attend to the sick member, it surely did not mean that he neglected the others.

He had had repeated and insistent advice from Muslim friends that his place was more in Bihar, where the Muslims were in point of numbers much greater sufferers than the Hindus in Noakhali. He was sorry that he had hitherto failed to make his Muslim critics see that he had sufficiently affected the Hindus of Bihar in favour of the Muslim sufferers. If he listened to his critics against his own better reason and went to Bihar, it was just likely that he might injure the Muslim cause rather than serve it.

Thus, for instance, he might not find corroboration for the many charges brought against the Bihar Hindus and the Bihar Government and, in order to be able to make such a declaration, he had accepted the better course, namely, to advise the Bihar Ministry, which had accepted his advice that they should jointly with the Bengal Government or by themselves, appoint an impartial Commission of Inquiry.

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THE ART OF LIVING

A short while before prayer on the 18th instant, the Muslim friend at whose house Gandhiji had halted on his way to Badalkot approached him and said that if there was a settlement between Mr. Jinnah and him, peace would be established in the country. Gandhiji's answer was that he did not maintain illusions and never ascribed to himself any superior powers. He had met Mr. Jinnah many times, as they knew, and their meetings had been marked by nothing but friendliness, yet the results were negative as they all knew.

The fact was, continued Gandhiji, that a leader was made by his followers. He reflected in a clearer manner the aspirations lying dormant among the masses. This was true not only of India but of all the world. What he would, therefore, suggest to both the Hindus and the Mussalmans was that they should not look to the Muslim League or the Congress or the Hindu Mahasabha for the solution of their daily problems of life. For that they should look towards themselves; and if they did, that, then their desire for neighbourly peace would be reflected by the leaders. The political institutions might be left to deal with specifically political questions but how much did they know about the daily needs of individuals? If a neighbour was ailing, would they run to the Congress or the League to ask them what should be done? That was an unthinkable proposition.

On the previous evening Gandhiji had quoted Mr. Jinnah's advice that women should rapidly be rescued from illiteracy. But Gandhiji said that that was not enough. Was the condition of the literate men any better for their literacy? Were they not, he asked, subject to the passing fashions of the political world? Germany, which had lain so long under Hitler, proved what he meant; as all knew it was in a sorry plight today. It was not literacy or learning which made a man, but education for real life. What did

it matter, questioned Gandhiji, if they knew everything but did not know how to live in brotherliness with their neighbours?

Gandhiji continued that if some people had committed grievous mistakes in their dealings with their neighbours, they should repent and ask their pardon of God. If He granted it but the world did not, even then it did not matter to a man who had learnt to depend on God; such punishment nobly borne serves to elevate a man. Gandhiji then said that in a book of sayings of the Prophet he had found that a man should never leave an error uncorrected. If they did, they would be hauled up on the Day of Judgment and find no favour in the eyes of God.

It was not enough that they acquired the art of reading, writing etc., but it was necessary that they should learn the art of living on friendly terms with their neighbours. They should rescue the womenfolk, who formed half their number, from the thraldom of ignorance and superstition. Men should live in co-operation and work for the common good. For this, they should not look up to political parties for direction, but to their own souls or God.

Personally, Gandhiji said, he had addressed himself wholly to that task. He would not leave this part of the country alive if the work remained unaccomplished. If he succeeded in overcoming the distrust of his Muslim brethren, and in establishing the fact that, after all, it was the daily things of life such as he had mentioned which mattered most, then its effect would be felt not merely in this part of the country but over the whole of India; and as such might even deeply affect the future peace of the world.

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SOME QUESTIONS ANSWERED

A question was put to Gandhiji at Narayanpur on the 15th January: Why cannot the apostle of non-violence, the modern Buddha, stop internecine war and blood-bath in the country?

Gandhiji replying to this question, acquitted himself from the charge of being the modern Buddha. He was and claimed to be a simple man having extensive experience at his back, but on that account claimed to be no better than any member of the audience. He was an equal servant of both the communities or all the communities of India. He wished he had the power to stop 'internecine war' and consequent 'blood-bath'. Buddha or the prophets that followed him had gone the way they went in order to stop wars. The fact that he could not do so was proof positive that he had no superior power at his back. It was true that he swore by non-violence and so he had come to Noakhali in order to test the power of his non-violence. As he had repeatedly said ever since his arrival in Bengal, he had no desire to leave Bengal unless both the communities showed by their action that they were like blood-brothers living together in perfect peace and amity.

Gandhiji also dealt with a question that was raised by the Muslim friends who had seen him before the prayer meeting. They had asked him how he expected friendly relations between the two communities when the Hindus agitated for the arrest and trial of those who were guilty of murders, arson and loot during the disturbances? The speaker confessed that he did not like these complaints. But he sympathized with the complainants so long as the wrong-doers avoided arrest and trial and so long as Muslim opinion in Noakhali did not insist upon guilty parties disclosing themselves. He would be glad to see Muslim opinion working actively to bring the offenders not before the courts of justice but before the court of public opinion.

Let the offenders show contrition and let them return the looted property Let them also show to those against whom offences were committed that they need fear no molestation, that the days of frenzy were over Muslim public opinion should be such as to guarantee that miscreants would not dare to offend against any individual and only then Hindus could be asked to return safely to their villages. The speaker was sure that such purging before the court of public opinion was infinitely superior to a trial before a court of law. What was wanted was not vengeance but reformation.

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QAID-E-AZAM'S ADVICE

At Parkot, on the morning of the 17th January Gandhiji had read a speech delivered by the Qaid-e-Azam on the occasion of the foundation ceremony of a Girls' High School by his sister Miss Fatima Jinnah During the after-prayer speech in the evening, he translated a portion of that speech in which Mr Jinnah is reported to have said that the Muslims should develop a high sense of responsibility, justice and integrity. Wrong was not to be imitated. If after consulting one's conscience one felt that a contemplated action was wrong, one should never do it irrespective of any consideration or influence If people acted up to this rule, no one would be able to prevent them from attaining Pakistan Commenting upon this, Gandhiji said that as there was no question of force here and if Pakistan was going to be established by sterling qualities of character, everybody would welcome such a State, no matter by what name it was called.

Gandhiji added that they ought to remember Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah's advice and act upto it, for it was an advice confined not to any particular community but was of universal significance. The qualities which he had advised people to develop were not combativeness but a sense of

justice and truth; and this implied that whenever justice was at stake, people ought to appeal to reason instead of taking recourse to barbarous methods of settling disputes whether private or public.

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SOME SAYINGS OF THE PROPHET

It was Gandhiji's day of silence; so he wrote out the following on a few slips of paper:

Whatever I have been trying to say in these days, is contained in the sayings of the Prophet. The following passages are therefore culled for our benefit:

No man is a true believer unless he desireth for his brother that which he desireth for himself.

He who neither worketh for himself nor for others will not receive the reward of God.

He is not of me, but a rebel at heart who when he speaketh, speaketh falsely, who when he promiseth, breaketh his promises and who when trust is reposed in him, faileth in his trust.

Muslims are those who perform their trust and fail not in their word and keep their pledge.

Whoever is kind to His creatures, God is kind to him.

A perfect Muslim is he from whose tongue and hands *mankind is safe.*

The worst of men is a bad learned man and a good learned man is the best.

When a man committeth adultery *iman* leaveth him.

He is not a Momin who committeth adultery or stealth, or who drinketh liquor or who plundereth or who embezzleth; beware, beware.

The most excellent *jehad* is that for the conquest of self.

Assist any person oppressed, whether Muslim or non-Muslim.

The manner in which my followers become eunuchs is by fasting and abstinence.

Women are the twin halves of men.

Learned are those who practise what they know.

The most valuable thing in the world is a virtuous woman.

Give your wife good counsel; if she has goodness in her, she will soon take it; leave off idle thinking and do not beat your noble wife like a slave.

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MUSLIM LEAGUERS' QUESTIONS

The gathering at Paniala in the evening of the 22nd instant was not only orderly but of the largest size so far encountered by Gandhiji in the course of his tour from village to village. There were no less than five thousand people. A few weeks ago the villagers had celebrated an inter-communal dinner in which the Hindus including the so-called untouchables and the Mussalmans had participated. Gandhiji said that he had originally desired to attend that celebration but it had not been possible on account of inaccessibility. He was happy, therefore, that after all he had been able to visit the village of Paniala. But that was not enough; he would feel happier still if the Hindus and the Mussalmans succeeded in establishing unity and friendship among themselves.

One problem, continued Gandhiji, which had been recently exercising him was in connection with the families of those who had lost their all in the course of the disturbances. There were many families which had lost their earning members. The survivors had to be looked after; while the children had to be educated and given adequate protection. That undoubtedly was the duty of the Government. Both he and they if they wanted heart-peace should look at the question from a broader standpoint. In his humble opinion, where the wrong was done by some

Muslims, reasonable arrangements for the above purpose should be made by the Muslims of the neighbourhood

Government would only act through force while the common citizen would act through persuasion and agreement. Through the establishment of good human relations citizens should try to tide over the disasters which might overwhelm the social body It was not good to depend on an organization based on force like the State for the above purpose

Gandhiji then referred to two more matters, namely, the duty of volunteers and the rehabilitation of artisans. With regard to the volunteers his advice was that they should never discriminate between one type of duty and another, have no preferences, but should stick to their post even at the cost of their lives It was the quality of discipline and sacrifice which made small things great in organized action. Then referring to the problem of the artisans, he continued, they ought not to depend upon charity however well-intentioned but on their own resources in order to tide over their present difficulties In this connection he referred to his view supported by the Scriptures of the world that he, who ate his food without returning its equivalent by means of body-labour was no more than a thief Permanent peace would come in the world only when the bond of labour shared in common held together different units of the social body

During prayer meeting at one time rain threatened to break up the meeting. Happily it subsided and the meeting was continued in order to enable Gandhiji to deal with the questions addressed to him by Muslim Leaguers in Bengali and English

The first question was You said that Muslim majority provinces if they so chose had Pakistan already. What did you mean by this?

Gandhiji replied that he fully meant what he had said. Whilst there was an outside power ruling India there was neither Pakistan nor Hindustan but bare slavery was their lot. And if anybody maintained that the measure of provincial autonomy they enjoyed was equal to independence,

they were unaware of the contents of independence. It was true that the British Power was certain to go. But if they could not patch up their quarrels and indulged in blood-baths, a combination of powers was certain to hold them in bondage. Those powers would not tolerate a country so vast and populous as India and so rich in potential resources to rot away because of internal disturbances Every country had to live for the rest. Days when they could drag on the frog-in-the-well existence were gone. Even before the Congress had taken up non-violent non-co-operation as the official policy for the whole of India, that is, before 1920, a resolution to that effect was passed in Gujarat under the chairmanship of the late Abbas Tyebji Saheb. The speaker had said that it was open even to one province to vindicate its position and become wholly independent of the British Power. Thus supposing that following the prescription Bengal alone became truly and completely independent, there would be complete Pakistan of his definition in Bengal. Islam was nothing if it did not spell complete democracy Therefore there would be one man one vote and one woman one vote irrespective of religion. Naturally, therefore, there would be a true Muslim majority in the province. Had not Jinnah Saheb declared that in Pakistan minorities would, if possible, be even better off than the majority? Therefore there would be no underdog. If Pakistan meant anything more, the speaker did not know and if it did, so far as he knew, it would make no appeal to his reason.

The second question was. How did your *ahimsa* work in Bihar? Gandhiji said that it did not work at all. It failed miserably. But if the reports received by him from responsible quarters were to be relied upon, the Bihar Government was making full amends and that the general population in Bihar also had realized the heinousness of the crimes committed by large masses of Biharis in certain portions of that province.

The third question was: Why are you silent about the eviction of Bengalis by the Assam Government? Gandhiji said that he was not deliberately silent. The question was

not new for him. When some years ago he went to Assam he was taken to the very spot where Muslims from Mymensingh had migrated and taken possession of vacant lands. He had then given his opinion and held it even now that it was not open to persons to usurp vacant land wherever it may be, that is, whether in their own province or in another. For him it was not a Hindu-Muslim question. What he had said was of universal application. If Assam attempted to evict lawful possessors, it would be guilty of crime against humanity. What he had heard was quite the contrary. But if there was a question of unlawful eviction, the Assam Government would not be above law and it was open also to the Bengal Government to vindicate the position of evicted Bengalis, here happening to be Muslims.

The next question was: What in your opinion is the cause of communal riots? Gandhiji said that in his opinion the riots were due to the idiocy of both the communities.

The fifth question was: Do you think that you would be successful in bringing peace at Noakhali without having it at the Centre? Gandhiji replied that if by the Centre was meant a pact between Jinnah Saheb, President of the Muslim League and Acharya Kripalani, President of the Indian National Congress, he certainly held that such a pact was not necessary in order to bring about harmonious relations between the Hindus and the Muslims in Noakhali. So far as he knew neither the President of the Congress nor the President of the Muslim League desired discord between the two. They had their political quarrel. But the disturbances in India whether in Bengal, Bihar or elsewhere were insensate and hindered political progress. He, therefore, felt that it was open to the Hindus and the Muslims in Noakhali to behave like men and cultivate peaceful relations among themselves.

The last question was: Who according to your opinion have saved the Hindus and Hindu property in Noakhali? Do you not think that Muslim neighbours saved them? Gandhiji replied that the question assumed a subtle pride. What was wanted was a spirit of humility and repentance that there were enough Muslims found in Noakhali who had

lost their heads to the extent of committing loot, arson and murder and resorting to forcible conversions etc. If more mischief was not done, God alone was to be thanked, not man. At the same time the speaker was free to confess that be it said to their honour, there were Muslims who afforded protection to Hindus.

Harijan, 9-2-1947

247

BIBI AMTUL SALAAM'S FAST

Bibi Amtul Salaam has for years lived for Hindu-Muslim unity. She comes from a well-known family of Mussalmans in the Patiala State in the Punjab. But she put aside the comforts that her birth offered her and joined Gandhiji's Ashram in 1930 She has ever since endeavoured to shape her life according to the ideals propounded by Gandhiji Having come under the influence of Theosophy in her early childhood, she has cultivated equal respect for all religions though she remains a staunch Muslim herself In her zeal for unity she even edited an Urdu weekly called the *Ittehad* for sometime in 1942 But for various reasons she had to stop it

During the Bengal famine she came to East Bengal and worked in Tipperah district rendering yeoman service to the afflicted people But though she has a strong will, her body is very frail and she had to go to Sevagiam for recuperation Riots broke out in Bengal Reports of the happenings in Noakhali made her restless and she came to Bengal and had started working in the affected areas a few days before Gandhiji's arrival at Chaumuhani

What she saw oppressed her. She worked in Dasgharia at first. Being a highly religious woman, she could not bear to see people deprived of religious solace. Then she shifted to the village Shirandi. For reasons into which I need not go, she went on a fast there while she was running a temperature of 104° F.

On the ninth day of the fast she dictated a statement to me, explaining the idea behind her fast into which I must not go at present. I shall permit myself to say this much only that she fasted to evoke genuine repentance among her co-religionists. The fast dragged on and I became anxious about her life

We were all in a fix. Bibi Amtul Salaam alone was at peace. She had resigned herself to God's will and was prepared to die It was a test of faith Towards the last week she would not let her temperature be taken. We wanted to test her urine She protested What was the good? It would simply cause more anxiety Friends came from far and near to see her and were struck by her brave suffering. She had the *Quran* and the *Gita* recited to her every day and the recitation soothed her. A doctor friend pleaded with her, "Sister, your life is not your own. Won't you let me give you an injection of glucose? At least give me permission to do so if you become unconscious." She opened her eyes and spoke with an effort Her voice was feeble but clear and steady "My life I have surrendered to God His will be done If He wishes me to live, I cannot die I must not take injections The fast must continue until its object is fulfilled"

The police and the local leaders were also worried. They tried their utmost. They all went to Gandhiji and wanted him somehow to put an end to the fast. He could not do so She had embarked upon the fast on her own initiative and had taken his word that he won't compel her to break it He was scheduled to go to Shirandi on the 20th January, the 25th day of her fast, in the course of his tour. We were sceptical whether she would hold out so long and wanted him to go there earlier We all felt that his presence at Shirandi might be able to achieve what nothing else had and the fast might come to a successful end. Gandhiji was disinclined to change the tour programme and she herself was not keen. "Let him come when I am near the end, so that I can die in his lap," she said. And so Gandhiji arrived at Shirandi on the 20th. Even in her terribly weak state from her sick bed she supervised all

arrangements for his stay. Such has been her devotion to Gandhiji. And she sent me and Abha Gandhi to receive him as she could not walk herself.

A Muslim Deputation waited on Gandhiji at 3 p m They were extremely sorry for what had happened. Replying to their plea that he should intervene to end the fast, Gandhiji said that he had come as the friend of the Hindus and the Mussalmans. If they could tear open his heart they would find there nothing but love Bibi Amtul Salaam was more than a daughter to him He did not wish to lose her He had taught the Muslim boys under his care to be firm in their faith and had seen to it that they said their *namaz* and observed *Ramzan*. She had embarked on the fast because she could not stand the religious intolerance of her Muslim brethren She loved Islam, but she did not hate the Hindus She had not taken his permission to go on fast He was the last person to trifle with her faith The object of the fast has to be fulfilled. It was to make the Muslims see the wrong that they had done and repent for it If they were genuinely repentant and assured non-recurrence of such things in the future, he would plead with her to break the fast. After all God was one and the same by whatever name men called Him.

He had read in the *Morning News* that Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah had said that Pakistan could not be established through force He had also said that in Pakistan there would be perfect freedom and safety for the minorities. He had not come to East Bengal on a political mission His was a purely humanitarian mission. If they wanted the Hindus to leave East Bengal, they should say so plainly If not, they should redress the wrong done and give assurances for the future. Then he would certainly persuade Bibi Amtul Salaam to break her fast. If they said one thing and meant another, if they broke their word afterwards, they would have to reckon with his fast instead of Amtul Salaam's. He could not hold them responsible for the whole district. But they should take up the responsibility for the peace of their area. By doing so they would be laying the foundation of peace for the whole of Noakhali, nay for the

whole of East Bengal. After mutual consultation they evolved a formula expressing sorrow for what had happened and guaranteeing the religious freedom of the Hindus in future in the village of Shirandi and four adjoining villages.

It was signed by the leading members of the Muslim community representing the five villages mentioned. It was past 9 p. m. when the agreement was finally completed and Gandhiji handed over a cup of orange juice to Bibi Amtul Salaam after recitation of the *Quran* by the Muslim friends.

S. N.

Harijan, 6-4-1947

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IMPRACTICABLE PROPOSITION

Gandhiji began by saying that he felt much pleasure in being housed in a Muslim house. He and his party had received every attention. The Muslim friends went so far as to find a *maidan* large enough to hold the largest number of visitors possible. And it so happened that the meeting was the largest of all during his pilgrimage. He attributed the increasing largeness of the meeting to the fast of Bibi Amtul Salaam which had a happy ending because of the sincere labours of Abdullah Saheb and his assistants and the leading Muslims of the villages concerned. Whether his inference was justified or not, he flattered himself with the belief he had expressed.

He was sorry that there was poison administered to the public by some newspapers. Newspapers today had almost replaced the Bible, the *Quran*, the *Gita* and the other religious scriptures. It was wrong but the fact had to be faced. Such being the case, he held it to be the duty of newspapermen to give nothing but facts to their readers.

He was also of opinion that the movement of minorities to the majority provinces was an impracticable proposition. He knew the time when the late two Imam brothers and the late Mazharul Haq Saheb led both the communities and the leading Hindus, such as the late Brijkishore Prasad and Dr. Rajendra Prasad gladly worked

under them Muslims of that Bihar must not leave Bihar. It was true that some Bihar Hindus had acted inhumanly, but that aberration ought not to deflect the Muslims from their clear duty bravely to stick to their homes which were theirs by right. And the Bihari Hindus had to make all possible amends for the misdeeds of the Hindus who had become insane. Similarly he would say to the Noakhali Hindus and Muslims. It was therefore a good omen that there were Muslims in the village to harbour him. It was their duty to make even a solitary Hindu absolutely safe in their midst and Hindus should have faith enough to stay in Noakhali.

Harijan, 9-2-1947

249

INDEPENDENCE DAY

The day of the prayer meeting at Bansa being Independence Day, Gandhiji devoted his speech to the question of independence The song sung was the famous song composed years ago by the late Rabindranath Tagore. He briefly traced the history of the Independence Movement. It took definite shape with the birth of the Congress It began to penetrate the villages after 1916 and after, till at last the Independence Resolution was taken and ever since, 26th January has been celebrated all over India Lakhs of people had taken part in the movement If the fates were not against India and she was not divided within, the present meeting would have seen the tricolour flag proudly flying in their midst But he asked his friends not to fly it as they were divided amongst themselves It was a flag that belonged to the whole of India. But today unfortunately their Muslim brethren did not take pride in it. They even resented it He would not flaunt it in their face. The fruit was almost within their grasp. But if they were foolish, they would let it slip out of their hands Not even the Constituent Assembly would be able to vindicate independence if ultimately all Indians did not wish and were not ready to

fight for independence. It was true, he held, that even one province could seize independence He had in mind the independence of the whole of India. He, therefore, hoped that the whole of India with one mind would yearn and work for independence. He mentioned too that whilst the flag was not in evidence at the meeting, it was flown in the morning in the quarters that were assigned to him. Let them remember the great Netaji and many others who had devoted their lives to the glorious work of independence.

Harijan 9-2-1947

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WALKING TOUR BEGINS

In a written speech at Palla, on Monday the 27th January which was his day of silence, Gandhiji first expressed his satisfaction at having been accommodated in the house of a weaver friend. He then said that the cottages of Bengal had become dearer to him than the prison-like solid walls of palaces. A house full of love such as this one was superior to a palace where love did not reign.

The hut in which he had been accommodated for the day was full of light and air and nature's abundance was showered on the country all around What however made him sad in such a fair and potentially rich country was that the Hindus and the Mussalmans should have brought themselves into hostile relation with one another Should differences in religion, he asked, be sufficient to overshadow our common humanity? He prayed that fundamental commonsense should reassert itself so that all contrary forces might be overpowered in the end.

In his pilgrimage, continued Gandhiji, he had come across homes which lay ruined and desolate, bazaars and schools which lay empty; and he had also found members of the two communities in a stage of non-co-operation with one another. Whom did all this profit, the Hindu or the Muslim? Agriculture had not been properly attended to and the spectre of famine lay waiting in the offing; the

villages were dirty, the water unclean; and only a new and extensive scheme of education could raise the people from their slumber of ages. He prayed that God might give both the Hindus and the Mussalmans intelligence and strength enough to grapple with these problems. He thought that if they succeeded in their attempt to solve these common problems without troubling the Government, it would go a long way to overpower the forces of disruption evident today.

Harijan, 23-2-1947

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EXPANSIVE RELIGION

Addressing the prayer meeting Gandhiji at the outset dealt with a question that was raised by some Muslim friends. Did he want Muslims to attend his prayer meetings? The reply was that he wanted neither the Muslims nor the Hindus to attend the prayer meetings. If the questioners meant to ask whether he would like the Muslims to attend such meetings he had no hesitation in saying that he would certainly like them to attend. What was more, numerous Muslims had attended his prayer meetings which had gone on for years. The next question was whether he, the speaker, did not consider it wrong for him, a non-Muslim, to recite anything from the *Quran* or to couple Rama and Krishna with Rahim and Karim. They said it offended Muslim ears. The speaker replied that the objection gave him a painful surprise. He thought that the objection betrayed narrowness of mind. They should know that he had introduced the recital from the *Quran* through Bibi Raihana Tyebji, a devoted Muslim with a religious mind. She had no political motive behind the proposal. He was no *avatar*-man as was suggested. He claimed to be a man of God humbler than the humblest man or woman. His object ever was to make Muslims better Muslims, Hindus better Hindus, Christians better Christians, Parsis better Parsis. He never invited anybody to change his or her religion. He had thought, therefore, that the questioners would be glad to find that

his religion was so expansive as to include readings from the religious scriptures of the world.

The next thing was that some friends had said that all prosecutions, initiated by the Hindus against the Muslim offenders, interfered with the progress of the peace mission between the two. It surprised him. What had peace between gentlemen to do with the prosecution of criminals? He could understand the objection if it meant that false prosecutions should be withdrawn. He would be whole-heartedly with the objectors. He went further and said that all such persons should be brought to book as perjurers. He said also that the proper course to avoid court procedure was for the guilty persons in all humility to make an open confession of their guilt and stand the judgment of the public. He would gladly help any such movement.

Gandhiji ended by citing the example of England, Russia and other countries where every family had sent as many able-bodied men and women as possible for the defence of their country. This was how unity of heart was actually achieved in the world and he hoped that we in our country would be able to rise above small selfish considerations and create that unity without which life itself would not be worth living.

Harijan, 23-2-1947

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MUSLIM BOYCOTT OF HINDUS

In the course of his prayer meeting speech at the outset Gandhiji congratulated the audience, which was exceptionally large, on the perfect quiet they observed throughout the prayer. He then referred to two communications he had received from Muslim writers who consoled him against his critics who questioned his right to speak about the *purdah* or other things pertaining to Islam. The writers held by quoting from the *Quran* that it was broad-based and was exceptionally tolerant. It welcomed criticism and invited the world to study the *Quran*. One of them

also held that no group or nation had remained without a prophet or teacher. He mentioned these communications to show that all Muslims did not hold what he considered to be intolerant views. He hoped too that the audience which contained a large number of Muslims would appreciate the testimony of the two writers who did not appear to be biassed writers.

The speaker then dealt with the following question addressed to him by some of the workers.

The Muslims were boycotting Hindu artisans and craftsmen and were taking to occupations like fishing, fir trade, *pan*-cultivation etc. Workers who desired to bring about peace between the two communities did not know what to do under the circumstances.

Gandhiji said he hoped that the news was exaggerated and that the boycott was confined to the fewest Muslims possible. He thought that it could not be sustained. The logical result was that any such move would be a compulsory exodus of the Hindus from the Muslim majority provinces, a result he had not heard a single leader encourage or contemplate. He invited his informants to bring the news to the notice of the authorities, not with a view to having the movers punished but with a view to having an authoritative pronouncement from them. He further advised the audience to pray for wisdom to both the communities.

Harijan, 23-2-1947

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WHY NARROW VIEW OF ISLAM ?

This meeting eclipsed all the previous ones in point of numbers of both the Muslims and the Hindus. Consequently there was much noise when Gandhiji came to the meeting. He drew the attention of the audience to the fact that the universal law applicable to all meetings was that the visitors should be perfectly still and observe silence no matter how vast the audience was.

Yesterday evening a Maulvi wanted to speak for a short time. The speaker had sensed what he wanted to speak. He therefore contrary to wont allowed him to speak for the five minutes which he wanted by the watch. The Maulvi Saheb took no more than three minutes but said what he wanted to say. He resented Gandhiji's remark on the *purdah* system in vogue in Bengal. He had no right to speak on the Islamic Law. Gandhiji thought this was a narrow view of religion. He claimed the right to study and interpret the message of Islam. The Maulvi Saheb further resented coupling of the name of Rama, a mere young King with Rahim, name of God, similarly of Krishna with Karim. Gandhiji said this was a narrow view of Islam. Islam was not a creed to be preserved in a box. It was open to mankind to examine it and accept or reject its tenets. He hoped that this narrow view was not shared by the Muslims of Bengal or rather India.

In this connection Gandhiji wanted to draw the attention of the audience to the work Dr. Sushila Nayyar was doing in Changirgaon. She wanted to go to Sevagram to attend to the hospital for whose management she was responsible, but her Muslim patients would not let her go till they were restored to health. She had also mentioned that in the village, partakers of the loot of October last were of their own accord bringing back some of the looted property. He was of opinion that this was a happy omen. If the infection spread, the courts would have no work to do

so far as public loot was concerned. He for one would ask Government to waive the right of prosecution if the looted property was returned. But he said the return must be sincere and full, whether by the guilty one or the public, and not a mere token to avoid prosecution. What he aimed at was a change of heart and not a truce superimposed by the military or the police. A popular ministry could not impose its will on the people.

Harijan, 23-2-1947

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HEARTS MUST BE UNITED

The prayer meeting was held by special invitation in the *badi* of Salimulla Saheb who is reported to be the chief Muslim in Sadhurkhil. He had given his assurance that there would be no objection to the *Ramadhun* being recited with the clapping of hands (to keep time to the chanting).

At the time of Gandhiji's speech some Muslim friends wished to read an address in Bengali which Gandhiji said might be read if it pleased the friends. It referred to music before mosques, cow-slaughter etc. Gandhiji said he was not concerned with these questions. They were questions of law. He wanted to capture their hearts and see them welded into one. If that was attained, everything else would right itself. If their hearts were not united, nothing could be right. Their unfortunate lot would then be slavery. He asked them to accept the slavery of the one Omnipotent God no matter by what name they addressed Him. Then they would bend the knee to no man or men. It was ignorance to say that he coupled Rama, a mere man, with God. He had repeatedly made it clear that his Rama was the same as God. His Rama was before, is present now and would be for all time. He was Unborn and Uncreated. Therefore, let them tolerate and respect the different faiths. He was himself an iconoclast but he had equal regard for the so-called idolaters. Those who worshipped idols also

worshipped the same God who was everywhere, even in a clod of earth, even in a nail that was pared off. He had Muslim friends whose names were Rahim, Rahman, Karim. Would he therefore join on to them the name of God when he addressed them as Rahim, Karim, or Rahman?

Let them beware of the thought that all was well in Noakhali or the neighbouring parts. If the reports he received were at all true, things had not quite settled down. He did not refer to these things or the destruction that had been wrought because he did not wish to excite passion. He did not believe in retaliation. He had lived with Pathans. Badshah Khan, being tired of retaliation which had descended from generation to generation, had learnt the virtue of non-violence. He did not claim perfection for him. He could be angered. But he did claim for his friend the wisdom that dictated to him restraint on one's love of vengeance. He wanted the same thing in Noakhali. Unless they sincerely believed that without real peace between the communities there was neither Pakistan nor Hindustan, slavery was their lot.

He had a visit from four young Muslim friends who deplored the fact that he had not corrected the exaggeration about the number of murders in Noakhali and the adjacent parts. He had not done so because he did not wish to bring out all he had seen. But if it at all mended matters he was free to declare that he had found no evidence to support the figure of a thousand. The figure was certainly much smaller. He was also free to admit that the murders in number and brutalities in Bihar eclipsed those in Noakhali. But that admission must not mean a call for him to go to Bihar. He did not know that he could render any greater service by going to Bihar than from here. He would not be worth anything if without conviction he went there at the bidding of anybody. He would need no prompting, immediately he felt that his place was more in Bihar than in Noakhali. He was where he thought he could render the greatest service to both the communities.

Harijan, 23-2-1947

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MUSLIM LEAGUE AND THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY

Gandhiji in his post-prayer speech referred with hesitation to the resolution passed by the Muslim League on the Constituent Assembly. It considered the Congress resolution to be dishonest and did not mean what it said It was also said that the elections and other dealings of the Assembly were illegal. The speaker pleaded that there should be no imputation of dishonesty by one party to the other. It was not good for the great organizations which they both were. There was no reason why they should regard them as enemies, one of the other. That practice would not lead them to independence If the elections and proceedings were illegal their legality should be challenged in a court of law Otherwise, the charge had no meaning If they did not wish to recognize the courts as he did in 1920 and later, then the talk of illegality should cease. He would plead with the League that they should go into the Assembly and state their case and influence the proceedings. But if they did not, he would advise them to test the sincerity of the Assembly and see how it dealt with the Muslim problem. It was due to themselves and the rest of the country unless they wanted to rely upon the law of the sword which he was sure they did not wish to do Then the League had said that the Assembly represented only the Caste Hindus. Surely there were in the Assembly the Scheduled Classes, the Christians, the Parsis, the Anglo-Indians and all those who considered themselves sons of India. Then Doctor Ambedkar was good enough to attend the Assembly, not to mention the other large number of the Scheduled Classes. The Sikhs too were still there. It was open to the League to put up their fight within the Assembly.

As to the British Government who, as the League contended, should dismiss the Assembly, he entertained the

hope, though he admitted it was somewhat shaken, that they would honestly carry to the end the voluntary Document He submitted that the British Government was bound to act according to the State Paper even if a few provinces chose to establish their independence in accordance with the Paper. He hoped that the British would not forfeit all credit for honest dealing with India.

Gandhiji concluded by saying that whilst he felt obliged to refer to League politics, he warned the audience against inferring that the Hindus and the Muslims were to regard one another as enemies The League has made no such announcement Let the political quarrel be confined to the politicians at the top It would be a disaster if the quarrel permeated in the villages The way to Indian independence lay not through the sword but through mutual friendship and adjustment He was in Noakhali to show what real Pakistan could mean Bengal was the one province in India where it could be demonstrated Bengal had produced talented Hindus and talented Muslims Bengal had contributed largely to the national struggle. It was in the fitness of things that Bengal should now show how the Muslims and the Hindus could live together as friends and brothers. Then there would be no reason for Bengal to remain a deficit province It ought to be a province of plenty.

Harijan, 23-2-1947

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ESSENTIAL SERVICE

Q. The cultivators and land-owners who used to have their land tilled by Muslim labour have lost two crops namely *mirchа* (long pepper), and *il* seeds and mustard seeds owing to the loot of agricultural implements and bullocks and want of labour from Muslims. The time for ploughing fields for the next *boro* and *aus* crop is impending and unless the cultivators get these within fifteen days, they will almost lose that crop also.

A. This is most unfortunate if it is true. I have no doubt that all such land should be put under cultivation not only for the sake of the owners but also for the State, which is or should be more concerned with the cultivation of food-crops even than the owners. Therefore, the owners should ask the authorities for this assistance and the State should see to it that all such land is beneficially cultivated. It is the duty of the State to ask and encourage Muslim labour to render this essential service whether the owner be a Muslim or a Hindu. The State should certainly see that all labour is adequately paid by fixing the wages.

Harijan, 2-3-1947

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THE FUTURE CONSTITUTION

It was a big audience that Gandhiji had addressed on the fifth. He dealt that evening with a question that arose out of the meeting of the third instant. The question was as follows:

You have asked those provinces which have the necessary courage to frame their own constitution and then ask the British army to quit their territory as proof of the attainment of independence. What, in your opinion, should

be the basis of the franchise in those free provinces of India? Should communal electorates be replaced by functional ones in the Assemblies? Should there be functional instead of communal representation? Should there be joint electorates with reservation of seats for communal minorities or functional groups? Should there be favoured representation of any group for the time being? If so, of what group? Should we have joint electorate, and full adult franchise?

Gandhiji's answer was unequivocal. Even one province could frame its own constitution and enforce it, provided that it was backed not by a majority of one but by an overwhelming majority. Gandhiji held that no power on earth could resist the lovers of liberty who were ready not to kill opponents but be killed by them. This was the view that he had enunciated at one time. But today they had made considerable progress He put a favourable interpretation on the Cabinet Mission's State Paper. So far as he could see they could not resist the declared wish of a single province. If that was true of one province, say Bengal, how much more it was for a number of provinces which the Constituent Assembly undoubtedly represented? But he was indifferent to what the British Government said so far as India's independence was concerned. That rested with the people and no outside power. Nor was there any question as to what India would do if the State Paper was withdrawn India has been accustomed to life in the wilderness. When Pandit Nehru and his friends accepted office he had said that it was not a bed of roses but a bed of thorns. Their goal was liberty and liberty they would take no matter what happened.

Naturally he could speak with confidence when the people had only non-violence in view as a steadfast simple policy without reservation If, on the other hand, they thought they could drive away the English by the sword they were vastly mistaken. They did not know the determination and courage of the English. They would not yield to the power of the sword. But they could not withstand the courage of non-violence which disdained to deal death against death. He knew no other power higher than non-violence.

And if they were still without real independence, it was, he was sure, because the people had not developed sufficient non-violence. Anyway the State Paper in his opinion was in answer to the non-violent strength that India had so far developed.

If they contemplated the last war, they would plainly see that whilst the enemy powers so-called were crushed, the allied powers had won but an empty victory. Apart from the wanton destruction of human heads they had between the allies and the enemies succeeded in draining the world of its food materials and cloth. And the former seemed to be so dehumanized that they entertained the vain hope of reducing the enemies to helotry. It was a question whom to pity more — the allies or the enemies. Therefore he asked the people bravely to face the consequence whatever it was, feeling secure in the confidence born of non-violence, be it as an honest policy.

As to the franchise he swore by the franchise of all adults, males and females, above the age of twentyone or even eighteen. He would bar old men like himself. They were of no use as voters. India and the rest of the world did not belong to those who were on the point of dying. To them belonged death, life to the young. Thus he would have a bar against persons beyond a certain age, say fifty, as he would against youngsters below eighteen. Of course, he would debar lunatics and loafers In India free, he could not contemplate communal franchise. It must be joint electorate, perhaps with reservation of seats. Nor could he contemplate favouritism for anyone, say Muslims, Sikhs or Parsis for example. If there was to be favouritism he would single out physical lepers. They were an answer to the crimes of society. If moral lepers would ban themselves, the physical lepers would soon be extinct. And they, poor men, were so frightened of modern society that they put forth no claims. Educate them truly and they would make ideal citizens. Anyway, side by side with adult franchise or even before that he pleaded for universal education, not necessarily literary, except as perhaps an aid. English education, he was convinced, had

starved our minds, enervated them and never prepared them for brave citizenship. He would give them all sufficient knowledge in their rich languages of which any country would be proud. Education in the understanding of the rights of citizenship was a short term affair if they were honest and earnest.

Harijan, 2-3-1947

258

FOUR QUESTIONS

Q. The Mussalmans are boycotting the Hindus. Those Hindus who possess more land than they can till themselves are in a serious difficulty What is your advice to them? What will they do about the surplus land which they hold but cannot till themselves, even if they take up the plough themselves?

A. In answer he said that he had heard of the boycott and had made some remarks at previous meetings. He hoped, indeed he knew, that the boycott was not universal in Noakhali It was probably confined to a few. Whatever the extent, he had no doubt that it was wrong and would do no good to the boycotters as it could not to those against whom it was directed. That opinion was held by him for a large number of years, say sixty. But there was a condition when he would conceive it possible, i. e. if the Muslims regarded the Hindus as their enemies and wished to avoid their presence in Noakhali. That would amount to a declaration of war from which every Indian would recoil with horror. In isolated cases, his opinion was emphatic. The Hindu under the boycott would allow his land to lie fallow like the Australians or he would sell the surplus land. What was best was that nobody should possess more than he could himself use. That was the ideal the society should strive to reach.

Q. You have been working here for the last three months. Has there been any appreciable change in the mentality of the Hindus?

A. The question could best be answered by the Hindus concerned He flattered himself with the belief that the Hindus have, at least for the time being, shed their cowardice to an extent.

Q There is certainly a peace-loving section among the Mussalmans After your presence in their midst, have they been influenced to such an extent that they are able to assert themselves against the worst element in their own community?

A As to this third question he felt glad that the questioner admitted that there was a peace-loving section among the Muslims of Noakhali It would be monstrous if there was not Whether they had developed courage to oppose the bad and mischievous element in Muslim society, he would give the same answer that he gave to the second question The Muslim friends could reply with certainty But he was vain enough to believe that several Muslim friends had been so affected As for instance, the Muslim witness in Bhatialpur declared that the destroyed *mandir* which he had opened they would defend against destruction in future with their lives There were other consoling instances he had met with during his tour

Q Several workers are engaged in village work according to your direction What has been the result of their work on the local Hindu or Muslim population? If you had not been here, would their influence have been equal to what it is at present? Will the present influence of your workers be of a lasting character?

A As to this fourth question Gandhiji said that if he was pure and meant what he said, his work was bound to survive his death He believed that there must be perfect correspondence between private and public conduct Similarly, if his associates were actuated purely by the spirit of service and were pure within and without and were not dominated by the glamour that surrounded him, they would work on with unabated zeal and that their joint work would flourish with time He had never subscribed to the superstition that any good work died with the workers death On the contrary, all true and solid work

made the worker immortal by the survival of his work after his death.

Harijan, 2-3-1947

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MANY QUESTIONS

In his post-prayer address Gandhiji referred to the fact that a friend had told him that he found a Muslim trader who had proper scales and a Hindu one who had improper scales, and asked him whether it was not true that the Muslim traders were honest and the Hindu traders dishonest. He was sure that the inference was wrong. In this imperfect world no community was wholly honest or dishonest. All he could say was that a man who sported false scales for deceiving his customers was a criminal. But he could not take it upon himself to condemn the whole group or community.

He had many questions addressed to him by Muslim friends who had seen him yesterday. He had promised to answer them. They were:

Q. You have said that you will stay here as long as perfect peace and amity between the two communities was not established and that you will die here if necessary. Do you not think that such a long stay here will unnecessarily focuss Indian and world attention on Noakhali, leading people to think that excesses still continued to be committed here, whereas on the contrary no unseemly acts have been committed by Mussalmans for sometime now?

A. No impartial observer could draw the mischievous inference from his presence. He was there as their friend and servant. His presence has certainly advertised Noakhali as a beautiful place which would be a paradise on earth if the Hindus and the Muslims lived in hearty friendship. It may be that at the end of the chapter he might be noted down as a failure who knew very little about *ahimsa*. Moreover, it was impossible for him to stay in Noakhali if the Hindus and the Muslims satisfied him that they had established hearty friendship between them. He was sorry

to tell them that he had evidence to show that things were not quite as they should be.

Q Don't you think that the Hindus are artificially keeping up the appearance of tension by staying away from their homes in spite of promises of good behaviour by the Mussalmans which they have also made good in cases where they have been given an opportunity?

A. He did not think that many Hindus were wilfully staying away from their homes. No one would want to be away from his home without attractive inducements. He had heard nothing of such inducements But he knew that fright and the absence of the wherewithal were keeping them back. Nevertheless, he was assured by the officials that the number returning was satisfactory. They could not cope with a greater number. When these obvious causes were present there was no occasion to draw far-fetched inferences which could not be proved. If, however, there were any instigators keeping them back, the law was there to punish them. The proof of the pudding was in the eating. If it was true that the general body of the Muslims really wanted the refugees back, he was quite sure they would gladly return. But the picture was not so rosy as was painted by the questioner.

Q Don't you think that the dictates of non-violence and friendship to all demand withdrawal or dropping of cases against the Mussalmans?

A. He did not know that there was much non-violence in the air. Even non-violent conduct could not arrest the course of law. And non-violent conduct on the part of the frightened and injured party could not operate until the culprits declared themselves and were penitent. The fact was that not only was there no penitence on their part, but they were absconding. He was averse to mass arrests. And he was for severe punishment of those who were proved to have manufactured complaints.

Q. Is not the double-faced policy of the Cabinet Mission at the root of the present trouble between the League and the Congress and ultimately between the Muslims and the Hindus?

A. He would not accuse the Cabinet Mission of double dealing. They had honestly suggested a solution which in their opinion was fair. The beauty of the Paper was that it contained no compulsion. Naturally, after acceptance the clauses became obligatory for the accepting party. But any party could refuse acceptance. Thus if Assam in the east and Baluchistan in the west rejected the grouping, no power on earth could compel them under the Cabinet Mission Paper. Lastly, assuming that the Cabinet Mission Paper was a trap, why should the Congress and the League fall into it?

Q. Pakistan means complete independence for the Muslim majority provinces and for the Hindus in Hindu majority provinces. Why then does the Congress object to it?

A. The answer was simple. If Pakistan meant independence only to the Muslims in the Muslim majority provinces and vice versa, it was summarily rejected. Happily not one Muslim leader, certainly not the Qaid-e-Azam, had ever given that meaning. Were the Hindus in Bihar to be independent and the Muslims helots? Or were the Hindus to be helots in Bengal? He hoped not.

Q. Can there be any hope of establishing Hindu-Muslim unity here in spite of the Congress-League differences which are at the root of all the troubles everywhere? Even if it is established, how long can it be expected to last?

A. He admitted that Hindu-Muslim unity could not be sustained in the face of Congress-League differences He hoped, however, that apart from party politics, whilst there was time, the Hindus and the Muslims in Noakhali would act together as real friends. They should set an example to all India and especially to the League and the Congress. Any way, that was the mission that brought him to Noakhali. He wanted to pass his examination in pure *ahimsa*. If it was pure, it must result in establishing that friendship which he desired at heart. Therefore, if it was not established, the failure would be his. And as *ahimsa* knew no failure, he had said he would do or die in Noakhali. Let the questioner and those who thought like him help the fruition of the effort.

Harijan, 29-3-1947

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BOYCOTT SHOWS INTOLERANCE

The first question was: All over the district of Noakhali there is talk that the Muslim population should boycott the Hindus in every way. Some Muslims who have worked for the Hindus recently or helped them during the riots report that they are under threat of boycott. They ask: What should be the duty of those Muslims who genuinely desire peace in this connection?

Gandhiji replied that he had heard of the boycott before. But he entertained the hope that such was not the case on any extensive scale. He had one case brought to his notice three or four days ago by a Muslim traveller from Gujarat who had come to see him. He was rebuked for daring to want to see him. The traveller stood his ground and came out of the ordeal safely. Another poor Muslim who had come today was threatened with dire penalty if he dared to go to him. He did not know what truth there was in the description. The speaker then instanced printed leaflets that were pasted on the walls in the name of the *Muslim Pituni Party*. These instances gave colour to the question. He would say to the Muslim friends and others that these things should not frighten or disturb them. They should ignore these things if they were isolated instances. If they were on an extensive scale, probably the Government would deal with the situation. If unfortunately boycott became the policy of the Government, it would be a serious matter. He could only think non-violently. If they gave proper compensation he would probably advise acceptance. He could not think out there and then the pros and cons. If, on the other hand, they resorted to confiscation, he would advise people to stand their ground and refuse to leave their homesteads even on pain of death. This he would say of all provinces whether Muslim majority or Hindu majority. He however hoped that no Government would be mad enough to subscribe to the policy of boycott

whether with or without compensation. Those who belonged to the land for ages could not be removed from their homesteads for the simple reason that they found themselves in a minority. That was no religion, Hindu, Muslim, Christian or any other. It was intolerance.

Harijan,9-3-1947

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REPLY TO FAZLUL HAQUE

Gandhiji in his prayer speech referred briefly to the speech reported to have been made by the ex-Premier Maulvi Fazlul Haque Saheb. He was reported to have said that as a non-Muslim Gandhi should not preach the teachings of Islam. Instead of Hindu-Muslim unity he was creating bitterness between the two communities. Had he (Gandhiji) been to Barisal he would have driven him into the canal. He also wondered how the Muslims of Noakhali and Tipperah could tolerate Gandhi's presence so long.

Gandhiji said that he had grave doubts about the accuracy of the report. If it was the correct summary of the speech, he would consider it to be most unfortunate as coming from a man holding the responsible position that the Maulvi Saheb held and aspiring to be the President of the Muslim League. He was not aware of having done anything to create bitterness between the two communities. He had never claimed to preach Islam. What he had undoubtedly done was to interpret the teachings of the Prophet and refer to them in his own speeches. His interpretation was submitted for acceptance or rejection.

In the same speech he (Fazlul Haque Saheb) had said that when he (Gandhiji) returned from South Africa he (Fazlul Haque Saheb) had asked him (Gandhiji) to embrace Islam, whereupon Gandhiji said that he was a Muslim in the true sense of the term. Mr. Haque requested him to proclaim it publicly, but Gandhiji refused to do so. He said that he had no recollection whatsoever of the conversation and he was never in the habit of suppressing from

the public what he had said privately. The audience, however, knew that he had stated in various speeches in the district that he considered himself as good a Muslim as he was a Hindu and for that matter he regarded himself an equally good Christian or Parsi. That such a claim would be rejected and on some occasions was rejected, he knew. That, however, did not affect his fundamental position and if he had said what was attributed to him by Fazlul Haque Saheb, he (Gandhiji) would gladly declare his repentance if he would believe what was represented to him. Indeed he had put forth the claim in South Africa to be a good Mussalman simultaneously with being a good member of the other religions of the world. He would repeat for the sake of the ex-Premier of Bengal that he (Fazlul Haque Saheb) was misreported and he would welcome the correct version from him.

Harijan, 9-3-1947

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QUESTION BOX

Q. Do you support evacuation of the Hindus from the affected areas if the League Government or the majority community agrees to give us due compensation?

A. He had supported the proposition from the non-violent standpoint. It was applicable to all provinces whether the majority was Hindu or Muslim. What could the Government do if the majority had become so hostile that they would not tolerate the presence of the minority community? In his opinion it would be improper for them to force the majority into submission, nor could they undertake to protect the minority at the point of the bayonet. Suppose for instance that the majority would not tolerate *Ramadhun* or the clapping (to keep time to the chant), would not listen to the fact that Rama was not a person but the name was synonymous with God, and that the Hindus believed in clapping, suppose further that the Muslims would not tolerate that, he had then no hesitation

in saying that the minority should evacuate if adequate compensation was paid.

Q Workers who came three or four months ago have had to undergo a great deal of mental and physical hardship. Then they often went without the guidance of top-ranking leaders Now that transport conditions are easier, workers find themselves pulled in different directions by those who want to guide them. How can they avoid divided counsels and work efficiently at their appointed task ?

A. As to the second question he said that those who felt fagged had a perfect right to rest. As to the distraction caused by opposing advice by different leaders, the workers would make their selection of their leaders and follow them. But that was also only advisable when the advice of the leader appealed to their heart and head. In the case of conflict between the two, they must boldly follow their own heart and head. Such was the dictate of all religions. If it was so in religious matters, it was more so in mundane matters, especially in Noakhali where after all the issue was so simple. Theirs was to bring the two together, never to set one against the other.

Q Repatriated women depend very much upon the presence of women workers from outside to instil hope and courage amongst them. How long can this be encouraged ? Should not all workers from outside be gradually withdrawn ?

A. As to the third question, what was true of male workers was equally true of women workers. They were there to instil faith in God and courage in them, not to make them feel helpless without them i. e. the workers. They must make it clear to the women in the respective villages that the workers were in the villages only for the time being and that the village women had to learn to rely upon themselves. They had to learn the art of dying for their faith and honour.

Q. What should a Hindu worker do when he is being deliberately misrepresented by interested parties in Noakhali ?

A. The answer in terms of *ahimsa*, generally, would be that acts should be allowed to speak for themselves.

Whilst this was good as a general proposition there were occasions when to speak and explain was a duty and not to speak would amount to a falsehood. Therefore wisdom dictated that there were some occasions when speech must accompany action. Of course there was an occasion when mere thought would take the place of speech and action. Such was the attribute of the Almighty and might be almost possible for one in a billion, but he knew no such instance.

Q. You have advised evacuation if the majority become irrevocably hostile. But you have also maintained that a truly non-violent man should never give up hope of converting his opponent by love. Under these circumstances, how can a non-violent man accept defeat and evacuate?

A. As to this question, it was perfectly correct that a non-violent man would not move out of his place. For such a one there would be no question of compensation. He would simply die at his post and prove that his presence was not a danger to the State or the community. He knew that the Hindus of Noakhali made no such pretension. They were simple folk who loved the world and wanted to live in the world in peace and safety. Such persons would consult their honour if the Government honourably offered them compensation in order to see the majority living in peace. If the mere presence of the Hindus irritated the Muslims who were the majority, he would consider it to be the duty of the Government to offer compensation as it would be of the Government in a Hindu majority province to offer compensation to the Muslims if their presence irritated the majority community.

Q. In case of evacuation, under advice from the Government, should the evacuees ask for compensation for—

(a) all their movable and immovable property and

(b) loss of business?

In other words, what would you consider to be adequate compensation?

A. Gandhiji said that the Government would be obliged to compensate for both immovables and movables when the latter could not be or were not carried away with him by

the evacuee. Loss of business was a ticklish question. He could not conceive the possibility of any Government shouldering the burden of such compensation. He would understand the proposition that asked for a reasonable sum for enabling the person concerned to start business in a new place.

Whilst he examined and admitted the possibility of evacuation, his experience of all India told him that the Hindus and the Muslims knew how to live at peace among themselves. He declined to believe that people had said goodbye to their senses so as to make it impossible to live at peace with each other as they had done for generations.

For, he believed with the late Poet Iqbal that the Hindus and the Muslims who had lived together long under the shadow of the mighty Himalayas and had drunk the waters of the Ganges and the Yamuna had a unique message for the world.

Q. If you think the Government may boycott, i. e. remove the minority community, if they give adequate compensation, may not people take time by the forelock and go ?

A. As to this he said that those who felt that they would take time by the forelock, and if a Hindu corporation was formed to take the Hindus away, he had nothing in common with them. He could not be a party to any such scheme. The burden lay entirely on the majority community and the Government. He merely meant that when they declared bankruptcy of wisdom, the minority should go if they were adequately compensated. The other way was the way of violence i. e. civil war not of non-violence.

Q. You have said caste should go. But then will Hinduism survive ? Why do you thus mix up Hinduism with the progressive religions like Christianity or Islam ?

A. He maintained that caste as it was understood must go if Hinduism was to survive. He did not believe that Christianity and Islam were progressive and Hinduism static i. e. retrogressive. As a matter of fact he noticed no definite progress in any religion. The world would not be the shambles it had become if the religions of the world were progressive. There was room for *varna*, as a duty.

This was true of all religions whether the name used was other than *varna*. What was a Muslim Maulvi or a Christian priest but a brahmana if he taught his flock its true duty not for money but because he possessed the gift of interpretation? And this was true of the other divisions.

Q. As you are an advocate of the abolition of caste, are we to take it that you favour inter-caste marriages? Many occupations are now the monopoly of specific castes. Should not this be abolished?

A. He was certainly in favour of inter-caste marriages. The question did not arise when all became casteless. When this happy event took place, monopoly of occupations would go.

Q. If there is only one God, should there not be only one religion?

A. This was a strange question. 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. They did not see this plain truth because they were followers of different prophets and claimed as many religions as there were prophets. As a matter of fact whilst he believed himself to be a Hindu, he knew that he did not worship God in the same manner as any one or all of them.

Q. You advocate inter-caste marriages. Do you also favour marriages between Indians professing different religions? Should they declare themselves as belonging to no denomination, or can they continue their old religious practices and yet intermarry? If so, what form should the marriage ceremony take? Is it to be a purely civil function or a religious function?

Do you consider religion to be exclusively a personal matter?

A. Though he admitted that he had not always held the view, he had come to the conclusion long ago that an inter-religious marriage was a welcome event whenever it took place. His stipulation was that such connection was not a product of lust. Marriage in his estimation was a sacred institution. Hence there must be mutual friendship,

either party having equal respect for the religion of the other. There was no question in this of conversion. Hence the marriage ceremony would be performed by the priests belonging to either faith. This happy event could take place when the communities shed mutual enmity and had regard for the religions of the world

Q 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 instruction be left in the hands of private bodies? If so, do you think it is right for the State to subsidize such bodies?

A -As to this question he said that he did not believe in State religion even though the whole community had one religion. The State interference would probably always be unwelcome. Religion was purely a personal matter. There were in reality as many religions as minds Each mind had a different conception of God from that of the other.

He was also opposed to State aid partly or wholly to religious bodies. For he knew that an institution or group, which did not manage to finance its own religious teaching, was a stranger to true religion This did not mean that the State schools would not give ethical teaching. The fundamental ethics were common to all religions.

Q You say that you are in favour of interreligious marriages but at the same time you say that each party should retain his or her own religion and, therefore, you said, you tolerated even civil marriages. Are there any instances of parties belonging to different religions keeping up their own religions to the end of their lives? And is not the institution of civil marriage a negation of religion and does it not tend towards laxity of religion?

A. Gandhiji said that the questions were appropriate. He had no instances in mind where the parties had clung to their respective faiths up to death because these friends whom he knew had not yet died. He had, however, under his observation men and women professing different religions and each clinging to his or her own faith without abatement.

But he would go so far as to say that they need not wait for the discovery of past instances. They should create new ones so that timid ones may shed their timidity.

As to civil marriages he did not believe in them but he welcomed the institution of civil marriage as a much needed reform for the sake of reform.

Harijan, 16-3-1947

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MR. ATLEE'S STATEMENT

Gandhiji referred to the communications, telegraphic and otherwise, he had received for his opinion on Mr. Atlee's statement. He said there were the Congress and the League, not to mention other associations, which would express authoritative opinions. He would however permit himself to say that the statement had put the burden on the various parties of doing what they thought best. It had declared that British rule would end before or during the month of June 1948. It was up to the parties to make or mar the situation. Nothing on earth could overturn their united wish. And so far as he was concerned, he was emphatically of opinion that if the Hindus and Muslims closed their ranks and came together without external pressure, they would not only better their political condition but they would affect, the whole of India and probably the world.

Harijan, 16-3-1947

BIHAR TOUR BEGINS

As this was Gandhiji's first visit to Bihar after an interval of seven years there was a huge gathering to greet him at the prayer meeting on the famous *maidan* of Patna on the 5th of March. He complimented the vast audience on the exemplary silence which they observed during the prayers. He then referred to the mission which had brought him to Bihar, the occasion being Dr. Syed Mahmud's letter sent through his private secretary. He had flattered himself with the belief that it will be unnecessary for him to visit what he affectionately described as 'his Bihar' by right of service. But Dr. Mahmud's letter led him to think that all was not as well as it should be. He knew that what the Hindus of Bihar had done towards their brethren, the Muslims, was infinitely worse than what Noakhali had done. He had hoped that they had done or were doing all the reparation that was possible and that it was in magnitude as great as the crime. That meant that if there was real repentance, they should prove the truth of the great saying, "The greater the sinner, the greater the sin". He hoped that the Bihar Hindus will not be guilty of self-righteousness by saying that the Biharis, who had forgotten in a fit of insanity that they were human beings, were drawn from the *goonda* elements for whom the Congressmen of Bihar could not be held responsible. If they adopted the attitude of self-righteousness, they would reduce the Congress to a miserable party, whereas the Congress claimed, and he had repeated the claim in London at the Round Table Conferance he had attended, that of all the organizations in India the Congress was the only one organization which rightfully claimed to represent the whole of India, whether it was called French India or Portuguese India or the India of the States, because the Congress claimed by right of service to represent not only the nominal Congressmen or its sympathizers but also its enemies. Therefore, the Congress had to make itself responsible for the misdeeds

of all communities and all classes It should be its proud privilege to better and improve the moral, material and physical condition of the whole of India to entitle it to the proud claim it had made ever since its inception. As a matter of fact, it would be wrong even to say that there was not a single Congressman involved in the mad upheaval. That many Congressmen had staked their lives in order to save their Muslim friends and brethren was no answer to the charge that was justly hurled against the Bihar Hindus by indignant and injured Muslims who did not hesitate to describe the Bihar crime as having no parallel in history If he was so minded, he would he able to show that there were to be found in history examples of human monsters having done crimes even worse than those of the Hindus of Bihar. But he did not want to be guilty of making comparisons and weigh the greatness of crimes in golden scales. On the contrary, a truly repentant man would never want to flatter himself by even thinking that he was not as bad as his predecessors There was a legitimate place for rivalry in doing good and outdoing one's predecessors, and one's own labours in the act of service He was therefore grieved to find that there were thoughtless Hindus in all parts of India who falsely hugged the belief that Bihar had arrested the growth of lawlessness that was to be witnessed in Noakhali He wished to remind them in forcible terms that that way of thinking and doing was the way to perdition and slavery, never to freedom and bravery It was a cowardly thing for a man to believe that barbarity such as was exhibited, could ever protect a civilization or a religion, or defend freedom. He was able from recent first-hand knowledge to say that where there was cowardice on the one hand there was cruelty on the other. The way, therefore, to take reprisals upon Noakhali was to learn how not to copy the barbarous deeds such as Noakhali had proved itself capable of, but to return barbarism by manliness which consisted in daring to die without a thought of retaliation, and without in any way compromising one's honour. He warned the audience and through them the whole of India that if

they really wished to see India independent in every sense of the term, they must not imitate barbarous methods. Those who resorted to such methods would find that they were retarding the day of India's deliverance.

Harijan, 23-3-1947

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WHY COME TO BIHAR ?

After the prayer Gandhiji singled out one letter which he thought was based on pure ignorance. It doubted the wisdom of his leaving his work in Noakhali and coming to Bihar at the instance of Dr. Syed Mahmud and daring to accept his hospitality.

The critic forgot that Dr. Mahmud was Gandhiji's friend and that he had known Dr. Mahmud's father-in-law before he knew the late Brijkishore Prasad of revered memory or Dr. Rajendra Prasad. In his opinion Dr. Mahmud had rendered a service to the Hindus and the Muslims of Bihar by bringing him to Bihar. For, if Bihar remained sane in the midst of possible madness throughout India, Bihar would raise India in the estimation of the world and leave to the world a singular example of sanity in the midst of surrounding insanity. This he had a right to expect by right of service and more so because the Bihar Hindus, howsoever illiterate they might be, were votaries of Rama, the incarnation of all the good in the world. Although evil seemed at times to rule the world, the eternal truth was that the world lived so long as goodness resided even in one person. Evil was naught. If Bihar remained good in the midst of temptation, it was well with it, and well with the whole of India.

The insinuation that there was a sinister motive behind drawing him away from Noakhali, namely that the Noakhali Muslims might be free from his (Gandhiji's) restraining influence, was too flimsy to bear examination. For, if he succeeded wholly in Bihar, it was impossible for very shame that the Noakhali Muslims would go mad.

Harijan, 4-5-1947

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HOLI

At the prayer meeting the next day a note had been handed to him reminding him that *Holi* was on the following day, and that people would like to hear his opinion as to how it ought to be celebrated. Gandhiji began by saying that he had no doubt in his mind that a religious ceremony like *Holi* should never be marked by wild revelry, but by a disciplined effort to put oneself in communion with God.

There was a time, he continued, when the Hindus and the Mussalmans lived side by side as peaceful neighbours. If things had today come to such a pass that they could not look upon one another as friends, let them at least not behave as enemies. There was fear among the Mussalmans that the occasion of *Holi* might be marked by renewed attacks upon them. It was surprising that he was hearing from them what he had heard from the Hindus in Noakhali and Tipperah, and he felt ashamed to have to listen to the same tales in Patna as in Noakhali. He would, therefore, venture to say to his Muslim brothers in Bihar what he had said to the Hindus in Noakhali, viz., that they should shed all fear of man and trust God; but he knew that it was a counsel of perfection.

Cries of *Vande Mataram*, *Jai Bharat* or *Jai Hind* frightened the Mussalmans today. Were the shouts of *Bharatki Jai* (victory for India) going to mean *Mussalmanki Kshai* (destruction for Mussalmans)? It was a matter of shame that things had been brought to such a pass. He had been meeting several Muslim League friends, who, he felt, had opened their hearts before him and asked him if the Mussalmans would not really be allowed to remain in a province like Bihar. The Muslim friends who were in the Congress like Dr. Syed Mahmud had also expressed their uneasiness at the present situation. This terrorization of brother by brother, if it were true, was unbearable for

him. Were they really going to return one act of madness by another? In that event India could only be drowned in a sea of blood.

Gandhiji was firmly of the opinion that this could never be our fate if we were determined to have it otherwise. His hope lay more in womankind who, he had ever maintained, were the living embodiment of *ahimsa* and of self-sacrifice, without which *ahimsa* could never be a reality. Gandhiji wanted everyone to celebrate *Holi* in such a manner that every single Muslim felt that the Hindus had not only repented for what had been done to them but had also gathered love for them to an extent which outdid their previous sentiments. If *Holi* was marked by this revival of the old friendly relations then indeed it would be a truly religious celebration.

There was one thing more which Gandhiji wanted to tell his audience in the hope that justice would be done wherever his voice could reach. It had been conveyed to him that there were Muslim women even now kept perforce in Hindu homes. If that were true and if, of course, such women were still living, he would expect every one of them to be restored to their homes. The miscreants should show true repentance and every Hindu should consider it his duty to impress upon them that they should repent and courageously face punishment for their misdeeds. If that were too much for them, he would at least expect the women to be restored to him or to Rajendra Babu in perfect safety.

It was not enough that the Hindus should express lip-repentance or compensate the sufferers by means of money. What was really needed was that their hearts should become pure and, in place of the hatred or indifference which was sweeping over them, love should reign so that under its glow every single Muslim man, woman and child felt perfectly secure and free to pursue his or her own religious practices without the least let or hindrance. Let us all, he prayed, make *Holi* an occasion for the initiation of this relation between the two sister communities.

Harijan, 23-3-1947

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MISDEEDS AND THEIR ATONEMENT

Gandhiji began his address this evening by saying that just before starting for the prayer ground he had taken a brief rest. The whole of his waking hours during the day had been spent in listening to the reports and the accounts brought in by many Muslim and Hindu friends. None of them had been able to assure him that things had completely settled down to normality. This had fatigued him mentally and hence the needed rest.

The ideal of the *sthitaprajna* (man whose understanding is secure) described in the second chapter of the *Gita* was always before him and he was ceaseless in his efforts to reach that ideal. Whatever others might say of him, he knew he was 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 was that power in him now? He could only say that he was a common mortal, made of the same clay of which others were made, only ceaselessly striving to attain the lofty ideal which the *Gita* held before all mankind.

It was because his thoughts reached tonight only those brothers and sisters who had perhaps no direct influence upon the rioters that he had been seriously thinking if he should not march from village to village in the manner of Noakhali, so that what little power his thoughts contained might be conveyed directly to the most distant villager who had done a wrong to his brother Mussalman.

Bihar was the land of Tulsidas' *Ramayana*. However uneducated or poor a Bihari might be, his voice ever rang with the music of that mighty epic. They knew what was sin and what was also meant by religious merit. The misdeeds which had come out of their hands had been of terrible proportions. Should not then their *prayashchitta* (atonement) be of the same order? There was a saying: "The greater the sinner, the greater the sin". It was in this spirit that

they should approach those who had suffered at their hands and try to do the right by them.

He had said last evening that all Muslim women who were alleged even then to be confined in Hindu homes should be returned It would indeed be a brave thing if the miscreants came forward and openly confessed their sins and were prepared to bear all punishment justly meted out to them But if such courage was lacking, they could at least restore the girls to him without any fear of harm coming to them There was, however, one thing more he would like them to do. It had been reported that property worth about a crore of rupees had been looted or destroyed. It did not matter what the exact figure was. For, if a man was deprived of a couple of rupees when he had that amount only, it meant that he had lost his all. It became then the duty of every Hindu to see that the looted property was returned and losses compensated for, wherever they had occurred in the province. If the men concerned were no longer living, the restored property or the compensation should at least reach the surviving relatives.

This much he could surely expect from Biharis who lived in the land of the *Ramayana* and who tried to set their lives in accordance with the teachings of that noble book.

Harijan 23-3-1947

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SOME QUESTIONS

Q. To those who had lost all their trade your advice is that they should voluntarily turn themselves into labourers. Who will then look after education, commerce and the like? If you thus dissolve the division of labour, will not the cause of civilization suffer?

A. The question betrayed ignorance of his meaning. If a man could not carry on his original mercantile business, it was not open to him but obligatory on him to take to physical labour, say scavenging or breaking stones. He

believed in the division of labour or work. But he did insist on equality of wages. The lawyer, the doctor, or the teacher was entitled to no more than the *bhangi*. Then only would division of work uplift the nation or the earth. There was no other royal road to true civilization or happiness.

Spirit giveth life, the letter killeth. A *ganapati* with an elephant's head was a monster but as a representation of *om* was an uplifting symbol. Ravana with ten heads was a fabled fool but if it meant a man who carried no head about him and was tossed to and fro by the fleeting passions, he was a many-headed demon.

Q. When things are all going wrong at the Centre, what can common people do to restore unity?

A. There was a law of science which enunciated that two forces were simultaneously at work: the centripetal and the centrifugal. He wanted to apply the law to life also. The centre, therefore, of the Government attracted us all to it and in good government we would respond to that centripetal force. Similar was the centrifugal force in obedience to which we, the villagers of Haimchar, attracted the Centre. Thus, where these forces worked well there would be ordered and orderly government at the centre and the circumference. When, however, the Centre was going wrong, it should be pointless to dominate the seven hundred thousand villages. On the other hand, the villagers would live in perfect amity if they were wise in leaving the Centre alone to look after its so-called high politics.

Q. A man who sacrifices self-interest for the sake of his community is at least unselfish to that extent. How can the heart of such a man be affected so that he will sacrifice communal interests for the interest of the nation?

A. A man whose spirit of sacrifice did not go beyond his own community became selfish himself and also made his community selfish. In his opinion the logical conclusion of self-sacrifice was that the individual sacrificed himself for the community, the community sacrificed itself for the district, the district for the province, the province for the nation and the nation for the world. A drop torn from the ocean perished without doing any good. If it remained a

part of the ocean, it shared the glory of carrying on its bosom a fleet of mighty ships.

Q. In free India whose interest shall be supreme? If a neighbouring State is in want, what should free India do?

A. Gandhiji said that the first part of the question has been answered in the above. A truly independent free India was bound to run to the help of its neighbours in distress. He instanced Afghanistan, Ceylon and Burma and said that the rule also applied to the neighbours of the last three and, thus by implication, they became India's neighbours too And thus he said that if individual sacrifice was a living sacrifice, it embraced the whole of humanity.

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RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION

[In part of a letter to Shri E. W Aryanayakam of the Hindustani Talimi Sangh, Wardha, Gandhiji expressed his views on religious instruction The relevant portion is reproduced below — ED.]

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 do not have 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 partly 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. I do not need to give any illustrations in support of this truth obvious as it is to me.

Harijan, 23-3-1947

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HINDUS' DUTY

Gandhiji said at the prayer meeting that he hoped the audience would forgive him for speaking always and exclusively on the theme which had brought him to Bihar. It had become his duty to listen to the tale of woe that the Muslim sufferers unfolded before him from day to day. One of them had come to him and complained that, even so recently as two days ago, things were pilfered from Muslim houses. If such was the case, it was most unfortunate and if it was at all general, it betrayed a lack of the spirit of repentance without which there was no possibility of concord between the two communities in Bihar, indeed in the whole of India.

The speaker, therefore, expressed his surprise that he had received a telegram warning him that he must not condemn the Hindus in Bihar, for, what they had done was purely from a sense of duty. He had no hesitation in saying that the writer did no good to India or to Hinduism by issuing the warning. He spoke as a Hindu having a living faith in his own religion and he claimed to be a better Hindu for claiming to be a good Muslim, Christian, Parsi or Jew even as he was a Hindu. He invited everyone of his audience to feel likewise. And as such, he would forfeit his claim to be a Hindu if he bolstered up the wrong-doing of fellow Hindus or any other fellow being.

He claimed to do them a service by opening their eyes to their wrongdoing. They must not be carried away by the mischief which, for instance, was being done in the Punjab. If they were qualifying themselves as free citizens of India becoming free, they must not resort to wrongdoing on hearing of the wrongs perpetrated in other parts of India or anywhere else. Their and his duty was to imitate and assimilate whatever was good, no matter where found.

Now that he had been four days among them, he ventured to draw their attention to the duty they owed to

themselves and to the distressed Muslims, viz., that they should pay whatever they could towards the relief of the sufferers. He, therefore, invited them to give whatever they could, towards that cause by way of a token of repentance. It was unfortunate that he had to remind them of the obvious thing. Many Hindu donors sent him donations for the sufferers in Noakhali, which he thought amounted to nearly three lakhs of rupees. Having received the reminder, he hoped that they would come forth with handsome donations. Naturally, every pie spent would be accounted for. They should not deceive themselves into the belief that now that they had a representative Government, they would do everything in the way of finances.

The more democratic a Government, the more it laboured under disadvantages in making use of public funds. Therefore, in a well-ordered society, the legitimate limitations which Government suffered from were only crossed by wise public donations.

Harijan, 30-3-1947

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ESSENTIALLY POLITICAL ?

Gandhiji said in his post-prayer address that several correspondents had complained to him that he was utilizing his prayer meetings for the propagation of his favourite political ideas. But the speaker never suffered from any feeling of guilt on that account. Human life being an undivided whole, no line could ever be drawn between its different compartments, nor between ethics and politics. A trader who earned his wealth by deception only succeeded in deceiving himself when he thought that his sins could be washed away by spending some amount of his ill-gotten gains on so-called religious purposes. One's everyday life was never capable of being separated from one's spiritual being. Both acted and reacted upon one another.

Indeed, it might even be said, continued Gandhiji, that the Law which held together the universe was

indistinguishable from the Law-Maker Speaking in human language, one might even go so far as to say that God Himself was subject to the Wheel of the Law. We were used to the saying that "the king could do no wrong" But in God's universe even such a distinction was hardly permissible One could only say that "there could be no wrong in the Law, for the Law and the Law-Maker were one and the same". There was no scope for even the least little blade of grass to be free from the operation of God's laws

Gandhiji then referred to a certain letter he had received from a very frank and honest friend. The letter had reminded him that the efforts for religious toleration that he had been making were all in vain, for, after all, the quarrel between the Hindus and the Mussalmans was not on account of religious differences but was essentially political in origin, religion had only been made to serve as a label for political distinctions The friend had expressed the opinion that it was a tussle between United India on the one hand and India Divided on the other Gandhiji confessed that he did not yet know what the full meaning of dividing India really was But what he wanted to impress upon the audience was that supposing it were only a so-called political struggle, did it mean that all rules of decency and morals should be thrown to the winds? When human conflicts were divorced from ethical considerations, the road could only lead to the use of the atom bomb where every trace of humanity was held completely in abeyance If there were honest differences among the people of India, should it then mean that the forty crores should descend to the level of beasts, slaughter men, women and children, innocent and guilty alike, without the least compunction? Could they not agree to settle their differences decently and in a comradely spirit? If they failed, only slavery of an unredeemable type could await them at the end of the road.

Unlike other days he stayed on for the collection for the Muslim sufferers. He made a fervent appeal to the audience to untie their purse strings generously and contribute all that they possibly could towards the fund. Referring to the question whether the Muslims had contributed similarly

for relief in Noakhali, Gandhiji said that it was indeed true that little had come to him from that quarter. But the reason, he believed, had been that he was now looked upon as enemy No. 1 rather than a friend by the majority of the Muslim community in India. Yet even in Comilla, there had been a case where some Muslim and Christian friends had contributed more than Rs. 800 along with a parcel of conch-shell bangles and vermilion for distribution among the Hindu women from whom such ceremonial signs had been forcibly removed during the disturbances.

The collections amounted to nearly Rs. 2,000. Besides there were some ornaments which yet remained to be auctioned. He was glad that women had given their ornaments, and he reminded them in this connection that the true ornament of woman was a pure heart, the place of which could never be taken by any physical adornment.

Harijan, 30-3-1947

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THE ETERNAL LAW

Gandhiji referred to a letter from a correspondent which had lately reached him. It was in answer to that letter that he wanted to say that if a man abused him, it would never do for him to return the abuse. An evil returned by another evil only succeeded in multiplying it, instead of leading to its reduction. It was a universal law, he said, that violence could never be quenched by superior violence but could only be quenched by non-violence or non-resistance.

But the true meaning of non-resistance had often been misunderstood or even distorted. It never implied that a non-violent man should bend before the violence of an aggressor. While not returning the latter's violence by violence, he should refuse to submit to the latter's illegitimate demand even to the point of death. That was the true meaning of non-resistance.

If, for instance, proceeded the speaker, someone asked him under threat of violence to admit a claim, say, like

that of Pakistan, he should not immediately rush to return the violence thus offered In all humility he would ask the aggressor what was really meant by the demand, and if he was really satisfied that it was something worth striving for, then he would have no hesitation in proclaiming from the housetops that the demand was just and it had to be admitted by everyone concerned. But if the demand was backed by force, then the only course open to the non-violent man was to offer non-violent resistance against it as long as he was not convinced of its justice. He was not to return violence by violence but neutralize it by withholding one's hand and, at the same time, refusing to submit to the demand. This was the only civilized way of going on in the world. Any other course could only lead to a race for armaments, interspersed by periods of peace which was by necessity and brought about by exhaustion, when preparations would be going on for violence of a superior order. Peace through superior violence inevitably led to the atom bomb and all that it stood for It was the completest negation of non-violence and of democracy which was not possible without the former.

The non-violent resistance described above required courage of a superior order to that needed in violent warfare Forgiveness was the quality of the brave, not of the cowardly. Gandhiji here related a story from the *Mahabharata*, when one of the Pandava brothers was accidentally injured while living in disguise in the home of King Virata. The brothers not only hid what had happened, but for fear that harm might come to the host if a drop of blood touched the ground, they prevented it from doing so by means of a golden bowl. It was this type of forbearance and courage which Gandhiji wished every Indian to develop whether he was a Hindu, Mussalman, Christian, Parsi or Sikh. That alone could rescue them from their present fallen condition.

The lesson of non-violence was present in every religion but Gandhiji fondly believed that perhaps it was here in India that its practice had been reduced to a science. Innumerable saints had laid down their lives in *tapascharya* until poets had felt that the Himalayas became purified in

their snowy whiteness by means of their sacrifice But all that practice of non-violence was nearly dead today It was necessary to revive the eternal law of answering anger by love and of violence by non-violence, and where could this be more readily done than in this land of King Janaka and Ramachandra ?

Harijan, 30-3-1947

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MANDIRS AND MASJIDS

If the British were going, as they surely were, what should be the duty of Indians, asked Gandhiji Were we to return blow for blow among ourselves, and thus perpetuate our slavery, only to tear up our Motherland, in the end, into bits which went by the name of Hindustan and Pakistan, Brahmanistan and Achhutistan (land of untouchables) ? What greater madness could there be than what had taken place in Bengal and Bihar, or what was taking place in the Punjab or the Frontier Province ?

Should we forget our humanity and return a blow for a blow ? If some misdirected individual took it into his head to desecrate a temple or break idols, should a Hindu in return desecrate a mosque on that account ? Did it any way help to protect the temple or to save the cause of Hinduism ? Personally, said Gandhiji, he was as much an idol-worshipper as an idol-breaker, and he suggested that the whole of the audience, whether Hindu, Muslim or any other, were also so, whether they admitted it or not. He knew that mankind thirsted for symbolism. Were not *masjids* or churches in reality the same as *mandirs* ? God resided everywhere, no less in stock or stone than in a single hair on the body of man. But men associated sacredness with particular places and things more than with others. Such sentiment was worthy of respect when it did not mean restrictions on similar freedom for others. To every Hindu and Mussalman, Gandhiji's advice was that if there was compulsion anywhere, they should gently but

firmly refuse to submit to it. Personally, he himself would hug an idol and lay down his life to protect it rather than brook any restriction upon his freedom of worship That required courage of a higher order than was needed in violent resistance

Gandhiji then narrated the story of Badshah Khan's conversion to non-violence The latter came from a tribe whose tradition was to return a blow for a blow, there being cases where blood feud had been handed down from sire to son Badshah Khan himself felt that such endless reprisals only served to perpetuate the slavery of the Pathans When he took to non-violence, he realized a kind of transformation coming over the Pathan tribes It did not mean that every Pathan had undergone the transformation or that Badshah Khan, who was endearingly called a *fakir* because he had won the heart of everybody by love and service, had himself reached the highest goal of non-violence As far as he, the speaker, knew, he (Badshah Khan) was every day nearing the goal because he realized the truth of it. It was this type of brave non-violence which Gandhiji wished the audience to imitate

Gandhiji continued that he had come to Bihar in order to help the people in realizing the extent of the madness to which they had stooped His object was to induce them to repent and thus undo the wrongs which had been perpetrated The ruined houses of the Muslim families, he had just visited, had almost brought tears to his eyes. But he had steeled his heart and had come to teach the Hindu his duty towards his Muslim brother. True repentance required true courage And Bihar, which had risen to great heights during the satyagraha in Champaran and which was the land over which the Buddha had roamed and taught, was surely capable once more of rising to heights from which it could radiate its effulgence over the rest of India. Only unadulterated non-violence could raise it to that status.

Gandhiji added that, in his opinion, the departure from the straight path of non-violence they had made at times in 1942 was very probably responsible for the aberration to which he had referred. He instanced also the spirit of

general lawlessness which had seized them inasmuch as they dared to travel without tickets, pull chains unlawfully or in senseless vindictiveness, and burnt zamindari crops or belongings. He was no lover of the zamindari system. He had often spoken against it; but he frankly confessed that he was not an enemy of the zamindars. He owned no enemies. The best way to bring about reform in the economic and social systems, whose evils were admittedly many, was through the royal road of self-suffering. Any departure from it only resulted in merely changing the form of the evil that was sought to be liquidated violently. Violence was incapable of destroying the evil root and branch.

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SUICIDAL MENTALITY

Gandhiji visited the ruined Muslim homes of the village of Pasa before he reached the prayer ground at Ebbadulah Chawk. He began his address by a reference to the sight which had just greeted his eyes and he expressed surprise at the madness which had temporarily swept over the otherwise peaceful inhabitants of Bihar. To anyone who felt that Bihar was avenging Noakhali by what it did, he would firmly say that this was not the way of vengeance. The mentality which made one section of Indians look upon another as enemies was suicidal; it could only serve to perpetuate their slavery. In the end, such a mentality might even lead a person into the parochial feeling, when he would prize the freedom of his own village above everything else, if that were at all possible. What he really wanted every Indian to develop was the sense that an evil deed committed anywhere in India was the concern of every other Indian. Each should hold himself personally responsible for it and share the burden of undoing the wrong. Any other course could only lead them to happenings which the Punjab was witnessing today.

Invitations had come to him to leave Bihar in charge of the people's representatives and proceed to the Punjab for the restoration of peace. But Gandhiji did not consider himself so vain as to think that he could serve everywhere. He considered himself to be an humble instrument in the hands of God. His hope was to do or die in the quest for peace and amity between the sister communities in Bihar and Bengal. And he could only go away when both the communities had become friendly with one another and no longer needed his services. In spite of the fact that he could not see his way of going to the Punjab, he hoped that his voice would reach the Hindus, the Mussalmans and the Sikhs of that province, who should try to put an end to the senseless savagery which had gripped them in its hold.

Gandhiji then appealed to the local villagers to restore all the property looted from Muslim homes. They should also clean up the debris that had been created by their mischief and make it possible for their Muslim neighbours to return home quickly and safely. Incidentally, he drew the attention of the audience to the fact that the village he had visited was as filthy as could be imagined. He wanted all villagers to volunteer their services, set the paths right, fill up the ditches and replace them by gardens for the recreation of the inhabitants and, in short, convert the dung-heaps into abodes of peace and happiness. They could at least begin with those villages which had been laid waste by their insane anger against their Muslim brothers.

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NON-VIOLENCE OF THE STRONG

Khusrupur is one of the small towns where the comparatively prosperous Muslim residents were subjected to concentrated attack Prior to arrival at the prayer ground Gandhiji visited several such ruined homes and, when he began his address after the prayer, he appealed to the audience to lend him not only their ears but also their hearts.

His aim was the restoration of the old feelings which formerly prevailed among the Bihari Hindus and Mussalmans. Then it could be said of them that they did not merely live like brothers, but were veritably as brothers and sisters to one another. Now and then there might have been differences and even quarrels, but it never went to the point when heart was rent from heart, as it seemed to be now. Painful things had happened which it was even difficult for him to relate, but then he wanted them to keep such happenings in the background and think of what their duty was in the present context.

There were only two ways lying before the country: the course that the Punjab seemed to have taken of returning blow for blow, and the other, of unadulterated non-violence. Referring to the method of violence, Gandhiji said that some sort of peace might perhaps be established in the province by means of force He would hope, but it could never be said with confidence, that the evil would not spread throughout India, as it happened in the case of 1857. Similar things, as we know, had happened during the Sepoy War when it was quelled by means of superior arms. Outwardly, things quieted down but the hatred against an imposed rule went deep underground, with the result that we are even today reaping the harvest of what was then sown. The British Government took the place of the East India Company. They established schools and law courts and Indians took to these with enthusiasm; they even co-operated in the diffusion of Western culture; but, in spite

of all this, they could never bear the insult or the degradation involved in political subjugation Similarly, but in a worse manner, if the Punjab quietened down by reason of superior force used against the people of the Punjab, the seed of further quarrel and bitterness between brothers and sisters that the Hindus and the Muslims were, would go still deeper Violence, continued Gandhiji, thus could never be ended by counter-violence The only effective alternative to it was the way of non-violence Bihar has had a lesson of it in Champaran in 1917, but he could perhaps say at this distance of time that although the farmers who were responsible for the movement were soon disciplined to stay their hands while non-co-operating with the English planters, their non-violence was the non-violence of the weak Now that Indians were fighting violently as between brother and brother, such non-violence could be of no avail, only non-violence of the strong could prove really effective

That required as the first step, that there should be true repentance, based not on bravado but on the genuine feeling that the right had to be done by those who had suffered from our momentary madness Gandhiji wished everyone not to be swayed by his personal influence or by reason of his past services but think calmly and with sufficient detachment, and, if they felt that the way of non-violence appealed to their head and heart, then they should come forward for the reparation of the injury done to the Muslim brother

The secretary of the Provincial Muslim League, who had been good enough to come to him, had complained that although the Government had made arrangement for repatriations the mental attitude of the Hindus was not sufficiently reassuring Gandhiji firmly said that the reality had to be faced and a determined effort made by everyone of them to root out the least trace of the feeling of hostility and make it possible for their Muslim neighbours to live in brotherly love once more

He proceeded by saying that if the Bihari Hindus did not honestly feel like it and imagined that the way of violence alone was the proper answer to the challenge of

the times, then let them say so frankly and truthfully. He would not be hurt by the truth but would prefer not to live and see the day when the method of non-violence was thus beaten. It did not matter where he laid down his life for bringing about his cherished aim; anywhere in India would still be India for him. But he still hugged the hope that non-violence would surely be crowned by victory in the end; for, in the example which Bihar might set in this line today, lay future hope of peace and progress for our unhappy land.

Harijan, 30-3-1947

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HONOUR THE PLEDGE

Gandhiji had gone on a visit to the Governor about an hour before prayer time from where he returned five minutes late to the prayer ground. When he began his address he first referred to that visit and said that people might naturally be interested to learn why he had gone there. For him it was a courtesy call because he could not go expecting any favours or services from the Governor as of yore. Under a responsible Government, which theirs was, services and favours he could expect only from the Ministers who were the representatives of the people. The Governor had undoubtedly powers with reference to the minorities but these too he could exercise only with great restraint. What he discussed was for him to communicate to the Ministers. One thing, however, the speaker was free to tell them. To his agreeable surprise the Governor had said that those who were responsible to the people had to begin with themselves. Unless they began with their individual lives and showed relative perfection, they could not be real reformers or servants of the people.

Gandhiji wanted people also to disabuse themselves of the thought that they had usurped power from the British. Non-violent non-co-operation did not admit of any such assumption. What they performed was a simple duty.

The result undoubtedly was that the British naturally and voluntarily divested themselves of much authority and powers, and it was up to them to do their duty along the lines of non-violence, if they were to have complete power in and for the people. The late events in Bihar were a departure from that right conduct and, if the truth was not recognized and the infection of the Punjab spread, he had not a shadow of doubt that they would lose what was within their grasp. He, therefore, expected Bihar to recognize the fact and do its duty honourably and well.

He then proceeded to relate his experiences during the three short visits which he had paid to the neighbouring villages. It was painful for him to find the homes in the same condition as when the rioters had left them. If they wanted their Muslim neighbours to come back, it was necessary that proper conditions should be restored and the debris completely cleared. Every individual who felt it was his duty to make the return of the refugees smooth, could at once lend a hand in rendering the broken homes habitable once more.

Gandhiji then referred to the healthy competition which had been noticed among the rural people for contributing towards the relief fund. In quantity the collections might have fallen short of what went to the credit of the inhabitants of Bankipore, but quantity was there made up by quality, for most of the rural contributions were made up of very small sums of money.

He then told the audience what promises he had made on their behalf to the Muslim sufferers who had come to him in the course of the day. He had assured them, in their name, that a repetition of the recent tragedy was impossible in Bihar. He had assured a flourishing Muslim merchant that he should not be afraid of restarting his business in full confidence, for he was sure that the Bihari Hindu would honour that pledge.

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TRUE REPENTANCE

The gathering at Masurhi was, according to official estimates, more than thirty thousand. Gandhiji told them that his Bihar tour had not been undertaken for pleasure, but on account of serious and grave reasons. He would visit those places where Muslims had suffered His appeal to the Hindus was to show repentance by means of worthy and suitable acts.

During the mad days of November, women and children were remorselessly murdered, while men had also been done to death in such numbers as to put Noakhali in the shade, although events there also had been of a sufficiently serious character. He expected the Hindus of Bihar to show true repentance and not merely shout *Jai* or victory in his name He not only expected them to contribute liberally towards the relief fund but what he expected them to do more was that they should come forward and confess at least to him the wrongs that they had done. This alone could bring him true peace of mind.

Gandhiji said that he had asked for reports of events from various sources. One of them stated that the initial aggression had been from the side of the Mussalmans. He was not at all concerned how the trouble 'actually started. The problem was, as the Hindus were in such overwhelming majority, how could they stoop so low as to indulge in murdering the innocents? True repentance, with the consequent reparatory action, alone could restore abiding peace between the two sister communities.

The report also accused the Government of indifference to wrongs suffered by the Hindus at the hands of the Muslims. Similar reports had also been received from Muslim quarters complaining of indifference to Muslim complaints. Gandhiji continued that he was slow to believe either report. A popular Government that was so indifferent or partial one way or the other, could not exist for any length of time.

The Government had already declared that they would presently appoint an impartial Commission to hear all complaints, examine the causes of the terrible disturbances and discover ways and means for avoiding repetition of the tragedy. They would also advise as to the reparation to be made to the sufferers. Let those who had sent their letters to him, he continued, be ready with their evidence to be put before the Commission. His was not the way of a judge or of a prosecutor. His was the humble role of a reformer and humanitarian. He had, therefore, to deal with known facts and invite offenders to repent for their follies.

Harijan, 6-4-1947

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MY INCESSANT PRAYER

Gandhiji referred to his visit to Masurhi and described with emotion the wreckage he had witnessed. He pointed out that he had read about the happenings in Masurhi in the Muslim League report which, he regretted to have to say, he had believed to be grossly exaggerated. But he had to confess now that much of the description about Masurhi seemed to him to be borne out. And what one read, however honest it might be, was wholly different in effect from the actual sight. He was told that the tragedy was largely due to the excitement caused by the observance of Noakhali Day. He was told, too, that the Muslims of Bihar were perturbed by the talk that was going about that the Punjab Day was to be observed on the 23rd. He hoped that it was a mere rumour which had no foundation in fact. Such an observance anywhere would mean a clear invitation for mutual slaughter between brother and brother. He had told the Muslim friends that if such a misfortune took place in Bihar. he would want to perish in the flames. His incessant prayer to God was that He would not keep him alive to witness such an awful and disgraceful scene.

Gandhiji then read two letters which he had received on the way to Bir from the adjacent villages. One was from Sain and the other from Barni. He wished that the friendly spirit running through the letters which were described to have come from the Hindu and Muslim residents of the villages would become universal.

Harijan, 6-4-1947

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EXPIATION

Gandhiji commenced with a reference to his visit to Garahwan village where men, women and children had been brutally done to death, and asked those assembled before him to sit in mournful silence in sympathy with the deceased. He asked them to consider for themselves why innocent women and children had been killed. Was it to save any religion ? No religion, Gandhiji emphasized, taught anyone to kill his neighbours. What was done was nothing but wanton destruction—he did not stop to think whether it was done from motives of self-interest or any other.

The houses which a few months ago were full of life, Gandhiji said, were now desolate and everyone knew about it. But then what was to be done next ? People went to bathe in the Ganga, believing that their sins could thus be washed off. The ruins before them should remind them of the sin they had committed on helpless women and children, and they should seek to expiate it by considering in what way they could redeem themselves. Gandhiji told them that they should clean the ruined houses and make them neat and habitable. They should also express to their Muslim brethren their repentance for the past occurrences and persuade them to return to their villages, telling them that then alone they would have peace of mind. It was possible that the Muslims might turn round and ask how they could go back and live in the houses where their kith and kin had been done to death. The Muslims, Gandhiji said, would be justified in saying so. But, if the guilty

men or their relations could go to the Muslims with truly penitent hearts and assure them that what was past was past and would never be repeated, he was sure that even a stony heart would melt.

Amidst this mad upheaval, Gandhiji continued, there were men, like oasis in a desert, who risked the wrath of the violent mobs and saved many Muslim lives and Muslim property. Those people deserved congratulations, though they did not need any. If he did not go to them, he said, it did not mean that he had not recognized their work. But he was in the nature of a doctor who went not to the well but to the suffering.

He had been told, Gandhiji proceeding said, that the Hindus had also suffered in the conflict. If there were any such, they too needed help and would be included in the relief

Gandhiji mentioned that about fifty persons, who were wanted in connection with the riot cases, had surrendered the day after his arrival at Masurhi. He welcomed it and hoped that others who had taken part in the riots would surrender to the proper authorities, making a clean breast of the crimes they had committed and taking whatever punishment might be given to them. If people had not the courage to surrender to the authorities, he said, they could come to him or Badshah Khan or Major General Shah Nawaz with their confessions.

Lastly, Gandhiji referred to the fear entertained by the Hindus of Noakhali about preparations that were being made by the Muslims to observe Pakistan Day on the 23rd instant. A friend from Khadi Pratishthan had also come to him and explained to him that the situation in Noakhali was deteriorating. He said that he had told that friend that he would not be persuaded to leave his post in Bihar at the present moment, for he believed that his mission, if fully successful in Bihar, would cast its effect on Bengal and perhaps on the rest of India. The Muslims of Bihar and the Hindus of Bengal should accept him as security for the safety of their life and property from the hands of the communalists. He had come here, Gandhiji said, to do

or die. Therefore, there was no question of abandoning his post of duty till the Hindus and the Muslims could assure him that they did not need his services.

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THE AIM OF LIFE

Gandhiji's weekly silence having commenced, his written message in Hindustani was read out to the congregation after the prayers. It was his earnest prayer that those who were present and those others whom his voice could reach should understand the aim of life. The aim of life was that they should serve the Power that had created them, and on Whose mercy or consent depended their very breath, by heartily serving Its creation. That meant love, not hate which one saw everywhere. They had forgotten that aim and were either actually fighting each other or preparing for that fight. If they could not escape that calamity, they should regard India's independence as an impossible dream. If they thought that they would get independence by the simple fact of the British power quitting the land, they were sadly mistaken. The British were leaving India. But if they continued fighting one another, some other power or powers would step in. If they thought they could fight the whole world with its weapons, it was a folly.

A friend had written, continued Gandhiji, that a sort of peace seemed to have been established in the Punjab through military occupation. That peace was the peace of the grave. The people were silently preparing for an open and deadlier fight. Weapons were being collected. After that even the military would find it impossible to control the people. It was his firm conviction that the peace established with the aid of the military or the police would be no peace. True peace would come only when at least one side, if not both, adopted the true bravery that non-violence gave.

Bihar had realized, said Gandhiji, that there was no bravery in killing women and children. It was sheer cowardice. It would be a grand thing if Bihar could manifest the true bravery of silent strength, and show thereby the true path of life to the whole world.

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NO ROOM FOR BOYCOTT

At today's prayer meeting perfect silence was observed by the audience to the end. Gandhiji congratulated them for it. He told them that he had heard that the Hindus were boycotting the Muslims. If that was so, it was a bad omen. True repentance demanded true friendship in which there could be no room for boycott. Hence, if they were truly repentant, they ought not to boycott the Muslims. He then referred to a visit of Muslim League friends who were prepared to co-operate in every way in rehabilitation and he added that without the co-operation of the League friends in Bihar, there could be no friendship which depended not on the bayonet but on mutual goodwill.

Gandhiji had a visit from a friend from Noakhali who had come to report that things had worsened there after his departure. He had replied that the work he was doing in Bihar could not but affect the Noakhali work for the better. He advised the Noakhali friend to report every misdeed to the proper authorities. Whatever came to his notice he would gladly pass on to the authorities with confidence. In any case he would advise them to be calm, courageous and to have faith in God as the true and only Helper.

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HOW GANDHIJI VIEWS HIS PEACE MISSION

[In the *Searchlight* of Patna of the 30th March 1947 appears a report of the proceedings of a meeting Gandhiji held at a refugees' camp in Bihar. The answers that he gave to the various demands of the refugees strikingly reveal his approach to the question of the restoration of peace and friendliness between the two communities. – ED.]

"As far as possible I have refrained from discussing the affairs in Noakhali in my speeches. But whenever I have had occasion to speak about Noakhali, I admit that I have spoken with great restraint. Do the Muslims want that I should not speak about the sins committed by them in Noakhali and that I should only speak about the sins of the Hindus in Bihar? If I do that, I shall be a coward. To me the sins of the Noakhali Muslims and the Bihar Hindus are of the same magnitude and equally condemnable," observed Gandhiji while replying to a series of grievances set forth in written memoranda which were submitted to him this morning by the local Muslim refugees at a camp here.

One memorandum suggested that Gandhiji's reference to the Noakhali incidents in his speeches instead of suppressing the Hindu feeling in Bihar would aggravate it. Gandhiji said that as the Muslims today generally considered him as their enemy, he was sometimes obliged to speak with restraint. In the Punjab worse things were happening and at first he did not believe the newspaper stories, but his subsequent enquiries made him believe that far more excesses than the newspapers reported, were being committed in the Punjab. Because it was the doing of a particular community, should he not speak about it? His mission could not be successful by such suppression, he said.

Gandhiji thereafter replying to another memorandum, which stated that the signatories had no confidence in the present Ministry, said: "I told the Hindus of Noakhali,

who also expressed such no confidence in Mr. Shaheed Suhrawardy, that they could not remove Saheed Saheb from the Ministry as he was returned by the separate electorate system So long as Saheed Saheb enjoys the confidence of the community he represents, no one can remove him. Similarly, how can you remove the Ministers when they have been sent by the Hindu electorate? This unfortunate situation has been created by the communal electorate system which, you know, I have always condemned. Dr Khan Saheb also said the same thing the other day that so long as he enjoyed the confidence of the Pathans there was no question of resignation Moreover, what will happen if the Ministry goes out? There will again be the rule of the bureaucratic government That apart, I can take good work from these Ministers as my relationship with them is most friendly"

Referring to the demand that fifty per cent of the officers and constables put in charge of new *thanas* should be Muslims, Gandhiji replied "I disapproved of t e very same demand of the Noakhali Hindus This demand cuts across my peace mission If conceded this will mean so many small Pakistans and a division i t Bihar After all, wherever you live, you have to live by creating mutual goodwill and friendly relations with your neighbours Even the Qaid-e-Azam once said that in the Pakistan areas the majority must so behave as to win the confidence of the minority In the same manner, I am urging upon the Hindus here to win your confidence Either Pakistan or Hindustan, whichever is established, it must be based on justice and fairplay"

Referring to another demand that the Muslims may be allowed to resettle in certain exclusive areas, Gandhiji said "You cannot force the Government to keep you in certain exclusive areas. Could I tell that to Saheed Saheb for the Noakhali Hindus? I never gave any encouragement to the Noakhali Hindus for such a move I told the Hindus of Noakhali that if they were afraid, they could go anywhere if they got compensation And why should the Government not pay compensation when they got the

properties? Similarly, I will tell you to go anywhere provided you get adequate compensation. But I must tell you that it is not my heart's desire. Leaving your homestead in such a manner is nothing but cowardice. If the Government is not prepared to pay compensation, I should say it is unworthy of them and the Government cannot refuse it. Moreover, if the Ministers who have been returned by the Hindu votes say that the Hindus here have gone beyond control, it is better for them to consume themselves in the flames of the Hindu rage rather than continue in office. The Government has to do justice and cannot afford injustice in any manner.

Gandhiji thereafter referred to the Muslim grievances as put forward in the memorandum regarding the reported appointment of Mr. Justice Rueben to conduct the Bihar Riots Enquiry. Gandhiji said. "The memorandum suggested that the Muslims had no faith in Mr. Rueben. But they never suggested whom they wanted. We must have faith in some non-Muslim as Mr. Justice Rueben was. There is no harm in the One Man Commission. If the Muslims want, they can submit a panel of names from which the committee should be appointed. Then I can inform the authorities."

With regard to the demand of restoration and finding out of abducted women, Gandhiji said: "Since my arrival in Bihar I have been telling all those Muslims who told me about the abducted girls to give me the names and the family connections of such girls in order to help finding them out if they were still alive. But up till now not one name has been submitted to me. I again ask you to submit the names of the unfortunate girls."

In the meeting place within the refugee camp, Mahant Bhagwat Das, M L. A., was also present against whom the Muslims brought forward charges that he infuriated the Hindu mob during the riots. Shree Bhagwat Das then stood up and told Gandhiji that he was innocent and asked the Muslims to bring forward specific instances to prove the charge. To the greatest satisfaction of Gandhiji, Shree Bhagwat Das said: "Gandhiji, I am prepared to face any enquiry and I suggest that the Muslims themselves form

an enquiry committee and judge me and my conduct during the riots I have full confidence in those persons who are accusing me and let them judge my conduct"

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IS HINDU REPENTANCE NOT OPEN AND SINCERE?

At the prayer meeting Gandhiji began by saying that he had passed a very full and heavy day The day was begun with a long meeting with the members of the local Muslim League at the bungalow of Mr Azharul Haq, local League leader He was with them for over an hour and had a hearty chat with them answering all kinds of questions. Then he had a meeting at his residential quarters with Hindus and Muslims belonging to Jehanabad and the surrounding villages He had then a meeting with the Congressmen which included members of the various Congress Committees Later he met the members of the local Hindu Mahasabha Finally he had a heart to heart talk with over 25 members of the police force on strike Then at half past three again he visited the villages of Malathi, Gangasagar, Bola and Allahganj, in which Muslims had suffered badly

Referring to his visit to the villages, Gandhiji said that naturally he was full of topics on which he wanted to speak and bespeak their attention He was sorry to say that Hindu repentance was not open and sincere enough to inspire confidence among the Muslims He had told the afternoon meeting that it was open to representative Hindus who were present at the meeting to disabuse the Muslims of their suspicion He was sorry to say that not one Hindu got up to give the needed assurance. He had not the heart, therefore, to ask his Muslim hearers whether they (the Hindus) had cleansed their hearts. They were the injured party in Bihar and it was not open to any one to expect a satisfactory answer from them unless the guilty Hindu party

had led the way by repentance There were yet ring leaders like Mathura Singh roaming about and successfully evading arrest There was, therefore, little cause for wonder if the Muslims were afraid to return to their respective villages Gandhiji said that he could not help feeling that the culprit could not long remain at large if the Hindu population did not give him shelter He asked Mathura Singh's friends and sympathizers to advise him to discover himself and face the consequences of his action He would also like to tell him that it was no act of bravery for him to evade arrest. He was thus rendering a disservice to himself, his religion and his country He suggested to the Congressmen, in whose midst the inhumanities were enacted, that they could not free themselves, unless they made every effort to induce all the culprits to come out into the open to wash their guilt as publicly as they had committed the crimes

Continuing, Gandhiji said that he had visited a mosque in the village Bola which was damaged during the disturbances He was told that on the *Holi* day the mosque was again desecrated by some villagers who played *Holi* inside the mosque premises. If it was true, Gandhiji said, it was undoubtedly a notice given by them to the Muslims not to enter their homes even when they were rebuilt nor dare to visit the mosque. If this reported desecration on the *Holi* day was a fact, it was a bad omen for the Hindus, for Bihar and for the whole country

Gandhiji went on to say that he had heard at the Muslim League meeting in the morning and at the meeting of the Hindus and the Muslims in the afternoon that Mahant Bhagwat Das who was a member of the Bihar Legislative Assembly was himself a participator in the crime and was himself present at both the meetings The speaker advised him whilst he was under suspicion to give up his membership. He was glad to say that Mahant Bhagwat Das, without a moment's hesitation, welcomed the advice and promised at once to act up to it. He also added that he was in no way a participator directly or indirectly in the crime and that he was quite ready to face an open, impartial enquiry to be made by the Muslim League itself. If it was

a sincere declaration, Gandhiji said, it was certainly a refreshing thing at a time when there was no real sign of sincere sorrow and repentance on the part of the Hindus in the affected areas. This he was obliged to say in spite of welcome letters of repentance to which he had made reference at the previous evening's meeting.

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THE MESSAGE OF ASIA

Addressing the concluding session of the Inter-Asian Relations Conference on Wednesday the 2nd of April, 1947, in the *Purana Quila* at Delhi, Gandhiji said:

I was wondering as to what I was to speak to you. I wanted to collect my thoughts but, let me confess to you, 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 from me that that piece of paper is not by my 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.

If you really want to see India at its best, you have to find it in the humble *bhangi* homes of the villages. There are 7,00,000 of such villages and 38 crores of people inhabit them.

If some of you see the 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 ever were places of paradise. Today they are really dung heaps. They were not like that before. What I speak is not from history but from what I have seen myself. I have travelled from one end of India to the other and have seen the miserable

specimens of humanity with lustreless eyes. They are India. In these humble cottages, in the midst of these dung heaps, are to be found the humble *bhangis* in whom you find the concentrated essence of wisdom.

Stating that wisdom had come to the West from the East, Gandhiji said. 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. After Jesus came Mohammed. I omit my reference to Krishna and Rama and other lights I do not call them lesser lights but they are less known to the literary world. All the same I do not know a single person in the world to match these men of Asia.

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 to be learnt through 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 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 for wisdom. It is despairing of a multiplication of atom bombs, because 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

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SHED ALL SAVAGERY

There was a slight disturbance at the prayer meeting in Delhi this evening when an excited Hindu youth took exception to the recitation from the *Quran* in the course of the prayer. Gandhiji stopped the prayer for some time, while the boy was removed from the prayer ground.

Though with the removal of the youth there was no occasion, Gandhiji said, to make any variation in the recital of the whole prayer including the Zoroastrian verses, the *bhajan* and the *Ramadhun*, he wanted to waive the recital and bring home to the youth that his supposed victory was really the loss of the entire audience, who wanted the whole prayer. His act was not only un-Hindu but it was a discourteous breach of the ordinary laws governing meetings. Thoughtless action, such as the youth had indulged in, really promoted illwill resulting in the inhumanities they had witnessed on a progressive scale in Noakhali, Bihar and in the Punjab. It was time, therefore, that the people made a fixed determination to shed all savagery.

Gandhiji went on to say how he had to hang his head in shame in Noakhali when he was told of the cruelties perpetrated on the Muslims in Bihar. And now, as if in answer to Bihar, comes the tragedy of the Punjab. Death, Gandhiji said, was a companion and friend. It was well with those who had died bravely Whether any died as cowards was immaterial now. They too were gone. But it was the guilty living who were responsible and they were responsible to God. He alone knows the hearts of men.

Gandhiji exhorted the people to shed violence and the law of the jungle. He was in Bihar trying to restore confidence in the Muslims and love in the hearts of the Hindus. He felt that he was succeeding and, if he did, then, all

would be well elsewhere too. It was a tragedy that in the India that had fought with the weapons of truth and *ahimsa* for its freedom, there should today be the law of the brute. They were belying all that the Congress had stood for.

Never in history, Gandhiji went on to say, had a ruling power left any dominion of its own free will. This was what the British were trying to do today. It was right to believe that they were honest whatever their past record here had been. But were Indians going to demean themselves by internal warfare? Such action might even lead to the consequence of their asking British troops to remain on Indian soil in order to maintain order. He hoped they would not resort to such madness.

Gandhiji then referred to the Asian Conference then being held. It was a big thing and their jewel, Jawaharlal† was very beloved of the delegates because of his love for them and his dream of a United Asia. Only, however, if India was true to her traditions could she be worthy of the role she ought to play. It would be cruel to spoil Jawaharlal's dream of a United Asia by internal strife in this land.

Gandhiji concluded his address by saying that there could be no end to strife until and unless they made over their hearts to God. Today he felt that he himself had no following. If he had, then these tragedies would not have happened; but even if all deserted him, he knew God would not and He would direct him in his duty. Only when God reigned in men's hearts would they be able to shed their anger.

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† Jawahar means jewel. - Ed.

HEAL THE WOUNDS

Before starting the prayers Gandhiji stated that he had received a letter asking him either to discontinue recitations from the *Quran* or leave the Valmiki Temple (where he was staying). He asked the people present if there was any one among them who objected to the recitation of verses from the *Quran*. When a number of people raised their hands and said that they would not allow him to pray if verses from the *Quran* were recited, he decided not to hold the prayers.

In the course of his speech, Gandhiji asked the audience if they had understood the beauty and truth of what had been said the previous day. He said that he was not one to refrain from doing what he held to be his duty, but his non-violence dictated that even if a boy objected to his holding the prayer meeting, he should refrain from doing so. But this should in no way be interpreted as cowardice. He did not hold the prayers in order to prevent argument and violence. Violence, he said, was the work of the devil and all his life he had fought against it.

He added that he would ask those who were against his holding the prayer meeting not to come, or if they did, they should come by themselves and kill him if they wanted to. Even if he was killed, he said, he would not give up repeating the names of Rama and Rahim, which meant to him the same God. With these names on his lips he would die cheerfully.

If he refrained from repeating the names of Rama and Rahim how could he, Gandhiji asked, face the Hindus of Noakhali and the Muslims of Bihar?

He asked those who wanted the prayer to be held not to entertain anger or malice towards the obstructionists but to pity them. Anger and desire for revenge were no service to Hinduism, he said.

When the two sections of the audience began to quarrel among themselves as he was about to go away, Gandhiji addressed the crowd for about fifteen minutes standing. He said that anger would lead them nowhere. They should think how best they could heal the wounds of the Punjab, and not abuse anybody, as this was against their religion.

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A TRUE HINDU

There was only one person who objected to the prayers, with the verse from the *Quran Sharif*, being held in a Hindu temple. Gandhiji said that that was an objection which only the Harijans of that place could raise. The objectionist then withdrew his objection. The Harijans of the place, Gandhiji proceeding said, were sad at the happenings of the last three days. They were his younger brothers. He was a *bhangi* and it was the duty of a true *bhangi* and therefore a true Hindu to cleanse not only the dirt of the body but also all the pollution of the mind and the spirit. The true Hindu saw Truth in every religion. The essence of the *Quran* verse was found in every religion.

Gandhiji told them how friends from Rawalpindi had today come and narrated all the atrocities that had been perpetrated there. They wanted his service and his help and guidance. They could not understand the objection raised here to the recital of the *Quran* verse. Even Muslims had never stopped the holding of prayers even though some of them objected to the recital of the verse in question.

The *Vedas*, Gandhiji said, were from time immemorial. So were the *Upanishads*. But they were imperfectly known. Any impurities that had crept in any of the scriptures were due to the fact that they were written many years later. The Hindu religion was a great religion and had infinite toleration and powers of absorption in it. God was everywhere as the Harijan woman saint told her young

questioner. He was the ruler of men's hearts. He only wanted single-minded worship in whatsoever form and whatsoever language it be. It was, therefore, wholly un-Hindu and irreligious to object to the great verse from the *Quran Sharif* being recited.

The full prayer was then held After the prayer Gandhiji addressed the gathering again.

He said that it had hurt him much to think that on three days they had not been able to hold the prayer and hundreds had been disappointed because of the unenlightened objection of a few But, if prayer had been in their hearts, they really had not missed the worship. He himself was grateful to the objectors because they had given him ample opportunity for heart searching. He had asked himself whether, because he had not been able to calm them, there was anything against them in his heart If they had understood the inner meaning of the *bhajan* sung that day, they should have understood that it was right for them to take everything that came from God as a gift. Gandhiji felt glad that he had gone through the test Even if three or four had said that they would kill him for saying Rama and Rahim in the same breath, he hoped he would die smiling with those very names on his lips.

Gandhiji went on to say how in Noakhali it was difficult to have the *Ramadhun* but there too he was able to continue his customary worship. All would be well if there was no anger or malice in their hearts. How could it be a sin to chant God's name in Arabic? Gandhiji implored them not to degrade Hinduism by not understanding their immortal scriptures Everyone should be at liberty to pray as he liked.

Some people imagined that he was engaged in big tasks here and had forgotten the suffering areas. God alone knew how his heart wept and what agony he suffered at the madness the people had indulged in in Noakhali, Bihar and now in the Punjab. He assured them that he was working for those areas wherever he was, even in his talks with the Viceroy. There was no bigger task for him than to strive for Hindu-Muslim unity. He could not serve India

if he forgot Noakhali, Bihar or the Punjab. He claimed to be a servant of God. He neither ate nor drank nor did anything else except at God's bidding They would, perhaps, understand his work better in the fullness of time. Meantime he must continue his duty wherever God took him.

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THE NATIONAL WEEK

Before commencing the prayer, Gandhiji again asked whether there was anyone amongst the gathering who would rather that he did not conduct the customary prayer. There were no objectors and Gandhiji was glad. He reminded them once again of the folly of looking upon one religion as better than another. The recent happenings were due, he was sure, to the atmosphere of hate that pervaded the land today. If they remained calm in the midst of the storm, then only would they grow in strength. He reminded them of how Maulana Mohammed Ali, in the good old days of the Khilafat movement when the Hindu and the Muslim fought side by side, had said that their mightiest weapon was the charkha and their most potent bullets the cones of yarn which they span Gandhiji had pointed out that the Congress could only join the Khilafat movement if they would fight non-violently and the condition had been gladly accepted in the name of Allah. It was the result of that non-violent fight that India was today on the threshold of independence

He went on to remind the audience that the next day was the beginning of the National Week. He related how the thought of a 24 hours' fast had come to him one night in a dream, how he had consulted Rajaji whose guest he then was in Madras, how the idea had appealed to the latter, how notices had been issued at once and what a widespread and hearty response there had been to the call. He had never dreamt that the country

had been so awakened, and by the country he meant not the few cities of India but the seven lakhs of villages where the vast mass of Indian humanity lived. Gandhiji appealed to the audience to respond to the call once again but only if they understood its implications. The fast was undertaken in those days for the sake of vindicating Swaraj through Hindu-Muslim unity, and the charkha, etc. Today alas! all that the Congress tricolour stood for, viz. Hindu-Muslim-Sikh unity and the charkha were nowhere to be found except in his humble hut. He, however, asked the assemblage, in any event, to contemplate on what internal strife meant, to forgive and forget what had happened and to bear no malice in their hearts for all the tragic and bestial happenings of Noakhali, Bihar and the Punjab. He still believed more strongly than ever that the spinning wheel was the truest symbol of non-violence. It was the one thing that never failed through its music to give solace to the mind and soothe the troubled heart. If, therefore, they truly desired to extinguish the volcano of hatred that was that day pouring out its poisonous lava, he hoped they would join him in fasting in the true spirit. The fast signified much more than processions and flag-hoisting ceremonies.

The whole of India, Gandhiji said, could be a Pakistan if they looked upon every fellow Indian as a brother. If Hindustan meant a land only for the Hindus and Pakistan only for the Muslims, Pakistan and Hindustan would then be lands flowing with poison. The land of his dreams, he said, was a land watered by rivers of love.

In conclusion, Gandhiji said that he had received a letter, which he would release to the Press, from the Rashtriya Seva Sangha, that they had nothing to do with the raising of objections to the prayer on the three previous days. He was glad to hear that and believed it. No organization could protect life or religion if it did not work absolutely in the open.

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WHAT WOULD VIOLENCE BRING ?

Addressing the prayer gathering, Gandhiji drew their attention to the lovely Bengali *bhajan* to which they had been treated that evening as also to the *Ramadhun* which included the names of both Rama and Rahim, Krishna and Karim. As these were being sung, he said, the vistas of Noakhali came before his eyes. That *bhajan* was often sung there. Sometimes it was sung and the *Ramadhun* chanted as they walked from village to village.

The day was the first day of the National Week—a day of fasting and prayer. There was sacrificial spinning also from 3 p. m. to 4 p. m. in which the Congress President and his wife, and Jawaharlalji and other leaders took part. The fast would soon be broken but how good it would be, said Gandhiji, if the names of Rama and Rahim and the message of the *bhajan* were engraved in their hearts for all time as a result of that day's rededication ! He went on to say how some abused him, how some thought he had grown too big even to reply to their letters, and how others accused him of enjoying himself in Delhi while the Punjab was in flames. How could these persons understand that he was working day and night for them wherever he was ? He could not dry their tears. God alone could do that, but he would go at once to the Punjab when the call came. It grieved him to sense the existing hatred and spirit of revenge and warned them that unless they calmed and purified their hearts, they would light such a fire throughout the land as would consume them all. He reminded them of the story of the *Mahabharata* which was not a history of India but of man. It was the story of the fight between the worshippers of Rama, the embodiment of good, and Ravan, the embodiment of evil. They fought—the Pandavas and the Kauravas—blood-brothers, and what was the result ? While evil was certainly defeated only seven of the victors remained

to tell the tale. This, said Gandhiji, was the state of the country today.

He made a touching reference to the brave old Nationalist Muslim Khwaja Abdul Majid, who had come to see him that day. Would that those good old days when heart-unity between the Hindus and the Muslims existed returned! Today in Bihar Nationalist Muslims had been killed by the Hindus and Hindu friends of Islam had been done to death by Muslims.

Gandhiji exhorted the audience to pause and think where they were drifting. He begged of the Hindus not to harbour anger in their hearts against the Muslims even if the latter wanted to destroy them. None should fear death. Death was inevitable for every human being. But if they died smiling, they would enter into a new life—they would create a new Hindustan. The second chapter of the *Gita* described in its ending *shlokas* how the God-fearing man should live and move and have his being. He wanted them to read, mark, learn and inwardly digest the meaning of every one of those *shlokas*. They would then realize what their ideals were and how far short of them they had fallen today. On the eve of independence it was their duty to ask themselves whether they were fit to have it and sustain it.

Harijan, 20-4-1947

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VENGEANCE BELONGS TO GOD

Gandhiji began by saying that he continued to receive letters accusing him of having become a slave of Jinnah Saheb and a fifth columnist. But he was impervious to such outpourings. The *shlokas* of the *Gita* to which they listened every day were always with him to sustain him and he was sure his accusers did not know or understand them. It was because he was a *sanatani* (orthodox) Hindu that he claimed to be a Christian, a Buddhist and a Muslim. Some Muslim friends also felt that he had no right to read

Arabic verses from the *Quran* but such did not know that true religion transcended language and scripture. He did not see any reason why he should not read the *Kalma*. why he should not praise Allah and why he should not acclaim Mohammed as His Prophet. He believed in all the great prophets and saints of every religion. He would continue to ask God to give him the strength not to be angry with his accusers but to be prepared even to die at their hands without wishing them ill. He claimed that Hinduism was all inclusive and he was sure that if he lived up to his convictions, he would have served not only Hinduism but Islam also.

Gandhiji said how he had reluctantly on his day of silence, which was an extra busy day for him, given a few minutes to a Hindu from Rawalpindi, who had come with a sorrowful tale of the happenings there. It was a tragedy that the Rawalpindi which he remembered where the Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs vied with each other to give him and the Ali Brothers hospitality, had today become unsafe for any non-Muslim. The Hindus in the Punjab had anger burning within them. The Sikhs said they were disciples of Guru Govind Singh who had taught them to use the sword But he would again and again plead with the Hindus and the Sikhs on no account to retaliate. He dared to say that even if the Hindus and the Sikhs died without retaliation at the hands of their Muslim brethren, they would save not only Hinduism and Sikhism but they would also serve Islam and save the world.

For thirty years, Gandhiji said, he had preached the gospel of *satya* and *ahimsa* to them. For twenty years he had done likewise in South Africa He was sure Indians in South Africa were the richer for following him there, and here too those who had followed truth and non-violence had lost nothing. It was his profession to teach the people to leave the ephemeral for the real. If he went to the Punjab, it could not be to preach revenge. That would be a disservice to both the Hindus and the Sikhs and also to the Muslims. The Bible rightly taught that vengeance belonged to God. Gandhiji continued that he could not understand

a Pakistan where no non-Muslim could live in peace and security, nor a Hindustan where the Muslims were unsafe. He had been to Bihar and tried to wean the Hindus from their anger and restore confidence in the Muslims. The Ministers there were anxious to repair the terrible wrongs done to the poor Muslims by the Hindus. Rajendra Babu was the uncrowned king of Bihar. The Congress rule, which should exercise its influence equally on the Hindus and the Muslims, could not be truly national if the Muslims could not feel safe under it. Therefore, he was glad that many Hindus in Bihar had publicly expressed their regret for the shameful deeds done by the Hindus and assured him that such deeds would not be repeated. He would appeal to the Muslim leaders likewise to ask their fellow Muslims in the Muslim majority provinces not to try to wipe out the non-Muslims. Whatever provocative language the Hindus and the Sikhs used in the Punjab—he was told that they had done so—that was no reason whatsoever for the orgy of cruelty perpetrated by mad Muslims in areas where they were in the majority.

Gandhiji went on to state that he was sorry to receive bad news from Noakhali especially during the last two days. Satish Babu and his wife and his own immediate staff were all in Eastern Bengal and he would not shed a tear if any of them were to perish in the flames there But he hoped that the wire he had sent to his friend, the Chief Minister of Bengal, would have the desired effect of stopping the loot and arson which seemed to be rearing their heads once again in Noakhali.

Gandhiji reiterated that it was wrong and cowardly to ask for either military or police protection. They should have the bravery of non-violence which feared not death. Otherwise, there was nothing for them except to flee from their homes, but that would not be bravery.

Those who wept when catastrophes came were slaves and those who asked for military protection would remain slaves. Gandhiji hoped the people would neither go in for civil war nor elect to remain slaves. The former would mean that India would lend a hand not only to her own

destruction but to the destruction of the world Was the land that was bounded by the immortal Himalayas and watered by the healing stream of the Ganga going to destruction through violence ? He devoutly hoped that they would give up all thought of huge armies. Those would lead them nowhere and their independence would then be nothing worth

Harijan 27-4-1947

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ONLY ONE TOPIC

Gandhiji began his talk by saying that he had only one topic on which to address them those days and that was their sorrowful plight He hoped that his daily words would reach their hearts and cleanse them of anger against each other

The day before he had referred to the distressing news he had received from Noakhali. They must have seen the wires and his reply in that morning's papers During the day a further wire had come from Satish Babu saying that the situation was worsening Nevertheless, he and all the co-workers there assured him that they did not expect him to return, and that so far all the Hindus were brave and willing to die if necessary without killing They felt this was the result of all their endeavour during the past months All these workers were living in different villages He had mentioned Satish Babu and his wife and Pyarelal the day before There was Haran Babu doing great work in Chaumuhani There was Amtul Salaam—physically frail but a true Muslim and a Hindu too There was Sushila Pai and twentyone year old Abha who was wedded to Kanu Gandhi There was Sushila Nayyar. All these were unafraid They refused to believe that the Muslims would be so merciless as to murder them. Gandhiji hoped that the selfless service rendered by all these workers would teach the wildest of Muslims that they could never get Pakistan by force. Whatever was got by force was never

digested. He reiterated that if any of these workers did perish in the flames of communal fury he would not shed a single tear, for theirs would be the truest and best service not only to Hinduism but also to Islam

Gandhiji said that it was everyone's duty to pray that wisdom and courage might be given by God to all in these disturbed areas so that they might realize the folly of violence He longed for the day when the Muslims of Noakhali would write and tell him that none of his workers need stay there because thenceforth all Hindus would be safe.

Gandhiji then went on to read from two letters that he had received One friend had asked him to explain to the audience the Sanskrit *shloka* which says that he who sees God everywhere and in everything and sees all in God—that is to say in every scripture and in every person of every religion—God is always for that person God is never tired of him and he is always with God If put in that way, it would be easy for everyone to understand what he meant when he said that he was a *sanatani* Hindu, but it was not right to call himself a Muslim Gandhiji maintained that what he had said the day before was correct and that he was not ashamed to say that because he claimed to be a *sanatani* Hindu he was a Muslim too The friend also wanted to know where people were to go if they were afraid to live as a minority in any place The whole of India was open to them, would be his reply—only they must not be beggars wherever they went

The second correspondent asked that if both Rahim and Rama were names of God, why use the two ? Would not only Rama suffice ? Gandhiji said that God was supposed to have a thousand names in the Hindu scriptures. What if He had 40 crores of names ? It was open to everyone to call Him by as many names as he wanted to for his spiritual satisfaction. Gandhiji was accused of trying to please the Muslims. If he did, what harm was there ? Some Muslims might want to hurt him but that did not mean that he was to hurt them in return. It was

a Muslim girl—Raihana Tyebji—who had taught him the verse from the *Quran Sharif* and he could never give it up. When he broke his last fast in Jail, Dr. Gilder recited a verse from the *Zend Avesta* and ever since the Parsi verse had also been included in his prayers. Gandhiji averred that by using these prayers and singing the *Ramadhun* as he did, he did not take away from, but added to, the glory of the name of Rama.

A friend had also asked whether he was not ashamed to have the police guarding his dwelling while prayers were being held. Gandhiji laughingly said he was ashamed but he was a humble subject with no powers to interfere with the law. If they wanted to remove the police, they should go to their Sardar who was Home Member. He had also been asked wherefrom in Hinduism he had unearthed *ahimsa*. Gandhiji said that *ahimsa* was in Hinduism, it was in Christianity as well as in Islam. Whether they agreed with him or not, it was his bounden duty to preach what he believed to be the truth as he saw it. He was also sure that *ahimsa* had never made anyone a coward.

Harijan, 27-4-1947

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PAKISTAN BY FORCE?

At the prayer Gandhiji remarked upon his favourite hymn which had been sung by Shrimati Sucheta Kripalani in her rich, melodious voice, and reminded his audience that the hymn was printed and distributed amongst them when he conducted the prayers during his previous visit. If all of them acted in accordance with the teaching of the hymn, he said, India would be a land worth living in and worth dying for. The tenor of it required human beings to fear no one and nothing but God, and therefore they would yield nothing to force however great it might be and they would yield to reason everything that was just and honourable. Applying the rule to Pakistan, the

speaker could not help saying that the violence that was being practised in order to seize Pakistan by force was bound to defeat its purpose, if Indians were worth their salt.

In that connection Gandhiji said that he could not help noticing the speech reported to have been made by the Chief Minister of Bengal. If the newspaper reports were correct, the Chief Minister had stated that, on the strength of the reports he had received from Gandhiji and Satish Babu, he was making enquiries about the allegations of arson, loot etc. The speaker suggested that at this time of tension and suspicion, the Chief Minister should prefer the cautious reports of a staunch, sincere and unbiased worker like Satish Babu, who with his wife had dedicated his life to the service of both the Muslims and the Hindus of Noakhali. Satish Babu was not interested in propagating false reports. The reports which the Chief Minister said he had sent for might take a long time to come and Gandhiji knew from experience that they were not always unbiased. He said that he had noticed also that the Chief Minister disapproved of the agitation that was now going on in Bengal for partition. Without going into the merits of the question he would say that the best way of silencing the cry for the partition of Bengal would be to reason with the Hindus, to demonstrate to them from now that he wished them to do nothing compulsorily, and to prove by his strictly fair conduct that in Pakistan there was no fear to be entertained by the Hindus about the strictest impartiality and justice, that no Muslim was to be favoured because he was Muslim and that merit was the sole consideration in selecting men and women for service in the Government.

Gandhiji concluding said that he would make bold to say that seizure of Pakistan by force was an empty dream.

Harijan, 27-4-1947

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A DANGEROUS DOCTRINE

Gandhiji began by breaking the news that he would be leaving for Bihar on Saturday evening. One could sense the sadness that was creeping over the listeners. He explained to them how he had gone to Noakhali at the call of the inner voice. He claimed that he had served the Hindus there by restoring some confidence in them and he had served the Muslims too.

In the same way he had gone to Bihar. He had said he would do or die there. His work in both places was unfinished. He could only be satisfied if in both the places the Hindus and the Muslims, in however small a minority they might be, could live in absolute peace and security.

They might ask him why he was not visiting the Punjab which had suffered and was suffering no less. Gandhiji wished to say that no one could stop him from visiting the Punjab when the call came. The leaders had advised him not to go there just yet. They were all aware that today there was British *raj* there, not Indian. League *raj* was just as much Indian as Congress *raj*.

The moment they began to think in terms of Hindu and Muslim *raj* they fell into an error. That was a dangerous doctrine. In a true Pakistan — holy land — there ought to be no fighting. Everything must be done by appealing to reason and not through force. He was speaking to the Punjab from here. He was no stranger to that province or to its people. The Congress fight against the British had succeeded because in spite of some Congressmen falling into the error of violence, the movement had remained non-violent.

The history of Indian *satyagraha* in South Africa would live for all time because Indians had remained true to their creed. Though he had gone twice to England on behalf of the Indians in South Africa, he could not have achieved anything if he had not had the strength of *satyagraha* behind him. Therefore, he appealed to the Hindus and the Sikhs

of the Punjab to resolve to be killed but not kill. They should resist Pakistan being forced on them with all the incomparable strength of *satyagraha.*

Gandhiji said he was not afraid to die in his mission if that was to be his fate. As they had heard in the evening hymn, no doctor could make his patient live beyond the allotted span. If the Hindus and the Sikhs were non-violent, the world would condemn the action of the Muslims in trying to get Pakistan by force It would be a wonderful lesson for the whole world.

Gandhiji said he was returning to Bihar because his work in Delhi was over for the time being. He had told them he was a prisoner both of the Viceroy and Pandit Nehru. His talks with the former were over for the time being and Jawaharlalji was too big to restrain him from going where he thought his duty lay Gandhiji said that he was a worshipper of the *Gita* and the *Gita* said that it was best at all times to do one's duty in one's own field, no matter how big any work outside that field may seemingly appear.

Continuing, he said how much Chief Minister Suhrawardy's statement in the day's papers had hurt him. It was a man's duty to tell his friend if he had any suspicion or doubt in his mind. He had sent Shri Satish Babu's wires to the Press because he believed that Satish Babu would not deliberately swerve from the truth. It was up to Saheed Saheb to prove that the suspicion regarding the Noakhali happenings was unfounded, but to say that the release of those wires to the Press had been the cause of recrudescence of violence in Calcutta was wholly wrong.

Gandhiji said that as a *satyagrahi* he stood by truth and it would be wrong on his part to hide any suspicion or simply nurse a grievance in his heart. He could not serve the Hindus and the Muslims of Bengal without the Chief Minister's help and he hoped this would not be withheld In the same way he would not put his *ahimsa* in his pocket and not advise the true path to the Hindus and the Sikhs in the Punjab if he was to be their friend.

Harijan 27-4-1947

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NATIONAL WEEK

Gandhiji began by reminding the audience that the next day was the last day of the National Week. From Assam and the Frontier down to Cape Comorin, the date was observed by all. It showed the awakening in the real India which was the villages. The first day signified the awakening. The last day, the Jallianwala Bagh Day, was a symbol of dedication. There was no need to recall the tragic happenings in detail but it was enough to say that on that day the blood of the Hindus, the Muslims and the Sikhs flowed in one stream. In remembrance of April 13, it was the duty of all to pledge themselves to rebuild that unity which today, alas, was broken. He hoped that if they had lived truly during these seven days and if they had correctly understood the inner meaning of the National Week, they would resolve never to fight with each other.

Gandhiji said that he had to hang his head in shame when foreigners asked him about the communal strife in India. All he could say was that it was not everybody that had gone mad. The mad orgies were the work of a few and he prayed and believed that all would become one in God's good time. He hoped that the people of Delhi would take their full share in bringing about that heart unity.

Concluding, Gandhiji referred to two good letters he had received from a Hindu friend and a Muslim friend in regard to the verse from the *Quran*. One friend said that there was no difference except the difference between the Arabic and Sanskrit languages in the spirit of what the *Quran* verse said and what was contained in the *Upanishad shlokas*. He maintained that he had the right to praise God in whatever language he chose.

Harijan, 27-4-1947

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BEEF

Q. The Muslim public need to be satisfied on a very important question. Will the Muslims be allowed to eat their national food—beef—under a Hindu majority Government? If you can satisfy the Muslims on this all-important question, a great deal of knots will be solved. You should give a straight answer to this question in your paper *Harijan*.

A. I do not know how this question arises. For whilst Congressmen were in office they are not known to have interfered with the practice of beef-eating by Muslims. The question is also badly conceived. There is no such thing as a Hindu majority Government. If a free India is to live at peace with herself, religious divisions must entirely give place to political divisions based on considerations other than religious. Even as it is, though unfortunately religious differences loom large, most parties contain members drawn from various sects. It is moreover not true to say that beef is the *national* food of Muslims. In the first place the Muslims of India are not as yet a separate nation. In the second, beef is not their ordinary food. Their ordinary food is the same as that of the millions. What is true is that there are very few Muslims who are vegetarians from a religious motive. Therefore they will take meat, including beef, when they can get it. But during the greater part of the year millions of Muslims, owing to poverty, go without meat of any kind. These are facts. But the theoretical question demands a clear answer. As a Hindu, a confirmed vegetarian, and a worshipper of the cow whom I regard with the same veneration as I regard my mother (alas no more on this earth), I maintain that Muslims should have full freedom to slaughter cows, if they wish, subject of course to hygienic restrictions and in a manner not to wound the susceptibilities of their Hindu neighbours. Fullest recognition of freedom to the Muslims

to slaughter cows is indispensable for communal harmony, and is the only way of saving the cow. In 1921 thousands of cows were saved by the sole and willing effort of Muslims themselves In spite of the black clouds hanging over our heads, I refuse to give up the hope that they will disperse and that we shall have communal peace in this unhappy land. If I am asked for proof, I must answer that my hope is based on faith and faith demands no proof.

Harijan, 27-4-1940

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REAL COW-PROTECTION

Gandhiji having heard that some Hindus were whispering to one another that Muslims being beef-eaters were the natural enemies of Hinduism and were, therefore, fit to be destroyed, devoted his remarks to the topic of cow-protection. He said that nearly forty years ago he wrote about it in *Hind Swaraj* in South Africa. He was from his childhood a devotee of the cow. He believed her to be the natural mother of prosperity. But he had expressed the opinion in *Hind Swaraj* that cow-protection societies were destroyers of the cow and not her protectors. To this view he adhered even today. True devotion to the cow required broad-mindedness and an accurate knowledge of the art and science concerning the protection of the cow. In no country on the earth were the cow and her progeny so ill-treated as in India which, strangely enough, was the only country where the cow was venerated. Their veneration, however, consisted of mere words and deadly quarrel with the Muslims over cow-killing. The very Hindus who quarrelled with the Muslims because they slaughtered the cow for the beef she gave were not ashamed to accept the mastery of the English who were known to be beef-eaters in a sense in which the Muslims never were. He had no quarrel with the Englishmen because they ate beef and as such he had none with the Muslims either. He was concerned with showing the great inconsistency of the Hindus who

for the sake of money gladly served their English masters and quarrelled with the Muslims Then they forgot that there were Hindus who gladly partook of beef. He had known orthodox *vaishnavas* who ate beef-extract when it was prescribed by their doctors. He reminded the audience of the fact that during the Khilafat days thousands of cows were saved from the Muslim knife. The late Maulana Abdul Bari used to say that if the Hindus helped the Muslims to save the Khilafat, the Muslims were bound to save the cow for the sake of the Hindus. From every point of view, therefore, he held that it was insensate on the part of the Hindus to be angry with their Muslim brethren because they ate beef and slaughtered cows He quoted numerous instances to show the utterly inconsistent behaviour of the Hindus in this matter. He therefore, asked the Hindus to put their own house in order before it tottered to its ruin.

Harijan, 11-5-1947

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COW-PROTECTION

In his post-prayer speech Gandhiji said that Rajendra Babu had told him that he had received about 50,000 post cards, 30,000 letters and thousands of telegrams asking for prohibition of cow slaughter in the Union of India. A telegram was received today saying that a *pandit* had undertaken a fast in Cawnpore on that issue. Hindu religion prohibited cow slaughter for the Hindus, not for the world. Religious prohibition came from within. Any imposition from without meant compulsion. Such compulsion was repugnant to religion. India was the land not only of the Hindus but also of the Muslims, the Sikhs, the Parsis, the Christians, the Jews and all who claimed to be of India and were loyal to the Union. If they could prohibit cow slaughter in India on religious grounds, why could not the Pakistan Government prohibit, say, idol worship in Pakistan on similar grounds? He was not a temple-goer, but if he was

prohibited from going to a temple in Pakistan he would make it a point to go there even at the risk of losing his head. Just as *Shariat* could not be imposed on the non-Muslims, Hindu law could not be imposed on the non-Hindus He told the audience that many Hindus were guilty of cow slaughter by slow torture. It was the Hindus who exported cows outside India well knowing that they were to be slaughtered for beef extract which came to India and which the children of orthodox Hindus ate without compunction under medical advice Were they not co-partners in cow slaughter ?

Harijan, 10-8-1947

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HOW TO SAVE THE COW ?

There is serious ignorance about the place of the cow in Hinduism and in the economy of Indian life. At the same time that India has become independent of foreign rule, by common consent it has been cut into twain so as to induce the untenable belief that one part is popularly described as Hindu India and the other part as Muslim India. Like all superstitions, this of Hindu and Muslim India will die hard. The fact is that the Indian Union and Pakistan belong equally to all who call themselves and are, sons of the soil, irrespective of their creed or colour.

Nevertheless, a large number of vocal Hindus have begun to believe the superstition that the Union belongs to the Hindus and that, therefore, they should enforce their belief by law even among non-Hindus. Hence an emotional wave is sweeping the country, in order to secure legislation prohibiting the slaughter of cows within the Union.

In this state, which I hold, is based on ignorance, claiming to be a knowing lover and devotee, second to none in India of the cow, I must try in the best manner I can to dispel the ignorance.

Let us at the outset realize that cow worship in the religious sense is largely confined to Gujarat, Marwad, the United Provinces and Bihar. Marwadis and Gujaratis being enterprizing merchants, have succeeded in making the greatest noise without at the same time devoting their business talent to the solution of the very difficult question of conserving the cattle wealth of India.

It is obviously wrong legally to enforce one's religious practice on those who do not share that religion

In so far as the pure economic necessity of cow protection is concerned, it can be easily secured if the question was considered on that ground alone In that event all the dry cattle, the cows who give less milk than their keep and the aged and unfit cattle would be slaughtered without a second thought. This soulless economy has no place in India, although the inhabitants of this land of paradoxes may be, indeed are, guilty of many soulless acts

Then how can the cow be saved without having to kill her off when she ceases to give the economic quantity of milk or when she becomes otherwise an uneconomic burden? The answer to the question can be summed up as follows ·

1. By the Hindus performing their duty towards the cow and her progeny. If they did so, our cattle would be the pride of India and the world The contrary is the case today.

2. By learning the science of cattle breeding. Today there is perfect anarchy in this work.

3. By replacing the present cruel method of castration by the humane method practised in the West.

4. By thorough reform of the *pinjarapoles* (institutions for aged cows) of India which are today, as a rule, managed ignorantly and without any plan by men who do not know their work.

5 When these primary things are done, it will be found that the Muslims will, of their own accord, recognize the necessity, if only for the sake of their Hindu brethren, of not slaughtering cattle for beef or otherwise.

The reader will observe that behind the foregoing requirements lies one thing and that is *ahimsa*, otherwise known as universal compassion. If that supreme thing is realized, everything else becomes easy. Where there is *ahimsa*, there is infinite patience, inner calm, discrimination, self-sacrifice and true knowledge. Cow-protection is not an easy thing. Much money is wasted in its name. Nevertheless, in the absence of *ahimsa* the Hindus have become destroyers instead of saviours of the cow. It is even more difficult than the removal of foreign rule from India.

Calcutta, 22-8-'47

[*Note*: The average quantity of milk that the cow in India yields is said to be roughly 2 lb. per day, that of New Zealand 14 lb., of England 15 lb., of Holland 20 lb. The index figure for health goes up in proportion to the increase in the yield of milk.

23-8-'47 —M. K. G.]

Harijan, 31-8-1947

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TRUE COW-WORSHIP

The complaint of one writer was why, when slaughter of pigs was prohibited in Pakistan, cow-slaughter could not be prohibited in the Union? Gandhiji said that he had no knowledge of legal prohibition of the slaughter of pigs in Pakistan. If the information given by the complainant was true, he was sorry. He knew that use of pork for food was prohibited in Islamic law. But even so, he could not justify the prohibition of the use of pork by those other than Muslims.

Had not the Qaid-e-Azam said that the Pakistan was not a theocratic State and that it was purely a secular State? That the claim could not always be justified in action was, unfortunately, too true. Was the Union to be a theocratic State and were the tenets of Hinduism to be imposed on non-Hindus? He hoped not. The Indian Union would then cease to be a land of hope and promise, a land to which

all Asiatic and African races looked, indeed the whole world. The world expected not littleness and fanaticism from India whether as the Union or Pakistan. It expected greatness and goodness from which the whole world could derive a lesson and light in its prevailing darkness.

He (the speaker) yielded to none in his devoted worship of the cow, but that devotion could not be imposed by law. It would only come by cultivation of friendship with all non-Hindus including the Muslims and by correct conduct. The Gujaratis and the Marwadis were supposed to be the foremost in their wish for the protection of the cow, but they had so far forgotten the dictates of Hinduism that they would gladly impose restrictions on others whilst they themselves were grossly ill-treating the cow and her progeny. Why were the cattle of India the most neglected? Why had they, as was contended, become a burden on the land by reason of the poorest yield of milk in the world? As beasts of burden why were they grossly ill-treated?

The various *pinjarapoles* were not institutions to be proud of. Much money was invested in them, but scientific and intelligent treatment of cattle was hardly to be found in them. They would never bring about the regeneration of the cattle of India. They could only do so by strict regard to the humane treatment of cattle. He (the speaker) claimed that without the assistance of law, but because of his being able to cultivate friendship with the Muslims of India during the Khilafat days, he had been instrumental in saving more cows from the butcher's knife than any other individual.

Birla House, New Delhi, 4-11-'47

Harijan, 16-11-1947

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ABOUT THE JOINT STATEMENT

Gandhiji referred to a statement which he had signed at the suggestion of the Viceroy while he was in Delhi. The act had the consent of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and other members of the Working Committee. Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah had also signed it. The terms of the document were:

"We deeply deplore the recent acts of lawlessness and violence that have brought the utmost disgrace on the fair name of India and greatest misery to innocent people, irrespective of who were the aggressors and who were the victims.

"We denounce for all time the use of force to achieve political ends, and we call upon all the communities of India, to whatever persuasion they may belong, not only to refrain from all acts of violence and disorder, but also to avoid both in speech and writing, any word which might be construed as an incitement to such acts."

So far as his signature was concerned it had no value for he had never believed in violence. But it was significant that Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah had signed it. If the spirit of the appeal was adhered to by the signatories, and there was no reason why it should not be, they could hope that all the trouble and bloodshed would cease. It might be that they would now enable him to leave Bihar and do other work.

They might well ask why his signature was taken and not of the members of the Working Committee or of the Congress President. He could not go into the matter. He confessed that he represented nobody but himself. Nevertheless, the signatures laid a heavy responsibility on both of them. He had not signed the appeal only on behalf of any one community. It meant assuming responsibility for all communities. He claimed that all religions were equal. A similar claim could be advanced on the Qaid-e-Azam's behalf since the appeal was issued not only to one community but to all the communities. And there was a time when Jinnah Saheb had a high position in the Congress.

The Viceroy should be congratulated on bringing about the unique document. No doubt it would have been better if such a document had been signed as between the Congress and the League without any outsider's intervention. He hoped, however, that there would now be co-operation between the two bodies.

Harijan, 4-5-1947

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IN SPITE OF JOINT APPEAL?

Gandhiji then referred to the violence that was taking place in the Frontier Province, in the Punjab and in other places. The audience might well ask, he said, why in spite of the joint appeal by Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah and himself for peace in the country and the declaration in the appeal that use of force should be eschewed for all time for gaining political ends, the appeal seemed to have been entirely defeated in practice.

In his opinion, the honour, both of the Viceroy who was instrumental in bringing about the joint appeal and of Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah was involved in the failure of the appeal. He held that it was not open to Jinnah Saheb to plead that his followers did not listen to his (Jinnah Saheb's) appeal. That would be cutting the whole ground from under his feet because he was the undisputed President of the All-India Muslim League which claimed to represent the vast bulk of the Muslim population of India. Where was the authority of the League, if the Muslims resorted to violence for gaining the political aim which was summed up in the word Pakistan? Was the British Government to yield to the force of arms rather than the force of reason?

The speaker had expressed his doubts as to the wisdom of issuing the joint appeal unless it was certain that it meant for both the signatories all that the words thereof conveyed.

Harijan, 11-5-1947

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THE QUINTESSENCE OF TRUE RELIGION

The following is the English version of the written speech of Gandhiji read before the prayer gathering, it being his day of silence

I am sorry to let you know that I shall have to go to Delhi again. It pains me to leave you at this stage. I do not relish the idea of leaving Bihar unless the Mussalmans have completely shed their fear and both the communities allow me to leave with a clear conscience. I felt the same when I left Noakhali For both these places I have the same motto before me, *Do or Die.* My non-violence bids me dedicate myself to the service of the minorities. It would be like a new birth and give me additional strength if the Hindus and the Mussalmans of both these places began to live at peace with each other and shed their animosity. God knows what will come out of this travail. Man can only try and perish in the attempt. God is all in all. We are only zeros. The same mission takes me to Delhi. I hope to return within a short time and resume duty.

You may be astonished to learn that I continue to receive letters charging me that I have compromised the interests of the Hindus by acting as a friend of the Muslims. How can I convince people by mere words, if the sixty years of my public life have failed to demonstrate, that by trying to befriend the Muslims I have only proved myself a true Hindu and have rightly served the Hindus and Hinduism? The essence of true religious teaching is that one should serve and befriend all. I learnt this in my mother's lap You may refuse to call me a Hindu. I know no defence except to quote a line from Iqbal's famous song: *Majhab nahin sikhata apasmen ber rakhna* (मजहब नहीं सिखाता आपसमे बैर रखना।) meaning religion does not teach us to bear ill-will towards one another. It is easy enough to be friendly to one's friends. But to befriend the one who regards himself as your enemy, is the quintessence of true religion. The other is mere business.

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THE ROOT OF ALL RELIGIONS

Two persons were arrested when they took exception to the recitation of *Quranic* verses during the prayers and shouted *Hindu Dharmaki Jai* (victory to Hinduism). Gandhiji then discontinued the prayers.

He requested the police to set the men free as it put him to shame if anybody was arrested for objecting to what he did.

Gandhiji deplored such narrow-mindedness on the part of the people. Mere shouting of slogans would not carry Hinduism anywhere, he said. He was at a loss to understand why some Hindus objected to his reading the *Quran* verses in his prayer. If at places the Muslims had not behaved as they should, then it did not mean that the Hindus should retaliate by opposing the reading of the *Quran*.

The verse from the *Quran* that was being recited, Gandhiji said, was a mighty prayer in praise of God. How did it harm the Hindu religion if the prayer was recited in the Arabic language? He who said so knew neither his religion nor his duty. That prayer could also be recited in a temple.

He had been told by a friend that a prayer with the same meaning was also found in the *Yajurveda*. Those who had studied the Hindu scriptures knew that among the 108 *Upanishads* there was one called the *Allopanishad*. Did not the man who wrote it know his religion? It was said that Guru Nanak himself went to Arabia in search of truth during his religious wanderings.

No religion in the world, Gandhiji continued, could live without self-suffering. A faith gained in strength only when people were willing to lay down their lives for it. The tree of life had to be watered with the blood of martyrs, who laid down their lives without killing their opponents or intending any harm to them. That was the root of Hinduism and of all other religions.

The scene that they witnessed, Gandhiji went on to say, was a symptom of the disease that had got hold of India. Intolerance, impatience and retaliation were in the air. They were thinking even of universal conscription. God forbid that India should ever become a military nation, which would be a menace to the peace of the world, and yet if things went on as they were doing what hope was there for India and, therefore, for the world? Was Pakistan to be seized by terrorism such as they seemed to be witnessing in the Frontier Province, in the Punjab, in Sind and elsewhere?

People had suggested that everything would be all right and non-Muslims in the Muslim majority provinces would be put on absolute equality with the Muslims if not specially favoured as against them. He suggested that it was an impossible dream. If the Muslims were taught otherwise while Pakistan was not established they could not be expected to behave better after Pakistan had become a settled fact. It was up to the Qaid-e-Azam and his lieutenants to inspire trust in the minds of the minorities in the provinces or parts, which were designed for Pakistan. Then there would no longer be fear of Pakistan-cum-partition.

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HOW GANDHIJI FEELS AND ACTS

Gandhiji's second visit to Delhi within a comparatively short interval gave the residents a further chance of listening to him every evening. The crowds were, if anything, larger than before. The air is tense with feelings of insecurity, lack of faith all round, hatred, mistrust and despair. Small wonder then that they flocked in their thousands to hear a few words of solace from the only one who bears no hatred in his heart towards anyone and in whose vocabulary the word despair does not exist.

It was indeed a tragedy that this time too the prayers were not allowed to be held. The moment the verse from

the *Quran Sharif* was begun to be recited a voice would be raised in objection. And, true to his technique of non-violence, Gandhiji would ask the thousands to bow to the will of the one because it would not be right to overawe anyone. It was a hard lesson for those who had come to join in community prayer to be deprived of the privilege owing to the folly of one person. One felt particularly sorry for the large number of women, for they certainly did not come to hear Gandhiji's after-prayer discourse so much as to join in the *Ramadhun*. But the crowd showed exemplary toleration and calm and one can only hope that the lesson Gandhiji would have them learn from this practical demonstration went home.

Asked by a friend whether Pakistan would die a natural death if conceded, his reply was, "Can you describe Pakistan to me? What reply can be given to an unknown premise? I have tried to understand what it is and have failed. And if the Punjab and Bengal today are hall-marks of Pakistan, then it can never exist" His own view regarding the division of India has not undergone any change He stands for a United India as firmly as ever and as he said more than once to friends, "The ultimate decision of division or partition of provinces and all such matters are for the people to settle among themselves after the British have withdrawn their power." This looking towards the British power for everything was a hopeless and a disintegrating factor in their lives.

"Will religion die?" asked the same friend. Quick as lightning came the response "If religion dies, then India dies. Today the Hindus and the Muslims are clinging to the husk of religion. They have gone mad. But I hope that all this is froth, that all the scum has come to the surface as happens when the waters of two rivers meet. Everything appears muddy on top, but underneath it is crystal clear and calm. The scum goes to the sea of itself and the rivers mingle and flow clear and pure."

To the same friend he said, "Britain was once undisputed mistress of the seas. If she plays true by India, she can become mistress of the morals of the world which will

be a very much bigger honour. She can then decide the fate of the world I believe she has the capacity. I know the British well I have passed some of the best years of my life among them and I have always voted against the name of 'Perfidious Albion' for them and have preferred to subscribe to Cowper's well-known verse 'Hypocrisy is an ode to virtue.' But Britain has yet to rise to those heights."

And so Gandhiji goes his way on his lone pilgrimage of winning hearts to the way of love Everything he says whether to the British, to the Princes, to the Hindus, to the Muslims, to the individual, to the community, to the minorities, to women, to the journalists, indeed to the world, is all in the nature of a challenge. All eyes are turned on India. Will she be true to her leader and lead not only herself but the world into the paths of peace? It is a big challenge and a heavy responsibility.

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THE COMMON PURPOSE

Gandhiji told the gathering that he had had an hour and a half's interview with the Viceroy during the day in which the latter had complained against misleading reports and headlines in the newspapers. The Viceroy had said that he had come to India to transfer power in a peaceful manner to Indian hands By June 30th, 1948 all signs of British rule were to vanish from here It was his earnest desire that India should be united and that all should live in harmony with each other, no matter to what community they belonged. He wanted Indians to forget the past and to believe in the honest desire of the British to bring about, if possible, agreement between the Hindus and the Muslims before leaving. It would not redound to the credit either of Britain or of India, the Viceroy had said, if the communal strife continued The Viceroy was a famous naval commander and while, as such, he did not believe in non-

violence, he repeatedly assured him (Gandhiji) that he believed in God and always tried to act according to his conscience. He, therefore, pleaded with everyone that they should not place obstacles in his (the Viceroy's) way. If the strife continued in spite of his best endeavour during the period of the liquidation of the British power, he would not hesitate, however reluctant he might be, to have recourse to the use of the military. Though the Interim Government of India was responsible for the preservation of law and order, he considered himself no less responsible in the ultimate end for the maintenance of peace so long as British soldiers were on Indian soil. Gandhiji said that the Viceroy had spoken very courteously and earnestly and felt that his difficult task would be lightened if all the communities and parties recognized his honesty and co-operated in the pursuit of the common purpose.

Gandhiji repeated what he had said the day before that unless the Viceroy was proved to be guilty of a breach of trust, they must continue to believe in his honesty of purpose. If the Hindus and the Muslims continued to fight, it would mean that they did not want the British to go. Nevertheless, even if they continued to behave as animals, he himself had no doubt in his mind that the British must go by 30-6-'48. It was high time they stopped blaming each other. That could never bring about peace.

If the Qaid-e-Azam's signature to the peace plea was sincere, Gandhiji continued, then the disorders and cruelties in the Frontier and the Punjab would stop.

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SEE THE FOLLY

Referring to his visit to Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah on Tuesday, Gandhiji, addressing the prayer meeting at Bhangi Colony on Wednesday evening, said that the conversations were carried on in a friendly spirit even though there could never be agreement between them on the question of the division of India. He could not bear the thought of it and so long as he was convinced that it was wrong, he could not possibly put his signature to the scheme. He held that it was not only bad for the Hindus but equally so for the Muslims.

Gandhiji added that he did not think in terms of the good of any particular community where India was concerned. He tried to be the representative and servant of all alike. But the Qaid-e-Azam and he had declared again in clear language that they abjured violence for all time for attaining political ends. To that they were both pledged.

He went on to say that many people were opposed to his going to Jinnah Saheb but he was convinced that no harm could possibly have accrued therefrom. After all they were fellow Indians and had to live in the same land.

Referring to a letter he had received from a sister, wife of a prominent Hindu Mahasabhaite, objecting for the usual reasons to his reading the *Quranic* verse, Gandhiji said that he was hurt that such objections could come from a woman. He expected love and toleration in a higher degree from women than from men. He wondered where they were drifting, and what women would or could teach their children if their hearts were permeated with hate.

Gandhiji refuted the argument that because some Muslim fanatics had done evil deeds in Bengal and in the Punjab, the *Quran Sharif* was bad. The Hindus had gone mad in Bihar, but that did not take away from the greatness of the *Gita*. He said he might understand their not wishing to admit Muslim wrong-doers into their homes, though even that was wholly contrary to the spirit of religion, all of which taught man to love his enemies. But not to wish

to read a verse from any scripture, simply because hate for the followers of that religion filled their hearts, was the negation of true religion and far from protecting Hinduism, was the very way to destroy it.

He went on to say that the argument that he could not recite *Gita* in a mosque and that no Muslims would read a verse from any scripture other than their own was a fallacious one. He related how he had held prayers in Muslim houses and how in Noakhali he had held them in the compound of a mosque. The person in charge had raised no objection and had said that it was perfectly legitimate to call God by the names of Rama and Rahim.

Gandhiji then read out the translation of the *Quranic* verse in Hindi which ran as follows:

> In order to escape from the evil one I seek refuge in God.
>
> Oh God, I begin every task with the remembrance of Thy name.
>
> Thou art the compassionate and the merciful.
>
> Thou art the Creator of the universe.
>
> Thou art Lord and Master.
>
> I praise Thee alone and desire only Thy help.
>
> Thou wilt mete out justice on the Day of Judgment.
>
> Show me the right path, the path which Thy saints have trod, not the wrong path of those who have offended Thee.
>
> God is one.
>
> He is eternal, all-powerful, uncreate.
>
> There is none other like Him. He has created all things.
>
> None has created Him.

Gandhiji said that if every word of it were enshrined in their hearts they would be uplifted and be the better for it. No one objected to the translation because it was in Hindi but the moment he read it in Arabic there were objections. He pleaded with them to see the folly of their ways. He hoped they would pray to God to lighten their darkness.

Harijan, 18-5-1947

QUIT NOW

[On the 5th of May Gandhiji answered several questions put to him by Mr. Doon Campbell, Reuter's special correspondent at New Delhi. The answers cover a large field — the current situation in India and world affairs. But below is given only that portion which discusses the Indian situation. Ed.]

Q. Is the communal division of India inevitable? Will such division solve the communal problem?

A. Personally, I have always said No, and I say No even now to both these questions.

Q. Do you subscribe to the opinion that Britain will be morally obliged to stay on in India if the outstanding Hindu-Muslim differences have not been resolved by June 1948?

A. This is a question that has never been put to me before. It would be a good thing if the British were to go today—thirteen months means mischief to India. I do not question the nobility of the British declaration, I do not question the sincerity of the Viceroy but facts are facts. Neither the British Cabinet nor the Viceroy, however outstanding he may be, can alter facts. And the facts are that India has been trained to look to the British power for everything. Now it is not possible for India to take her mind off that state all of a sudden. I have never appreciated the argument that the British want so many months to get ready to leave. During that time all parties will look to the British Cabinet and the Viceroy. We have not defeated the British by force of arms. It has been a victory for India by moral force. Assuming, of course, that every word of what has been said is meant to be carried out, then the British decision will go down in history as the noblest act of the British Nation. That being so, the thirteen months' stay of the British power and British arms is really a hindrance rather than a help, because everybody looks for help to the great military machine they have brought into

being. That happened in Bengal, in Bihar, in the Punjab, and in the North-West Frontier Province. The Hindus and the Muslims said in turn: 'Let us have the British troops.' It is a humiliating spectacle. I have often said before but it does not suffer in value through repetition, because every time I repeat it, it gains force: the British will have to take the risk of leaving India to chaos or anarchy. This is so because there has been no Home Rule; it has been imposed on the people. And, when you voluntarily remove that rule there might be no rule in the initial state. It might have come about if we had gained victory by the force of arms. The communal feuds you see here are, in my opinion, partly due to the presence of the British. If the British were not here, we would still go through the fire no doubt, but that fire would purify us.

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ADVICE TO SIND HINDUS

Gandhiji's timely clarification of his advice to Sind Hindus has heartened them to face the future with courage and fortitude. Asked to clarify his advice that Sind Hindus should migrate in the event of partition, Gandhiji told Bhai Pratap Dayaldas of Hyderabad who met him at New Delhi:

"I said that you should suffer bravely, but non-violently unto death. But if you cannot do that and must make a disgraceful surrender of all including honour, your womenfolk and religion, in that case the only and safe proper course for you to take is migration, not singly, but of all the Hindus and other non-Muslims."

To a further query as to what would be the plight of the minorities in Sind in the case of a partition of India, Gandhiji replied:

"That question is to be fought out in the Constituent Assembly, but I am certain that all protection that is humanly possible will be stipulated for. You must not be weaklings."

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IN PART PAYMENT OF DEBT

Gandhiji in his post-prayer speech at Gulzarbagh today referred to his visit to the refugee camp nearby prior to the prayer meeting. He had not been able to see it as thoroughly as he would have liked to do. But what he saw and heard from the Superintendent made him really glad.

The camp was being run on the principle of self-help. Men worked and were paid their due. The children also worked, though they were paid more than what they would be otherwise entitled to. Such self-help bred self-respect

They were innocent men and women, continued the speaker, who had suffered at the hands of the Hindus who had gone temporarily insane. It was their (the Hindus') duty, therefore, to make all amends they could. They should go and visit the refugees in the camp, interest themselves in every detail of their life, and seek to help them in every way they could. If they did that, Gandhiji said, it would be in part payment of the debt that they owed to the refugees whom they had wronged.

Similarly, about the refugees who had left the province through fear or due to false propaganda, they need not beg them to come back. They should win them back by the magnetic power of their love. If they could create such an atmosphere of affection and brotherliness, most of the Muslims who had left the province would return. His work and that of the Government would be considerably lightened. And Bihar would truly become the province of Spring, as its name signified.

Harijan, 25-5-1947

AHIMSA, A FACT OF LIFE

Q. 1. The Hindus being influenced by your preaching of *ahimsa* may in the near future get beaten by the Muslim League followers. This is the general feeling in view of the belief that the Muslims are being secretly armed on a wide scale.

A. 1. The assumption is serious. If it is sound, it casts a grave reflection upon the Provincial Governments. In any event, how I wish the Hindus were influenced by my teaching of *ahimsa* which is a force mightier than the force of arms however powerful. No teacher can be held responsible for a caricature of his teachings. Do we not know how geometrical propositions are caricatured by indifferent pupils? Are the teachers to be blamed? The utmost that can be said against me is that I am an incompetent teacher of *ahimsa*. If such be the case, let us pray that my successor will be much more competent and successful

Q. 2 After the British withdrawal from India, there is a likelihood of chaos and anarchy prevailing in the country. There is a fear that the Nationalists, unless they immediately started learning self-defence with fire-arms, may suffer and ultimately find themselves under the heels of the Muslim League whose followers believe only in fighting. Pakistan or no Pakistan, the trouble is coming because there is the secret hand of imperialism working behind the scenes. Would you not modify your theory of *ahimsa* in the larger context of such a political situation overtaking the country for the sake of individual defence?

A. 2. The Nationalists are not worth the proud name they bear, if they fear the Muslim League as you imagine. Can the Nationalists exclude the followers of the League from the sphere of their action? I am not thinking of vote-catching devices. I am thinking of the Muslims as Indians, the same as others, needing their care and attention. If the leaders have ceased to believe in *ahimsa*, they should

boldly and frankly say so and set about putting their house in order. For me there is no scope for any change. *Ahimsa* is no mere theory with me, it is a fact of life based on extensive experience. How can a man who has tasted apples and repeatedly found them sweet be induced to describe them as bitter. Those who say they are bitter have tasted not apples but something looking very much like them. *Ahimsa* should not fear the secret or open hand of imperialists assuming for the sake of argument that it is working as suggested in the question.

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TWO QUESTIONS

Gandhiji addressed himself to two questions that were asked of him.

The first question was: In view of the sourness between the Hindus and the Muslims that seemed to be daily growing, was it possible for the two to become friends?

He answered emphatically that the enmity could not last for ever. They were brothers and must remain so in spite of temporary insanity. But perpetual feud was not an impossibility between communities as it was not between two individuals. He hoped that that would not happen, for he prophesied that in that case they would bury the two religions in India and would sell their freedom for a mess of pottage.

The second question was: Could partition of Bengal be avoided in view of the rising Hindu opinion in its favour?

Gandhiji recognized the force of that opinion. He himself was not in a position to pronounce an opinion. But he could say without fear of contradiction that if there was partition, the Muslim majority would be responsible for it and, what was more, the Muslim Government that was in power. If he was the Prime Minister of Bengal, he would plead with his Hindu brethren to forget the past. He would

say to them that he was as much a Bengali as they were. Differences in religion could not part the two. We and they spoke the same language, had inherited the same culture. All that was Bengal's was common to both, of which both should be equally proud. Bengal was Bengal. It was neither the Punjab, nor Bombay, nor anything else. If the Prime Minister could possibly take up that attitude he (the speaker) would undertake to go with him from place to place and reason with Hindu audiences, and he made bold to say that there would not be a Hindu opponent left of the unity of Bengal, the unity for which the Hindus and the Muslims had fought together so valiantly and undone "the settled fact" of so powerful a Viceroy as Lord Curzon. If he were Janab Suhrawardy, he would invite the Hindus to partition his body before they thought of partitioning Bengal. If he had that sturdy love for Bengal and the Bengalis, whether Hindus or Muslims, that love would melt the stoniest Hindu heart as it was their fear and suspicion that had seized the Hindu mind. He could not forget Noakhali or even Calcutta if all he heard was true, as it was equally true of the Muslim mind in Bihar. And he had not hesitated to tell the Hindus (of Bihar) that they should remove all suspicion and fear from the Muslim mind. He believed in the sovereign rule of the law of Love which made no distinctions.

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TWO QUESTIONS AGAIN

Gandhiji addressed himself to two more questions put to him at the prayer meeting.

The first was: You have advised us to work for an undivided Bengal. But can there be an undivided Bengal with a divided India?

The answer was that if what he had said was well understood, it followed that nothing could happen without the joint wish of both the Hindus and the Muslims. If a

third party was not to decide their fate, it could be only decided by their joint will. Then there was no question as yet of a divided India. If the distant event unfortunately did come to pass, the joint and free will of Hindu and Muslim Bengalis would decide which part to join.

The second question was: The British have not yet quit. Should not that be our first demand? Can we not wait to settle matters between ourselves *after* power is really transferred to the Indian people?

This question really did not arise. For when the whole of Bengal had one united mind, it was irrelevant whether it was expressed then or after the British power had actually withdrawn.

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HOW TO COMBAT GOONDA RULE?

In his written message to the prayer gathering Gandhiji said:

The thought that is uppermost in my mind today is how to combat the *goonda* rule that seems to be fast enveloping us. This I say of all India; perhaps it is true more or less of the whole world.

Let the Hindus not deceive themselves with the belief that it is well with them. As a devout Hindu that I claim to be, I wish to affirm that we Hindus will be living in a fool's paradise if we harboured any such thought. *Goondaism* is no preparation for taking the place of foreign rule.

The thoughtless interference at prayer meetings is not a small symptom of the disease I am describing. Intolerance is a form of *goondaism*. It is no less disgraceful than the savagery which we see announced in the daily press. Let all political workers, be they Hindu, Muslim or any other ponder well over what is happening before their eyes. Let it not be said by the future generations that we were trying to learn how to lose liberty before it was even gained. I would ask all the school masters of India, now that they

are no longer under the observation of the foreign masters, that they should recognize their true function even at the risk of their lives to give the right bent to the minds of those whom it is their proud privilege to mould.

Harijan, 25-5-1947

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IGNORANT HELPLESSNESS

At today's prayer meeting Gandhiji dealt with the questions that were before him.

The first was: What could we do to save ourselves and our culture — whether Hindu or Muslim?

Gandhiji said that he thought that nobody else could protect their culture for them. They had to protect it themselves and could destroy it by their folly. Thus, if Bengal had one culture, as he believed it had, it was for the people of Bengal to protect it.

The second question was: When everything at the top goes wrong, can the goodness of the people at the bottom assert itself against its mischievous influence?

In answer Gandhiji said that if the people at the top went wrong, it was certainly open to, and it was the duty of those at the bottom, to remove the wrong top even as he would remove an umbrella which appeared to be at the top but which was sustained by him.

Thus Pandit Nehru was at the top. But in reality he was sustained by them. If he went wrong, those at the bottom could remove him without trouble. Coming nearer home if they found Suhrawardy Saheb (the Bengal Premier) to be unworthy, they at the bottom could certainly remove him, not by physical force but by the way he had had the honour of putting before them. The argument that he was elected by the Muslim voters was beside the point.

It all boiled down to the fact that if the people at the bottom were ignorant, they would be exploited. Such was the case with the English. When they realized their strength

and the fact that the bottom sustained the top, it would be well with them Therefore he would say that if the top was wrong there was something radically wrong with the bottom. Let them, therefore, dispel their ignorant helplessness.

Harijan, 25-5-1947

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HOW TO RESTORE NORMAL LIFE?

Gandhiji replied to two questions put to him. The first question was:

Calcutta has virtually become divided into Hindu and Muslim zones. What can be done by the citizens so that normal life can once again be restored?

Gandhiji replied:

The only way is at least for one party to be wholly truthful and non-violent. Then they will fear no one but God. Such men are the men of courage. All parties will make friends with them and even *goondas* will shed their *goondaism* before them. I know of no other better way. I have appealed to the Muslims who are in a majority to take the lead.

The second question was

Why do you ask the Hindus to study the *Quran* also? Is it not enough if they study their own religion?

Replying Gandhiji said

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

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QUESTION BOX

HOW TO COMBAT HIMSA

Q. 1. The leaders and followers of the League do not believe in attaining their object through non-violence. In such circumstances, how is it possible to melt their hearts or to convince them of the evil of violent action?

A. 1. Violence can only be effectively met by non-violence. This is an old, established truth. The questioner does not really understand the working of non-violence. If he did, he would have known that the weapon of violence, even if it was the atom bomb, became useless when matched against true non-violence. That very few understand how to wield this mighty weapon is true. It requires a lot of understanding and strength of mind. It is unlike what is needed in military schools and colleges. The difficulty one experiences in meeting *himsa with ahimsa* arises from weakness of mind.

Q. 2. Today many people are beginning to feel that a clash, possibly of a violent character, with the supporters of the League is inevitable. The Nationalists feel that until the League agrees to the partition of Bengal and the Punjab, its demand for Pakistan is unjust. What means should they adopt to meet the situation?

A. 2. If the answer to the first question is held valid, the second question does not arise. However, the question may be discussed for a clearer understanding. If the majority of the Muslims obey Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah, a violent conflict should be out of the question, or if the majority of the Hindus take their stand on non-violence, no matter how much violence the Muslims use, it is bound to fail. One thing, however, should be perfectly understood. The votaries of non-violence cannot harbour violence in thought, let alone the question of doing it. If Pakistan is wrong, partition of Bengal and the Punjab will not make it right. Two wrongs will not make one right.

Q. 3. The majority of the Socialists claim that if there was a socialist revolution the economic question will come to the forefront throwing the communal conflict in the background. Do you agree? If such a revolution takes place, will it promote the establishment of the Kingdom of God which you call *Ramarajya*?

A. 3. The economic conflict you envisage is likely to make the Hindu-Muslim tension less acute. Even the end of the Hindu-Muslim conflict will not end all our troubles. What is happening is this. With the end of slavery and the dawn of independence, all the weaknesses of society are bound to come to the surface. I do not see any reason to be unnecessarily upset about it. If we keep our balance at such a time, every tangle will be solved. As far as the economic question is concerned it has to be solved in any case. Today, there is gross economic inequality. The basis of socialism is economic equality. There can be no *Ramarajya* 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 any lasting reform.

(Adapted from the original in Hindustani)

New Delhi, 25-5-'47

Harijan, 1-6-1947

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THE GREAT SIN

Gandhiji addressed a huge but a perfectly quiet audience at Barh Barh was one of those fortunate places which did not entirely go mad. But it could not escape the responsibility for the acts of those around it It was difficult to estimate, Gandhiji said, what India had already lost through madnesses like Bihar's or what she might have to lose in future. The only way to escape the consequences of their acts was to show genuine repentance and thus lighten the heavy responsibility of Ansari Saheb, with which he had been entrusted by the Ministry The people should refuse to shelter criminals who had acted barbarously or who were still threatening the returning Muslims under the false belief that they had done something heroic How it could be heroic, Gandhiji said, he failed to understand

To the criminals Gandhiji said that as a mark of true repentance they should surrender themselves to the police and bear the punishment that might be meted out to them Even otherwise it was in their interest to surrender, for if the Government and the police did their duty — which they must if they wanted to justify their existence — they would be arrested sooner or later A voluntary surrender was bound to win them consideration from the court What he had said, continued Gandhiji, should not be dismissed as a counsel of cowardice

Inculcation of cowardice was against his nature. Even since his return from South Africa, where a few thousand had stood up not unsuccessfully against heavy odds, he had made it his mission to preach true bravery which *ahimsa* meant They could not forget how in their own province the age-long tyranny of the indigo planters was swept off in six months in Champaran through non-violent resistance They had to show the same bravery to a much greater extent if they wanted to get out of the abyss in which the country was being plunged at the time.

Harijan, 1-6-1947

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SPIRIT OF BROTHERLINESS

This evening Gandhiji's prayer was held at Hilsa, one of the worst affected areas in the riots. Addressing the gathering after prayer was over he said that the roits were a matter of great shame and sorrow But the shame of the sin could be turned to good account by adequate repentance. All the religions that he had studied were full of instances proving the maxim "The greater the sinner the greater the saint". For the poignancy of the pain of the guilt enhanced the joy that a guiltless life brought with it. He wished that the maxim could be proved true in the reformed life of the people of Hilsa They would be repelled by physical dirt Surely the repulsion caused by mental dirt which the insanity of the Hindus of Hilsa meant was much greater than the pain caused by any physical dirt however great He was wondering, continued Gandhiji, how he could awaken genuine repentance in the hearts of the Hindus of Hilsa. It had been suggested to him that if he settled down in Hilsa and went from house to house, he would be able to effect the desired transformation Although there was truth in the remark, he must own his physical weakness and consequent inability to follow the advice They were none the better for his confession He hoped, therefore, that his remarks would penetrate the hearts of the large audience and that they would invite the Muslim sufferers to return

He had been told that many Muslims came to see the place and finding it unprepared left it He expected them to help the process of renovation of the shattered houses. The rainy season was approaching They should, therefore, be quick about their work. Till then it was their duty to accommodate the Muslims in their own houses as they would accommodate their own blood relations. The Hindus and the Muslims had lived like blood relations in Bihar before. There was no reason why they should not revive the old time.

If the Hindus showed the spirit of brotherliness, concluded Gandhiji, it would be good for Bihar, for India and the world

Harijan, 1-6-1947

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IN DELHI

In the sweltering heat of Delhi Gandhiji arrived on the 25th May in answer to Pandit Nehru's call. Both the Sardar and the Panditji had wired to him to go for a brief rest and change to Mussoorie where they were But he could not go as he had promised himself not to leave his field of service till friendly relations were established between the two communities in Noakhali, Bihar and Calcutta The fact is that he would be in every riot-affected area himself if he could manage it by some magic Mr Khan of Chandpur came to pay his respects to him at Delhi the other day "Tell the people of Noakhali that I have not deserted them," he said to him. "I hope to return as soon as possible" The workers of the Nature Cure Trust at Uruli and Panchgani have been beseeching him to go there for a short stay in the interests of the Trust and his own health But he is adamant "The Hindus and the Muslims of Noakhali and Bihar must first assure me that they no longer require my services Then alone will I think of going elsewhere for rest"

The happenings in the country oppress him heavily Having deprived himself of the help of his usual staff, he burns the candle at both ends He has become reckless with regard to his health and life "In the India as I see it shaping today, there is no place for me," he said There was passion in his voice. "I have given up the hope of living 125 years," he continued, "I might last a year or two. That is a different matter. But I have no wish to live if India is to be submerged in a deluge of violence, as it is threatening to do There is the communal frenzy and they

are talking of militarization and industrialization. India might become a first class military power and a highly industrialized country. But where is the place for village industries or *khadi*, symbols of non-violence, in such India?"

In a letter to an old Ashramite he wrote: "I am in the midst of flames. Is it the kindness of God or His irony that the flames do not consume me?"

What is it that sustains him? It is his Himalayan faith. A European friend who had spent a few days with him in India in 1935 writes to him from America: "I think of you in prayer while in that part of the world, where I am not very far from the place where they manufacture the atomic bomb material U 235. I see only the light of hope for our Western civilization in your radiant and friendly guidance and wisdom." In his reply Gandhiji wrote: "I am the same as when you saw me except that my faith burns, if possible, brighter than before."

The Chinese Ambassador Dr. Lo Chia Luen came with Pandit Nehru to see Gandhiji. "How do you think things will shape themselves? How do you predict the future?" he asked.

"I am an irrepressible optimist," replied Gandhiji. "We have not lived and toiled in vain all these years that we should become barbarians as we appear to be becoming, looking at all the senseless bloodshed in Bengal, Bihar and the Punjab. But I feel it is just an indication that as we are throwing off the foreign yoke all the dirt and froth is coming to the surface. When the Ganges is in flood, the water is turbid. The dirt comes to the surface. When the flood subsides, you see the clear blue water which soothes the eye. That is what I hope for and live for. I do not wish to live to see Indian humanity becoming barbarian.

"And who can predict the future? Years ago I read Butler's *Analogy*. Therein I read that the 'future is the result somewhat of our past'. This thought has persisted with me because it coincides with the Indian belief. We are the makers of our own destiny. We can mend or mar the present and on that will depend the future."

The Chinese Ambassador was thoughtful. "History sometimes repeats itself, because we do not learn its lesson," he said. "It is only a half truth," replied Gandhiji. "History may seem to be repeating itself today. I believe that nothing remains static. Human nature either goes up or goes down Let us hope, in India, it is going up. Otherwise, there is nothing but deluge for India and probably for the whole world."

They talked of the havoc wrought by the war in China. Would the war-weary Asiatic countries follow in the footsteps of Japan and turn to militarization? The answer lay in what direction India would throw its weight. "India is becoming the laughing stock of the world," he said in the course of one of his post-prayer speeches. "The world asks, where is your non-violence with which you have won your independence? I have to hang down my head in shame. Will a free India present to the world a lesson of peace or of hatred and violence of which the world is already sick unto death?"

The learned ambassador conveyed to Gandhiji the deepest respect and affection of the Chinese people. Gandhiji valued their affection and said he would love to visit China which had so much in common with India. The ambassador began to talk of Chinese philosophy and quoted Lao-tse's maxim: "Production without possession, action without self-assertion, creation without domination." Gandhiji's face beamed. "You are talking the language of the *Upanishads*," he said. "The same thought is to be found in the *Ishopanishad*."

New Delhi, 28-5-'47

Harijan, 8-6-1947

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THE WAY OF PERDITION

Speaking after prayers, Gandhiji said that by their exemplary restraint and attention they had drawn him and enabled him to open out his heart to them. How he wished that all those who called themselves the sons of the soil would think well and act bravely—a very difficult performance at the moment when newspapers gave gruesome details about senseless arson and murder. Some correspondents would have him take to forest life unless he would ask the Hindus to answer sword with sword and arson with arson. He could not oblige those correspondents by denying the whole of his life and by being guilty of advocating the law of the brute in place of the law of man. On the contrary, he would plead with leaders of all parties at least to have courage to refuse to yield to brute force.

He was not thinking of the eternal law of love, much as he believed in it. If the whole of India accepted that, India would become the unquestioned leader of the whole world. Here he merely wished to suggest that there should be no surrender except to reason.

They had worked hard for achieving freedom. They had bravely faced the bayonets of the mighty British Empire. Why should they falter now? Let them not make the mistake on the eve of hard won freedom of thinking that they were likely to lose it if they did not yield, even though it be to brute force. That way lay perdition.

If they would face reality in terms of the welfare of their own country, they would agree first to establish peace in the country, telling the turbulent elements in the country firmly and boldly that there could be no departure from that document of May 16 until they stopped the sanguinary strife.

The Constituent Assembly was sitting in terms of the May 16 paper. It was for the British to hand over power

and quit. The Government of free Indians formed under the constitution worked out by the Constituent Assembly could do anything afterwards—keep India one or divide it into two or more parts.

The British officials should know what the people were whispering. Many believed that their hand was in the riots. He must refuse to believe the serious charge unless it was established beyond doubt.

Harijan 8-6-1947

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PERFORM OUR DUTY

Speaking after prayer Gandhiji said that being the joint author of the famous statement signed by Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah, he (Gandhiji) should represent him (Jinnah) at least in the one deciding and supreme factor of peace. Did he represent the Qaid-e-Azam? If he did, they should be found working on the same platform and not resting till they had secured peace in the land of their birth, or die in the attempt. He knew that he did not represent those who burnt villages near Gurgaon and committed murder. Whether they were Muslims or Hindus or both did not matter to him. They were all children of Mother India. It was unfortunate that the Interim Government had inherited a bad tradition and therefore they did not know who killed whom. It was the deed of "the members of a certain community." Why should they not be frank and bold enough to name the butcher by his name? Anyway he had made it clear the day before that if he had his will there never would be Pakistan before peace and certainly not through British intervention. After the joint statement he had just referred to, Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah had left no way open to himself but the way of conviction through cold reason for the attainment of Pakistan. Let him first establish peace with or without his (Gandhiji's) association and afterwards convene a meeting at his house or anywhere else of Indian leaders of all

classes and communities and plead with them the cause of Pakistan and wait till he had carried conviction to them Let him dismiss the 'Caste Hindus' from his brain He would assure Jinnah Saheb that in the ocean of Indian humanity and even Hindu humanity they were but a microscopic minority if the Shudras were excluded By "Caste Hindus" were generally known Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas Jinnah Saheb himself excludes the Scheduled Classes from this category and therefore would have to exclude the Shudras For the wretched caste system had always traduced the Shudras who together with the Atishudras made the millions. If Pakistan of Jinnah Saheb's conception was a reasonable proposition, he should have no difficulty in convincing India Let him not appeal to the British power or its representative Viscount Mountbatten The latter's function was only to quit India at the latest by the end of June next year, leaving India at peace if possible, but quit in any case, peace or no peace Imposed peace would be the peace of the grave of which all India and the British should be ashamed. Let it not be said that he (Gandhiji) was too late on the scene He was not It was never too late to mend, never too late to replace the force of the sword with that of reason Could the British dare to impose Pakistan on an India temporarily gone mad?

Was Pakistan, according to Jinnah Saheb, a State, where every child would enjoy the fullest security, where there would be no caste and no distinctions of high and low, where there would be justice for all? No one could have anything against such a Pakistan He himself would tour with Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah all over and explain to the people that they could all live happily in that Pakistan. But the happenings in N W F P, the Punjab and Bengal did not encourage such a belief.

A friend had sent him some literature to prove that the *Quran* preached killing of *kafirs*, i. e, non-believers. He had been in the midst of Muslims all his life No one had ever suggested that he should be killed as a *kafir*. He had been in the midst of *Maulvis* in Noakhali. Learned Muslims had told him that the meaning of the

particular verse of the *Quran* was that God would take to account the so-called non-believer. But that he would do to the Mussalmans also. He judges men by their deeds and not by their words. There was mention of terrible punishments in the *Bhagwata*, the *Manu Smriti* and the *Vedas*. Yet the central teaching of Hindu religion was: "Mercy or kindness is the essence of all religion." He wanted them to bear in mind what Tulsidas had said:

"Good and bad, all men are the creation of God. The man of God picks up the good and discards the bad like the proverbial swan which is able to drink the milk and leave behind water, when a mixture of water and milk is placed before it."

Harijan, 8-6-1947

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BLOODY LEGACY

Gandhiji in his written message on Monday said in part:

"There is an additional reason why no vital change in the shape of Hindustan is possible in the present state of the country. There is the joint statement issued by the Qaid-e-Azam and me. It enunciates a sound principle that there should be no violence employed in the pursuit of political aims. If in the teeth of that document the country continues the mad career of violence of the worst kind, and if the British Power is weak enough to submit to it in the vain hope that after the mad thirst is quenched things will run smooth, it would have left a bloody legacy for which not only India but the whole world will blame her. We shall then have learnt the cruel lesson that everything was to be got if mad violence was perpetrated in sufficient measure. I would, therefore, urge every patriot and certainly the British Power to face out the worst violence and leave India, as it can be left under the Cabinet Mission document of 16th May of last year. Today in the presence of the British Power we are only demoralized by the orgy of blood, arson and worse. After it is withdrawn, let me hope, we shall have the wisdom to

think coherently and keep India one, or split it into two or more parts. But if we are bent even then on fighting, I am sure we will not be so demoralized as we are today, though admittedly all violence carries with it some amount of demoralization. I shall hope against hope that India free will not give the world an additional object lesson in violence with which it is already sick almost unto death."

Harijan, 8-6-1947

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THE SACRED TRUST

A correspondent had written a letter saying that whenever the Viceroy invited leaders from the Interim Government for discussions, he invited the Hindus, the Muslims and the Sikhs. Were there no other communities in India? What about the Parsis, the Christians, Jews and others? They had been with the Congress. Were they to be suppressed by the vociferous elements? The Sikhs were a brave race. The Muslims had raised a hue and cry for years and so they were being consulted. Were the quiet citizens to have no voice in shaping the destiny of the country?

The question was relevant and important, said Gandhiji. If the Sikhs and the Hindus and the Muslims thought themselves to be the only people that mattered and that the rights of the other communities were in any way less than their own, they would prove themselves utterly unworthy. The curses of the innocent would destroy them. Such a Government would never be *Rama Raj* or the Kingdom of Heaven on earth.

It was the duty of every citizen to treat the lowliest on a par with the others. If some persons became mad, that was no justification for others to follow suit. If Indians decided to live independently, Gandhiji urged, none in the world, not even a combination of powerful nations, could thwart them.

New Delhi, 29-5-'47

Harijan, 8-6-1947

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PAKISTAN AT LAST

On the evening of the 3rd June the Viceroy followed by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah and Sardar Baldev Singh spoke to the people on the radio. The reactions to H M G.'s announcement were mixed. Most of the Hindus were sad. Panditji's broadcast was most touching. They all disliked the vivisection of India. But they could not let India bleed continuously. A surgical operation was to be preferred under the circumstances. Three lorries full of Muslims were reported to have gone to the Qaid-e-Azam's house shouting *Pakistan zindabad* (long live Pakistan). And yet several Muslims came to see Gandhiji and expressed sorrow over what had happened. In the Punjab and Bengal large numbers of Muslims are reported to be dissatisfied. Speaking on the plan embodied in H. M. G.'s announcement, Gandhiji said that he had already told them over and over again that to yield even an inch to force was wholly wrong. The Working Committee holds that they had not yielded to the force of arms but they had to yield to the force of circumstances. The vast majority of Congressmen did not want unwilling partners. Their motto was non-violence and, therefore, no coercion. Hence, after careful weighing of the pros and cons of the vital issues at stake they had reluctantly agreed to the secession from the Union that was being framed of those parts which had boycotted the Constituent Assembly. Gandhiji expressed sorrow at what he considered was a mistaken policy of the Muslim League. They feared Hindu domination they said, and desired to rule in what they were mistaken in calling their own homelands. As a matter of fact, however, India was the homeland of all who were born and bred in India. Would the Muslim homeland live in isolation? Was not the Punjab as much the homeland of the Hindus, the Sikhs, the Christians, the Jews and the Parsis who were of the Punjab?

Gandhiji could not blame the Viceroy for what had happened. It was the act of the Congress and the League.

He (the Viceroy) had openly said that he wanted a United India but he was powerless in the face of Congress acceptance, however reluctantly, of the Muslim position.

There were the brave Sikhs whose leaders had been to see him. Gandhiji had explained to them what he meant by one Sikh being equal to 1¼ lakhs of persons. It was the courage of one Sikh to stand firm in spite of the opposition of 1¼ lakhs of men. This could only mean bravery of the highest and purest kind If they had that faith and courage born of non-violence, they would be worthy of the proud name *Khalsa* That was the lesson he had learnt from the *Granth Sahib* and *Khalsa* History

He had done his best to get people to stand by the Cabinet Mission Statement of May 16th but had failed. But what was his duty and theirs in the face of the accepted fact? He was a servant of the Congress because he was a servant of the country and he could never be disloyal to them. Panditji and the Viceroy had said that nothing had been imposed on anyone. The agreement that was embodied in the announcement being a voluntary act of the parties could be varied by them at any stage by mutual consent. He pleaded with the Muslim League, now that they had their wish fulfilled, to relieve the Viceroy of the heavy task of being the middleman between the parties. He hoped that it was a final agreement between the parties Therefore, all violence should stop, and Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah should invite Congress leaders for a discussion as to the best way of dealing with the further stages. Thus, for instance, there was no reason why they should not by mutual agreement define the boundaries of partitioned Punjab and Bengal

WOULD HE FAST?

The feeling against the division of the country was strong. Gandhiji's speeches had revived the hopes that the evil might be averted. Some people asked him whether he would undertake a fast unto death in view of the decision of the Congress Working Committee accepting division of India. Had not he called Pakistan a sin in which he could never

participate? Replying to this Gandhiji said that he could not fast at the dictation of anyone. Such fasts could not be lightly undertaken. They could conceivably be wholly undesirable. They could not be undertaken out of anger. Anger was a short madness. He must, therefore, undertake the fast only when the still small voice within him called for it. He was a servant of the country and, therefore, of the Congress. Was he to fast because the Congress differed from his views? He had to be patient. There were occasions enough for being impatient. The Congress seemed to stand for projects of industrialism in which he saw no deliverance for the masses from their grinding poverty. He did not believe in mill-made civilization as he did not in mill-made cloth. He did not believe in an army for the removal of the menace to the real freedom of the country. If he was to impatiently fast, in the symptoms he had described and others he could add, there were reasons enough to justify a fast unto death. He felt that he must be steadfast in the midst of the fire raging round him and prove his faith in the ultimate triumph of truth. He referred even to the document he had signed together with Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah and to which the Viceroy was really a party. He must watch what his two partners did before he acted. He could only say that he would gladly walk or drive with them to the affected parts. They (the people) might well ask what they were doing while Gurgaon was burning? He asked the audience and the authors of the rebuking messages to bear with the Congress, the League and with him, and watch, even critically, and see how things were moving. He hoped that they would not fail them, the people. The Government belonged to the latter as he did. There was ample time for the people to judge them and leave them if any of them were found wanting.

There is a large section of the Hindus who have heaved a sigh of relief that at last they are rid of the Muslims and would be able to work out and develop the country without any bickerings. But there are others who see clearly that partition is no solution to the problem. Nearly four crores of the Muslims would still remain in the Union of India

and about two crores of the Hindus will remain in the so-called Pakistan areas. They feel helpless and angry at the Congress decision and as such blame the Congress and Gandhiji. A sister wrote to him that he should retire to the jungle. It was he who had spoilt Jinnah Saheb and turned his head. He (Gandhiji) was responsible for the evil that the country was facing. Gandhiji's reply was that the sister was quite wrong. Love or *ahimsa* was the most powerful magnet in the world. It never did any harm to anyone.

Harijan, 15-6-1947

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PUT PAKISTAN ON THE SCREEN

Now that the Qaid-e-Azam had got what he wanted, said Gandhiji, it was up to him to give the world the shape of Pakistan and make it attractive in word and action. Was it not up to him to invite all non-Muslims and show them that they would be as happy as the Muslims of Pakistan? What about the Frontier Province? It was a Congress Province. If it was to be of Pakistan, the Qaid-e-Azam had to convince the Pathans that they would be just as well off in Pakistan as in the Union of the Provinces of India. Referendum was a dangerous method at this time. He, therefore, suggested the method of attracting the Pathan through reason and love.

What should happen was that the Union of India and Pakistan should vie with each other in well doing. If Pakistan did better, the whole of India would be Pakistan in which there would be neither majority nor minority and all would be equal. If he were the President of the Muslim League, he would put Pakistan on the screen and make it attractive by its matchless beauty. In that case he (Gandhiji) would be the first one to admit his mistake and commend Pakistan to everybody. Will the Qaid-e-Azam do this?

Referring to the newspaper report that Gandhiji had differed from the decision of the Working Committee and that the A. I. C C. would raise its voice against it, Gandhiji said that the A. I. C. C. had appointed the Working Committee and they could not lightly discard its decisions. Supposing the Working Committee signed a promissory note on behalf of the A. I. C. C., the A. I. C. C. had to honour it. The Working Committee might make a mistake. They could punish it by removing it. But they could not go back upon the decision already taken by it

As for the people, he would ask them to oppose the Congress only when it tried to mislead the public deliberately. They knew his method of resistance. After all, he had preached rebellion against the mighty Sanatanist Hindu stronghold on the subject of untouchability and the result was quite good.

He might differ from the Working Committee. But having stated the fact he would recommend their decision for acceptance. He was of the opinion that they could still mend the situation to a large extent.

Harijan, 15-6-1947

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UNITED BENGAL ?

The talk of a united sovereign Bengal has been in the Press for sometime The sponsors of the scheme, told Gandhiji that Bengal had a common culture and a common language. They did not want to split their Province in two They were one people and would live and die as such. The valiant fight that the Bengalies put forth against Lord Curzon's scheme of partitioning Bengal was not so very long ago Gandhiji had nothing to say against the argument Indeed, it applied equally to the whole of India. If any single province wanted to do the right thing, he would not oppose it.

Referring to this he said that some people had told him that the move for a united sovereign Bengal was a sinister one. The Hindus were fed up and wanted to separate

West from East Bengal The Bengal Muslim League had also rejected the unity plan but some people were still persisting with it and it was said to be due to the fact that he (Gandhiji) was behind the move He wanted to make it clear that he could never support any questionable practice He was even told that money was being spent like water to buy votes in favour of a united Bengal He appreciated unity but not at the cost of honour and justice He was taken to task for supporting Sarat Babu. He was undoubtedly his friend. He was in correspondence with him But he would never be guilty of supporting anything that could not be publicly and honestly defended That was his universal practice He did not believe in questionable means even to secure a worthy end

New Delhi, 9-6-'47

Harijan 15-6-1947

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HOW SHOULD THE INDIAN UNION ACT ?

[Gandhiji's post-prayer speech on 12-6-'47]

Does the readjustment of the geography of India mean two nations ? I admit that the division having been agreed upon, unity becomes somewhat difficult But assuming that the Muslims of India look upon themselves as a nation distinct from the rest, they cannot become so, if the non-Muslims do not respond The Muslim majority areas may call themselves Pakistan but the rest and the largest part of India need not call itself Hindustan In contradistinction to Pakistan it will mean the abode of the Hindus. Do the Hindus feel so ? Have the Parsis, the Christians and the Jews born in India, and the Anglo-Indians who do not happen to have the white skin, any other home than India ? I will omit the Muslims for the time being I suppose such is the reason why Panditji refuses to call the non-Pakistan areas as Hindustan and loves to call them by the proud name of the Union of Indian Republics from

which some Muslim majority areas have seceded. History has shown that possession of proud names does not make the possessors great. Men and groups are known not by what they call themselves but by their deeds. How is this Union to behave? Already the taunt is being levelled against the Union that the much-maligned caste Hindus who, as I have shown in an earlier speech are in a hopeless minority, will ostracize the millions of the Scheduled Classes and (I will add) an equal number of *shudras* and the so-called aboriginal tribes. And then what of the other insignificant minorities? The so-called caste Hindus are on their trial. Will they recognize and do their obvious duty and give place to the least in the Union by affording them all the facilities to rise to the highest status? And what will they do to the Muslim minorities? Will they be regarded as aliens or will they be made to feel that they cannot be treated as aliens in their own land and that they will have all the opportunity that the tallest in the Union enjoy? Heaven forbid that the caste Hindus so behave as to prove Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah's thesis that the Muslims and the Hindus are separate nations. Will they rise to the occasion and by their character, bravery, incorruptibility and toleration prove to the Muslims of Pakistan that in the Union there is no discrimination whatsoever on the ground of religion, caste or colour, and that the only test is merit which every industrious citizen of the Union will have ample opportunity to acquire?

I am told that there are people in the Union who have wrongly come to the conclusion that now there is no occasion for Hindustani — a compatible mixture of Hindi and Urdu. There are many holy shrines of Islam. Will they be honoured equally with the others? Will it be the same with the Muslim seats of learning? On the proper treatment of these and such other questions, depends the real unity of India and I say this irrespective of what is said or done in Pakistan. 'Tit for tat' is the law of the brute or unregenerate man. Such men have had their day. The world is sick of the application of the law of the jungle. It is thirsting for the brave law of love for hate, truth for

untruth, toleration for intoleration. If this law of regenerate man is not to rule the world, it is thrice doomed.

Harijan, 22-6-1947

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A WEEKLY LETTER

OUR HERITAGE

The prayer meetings have not been disturbed of late. The religious tolerance and the power to absorb and assimilate the good points of those it came in contact with, have been the special features of Hinduism and Hindu culture from ancient times A correspondent, reading of Gandhiji's reference to *Allopanishad* in one of his prayer speeches, has sent him a manuscript copy It consists of seven verses and is part of the *Atharvan* group. He has since received further printed copies The senders have given the warning that it does not form part of the authorized collections

Professor Jaichandra Vidyalankar wrote to Gandhiji of Rana Kumbha, who was the grandfather of Rana Sanga, who in his turn was the grandfather of the great Rana Pratap. Rana Kumbha was one of the earliest Hindu princes to rebel against the Muslim domination of India He defeated the Sultans of Malwa and Gujarat and erected a victory pillar in Chittore which is in existence even today On the victory pillar along with names *Brahma*, *Vishnu* and *Mahesha* is the name *Allah* carved in bold Arabic letters

The Professor tells of Sultan Jainubiddin of Kashmir, Rana Kumbha's contemporary, who used to accompany his Hindu subjects on pilgrimage. He renovated many Hindu *mandirs*, some of which are still in existence. Chhatrapati Shivaji and Maharaja Ranjit Singh honoured Islam, while they fought Muslim potentates.

The learned historian attributed the present communal bitterness to the wrong teaching of history in schools and took Gandhiji to task for neglecting this. Gandhiji recognized

the force of the argument. He asked the audience including the objectors to take to heart the lesson of the information and not to discredit Hinduism by their misbehaviour.

RETALIATION NOT TRUE BRAVERY

A correspondent wrote to Gandhiji that India was face to face with a *Devasur-sangram.* Time was over for altruistic flights of spirituality. Should he not follow the rule, *shathe shathyam samacharet* (शठे शाठ्यं समाचरेत् : Practise cunning unto the cunning.), or at least not interfere with or discourage those who believed in the wise maxim? Why should he be shocked by what Babu Purshottamdas Tandon had said in his speech with regard to self-defence?

Gandhiji replied that Babu Purshottamdas Tandon was his friend and co-worker. Differences with him did give him (Gandhiji) a shock. It merely proved that he was a frail human being. If he had become a *sthita pragnya* (steadfast one) he would be above delights or shocks. He was struggling to attain that state.

As for the correspondent's advice to give tit for tat, he had dealt with the question before. A good man was reproved for picking out of water a scorpion which stung him. His gentle but effective answer was that the scorpion had acted according to his nature, even as he, the *Sadhu.* had acted according to his. Man's innate nature was to be invariably merciful. The advice to be silent about the operation of the law of the jungle was an invitation to be a hypocrite. He certainly had said and he would repeat that retaliation was better than cowardly submission. But he could not help adding that retaliation was no mark of true bravery and it never allayed animosity.

RESIST THE VIVISECTION OF INDIA

A correspondent wrote to Gandhiji that he, who had proclaimed that the vivisection of India would mean a vivisection of himself, had weakned. The writer had also invited him to lead the opposition to the proposed division. He could not plead guilty to the taunt. When he made the statement he was voicing public opinion. But when public opinion was against him, was he to coerce it? The

writer had also argued that he had often held that there was to be no compromise with untruth or evil. The assertion was correct But the application must also be correct. He made bold to say that if only non-Muslim India was with him, he could show the way to undo the proposed partition But he freely admitted that he had become or was rather considered a back number We had forgotten the lesson we had learnt for the past thirty years. We had forgotten that untruth was to be conquered by truth and violence by non-violence, impatience by patience and heat by cold We had begun to fear our own shadows. Many had invited him to head the opposition But there was nothing in common between them and him except the opposition. The basis of his opposition seemed to be wholly different from that of the inviters Could love and hate combine ?

UNITED BENGAL

Gandhiji has been receiving angry protests against what he said about the movement for a united Bengal. He willingly pleaded guilty to the charge of wanting a united Bengal He would not mind standing alone in defence of such unity, if it could be preserved with dignity, honesty and willingness on both sides For him it was no political game or bargain What he wanted was a heart-unity And although the provincial League had turned down the proposition, he made bold to say that it was possible for the Muslims of Bengal to give an assurance accompanied by tangible action that the Hindus had nothing to fear from the Muslim majority and there would be no partition. Unfortunately the omens appeared to be the contrary

TWO NATIONS ?

The division of India, said Gandhiji, was now a certainty so far as man could see. He asked them not to grieve over it. He had never believed in Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah's two-nation theory and never would. Change of religion could never change nationality. He was as much of Pakistan as of Hindustan. If they acted in like manner, Jinnah Saheb would not be able to prove his theory in spite of the geographical division of India

Jinnah Saheb had rebuked his followers for calling him *Shahanshah-e-Pakistan* (Emperor of Pakistan) and he had said that in Pakistan the minorities would get a square deal. If he lived up to what he had said, things would go right. Having got what they wanted, they were expected to live in peace with their non-Muslim fellow countrymen. In Pakistan they had to assure religious freedom and equal rights for all. Why should the Hindus in Sind for instance be unable to live there in peace and security? If a single Hindu left Sind, the Muslims should plead with him and welcome him back. To the Hindus he would say that they should shed all fear. No one could force them to change their religion or status.

To the Hindus in the Hindu majority areas he would say that they should do the right thing irrespective of what the Muslims did. Thus only they would be able to disprove Jinnah Saheb's two-nation theory.

MINORITIES IN PAKISTAN

Gandhiji had a visit from some non-Muslims from severely stricken Rawalpindi. Naturally he enquired of them whether, now that Pakistan was almost a settled fact, there was any difference for the better in the behaviour of the Muslims round them. He was startled to be informed that the difference was undoubtedly there, but for the worse.

How happy he would be if he could be told truly that the information was coloured or that it was wholly wrong and that the fact was that the Muslims were going out of their way to fraternize with the Hindus, the Sikhs and the other non-Muslims!

Some friends from Campbellpore came and wanted to know whether they could live with safety in Campbellpore. Gandhiji hoped that he had no fear of any man, much less of Pakistan, for he feared only God. Therefore, he had no hesitation in saying to them that they should have no fear about their own safety because the area which they occupied was to be part of Pakistan. His assurance, however, could not produce much or any effect on them. They were

frightened like most of the other non-Muslims who had to be in Pakistan. In reality, therefore, it was not he but Jinnah Saheb and other Muslim leaders of the League who had to give convincing assurances to all the frightened non-Muslims and dispel their fears.

N W F. P.

Gandhiji suggested that the Qaid-e-Azam should lay all his cards on the table so that the world could see what he meant by Muslim majority rule, otherwise called Pakistan.

There was a talk of referendum in N. W. F. P. He would suggest to Jinnah Saheb that he should meet the Frontier Ministers and Badshah Khan as also his *Khudai Khidmatgars* and tell them why they should be in Pakistan. If the terms were attractive, he would have no hesitation in advising his Frontier friends to be part of Pakistan and thus avoid conflict between Pathan and Pathan and keep their Pathanistan intact in a federation of the majority Muslim States. Surely it was not proper to divide the Pathans by a referendum into two parties

SCRAP OF PAPER

It was open to the Hindus, the Muslims and the Sikhs and all the other communities even now to come together and treat the Viceregal document of 3rd June as a scrap of paper in so far as further steps were concerned. It did nothing but register an agreement between the Congress and the League. It was an agreement which neither party liked. The Congress spokesmen had made it clear that they could not be willing partners in any division of India. Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah did not show enthusiasm about the agreement inasmuch as Bengal and the Punjab were to be partitioned. In whatever direction he looked, the only way he could see through the surrounding darkness was that all the parties should come together and evolve a concerted plan so as to prevent further friction and further bloodshed.

New Delhi, 15-6-'47

Harijan, 22-6-1947

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NON-VIOLENCE OF THE BRAVE

The Congress President in his concluding speech at the A. I. C. C. had said that Gandhiji had not been able to show the way of combating communal strife in a non-violent manner as he had done in the case of fighting the British. Gandhiji had said that he was groping in the dark and though he said that he was solving the Hindu-Muslim problem for the whole of India by his work in Noakhali and Bihar, he (the President) had not been able to understand how the technique could be applied on a mass scale. That was why he was not standing with Gandhiji that day and had agreed to the partition of India.

Gandhiji's reply was that his groping in the dark referred to the fact that he did not know how to make the people see his view-point. He had no doubt that non-violence was as effective a weapon against communal strife as it had proved in their struggle against the British. The people had followed him then, because they knew they could not face the might of British arms in any other way. It was the non-violence of the weak. That won't serve the purpose in communal strife. For that was required pure non-violence of the brave.

Speaking in the prayer meeting Gandhiji said that while he admitted his impotency regarding the spread of the *ahimsa* of the brave and the strong as distinguished from that of the weak, the admission was not meant to imply that he did not know how that inestimable virtue was to be cultivated. Consciousness of the living presence of God within one was undoubtedly the first requisite. Acquisition of this consciousness did not require or mean temple-going. The daily recitation, however, carried with it certain well-defined implications. Assuming that the millions of India daily recited at a given time the name of God as Rama, Allah, Khuda, Ahura Mazda and

Jehovah but the recitation was not free from drunkenness, debauchery, gambling on the market or in gambling dens, black-marketing etc., the *Ramadhun* was a vain and inglorious effort. One with a wicked heart could never be conscious of the all-purifying presence of God. Therefore it was truer (if it was a fact) to say that India was not ready for the lesson of the *ahimsa* of the strong than that no programme had been devised for the teaching. It would be perfectly just to say that the programme just mentioned for the *ahimsa* of the strong was not as attractive as that devised for the non-violence of the weak had proved to be. He hoped that at least his hearers who daily attended the prayer meetings would lead the way in expressing in their lives the *ahimsa* of the strong.

New Delhi, 22-6-'47

Harijan, 29-6-1947

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FROM AMERICA

Mr. Richard Gregg writes from U. S. A.:

"Today's New York newspaper carries a dispatch from New Delhi stating that you have given up hope of living for 125 years and that there is no place for you in India because of the deluge of violence. If this report is substantially correct, I beg you, please reconsider your attitude. As I see the matter there is far more at stake than present violence in India, even if this should last for fifteen years.

"India is the source of the deepest and strongest spiritual insight and culture in the world. It is also the most enduring. Despite the grave harm that has been done to Hindu culture by the modern loss of religion and contact with the West which so fully embodies that secularism, Hindu culture still stands supreme. Most of the world will soon be ruined by violence and greed and godlessness, but I have hoped that there would be a remnant, no matter how small, in India which would keep its spiritual anchorage

and be an island of hope and spiritual insight which may once more be the source of life and sanity for the stricken world.

"More than anyone else, you represent that Hindu culture, and the continuance of your life is of great importance to all the world. Even though for a time the number of those who agree with you and truly follow the road of *ahimsa* may shrink to only a handful, the very smallness makes possible an enhancement of quality and spiritual power. Then when mankind have learned better out of their suffering, (it seems to be the only way most of them can learn), they will turn again to the spiritual sources. We may not tell God that if violence (the folly of men) does not stop within a certain time that fits our hopes, we will stop doing our utmost including living as long as we can in order to do our utmost. I only dare say this to you because I want you so much to stay with us.

"Let me speak in a little more detail. Very careful economic studies over a long period of time have shown that there are several waves or cycles or rhythm of economic activity of various kinds. There is a 54-year rhythm of wholesale prices, an 18-year cycle of real-estate activity, a 9-year wave of another sort, and a still other variety of $3\frac{1}{2}$ years. All the great depressions have been governed by these. All these cycles reach their lowest point in 1951-52. We are now entering what will probably be the severest economic depression that industrial nations have ever experienced. It will engulf the United States as well as all other nations. With the present dependence of Great Britain on economic aid from the U. S., the inevitable recession of that aid will, I believe, put an end to British interference in India. If another war, such as now seems likely between the United States and Russia, occurs, there will be the end of the present Western civilization and the dominance of the White man over the world. I think that Hindu India can then lead the world out of the holocaust. That is my hope. I beg of you, please try to live out all those 125 years so that you as God's servant may play your part in that supremely important time.

India and the world will need you then even more than now Because this is a moral world governed by God's laws, mankind must suffer by its continued violation for centuries of these laws, especially by the governments of the nations. The sufferings are terrible to contemplate, but if they did not come, it would indicate that this is not a moral universe after all So, the very suffering is a proof of our optimism, our belief that God s laws prevail and can no more be successfully violated than man can violate the force of gravitation

" God bless you and keep you Please, please, reconsider your discouragement and keep on living for the rest of the world as well as India As I wrote to you in my last letter, there is always violence during and soon after the transfer of political power between nations and groups When the thirteen American colonies broke away from Britain in 1776, we had our riots and fighting too It was called Shay s rebellion All history shows similar phenomena throughout the West, and enough of India has been infected by the Western ideas that it follows But I hope the infection will end when the next war comes and Indians see beyond any doubt where irreligious Western culture leads "

The dispatch from which Mr Gregg quotes is substantially correct The loss of hope arises from my knowledge that I have not attained sufficient detachment and control over my temper and emotions which entitle one to entertain the hope One day I found to my cost that I had not attained the required detachment. No one has the right to live at all unless it is a life of service And a man without detachment in terms of the *Gita* cannot render full service.

A faithfull confession of one's failings is good for the soul It enables one the better to get rid of those failings. Let the readers of the *Harijan* know that I am making every effort to get out of them so that I can regain the lost hope. In this connection I should also repeat that the hope is open to every one who dedicates himself to the service of his fellowmen. Nor need it be laughed out as an idle dream That it may not be realized in me and many fellow aspirants should be no proof of its futility.

The statement that I find no place for myself in a society that bases itself on violence has nothing to do with the reported loss of hope. I deliberately use the adjective 'reported' for I do not want to harbour the thought of hopelessness. What was true when the report was made, need not be and, is not true in an equal measure today

It must be clear that there can be no place for a man of peace in a society full of strife. Yet he may live the full span of 125 years and may hope by ceaseless striving to make a place for himself. That is exactly the meaning of my second statement and no more. I am in that society, though not of it. The statement registers my protest.

Has the non-violent effort of the past 30 years come to nought? I have already argued out the position in my speeches reported in these columns. It is to be hoped that the violence has not penetrated India's villages. Be that as it may, I wholly endorse Mr. Gregg's warning that "we may not tell God that if violence (the folly of men) does not stop within a certain time that fits our hopes, we will stop doing our utmost including living as long as we can" I very much fear that the dispatch in question tore the sentences out of their context and evoked the doubts expressed by Mr. Gregg. I hope I am incapable of judging God.

New Delhi, 22-6-'47

Harijan, 29-6-1947

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PARTITION IN A BROTHERLY SPIRIT

A note appeared in the Press that the Muslim League and the Congress members of the Partition Committee had agreed before the Viceroy that the partition would be effected in a brotherly spirit. It was a good thing that H. E. the Viceroy had been able to achieve. But he knew that sweet words buttered no parsnips. He would dance with joy when he found a series of acts following the words. The world was tired of eloquent speeches and writings. Both the things were overdone. Hunger was appeased by

even a dry crust of bread without butter but never by honied promises.

DOCTRINE OF TIT FOR TAT

Babu Purshottamdas Tandon visited Gandhiji on his silence day. He said that he did believe in training in arms for the people, but it did not mean that he believed in the doctrine of tit for tat. He regarded it a vicious doctrine. Gandhiji was pleased to have the emphatic repudiation and invited Tandonji to state his views for the public on the doctrine of tit for tat and the limitations he conceived to be possible on the use of arms.

Referring to the same subject he told some refugees: "Muslims are your brothers. If anyone sinks to the level of the beast, it does not follow that all should do likewise. The Muslims cannot go on killing you. No one can live on killing. If a Muslim kills me, what will he gain so long as I remain without any hatred in my heart? Love alone can win over hatred."

NATIONALIST MUSLIMS

Khwaja Saheb Abdul Majid came to see Gandhiji during the week and expressed a hope that the Nationalist Muslims would not be neglected by the Congress. Like Gandhiji, who claimed to be a good Hindu and therefore a good Muslim, Parsi etc., Khwaja Saheb claimed to be a good Muslim and therefore a good Hindu and a good Parsi, Christian etc. "This means," said Gandhiji, "that for God-fearing men all religions are good and equal, only the followers of different religions quarrel with one another and thereby deny their respective religions. I hope those in the Union of India would be worthy of their faiths and would be proud to call themselves sons and daughters of the same soil, claiming perfect equality in the eyes of the law. Religion is no test of nationality but a personal matter between man and his God. In the sense of nationality they are Indians first and Indians last, no matter what religion they profess."

Answering another correspondent, who had expressed fear with regard to the fate of the Nationalist Muslims in

the Union of India, he said that the Union of India had to show by its action that no matter what was done in the so-called Pakistan Provinces, the Union Provinces would be strictly just and fair in their treatment of their Muslim brethren. Pakistan should make no difference in their regard for the Muslims as well as the other minorities. This had no reference to the apples of discord which the foreign power had thrown in their midst such as separate electorates.

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PATHANISTAN

Referring to the movement for a free [illegible]ntier State called Pathanistan, Gandhiji said that the [illegible]ement had come to stay for it was a solid movement. If it was an anti-Indian movement, it was a bad and mischievous thing. If it was meant to conserve, as he thought it was, Pathan life and culture, it deserved every encouragement. Geographically it was only a bit of India; numerically too the Pathans were very few compared to the millions of India. But their warlike qualities and their position on the map of India gave them an importance all their own. The Frontier was a Congress Province. It was so when the Congress was in the wilderness. And it was now too when it was in power. It was also represented on the Constituent Assembly. But now it was face to face with a delicate position. There was the referendum immediately to be held. Both the Congress and the League were committed to it. It was not open to any one party to vary the terms. The issue was to be Pakistan or Hindustan. This had a sinister meaning in the context of what had happened in front of them. Were they to be with the Hindus or with the Muslims? The Congress was not a Hindu organization. It never was and he hoped never would be. But how could the Pathan mind grasp the difference in the midst of confusion becoming worse

confounded from day to day? He would advise the Congress to make its position clear and would ask the Muslim League to do likewise. Let both honour the Pathan sentiment and let the Pathans have their own constitution for internal affairs and administration. It would promote Pathan solidarity, avoid internal conflict, retain Pushtu culture and the Pushtu language. If they could do that they would be better able unitedly to federate with Pakistan or the Union of India. And this he would advise whether there was or was not a referendum. Any premature referendum would be a leap in the dark.

Harijan, 29-6-1947

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PATHANISTAN AGAIN

The question of the referendum in the Frontier Province just now looms large in the public eye, because it has been and is still officially a Congress Province. Badshah Khan and his co-workers do not relish being asked to choose between Hindustan or Pakistan bearing respectively the unjust meaning. Hindus or Muslims. How is the Badshah to get over the difficulty? The Congress has pledged its word that there should be a referendum in consultation with Dr. Khan Saheb but under H. E. the Viceroy's direct supervision. So it is going to take place at the appointed time. The *khudai khidmatgars* will not exercise their votes thus providing a walk-over for the Muslim League and at the same time doing no violence to their conscience. Is there in this procedure any breach of the terms of the referendum? The *khudai khidmatgars* who bravely fought the British are not the men to shirk defeat at the polls. It is an everyday occurrence for parties to go to the polls in spite, sometimes, of the chance of certain defeat. Defeat is no less certain for a boycotting party.

WHY PATHANISTAN?

The charge of the new cry of Pathanistan is being flung in the Badshah's face. Even before the Congress

Ministry came into being, so far as I know, Badshah Khan had on the brain Pathan independence in internal affairs. He does not want to create an additional State. If he can frame his own local constitution, he will gladly make his choice of the one State or the other. It is difficult for me to understand the objection to this yearning after Pathan autonomy unless the object is to humiliate the Pathans and to tame them into subjection.

The more serious charge is that the Badshah is playing into the hands of Afghanistan. I consider him to be incapable of any underhand dealing. He would not allow the Frontier Province to be absorbed by Afghanistan.

As his friend and because I am his friend, I must admit one failing of his. He is highly suspicious especially of British professions and intentions. I would urge on all to overlook this failing which is by no means peculiar to him. Only it does not sit well on a leader of his eminence. I contend that though I have called it a failing and which it is in one way, in another it is to be regarded as a virtue in that he cannot, even if he tries, conceal his thoughts. He is too honest to hide them.

Harijan, 13-7-1947

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RIGHTS OR DUTIES?

[The following is from Gandhiji's post-prayer speeches on the 28th and 29th June.]

If all simply insist on rights and no duties, there will be utter confusion and chaos. If instead of insisting on rights everyone does his duty, there will immediately be the rule of order established among mankind. What is the duty of the Hindu towards his Muslim neighbour? His duty is to befriend him as man, to share his joys and sorrows and help him in distress. He will then have the right to expect similar treatment from his Muslim neighbour and will probably get the expected response. Supposing the

Hindus are in a majority in a village with a sprinkling of Muslims in their midst, the duty of the majority towards the few Muslim neighbours is increased manifold, so much so that the few will not feel that their religion makes any difference in the behaviour of the Hindus towards them The Hindus will *then* earn the right, *not* before, that the Muslims will be natural friends with them and in times of danger both the communities will act as one man. But suppose that the few Muslims do not reciprocate the correct behaviour of the many Hindus and show fight in every action, it will be a sign of unmanliness. What is then the duty of the many Hindus ? Certainly not to overpower them by the brute strength of the many, that will be usurpation of an unearned right Their duty will be to check their unmanly behaviour as they would that of their blood brothers. It is unnecessary for me to dilate further upon the illustration. I will close it by saying that the application will be exactly the same if the position is reversed. From what I have said it is easy enough to extend the application with profit to the whole of the present state which has become baffling because people do not apply in practice the doctrine of deriving every right from a prior duty well performed.

Harijan, 6-7-1947

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WEEKLY LETTER

TREAT THE DISEASE

It was with a heavy heart that the Congress agreed to the vivisection of India. They could not afford to see the country bleed to death. They had never wished to coerce any unit to remain in the Indian Union against its wishes. The public charged them with bending before brute force. They refuted the charge. They had bowed before the force of circumstances and swallowed the bitter pill in the interests of the country. And yet the violence continues. Early this week 100 houses were reported to

have been burnt in one day in Lahore. The houses in Lahore are not huts. They are big mansions. News of stabbings and bomb explosions continue to pour in from Lahore, Amritsar and Calcutta. Rumour says that the leaders are unable to check the roused ruffian element of the public. Referring to this on the 24th, Gandhiji said in his prayer meeting that he was told, with what truth he did not know, that the parties were fairly matched and were bent on fighting it out. What the 'it' was he did not know. "Is the suicidal strife to continue, Pakistan or no Pakistan? Why cannot the combatants honestly come together and decide to stop arson and murder? Must we look to the ruling race to suppress the riots? The end of alien rule is imminent. Would to God our people stop this savagery and show mankind the better and the braver way!"

On the following day the newspapers reported that the Hindu, Sikh and Muslim leaders of Lahore had issued a joint peace appeal and they were determined to put down violence. A Muslim Leaguer was reported to have said that they could not allow Lahore, the flower of Pakistan, to be reduced to ashes. There had been reports that appeals had been made to the Viceroy to put Lahore under martial law. Poor Punjab! It has not forgotten the horrors of the days of the last martial law in 1919. Was it to be a victim to it again? And that too at the request of the people?

Congratulating the leaders on their humanitarian and national move Gandhiji said that it was any day much superior to martial law. "It is an effective substitute for martial law which deals with the symptoms but not with the disease itself. The parties, if they bring about peace, will be dealing with the disease."

LESSON OF AFFLICTION

Speaking to a deputation of sixteen representatives of the refugees from the N. W. F. P. and the Punjab at Haradwar, Gandhiji said that it was useless and depressing to recount the story of the horrors they had gone through.

"But every affliction has its own rich lesson to teach if we would learn it. I hear many of those who were well-to-do in the past are idling away their time in playing cards and even gambling. Some are reported to be buying property or resorting to other methods of making money. I call it criminal misbehaviour. If I was given the rare opportunity of making common cause with poor fellow refugees, I would share with them my talents and such riches as I had brought with me. All of you should make a co-operative effort so that wherever you go ultimately you lead a better and corporate life as a result of the life lived in Haradwar. Haradwar is considered to be a holy place. I do not think it is holy, but you can make it so by your correct behaviour."

PUT YOUR OWN HOUSE IN ORDER

There was a newspaper report that the British Parliament would make two nations of India by passing a bill about the division of India in the Parliament with great pomp and show. It hurt Gandhiji. What was there to gloat over the tragedy? Was this to be a parting shot of the British?

"If the major partner is true to his salt," Gandhiji said in a written message on Monday, "the foreshadowed wisdom can be confounded not in the shape of avoiding partition however distasteful it might be, but by right behaviour on the part of the major partner by always acting as one nation, by refusing to treat the Muslim minorities as aliens in their own home.

"This means a revolutionary reform in the religion of the major partner. Let us not shut our eyes to the plain fact. The "untouchables", the scheduled classes are the target because they are the weakest point of Hinduism. One reads reports of Muslim League speakers holding forth that the scheduled classes in Pakistan can have separate electorates. Is that to be a call for joining Islam of the Pakistan type? I do not wish to recall the tales of forcible conversions. But having heard so much from their own mouths, I shudder to contemplate the worst. What is the

answer to this fear or threat? Undoubtedly there should be no untouchability whatsoever in Hinduism, no scheduled classes, therefore, in India, no caste divisions whatsoever in the eye of the law. Hindus are all one, no high or low. All the neglected classes such as the scheduled classes, the so-called aboriginal classes should receive special treatment in the matter of education, housing etc. On the electoral role they will be one. This must never mean a worse state than the present but better in everyway. Will Hinduism come up to the high level or will it court extinction by hugging infamous superstitions and aping bad manners?"

IS GANDHIJI PARTIAL?

Of late 95% of the letters in Gandhiji's post are full of abuse. The Muslims look upon him as their arch-enemy and the Hindus accuse him of partiality for the Muslims. His advice to the Hindus to be honourable and just to the Muslims in the Union of India, irrespective of what was done in Pakistan, was also looked upon in that light. He did not plead guilty to the charge. Every person as every institution, above all every religion, was to be judged not by the amount of atrocities or the wrong committed by them but by their right conduct. Who would dare say that what he had suggested was less than right? That the Hindus of larger Hindustan could not or would not do the right was another question. So much the worse for those who did not do the right no matter whether they were Hindus, Muslims or any other. The law was no respecter of persons. Only for the occasion his remarks were addressed to the Hindus. For, it was they who by their action were to prove or disprove the two-nation theory. In this connection he could not help saying that his advice was meant for brave, unselfish and godly people. Persons and people lost by their own mistakes, never by those of others. Their own sad history was filled with illustrations of how through personal greed, selfishness and cowardice they had lost their liberty.

FRAGRANCE OF NON-VIOLENCE

Another question was: "Does not your non-violence stink in your nostrils?" Gandhiji made bold to say that

the fragrance of non-violence to him was never sweeter than when it was today amidst the stink of violence of the most cowardly type that was being displayed in the cities of India such as Lahore, Amritsar and other places. He was sorry to say that he was ashamed of his countrymen, be they Hindu or Muslim. Neither became his enemy because either chose to call himself so. He was aware that Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah had rendered a disservice to Islam by calling Hindus or better still the Caste Hindus 'our enemies'. He would plead with the so-called Caste Hindus not to wear the cap but unselfishly and bravely prove themselves friends of every Indian because they loved India. There was grave danger of insanity proving infective. Pakistan was there. Why would the Qaid-e-Azam not be happy now that he had got it? Or had the poison gone too deep to be brought under control? Was it a variety of, and that worse than, the atom bomb? Let those who had eyes, see the thing and avoid it well before India was caught in the poisonous coil.

Harijan, 6-7-1947

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THE CONFLICT

On the 25th of June Gandhiji said in his post-prayer speech that he was torn between several conflicts. He felt that Bihar was calling him, so was Noakhali where he had commenced work among the riot-affected refugees and tried to specialize in the work. When a month ago he left Patna, he was under the impression that he would return to Bihar inside of a week. But events had taken place during the month in such quick succession that perhaps a generation had been packed into a month. So he was vegetating in New Delhi hoping that thereby he was serving both Bihar and Noakhali. Then he fancied that the Punjab was also calling him. He saw no guiding star unmistakably telling him which way to take. He, therefore, went by the saying

that had gripped him years ago — "When in doubt stay where you are."

He reminded the audience of his promise to do or die in Noakhali. He had said that he would not leave Noakhali till the Hindus and the Muslims assured him that he could go without feeling the slightest anxiety about the honour, life and property of the Hindus there. Who was he to achieve such a result? He was but a servant of God. If God wished it, He would make him the instrument of such service. If he did not do so, he would be content to do or die in Noakhali. He would just live in the midst of the people of Noakhali rendering such service as he could. His friends told him that he was crazy to attach so much importance to Noakhali. What was Noakhali as compared to the whole of India? they argued. Why should he not use his talents for the service of India as a whole instead of confining himself to Noakhali? If things were alright in India, they would be alright in Noakhali. He was made differently. His mother, an illiterate village woman had taught him यथा पिण्डे तथा ब्रह्माण्डे. The atom reflected the universe. She had explained to him that he should take care that he did the right thing. His universe was his immediate surroundings. If he served them the universe would take care of itself.

A friend from Noakhali had written to him that if he did not return there by the 15th of August, he might have to repent. 15th August was the dead line for the division of India and the transfer of power from British to Indian hands. As a matter of fact the division was a settled plan already. But God could upset the plans of men. An earthquake could destroy the whole of India before the appointed day. A foreign invasion might upset man's pretty and petty plans.

But humanly speaking Pakistan would be a legally established fact on the 15th of August. He had left Noakhali to go to Bihar. He had done a lot for the Muslim brethren there. The number of deaths in Bihar far exceeded that in Noakhali. It was nearly 10,000, whereas in Noakhali it was under 500. When the call came from Bihar he went there.

He was, therefore, bound to take Bihar on his way to Noakhali. He was anxious to reach there as early as possible. He felt out of place in Delhi. It was not so in Bihar and Noakhali. He wanted them to pray that God might enable him to return to Noakhali early and fulfil his promise.

New Delhi, 12-7-'47

Harijan, 20-7-1947

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THE INDEPENDENCE BILL

Gandhiji did not propose to examine in detail the twenty sections of the elaborate Bill. He was ill-disposed with many critics to read a sinister meaning in it. The fact that there were two Indias instead of one was bad enough in itself. Both had the same status. Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah and the Muslim League were entitled to claim full credit for bringing about a state of things which seemed to be impossible only as it were yesterday. They had undone the solemn declaration of the Cabinet Mission. They had succeeded in compelling consent from the Congress and the Sikhs to the division. The thing that was in itself bad did not become good because the parties concerned had accepted it, no matter that the causes dictating acceptance were different in each case. It was hardly any comfort that the Qaid-e-Azam did not get all that he wanted. The difference was not at all in kind. He wanted a sovereign State. That he had in the fullest measure. Pakistan had the same status as India.

As he read and re-read the Bill he saw that the three parties had subjected themselves consciously or unconsciously to public judgment in terms of the Bill. It was true that the British were divesting themselves of all power. But they had become party to the division and had two new members in the family of the Commonwealth possessing conflicting ideals and interests. So long as they two had any connection with Great Britain, the latter would be judged by the action following the Bill rather than by its language,

however generous and just it might read. He admitted that it would be a superhuman task to reconcile conflicting interests and treat them equally. What would happen if one declared complete independence when the Constitution Act was passed by its Constituent Assembly?

The Qaid-e-Azam and the Muslim League had by their act of secession and severance invited the world to judge them by their behaviour towards the Muslims as also towards the non-Muslims. Surely there were many sects, chief among whom were the Sunnis and the Shias, politically the Nationalists and the Leaguers, the Baluchis, the Sindhis, the Pathans, the Punjabis, the Bengalis, the Muslims of the Indian Union. He was daily beseiged by the large Hindu and Sikh minorities and not as often by Christians and Parsis. He was asked whether there was ground for the fear that there would be an attempt to estrange the Scheduled Classes from their Hindu brethren. Was Pakistan a means of converting non-Muslims to a special brand of Islam? True religion was a universal belief in the one and only God. The world was fast growing out of dogmas and creeds which had so sickened it that it had become confused and had begun to deny the very existence of the Maker. Happily that stage of negation was quickly passing and enlightened faith in the Supreme Maker of the Universe was taking its place. Was the Islam of Pakistan going to be in the vanguard of that movement for restoration of universal faith? Or was it to pass through darkness and denial of God in the name of God? He hoped that the doubts he had mentioned would be quickly dissolved.

HINDUISM ON TRIAL

The Qaid-e-Azam had unwittingly placed Hinduism also on its trial. The Hindus had the rare opportunity of refining it of all dross and showing by strict justness that the brand of Hinduism of the Indian Union was the same as universal religion. He had said only the day before that those who believed in India as a nation could have no minority and majority question. All were entitled to equal privileges and equal treatment. Thus viewed the Indian

Independence Bill could be taken as the final examination of all the parties involved in the Bill. It was possible to turn Pakistan which he had declared an evil into unadulterated good, if all the forebodings were dispelled and enmities were turned into friendship and mutual distrust gave place to trust.

New Delhi, 6-7-'47

Harijan, 13-7-1947

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THE WAY OUT

Last evening I showed why the coming freedom seemed to create no enthusiasm. This evening I propose to show how we can, if we will, turn the calamity into a blessing. It will profit us nothing to brood over the past or to blame this party or that. Technically freedom is yet to come a few days hence. In fact the parties having jointly accepted the situation, there is no turning back. Only the inscrutable Providence can undo what men have agreed to do.

One easy and ready way out is for the Congress and the League to come together and arrive at a mutual understanding without the intervention of the Viceroy. The League has to make the first move. I do not at all suggest the undoing of Pakistan. Let that be treated as an established fact beyond dispute or discussion. But they can sit together in a mud hut large enough to accommodate not more than ten representatives and undertake not to part till they have reached an agreement I dare swear that if such an event occurs, it will be infinitely better than the Bill recognizing the Independence of India cut up into two States enjoying equal status.

Neither the Hindus nor the Muslims are happy over what is happening before their helpless selves. This is first-hand evidence unless the Hindus and the Muslims who daily see me or correspond with me are deceiving me. But — it is a big *but* — I seem to be aiming at the impossible. Now that British intervention has done the trick, how can

the League be expected to come down to their adversaries and produce an agreed settlement as between brothers and friends ?

There is an alternative which is also, almost if not quite, as difficult. This creation of two opposing armies out of one, hitherto with one and a common goal, whatever it was, must frighten every lover of India. Will the two armies be created, not in order to "face and fight a common danger but to destroy one another and demonstrate to a gaping world that they were unfit for any other purpose but to fight one another unto death ? "

I have put the prospect in its awful nakedness so that everyone may see and shun it. The alternative escape is undoubtedly attractive. Will the vast mass of the Hindus and those who had joined them in the struggle for Independence realize the danger in its proper perspective and rise to the occasion and swear even now that they do not wish to have any army at all or at least refuse ever to use it against their Muslim brethren whether in the Union or outside it in Pakistan ? This proposal is tantamount to asking the Hindus and their associates to turn thirty years' weakness into strength of great beauty. Perhaps to state the problem thus is to demonstrate its absurdity — may be God has been known before now to turn man's folly into wisdom. The effort is worth making for the sake of all the parties who have subscribed to the dangerous division of the army into two self-destroying warring camps.

Harijan, 20-7-1947

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AN ENGLISHMAN IS NEVER WRONG

Gandhiji was asked the following question:

" George Bernard Shaw has remarked that 'an Englishman is never in the wrong. He does everything on principle. He fights you on patriotic principles; he robs you on business principles; he enslaves you on imperial principles; he supports his King on loyal principles and cuts off his King's head on republican principles.' I am eager to know from Gandhiji under which of these principles the Englishman is now quitting India. Is the Englishman glad over the present economic and political condition of our beloved country? Does he feel satisfied in the secession of Travancore and Hyderabad States from the Indian Union? Has he any axe to grind in scrapping the 'May '46 Paper' and bringing forward in its place the recent 'Partition Plan'? Does he *feel* for the horrible happenings in Noakhali, Bihar and the Punjab — which happenings have forced the Congress to accept that Plan? What can be the reason or the idea behind Mr. Churchill and his company endorsing the Plan? Gandhiji has often said that he knows the mind of an Englishman better than any other Indian, and has repeatedly been advising us in his post-prayer speeches to trust the faith, sincerity and good intentions of the Englishmen in transferring power to our hands. I, therefore, believe that he should be in a position to make matters clear. He alone can dispel our doubts in a convincing manner."

He (Gandhiji) could only paraphrase the idea in his speech. Bernard Shaw's banter was by no means exhaustive nor were Englishman's resources. He had no doubt that he was quitting India on principle. Man had the supreme knack of deceiving himself. The Englishman was supremest among men. He was quitting because he had discovered that it was wrong on economic and political grounds to hold India in bondage. Herein he was quite sincere. It would not be denied, however, that sincerity was quite

consistent with self-deception. He was self-deceived in that he believed that he could not leave India to possible anarchy if such was to be her lot. He was quite content to leave India as a cockpit between two organized armies. Before quitting, he was setting the seal of approval on the policy of playing off one community against another. And he lacked the courage to do the right so far as the States were concerned. Gandhiji hoped that before he finally left on the 15th of August, he would bring the two parties together, now that one had got all it wanted. He could do so, if he willed it. Travancore and Hyderabad had not yet become independent States. He, the speaker, admitted freely that if the Englishman left India in an uncertain condition and left the possibility of several warring States, all independent of England and, therefore, of one another, he could not conceive a greater reflection on the British name than this would be. Dominion Status would then stink in the nostrils. But he had not given up hope that British statesmanship would not have declared utter bankruptcy before August 15th. Till then he preferred to defer judgment in spite of the correspondent's profound distrust of British declarations however high-minded they might be to read. Let their acts be the real judge of their words. He would believe a man's word unless he had good reason to doubt it. That 'Mr. Churchill & Co.' were disposed to bless the Bill for Indian Independence proved that they had realized the economic and political necessity of the step. He, however, had no hesitation in admitting that recent signs were portentous enough to rouse suspicions. He did not, however, believe in dying before his death.

Harijan, 20-7-1947

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CONVERT POISON INTO NECTAR

Gandhiji referred to another extract from the letter dealt with on the previous evening. It was as follows:

"I believe that it was in the year 1940 that Gandhiji wrote in the columns of his paper that he smelt violence in the air he breathed. What has he to say of the 'living present'? The whole body politic is in chaos: corruption in its worst and most virulent form is having its unprecedented sway everywhere; money is demanded shamelessly, and money is given stealthily. People don't seem to care for the *means*: moneyed people get all they want by every heinous means possible. The air is moistened with all forms of evil: violence, hatred, bitterness, mistrust, enmity, uncertainty etc. On the top of all this from June 3, 1947 onwards, 'Division is in the air'. One never opens a day's newspaper without reading reports of strike, theft, loot, arson, murder and stabbing, in various parts of India. Where is the brave law of 'love' for hate, truth for untruth and toleration for intoleration, which Gandhiji has been daily hammering in the ears of the people? Who is responsible for this sorry state of affairs in the history of our country? Were the untold miseries, sufferings and sacrifices of Congressmen and women from the top rank leaders down to the *bhangi* during the past three decades or so designed for this end? Is the *amrit* viz. 'Poorna Swaraj', required to be preceded by the *poison* in the name of all the above-stated evils which have resulted in the division of India into two political entities? Gandhiji alone in all India is capable of killing that *poison*, and thus enabling us to reap the benefits of 'Complete Independence'."

There was no doubt, Gandhiji said, that murder, arson, loot etc. were never so rampant as at present. He had admitted his share of responsibility for the sorry state of things by saying that what was done during the past thirty years under his leadership was no better than passive

resistance. It was good enough to induce the British power to quit India. Passive resistance, unlike non-violence, had no power to change men's hearts The consequences they knew but too well. They need not engage further attention The Swaraj of their dreams was far off. What was to be done to convert the *poison* into nectar? Was the process possible? He knew that it was and he thought he knew the way too. But whereas the Indian mind was ready to respond to the effort at passive resistance, it was not receptive enough to imbibe the lesson of non-violence which, and perhaps which alone, was capable of turning the *poison* into nectar. Many admitted that it was the way but they had not the heart to adopt the golden path. He could proclaim from the house top that non-violence had not, had never, failed. The people failed to rise to it. He did not mind being told that he did not know the technique of propagating non-violence. His critics even went so far as to suggest that he had no non-violence in himself. God alone knew men's hearts. He could say with confidence that if the world was to have peace, non-violence was the means to that end and no other.

Harijan, 20-7-1947

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NO APPEASEMENT

Seeing that India was cut into two, they had to consider their conduct accordingly. Unfortunately it had become the fashion nowadays to act as if they were enemies one of the other. Gandhiji could not subscribe to any such belief, nor did he approve of the method of appeasement—a word that had come to have a bad odour. If he did not believe in appeasement, why, he was asked, did he dance attendance on Jinnah Saheb for 18 days in 1944? A friendly approach was not one of appeasement. Appeasement was possible between enemies. This was supposed to have happened about the late Hitler. England and Germany were

opposing Powers The late Mr Chamberlain was supposed to have been guilty of the policy of appeasement Gandhiji owned no enemies He, undoubtedly, made an offer to the Qaid-e-Azam of which he was proud If Jinnah Saheb had accepted the offer, he could have been master in what might have been called the Pakistan area but there would have been common subjects as between friends They would then have had one India before the whole world and free of all domination by a third power All the bloodshed, loot and arson would have been avoided Now they were snarling at one another He refused to scent independence in this barbarous state He could not be enthusiastic over the independence that was coming until the look of things was changed during the next thirtyfive days. He wanted us to develop bravery of the highest type that would surrender nothing to violence and much to genuine friendliness, not friendliness that was euphemism for hypocrisy

Harijan, 20-7-1947

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INDIA IS HOME FOR ALL INDIANS

What then were they to do, the Hindus and the Sikhs and the other non-Muslims in Pakistan? They would not anticipate evil and leave their homes for fear of evil overtaking them. He would give the Muslim fellow countrymen credit for common honesty and human behaviour There were *mandirs* and *gurudwaras* in the Pakistan areas. Were they to be demolished? Was admission to them to be forbidden to the Hindus, the Sikhs and the others? He could not bring himself to entertain any such fear. Taking the contrary example, one of the finest Juma Masjids in the world was in the Indian Union, the Taj was there, the Aligarh University was there. Did the partition make the slightest difference in the Muslims approaching these great places and many others he could name? He thought not.

Then there was the question of the Hindus who could not stay in their own homes in Pakistan through fear, vague

or real. They could not, if their trade or movements were restricted and they were treated as aliens in their own province. It was, undoubtedly, the duty of the provinces in the Union to receive such refugees with open arms and give them all reasonable facilities. They should be able to feel that they had not come to a strange land. The whole of India was the home of every Indian who considered himself and behaved as such, no matter to what faith he belonged. The condition for the new comer was, as he had said in Haradwar, that he must be as sugar was to milk. He must aim at adding sweetness and richness to the life around him.

Harijan, 20-7-1947

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A DIFFICULT QUESTION

Gandhiji has been trying to impress upon Indians the importance of maintaining their balance in spite of all provocation. Whatever might be the policy of Pakistan, India was and should remain equally the home of the Hindus, the Muslims, the Sikhs, the Parsis, the Christians and the others. All those who regarded India as their motherland were Indians with equal rights of citizenship. He could never approve of the doctrine of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, much less that of a hundred eyes for one eye. His insistence on this point annoys many Hindus. Some indulge in abuse. Others gently request him to retire to the Himalayas. But there are a good number who believe in what he says and wish to act up to it. One such friend came to Gandhiji the other day and placed his difficulties before him. The Congress governments were being warned not to trust the Muslims. The latter might act as saboteurs and fifth columnists. Jinnah Saheb had congratulated the Muslims of the non-Pakistan areas for their labours and sacrifices which had made Pakistan a reality. Some members of the Muslim League were openly saying that they would not be content with the truncated Pakistan that had been

secured. Their eyes were on Delhi, Agra, Ajmer, Aligarh. Some even dreamt of dominating the whole of India It was a vain dream; yet what guarantee was there that the Muslims in the Union of India would not use their energies and influence towards the realization of that dream? Was it right on the part of the Congress governments to take the risk of trusting them?

Gandhiji's reply was clear and decisive. The Congress governments could not discriminate against anyone on grounds of religion "My eldest son has often come to me saying, 'I will be good in future. I will not touch wine.' I tell him, 'Though I do not trust you, I shall give you a chance.' He has not been able to keep to his word so far. Yet if he comes again, I will not turn him out and I shall hope that he will be as good as his word, until I know that he has come back only to deceive me. We must trust the Muslims in the same way and, at the same time, be vigilant."

"But if we have suspicion in our minds, will it not be reflected in our actions?" asked the friend

"No," said Gandhiji. "You must not act or suspicion. Look at the British. How much harm they have done to India! I confess that I am not yet wholly free from suspicion. I wonder if they can really change completely. I trust Lord Mountbatten The world cannot go on without trust. The minorities must realize that they have to be loyal to the State under which they live. If they prove unworthy, the State can take necessary action. But you must not prejudge them. Why die before death?"

"We must, however, be prepared to fight the danger," persisted another friend.

"Yes," said Gandhiji. "The real preparation lies in purging ourselves of our inherent weaknesses — selfishness and disunity."

New Delhi, 18-7-'47

Harijan 27-7-1947

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JINNAH SAHEB'S ASSURANCES

Gandhiji said that he had read a brief report of Jinnah Saheb's Press Conference in the course of which it had gladdened his heart to learn that Jinnah Saheb had assured complete freedom of faith and religious worship and full security of life and property to all the minorities living in Pakistan. But while any leader may say a thing and say it sincerely, it does not follow that the advice is straightaway acted upon. It was sad that in spite of the achievement of division, news of stabbings, murders, loot and arson came from everywhere. He had many Sindhi Hindu friends who were leaving their homes because they felt they could not live there any longer. Now Karachi was going to be the capital of Pakistan. He would like to ask Jinnah Saheb whether he was going to wait till August 15th to offer protection to the Hindus in Sind. If he were in Jinnah Saheb's place, he would be sad beyond measure if any Hindu deserted his home in Pakistan through fear of injustice. While the Qaid-e-Azam was going to be the Governor-General of Pakistan it was true that he could do nothing without the advice of his Ministers; yet that did not mean that he was going to lose his hold over the League. On the other hand his political power would be even greater. Therefore, it was his duty to forbid such happenings as are reported from Sind and elsewhere in the Dominion of which he was to be the Governor-General. A man or the government of a country could only be judged by its actions and this applied equally to India. Some Muslims of the U. P. had fears whether they could live there any more. It was the duty of the government there to give them every assurance that the U. P. would always be their home where they could as hitherto live without fear. The British had carried on their rule through the policy of divide and rule but their power was over and so should be the favouritism. What mattered it if a minority

got a little more than its share of the spoils of service or office anywhere? Minorities were entitled to the fullest justice. Efficiency and merit alone should count and the spoils of office given to the minorities over a long period by the British to serve their own ends should no longer lure them They must realize that all these were in the nature of bribes After all the British could not remove untouchability It was the Hindus themselves who had opened all the ancient temples in South India — a fact that gladdened his heart for it was by removing the stain of untouchability that Hinduism could live No privileges should be given to anyone in the new India. It was the poor and neglected, and down-trodden and weak that should be their special care and attention A Brahmin should not grudge it if more money was spent on the uplift of the Harijans. At the same time a Brahmin may not be done down simply because he was a Brahmin. In fact the Brahmins were a very small minority There must be pure and undefiled justice for everyone in both Pakistan and Hindustan.

DIVISION OF THE ARMY

Gandhiji referred again with intense feeling to' the division of the army. He could not understand why they could not remain united for the object of facing foreign aggression The present mode of division might even lead to internal warfare between the two armies who might even look upon themselves as rivals That would be a tragedy too deep for tears. As a matter of fact division of the army was a factor which would weaken the defence forces. It was up to them to ponder deeply over this. He hoped that even if they had not learnt the lesson of *ahimsa* during the last 30 years, they had at any rate learnt not to live as slaves of anyone — not only of the British. If they had, what need of armies anywhere? This was the lesson he was trying to teach the Hindus in Noakhali and the Muslims in Bihar. If they had the personal courage he would not mind if they resisted oppression even violently. Naturally, he would always plead for non-violent resistance because the latter meant that God was their sole Protec-

tor. Violent resistance invariably meant the aid of the sword which was at best a poor weapon of defence.

New Delhi, 14-7-'47

Harijan, 27-7-1947

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THE FUNDAMENTAL DIFFERENCE

It is said that my speeches nowadays are depressing. Some even suggest that I should not speak at all. This multitude of advisers reminds me of a painter who had exposed his painting in a shop window without glass inviting critics to mark the parts they did not like. The result was a daub. The painter had simply tried to show that it was impossible to please all parties. He was, therefore, satisfied that he had painted a good picture. His business was to produce a work which satisfied his artistic taste. Mine is a similar case. I hope I never speak for the sake of speaking. I speak because I feel that I have something to say to the people. It is true that I do not agree with what many of my closest friends have done or are doing. Whilst I am in Delhi and I have an opinion about some current events, I cannot help giving that opinion. And what are the differences that matter? If you analyse them you would find only one fundamental difference to which all the others could be traced. Non-violence is my creed. It never was of the Congress. With the Congress it has always been a policy. A policy takes the shape of a creed whilst it lasts, no longer. The Congress had every right to change it when it found it necessary. A creed can never admit of any change. Now though according to the Congress constitution the policy abides, the practice has undoubtedly altered the policy. Technicians may quarrel with the fact. You and I cannot, must not. Why should not the makers of the present Congress change their policy in fact? The law will take care of itself. It should also be noted that in the constitution the word *peaceful* is used, not *non-violent*.

In Bombay when the Congress met in 1934 I tried hard to have the word *peaceful* replaced by *non-violent* and I failed Therefore, it is open to give the word *peaceful* a meaning probably less than that of *non-violent.* I see none But my opinion is irrelevant It is for the *savants* to determine the difference, if any All that you and I need to realize is that the Congress practice is not non-violent today in the accepted sense of the term If the Congress was pledged to the policy of non-violence, there would be no army supported by it But she sports an army which may eat up the civilians and establish military rule in India unless the people listen to me. Am I to give up all hope of their ever listening to me? I cannot do it whilst there is breath left in me. And if the people do not wish to listen to my non-violent dirge, there is no reason for critics to dissuade me from speaking to the public

Let me make one thing clear. I have frankly and fully admitted that what we practised during the past thirty years was not non-violent resistance but passive resistance which only the weak offer because they are unable, not unwilling, to offer armed resistance If we knew the use of non-violent resistance which only those with hearts of oak can offer, we would present to the world a totally different picture of free India instead of an India cut in twain, one part highly suspicious of the other and the two too much engaged in mutual strife to be able to think cogently of the food and clothing of the hungry and naked millions who know no religion but that of the one and only God who appears to them in the guise of the necessaries of life Not for them the sanguinary strife or the cinema pictures showing them how efficiently to cut one another's throats!

New Delhi, 15-7-'47

Harijan, 27-7-1947

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THE PROBLEM OF BENGAL

Gandhiji referred to some questions that had been put to him by Bengali friends. He was told that the Hindus in Eastern Bengal feared that now that the province was divided into two, the Hindus of Western Bengal would forget them and that the Hindus of East Bengal would be weakened. Gandhiji said that he could never understand such fears. All were Indians first and last, wherever they lived and to whatever creed or province they belonged. Religion was entirely a personal matter. Each one could approach his Creator as he liked. But the poison of separatism had gone deep into the soil. When he was in Noakhali he was just as much at home there as elsewhere. And were the Muslims of East Bengal and the Hindus of Bihar, for example, always going to behave as mad men? He was never going to subscribe to such a fear. He wanted to reiterate that while he did not like division, it was at the moment a *fait accompli* and they had to face up to it. But it was always possible by correct conduct to lessen an evil and eventually even to bring good out of evil. In spite of the division, the people of Eastern and Western Bengal were going to be Bengalis and speak the same language. The Hindus of Western Bengal must live as friends with the Muslims there. If they did, the Muslims of Eastern Bengal would certainly reciprocate the friendship with their Hindu brothers. None must look upon the other as his enemy. Only such action could drive out fear. He added too that Western Bengal was better able to help the Hindus in East Bengal because the government of West Bengal was in their hands.

He had been asked whether the B. P. C. C. should now be split up into two. His answer was a firm negative. The Congress Committee there must never look upon Bengal as divided. The B. P. C. C. would act as before though there would be sub-committees in the two halves

working under the parent body. The Congress was national. Its doors were open to every Indian who chose to enter its portals.

He was also asked why Profulla Babu and Suresh Babu who were of Eastern Bengal were serving as Ministers in Western Bengal, thus deserting their brothers of East Bengal. He saw no reason whatsoever why they should not serve in the West. It did not mean that they were deserting their homes. In fact they would serve as links and strengthen the bonds between the two Provinces.

Gandhiji asked them not to see evil everywhere All Muslims were not bad just as all Hindus were not bad. It is generally the impure who see impurity in others. It was their duty to see the best and have no fear.

Harijan, 27-7-1947

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TO THE EDITOR OF THE DAWN

Gandhiji referred to an open letter written by the editor of the *Dawn* to him in the issue of 19th July. It was the Qaid-e-Azam's mouthpiece. The editor had taken Gandhiji to task for saying that Jinnah Saheb's assurances about the protection of the minorities in Pakistan would be valued according to the corresponding deeds of the Muslims in Pakistan He adhered to his statement and held that it carried no reflection. He had said the same of the Viceroy and the Congress Ministers The fear that had seized the Hindus of Sind was an ominous beginning. The editor had further talked about the sufferings and fears of the Muslim minority in the U. P. and had given a number of instances in support. He (Gandhiji) would reply that even if the allegations were proved true, there would be no justification for similar treatment in Sind as Sind's misdeeds would be none in the U. P. He must confess that he had known nothing about many allegations against the U. P. The editor perhaps did not know that

he had alluded publicly to the allegations about which he knew nothing. As soon as he read the remarks referred to, he wrote to Rafi Saheb and as he was not in Delhi he wrote to the Chief Minister who wrote in reply and later saw him and told him that there was great exaggeration in what the editor had written. What was true in it was attempted to be remedied at once. The guilty parties were punished whenever traced. No pains were spared in order to trace the offenders. But he added that the aggression in the first instance had come from the Leaguers. He did not seek to justify the Hindu offenders. He and his fellow Ministers were doing their best to keep the turbulent element under check. He had a suggestion to make to the *Dawn* and all the newspapers, whatever their hue, that they should avoid all exaggeration. In order to give effect to the suggestion they should appoint a Joint Board to which all reports about communal trouble would be submitted and even passed on to responsible Ministers and when necessary, given publicity. His suggestion could find favour only if the editors realized their duty to the public and were anxious that a peremptory stop should be put to all communalism. Division having become a settled fact it was surely time that the country was allowed to settle down to the constructive work of feeding and clothing the ill-fed and ill-clad millions. The editors had a weighty part to play in the noble task. To foment trouble was ignoble.

Harijan, 27-7-1947

THE ROOT CAUSE OF PARTITION

Many people come to Gandhiji and express their dissatisfaction over the partition of India. They know that Gandhiji has always been opposed to it. Why does he not give tangible form to his opposition? they ask. It is wrong for him to say that he is a spent bullet or that the country is not behind him. "Give us the lead and you will see for yourself whether the country is behind you or not." Gandhiji is sometimes amused by such talk. Against whom is he to give the lead? It was not the British who had partitioned the country. It had been done with the consent of the Congress howsoever reluctantly. There was only one way to avoid the calamity and that was by the non-violence of the brave. But how could the people develop it overnight? "I have admitted my mistake," he continued. "I thought our struggle was based on non-violence, whereas in reality it was no more than passive resistance which essentially is a weapon of the weak. It leads naturally to armed resistance whenever possible." Intoxicated with his success in South Africa, he said, he came to India. Here too the struggle bore fruit. But he now realized that it was not based on non-violence. If he had known so then, he would not have launched the struggle. But God wanted to take that work from him. So He blurred his vision. It was because their struggle was not non-violent that they today witnessed loot, arson and murder.

A friend interposed that Gandhiji had always maintained that our struggle was based on non-violence, though of the weak.

Gandhiji said that his was a mistaken statement. There was no such thing as non-violence of the weak. Non-violence and weakness was a contradiction in terms. He had never experienced the dark despair that was today within him. He was a born fighter who did not know failure. But he was groping today.

"But why should you feel despondent?" persisted the friend. "I see clearly," replied Gandhiji, "that if the country cannot be turned to non-violence it will be bad for it and the world. It will mean goodbye to freedom. It might even mean a military dictatorship. I am day and night thinking how non-violence of the brave can be cultivated.

"I said at the Asiatic Conference that I hoped the fragrance of the non-violence of India would permeate the whole world.. I often wonder if that hope will materialize."

New Delhi, 18-7-'47

Harijan, 27-7-1947

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THOU TOO GUJARAT!

Shri Maganbhai Desai has sent me a copy of his correspondence with Shri Ratanlal Parikh. The latter writes:

> "The newspapers report that the Congress Party has decided that Hindi written in the Devanagari script should be the lingua franca of the Indian Union. This has had a profound effect upon the public mind. They are excited and opposed to the Urdu script. It is as well that the move for the propagation of the Urdu script is not a living thing! Even staunch Congressmen have begun to oppose it. This means that the number of candidates for Hindustani examinations to be held in February is likely to be greatly reduced."

I hope that what Shri Ratanlal says is not true. The Gujaratis are not to act thus foolishly. I do not approve of the dislike of the writers for the Urdu script, though I would be prepared to account for it. But for the life of me I cannot understand this thoughtless dislike of the script. Does it not betray a bankruptcy of wisdom? The Gujaratis are reputed as businessmen. In doing business, they do not discriminate between friends and foes. They gladly make money from both. Will this same businesslikeness forsake them in politics or in the use of the script?

In Delhi I daily come in contact with Hindus and Muslims. The number of the Hindus is larger Most of them speak a language which has very few Sanskrit words and not many more Persian or Arabic They or the vast majority do not know the Devanagari script They write to me in indifferent English and when I take them to task for writing in a foreign language, they write in the Urdu script. If the lingua franca is to be Hindi and the script only Devanagari, what will be the plight of these Hindus?

But I confess that my insistence on Hindustani is a proof of my partiality for the Muslim brethren, though not of Gujarat The Muslims of Gujarat do not know Urdu They learn it not without difficulty Their mother tongue is Gujarati. But the language of the Muslims in North India is undoubtedly Hindustani i e simple Urdu. I do not mind their calling it Urdu The millions of the villagers of India have nothing to do with books. They speak Hindustani, which the Muslims write in the Urdu script and the Hindus in the Urdu or in the Nagari script. Therefore, the duty of people like you and me is to learn both the scripts The Gujaratis decided to perform this duty with gladness They joyously accepted Hindustani as the lingua franca They did not swallow it like a bitter pill. Why then have they developed a dislike for the Urdu script now? For me it has become all the sweeter in the midst of the deadly bitterness surrounding us. The non-Pakistani Muslims are all the dearer to me. They are not to look to Pakistan for the safety of their honour, person and property Such a thing would be a shame for us of the Union. *Sanatana Hindu Dharma* is not circumscribed like the proverbial frog in the well It is as broad as the ocean Thus interpreted, it is the property of all mankind, no matter by what name it is called. A Malayali commentator of the great epic the *Mahabharata* has, in my opinion, correctly called it the history of mankind. But be it as it may, the word Hindu is not derived from Sanskrit. The foreigners called the inhabitants on this side of the river Sindhu, Hindus. We have adopted the title Manu is not the name of any one man. It is an equivalent of

Adam, the first man. The Law of Manu is known as *Manava Dharma Shastra* (the Law for Mankind). It is given by the first man under inspiration. One can only guess as to how many of the *shlokas* are the original work of Manu and how many are interpolations. Dr Bhagavandas has pointed out certain interpolations. The Arya Samaj looks upon certain others as such. There has been some difference of opinion even on the interpretations. In my opinion, whatever out of them appeals to the head and heart of the wise, is the law for mankind There is, therefore, always room for addition or subtraction. The *shlokas* looked upon as interpolations are the result of the efforts, successful or unsuccessful, of the reformers in different ages. Such a law belongs to all mankind. It does not permit of discrimination on grounds of caste and class. It knows no distinctions between the Hindus, the Muslims and the others. "This is mine and that is some one else's, is the calculation of narrow minds," is one of the pearls of wisdom.

On the basis of this immortal *shloka* you and I cannot discriminate between Hindustan and Pakistan. What even if you and I happen to be the only ones having such a belief? If we are true, others are bound to follow us.

The Congress has always kept a broad vision. Today it is needed more than ever before. It is permissible to say that India has accepted partition at the point of the bayonet. This settled fact cannot be unsettled in the same way. The two can be one only when there is heart unity

The omens today seem to point to the contrary. During the crisis the Congress must stand firm like a rock. It dare not give way on the question of the lingua franca of India. It cannot be persianized Urdu or sanskritized Hindi It must be a beautiful blend of the two simple forms written in either script. How I wish Gujarat would remain unaffected by the gathering storm! Will those who have soared high, now crash at the first blow? If I could have my way, such a thing would not happen. There is a Gujarati hymn which says, "Will he who has been purified by the fire of love ever turn back?" Let us follow the poet. Let us not turn away from the Urdu script. One

slip of the foot is likely to hurl us down. Thank God, the newspaper report was untrue. The consideration of the question has been postponed by two or three months. Let us hope sanity will prevail.

On the train to Kashmir, 31-7-'47
(*Translated from the original in Gujarati*)

Harijan, 10-8-1947

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HINDUSTANI

Shri Kakasaheb Kalelkar writes:

> "If the Muslims of the Indian Union affirm their loyalty to the Union, will they accept Hindustani as the national language and learn the Urdu and Nagari scripts? Unless you give your clear opinion on this, the work of the Hindustani Prachar Sabha will become very difficult. Cannot Maulana Azad give his clear opinion on the subject?"

Kakasaheb says nothing new in his letter. But the subject has acquired added importance at the present juncture. If the Muslims in India own loyalty to India and have chosen to make it their home of their own free will, it is their duty to learn the two scripts. It is said that the Hindus have no place in Pakistan. So they migrate to the Indian Union. In the event of a war between the Union and Pakistan, the Muslims of the Indian Union should be prepared to fight against Pakistan. It is true that there should be no war between the two dominions. They have to live as friends or die as such. The two will have to work in close co-operation. In spite of being independent of each other, they will have many things in common. If they are enemies, they can have nothing in common. If there is genuine friendship, the people of both the States can be loyal to both. They are both members of the same commonwealth of nations. How can they become enemies of each other? But that discussion is unnecessary here.

The Union must have a common inter-provincial speech. I will go a step further and say that if the two States are friends, Hindustani should be the common speech between the two. This does not mean that Urdu and Hindi will cease to exist as distinct forms of speech They must continue to live and progress. But, if the Hindus and the Muslims or rather people of all religions in India are friends, they must accept a common language evolved from Hindi and Urdu. They should learn the two scripts This will be a test for the Muslims and the Hindus in the Indian Union

It would be wrong to say that if the Muslims of the Union refuse to learn the Nagari script, Hindustani cannot become the national language. Whether the Muslims learn the Nagari script or no the Hindus and the people of all other religions ought to learn the two scripts. It is possible that in view of the poisoned atmosphere of the day, people may not appreciate this simple proposition If the Hindus wish to, they can boycott the Urdu script and Urdu words, but all will be the losers thereby. Therefore, those engaged in Hindustani Prachar should not weaken in their faith or efforts. I agree that people like Maulana Azad and other prominent Muslims of the Indian Union should be the first ones to adopt Hindustani and the two scripts. Who will take the lead if not they? Difficult times lie ahead of us. May God guide us aright.

New Delhi, 27-9-'47

Harijan, 5-10-1947

(*Translated from the original in Hindustani*)

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HINDI OR HINDUSTANI?

Gandhiji, in his post-prayer speech said that he had seen a paragraph in the Press that henceforth the official language of the U P would be Hindi with the Devanagari script. It hurt him Of all the Muslims in the Indian Union, nearly one-fourth resided in the U P. There were many Hindus like Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru who were Urdu scholars Were they to forget the Urdu script ? The right thing would be to keep both the scripts and make the use of either acceptable in all official dealings. This would result in the compulsory learning of both the scripts.

The language then would take care of itself and Hindustani would become the language of the Province. This knowledge of the two scripts would not be a waste. It would enrich them and enrich their language No one should cavil at such a step

They should treat the Muslims as equal citizens Equality of treatment demanded respect for the Urdu script They must not produce a State in which respectable life was impossible and still claim that they did not want the Muslims to go If in spite of really equal treatment they (the Muslims) chose to go to Pakistan, it was their (the Muslims') own look-out There should be nothing in their behaviour to scare away the Muslims. They should be correct in their conduct Then they could serve India and save Hinduism They could not do so by killing the Muslims or driving them away or suppressing them in any way

Birla House, New Delhi, 15-10-'47

Harijan, 26-10-1947

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HINDUSTANI WRITTEN IN NAGARI ONLY

Raihanabehn Tyabji has written a well-argued letter to me favouring Hindustani as the inter-provincial language written exclusively in the Nagari. She rigidly excludes the Urdu script. As all her main arguments have been answered herein, the letter is not being translated. Her letter demands full consideration. Raihanabehn sees no distinction between a Hindu and a Muslim Both, she holds, come from the same source and she acts accordingly. I have always held that there is no distinction between the two Even though their observances differ, these do not separate them They undoubtedly profess different religions but they, like others, come from the same root.

Nevertheless, I detect certain flaws in her arguments.

We are not two nations. Those who believe the Hindus and the Muslims to be two nations harm both the communities and India. It should not matter that the Qaid-e-Azam believes the Hindus and the Muslims of India to be two nations or that there are Hindus too who entertain the same belief. Surely, it does not follow that because the whole world is in error, we, who believe otherwise, should follow it. This should never happen.

If Hindustani is taken to be the inter-provincial language of India, it follows that both the scripts, Nagari and Urdu, should be equally acceptable. If the State recognizes only Nagari as the character in which Hindustani should be written, it would certainly be unjust to our Muslim brethren, and when it is remembered that they are a minority the guilt is enhanced.

I have never contended that all the forty crores of Indians have to learn both the scripts. I have, however, held that those who have inter-provincial contacts and who want to serve not merely their own province but the whole of India should know both the scripts. The reason is obvious They ought to be able to read letters written

whether in the Nagari or the Urdu script Hence, it is necessary that both the scripts are accepted as national

If Hindi is to be the national language, naturally Nagari alone will be the national script and if Urdu is to take that place, Urdu script alone will be the national script. But, if Hindustani, which is a resultant of the junction of Hindi and Urdu, is to be the national language, a knowledge of both the scripts is essential in the manner indicated by me.

It is worth remembering that in reality neither the Urdu character nor the Urdu form of the same language is the exclusive property of the Muslims of India There is quite a large number of Hindus and others whose mother-tongue is Urdu and who know only the Urdu character It is further to be remembered that the necessity of knowing both the scripts was stressed by me on my return from South Africa in 1915 I submitted the same proposition to the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan in Indore as its President. So far as I recollect, there was hardly any opposition to *the proposition It is true that then I did not suggest any* alteration in the name The definition, however, was the same as that of today When perfect anarchy prevails in the thought world and we express different views without regard to facts, it is obligatory that we should have one strong helm to weather any storm

In so far as it is believed that the Muslims only are concerned with the retention of the Urdu character, at this juncture it becomes our special duty to emphasize the necessity of Hindustani written in either character This should appear self-evident Whatever were the reasons in justification, it must be admitted that within the Union in many places the Muslims have been dealt with harshly It would be beside the point to contend that Pakistan made the beginning with harsh treatment against the Hindus and the Sikhs. For the State to ordain that the inter-provincial script in the Union shall be only the Nagari, it would be an imposition upon the Muslims. If the result of the act of justice is to be that the Muslims are to confine themselves to the Urdu character and gratuitously regard the word Hindustani as synonymous with Urdu, it would amount to

cussedness and perhaps a sign that their heart is not in the Union.

It would be confusion of thought for Raihanabehn to argue that keeping of the Urdu character side by side with the Nagari would be construed to be in pursuance of the policy of appeasement. Though the word has come to have a bad odour about it, I would submit that appeasement can be a praiseworthly duty, as it can also be at times a blameworthy gesture. Thus, for instance, it can conceivably be a duty on the part of a brother to walk with his brother towards the North whilst alone he would have gone to the South. But it would certainly be criminal for him, a confirmed teetotaller, to drink spirituous liquors with his drunken brother in order to appease him. He would then harm both himself and his brother. I must not recite the *Kalma* in order to appease or flatter my Muslim brother, as he must not recite the *Gayatri* in order to appease or flatter me. It would be another matter if both of us recite either at will because we believe the two incantations as one in essence. I hold that it is so. Hence it is that in the daily recital of the Ashram prayers, among the eleven observances occurs equal respect for all the accepted religions in the world. The upshot of all this argument is that the policy of appeasement is not always bad. It may even become a duty at times.

This sister further says that the Nagari script is, comparatively speaking, fairly perfect, whereas the Urdu script is imperfect and difficult to decipher. To write Sanskrit words in the Urdu script is, she holds, well-nigh impossible. There is some force in these three statements. They amount to this that the Devanagari *lipi* though comparatively perfect admits of improvement and the Urdu script demands it because it is imperfect. It will be difficult for Raihanabehn to sustain the charge that it is not possible to write Sanskrit words in the Urdu script. I have in my possession the whole of the *Gita* transcribed in that script. Improvement is possible only when fanaticism has died out. After all, what is the Sindhi alphabet but an improved edition of the Urdu script?

Lastly, I suggest to Raihanabehn that her letter under discussion is a fine specimen of Hindustani. She has woven in that letter Urdu words as freely as Sanskrit words. The beauty of Hindustani is that it has no quarrel either with Sanskrit or with Arabic words. In order to strengthen Hindustani consistently with its genius, if a language can be said to have a 'genius', it must borrow from all the languages of the world Its grammar must remain as it always has been in indigenous Hindi Thus the plural of 'Hindu' in Hindustani will always be *Hindu-o* (हिंदुओं) and not *Hunud* (हुनुद) as it is in highly Arabicized Urdu. Raihanabehn is an Urdu scholar. Though not a scholar in Hindi, she knows it well. She reads and writes both the Nagari and Urdu characters When I was in the Yeravda prison she and Zohra Ansari were my Urdu teachers. Naturally, they taught me through correspondence. My advice, therefore, to her is that she should devote her energy to the strengthening and spreading of Hindustani and making the teaching of the two characters as easy as possible This work she can only do, if her ignorance, as I call it, is removed. If, what she has now begun to believe is true, I could have nothing to say to her. Then indeed, I shall have to unlearn the past and learn a new lesson and displace the Urdu character from the position which I think it should occupy.

New Delhi, 1-11-'47

(*Adapted from the original in Hindustani*)

Harijan, 9-11-1947

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THE NATIONAL LANGUAGE

Gandhiji mentioned in his post-prayer discourse the letters he had been receiving in connection with the opinion expressed by him about the adoption of Hindustani as the national language. He had no doubt that Hindustani would be the best suited interprovincial language for all Indians. Neither persianized Urdu nor sanskritized Hindi could easily be understood by the masses. With the end of British *Raj*, the English language had to go as the common medium of speech or the court language. It was a usurpation. He honoured the English language in its own place. It could never become India's national language. An esteemed friend had, however, suggested that the English language was soon going to be displaced from the position that did not belong to it. But his harping on the subject, the writer feared, might transfer the dislike of the language to the people who spoke it, i. e., the English. The writer knew that if any such mishap occurred, he (Gandhiji) would be cut to the quick so much so that he might even go mad with grief over the unexpected tragedy. The warning was timely. The audience should know that he always made a distinction between the doer and his deed. The deed might be worthy of dislike, never the doer. He was reminded that he knew that the distinction was rarely borne in mind. Men generally confused the deed with the doer and the orbit of condemnation included both the doer and the deed. The writer also warned him that he (Gandhiji) had to make allowance for the Anglo-Indians, the Goans and others with whom English had become the mother tongue. Did Gandhiji ever contemplate that these would be suddenly dismissed for want of knowledge of Hindi or Hindustani whichever finally became the interprovincial speech? The writer knew that he (Gandhiji) would never entertain any such idea. Gandhiji said that the writer was correct in his fear. Nevertheless, he did expect that within a given period they would all attain a working

knowledge of Hindustani. No oppression should be felt by the minorities, however small they might be. There was need for the gentlest handling of all such questions.

The same earnest friend had reminded him that his (Gandhiji's) insistence on the two scripts was likely to displace both and make room for the Roman script. The friend had partiality for the Roman script. He (Gandhiji) did not share it. Nor did he fear that the two scripts would ever be displaced by the Roman. He did not wish to enter into argument over the question. He simply referred to the subject to show that their nationalism was poor stuff if it shirked the learning of the two scripts. Their love of their country should make the learning of the two scripts a matter of joy. He instanced the example of Sheikh Abdullah Saheb who informed him only that afternoon that during his imprisonment in Kashmir he was able with ease to learn Hindi and the Nagari script. What the Sheikh Saheb was able to do, was surely equally easy for other nationalists.

Birla House, New Delhi, 18-10-'47

Harijan, 26-10-1947

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PRESS STATEMENT

A correspondent writes to me to say that the strained relations between the Hindus and the Muslims bid fair, if timely warning is not taken, to replace Nagari and Urdu scripts with Roman. There are undoubtedly protagonists of the Roman as the universal script. It seems to me that it would be a great human tragedy if such a result comes about. Time saving devices are good upto a certain point. But they take the form of a mania when they destroy human relations and desirable restraints. I must not tarry to examine what they are. Suffice it to say that lovers of the Nagari script which is scientifically almost perfect, and the Urdu script, which is so graceful, will not be carried away by the lazy craze for the Roman script. Would that both the communities will be sane enough to realize that

the mutual dislike is not allowed to replace the two Indian scripts. But if that happy consummation does not take place, let those few or many who have regard for sacred human understanding assiduously learn both the scripts and thus enrich the Indian national language, Hindustani, as the easy fusion of Hindi and Urdu Let the Provincial Governments beware of the lure of the Roman script Let it not be said of India that it is so degraded as to become the blotting sheet of civilization.

Kheturi (Noakhali), 24-1-'47

Harijan, 2-2-1947

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QUESTION BOX

Q 1. It does not matter whether the lingua franca be called Hindi or Hindustani, in any case the common language in actual use will remain Hindustani. It cannot, however, be gainsaid that in advanced literature and science certain words will be necessary which can only be derived from Sanskrit. Where is the harm in making this clear to the public ?

A The first part of the question would be correct provided the name adopted were accepted by all in the same light The controversy arises not over the name but what it is meant to convey In advanced literature and science we should not draw exclusively from Sanskrit. A small committee can be appointed to prepare a dictionary of current words irrespective of their original source

Q 2 With regard to the script, it would be burdensome to have to use two scripts in the conduct of the affairs of the nation. Why not then adopt the Nagari script which is current in all provinces? Does the two-script proposal mean that the Central Government should use both the scripts in its correspondence and publications ? Would telegraph and other offices also have to use both the scripts ?

I do not subscribe to the view often put forward that the two-script proposal is meant to appease the Muslims. Our concern should be to select the script which might be advantageous to the nation as a whole without wishing any injustice. It would not be correct to hold that the adoption of the Nagari script would be harmful to Muslim interests. As far as I can see, it would be necessary to adopt both the scripts, but only as a temporary measure—ultimately one script should be acceptable to all. How can this be disputed?

A With the adoption of the two scripts, the easier one will ultimately survive All that is wanted is that the Urdu script should not be boycotted, as such boycott would imply discrimination. A controversy arose over such discrimination and this has now been accentuated. With this background, we who believe in unity and are opposed to civil strife are bound to adopt both the scripts. Again we cannot forget that many Hindus and Sikhs are ignorant of the Nagari script. There is no question of all people having to learn both the scripts, but only of those liable to serve outside their province. Nor is it suggested that all notices should be issued by the Central Government in both the scripts—but only those meant for a".

Having regard to the present communal antagonism, the boycott of the Urdu script would be regarded as an anti-democratic measure

The question whether telegraph and other offices would also have to use both the scripts is a minor one. When we get rid of the incubus of the English language and the Roman script, our minds will be clearer and we shall realize the futility of such controversies.

While we must always refrain from an improper course with the object of appeasing others, there is no harm in conciliating when the course itself is intrinsically proper. If all accepted our script willingly, it would be so good, but even to achieve this end it is necessary to retain both the scripts at present.

New Delhi, 4-1-'48

Harijan 11-1 1948

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URDU HARIJAN

Two weeks ago I hinted in the Gujarati columns that the *Harijan* printed in the Urdu script was likely to be stopped as its sale was steadily dwindling. Apart even from financial considerations, I saw no meaning in publishing it, if there was no demand for it. The dwindle to me was a sign of resentment against its publication. I would be foolish if I failed to profit by it.

My view remains unalterable especially at this critical juncture in our history. It is wrong to ruffle Muslim or any other person's feeling when there is no question of ethics. Those who take the trouble of learning the Urdu script in addition to the Nagari, will surely lose nothing. They will gain a knowledge of the Urdu script, which many of our countrymen know. If it was not for cussedness, this proposition will be admitted without any argument. The limitations of this script in terms of perfection are many. But for elegance and grace it will equal any script in the world. It will not die so long at least as Arabic and Persian live, though it has achieved a status all its own without outside aid. With a little adaptation it can serve the purpose of shorthand. As a national script, if it is set free from the bondage of orthodoxy, it is capable of improvement so as to enable one to transcribe Sanskrit verses without the slightest difficulty.

Lastly, those who in anger boycott the Urdu script, put a wanton affront upon the Muslims of the Union who, in the eyes of many Hindus, have become aliens in their own land. This is copying the bad manners of Pakistan with a vengeance. I invite every inhabitant of India to join me in a stern refusal to copy bad manners. If they will enter the heart of what I have written, they will prevent the impending collapse of the Nagari and Urdu editions of the *Harijan*. Will Muslim friends rise to the occasion and do two things — subscribe to the Urdu edition and

diligently learn the Nagari script and enrich their intellectual capital?

New Delhi, 11-1-'48

Harijan, 18-1-1948

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DON'T CRY OVER SPILT MILK

Gandhiji said that some friends were insistently telling him that his post-prayer discourses were having a depressing effect on the people in general. After all the freedom for which he had fought all his life was at their door. He knew that there could be no economic freedom or moral betterment without political freedom. Therefore, why did he not rejoice? He replied that there was some force in this argument. But as a *satyagrahi* wedded to Truth, he could never say what did not come from the depths of his heart. The partition of India was there and he could not but be unhappy about it. If, however, what he said depressed them the fault was not his. He had told them that it was no use crying over spilt milk. He had been a rebel and a fighter all his life and had found great happiness therein. But he had never been defeated in spirit. He could not weep nor could he make others do so. He had gone to Noakhali to wipe their tears and tell them not to mourn over the loss of life and property. A *satyagrahi* knew no defeat. Even if their leaders had made a mistake, there was no consciousness about it. They believed that what they had done was for the good of the country. If they were happy, the audience too felt likewise. It was no part of his duty to seek to deprive them of their happiness. If the Congress decided on celebrations on August 15th, those who felt like joining must join in them. Congress, as a democratic organization, was never going to force anyone to do anything against his or her wishes. It was true that the British were going. Those few who remained would remain as their servants to do their bidding. Gandhiji brought home to the audience the difference between

gaining a victory as Congress had done through passive resistance and that gained by armed force. Now power was going to be in their hands. But the real day of rejoicing would be when the Hindus and the Muslims would live as brothers, even though in the two dominions. He was distressed to hear that the Punjab Muslim League were holding out threats of violence if the decision of the Boundary Commission went against their wishes. Some Sikhs had said likewise. Gandhiji deplored this attitude. It was inconsistent with the honour of the parties who had agreed to arbitration. Having agreed they must conform to the decision.

Harijan, 3-8-1947

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SOME QUESTIONS

A non-Muslim friend living in the Pakistan area writes:

> "You people are talking loud about the celebration of 15th August next as the Independence Day. Have you thought how we, the non-Muslims of Pakistan, are to celebrate the day and with what joy in our hearts? We here shall be afraid about our own safety when you might be rejoicing. Can you direct us as to what we might do? Can it be a day of anything but mourning? Our Muslim neighbours have begun to put fright into our hearts from now! What will the Muslims of the Indian Union be thinking? Are they not likely to share the same fright? We are frightened to such an extent that we feel we are in danger of compulsory conversion to Islam. It is all very well for you to preach courage and to prattle that everyone's religion is in his own keeping. It may be true of *sannyasis*, not of poor householders having children."

All I can answer is that Jinnah Saheb has now become the Governor-General of Pakistan. As such he says that the non-Muslims in Pakistan will be treated precisely in the same manner as their Muslim brethren. My advice is that we should trust his word and believe that no harm

will come to the non-Muslims in that part of India as none will befall the Muslims in the Indian Union. Now we have two States in India. Therefore, I think that each will have to be responsible to the other for the due protection of the minorities.

This much I certainly believe that the coming 15th August should be no day for rejoicing whilst the minorities contemplate the day with a heavy heart. It must be a day for prayer and deep heart-searching. There is one condition on which it might become a day of universal rejoicing in spite of the two divisions. Let both try from now onwards to become true friends so that they are ready on the 15th August to give themselves to rejoicing. This, however is an opinion confined to me alone

SHELTER FOR REFUGEES

The same friend asks whether those who, being mortally afraid, leave Pakistan, will get shelter in the Union.

My opinion is emphatic on the point. Such refugees should get proper shelter in the Union and *vice versa*. Of course, the rich ones may not expect palatial buildings in the Union. I have not seen that done anywhere I further believe that the refugees should work against food being given to them. No work, no payment. I hug the hope that no non-Muslim will have to leave Pakistan and no Muslim the Union.

The friend again asks. "What will happen about land and buildings, if any, left in Pakistan?"

I have said repeatedly that the State should pay the present market price of the land and buildings. So far as I know it is customary for the rival State to ensure such payment. But let us hope that matters will never have to go so far.

PUNISHMENT FOR EVIL-DOERS

Lastly, the same writer says: "You regard yourself as a practical idealist. What is happening today is inhuman. Will you tell me how your practical *ahimsa* can work against these evil-doers?"

I must plead guilty to having called myself a practical idealist. I have tried ever to practise as I have preached,

be it ever so imperfectly. Who are the evil-doers of your conception? Are they as described by the Sage Manu? All these are not today done to death. Today there is a movement on foot in the world for the abolition of capital punishment. Indeed, an attempt, worthy in my opinion, is being made to convert prisons into hospitals and reformatories for the treatment of criminals as if they were diseased persons. The upshot of all I want to convey is that every work labelled as scripture is not necessarily so Moreover a scripture to be scientific lends itself to emendations as the times may really require They must progress with the times if they are to live in the lives of the people The changeless and universal fundamentals are always very few They do not require learned treatises to be described The treatises are built upon these immovable rocks

Further, it is not everyone who is entitled to punish evil-doers. In a decent society it is always reserved for the State It enacts laws and appoints judges to judge in accordance with them If such were not the case, we would all bid fair to become evil-doers The assassinations in Burma were truly fearful. Now we know for certain that the motive behind them was political I am quite sure that the assassins believed that they were doing a virtuous act in murdering those patriots whom they regarded as evil-doers Did not our terrorists think likewise? They told me that they sincerely believed that those whom they did to death were evil-doers of Manu's description These friends never thought until they had seen new light, that they had done anything wrong in shooting their victims. Hence have I argued that those who take the law into their own hands and presume to judge others are themselves the guilty ones. Departure from *ahimsa* is possible, if at all, when justice is awarded by properly constituted impartial tribunals. What is happening today comes under the definition of evil.

New Delhi, 22-7-'47

Harijan, 3-8-1947

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ARMY AND FREEDOM

A friend asked said Gandhiji in his post-prayer discourse if the division of the army and the retention of British Officers had his approval. The friend should first ask whether Gandhiji approved of the army at all As it was, the military expenditure in free India would probably be more, not less, than before Gandhiji could never be a party to it. He viewed the military with apprehension Could it be that India would also have to pass through the stage of military rule? For years they had said that they did not want any army He stood by that statement even today, but the others did not A new generation had set in. Congressmen were not bound by what they had done during India's bondage. No blame could be imputed to them for the change. He had mistaken passive resistance for non-violence. There was violence in people's hearts. The British Government's imminent withdrawal had set free the bottled violence which was finding free vent against their own kith and kin Almost every province wanted military assistance If they did not wake up betimes, there was even danger of military dictatorship being established. Was that freedom?

Harijan, 3-8-1947

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PROTECTION OF MINORITIES

The question he had no time to answer yesterday, Gandhiji answered today How were they to behave towards the Muslims in the Union in view of the atrocities committed by them in many places? It had become difficult to trust the Muslims they met — and how were they to ensure the protection of the non-Muslims in Pakistan? He had, he hoped, answered the question more than once.

Yet evidently the answer bore repetition. India was equally the home of the Hindus and the non-Hindus. All religions were on their trial. He had already confessed his own mistake. He had imagined that the weak could be non-violent. It was not so. If they could shed their cowardice the Muslims would recognize their bravery and would cease to worry them. In the Union they were, therefore, bound to treat all with equal regard. In the absence of that bravery which non-violence alone gave, they had the law of revenge — division of the army might well mean a graphic lesson in that law. The division rendered the army weak, if not useless, as an effective defence against foreign aggression. He had shown how, if they did not take care, India might even have to pass through military dictatorship. Was it to be the fate of India to win freedom with one hand and lose it with the other? The Dutch seemed to be trying to deprive Indonesia of her freedom. Whatever their previous faults the British were leaving India of their own accord. A fratricidal war was bound to result in the loss of that freedom. If they acted correctly in the Indian Union, no one would dare touch the non-Muslims in Pakistan, however small their number might be. It was, therefore, a good sign that the leaders of both the communities had made a statement that they would accept the decision of the Boundary Commission whatever it was. They had also said that the minorities and even erstwhile political opponents would be quite safe in either part of India. Correct conduct required that they should believe what they had said till proved otherwise.

Harijan, 10-8-1947

SOME QUESTIONS

Gandhiji said that that evening he proposed to answer some of the questions that were found in his correspondence file.

CONGRESS AFTER AUGUST 15TH

Q. After the 15th of August will there be two Congresses or only one for both the parts of India, if there is to be any need for the Congress at all?

A. In my opinion the need for such an organization will be greater than it has been upto now. No doubt the function will be different. Unless Congressmen foolishly subscribe to the theory of two nations based on two religions, there can be only one Congress for one India. Division of India does not, ought not to, divide the All India body. India does not become two nations because it has been cut up into two sovereign States. Supposing one or more States remain outside the two dominions, will the Congress exclude them and their people from the National Congress? Will they not rather demand special care and attention from the Congress? Problems more intricate than before, will certainly arise. Some of them may defy solution. That will be no reason for cutting the Congress in twain. It will evoke greater statesmanship, deeper thinking and cooler judgment than hitherto. Let us not anticipate paralysing difficulties. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

CONGRESS AND COMMUNALISM

The second question is:

Q. Will the Congress become a communal body now? There is an insistent demand for it. Now that the Muslims regard themselves as aliens, why should we not call the Union, Hindu India with an indelible stamp of Hindudom on it?

A. This question betrays gross ignorance. The Congress can never become a Hindu body. Those who will make it

so are enemies of India and Hinduism. We are a nation of millions. Their voice no one has heard. Insistence, if there is any, is confined to the busybodies of our cities. Let us not mistake their voice for the voice of the millions of India's villages. Thirdly, the Muslims of the Union have not declared themselves as aliens. Lastly, in spite of the many shortcomings of the Hindus, it can be safely claimed that Hinduism has never been known to be exclusive. Many persons claiming different faiths make us one and an indivisible nation. All these have an equal claim to be the nationals of India. The so-called majority community has no right to impose itself on the others. Might of numbers or of the sword shall not be right. Right is the only true might, appearances to the contrary notwithstanding.

NON-MUSLIMS AND THE PAKISTAN FLAG

The third question is:

Q. What should be the attitude of the non-Muslims towards the Pakistan flag?

A. That flag has not yet come into being. Probably it will be the same as the Muslim League flag. If it is identified with Islam, it must have a flag which is common to all Muslims of the world and it should command the universal respect of all who are not inimical to Islam. I know of no such flag either for Islam, Christianity, Hinduism or any other faith. Not being a student of history, I am subject to correction. If the Pakistan flag, whatever its design, represents all its inhabitants equally, irrespective of religion, it will command my salute as it should yours. In other words, the dominions must not be enemies one of the other.

Harijan, 10-8-1947

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THE REASON FOR ADDITION

During the three days I passed in Srinagar though I had prayers in the compound of Lala Kishorilal's bungalow, where I was accommodated, I made no speeches. I had so declared before leaving Delhi. But some of the audience sent me questions. One was :

"I attended your prayer meeting last evening in which you recited two prayers of the other communities. May I know what is your idea in doing so and what you mean by religion ?"

As I have observed before now, the selection from the *Quran* was introduced some years ago on the suggestion of Raihana Tyabji who was then living in the Sevagram Ashram, and the one from the Parsi prayers at the instance of Dr. Gilder who recited the Parsi prayer on the break of my fast in the Aga Khan palace during our detention. I am of opinion that the addition enriched the prayer. It reached the hearts of a larger audience than before. It certainly showed Hinduism in its broad and tolerant aspect. The questioner ought also to have asked why the prayer commenced with the Buddhist prayer in Japanese. The selections of the stanzas of the prayer has a history behind it befitting the sacred character. The Buddhist prayer was the prayer with which the whole of Sevagram resounded in the early morning when a good Japanese monk was staying at the Sevagram Ashram and who by his silent and dignified conduct had endeared himself to the inmates of the Ashram.

Jammu, 5-8-'47

Harijan, 17-8-1947

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THE MINORITIES

A questioner asks why I do not agree that the minorities should quit their respective dominions.

No one has asked me to agree. But I should oppose any such movement. There is no occasion to distrust the majority in either dominion. And in any case, now that there are two sovereign States in India, each has to ensure the proper treatment of the minorities in the other. Let us hope that such a contingency will never arise. I hold too that every right carries with it a duty, better still, there is no right which does not flow from duty duly performed.

On the train to Patna, 7-8-'47

Harijan, 17-8-1947

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TRUE ISLAM

A Muslim correspondent sends a letter which is given below barring personal references:

> " Islam is a universal religion and its great message is to strive and know the Truth. The following verses of Maulana Jalaluddin Roomi will explain what great effort is needed even for great souls like Caliph Ali to know the Truth :
>
> 1. The Prophet said to Ali, ' O Ali !
> Thou art the Lion of God, a hero most valiant
> Yet confide not in thine lion-like valour;
> But seek refuge under the palm trees of the truth
> Come under the shadow of the Man of Reason,
> Thou canst not find it in the road of the traditionist.
> His shadow of earth is as that of Mount Qaf,
> His spirit is as a Simurgh soaring on high.

Were I to tell his praises till the last day
My words would not be too many nor admit of
curtailment;
That sun is hidden in the form of a man,
Understand me. Allah knows the truth!''

2. Pass over names and look to qualities
So that qualities may lead thee to essence;
The differences of sects arise from His names
When they pierce to His essence, they find His peace.

The great tragedy of Muslim India today is that it has entangled itself in names and has ignored the teachings of Islam, whereby it could have passed over to knowing the reality. They act according to their own natures, yet they attribute their actions to Islam forgetting that :

The Moon sheds her light and the dogs howl;
Everyone acts according to his nature
To each his office is allotted by the divine decree.
I swear by Ages indeed man is at total loss
Except those who believe and do good deeds
And those who preach for Truth and Non-violence.

I would request you kindly to avoid bringing the name of Islam when you refer to the actions of the Muslims, as the two are today different.''

Would that this Islam might be exhibited in deeds under Pakistan and the correspondent's taunt dispelled!

New Delhi, 20-7-'47

Harijan, 17-8-1947

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THE PINDI SPEECH

The prayer meeting of the 31st of July was held in the compound of Lala Devraj Anand. After the prayer Gandhiji referred to a letter he had received. In it, the writer had asked him to spend at least a week in Rawalpindi and see with his own eyes what the Hindus had suffered. Why should he wish to go to Kashmir? His reply was that ever since he had gone to Delhi he had wanted to come to the Punjab. He wanted to visit Lahore, Amritsar and Rawalpindi. But he believed that he was in God's hands. God was the Master of all the universe and He could upset the plans of men. The original plan was that he would spend a day at Lahore and Amritsar, two days at Rawalpindi and at least ten days in Kashmir. Now he had only two or three days for Kashmir. And that too was in fulfilment of a promise.

Though he could not stay in the Punjab, he had not forgotten them. He had to reach Noakhali before the 15th. That again was in fulfilment of a promise. He was a devotee of Rama and Rama had said that a promise must be kept at any cost. He referred to the black flag demonstration that Hindu youngmen had arranged at the Amritsar railway station. All the time the train stopped they kept shouting 'Gandhi, Go Back' in English. He had to close his ears as he could not stand the noise. He closed his eyes also and kept on repeating God's name. They were too noisy and too excited, else he would have liked to get down and ask them what harm he had done to them to deserve such noisy hostility. He knew however that praise and blame must be received with equanimity. At the other stations people were extremely well-behaved and cordial. He had not been disturbed during the night and he was grateful for it.

Rawalpindi, 6-8-'47

Harijan, 24-8-1947

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AT PANJA SAHEB

The Wah Camp is situated at a distance of about 2 miles from Panja Saheb, the famous Sikh *Gurudwara.* From the Camp Gandhiji motored to Panja Saheb where he was taken to a cool underground room for rest. Two water channels leading from the main tank flow through this room. The tank is fed by a spring which yields lovely cool water. But like most holy places the tank is made extremely dirty by the thoughtless public. Before leaving Panja Saheb, Gandhiji visited the *Gurudwara* where an address was presented to him in *Gurumukhi.* It narrated the sufferings of the Sikh community and the dangers that faced them and their shrines in Pakistan. The Panja Saheb *Gurudwara* is one of the oldest and holiest of the Sikh shrines. It owns property worth a crore or so. It feeds one thousand mouths every day. Nowadays, nearly three to four thousand people are fed at the *Guru ka langar* everyday. Twice the *Gurudwara* was attacked by Muslim mobs during the recent disturbances. But with the grace of God, the attack was warded off and no harm came to the *Gurudwara.* But they wanted definite and concrete measures to insure the safety of the *Gurudwara.* Any damage to the *Gurudwara* would endanger the peace of the whole of the Punjab, they said. They also wanted Eastern Punjab to be made into a Sikh State where Sikh religion and culture could prosper. Replying to the address Gandhiji did not consider it possible that Eastern Punjab should be handed over entirely to the Sikhs to govern. He felt that the Sikhs should never entertain such an unworthy ambition. The Sikhs were reputed, and rightly, to be a warlike race. With them of all the persons in the world, merit and merit alone should be the sole test for holding any office. He hoped that throughout the two dominions merit would be the sole test. The speaker invited the Sikhs to lead in this desirable competition.

Coming to the protection of Panja Saheb, Nankana Saheb and the other *Gurudwaras* that may be found in Pakistan or elsewhere, he said, "Do not look to any other power outside yourselves for the protection of these shrines. I would like every Sikh to be a defender of his faith and, therefore, of all the *Gurudwaras* and not merely of Panja Saheb which is one of the greatest. At the same time I want you to shed all fear about the future. I would ask you to rely upon the plighted word of the Muslim leaders. They had got their Pakistan. They have no quarrel now with any one in India — at least they should have none. If your fears materialize, and any attempt at desecration of the *Gurudwaras* is made by the Muslims, it will be contrary to the tradition of Islam as I know it. And those Muslims who take part in such desecration would be partakers in the destruction of Islam. Every faith is on its trial in India. God is the infallible judge and the world which is His creation will judge the Muslim leaders not according to their pledges and promises but according to the deeds of these leaders and their followers. What I have said of the Muslim leaders is also true of the leaders and followers of other faiths.

Rawalpindi, 6-8-'47

Harijan, 17-8-1947

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KASHMIR AND REFUGEES

Addressing his post-prayer gathering at Wah on August 5, Gandhiji said that he was glad that he was able to visit the Refugee Camp at Wah. Before, however, he dealt with matters arising out of his talks with the representatives of the refugees, he said that he would like to say a word about his visit to Kashmir. He had made up his mind not to hold any public meeting or address them but he was able to see the workers. Begum Saheba (wife of Sheikh Abdullah) was constantly with him throughout the three days he was in Srinagar. He was able also to see the Maharaja Saheb, the Maharani Saheba and Prime

Minister Kak Saheb. He was sorry that he was not able to see Sheikh Abdullah who was undoubtedly the leader of the Kashmiris. He had not gone there to see the Sheikh Saheb. He was able, however, to hold public prayers for two days in Kashmir and one day in Jammu. These were attended by thousands. He could say that on 15th August, all being well, legally the State of Kashmir and Jammu would be independent. But he was sure that the State would not remain in that condition for long after August 15. It had to join either the Union or Pakistan. It had a predominantly Muslim population. But he saw that Sheikh Saheb had fired Kashmiris with local patriotism. British paramountcy would terminate on the 15th instant. Real paramountcy would then commence. He referred to the paramountcy of the Kashmiris. They had one language, one culture and, so far as he could see, they were one people. He could not distinguish readily between a Kashmiri Hindu and a Kashmiri Mussalman. In the large deputation that he saw it was very difficult for him to know whether it was predominantly Muslim or Hindu. Whatever it was, he had no hesitation in saying that the will of the Kashmiris was the supreme law in Kashmir and Jammu. He was glad to say that the Maharaja Saheb and the Maharani Saheba readily acknowledged the fact. He had the good fortune to read what was euphemistically called the Treaty of Amritsar but which was in reality a deed of sale. He supposed that it would be dead on August 15. The seller was the then British Governor-General, and Maharaja Gulab Singh was the buyer. The treaty going, would the State revert to the British and, therefore, to England? If to India, to which part? He held that without going into the intricacies of law which he had no right to dilate upon, commonsense dictated that the will of the Kashmiris should decide the fate of Kashmir and Jammu. The sooner it was done the better. How the will of the people would be determined was a fair question. He hoped that the question would be decided between the two dominions, the Maharaja Saheb and the Kashmiris. If the four could come to a joint decision, much trouble would be avoided. After all Kashmir

was a big State; it had the greatest strategic value, perhaps in all India. So much for Kashmir.

He would now deal with the question of the refugees. Among them they were nearly 9000. The Hindus and the Sikhs who discussed the question with him said that they were afraid of the approach of August 15. He confessed that he did not in any way whatsoever share the fear. Nor could he appreciate it. The Muslims had got their Pakistan. They could now have no quarrel with the Hindus and the Sikhs of the Punjab Jinnah Saheb and other Muslim Leaguers had given assurances that the non-Muslims were as safe in Pakistan as the Muslims. He invited the audience to accept the assurance. Supposing that the assurance proved untrue and the worst fears of the refugees proved true, it would be the beginning of the ruin of Islam. He refused to believe that Muslim leaders would be guilty of such a suicidal act. He asked the refugees, men and women, to dispel all fear If he could put off his departure for Noakhali, he would gladly pass August 15 in the midst of the refugees at Wah He proposed, however, to do the next best thing The audience saw Dr. Sushila Nayyar taking notes of what he was saying. She herself belonged to the district of Gujarat in Western Pakistan He had conferred with her before coming to the prayer meeting and though she was otherwise to accompany him to Noakhali, she had accepted his advice to stay with the refugees on his behalf, in order to help them to dispel all fear about August 15. He knew that she had no such fear. She was with him in Noakhali as was also her brother Pyarelalji. She was posted in one of the worst affected areas of Noakhali and through medical assistance she had become popular among the Muslims as she was undoubtedly among the Hindus. He had just heard from the District Commissioner, who was a Muslim, that the refugees in and about Rawalpindi had nothing to fear. They should feel as safe as the Muslim inhabitants.

Rawalpindi, 5-8-'47

(Adapted from the original in Hindustani)

Harijan, 24-8-1947

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MIGRATION TO CALCUTTA

Gandhiji devoted the whole of his address to the situation in Calcutta. His destination, he said, was Noakhali but he had been listening the whole day long to the woes of Calcutta. Some Muslim friends and also some Hindus complained that they (Hindus) seemed to have gone mad, not that the Muslims had become wiser. But now that the Muslim police and officials were almost withdrawn and replaced by Hindus, the Hindus had begun to believe that they were now free to do what they liked as the Muslims were reported to have done under the League Ministry. He was not going to examine what was done under the League Ministry. His purpose was undoubtedly to know what his co-worker Dr. Ghosh's Ministry was doing. Was it true that the Muslims were living in terror? If it was at all true, it was a severe reflection on the Congress Ministry. He was rightly asked before he went up to Noakhali to tarry in Calcutta to 'pour a pot of water over the raging fire' that was burning Calcutta. He would love to give his life if thereby he could contribute to the quenching of mob fury. He would never be able to subscribe to the theory that the doings in Calcutta were the result of *goondaism*. He held that the crude open *goondaism* was a reflection of the subtle *goondaism* they were harbouring within. Hence, it was the duty of the Governments to hold themselves responsible for the acts of the *goondas* so-called. He hoped that Calcutta would not present the disgraceful spectacle of hot *goondaism* when they were entering upon full responsibility.

He said that he was to go to Noakhali the next day (Monday). Owing however to pressure from many Muslim friends who had seen him, he had decided to stay on to see if he could contribute his share in the return of sanity in the premier city of India. The argument of the Muslim friends went home. He had at the same time said that if he

did not go to Noakhali and any mishap took place, his life would become forfeit as he had said already about Bihar. He had seen the Ministers and others too during the day. He would like to see the places where destruction was said to have been wrought by the Hindus. He had also learnt that there were parts of Calcutta which were inaccessible to the Hindus, though many premises therein used to be occupied by them. Similar was the case with the Hindu localities. His head hung in shame to listen to this recital of man's barbarism. He would love to go to these places and see for himself how much truth there was in these recitals. He was told that there were not more than 23% Muslims in Calcutta. It was unthinkable that such a minority could coerce the majority without countenance from or incompetence of authority. Similarly it was unthinkable that in the midst of a Government which knew the art of government, the majority could for one moment be permitted to coerce the minority. He was also told that what the Muslim police and officers were alleged to be doing before, now that the Congress Ministry was in power the Hindu police and officers were doing. They had become partial in the administration of justice. If this wretched spirit of communalism had entered the police force, the prospect was black indeed. He hoped that the police would realize the dignity of their profession.

Sodepur, 10-8-'47

Harijan, 24-8-1947

THE FIFTEENTH OF AUGUST

Gandhiji said that the 15th instant was to be a landmark in India's history. It was a day when India would be declared free of the foreign yoke. It was to be an independent nation. He had said how the day was to be observed, but he was probably alone in the view. Already there was an announcement that the Muslims of Calcutta were to observe it as a day of mourning. He hoped that it was not true. No man could be compelled to observe the day in a particular manner. It was to be a perfectly voluntary act. He would ask his Muslim countrymen not to mourn over the freedom. The present distemper was to go. What were the Hindus in Pakistan to do? They should salute the Pakistan flag if it meant the freedom and equality of all in every respect, irrespective of caste, colour or creed.

He then came to another important subject. They knew that he prolonged his stay in Calcutta by two days at the instance of Muslim friends. Last night Shaheed Saheb Suhrawardy came to see him. He suggested that it would be contrary to his (Gandhiji's) practice to leave Calcutta while it was going through the horrors of communal strife. Shaheed Saheb suggested that Gandhiji should prolong his stay in the city and work until real peace was restored. Gandhiji replied that Suhrawardy Saheb and he should live under the same roof in the disturbed parts. It would be best to live unprotected by the police or the military. In brotherly fashion, they would approach the people, argue with them and tell them that now that partition had taken place by agreement, there was no longer any reason why the parties should quarrel. The decision of the Boundary Commission was going to be announced in a day or two, and it was in the fitness of things that all the parties should abide by the decision in a becoming manner. After all, the parties had appointed an arbitration tribunal. They

were in honour bound to abide by the award whatever it was.

Gandhiji's proposal to Suhrawardy Saheb was of such an important nature that the latter could not afford to give a hasty reply. Gandhiji had, therefore, asked Shaheed Saheb to consult his aged father as well as his daughter before coming to a decision.

During the afternoon, Mr. Usman the ex-Mayor of Calcutta, had arrived with Shaheed Saheb's message stating that the latter had accepted Gandhiji's proposal without reservation. It was now time, therefore, for the two friends to choose quarters in the midst of the worst affected areas and see what could be done by joint effort.

Gandhiji said that he was warned that Shaheed Saheb was not to be relied upon. The same thing was said about him (Gandhiji) also. He was described as the worst enemy of Islam. He was supposed to be a consummate hypocrite. God alone knew men's hearts. He asserted that he spoke and acted as he believed. He had known Shaheed Saheb since the days of the Faridpore Conference, to which the late Deshbandhu had taken him. Nobody had any right to prejudge anybody. He would trust as he expected to be trusted. Both would live under the same roof, and have no secrets from each other. They would together see all the visitors. People should have the courage to speak out the truth under all circumstances and in the presence of those against whom it had to be said.

Gandhiji finally referred to what the common citizen could do in order to help the cause. They were to bless them on the mission on which they were embarking.

Sodepur, 12-8-'47

Harijan, 24-8-1947

WOULD CALCUTTA RETURN TO SANITY?

Gandhiji addressed a packed audience which listened to him without the slightest disturbance He said that the next day was the fixed day of deliverance from the foreign yoke. It was, therefore, a great day. They were bound to celebrate it. In his opinion it was a day when both the dominions were to shoulder a heavy burden. He invited everyone to have a twentyfour hour fast and prayer during the day, for the well-being of India as a whole and pass it in spinning as much as possible For, it was hand-spinning that had knit the poor and the rich together and that had given occupation to countless men and women who were without occupation.

He then returned to the reason for his postponing the visit to Noakhali and coming to stay in the present place. He said that Shaheed Saheb had come to see him and induce him to do his bit in bringing about peace in Calcutta which was burning. The appeal had its effect upon him He agreed provided Shaheed Saheb went with him to the affected areas and stayed there under the same roof with him, till the fury had abated and till complete friendship between the two communities was restored. Therefore, they were to work with one mind without mental reservations and without any secrets in the matter from one another Let them not think that they were to neglect the parts of Calcutta which were deserted by their Hindu inhabitants and were occupied by Muslims. They were working for the peace of the whole of Calcutta and he invited his audience to believe with them that if Calcutta returns to sanity and real friendship, then Noakhali and the rest of India would be safe. He mentioned that Shaheed Saheb was in the building, but he had, with his consent, kept himself away from the meeting as he wanted to avoid being the slightest cause of irritation to the meeting. But he was glad that the

audience had exhibited becoming tolerance and gave him the courage to bring Shaheed Saheb to the meeting. After all they should live and work together in the open and in perfect co-operation if their difficult mission was to succeed.

Beliaghata, 14-8-'47

Harijan, 24-8-1947

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NECTAR OF FRIENDLINESS

Gandhiji insisted on walking to the meeting which was held at Rash Bagan Maidan, Beliaghata, Calcutta. A very large congregation attended. The crowd through which he was to pass was so dense that what was five minutes' walk took twenty minutes to cover. Gandhiji congratulated Calcutta on Hindus and Muslims meeting together in perfect friendliness. Muslims shouted the same slogans of joy as the Hindus. They flew the tricolour without the slightest hesitation. What was more, the Hindus were admitted to mosques and Muslims were admitted to the Hindu *mandirs*. This news reminded him of the Khilafat days when Hindus and Muslims fraternized with one another. If this exhibition was from the heart and was not a momentary impulse, it was better than the Khilafat days. The simple reason was that they had both drunk the poison cup of disturbances. The nectar of friendliness should, therefore, taste sweeter than before. He was however sorry to hear that in a certain part the poor Muslims experienced molestation. He hoped that Calcutta including Howrah will be entirely free from the communal virus for ever. Then indeed they need have no fear about East Bengal and the rest of India. He was sorry, therefore, to hear that madness still raged in Lahore. He could hope and feel sure that the noble example of Calcutta, if it was sincere, would affect the Punjab and the other parts of India. He then referred to Chittagong. Rain was no respecter of

persons. It engulfed both Muslims and Hindus. It was the duty of the whole of Bengal to feel one with the sufferers of Chittagong.

Calcutta, 15-8-'47

Harijan, 24-8-1947

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MIRACLE OR ACCIDENT ?

Shaheed Saheb Suhrawardy and I are living together in a Muslim *manzil* in Beliaghata where Muslims have been reported to be sufferers. We occupied the house on Wednesday the 13th instant and on the 14th it seemed as if there never had been bad blood between the Hindus and the Muslims. In their thousands they began to embrace one another and to pass freely through places which were considered to be points of danger by one party or the other. Indeed, Hindus were taken to *masjids* by their Muslim brethren and the latter were taken by their Hindu brethren to the *mandirs*. Both with one voice shouted 'Jai Hind' or 'Hindu-Muslims! Be One'. As I have said above, we are living in a Muslim's house and Muslim volunteers are attending to our comforts with the greatest attention. Muslim volunteers do the cooking. Many were eager to come from the Khadi Pratisthan for attendance, but I prevented them. I was determined that we should be fully satisfied with whatever the Muslim brothers and sisters were able to give for our creature comforts, and I must say that the determination has resulted in unmixed good. Here in the compound numberless Hindus and Muslims continue to stream in shouting the favourite slogans. One might almost say that the joy of fraternization is leaping up from hour to hour.

Is this to be called a miracle or an accident? By whatever name it may be described, it is quite clear that all the credit that is being given to me from all sides is quite undeserved; nor can it be said to be deserved by Shaheed Saheb. This sudden upheaval is not the work of one or

two men. We are toys in the hands of God. He makes us dance to His tune. The utmost, therefore, that man can do is to refrain from interfering with the dance and that he should tender full obedience to his Maker's will. Thus considered, it can be said that in this miracle He has used us two as His instruments, and as for myself I only ask whether the dream of my youth is to be realized in the evening of my life.

For those who have full faith in God, this is neither a miracle nor an accident. A chain of events can be clearly seen to show that the two were being prepared, unconsciously to themselves, for fraternization. In this process our advent on the scene enabled the onlooker to give us credit for the consummation of the happy event.

Be that as it may, the delirious happenings remind me of the early days of the Khilafat Movement. The fraternization then burst on the public as a new experience. Moreover, we had then the Khilafat and Swaraj as our twin goals. Today we have nothing of the kind. We have drunk the poison of mutual hatred and so this nectar of fraternization tastes all the sweeter and the sweetness should never wear out.

In the present exuberance one hears also the cry of 'Long Live Hindustan and Pakistan' from the joint throats of the Hindus and the Muslims. I think it is quite proper. Whatever was the cause for the agreement, three parties accepted Pakistan. If then the two are not enemies one of the other, and here evidently they are not, surely there is nothing wrong in the above cry. Indeed, if the two have become friends, not to wish long life to both the States would probably be an act of disloyalty.

Beliaghata, 16-8-'47

(Adapted from the original in Gujarati)

Harijan, 24-8-1947

MANY ROADS, ONE GOAL

Everyday, in one quarter of Calcutta or another, the same question has been cropping up: how can we trust the Mussalmans, how can we trust Suhrawardy Saheb after the bitter things we have experienced for one whole year? Gandhiji has unfailingly tried to lift the audience from this emotional way of looking at things to political sanity.

Speaking the other day to a group of students, he said that they should remember that the Muslim League was fighting for a political objective viz., the establishment of Pakistan. The rest of India was against the vivisection; its aim was to preserve India undivided. Whatever the cause actuating the parties, they, the British Government, the Congress, the League and the Sikhs, ultimately accepted partition of India. Having got Pakistan, Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah says that in Pakistan there is equality of treatment for all—Muslims and all minorities, the Congress claiming likewise.

The fact towards which Gandhiji has been drawing pointed reference at every meeting, or among every group where opportunity presents itself, is that now that the struggle for Pakistan and *Akhand* Hindustan is over, we must settle down to the reality, that in each State Hindus and Mussalmans have to live together as common citizens. If any of them still swore by the past, it would not help but hinder us in our forward march. We have to accept facts, and try to convert every citizen into a worthy member of either State. If we treated the Mussalmans in the Indian Union as aliens who had fought for Pakistan and tried to keep them in subjection, we would only succeed in proving our political bankruptcy. Today they were no less citizens of the Union than anyone else. The Mussalmans, he has been pointing out, had accepted the fact of their Indian citizenship; and as proof of that,

everyone of them, from Mr. Suhrawardy downwards, had been lustily shouting *Jai Hind.*

But in the speech in Narkeldanga, the other day, Gandhiji referred to a deeper matter. He said that there were indications that all was not well with the Mussalmans. Some Hindus were now beginning to feel that they had the upper hand, and some Mussalmans were afraid that they would have to play the underdog in the Union today. Gandhiji said that this would be shameful indeed. If a minority in India, minority on the score of its religious profession, was made to feel small on that account, Gandhiji could only say that this India was not the India of his dreams. In the India for whose fashioning he had worked all his life every man enjoyed equality of status, whatever his religion was. The State was bound to be wholly secular. He went so far as to say that no denominational educational institution in it should enjoy State patronage.

All subjects would thus be equal in the eye of the law. But every single individual would be free to pursue his own religion without let or hindrance, so long as it did not transgress the common law. The question of the 'protection of minorities' was not good enough for him; it rested upon the recognition of religious grouping between citizens of the same State. What he wished India to do, was to assure liberty of religious profession to every single individual. Then only India could be great, for it was perhaps the one nation in the ancient world, which had recognized cultural democracy, whereby it was held that the roads to God were many, but the goal was one, because God was one and the same. In fact the roads were as many as there were individuals in the world.

Calcutta, 19-8-'47

Harijan, 31-8-1947

NO SUBJECTION

Gandhiji apologized for being 1½ hours late. His party was not at fault. Because of the misdeeds of the majority, who were Hindus in Kanchrapara, the Chief Minister, Shaheed Saheb, he and others had to go to Kanchrapara. Then on return they were stopped by parties who wanted to acclaim their joy. This sort of acclamation, if it was not tempered with restraint, would kill their leaders and then they would deplore the embarrassing affection. He then warned them against being unduly elated by all the fraternization that they were witnessing. Behind it there were pointers like Barrackpore, Kanchrapara and other places he could mention. He would not let them plead excuse or extenuation. There was neither excuse nor extenuation for the majority in Pakistan or Hindustan. If the Hindu majority treasured their religion and duty, they would be just at all cost. They would overlook the limitations or mistakes of the minority who had no one but the majority to look to for justice. He had to listen not without shame and sorrow to the statement that a Muslim friend made to him. He said with a sigh that there was nothing left but a kind of subjection to the Hindu majority, and they might have to suffer in silence the playing of music before mosques whilst they were offering prayers. He would have no such despair on the part of Muslims. The friend, who made the remark, did not realize that he unconsciously implied that the Muslim majority would inflict revenge in Pakistan. He hoped it would never be so either in Hindustan or Pakistan. The proper thing was for each majority to do their duty in all humility, irrespective of what the other majority did in the other State. He suggested, therefore, that until the Prime Ministers of Pakistan and the Union agreed upon another course in both the States, the practice that was followed during the British regime often under compulsion, should be fully and

voluntarily followed in both the States Those who thought that they could haughtily impose their will on the minority were foolish and were vastly mistaken If, therefore, they wanted to consolidate the prevailing goodwill, they would see to it that they acted on the square under all circumstances.

Beliaghata, 19-8-'47

Harijan, 31-8-1947

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CONSOLIDATE GOOD FEELINGS

The prayer was held at Khengrapati, Barrackpore, which was a unique scene in fraternization. More than four lakhs of people of all classes and communities attended the meeting. People failing to go near the venue of the meeting thronged round on the roofs of the adjoining buildings. Hundreds of people were seen even climbing on all the available trees in the area.

THE PUNJAB

Referring to the Punjab, Gandhiji said that he had received letters to the effect that now that there was peace in Calcutta, he should proceed to the Punjab. He said that when God called him, he would most certainly go there. But the two Prime Ministers of the two Dominions had announced that their major preoccupation would be to restore complete peace in the Punjab. They would use every resource at their disposal to establish peace and they would mobilize the public opinion of the Punjab This should be enough for them to hope that things in the Punjab would be as good as in Calcutta. The two Prime Ministers of the Punjab and Master Tara Singh and Master Giani Kartar Singh have said likewise.

Mentioning about the Central Peace Committee, Gandhiji said that it should consolidate the results so far achieved. They had to see that poor Muslims were rehabilitated just as the Hindus had to be rehabilitated in the

areas from which they had been evacuated. Local peace committees should be set up in each *mohalla*, and they must find at least one Hindu and one Muslim of clean heart to work together. These committees must tour the areas under their jurisdiction They should work to create the feeling of friendliness wherever it was lacking. For the purpose of rehabilitation they would have to go into details. Food, shelter and clothing had to be found for the evacuees returning to their homes. It would be a great day indeed for Calcutta if its men and women co-operated in this manner to consolidate their good feelings, which had been so much in evidence during the last few days. In this task all the parties were to co-operate. For, now that all the parties concerned had come to an agreement with regard to the division of India into two Dominions, there was no longer any reason to quarrel and they could join hands in the task of restoring peaceful conditions.

Calcutta, 20-8-'47

Harijan 31-8-1947

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THE BOUNDARY COMMISSION AWARD

Gandhiji started by drawing attention to the joint flags of Pakistan and the Indian Union that were being prominently flown in the audience, and hoped that that pleasing sight would be universal in India. He was glad too that Shaheed Saheb had suggested the revival of the slogan 'Hindu-Muslim *ki Jai*', for it was started during the palmy Khilafat days. He recalled the memory of the old days when a Muslim fellow prisoner used to sing Iqbal's *sare jahanse achchha* (Better than all the world). He used to have it sung equally sweetly by the late Saraladevi Chowdharani. The third time was this evening when he heard it sung with equal sweetness and force. The words of the poem were as sweet as the tune. And among them what could be sweeter than that religion never taught mutual hatred? He hoped and prayed that the beginning

thus auspiciously made would last for ever and that they would never appeal to the sword for the solution of their difficulties. If that was to be so, they would see that no untoward incidents were allowed to happen and flimsy things were not exaggerated so as to make them look like a communal disturbance as had come to his notice even that very day. He pleaded, too, that a strong rehabilitation committee would collect funds enough to give aid where it was required.

He then came to the award of the Umpire in the Boundary Commission. The Umpire was chosen by all the parties to the dispute. It would be unjust and unworthy to impute motives to the Umpire. He was specially invited by the parties to the thankless task. The parties and the public they represented, were loyally to abide by the award. No award that he knew — and he had to do with many arbitrations — completely satisfied the parties. But having made the choice they were bound to carry out the terms of the award. No doubt the best way was for the parties to adjust differences themselves. This royal road was open to them any time as Khwaja Saheb Nazimudin and Dr. Ghosh, the two Premiers, had wisely pointed out.

He knew that the Muslims of Murshidabad and Malda were severely disappointed as the Hindus in Khulna or Gopalganj and the Buddhists in the Chittagong Hill tracts. The latter had gone to East Bengal. He would say to all these parties that it was not only foolish but unbecoming to quarrel over the award. It should not matter that on the 15th, the day was celebrated according to the national division. If he had been consulted he would have advised non-celebration because of the state of uncertainty. But having by mistake flown in the respective places the wrong flag, there should be no hesitation whatsoever in replacing the wrong flag by the right one. But as he had already said, there was no flag wrong in their Dominion for the simple reason that there was no quarrel left between the parties. Both the Dominions had sincerely professed mutual friendship and mutual regard. Therefore, he would advise the parties to fly both the flags of both the Dominions

or be equally respectful whichever flag was flown for the time being

He could not understand the misgivings of the Mussalmans in that Murshidabad and Malda went to West Bengal, nor could he understand the misgivings of the Hindus in Khulna and Gopalganj and of the Buddhists in the Chittagong Hill tracts For, in view of the friendship professed by all the parties, there was not the slightest occasion for entertaining any fear Surely, there would be no compulsion used against the minorities in either part of Bengal The minorities will enjoy equal rights with the majorities.

Park Circus, Calcutta 21-8-'47

Harijan, 31-8-1947

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THE THREE SOUL-STIRRING SLOGANS

Gandhiji referred to the cry of *Allah-o-Akbar* to which some Hindus had objected He held that it was probably a cry than which a greater one had not been produced by the world It was a soul-stirring religious cry which meant, God only was great There was nobility in the meaning. Did it become objectionable because it was Arabic? He admitted that it had in India a questionable association. It often terrified the Hindus because sometimes the Muslims in anger come out of the mosques with that cry on their lips to belabour the Hindus. He confessed that the original had no such association. So far as he knew, the cry had no such association in other parts of the world If, therefore, there was to be a lasting friendship between the two, the Hindus should have no hesitation in uttering the cry together with their Muslim friends. God was known by many names and had many attributes. Rama, Rahim, Krishna, Karim were all names of the one God. *Sat Shri Akal* (God is True) was an equally potent cry. Should a single Muslim or Hindu hesitate to utter it? It meant that God was and nothing else was. The *Ramadhun* had the same virtue.

VANDE MATARAM

He then came to *Vande Mataram*. That was no religious cry. It was a purely political cry. The Congress had to examine it. A reference was made to Gurudev about it. And both the Hindu and the Muslim members of the Congress Working Committee had to come to the conclusion that its opening lines were free from any possible objection, and he pleaded that it should be sung together by all on due occasion. It should never be a chant to insult or offend the Muslims. It was to be remembered that it was the cry that had fired political Bengal. Many Bengalis had given up their lives for political freedom with that cry on their lips. Though, therefore, he felt strongly about *Vande Mataram* as an ode to Mother India, he advised his League friends to refer the matter to the League High Command. He would be surprised if in view of the growing friendliness between the Hindus and the Muslims, the League High Command objected to the prescribed lines of the *Vande Mataram*, the national song, and the national cry of Bengal which sustained her when the rest of India was almost asleep and which was, so far as he was aware, acclaimed by both the Hindus and the Muslims of Bengal. No doubt, every act, as he pointed out the previous evening, must be purely voluntary on the part of either partner. Nothing could be imposed in true friendship.

Woodlands, Alipore, 23-8-'47

Harijan, 31-8-1947

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TRUE FRIENDSHIP

Gandhiji, in his after-prayer speech said that he was receiving verbal complaints and complaints by letters that Shaheed Saheb was not to be trusted and that the Hindus had suffered a lot during the tenure of his Ministry. The complaint was not new. He knew it before they embarked on the joint mission which seemed to be bearing unexpectedly good fruit. It was due to the givers of the warning that he should deal with it. He had not had time even to discuss the matter with his friend. He was in no hurry. His was a trusting nature. He had never lost anything by trusting in good faith. Just as he would expect others to believe his word, unless he was proved untrue, he would likewise believe the word of another. That, he held, was the only honourable way of living among men. He held that man never lost by trusting and that the deceiver ever lost. He would have to answer for his crime before his Maker. He could say that during the few days they were together, he had found no occasion to regret the friendship. This he could tell them, that without his association in the work, he (the speaker) would have been able to do nothing.

THE PUNJAB

He referred next to a deputation he had from the Punjabi friends, who had drawn a terrible picture of what was said to be going on in the Punjab and who on the strength of the information asked him immediately to proceed to the Punjab. They had informed him that before the killing and arson in the Punjab, what had happened in Bengal was nothing. They added that Lahore was almost denuded of the Hindus and the Sikhs as was Amritsar of the Muslims. He hoped that the information was highly coloured. The Punjabis of Calcutta could not know the true situation in the Punjab. Be that as it may, he was sure that if the Hindus, the Sikhs and the Muslims of Calcutta were sincere in their professions of friendship,

they would all write to their fellows in the Punjab and ask them to desist from mutual slaughter. The declarations of the Dominion Premiers could not go in vain. He could not believe that the Punjab leaders would not like any non-Muslims in the Pakistan part and non-Hindus and non-Sikhs in the other part. The logical consequence would be that there would be no *gurudwaras* and *mandirs* in the West Punjab and no mosques in the East Punjab. The picture was too gruesome to be ever true.

NATIONALIST MUSLIMS

Lastly, he came to the Nationalist Muslims who were good enough to see him. They twitted him for giving importance and life to the Muslim League and neglecting the Nationalist Muslims. He could not plead guilty to either charge. The League had gained importance without his or the Congress aid. It became great because, rightly or wrongly, it caught Muslim fancy. The Congress and he had to deal with and recognize the fact that faced them. He was not sorry for having visited Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah eighteen times in Bombay. His friends should also know that he alone could have done nothing without Shaheed Saheb and Osman Saheb and the other League members. There was no question of neglect of the Nationalist Muslims. Nationalism of a man was its own merit. It demanded no recognition. He would advise his friends to remain what they were and exhibit in their every act courage, self-sacrifice and true knowledge born of study, and he was certain that whether they were few or many, they would make their mark on India's future. He would even advise them to join the League and oppose it from within, whenever they found it to be reactionary. Whilst he said all this, he would advise his League friends to approach the Nationalist Muslims in a friendly spirit, whether they remained out or came in. True friendship did not admit of exclusion without the soundest reason.

Woodlands, Alipore, 23-8-'47

Harijan, 31-8-1947

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NATIONALIST MUSLIMS

Gandhiji referred in his post-prayer address to the Nationalist Muslims who had sent him the following note:

"You have expressed the opinion that the Nationalist Muslims should join the League. Then, does it imply that the Congress has now become a communal organization?"

Gandhiji said that he was not guilty of asking them to discard nationalism or of expecting the Congress to be another Hindu Sabha. He hoped that the Congress would never commit suicide by being a communal organization. When the Congress ceased to represent all who were proud to call themselves Indians, whether prince or pauper, Hindus, Muslims or any other, it will have destroyed itself. Therefore, he could not advise a Muslim Congressman to join the League if the condition of joining the League was to discard or suppress his Congress membership. He would vote for those resolutions of the League which were in the nation's interest and against those which were contrary to that interest. He had several Muslims of staunch faith in mind who were neither in the Congress nor in the League. He advised the Nationalist Muslim friends to join the League if they wanted to affect the Muslim masses. Real nationalists needed no encouragement from him or anyone else. Nationalism, like virtue, was its own reward. His one warning was that they should never think of power or bettering their worldly prospects by joining the one or the other organization. A nationalist would ever think of service, never of power or riches. It was, he hoped, clear to the Nationalist Muslims under what conditions he advised them to join the League.

Calcutta, 28-8-'47

Harijan, 7-9-1947

NON-VIOLENCE AND FREE INDIA

There was a small gathering of local students the other day in Gandhiji's camp at Beliaghata. Gandhiji asked them if any of them had taken part in the riots, to which they replied in the negative. Whatever they had done was in self-defence; hence it was no part of the riot.

This gave Gandhiji an opportunity of speaking on some of the vital problems connected with non-violence. He said that mankind had all along tried to justify violence and war in terms of unavoidable self-defence. It was a simple rule that the violence of the aggressor could only be defeated by superior violence of the defender. All over the world, men had thus been caught in a mad race for armaments, and no one yet knew at what point of time the world would be really safe enough for turning the sword into the plough. Mankind, he stated, had not yet mastered the true art of self-defence.

But great teachers, who had practised what they preached, had successfully shown that true defence lay along the path of non-retaliation. It might sound paradoxical; but this is what he meant. Violence always thrived on counter-violence. The aggressor had always a purpose behind his attack; he wanted something to be done, some object to be surrendered by the defender. Now, if the defender steeled his heart and was determined not to surrender even one inch, and at the same time to resist the temptation of matching the violence of the aggressor by violence, the latter could be made to realize in a short while that it would not be paying to punish the other party and his will could not be imposed in that way. This would involve suffering. It was this unalloyed self-suffering which was the truest form of self-defence which knew no surrender.

Someone might ask that if through such non-resistance the defender was likely to lose his life, how could it be called self-defence? Jesus lost his life on the Cross and the

Roman Pilate won Gandhiji did not agree, Jesus had won, as the world's history had abundantly shown. What did it matter if the body was dissolved in the process, so long as by the Christ's act of non-resistance, the forces of good were released in society?

This art of true self-defence by means of which man gained his life by losing it, had been mastered and exemplified in the history of individuals The method had not been perfected for application by large masses of mankind. India's *satyagraha* was a very imperfect experiment in that direction. Hence, during the Hindu-Muslim quarrel it proved a failure on the whole

Two or three days ago, before this meeting with the students, Gandhiji unburdened his heart in this respect to Professor Stuart Nelson, who had come to see him before he left for his college in America Professor Nelson asked him why it was that Indians who had more or less successfully gained Independence through peaceful means, were now unable to check the tide of civil war through the same means? Gandhiji replied that it was indeed a searching question which he must answer. He confessed that it had become clear to him that what he had mistaken for *satyagraha* was not *satyagraha* but passive resistance — a weapon of the weak Indians harboured ill-will and anger against their erstwhile rulers, while they pretended to resist them non-violently Their resistance was, therefore, inspired by violence and not by regard for the man in the British, whom they should convert through *satyagraha*

Now that the British were voluntarily quitting India, apparent non-violence had gone to pieces in a moment. The attitude of violence which we had secretly harboured, in spite of the restraint imposed by the Indian National Congress, now recoiled upon us and made us fly at each other's throats when the question of the distribution of power came up If India could now discover a way of sublimating the force of violence which had taken a communal turn, and turning it into constructive, peaceful ways, whereby differences of interests could be liquidated, it would be a great day indeed

Gandhiji then proceeded to say that it was indeed true that many English friends had warned him that the so-called non-violent non-co-operation of India was not really non-violent. It was the passivity of the weak and not the non-violence of the stout in heart who would never surrender their sense of human unity and brotherhood even in the midst of conflict of interests, who would ever try to convert and not coerce their adversary.

Gandhiji proceeded to say that this was indeed true. He had all along laboured under an illusion. But he was never sorry for it. He realized that if his vision were not covered by that illusion, India would never have reached the point which it had today.

India was now free, and the reality was now clearly revealed to him. Now that the burden of subjection had been lifted, all the forces of good had to be marshalled in one great effort to build a country which forsook the accustomed method of violence in order to settle human conflicts whether it was between two States or between two sections of the same people. He had yet the faith that India would rise to the occasion and prove to the world that the birth of two new States would be, not a menace, but a blessing to the rest of mankind. It was the duty of Free India to perfect the instrument of non-violence for dissolving collective conflicts, if its freedom was going to be really worth while.

Calcutta, 20-8-'47

Harijan, 31-8-1947

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FRIENDSHIP

Gandhiji in a written message addressed the following to his prayer audience:

I am sorry that today being my silence day I cannot speak to you. I have, therefore, to write out what I wish to say to you. I have been speaking every day about the vital duty of the Hindus in Western Bengal, who are the majority community, towards their Muslim brethren. This duty they will perform truly, if they are able to forget the past. We know how all over the world enemies have become fast friends. The example of the Britons and the Boers, who fought one another strenuously, becoming friends we all know. There is much greater reason why the Hindus and the Muslims should become friends. We cannot do that if we are not great enough to shed all malice.

SYLHET

This evening I wish to devote to Sylhet. I have received frantic telegrams from Sylhet about the serious riots that have broken out there. The cause is not known. I am sorry that I am unable to go just now to Sylhet, nor am I vain enough to think that my presence would immediately abate the mob fury. I know, too, that one should not without peremptory cause abandon his present duty, however humble it may be, in favour of one which may appear to be higher. To adopt the Salvation Army language, we are all soldiers of God to fight the battle of right against wrong, by means which are strictly non-violent and truthful. As His soldiers, ours is " not to reason why ", ours is " but to do and die ". Though, therefore, I am unable to respond to the urgent call of the sufferers of Sylhet, I can appeal, not in vain, to the authorities in East Bengal in general and Sylhet in particular, to put forth their best effort on behalf of the sufferers and deal sternly with the recalcitrants. Now that there is peace between the Hindus and the Mussalmans, I am sure the authorities do not relish these ugly outbreaks.

It would be wrong and misleading to underestimate the trouble by calling it the work of *goondas*. The minorities must be made to realize that they are as much valued citizens of the State they live in, as the majority. Let the Premiers of the two divisions of Bengal meet often enough and jointly devise means to preserve peace in the two States and to find enough healthy food and clothing for the inhabitants and enough work for the masses in East and West Bengal. When the masses, Hindu and Muslim, see their chiefs acting together and working together honestly, courageously and without intermission, the masses living in the two States will take the cue from the leaders and act accordingly. To the sufferers I would advise bravely to face the future and never to give way to panic. Such disturbances do happen in the lifetime of a people. Manliness demands there should be no weakness shown in facing them. Weakness aggravates the mischief, courage abates it

Calcutta, 26-8-'47

Harijan, 7-9-1947

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A PLEA FOR UNDERSTANDING

Gandhiji referred to a letter from a Muslim who described himself as a *sufi*. He had sent this communication through Shaheed Saheb. The purport was that in his opinion there was nothing common between Hinduism and Islam and that the two could not be as if they were one. For, he argued that the Hindus did not believe in one and only God but held cows and goats as superior to man and believed in high and low, whereas Islam was a brotherhood in which there was no hierarchy and which believed in one God as Allah. In this there was a caricature of Hinduism. There was no Hindu who put animals, the cow and the goat, before man. But he submitted that if anyone like him believed himself to be the lowest in God's creation, there was nothing wrong. It was a sign of true humility. He held that every Hindu believed in one and only God. He admitted

that excrescences had grown round Hinduism and that its votaries had not always been true to Hinduism undefiled. It was, therefore, up to an impartial man to understand Hinduism as its votaries like him understood it, just as it was the duty of an impartial Hindu to understand Islam as a good Muslim understood it. That, he held, was the safest rule of interpretation for any faith. Then it would be found that all great religions sprang from the same source and the fundamentals were common to them all.

Calcutta, 26-8-'47

Harijan, 7-9-1947

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ROLE OF THE MINORITIES

Gandhiji answered the question whether other minorities would have recognition as religious minorities had. Thus, whether Bengalis of Bihar, though a minority, would have recognition? This was a ticklish question. In his opinion an Indian was a citizen of India enjoying equal rights in every part of India. Therefore, a Bengali had every right in Bihar as a Bihari. But he wished to emphasize that a Bengali must merge in the Bihari. He must never be guilty of exploiting Biharis or feeling a stranger or behaving as a stranger in Bihar. If the speaker brought his Gujarat manners to Bengal and imposed himself on the province, he would expect the Bengalis to expel him. He could not then claim the rights of an Indian as against Bengalis. All rights flowed from duties previously and duly performed. One thing he must stress that in both the Dominions of India, the use of force for the assertion of rights must be eschewed altogether if they were to make any progress. Thus, neither the Bengalis nor the Biharis could assert themselves at the point of the sword, nor could the Boundary Commission Award similarly be changed. It was the first lesson to be learnt in a democratic independent India. Their independence was yet only a fortnight old. Liberty never meant the licence to do anything at will. Independece meant

voluntary restraint and discipline, voluntary acceptance of the rule of law in the making of which the whole of India had its hand through its elected representatives. The only force at the disposal of democracy was that of public opinion. *Satyagraha*, civil disobedience and fasts had nothing in common with the use of force, veiled or open. But even these had restricted use in democracy. They could not even think of them whilst the Governments were settling down and the communal distemper was still stalking from one province to another.

Calcutta, 30-8-'47

Harijan, 7-9-1947

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QUESTION BOX

Q. You have often stated while you were in Noakhali that failure of your mission there, would be the failure of your own *ahimsa* and not of *ahimsa* itself. In the light of what has been achieved here (Calcutta), do you think that your *ahimsa* has succeeded or is on the way to success?

A. It is a correct statement that has been attributed to me. *Ahimsa* is always infallible. When, therefore, it appears to have failed, the failure is due to the inaptitude of the votary. I have never felt that my *ahimsa* has failed in Noakhali, nor can it be said that it has succeeded. It is on its trial. And when I talk of my *ahimsa* I do not think of it as limited to myself. It must include all my co-workers in Noakhali. Success or failure would, therefore, be attributable to the aggregate of the activities of my co-workers and myself.

What I have said about Noakhali applies to Calcutta. It is too early to state that the application of *ahimsa* to the communal problem in this great city has succeeded beyond doubt. As I have already remarked, it is wrong to contend that the establishment of friendliness between the two communities was a miracle. Circumstances were ready

and Shaheed Saheb and I appeared on the scene to take the credit for what has happened. Anyway, it is premature to predicate anything about the application. The first thing naturally is that we, the two partners, have one mind and are believers in *ahimsa*. That being assured, I would say that if we know the science and its application, it is bound to succeed.

Calcutta, 31-8-'47

Harijan, 7-9-1947

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PRESS STATEMENT

I regret to have to report to you that last night some young men brought to the compound a bandaged man. He was said to have been attacked by some Muslims. The Prime Minister had him examined and the report was that he had no marks of stabbing, which he was said to have received. The seriousness of the injury, however, is not the chief point. What I want to emphasize is that these young men tried to become judges and executioners.

This was about 10 p. m. Calcutta time. They began to shout at the top of their voices. My sleep was disturbed but I tried to lie quiet, not knowing what was happening. I heard the window panes being smashed. I had lying on either side of me two very brave girls. They would not sleep but without my knowledge, for my eyes were closed, they went among the small crowd and tried to pacify them. Thank God, the crowd did not do any harm to them. The old Muslim lady in the house endearingly called Bi Amma and a young Muslim stood near my matting, I suppose, to protect me from harm.

The noise continued to swell. Some had entered the central hall, and began to knock open the many doors. I felt that I must get up and face the angry crowd. I stood at the threshold of one of the doors. Friendly faces surrounded me and would not let me move forward. My vow of silence admitted of my breaking it on such occasions

and I broke it and began to appeal to the angry young men to be quiet. I asked the Bengali grand-daughter-in-law to translate my few words into Bengali. All to no purpose. Their ears were closed against reason.

I clasped my hands in the Hindu fashion nothing doing. More window panes began to crack. The friendly ones in the crowd tried to pacify the crowd. There were police officers. Be it said to their credit that they did not try to exercise authority. They too clasped their hands in appeal. A *lathi* blow missed me and everybody round me. A brick aimed at me hurt a Muslim friend standing by. The two girls would not leave me and held on to me to the last. Meanwhile the Police Superintendent and his officers came in. They too did not use force. They appealed to me to retire. Then there was a chance of their stilling the young men. After a time the crowd melted.

What happened outside the compound gate I do not know except that the police had to use tear gas to disperse the crowd. Meanwhile, Dr. P. C. Ghosh, Annada Babu and Dr. Nripen walked in and after some discussion left. Happily, Shaheed Saheb had gone home to prepare for tomorrow's proposed departure for Noakhali. In view of the above ugly incident, which no one could tell where it would lead to, I could not think of leaving Calcutta for Noakhali.

What is the lesson of the incident? It is clear to me that if India is to retain her dearly-won independence all men and women must completely forget lynch law. What was attempted was an indifferent imitation of it. If Muslims misbehaved, the complainants could, if they would not go to the Mininsters, certainly go to me or my friend, Shaheed Saheb. The same thing applies to Muslim complainants. There is no way of keeping the peace in Calcutta or elsewhere if the elementary rule of civilized society is not observed. Let them not think of the savagery of the Punjab or outside India. The recognition of the golden rule of never taking the law into one's own hands has no exceptions.

My Secretary, Dev Prakash, in Patna, wires: 'Public agitated Punjab happenings. Feel statement necessary

impressing duty of public and the Press.' Shri Dev Prakash is never unduly agitated There must be some unguarded word by the Press. If that is so, at this time when we are sitting on a powder magazine, the Fourth Estate has to be extra-wise and reticent. Unscrupulousness will act as a lighted match I hope every editor and reporter will realize his duty to the full.

One thing I must mention. I have an urgent message calling me to the Punjab. I hear all kinds of rumours about recrudescence of trouble in Calcutta. I hope they are exaggerated, if not quite baseless The citizens of Calcutta have to reassure me that there would be nothing wrong in Calcutta and that peace, once restored, will not be broken

From the very first day of peace, that is August 14th last, I have been saying that the peace might only be a temporary lull There was no miracle. Will the foreboding prove true and will Calcutta again lapse into the law of the jungle? Let us hope not, let us pray to the Almighty that He will touch our hearts and ward off the recurrence of insanity

Since the foregoing was written, i e, about 4 o'clock, during silence, I have come to know fairly well the details of what has happened in various parts of the city Some of the places which were safe till yesterday have suddenly become unsafe. Several deaths have taken place. I saw two bodies of very poor Muslims. I saw also some wretched-looking Muslims being carted away to a place of safety I quite see that last night's incidents so fully described above, pale into insignificance before this flare-up. Nothing that I may do in the way of going about in the open conflagration could possibly arrest it

I have told the friends who saw me in the evening what their duty is. What part am I to play in order to stop it? The Sikhs and the Hindus must not forget what the East Punjab has done during these few days. Now the Muslims in the West Punjab have begun the mad career. It is said that the Sikhs and the Hindus are enraged over the Punjab happenings

I have adverted above to an urgent call for me to go to the Punjab. But now that the Calcutta bubble seems to have burst, with what face can I go to the Punjab? The weapon which has hitherto proved infallible for me is fasting. To put in an appearance before an yelling crowd does not always work. It certainly did not last night. What my word in person cannot do, my fast may. It may touch the hearts of all the warring elements in the Punjab if it does in Calcutta. I therefore, begin fasting from 8-15 tonight to end only if and when sanity returns to Calcutta. I shall, as usual permit myself to add salt and soda bicarb to the water I may wish to drink during the fast.

If the people of Calcutta wish me to proceed to the Punjab and help the people there, they have to enable me to break the fast as early as may be.

Calcutta, 1-9-'47

Harijan, 14-9-1947

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IN CALCUTTA

Although Calcutta was apparently in an ecstasy of communal amity, Gandhiji's mind, uncannily sensitive to the hidden lie in the soul, was anything but restful. After some hesitation he decided to go to Noakhali in spite of the alarming news which continued to pour from the Punjab. "Shall I start tomorrow morning or the day after tomorrow?" he asked those around him and the latter day was fixed for departure. That evening, He who keeps watch when humanity's vision fails, gave the warning signal. "My resolve to go to Noakhali has collapsed after this evening's happenings," he said that night. "I cannot go to Noakhali or for that matter anywhere when Calcutta is in flames. Today's incident to me is a sign and a warning from God. Tell the people of Noakhali that if my colleagues for any reason cannot be there, they will find me, surely, in their midst."

And then casually he hinted that if the conflagration spread, he would have no alternative but to fast. "Have I not often said that there is yet another fast in store for me?" The next day was his day of silence. Ugly news continued to pour in Several deputations waited on him in the course of the day to consult him as to what they should do to quench the fire "Go in the midst of the rioters and prevent them from indulging in madness or get killed in the attempt. But do not come back alive to report failure The situation calls for sacrifice on the part of top rankers So far the unknown, nameless rank and file alone have been the victims of the holocaust with the one exception of the late Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi. That is not enough"

Even as he uttered these words, he was cogitating within himself, as to where he came into the picture which he was presenting to them For he added, "Of course, I cannot do today what I have told them to do. I will not be permitted to. I saw that yesterday. Everybody will protect me from harm if I went in the midst of the maddened crowd. I may drop down from sheer physical exhaustion—that is nothing. It won't do for a soldier to be exhausted in the midst of battle." But inaction in a crisis is not in Gandhiji's nature. When a dear old friend saw him that night his mind was already made up. "You don't expect me to approve or your proposed step," remarked the friend with his usual affectionate banter as he perused Gandhiji's statement setting forth his reasons for going on a fast which the latter had kept ready against his arrival Together they took stock of the situation thrashing out the question in the minutest detail.

"Can you fast against the *goondas*?" argued the friend.

"The conflagration has been caused not by the *goondas* but by those who have *become goondas*. It is we who make *goondas*. Without our sympathy and passive support, the *goondas* would have no legs to stand upon. I want to touch the hearts of those who are behind the *goondas*."

"But must you launch your fast at this stage?' finally argued the friend. "Why not wait and watch a little?"

To this Gandhiji's reply was that the fast had to be now or never. "It would be too late afterwards. The minority Muslims cannot be left in a perilous state. My fast has to be preventive if it is to be any good."

"I know I shall be able to tackle the Punjab too if I can control Calcutta," he continued. "But if I falter now, the conflagration may spread, and soon, I can see clearly, two or three Powers will be upon us and thus will end our short-lived dream of independence."

"But supposing you die, the conflagration would be worse," argued the friend.

"At least I won't be there to witness it. I shall have done my bit. More is not given a man to do," replied Gandhiji.

The friend capitulated.

"But why add sour lemon juice to water, if you are to put yourself entirely in God's hands?" he (the friend) permitted himself to think aloud as he read that part of the statement where Gandhiji had allowed himself that latitude.

"You are right," quickly replied Gandhiji. "I allowed it out of my weakness. It jarred on me even as I wrote it. A *satyagrahi* must hope to survive his conditional fast by a timely fulfilment of the condition."

And so the portion referring to the addition of sour lime juice to water to be taken during the fast was scored out and the unadulterated venture of faith commenced.

This was on Monday night. Two days later a prominent member of the Calcutta Muslim League waited on him to plead with him to give up the fast. "Your very presence in our midst is an asset to us. It is the guarantee of our safety. Do not deprive us of it," he added.

"My presence did not check the rowdies the other day. My word seemed to have lost all efficacy so far as they were concerned. My fast will now be broken only when the conflagration ends and the pristine peace of the last fifteen days returns. If the Muslims really love me and regard me as an asset, they can demonstrate their faith by refusing to give way to the instinct of revenge and retaliation even if the whole of Calcutta goes mad. In the meantime, my ordeal must continue."

The friend retired with a heavy heart. Added Gandhiji after he had left, "Let the evil-doers desist from evil, not to save my life, but as a result of a true heart change. Let all understand that a make-believe peace cannot satisfy me. I do not want a temporary lull to be followed by a worse conflagration. In that event I shall have to go on an *unconditional* fast unto death."

Then the miracle happened. As the leaden hours crept by and drop by drop strength ebbed out of the frail little man on the fasting bed, it caused a deep churning up in the hearts of all concerned, bringing the hidden lie to the surface. People came to Gandhiji and confessed to him what they would not have uttered to any living ear. Hindus and Muslims combined in an all-out effort to save the precious life that was being offered as ransom for disrupted peace between brother and brother. Mixed processions, consisting of all communities, issued forth and paraded through the affected parts of the city to restore communal harmony. A group of about fifty people, credited with the power to control the turbulent elements in the city, saw Gandhiji on the 4th instant and gave an undertaking that they would immediately bring the trouble-makers under check. They told Gandhiji that they had already traced and put under restraint the ringleaders who had organized the rowdyism in his camp on Sunday last, including the person who had hurled the stick that had narrowly missed hitting him. They would all surrender themselves to him and take whatever punishment might be meted out to them. Would not Gandhiji on the strength

of that assurance now break his fast, so that they might be able to go to work unburdened by the oppression of the fast? they asked. If not, what was his condition for breaking the fast? In reply Gandhiji told them that he would break his fast only when they could assure him that there would never again be recrudescence of communal madness in the city even though the whole of West Bengal and, for that matter, India might go forth into a blaze and the Muslims themselves would come and tell him that they now felt safe and secure and, therefore, he need not further prolong his fast. He did not expect, he proceeded to explain, to be able to control all the *goondas* in the city, though he would love to, as he had not the requisite degree of purity, detachment and steadfastness of mind. But if he could not even make them purge themselves of the communal virus, he would feel that life was not worth living and he would not care to prolong it. They had referred to the oppression of his fast. He could not understand that. Why should they have a feeling of oppression if what they had told him came right from their hearts? If a single step is taken under pressure of the fast, not from conviction, it would cause oppression: but there should be no oppression if there was complete co-operation between the head and the heart. "The function of my fast is to purify, to release our energies by overcoming our inertia and mental sluggishness, not to paralyse us or to render us inactive."

"My fast isolates the forces of evil; the moment they are isolated they die, for evil by itself has no legs to stand upon. I expect you therefore," he concluded, "to work with even greater vigour under the instigation of my fast. not to feel its oppression."

The deputation went back realizing that it was not fair to ask him to give up his fast unless they could deliver the goods. Later in the afternoon a number of those who had led the disturbances in his camp on Sunday night, came to him and made their surrender with what to all intents appeared to be genuine contrition.

That evening, another deputation of prominent citizens of Calcutta representing all communities, including Shaheed Saheb, Shri N. C. Chatterjee and Sardar Niranjan Singh Talib, waited on him. They told him that they had been to all the affected parts of the city and there was quiet everywhere. They had every reason to hope that there would be no recrudescence of trouble which was not communal really but was the work of the *goondas*. They requested him to break his fast. Gandhiji mildly rebuked them for the habit of taking refuge behind moral alibis by blaming it all on the *goondas*. It was a dangerous expedient. He showed by citing personal experiences of the days of his boyhood how it is the cowardice or passive sympathy of the average citizen or the "man with a stake" that gives the so-called *goondas* the power to do mischief. " My fast should make you more vigilant, more truthful, more careful and precise in your speech," he remarked.

Taking up next their request to break his fast, he asked them two straight questions. Could they in all sincerity assure him that there would never be any more recrudescence of communal madness in Calcutta? Could they say that there was a genuine change of heart among the citizens of Calcutta so that they would no longer foster or tolerate communal frenzy? They should let him continue his fast if they could not give him that guarantee for, in the event of the present communal outbreak being followed by another, he would have to undertake an irrevocable fast unto death. " But supposing there is another communal outbreak in spite of your assurances, since you are not omniscient," he resumed, "would you give your word of honour that you would in that event suffer to the uttermost before a hair of the minority community is injured, that you would die in the attempt to put out the conflagration but not return alive to report failure? And I want this from you in writing." If they could give that guarantee, he would break his fast. " But mind you," he added, " My blood will be upon your head if you say one thing and mean another; rather than thoughtlesssly hurry, let me prolong my fast a little longer. It

will not hurt me. When a man fasts it is not the gallons of water he drinks that sustains him, but God."

He spoke with deep passion A pin-drop silence followed. Shaheed Saheb broke the ice Gandhiji had said that he would break the fast when Calcutta would return to sanity. That condition had been fulfilled Was he not imposing fresh conditions by asking them to sign that declaration? To this "legal argument" Gandhiji replied that there was no fresh condition imposed All that was already implied in the original terms of the fast. "What I have spoken now is only a home truth to make you know what is what If there is complete accord between your conviction and feeling, there should be no difficulty in signing that declaration It is the acid test of your sincerity and courage of conviction If, however, you sign it merely to keep me alive, you will be encompassing my death "

Everybody realized the solemnity of the warning Rajaji and Acharya Kripalani, who had arrived during the latter part of the discussion, proposed that they might leave Gandhiji alone a little while and retire to the adjoining room to confer together Shaheed Saheb endorsed the suggestion They were about to retire when an appeal signed by about 40 representatives of the Hindus and Mussalmans, residents of Narkel Danga, Sitlatala, Manicktola, and Kankirgathi areas was brought in. In that appeal, the signatories swore that they would not allow any untoward event or incident in that locality which was the worst affected during the previous riots and earnestly prayed to Gandhiji to break his fast. "It may also be reported," continued the signatories, "that no incident occurred in this mixed area since 14th of August 1947 " "So our effort has not been in vain," remarked Shaheed Saheb, as he read out the appeal. "Yes, the leaven is at work," Gandhiji added.

Shaheed Saheb resumed, "Now that even the Muslims have joined in the appeal, won't you break your fast? This shows that they have fully accepted your peace mission although they are the aggrieved party in the present riots. It is all the more strange because at one time they looked

upon you as their arch enemy. But their hearts have been so touched by the services you have rendered them that today they acclaim you as their friend and helper."

It was a graceful thing, gracefully uttered. Rajaji, not to be beaten in a tournament of chivalry, quickly added, "If I may vary the language, I would say that he is safer today in the hands of the Muslims than in those of the Hindus."

Gandhiji followed with interest this contest of chivalry and picked out for his comments only the portion of Shaheed Saheb's remarks in which he had referred to the Muslims as the aggrieved party He did not like the "aggrieved party" language "Do not think of Muslims as the aggrieved party," he remarked. "The essence of our present peace mission is that we are to forget the past. I do not want the Muslims to feel that in West Bengal they are the underdog Unless we can forget the distinction, we will not have done solid work."

They then all retired to the next room and Gandhiji who had an attack of weakness and nausea during the latter part of the talk was left alone to rest.

In the deliberations that took place in the adjoining room Shaheed Saheb was cautious and circumspect, which only showed his sincerity and sense of responsibility. Acharya Kripalani was cynical and full of sardonic humour as ever, Rajaji, tactful and persuasive and full of practical wisdom, concealing his emotion under a mask of ratiocination The discussion was brief but unhurried. Rajaji dictated the draft of the pledge which was signed by Shri N. C. Chatterjee first, then by Shri Deven Mukerjee followed by Shaheed Saheb Suhrawardy, Shri R. K. Jaidka, and Sardar Niranjan Singh Talib to be followed later by others. A car load of hand grenades and arms had in the meantime arrived to be surrendered to Gandhiji as a token of repentance on the part of those who had taken part in the savagery of reprisals and counter-reprisals. Without any loss of time the signatories then returned to Gandhiji with the document

"But sir, is it any good my signing this document?" remarked Shaheed Saheb to Gandhiji, "I may any time be called to Pakistan and then what happens to my pledge?"

"You must in that event have confidence that those whom you leave behind will deliver the goods," replied Gandhiji. "Moreover, you can come back"

"I have no desire to hoodwink you and I never will do so deliberately," remarked Shaheed Saheb in reply, explaining his extreme cautiousness, which Gandhiji greatly appreciated.

"Well, I will break this fast now," said Gandhiji at last, "and leave for the Punjab tomorrow. I shall now go there with far greater strength and confidence than I could have three days back."

Shaheed Saheb interposed, "You cannot leave tomorrow Your presence is necessary here at least for a couple of days yet to consolidate the peace." Others supported him They did not tell him what was uppermost in their minds besides, that they were deeply concerned at his undertaking a railway journey in his present state of health. The unruly crowds in Bihar and all along the line would tear him to pieces in their blind adoration.

So, Saturday was provisionally fixed for his departure

Dr. Dinshah Mehta had in the meantime hurried away to get orange juice ready. Before breaking the fast Gandhiji according to his usual practice, had prayer recited.

"When life is dry and parched up,
Descend Thou in a shower of mercy" . . . .

followed by *Ramadhun* filled the air.

Calcutta and Dacca, 5/6-9-'47

Harijan, 14-9-1947

THE FAST

Gandhiji began his fast for allaying the communal frenzy and restoration of sanity in Calcutta at 8-15 p. m. on the 1st of September 1947, and broke it at 9-15 p. m. on the 4th instant with a glass of sweet lime juice which Mr. Suhrawardy served to him.

It is necessary to go back into the history of the fast, in order to prepare the background of the story as to how and under what conditions it was finally broken.

From the 14th of August till the 31st, peace reigned. That evening there was a demonstration against Gandhiji's peace mission. On the following morning communal frenzy, in a very intense form, once more swept over several parts of the city. There were already indications in the morning that Gandhiji might fast; but the final decision was taken at eleven in the evening when, according to him, friends had failed to show any satisfactory reason why he should not take the contemplated step. The last sweet drink was taken at 7 p. m. He made the provisional decision at 8-15 p. m.

Any way, the fast was taken and perhaps partly on account of it and partly also because the common citizen, who had tasted peace after one year's life in the trenches, did not want the recrudescence, the riots rapidly cooled down, so that on the 4th the Government as well as the public could come and report to Gandhiji that not one incident had taken place during the last twentyfour hours. Parties after parties came to Gandhiji either with reports or with promises, and in spite of his weak state, he insisted on speaking in his feeble voice to every batch of interviewers. Dr. Sunil Bose, the celebrated physician and brother of Netaji, came to Gandhiji with a request that he must take plenty of rest and not talk at all. But Gandhiji told him he could not exclude relevant talk. Such necessary loss of energy was inevitable. He was certainly desirous of living, but not

at the cost of work that duty demanded. "I can't interrupt the work," he said to Dr. Bose, "which has made me fast and which makes me live. If my life ebbs away in the process, I would feel happy."

This was at half past eleven in the morning. A few minutes afterwards a batch of twentyseven friends belonging to Central Calcutta came to see him. During the communal disturbance of the last year, resistance groups had grown up here and there, and the present party represented such a group in Central Calcutta which had become the focus of the recrudescence on Monday. They had come to Gandhiji with the promise that henceforth there would be no more incidents in their part of the city and he should, therefore, break his fast now, otherwise all of them were prepared to go on a sympathetic fast with him. Gandhiji argued long with them, and what he said in substance was this. The present occasion was not one in which there was scope for a sympathetic fast. Hindus and Mussalmans had fought for one whole year, at the end of which the major parties had agreed that India should be divided into two States. Both had Hindu and Muslim subjects. It was now time for every one to create the sense of common citizenship, to rebuild the land so that men might taste the fruits of freedom. To this end all should work. Gandhiji said that if the friends had come to him only for the sake of saving his life, it was nothing.

Referring to the Poona Fast which ended with the desired amendment of the Communal Award, it was suggested by some that though the amendment was not to their desire, they accepted it for the sake of saving his life. This was a wholly wrong approach. Such fasts were intended to stir the conscience and remove mental sluggishness. Truth could not be sacrificed even for the sake of saving a life, however precious it was. Gandhiji, therefore, warned the present company that they should create real Hindu-Muslim unity by educating the people in a sense of common citizenship of the State, where every single man enjoyed perfect equality of rights which flowed from duty performed. If they worked with this aim in

view, and succeeded after a few days' effort in making the Muslims in Calcutta feel safe where they now did not, it would be time for him to break the fast. Gandhiji was clearly of opinion that although his work was now confined to Calcutta, yet his one aim with respect to the Hindu-Muslim question was that the solution would be complete only when the minority, whether in the Indian Union or in Pakistan felt perfectly safe even if they were in the minority of one. There would be no favoured and no depressed community anywhere. All should forget their religious affiliations. He was working to this end. He was working in such a manner that the majority community in each State should go forward and create the necessary conditions of freedom.

Some one asked him: Was it possible that his fast would have any effect on the anti-social elements in society? Today, i. e., during the present recrudescence, it was this element which had gained the upper hand. Could their hearts be converted by Gandhiji's crucifixion? Gandhiji's answer was very clear and emphatic. He said that *goondas* were there because we had made them so. During one year of past anarchy, it was understandable how these elements in society had gained respectability. But the war between Pakistanis and those for Undivided India had ended. It was time for peace-loving citizens to assert themselves and isolate *goondaism*. Non-violent non-co-operation was a universal remedy. Good was self-existent, evil was not. It was like a parasite living on and round good. It would die of itself when the support that good gave was withdrawn. The heart of the anti-social elements may or may not be changed; it would be enough if they were made to feel that the better elements of society were asserting themselves in the interests of peace and in the interests of normality.

To the interviewers from Central Calcutta Gandhiji's advice, therefore, was that they should desist from a sympathetic fast, go forth among the oppressed in each quarter, assure them that they were safe, and rebuild life so that safety would be a permanent feature of the new State of India. He would personally have loved to move

about from quarter to quarter in Calcutta in order to place his views before the various bodies, but his physical condition would not permit it. If others worked, how could he rest? Yet he was bound to make his contribution. He felt that it should be in the shape of a fast.

The friends from Central Calcutta were followed by others. There came a deputation from the Bar Association of Calcutta with the promise that its members would do all that lay within their power to restore peace. Friends from Belliaghata, who a few weeks back had looked upon Gandhiji's peace mission with suspicion, were electrified by the fast. They appreciated now the full significance of the mission and, with all their energy, set about the task of rehabilitating the deserted Muslim *bustees*. Pressmen who had met the evacuees who had returned home testified to the sincerity and solicitude with which those who had driven them away a few weeks back, now treated them. All this was good news for Gandhiji, but yet he did not reach the point when the fast could be broken.

Towards evening, Sjt. N. C. Chatterjee, President of the Hindu Mahasabha, Debendra Nath Mookerjee, its Secretary, Sirdar Niranjan Singh Talib, Editor of the *Desh Darpan*, Dr. G. Jilani of the Muslim League, Dr. Abdur Rashid Chowdhury and Mohibur Rahaman of the Pakistan Seamens' Union came accompanied by some other friends to report on the quiet and with their request to Gandhiji to break his fast. Rajaji, the Governor of West Bengal, Acharya Kirpalani, Dr. P. C. Ghosh and Mr. H. S. Suhrawardy were also there. They had a long discussion with Gandhiji which left him rather worn out. Gandhiji heard what they said and did most of the talking. This is what he had to say.

He said that ever since the 14th of August, although he had relished the fraternization between Hindus and Mussalmans, yet he looked on the ebullition of emotion with caution and reserve. If the feeling was due entirely to friendship new found, to the sense of brotherhood through common citizenship newly attained, there would

be more signs of it e. g , in intensified efforts for rehabilitation. That sign was lacking The recrudescence had then come. Therefore, Gandhiji felt he must fast. God had at least given him the capacity to work and die for communal peace If there were anti-social elements in society, where a rowdy or a *goonda* plundered or killed a man whether Hindu or Muslim, his fast might not affect him. He knew his limitations. He fasted for the restoration of communal harmony The sanity that had been in evidence for the last twentyfour hours was not enough for him If the present company was going to assure him that it was a sincere affair and was going to be permanent he would expect them to give him something in writing. It must state that supposing Hindu-Muslim riots broke out once more in Calcutta, they should assure him that they would give their lives in the attempt to quell the riots. If they agreed, that would be enough. They must so work from tomorrow that real peace and common citizenship were created as a feature of Calcutta life, no matter what happened elsewhere. Communal peace should be their prime occupation. Their other occupations or avocations must henceforth occupy a second place.

There was another matter, but that was a condition which automatically attached itself to the situation. As in Bihar, as in Noakhali, so also in Calcutta, he wanted to tell the friends who were making themselves responsible for the break of his fast, that if communal frenzy broke out in Calcutta again, he might have to go on an *irrevocable* fast. The present fast was meant to activize the better, peace-loving and wise elements in society, to rescue them from mental sluggishness and make goodness active.

Realizing their responsibility, the friends retired to another room. Free and frank discussions took place between them. Suspicions were freely expressed, fears that the signatories might not rise to the heights demanded of them were discussed in an atmosphere of frankness, and finally came the decision to sign the document with all its implications

Gandhiji felt glad. He took the signatories at their word, prayed that God might give them the courage and strength to implement their promise in daily life from the following morning, and with that prayer on his lips he broke his fast last night. A heavy responsibility now lies upon the people of Bengal who have to implement the promise made sacred in Gandhiji's presence. May we have the requisite wisdom, strength and perseverance to see it through.

Calcutta, 5-9-'47

Harijan, 14-9-1947

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IMPLICATIONS OF FASTING

A friend writes:

> "It seems to me that to put your life in jeopardy has become the final and natural remedy for you. Be that as it may, I cannot help thinking that the remedy is akin to keeping a patient alive by administering injections or oxygen to him."

The above reflection proceeds from pain due to affection. Nevertheless, I must say that the writer has not given much thought to his criticism. Many other well-wishers probably entertain the same hasty opinion. Hence this public discussion.

The critic's simile is inapplicable. Administration of injections or oxygen are outward remedies, calculated merely to prolong bodily existence. Therefore, they are properly described as of momentary value. Nothing will be lost if those remedies were not applied. A physical body cannot be made immortal. All that medical skill can do is to prolong the existence for a while. This temporary prolongation confers no lasting benefit.

On the other hand, fasting is never intended to affect another's body. It must affect his heart. Hence it is related to the soul. And in this sense the effect, such as it is, cannot be described as temporary. It is of a permanent

character. Whether the fasting person is spiritually fit for the task and whether he has properly applied the remedy is a different matter, irrelevant to the present purpose.

Of all the fasts of which I have recollection, of one only it can be said that though there was no fault in the conception, it was alloyed with external remedy, with contra indication. Had this mistake not been made, I have no doubt that its natural, beneficial result would have flown from it as in the others. I refer to the fast I had undertaken in Rajkot against the late Thakore Saheb. I saw my mistake, retraced my step and averted a dangerous crisis. The last was in Calcutta in the current month of September. Admittedly, the result was as it should have been. Having reference to the spirit, I regard it as permanent. Time alone would show whether the effect was of a lasting character or not. It must depend upon the purity of the fasting person and the accuracy of his perception. That enquiry would be irrelevant here. Moreover, the fasting man is not competent to undertake the enquiry. It can only be done by a properly equipped impartial person and that too after my death.

New Delhi, 25-9-'47

(Adapted from the original in Gujarati)

Harijan, 5-10-1947

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TWO PRESS STATEMENTS

I

MAN PROPOSES, GOD DISPOSES

"Man proposes, God disposes" has come true often enough in my lifetime as it must have done in many others'. I knew nothing about the sad state of things in Delhi when I left Calcutta on Sunday last. On reaching Delhi, I have been listening the whole day long to the tale of woe that is Delhi today. I saw several Muslim friends who recited their pathetic story. I heard enough to warn me that I must not leave Delhi for the Punjab until Delhi regained its former self.

I must do my little bit to calm the heated atmosphere. I must apply the old formula "Do or Die" to the Capital of India. I am glad to be able to say that the residents of Delhi do not want the senseless destruction that is going on. I am prepared to understand the anger of the refugees whom fate has driven from West Punjab. But anger is short madness. It can only make matters worse in every way. Retaliation is no remedy. It makes the original disease much worse. I, therefore, ask all those who are engaged in the senseless murders, arson and loot to stay their hands.

The Central Government, the ablest, the most courageous and the most self-sacrificing team that the Union could produce, have not been in the saddle for even a month after the declaration of Indian independence. It is criminal and suicidal not to give them a chance to set the house in order. I am fully aware of the shortage of food. Mob rule is dislocating everything making distribution of foodstuffs all but impossible. May God restore peace to distracted Delhi.

I would close with the hope that Calcutta will fulfil the promise made on my departure and which sustains me in the midst of the surrounding madness.

New Delhi, 9-9-'47

II

Sanitation in Refugee Camps

During the day Rajkumari Amrit Kaur took me and Dr. Sushila Nayyar to the Irwin Hospital which devotes its energies only to the treatment of injured persons, irrespective of caste or creed. Among the patients was a child, hardly five years old, who had received a bullet wound. The doctors and nurses were working under great stress. The majority of patients were Muslims, as the Hindus and Sikhs were transferred to other hospitals.

I understand from Rajkumari that it was wellnigh impossible to supply refugee camps with *bhangis* for attending

to the cleaning of the latrines and general sanitation Any infectious disease like cholera might break out. I have no doubt whatsoever that the refugees should look after sanitation, including latrine cleaning in their own camps and should do some useful work with the approval of the camp superintendent There can be no exception to this rule, save for persons who are incapable of physical exertion. All camps should be models of cleanliness, simplicity and industry

During the day I had a visit from the Pakistan High Commissioner, who is an enthusiastic believer in communal peace and friendship. I had a visit too from Sikh friends twice during the day They were sore about the *kirpan* order of the Government of India They have promised to give me their requirement in writing before I speak to the Government. They further said that allegations made against them were highly coloured. They said they could have no quarrel with the Muslims or any other communities living in the Union They were anxious to be law-abiding citizens of the State.

New Delhi, 11-9-'47

Harijan, 21-9-1947

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THE REFUGEE PROBLEM

Gandhiji said in part in his prayer discourse that the cause of the change in his habitation this time was the fact that the Bhangi Colony he occupied was being used for the refugees whose need was infinitely greater than his. Was it not to their shame as a nation that there should be any refugee problem at all ? Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah, Liaquat Saheb and other Pakistan leaders had proclaimed in common with Pandit Nehru and Sardar Patel that the minorities would be treated in the respective Dominions with the same consideration as the majorities. Was this said by each to tickle the world with sweet words or was it meant to show the world that we meant what we had

said and that we would die in the attempt to redeem the word? If so, he asked why were the Hindus and Sikhs and the proud Amils and Bhaibunds driven to leave Pakistan which was their home? What had happened in Quetta, Nawabshah and Karachi? The tales that one heard and read from Western Pakistan were heart-breaking. It would not do for either party to plead helplessness and say that it was all the work of *goondas*. Each Dominion was bound to take full responsibility for the acts of those who were living in either Dominion No longer did they work willy-nilly under the crushing weight of imperialism But it could never mean that there was now to be no rule of law if they were to face the world squarely in the face Were the Union Ministers to declare their bankruptcy and shamelessly own to the world that the people of Delhi or the refugees would not cheerfully and voluntarily obey the rule of law? He would like the Ministers to break in the attempt to wean the people from their madness rather than bend Gandhiji's voice was very low throughout but he went on to give an account of his tour through Delhi which looked like a city of the dead He incidentally mentioned that even in the house he lived in, there was neither fruit nor vegetables to be had Was it not a shame that no vegetables were to be had in Subzimandi because some Muslims had opened fire with a machine-gun and otherwise? In his wanderings he heard complaints that the refugees were without rations. What was issued was not worth eating If the fault was of the administration, it was equally of the refugees who had paralysed even necessary activities Why did they not realize that they harmed themselves? If they trusted the Government to secure redress for all their legitimate grievances and acted as law-abiding citizens, he knew, as they should know, that most of their difficulties would be over

Harijan, 21-9-1947

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ANGER IS SHORT MADNESS

Gandhiji began his prayer address this evening by expressing his infinite sorrow at the disturbing news that was coming through from the Frontier Province. He knew that province well. For weeks he had toured there and lived under the roof of the Khan Brothers in perfect safety. It pained him beyond measure, therefore, to have been shown a telegram during the day from Shri Girdhari Lal Puri, an ex-Minister, saying that he and his wife, both good workers, should be rescued at once. Such news made him hang his head in shame and it was up to the Government today in power and the Qaid-e-Azam to see to it that all the Hindus and the Sikhs were as safe there as the Muslims.

While deploring the sad happenings in the N. W. F. P., however, Gandhiji impressed on the audience that anger was not going to lead them anywhere. Anger bred revenge and the spirit of revenge was today responsible for all the horrible happenings there and elsewhere. What good will it to do the Muslims to avenge the happenings in Delhi, or for the Sikhs and the Hindus to avenge cruelties on their co-religionists in the Frontier and West Punjab? If a man or a group of men went mad, should everyone follow suit? Gandhiji warned the Hindus and the Sikhs that by killing and loot and arson they were destroying their own religions. He claimed to be a student of religion and he knew that no religion taught madness. Islam was no exception. He implored them all to stop their insane actions at once. Let not future generations say that you lost the sweet bread of freedom because you could not digest it. Remember that unless you stop this madness the name of India will be mud in the eyes of the world.

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FORGET THE PAST

Gandhiji talked of his visit to the beautiful Jumma Masjid — second to no mosque in the world. It pained him to see Muslim men and women there in deep distress. He tried to comfort the sufferers by saying that death had to come to all. It was no good weeping for the dead. It would not bring back the dead. It was up to everyone to save the future of this great land. Many Muslim friends came to see him daily. He advised them to state their position frankly and fully. He was sorry that the lives of Muslims should be in danger in Delhi or any part of India. It was a big tragedy. Gandhiji implored them to listen to an old man who had been through many experiences during his long life. He was absolutely convinced that to return evil for evil led nowhere. To return good for good was no virtue. The true way was to return good for evil. Many Muslim friends would like to help. But it was impossible t, quisition their active services in Delhi today.

In soul-stirring words Gandhiji appealed to the Sikhs, the Hindus and the Muslims to forget the past, not to dwell on their sufferings but to extend the right hand of fellowship to each other and determine to live at peace with each other. Muslims must be proud to belong to the Indian Union, they must salute the Tri-Colour. If they were loyal to their religion no Hindu could be their enemy. Similarly the Hindus and the Sikhs must welcome peace-loving Muslims in their midst. He had been told that the Muslims here were in possession of arms. They should surrender these at once and the Government here should take no action against them. The Hindus and the Sikhs must do likewise. He had also been told that the West Punjab Government was arming the Muslims. If this was true, it was wholly wrong and would in the long run lead to their own destruction. It should cease forthwith. No one anywhere should have unlicensed arms.

Gandhiji begged of them all to bring about peace quickly in Delhi so that he might be able to proceed to both East and West Punjab He had only one mission and his message was the same for everyone. Let it be said of them that the inhabitants of Delhi had gone mad temporarily but that sanity had now returned Let them allow their Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister to hold up their heads again Today they were bowed in shame and sorrow. They had a priceless heritage. Let them remember that it was a joint one It was their duty to guard it and keep it unsullied.

TRUST THE GOVERNMENT

Gandhiji referred to the days in 1915 when he lived under the late Principal Rudra's roof He was as staunch a Christian as he was a son of India It was he who brought Gandhiji in contact with the late Hakim Saheb and Dr. Ansari, both of whom looked upon Hindus, Muslims and other Indians with even affection and regard. He knew that thousands of poor Hindus received free treatment from Hakim Saheb. He was without doubt the loved *Sardar* of all Delhi. Were these men to be classed as unworthy? It was a matter of shame that Dr. Ansari's daughter Zohra and her husband Dr Shaukatullah Khan should have to abandon their home and live in a hotel for fear of the Hindus and the Sikhs He was free to confess that he would lose all interest in life if Muslims who had produced such men could not live with perfect safety in the Union. It was suggested to him that the Muslims were all fifth columnists in the Union. He declined to believe in that sweeping condemnation There were four and a half crores of Muslims in the Union If they were all so bad, they would dig the grave of Islam The Qaid-e-Azam had asked the Muslims of the Union to be loyal to it. Let people trust their Government to deal with traitors. They must not take the law into their own hands.

GOD IS THE REFUGE OF ALL

Gandhiji then reported to the prayer audience that he was able to visit only one refugee camp and that in the

Old Fort. It contained many Muslim refugees. As his car passed through the crowd, many more refugees seemed to be coming. Though the crowd was large and the commandant was absent, Gandhiji insisted on saying a few words of cheer to the refugees. The Muslim workers requested the crowd to sit down and give a patient hearing to the speaker. They sat down and only those on the fringe kept standing. There was anger in their looks. The Muslim volunteers reasoned those into silence who were insistent on ejaculations. He had not much to say. He rested on Dewan Chamanlal's shoulders and asked him to repeat in his loud voice the few sentences he pronounced in his feeble voice. He urged them to be calm and shed anger. He said that God was the refuge of all, not man, however highly placed he may be. God would make right what man spoiled. On his part he promised not to rest till peace again ruled Delhi as it did before many men of both the communities had gone mad.

DUTY OF THE TWO DOMINIONS

During day he had seen many Muslim and Hindu friends. It was the same sad tale of woes whether recited by Hindu sufferers or Muslim. It was a shame for both. He claimed to be the equal servant of all. He wished they could unitedly make up their minds that transfer of population was a fatal snare. It meant nothing but greater misery. The solution lay in both living in peace and friendship in their own original homes. It would be madness to make the present estrangement into permanent enmity. It was the bounden duty of each Dominion to guarantee full protection to their minorities. Let the two thrash the question out among themselves or if need be fight it out and make of themselves the laughing stock of the world.

Gandhiji missed in the Qaid-e-Azam's fervent appeal for funds for the Muslim evacuees from the Union, any reference to the misdeeds of the Muslims in Pakistan. He pleaded for a frank and bold acknowledgment by the respective Governments of the misdeeds of their majorities.

New Delhi, 14-9-'47

Harijan, 21-9-1947

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DUTY OF THE GOVERNMENTS AND THE PEOPLE

Gandhiji in his post-prayer speech said that his thoughts turned to the cause of the dislocation on a scale which arrested the progress of the nation. Why were so many Hindus and Sikhs coming away from the Western Pakistan provinces? Was it a crime to be a Hindu or a Sikh? Or were they coming away out of sheer cussedness? Or was it a punishment for what their confreres had done in the East? Then he thought of the Union. Why were the Muslims of Delhi frightened into leaving their homes? Had both the Governments broken down? Why did the populace ignore its Government? The Muslims had unlicensed arms. There was the Government to see to it that those arms were taken away from the unlawful possessors. If they were incompetent, they were to give place to better men. The Government was what they, the people, made it. It was wholly wrong and undemocratic for individuals to take the law into their own hands. This lawlessness boded no good for India whether it was rampant in Pakistan or the Union. He was in Delhi to 'do or die.' He had no desire to witness the mad fratricide, this national suicide, their betrayal of their own Government. May God help them to regain their lost sanity!

Harijan, 21-9-1947

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TO THE MUSLIMS IN THE UNION

[On the 19th of this month Gandhiji addressed a small gathering of Muslims in the Daryaganj Mosque. A report of the meeting and the address is given here.]

NOTHING IN PANIC

Some Muslim friends had asked Gandhiji to visit the Muslim localities in the city so that those inhabitants who were still there might not leave their homes out of panic. Gandhiji readily agreed and began by visiting the Daryaganj area this evening. The deserted appearance of the houses and shops, a few of which had been looted, oppressed him. About a hundred Muslims had gathered in the house of Asaf Ali Saheb. They told Gandhiji that they wanted to live in India as loyal citizens of the Union, but they wanted an assurance of safety, particularly from the partisan behaviour of the police. Some of them were in tears when they narrated their plight. They did not approve of what the Muslims in Pakistan had done. But innocent people should not be made to pay for the guilt of others.

RELY ON GOD

Addressing them Gandhiji said that they had to be brave and declare firmly that they would not leave their homes whatever might happen. They should look to none but God for their safety and protection. He was there to do whatever he could. He had pledged himself to do or die in Noakhali, Bihar, Calcutta and now in Delhi. He would not ask those who had left their homes to come back till there was real peace, and the Hindus, the Sikhs and the Muslims agreed to live as brothers without the help of the police and the military.

GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION

He was the friend and servant of the Muslims as of the Hindus and others. He would not rest till every Muslim in the Union, who wished to live as a loyal citizen of the

Union, was back in his home living in peace and security, and the Hindus and the Sikhs returned likewise to their homes. He had served the Muslims for a lifetime in South Africa and in India. He could never forget the unity of the Khilafat days. It did not last, but it demonstrated the possibilities of lasting friendship between the Hindus and the Muslims. That was what he lived for and worked for. He was on his way to the Punjab to see that all the Hindus and the Sikhs who had been turned out of Pakistan should be able to return to their homes and live there in safety and honour. But on his way he was held up at Delhi and he would not leave it till real peace returned to the capital. Even if he was the only one to say it, he would never advise the Muslims to leave their homes. If they lived as law-abiding, honest and loyal citizens of India, no one could touch them. He was not the Government, but he had influence with those in the Government. He had had long talks with them. They did not believe that in India the Muslims had no place or that if the Muslims wished to stay there they had to do so as slaves of the Hindus. Some people had said that Sardar Patel encouraged the idea of Muslims going away to Pakistan. The Sardar was indignant at the suggestion. But he told him (Gandhiji) that he had reasons to suspect that the vast majority of the Muslims in India were not loyal to India. For such people it was better to go to Pakistan. But the Sardar did not let his suspicion colour his actions. Gandhiji was convinced that for the Muslims who wished to be citizens of the Indian Union, loyalty to the Union must come before everything else and they should be prepared to fight against the whole world for their country. Those who wished to go to Pakistan were free to do so. Only he did not wish a single Muslim to leave the Union out of fear of the Hindus or the Sikhs. Muslims in Delhi had assured him by their written declaration that they were loyal citizens of the Union. He would believe their word as he wished others to believe his. As such it was the duty of the Government to protect them. He for one would not like to live if he could not achieve that. The wrong had to be

undone wherever it was. Abducted women had to be returned, forcible conversions considered null and void. The Hindus and Sikhs of Pakistan and the Muslims of East Punjab had to be reinstalled in their own homes. In Pakistan and the Union they should produce conditions that not even a little girl, whatever her religion, should feel insecure. He was glad to have read the statement of Khaliquzzaman Saheb and of the Muslims of Muzaffarnagar. But before he proceeded to Pakistan he had to help to quench the fire in Delhi. If India and Pakistan were to be perpetual enemies and go to war against each other, it would ruin both the Dominions and their hard-won freedom would be soon lost. He did not wish to live to see that day.

Maulana Ahmad Said appealed to the Muslims to see that unlicensed arms were surrendered. Gandhiji was taken to some *purdanashin* ladies before leaving the place. They said that their hopes were fixed on him. He said that they should rely on none but God. He was trying to do his best.

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HEART SEARCHING

During the night as I heard what should have been the soothing sound of gentle life-giving rain, my mind went out to the thousands of refugees lying about in the open camps in Delhi. I was sleeping snugly in a verandah protecting me on all sides. But for the cruel hand of man against his brother, these thousands of men, women and children would not be shelterless and in many cases foodless. In some places they could not but be in knee-deep water. Was it all inevitable? The answer from within was an emphatic No. Was this the first fruit of freedom, just a month old baby? These thoughts have haunted me throughout these last twenty hours. My silence has been a blessing. It has made me enquire within. Have the citizens of Delhi gone mad? Have they no humanity left in them? Have love of the country and its freedom no appeal for

them ? I must be pardoned for putting the first blame on the Hindus and the Sikhs. Could they not be men enough to stem the tide of hatred ? I would urge the Muslims of Delhi to shed all fear, trust God and discover all the arms in their possession which the Hindus and the Sikhs fear they have. Not that the former too do not have any. The question is one of degree. Either the minority rely upon God and His creature man to do the right thing or rely upon their fire-arms to defend themselves against those whom they must not trust.

TRUST YOUR GOVERNMENT

My advice is precise and firm. Its soundness is manifest. Trust your Government to defend every citizen against wrong doers, however well-armed they may be. Further, trust it to demand and get damages for every member of the minority wrongfully dispossessed. All that neither Government can do is to resurrect the dead. The people of Delhi will make it difficult to demand justice from the Pakistan Government. Those who seek justice must do justice, must have clean hands. Let the Hindus and the Sikhs take the right step and invite the Muslims who have been driven out of their homes to return. If they can take this courageous step worthy from every point of view, they immediately reduce the refugee problem to its simplest terms. They will command recognition from Pakistan, nay from the whole world. They will save Delhi and India from disgrace and ruin. For me, transfer of millions of Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims is unthinkable. It is wrong. The wrong of Pakistan will be undone by the right of a resolute non-transfer of population. I hope I shall have the courage to stand by it, even though mine may be the solitary voice in its favour.

Ganesh Lines, Delhi, 17-9-'47

Harijan. 28-9-1947

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TO MEMBERS OF THE R. S. S.

ONLY SACRIFICE NOT ENOUGH

Addressing about 500 members of the Rashtriya Sevak Sangha at the Bhangi Colony on the 16th Gandhiji said that he had visited the Rashtriya Sevak Sangha Camp years ago at Wardha, when the founder Shri Hedgewar was alive. The late Shri Jamnalal Bajaj had taken him to the camp and he (Gandhiji) had been very well impressed by their discipline, complete absence of untouchability and rigorous simplicity. Since then the Sangha had grown. Gandhiji was convinced that any organization which was inspired by the ideal of service and self-sacrifice was bound to grow in strength. But in order to be truly useful, self-sacrifice had to be combined with purity of motive and true knowledge. Sacrifice without these two had been known to prove ruinous to society.

SANATANI HINDU

The prayer that was recited at the beginning was in praise of Mother India, Hindu culture and Hindu religion. He claimed to be a *Sanatani* Hindu. He took the root meaning of the word *sanatana*. No one knew accurately the origin of the word Hindu. The name was given to us and we had characteristically adopted it. Hinduism had absorbed the best of all the faiths of the world and in that sense it was not an exclusive religion. Hence it could have no quarrel with Islam or its followers as unfortunately was the case today. When the poison of untouchability entered Hinduism, the decline began. One thing was certain, and he had been proclaiming it from the house tops, that if untouchability lived, Hinduism must die. Similarly, if the Hindus felt that in India there was no place for any one else except Hindus and if non-Hindus, especially Muslims, wished to live here, they had to live as the slaves of the Hindus, they would kill Hinduism. Similarly if Pakistan believed that in Pakistan only the Muslims had a rightful

place and the non-Muslims had to live there on sufferance and as their slaves, it would be the death-knell of Islam in India.

GOOD FOR EVIL

It was an unfortunate fact that India had been divided into two parts. If one part went mad and did ugly deeds, was the other part to follow suit? There was no gain in returning evil for evil. Religion taught us to return good for evil.

THE SANGHA'S CLAIM

He had seen their *Guruji* (Director) a few days ago. He had mentioned to him the various complaints about the Sangha that he had received in Calcutta and Delhi. The *Guruji* had assured him that though he could not vouchsafe for the correct behaviour of every member of the Sangha, the policy of the Sangha was purely service of the Hindus and Hinduism, and that too not at the cost of any one else. The Sangha did not believe in aggression. It did not believe in *ahimsa*. It taught the art of self-defence. It never taught retaliation.

Today the ship of India was passing through troubled waters. The leaders in charge of the Government were the best that India possessed. Some people were dissatisfied with them. He would ask them to produce better men if they could and he would advise the old guard to hand over the reins to their betters After all the Sardar was an old man and Pandit Jawaharlal, though not old in years, looked old and haggard under the burden he was carrying. They were doing their utmost to serve the people, but they could only act according to their light. If the vast bulk of the Hindus wanted to go in a particular direction, even though it might be wrong, no one could prevent them from doing so. But even a single individual had the right to raise his voice against it and give them warning. That is what Gandhiji was doing. He was told that he was a friend of the Muslims and an enemy of Hindus and Sikhs. It was true that he was a friend of the Muslims, as he was of the Parsis and others. In this respect he was

the same today as he had been since the age of twelve. But those who called him an enemy of Hindus and Sikhs did not know him. He could be enemy or none, much less of Hindus and Sikhs.

RESULT OF WRONG DOING

If Pakistan persisted in wrong doing, there was bound to be war between India and Pakistan. If he had his way, he would have no military; no police even. But all this was tall talk. He was not the Government. Why did not Pakistan plead with the Hindus and the Sikhs and ask them not to leave their homes and ensure their safety in every way? Why could not they in the Indian Union ensure the safety of every Muslim?

Today both the parties appeared to have gone crazy. The result could be nothing but destruction and misery.

DEEDS AND WORDS

The Sangha was a well-organized, well-disciplined body. Its strength could be used in the interests of India or against it. He did not know whether there was any truth in the allegations made against the Sangha. It was for the Sangha to show by their uniform behaviour that the allegations were baseless.

WHO CAN PUNISH?

At the conclusion of the speech, Gandhiji invited questions. One person asked if Hinduism permitted killing of an evil-doer. Gandhiji replied that it did and it did not. One evil-doer could not punish another. To punish was the function of the Government, not that of the public.

Harijan, 28-9-1947

CURB ANGER

Turning to the burning question of the day Gandhiji said that he was prepared to understand their resentment and consequent impatience. But if they deserved their independence, they would learn to subdue their resentment and trust their Government to do the best. He was not presenting to them his own way of non-violence, much as he would like to, as he knew that he was out of court today. He suggested to them the adoption of the path that all democratic nations had adopted. In democracy the individual will was governed and limited by the social will which was the State, which was governed by and for democracy. If every individual took the law into his own hands there was no State, it became anarchy, i. e., absence of social law or State. That way lay destruction of liberty. Therefore, they should subdue their anger and let the State secure justice. In his opinion, if they permitted the State to do its duty, he had no doubt that every Hindu and every Sikh refugee would return to his home with honour and dignity. He was free to admit that they had suffered much in Pakistan, many homes had become desolate, lives had been lost, girls had been abducted, there had been forcible conversions. If they had self-control and did not allow their anger to get the better of their reason, girls would be returned, forcible conversions would be null and void and their properties returned to them. But this could not be done if they interfered with the even course of justice and thus spoiled their own case. They could not expect these things if they wanted their Muslim brothers and sisters to be driven out of India. He regarded any such thing as a monstrous proposition. They could not have the cake and eat it too. Moreover whilst it was true that the minorities, i. e., the Hindus and the Sikhs, were badly treated in Pakistan, it was equally true that East Punjab has also treated its minority, the Muslims, likewise. Guilt

could not be weighed in golden scales. He had no data to measure the guilt on either side. It was surely sufficient to know that both the sides were guilty. The universal way to have proper adjustment was for both the States to make a frank and full confession of guilt on either side and come to terms, failing agreement to resort to arbitration in the usual manner. The other and rude way was that of war. The thought repelled him. But there was no escape from it if there was neither agreement nor arbitration. Meanwhile, he hoped that wiser counsels would prevail and that Muslims who had not of their own free will chosen to migrate to Pakistan, should be asked by their neighbours to return to their homes with a perfect feeling of safety. This could not come about with the aid of the military. It could be done by return to sanity by the people concerned. He had made his final choice. He had no desire to live to see the ruin of India through fratricide. His incessant prayer was that God would remove him before any such calamity descended upon their fair land. And he asked the audience to join in the prayer.

Birla House, New Delhi, 18-9-'47

Harijan, 28-9-1947

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KEEP YOUR HANDS CLEAN

After his return from Daryaganj, Gandhiji proceeded to the small prayer gathering in the Birla House compound. He told them that if there was a single individual who objected to the recitation from the *Quran*, he would not hold his prayer in public. The object of the prayer was not to hurt anyone's feelings. At the same time he could not omit any part of the prayers, which he had selected after careful thought and consideration. He asked them to indicate by raising their hands whether they wanted him to hold the prayers or not. Not a single hand was raised against. Therefore, the prayer was held as usual with this change that recitation from

the *Quran* came at the beginning of the prayers instead of towards the end.

Gandhiji told them of his meeting with the Muslim friends at Daryaganj He could not rest in peace till every Muslim and Hindu and Sikh in India and Pakistan was rehabilitated in his own home What was to become of the Jumma Masjid, the biggest mosque in India, or of the Nankana Saheb or Punja Saheb if no Muslim could live in Delhi or India, and no Sikh lived in Pakistan ? Were these sacred places to be turned to other purposes ? Never. (Other forcible illustrations are omitted to save space.)

Gandhiji said that he was proceeding to the Punjab in order to make the Muslims undo the wrong that they were said to have perpetrated there But he could not hope for success unless he could secure justice for the Muslims in Delhi. They had lived in Delhi for generations. If the Hindus and the Muslims of Delhi would begin to live as brothers once again, he would proceed to the Punjab and do or die in Pakistan. The condition for success was that those in the Union should keep their hands clean Hinduism was like an ocean. The ocean never became unclean. The same should be true of the Union. It was natural for the Hindus and the Sikhs to feel resentment at what they had suffered. But they should leave it to their Government to secure justice for them

DUTY OF THE MILITARY AND THE POLICE

Partisan behaviour was attributed to the military and the police. It was sad if it was true. If the custodians of law and order were to become partial and participants in crime, how could law and order be maintained ? He appealed to the military and the police to be above prejudice and corruption. They were to be faithful servants of the people irrespective of caste and creed.

New Delhi, 19-9-'47

Harijan, 28-9-1947

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BE BRAVE

Gandhiji went out at 5 p. m. and visited the Hindu pocket in Kucha Tarachand surrounded on all sides by Muslims, as the spokesman said before a crowded meeting of the Hindus. He recited in highly exaggerated language the woes of the Hindus and ended by saying that the whole of the locality should be denuded of all the Muslims who were mostly Leaguers and who had carried on a wild agitation against the Hindus. He maintained that the Hindus should do exactly as the Muslims in Pakistan were reported to be doing.

Gandhiji in reply said that he could not associate himself with the contention that India should drive out all its Muslim population to Pakistan as the Muslims of Pakistan were driving out all non-Muslims. Gandhiji said that two wrongs could not make one right. He therefore, invited the audience to listen to his advice and act bravely and fearlessly and be proud to live in the midst of a large Muslim population He then went to the *Anathalaya* in Pataudi House and advised the responsible parties to bring back the orphans who had been removed out of fright He was told that there was a shower of bullets from adjoining Muslim houses killing one child and wounding another. This was about the 7th of September. Maulana Ahmed Said and other Muslim friends who were accompanying him said that the neighbouring Muslims would see to it that no harm befell the inmates The next place was near the house of Shri Bhargava who was the sole Hindu living in the midst of Muslims It was packed with Muslims. Gandhiji hoped that the Muslims would fulfil his dream as a lad of twelve that the Hindus, the Muslims and the other Indians would live together as brothers and friends. These were the facts brought out by Gandhiji at the prayer meeting before the small audience in Birla House garden when he asked them to join him in the

prayer that God would fulfil that dream or take him away and save him from witnessing the awful tragedy of one part of India being inhabited by the Muslims only and the other part by the Hindus

Birla House, New Delhi, 20-9-'47

Harijan, 28-9-1947

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RELY ON GOD ALONE

Today the Hindus and the Sikhs were frightening the Muslims in Delhi, said Gandhiji Those who wished to be free from fear themselves should not instil fear into the hearts of others.

Bannu in the Frontier Province was a city where he had lived in the house of a Muslim friend Some persons from Bannu had come and complained that unless they were evacuated soon from there they might all be killed and ruined The Muslim friend was as staunch as ever but he was unable to protect them single-handed, try as he might Other Muslims even from the border were coming daily and filling them with dread and they asked to be rescued in time Gandhiji said that he had not the power. He would pass on their story to Panditji and the Sardar. The friends asked that their own military should come to their aid Gandhiji, however, said to them, as he had so often said before, "No one can protect you other than God No man can protect another" None of them could say whether he was going to be alive the next day or even a minute after God alone was, is and ever shall be. Therefore, it was their duty to call upon Him and rely on Him. In no case, however, was any one at any time to return evil for evil.

Gandhiji went on to say that the fear of the Hindus and the Sikhs in Pakistan was a very sad reflection on the Government there and contrary to the assurance of protection given to the minorities by the Qaid-e-Azam himself. It was the bounden duty of the majority in Pakistan,

as of the majority in the Union, to protect the small minority whose honour and life and property were in their hands.

It baffled him as to why those who had lived as brothers, those whose blood had mingled in the massacre of Jalianwala Bagh, should today be enemies. As long as he had breath in his body he would say that this should not be. In the agony of his heart he cried daily, hourly, to God to bring peace. If peace did not come, he would pray to God to take him.

He had heard that convoys of Hindus and Sikhs were pouring in from West Punjab into the East—57 miles in length. It made his brain reel to think how this could be. Such a happening was unparalleled in the history of the world and it made him, as it should make all of them, hang their heads in shame This was no time to ask who had done more wrong and who less It was time to put a stop to this madness

Some said to him that every Muslim in the Indian Union was loyal to Pakistan and not to India. He would deny the charge. Muslim after Muslim had come and said the contrary to him. In any event, the majority here need not be frightened of the minority. After all, four and a half crores of Muslims in India were spread over the length and breadth of the land. The Muslims in the villages were harmless and poor, as in Sevagram. They had no concern with Pakistan. Why turn them out? As for traitors, if there were any, they could always be dealt with by the law Traitors were always shot, as happened in the case even of Mr. Amery's son, though Gandhiji admitted that that was not his law. Others said that some Muslim officials were being kept here in order to keep all Muslims in India loyal to Pakistan. Some said that the Muslims looked upon all the Hindus as *Kafirs*. Learned Muslims had told him that this was wholly incorrect. The Hindus were as much followers of inspired scriptures as the Muslims, the Christians and the Jews. In any event, he appealed to the Hindus and the Sikhs to shed all fear of the Muslims from their hearts, to be kind to them, to invite them to return

and settle in their old homes and to guarantee them protection from hurt. He was sure that in this way they would get the desired response from the Muslims of Pakistan, even from the border tribes across the Frontier. This was the way to peace and life for India. To drive every Muslim from India and to drive every Hindu and Sikh from Pakistan would mean war and eternal ruin for the country. If such a suicidal policy was followed in both the States, it would spell the ruin of Islam and Hinduism in Pakistan and the Union Good alone could beget good. Love bred love. As for revenge, it behoved man to leave the evil-doer in God's hands. He knew no other way.

Harijan, 28-9-1947

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HEALTHY TOLERANCE

Though I believe that I was wise in having yielded to a solitary objector and refrained from holding public prayer, it is not improper to examine the incident a little more fully. The prayer was public only in the sense that no member of the public was debarred from attending it. It was on private premises. Propriety required that those only should attend who believed whole-heartedly in the prayer including verses from the *Quran*. Indeed the rule should be applicable to prayer held even on public grounds. A prayer meeting is not a debating assembly. It is possible to conceive prayer meetings of many communities on the same plot of land. Decency requires that those who are opposed to particular prayers would abstain from attending the meetings they object to. The reverse would make any meeting impossible without disturbance. Freedom of worship, even of public speech, would become a farce if interference became the order of the day. In decent society the exercise of this elementary right should not need the protection of the bayonet. It should command universal acceptance.

I have noticed with great joy at the annual sessions of the Congress on its exhibition grounds several meetings

held by religious sects or political parties holding their gatherings, expressing divergent and often diametrically opposite views without molestation and without any assistance from the police. There have been departures from this fundamental rule and they have excited public condemnation. Where is that spirit of healthy toleration gone now? Is it because having gained our political freedom, we are testing it by abusing it? Let us hope it is only a passing phase in the nation's life

Let me not be told, as I have often been, that it is all due to the misdeeds of the Muslim League Assuming the truth of the remark, is our toleration made of such poor stuff that it must yield under some uncommon strain? Decency and toleration to be of value must be capable of standing the severest strain. If they cannot, it will be a sad day for India Let us not make it easy for our critics (we have many) to say that we did not deserve liberty Many arguments come to my mind in answer to such critics. But they give poor comfort It hurts my pride as a lover of India, of the teeming millions, that our tolerant and combined culture should not be self-evident.

If India fails, Asia dies. It has been aptly called the nursery of many blended cultures and civilizations. Let India be and remain the hope of all the exploited races of the earth, whether in Asia, Africa or in any part of the world

This brings me to the bugbear of unlicensed, hidden arms Some have undoubtedly been found. Driblets have been coming to me voluntarily Let them be unearthed by all means. So far as I know, the haul made up-to-date is not much to speak of for Delhi Hidden arms used to be possessed even during the British regime. No one worried then. By all means explode all the hidden magazines, when you have made sure beyond doubt that they are hidden in a particular place. Let there be no repetition of much cry and little wool. Nor let us apply one code to the British and set up another for ourselves when we profess to be politically free. Let us not call a dog a bad name in order to beat him. After all is said and done, to be

worthy of the liberty we have won after sixty years of toil, let us bravely face all the difficulties that confront us, however hard they may be. Facing them squarely will make us fitter and nobler.

Surely, it is cowardly on the part of the majority to kill or banish the minority for fear that they will all be traitors. Scrupulous regard for the rights of minorities well becomes a majority. Disregard of them makes of a majority a laughing stock. Robust faith in oneself and brave trust of the opponent, so-called or real, is the best safeguard. Therefore, I plead with all the earnestness at my command that all the Hindus, the Sikhs and the Muslims in Delhi should meet together in friendly embrace and set a noble example to the rest of India, shall I say, to the world? Delhi should forget what other parts of India have done or are doing. Then only will it claim the proud privilege of having broken the vicious circle of private revenge and retaliation. They belong, if they ever do, to the State, never to the citizens as individuals.

Birla House, New Delhi, 23-9-'47

Harijan 5-10-1947

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DIE BRAVELY

Recalling the objection to the recitation from the *Quran*, he said that they were entitled to resent the treatment of the Hindus and the Sikhs in Pakistan. But that should not make them resent recitation from *Quran*. The *Gita*, the *Quran*, the Bible, the *Granth Saheb* and the *Zend Avasta* contained gems of wisdom although the followers might belie their teachings.

Turning to the day's work, Gandhiji said that he had seen a deputation of the Hindus and the Sikhs from Rawalpindi as also from Dera Gazi Khan. The Hindus and the Sikhs had made Rawalpindi what it was. They were all well off there. Today they were refugees without shelter. It hurt him deeply. Who had made modern Lahore as it

was if not the Hindus and the Sikhs? They were exiles from their own lands. Similarly, the Muslims had not a little to do with the making of Delhi. Thus all communities had worked together to make India what it was on the 15th of August last. The speaker had no doubt that the Pakistan authorities should assure full protection to the remaining Hindus and Sikhs in every part of Pakistan. It was equally the duty of the two governments to demand such protection for their minorities. He was told that there were still left over 18,000 Hindus and Sikhs in Rawalpindi and 30,000 in the Wah Camp. He would repeat his advice that they should all be prepared to die to a man rather than leave their homes. The art of dying bravely and with honour did not need any special training, save a living faith in God. Then there would be no abductions and no forcible conversions. He knew that they were anxious that he should go to the Punjab at the earliest moment. He wanted to do so. But if he failed in Delhi, it was impossible for him to succeed in Pakistan. For, he wanted to go to all the parts and provinces of Pakistan under the protection of no escort save God. He would go as a friend of the Muslims as of others. His life would be at their disposal. He hoped that he would cheerfully die at the hands of anyone who chose to take his life. Then he would have done as he advised all to do.

The refugees had also asked him for houses. He told them that there was the land and the canopy of the sky above their heads. They should be content with such accommodation rather than inhabit the houses forcibly vacated by the Muslims. If they would all work, they could within a day put up necessary shelters. What was more, they could then assuage the anger of the refugees and bring about an atmosphere that would enable him to go to the Punjab at once.

Birla House, New Delhi, 24-9-'47

Harijan, 5-10-1947

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GIVE THE GOVERNMENTS A CHANCE

Today the spirit of revenge and retaliation filled the atmosphere. The Hindus and the Sikhs in Delhi did not want the Muslims there. If they had been driven away from Pakistan, why should the Muslims have a place in the Indian Union, or in Delhi at least, they argued. It was the Muslim League that had thrown out the gauntlet. Gandhiji agreed that the Muslim League had been wrong to have raised the slogan of '*larke lenge Pakistan*' (We will fight and take Pakistan). Gandhiji had never believed that such a thing could happen. In fact they could not have succeeded in partitioning the country through force. If the Congress and the British had not agreed, there would be no Pakistan today. Nobody could now go back upon it. The Muslims of Pakistan were entitled to it. Let them for a moment see how they had got independence. The principal fighter was the Congress. The weapon was passive resistance. The British had yielded to India's passive resistance and retired. To undo Pakistan by force would be to undo Swaraj. India had two governments. It was the duty of the citizens to allow the two governments to fight it out among themselves. The daily toll of lives was a criminal waste which did nobody any good and did infinite harm.

If the people became lawless and fought among themselves, they would prove that they were unable to digest freedom. If one Dominion behaved correctly all along the line, it will force the other to do likewise. It will have the whole world behind it. Surely, they would not like to rewrite Congress history and make the Union a Hindu State in which people of other faiths had no place. He hoped that they would not stultify themselves.

Birla House, New Delhi, 24-9-'47

Harijan, 5-10-1947

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DUTY OF THE UNION GOVERNMENT

Someone passed a slip to Gandhiji before the prayers started. In this he had stated that the Pakistan Government was driving away the Hindus and the Sikhs from Pakistan. Gandhiji advised the Indian Union Government to let the Muslims stay in the Indian Union as equal citizens. How could the Union Government bear this double burden?

Answering this question after prayers Gandhiji said that he did not propose that the Indian Union Government should ignore the ill treatment of the Hindus and the Sikhs in Pakistan. They were bound to do their utmost to save them. But the answer was undoubtedly not that they were to drive away the Muslims and copy the reputed methods of Pakistan. Those who wished to go to Pakistan of their own free will should be safely conducted to the border. To ensure the safety of the Hindus and the Sikhs in Pakistan, was the duty of the Indian Union Government. But for that the Government should be given a free hand and should receive the full and sincere co-operation of every Indian. It was no co-operation for the citizen to take the law into his own hands. Our independence was a baby of one month and ten days. If they continued the mad career of retaliation, they would kill the baby even in its babyhood.

Gandhiji narrated the story of the *Ramayana*. The uneven battle between the mighty Ravana and the exile Rama was won by the latter by strict adherence to *dharma*. If both sides indulged in lawlessness, who could point the finger against the other? The question of degree, or who started it, could not justify their behaviour.

They were brave men. They had stood up against the mighty British Empire. Why had they become weak today? The brave feared none but God. If the Muslims prove traitors, their treachery would kill them. It was the biggest offence in any State. No State could harbour traitors. But it was unbecoming to turn out men on suspicion.

He had heard that the military and the police were taking sides with the Hindus in the Indian Union and with the Muslims in Pakistan. It hurt him deeply to be told so. They could not usefully think of what they were capable of doing when they were under foreign masters. Today, they, including the British officers, were servants of the nation. They were expected to be above corruption or partiality.

To the people he appealed not to fear the police and the military. After all they were too few compared to the millions inhabiting their vast country. If the millions were correct in their conduct, the police and the military could not but act likewise

Birla House, New Delhi, 25-9-'47

Harijan, 5 10-1947

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RESTORE PEACE

Gandhiji said in his prayer-discourse that during the day he had a visit from some Sikh friends, followers of Baba Khadak Singh They said that the present butchery was contrary to Sikh religion and in fact was inconsistent with any religion One of them gave a striking verse from the *Grantha Saheb* wherein Guru Nanak says that God may be called by the name of Allah, Rahim and so on. The name did not matter if He was enshrined in their hearts Guru Nanak's efforts like those of Kabir had been directed towards synthesizing the various religions He had forgotten to bring the verse which he had got written down in order to share it with them. He would bring it the next day.

Pandit Thakur Datt of Lahore had come to him and narrated his tale of woe. He wept as he was giving the narrative. He had felt forced to leave Lahore. He said that he believed in what Gandhiji had said about dying at one's place in Pakistan rather than be bullied out, but he had lacked the strength to follow that sound advice. He was willing to go back and face death. Gandhiji did not want him to do that. But he said that he wanted him and all

the other Hindu and Sikh friends to help him in restoring real peace in Delhi. Then he would proceed to Western Pakistan with fresh strength. He would go to Lahore, Rawalpindi, Sheikhpura and other places in Western Punjab, he would go to N. W. F. P. and to Sind. He was the servant and well-wisher of all He was sure no one would prevent him from going anywhere. And he would not go with a military escort. He would put his life in the hands of the people. He would not rest till every Hindu and Sikh who had been driven away from Pakistan returned to his home with honour and dignity.

Pandit Thakur Datt was a well-known *vaidya*. He had a large number of Muslims as his patients and friends whom he treated free of charge. It was a shame that he should have had to leave Lahore In the same way, Hakim Ajmal Khan had served Hindus and Muslims alike in Delhi. He had started the Tibbia College, which was opened by Gandhiji. It would be a shame if the descendants of Hakim Ajmal Khan should have to quit Delhi a' the Tibbia College. All Muslims could not be traitors Those who proved traitors would be dealt with severely by the Government

Harijan, 5-10-1947

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WAS IT A BLUNDER?

Gandhiji read after the prayers the verse from the *Granth Saheb* to which he had referred the previous evening It was Guru Arjun Dev's composition but like so many *bhajans* in the Hindu scriptures, the followers of the saints, even while they wrote the verses themselves, often attributed them to their *gurus*. The verse affirms that man calls God by many names—Rama, Khuda etc. Some go on a pilgrimage and bathe in the sacred river, others go to Mecca; some worship Him in temples, others in mosques, some just bow their heads in reverence, some read the *Vedas*, others the *Quran*, some dress in blue, others in white, some call

themselves Hindus, others Muslims. Nanak says that he who truly follows God's law, knows His secret. This teaching was universal in Hinduism. It was difficult, therefore, to understand the madness that wanted to turn four and a half crores of Muslims out of India.

The speaker then referred to a letter from an Arya Samajist friend who said that while the Congress had already committed three blunders, they were now committing a fourth one of the highest magnitude. This lay in their desire to reinstate the Muslims in Hindustan side by side with the Hindus and Sikhs. Gandhiji said that while he was not speaking for the Congress he dared to say that he himself was perfectly prepared to commit the supposed blunder referred to by the correspondent. Supposing Pakistan had gone mad, were they to do likewise ? That indeed would be a blunder and a crime of the first magnitude. He was sure that when the insanity had died down, they would realize that he was right and they were wrong.

MONSTROUS INTOLERANCE AND INTERFERENCE

Gandhiji then referred with regret to what he had heard from the Rajkumari. She was now in charge of the Health portfolio. She was a Christian and on that account claimed to be a Sikh and a Hindu as well. She tried to look after the welfare of all the camps whether they were Muslim or Hindu. She collected a band of Christian girls and men to serve the Muslim camps. Now, some angry and senseless persons were threatening the Christians and many of them had left their homes. This was monstrous. He was glad to learn from the Rajkumari that in one place the Hindus had guaranteed protection to the poor Christians, and he hoped that they would all soon be able to return to their homes in peace and be allowed to carry on their service to sick and suffering humanity without any molestation.

Birla House, New Delhi, 27-9-'47

Harijan, 5-10-1947

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MESSAGE OF THE SIKH GURUS

Gandhiji began his discourse this evening by referring to a conversation he had during the course of the day with Baba Sardar Khadak Singh's Secretary, Sardar Santokh Singh. This friend told him that Guru Govind Singh had said exactly the same as he had quoted from Guru Arjun Dev. Most people imagined, quite wrongly — and on this score many Sikhs also were very ignorant — that Guru Govind Singh had taught his followers to kill the Mussalmans. The 10th *Guru*, whose *bhajan* Gandhiji read out, had said that it mattered little how, where or by what name man worshipped God. He was the same for everyone and, what is more, man was the same, i e., he was of the same genus. Guru Govind Singh said that humanity could not be differentiated. Individuals differed in temperament or appearance but all were built in the same mould. They had the same feelings. They all die and are mingled with the dust. Air and sun were the same for all men. The Ganga would not refuse her refreshing waters to a Muslim. Clouds showered their rain on all alike. It was unregenerate man alone who differentiated between himself and his fellow. If, therefore, the message of the great Sikh *Gurus* and other religious leaders was true for them, they should realize that it was wholly wrong for anyone to say that the Indian Union should be purely a Hindu State composed of none but the Hindus.

Gandhiji went on to say that by this he did not mean that the Sikhs were wedded to non-violence. They were not. But the Sardar told him that in Guru Govind Singh's day the Muslims had gone away from their religion and, therefore, he ordered his followers to fight them. The *kirpan*, which the Sikhs carried, was a weapon for the defence of the innocent. It was meant to fight against tyranny, never to kill the innocent, or women and children, or old or disabled persons. Even during the war against the

Muslims the code was to tend the wounded of both sides. But today the *kirpan* was often used for totally wrong purposes and he who used it wrongly was really not fit to carry it.

Birla House, New Delhi, 2-10-'47

Harijan, 12-10-1947

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WAR BETWEEN INDIA AND PAKISTAN

Gandhiji said during his prayer-discourse that he had been an opponent of all warfare But if there was no other way of securing justice from Pakistan, if Pakistan persistently refused to see its proved error and continued to minimize it, the Indian Union Government would have to go to war against it War was not a joke. No one wanted war. That way lay destruction But he could never advise anyone to put up with injustice If all the Hindus were annihilated for a just cause, he would not mind it If there was a war, the Hindus in Pakistan could not be fifth columnists there. No one would tolerate that. If their loyalty lay not with Pakistan, they should leave it. Similarly, the Muslims whose loyalty was with Pakistan should not stay in the Indian Union. To secure justice for the Hindus and the Sikhs was the function of the Government of Pakistan The people could make the Government do their will As for Gandhiji himself, his way was different. He worshipped God, which was Truth and *Ahimsa*.

There was a time when India listened to him. Today he was a back-number. He was told he had no place in the new order, where they wanted machines, navy, air force and what not He could never be a party to that. If they could have the courage to say that they would retain freedom with the help of the same force with which they had won it, he was their man. His physical incapacity and his depression would vanish in a moment. The Muslims were reported to have said *hans ke liya Pakistan, larke lenge Hindustan*. (Smiling we took Pakistan, fighting shall we take Hindustan). If he had his way, he would never let

them have it by force of arms. Some dreamt of converting the whole of India to Islam. That never would happen through war. Pakistan could never destroy Hinduism. The Hindus alone could destroy themselves and their faith. Similarly, if Islam was destroyed, it would be destroyed by the Muslims in Pakistan, not by the Hindus in Hindustan.

Harijan, 5-10-1947

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HAD HIS FAITH WEAKENED?

Newspapers had displayed Gandhiji's remarks about war in such a way that there was an enquiry from Calcutta whether he had really begun to advocate war. He was wedded to non-violence for all time and could never advocate war. In a State run by him there would be no police and no military. But he was not running the Government of the Indian Union. He had merely pointed out the various possibilities. India and Pakistan should settle their differences by mutual consultations and failing that fall back upon arbitration. But if one party persisted in wrong doing and would accept neither of the two ways mentioned above, the only way left open was that of war. They should know the circumstances that prompted his remark. In almost all his prayer speeches in Delhi, he had to tell the people not to take the law into their own hands, but let their Government secure justice for them. He put before them the logical steps which excluded lynch law. The latter would make decent government impossible. That did not mean that his faith in non-violence had weakened in the least degree.

Birla House, New Delhi, 27-9-'47

Harijan, 15-10-1947

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AVOID FRATRICIDE

My reference to the possibility of a war between the two sister Dominions seems, I am told, to have produced a scare in the West. I do not know what reports were sent outside by newspaper correspondents. Summaries are always a dangerous enterprise except when they truly reflect the speaker's opinion. An unwarranted summary of a pamphlet I had written about South Africa in 1896 nearly cost me my life. It was so hopelessly unwarranted that within twentyfour hours of my being lynched, European opinion in South Africa was turned from anger into contrition that an innocent man was made to suffer for no fault that he had committed. The moral I wish to draw from the foregoing version is that no one should be held responsible for what he has not said or done.

I hold that not a single mention of war in my speeches can be interpreted to mean that there was any incitement to or approval of war between Pakistan and the Union unless mere mention of it is to be taboo. We have among us the superstition that the mere mention of a snake ensures its appearance in the house in which the mention is made even by a child. I hope no one in India entertains such superstition about war.

I claim that I rendered a service to both the sister States by examining the present situation and definitely stating when the cause of war could arise between the two States. This was done not to promote war but to avoid it as far as possible. I endeavoured, too, to show that if the insensate murders, loot and arson by people continued, they would force the hands of their Governments. Was it wrong to draw public attention to the logical steps that inevitably followed one after another?

India knows, the world should, that every ounce of my energy has been and is being devoted to the definite avoidance of fratricide culminating in war. When a man vowed to

non-violence as the law governing human beings dares to refer to war, he can only do it so as to strain every nerve to avoid it. Such is my fundamental position from which I hope never to swerve even to my dying day.

Birla House, New Delhi, 29-9-'47

Harijan 12-10-1947

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A PUZZLE

A friend writes:

> "It would be well not to discuss even by way of joke the possibility of a war between our two States. But you have gone so far as to express the opinion that in the event of a war between the two, the Muslims of the Union should fight against those of Pakistan. Does it not then follow that the Hindus and other non-Muslims should do likewise? Now if such a war arises out of the communal question, no argument is likely to make the Muslims of the Union fight those of Pakistan and likewise the Hindus and the Sikhs of Pakistan. If, however, a war takes place between the two for other than the communal cause, you will not contend that the Hindus of Pakistan and the Muslims of the Union should fight Pakistan."

It is undoubtedly true that the possibility of a war between the two States should not be discussed by way of a joke. The adverb 'even' does not fit in. For, if the possibility be a reality, it would be a duty to discuss it. It might be folly not to do so.

It is my firm opinion that the rule that applies to the Muslims of the Union must in the same circumstance apply to the Hindus and other non-Muslims of Pakistan. I have expressed this view in my after-prayer speeches as also in my talks with friends here.

Of course, behind the opinion lies a train of reasoning. Loyalty cannot be evoked to order. If circumstances do not warrant it, it may be said to be impossible to achieve.

There is a large number of people who do not believe in the possibility of such genuine loyalty and hence laugh out my opinion. Surely, there is nothing to laugh at in conceiving such a possibility. The Muslims of the Union will fight those of Pakistan when they regard it as a duty, in other words, when it is clear to them that they are being fairly treated in the Union and that the non-Muslims are not so treated in Pakistan. Such a state is not beyond the range of possibility.

Similarly, if the non-Muslims of Pakistan clearly feel that they are being fairly treated there and that they can reside there in safety and yet the Hindus of the Union maltreat the minorities, the minorities of Pakistan will naturally fight the majority in the Union. Then the minorities will not need any argument to induce them to do their duty.

It was our misfortune that the country was divided into two parts. The division was avowedly by reason of religious cleavage. Behind it might be economic and other causes. They could not have brought out the cleavage. The poison that fills the air arose also from the same communal cause. Irreligion masquerades as religion. It sounds nice to say that it would have been better if there had been no communal question. But how could the fact be undone?

It has been repeatedly asked whether in the event of a war between the two, the Muslims of the Union will fight against the Muslims of Pakistan and the Hindus of one against those of the other. However unlikely it may appear at present, there is nothing inherently impossible in the conception. There is any day more risk in distrusting the profession of loyalty than in trusting it and courageously facing the danger of trusting. The question can be more convincingly put in this way: Will the Hindus ever fight the Hindus and the Muslims their correligionists for the sake of truth and justice? It can be answered by a counter question: Does not history provide such instances?

In solving the puzzle the great stumbling block in the way is that truth is at a discount. Let us hope that in this

holocaust some there are who will stand firm in their faith in the victory of truth.

New Delhi, 17-10-'47

(Rendered from the original in Gujarati)

Harijan, 26-10-1947

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MR. CHURCHILL'S INDISCRETION

This evening there was a larger audience than usual. Gandhiji asked if there was any one who objected to the prayer with the special verses from the *Holy Quran*. Two members of the audience raised their hands in protest and Gandhiji said he would respect their objection although he knew that it would be a sore disappointment to the rest of the audience. However, he told the objectors that although, as a firm believer in non-violence, he could not do otherwise, he could not help remarking that it was highly improper for them to flout the wishes of the very big majority against them. They should realize from the remarks that were to follow that the intolerance that the objectors were betrayed into was a symptom of the distemper which was visible in the country and which had promoted the very bitter remarks from Mr. Winston Churchill. The speaker then paraphrased in his Hindustani speech the following summary cabled by Reuter which had appeared in the morning papers:

> "Mr. Churchill declared in a speech here tonight that the fearful massacres which were occurring in India were no surprise to him.
>
> 'We are, of course, only at the beginning of these horrors and butcheries, perpetrated upon one another with the ferocity of cannibals by races gifted with capacities for the highest culture and who had for generations dwelt side by side in general peace under the broad, tolerant and impartial rule of the British Crown and Parliament,' he declared.

'I cannot but doubt that the future will witness a vast abridgement of the population throughout what has for 60 or 70 years been the most peaceful part of the world and that at the same time will come a retrogression of civilization throughout these enormous regions, constituting one of the most melancholy tragedies Asia has ever known'"

Mr. Churchill had rendered a disservice to the nation of which said Gandhiji he was a great servant. If he knew the fate that would befall India after she became free from the British yoke, did he for a moment stop to think that the blame belonged to the builders of the Empire rather than to the "races" in his opinion "gifted with capacities for the highest culture"? Gandhiji suggested that Mr Churchill was over-hasty in his sweeping generalization. India was composed of teeming millions in which if a few lakhs turned savages it counted for little He made bold to invite Mr Churchill to come to India and study things for himself, not as a partisan with preconceived notions, but as an impartial honest Englishman who put honour before party and who was intent on making the British transaction a glorious success Great Britain's unique action would be judged by results Dismemberment of India constituted an unconscious invitation to the two parts to fight among themselves The free grant of independence to the two parts as sister Dominions seemed to taint the gift It was useless to say that either Dominion was free to secede from the British family of nations It was easier said than done He must not carry the argument further He had said sufficient to show why Mr Churchill had to be more circumspect than he had been He had condemned his partners before he had studied the situation first hand. To the audience which listened to him, he would say that many of the listeners had provided a handle to Mr. Churchill. It was not too late to mend their manners and falsify Mr. Churchill's forebodings. He knew that his was a voice in the wilderness If it was not, and if it had the potency which it had before the talks of independence began, he knew that nothing of the savagery described with so much relish and magnified by Mr. Churchill would ever have

happened and they would have been on a fair way to solving their economic and other domestic difficulties.

Birla House, New Delhi, 28-9-'47

Harijan, 5-10-1947

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PROTECT MINORITIES

There were two ways of protecting the minorities in Pakistan. The best way was that Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah and his Ministers should inspire the minorities with confidence as to their safety so that they might not have to look to the sister Dominion. It was up to the Pakistan authorities to keep the vacated properties in trust for the evacuees. Surely, there should be no forcible conversions nor abductions. Even a little girl, Muslim or Hindu, should feel perfectly safe in the Union or in Pakistan. And there should be no attack on anyone's religion. In democracy the people could make or mar the Government. They could strengthen it or weaken it. Without discipline they would be able to achieve nothing.

As for himself, he must repeat even at the risk of irritating them that it lay in one's own hands to protect one's religion. Every child should be educated to lay down his or her life for his or her religion. They all knew the story of Prahlad and how he stood up against his own father at the age of 12 for the sake of his faith. Every religion was replete with such heroic instances. He had given the same education to his children. He was not the custodian of his children's religion. It was wrong to call women weak. No woman who was firm in her faith need fear any attack on her honour or her faith. The Government should offer them protection. But supposing the Government failed, would they change their faith as they changed clothes?

Referring to the wanton attacks on Muslims Gandhiji asked who were the Muslims of India? The vast majority had not come from Arabia. A few had come from outside.

But the crores were converts from Hinduism. He would not mind intelligent conversion. The so-called untouchables and *shudras* were not converted by an appeal to reason The responsibility was their own. By giving place to untouchability in Hindu religion and by oppressing the so-called untouchables, they had forced them into the arms of Islam. It was unbecoming on their part to kill or oppress those brothers and sisters.

Birla House, New Delhi, 30-9-'47

Harijan, 12-10-1947

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CONDITIONS FOR PEACE

Gandhiji had been to a meeting of the prominent citizens of Delhi convened by Baba Bachitter Singh. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was to address it. But he had asked to be excused as Liaquat Ali Saheb had come to confer with him and he had to attend the meeting of the Congress Working Committee at 4 p m. and a Cabinet meeting at 5 p. m. Baba Bachitter Singh, therefore, asked Gandhiji to address the invitees and Gandhiji agreed to do so. He (the speaker) had invited brief questions. A friend got up and practically delivered a speech The substance of it was that the citizens of Delhi were ready to live in peace with the Muslims, provided they were loyal to the Union and surrendered all arms and ammunition which they possessed without licence. There could be no two opinions that those who wished to live in the Union must be loyal to the Union whatever may be their faith and they should surrender unlicensed arms unsolicited. But he asked the friend to add a third condition to the two mentioned by him (the friend) and that was to leave the execution of the conditions mentioned by him to the Government.

INDIVIDUAL RETALIATION NO REMEDY

There were about 50,000 Muslim refugees in the Purana Quila and some more on the Humayun's tomb

grounds. The conditions of life were none too pleasant there. To justify their suffering by stating the sufferings of the Hindu and the Sikh refugees in Pakistan and even in the Indian Union was wrong. The Hindus and the Sikhs had suffered no doubt and suffered heavily. It was for the Government of the Indian Union to secure justice for them. Lahore was famous for its various educational institutions They had been founded by private enterprise. The Punjabis were industrious They knew how to earn money and how to spend it in charity There were first-class hospitals raised by the Hindus and the Sikhs in Lahore All those institutions and private property had to be restored to the rightful owners. It could not be done by seeking private revenge. It was the duty of the Union Government to see that the Pakistan Government did its duty as it was that of Pakistan to ensure justice by the Union They could not secure justice by copying the evil ways of one another. If two men go out riding and one falls do. . was the other to follow suit? That would merely resul. n breaking the bones of both. Supposing the Muslims would not be loyal to the Union, nor would they surrender arms, were they to continue murder of innocent men, women and children on that account? It was for the Government to see that the traitors were dealt with properly. By taking to savagery the people in both the States had tarnished the fair name that India had earned in the world. They were thereby bargaining for slavery and destruction of their great religions They were free to do so. But he who had staked his life to gain the independence of India did not wish to be a living witness to its destruction. With every breath he prayed to God either to give him the strength to quench the flames or remove him from this earth

Gandhiji referred to cablegrams from Muslim friends from Amman and another place in the Middle East hoping that the present fratricide was a temporary phase in India and that she would soon regain her former glory and that the Hindus and the Muslims would live together as brothers.

Birla House, New Delhi, 2-10-'47

Harijan, 12-10-1947

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BIRTHDAY GREETINGS

Gandhiji went on to describe the stream of visitors he had had all day — including representatives of the Foreign Embassies and Lady Mountbatten. They had all come to congratulate him. He had received scores of telegrams also both from home and abroad. It was impossible to send individual replies. But, he asked himself, "Where did the congratulations come in? Would it not be more appropriate to send condolences?" Flowers even had come to him from refugees and many tributes both in money and good wishes. Gandhiji, however, said that there was nothing but agony in his heart. Time was when whatever he said the masses followed. Today, his was a lone voice. All he heard from them was that they would not allow the Muslims to stay in the Indian Union. And if the cry was against the Muslims today, what might be the fate of the Parsis, the Christians and even the Europeans tomorrow? He said that many friends had hoped he would live to be 125 but he had lost all desire to live long, let alone 125 years. He was utterly unable to appropriate any of the congratulations showered on him. He could not live while hatred and killing marred the atmosphere. He, therefore, pleaded with them all to give up the present madness.

Birla House, New Delhi, 3-10-'47

Harijan, 12-10-1947

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NO DEPRESSION

This is from one of the many messages of birthday congratulations:

> "May I suggest that the present situation should not depress you? In my opinion this is the final attempt of the forces of evil to foil the divine plan of India's contribution to the solution of the world's distress by way of non-violence. You are today the only instrument in the world to further the divine purpose."

This is a telegram sent more out of personal affection than knowledge. Let us see.

It is perhaps wrong to describe my present state of mind as depression. I have but stated a fact. I am not vain enough to think that the divine purpose can only be fulfilled through me. It is as likely as not that a fitter instrument will be used to carry it out and that I was good enough to represent a weak nation, not a strong one. May it not be that a man purer, more courageous, more far-seeing is wanted for the final purpose? This is all speculation. No one has the capacity to judge God. We are drops in that limitless ocean of mercy.

Without doubt the ideal thing would be neither to wish to live 125 years nor to wish to die now. Mine must be a state of complete resignation to the Divine Will. The ideal ceases to be that when it becomes real. All we can do is to make as near an approach to it as possible. This I am doing with as much energy as I can summon to my assistance.

If I had the impertinence openly to declare my wish to live 125 years, I must have the humility under changed circumstances, openly to shed that wish. And I have done no more, no less. This has not been done in a spirit of depression. The more apt term perhaps is helplessness. In that state I invoke the aid of the all-embracing Power to take me away from this "vale of tears" rather than make

me a helpless witness of the butchery by man become savage, whether he dares to call himself a Muslim or Hindu or what not. Yet I cry — "Not my will but Thine alone shall prevail." If He wants me, He will keep me here on this earth yet awhile.

New Delhi, 5-10-'47

Harijan, 12-10-1947

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OUTRAGEOUS ANALOGY

A correspondent, who from his name appears to have Hindi as his mother-tongue, writes thus in English:

> "This is with reference to your many and continued appeals to treat Muslims as brothers and guarantee their safety so that they do not migrate from here to Pakistan. —'A man was walking along one cold day, when he came across a snake lying frozen with the cold. Taking pity on the reptile, he picked it up and thinking to give it warmth, put it in his pocket. The warmth soon revived the snake and the first thing it did was to dig its poisonous fangs into his saviour and kill him.'"

Anger has betrayed this correspondent into an outrageous analogy. To liken a human being, however degraded he may be, to a snake to justify inhuman treatment is surely a degrading performance. To damn crores of human beings for the faults of a few or many belonging to a particular faith seems to me to be the height of madness. The correspondent should also remember that I have known rabidly fanatical Muslims to use the very analogy in respect of Hindus. No Hindu would like to be regarded as a snake.

To treat a man as a brother is not to say that he should be trusted even when he is proved untrustworthy. And is it not a sign of cowardice to kill a man and his family for fear that he may prove untrustworthy? Picture a society in which every man is permitted to judge his

fellow. Yet, that is the state to which we are being reduced in some parts of India.

Lastly, let me, for the sake of the snake kind, correct the common error by saying that eighty snakes out of every hundred are perfectly harmless and they render useful service in nature.

New Delhi, 3-10-'47

Harijan, 12-10-1947

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APPEAL FOR BLANKETS

In his after-prayer speech Gandhiji said pointing to Dr. Sushila Nayyar sitting in front among the prayer party that she was at present concentrating on rendering medical aid to the refugees, Hindus and Muslims alike. She was giving four hours daily to the Muslim refugees at the Purana Quila. She had visited the Kurukshetra Camp on the previous day in company with a Red Cross party including Dr. Pandit, the Director of the Maternity and Child-Welfare Bureau of the Red Cross and Prof. Horace Alexander and Mr. Richard Simonds of the Friends Service Unit. At the Kurukshetra Camp the refugees were Hindus and Sikhs. Their number was at least 25,000 and it was daily increasing. Tents had been pitched to house the refugees but they were not enough to give shelter to all of them. The diet was enough to prevent death from starvation, but it was not a balanced diet and was already resulting in malnutrition and lowered resistance to disease. He was constrained to say that the suffering of humanity could have been greatly minimized if one side at least had retained sanity. The spirit of revenge and retaliation had started a vicious circle and brought hardships on increasing numbers. The Hindus and the Muslims today seemed to vie with each other in cruelty. Even women, children and the aged were not spared. He had worked hard for the independence of India and had prayed to God to let him live up to 125 years so that he could see the establishment

of *Ramarajya*—the kingdom of Heaven on earth, in India. But today there was no such prospect before them. The people had taken the law into their own hands. Was he to be a helpless witness of the tragedy? He prayed to God to give him the strength to make them see their error and mend it, or else remove him. Time was when their love for him made them follow him implicitly. Their affection had not perhaps died down, but his appeal to their reason and hearts seemed to have lost its force. Was it that they had use for him only while they were slaves and had none in an independent India? Did independence mean goodbye to civilization and humanity? He could not give them any other message now than the one he had proclaimed from the house-tops all these years.

His purpose for the evening was to draw the attention of his hearers to the approaching cold weather, which was very severe in Delhi and the Punjab. He appealed to all who could afford to donate warm blankets or quilts they could spare. Even thick cotton sheets could be sent. They should be washed and mended if necessary before sending. The Hindus and the Muslims should all join in this humanitarian task. He would like them not to earmark anything for any particular community. They should rest assured that their gifts would be distributed to the deserving people only. He hoped that gifts would begin to pour in from the next day. It was not possible for the Government to provide blankets to lakhs and lakhs of homeless human beings. The crores of India had to come to the rescue of their unfortunate brethren.

Birla House, New Delhi, 4-10-'47

Harijan, 12-10-1947

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A PREPOSTEROUS SUGGESTION

Gandhiji had received a telegram saying that if the Hindus and the Sikhs had not retaliated probably even he would not be alive today. He considered the suggestion preposterous. His life was in God's good hands as theirs was. No one could put an end to it till He permitted it. It was not for human beings to save his life or that of anyone else. The telegram further said that 98% of the Muslims were traitors and would betray India in favour of Pakistan at a given moment. He did not believe it. The Muslim masses in the villages could not be treacherous. Supposing that they were, they would destroy Islam. If the charge could be proved, the Government would deal with them. He was convinced that if the Hindus and the Muslims continued to be enemies of one another, it was bound to lead to war, which would mean the ruin of both the Dominions. It was the duty of the Government to offer protection to all who looked up to it, wherever they were and to whatever religion they belonged. Ultimately, the protection of one's faith lay with oneself.

Birla House, New Delhi, 5-10-'47

Harijan, 12-10-1947

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A BITTER LETTER

A Muslim friend writes :

" I am a Muslim of nationalist views. Throughout my life, if I may be allowed to call my twentyone years' existence so, I have never been able to think myself in terms of Hindu or Muslim however hard my elder brother, father and other relatives tried to make me do so. Naturally, the Islamia College, Jullunder, would not admit me as I was a quisling to my community.

" My father with my other relations left Jullunder in April but I did not accompany them because East Punjab, and more so India, was equally my country as it was for my friends of the other creed. But the brutal happenings of August have disappointed me beyond words. Even those boys, who had organized processions with me in January, 1946 when the Indian National Army people were being tried, wanted to have my life. After all I was a Muslim for them by killing whom they could get applause from members of their own community. So I had to run for my life to Delhi where I thought that this treatment cannot be meted out to those who believed in United India rather than in Pakistan. But it is worse here. Even my friends with whom I am putting up look towards me with suspicious eyes.

" Now tell me, my dear apostle of liberty and equality, whether I should go back to my parents in Western Pakistan to be their butt throughout my life and against my conscience or I should stay in India as a hostage whose life is always sought for against crimes committed by his unhuman co-religionists."

I have condensed the foregoing but little. The bitterness has not been touched. Assuming that the letter is accurate, there is ample excuse for bitterness. A person's worth is, however, tested under most adverse circumstances. Fair weather friends are many. They are worthless, " a friend in need is a friend indeed." Have not persons belonging to the same faith, fought against one another exactly as the Hindus and the Muslims are doing now ? What was to be expected of ordinary human beings after uninterrupted preaching of the hymn of hate all these long years ? If the correspondent will justify his nationalism, he must not deny himself at the crucial moment. We must avoid imitation of Judas Iscariot. Hence, I have no hesitation in advising the correspondent to return to his home in Jullunder even if he is to be cut to pieces by his erstwhile friends. Such martyrs will be saviours of Hindu-Muslim unity. If he proves as good as his word, I prophesy that his parents will receive him with open arms. Is it not

the lot of us mortals that the innocent suffer for the guilty? It is as well that they do. The world is the richer and better for the sufferings of the innocent. I need not be an "apostle of liberty and equality" to reiterate this plain truth.

New Delhi, 13-10-'47

Harijan, 19-10-1947

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BE TRUE TO THE CONGRESS CREED

Gandhiji in his after-prayer speech referred with sorrow to the murder of a noted Muslim in or around Dehra Dun. His only fault was that he was a Muslim. Was he (the speaker) to tell millions of Muslims in the Indian Union to leave India? Where were they to go? They were not safe in the trains even! It is true that the Hindus were suffering a similar fate in Pakistan. Two wrongs did not make one right. They could not help the Hindus and the Sikhs in Pakistan by retaliating on the Muslims in the Union. He appealed to them to be true to their religion and to the Congress creed. Had the Congress done anything during the past 60 years to injure the interests of the country? If the Congress had now lost their confidence, they were at liberty to remove Congress Ministers and put other men in power. Only they must not take the law into their own hands.

He appealed to the people to be loyal and faithful to their Governments and strengthen them or dismiss them which they had every right to do. Jawaharlalji was a real *jawahar* (jewel). He could never be party to *Hindu Raj*, nor could the Sardar, who had championed Muslim friends. Though he (Gandhiji) called himself a *Sanatani* Hindu he was proud of the fact that the late Imam Saheb of South Africa accompanied him to India on his return and died in the Sabarmati Ashram. His daughter and son-in-law were still at Sabarmati. Was he (the speaker) or the Sardar to throw them overboard? His Hinduism taught him to respect all religions. In that lay the secret of *Rama*

Raj If Jawaharlal, the Sardar and others with their ideas had forfeited their respect and confidence, they could replace them by another team that had their confidence. But they could not and should not expect them to act against their conscience and regard that India belonged only to the Hindus. That way lay destruction.

Birla House, New Delhi, 7-10-'47

Harijan 19-10-1947

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NON-VIOLENCE OF THE BRAVE

A good man had been to see Gandhiji. He had come from Dehra Dun The compartment in which he travelled was full of Hindus and Sikhs. A new-comer excited their suspicion On questioning he said he was a *chamar.* But on his arm was a tattoo mark which showed that he was a Muslim That was enough The man was stabbed and was thrown in the Yamuna This good man said that he turned away from the sight. Gandhiji then twitted him for not intervening to save the Muslim brother even at the risk of his life Had he done so, it was highly probable that the Muslim's life had been saved though he might have lost his That would have been non-violence of the brave It was also probable that his bravery would have infected the other passengers and they might have joined in the protest The good friend admitted that it had not struck him that way though it should have.

Gandhiji was loth to think that all the passengers were mischievously inclined though his advice would still have been the same He realized that their struggle against the British Government was not based on non-violence of the brave. He and the country were suffering from the consequence. The rest of his days he wanted to concentrate on inculcating into the people the *ahimsa* of the brave if he could.

Harijan, 19-10-1947

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DUTY OF NEWSPAPERS, MILITARY AND POLICE

Newspapers were a powerful influence. It was the duty of the editors to see that no false report, or report likely to excite the public, was published in their newspapers. He referred to the news published in a newspaper alleging that the Meos had attacked the Hindus in Rewari. When Gandhiji read it, it had upset him. But the next day he was pleased to see in the papers that the news was untrue. What he said was only one of several such instances. The editors and their assistants had to be extra careful about the news they gave and the manner in which they dressed it. In a state of independence it was practically impossible for Governments to control the Press. It was the duty of the public to keep a strict watch on the newspapers and keep them on the right path. An enlightened public would refuse to patronize inflammatory or indecent newspapers.

Just as the Press was a powerful arm of the State, so was the military and the police. They could not take sides. The communal division of the military and the police was deplorable. But if the military and the police became communally minded, it would be disastrous. The military and the police were bound in the Union to protect the minorities at the cost of their lives. They could not for one moment afford to neglect this primary duty. He would say the same of the Pakistan military and the police who were bound to protect the minorities there. Whether the latter listened to him or not, if he could make those in the Union do the right thing, he was convinced that Pakistan would have to do likewise.

The whole world was impressed by the fact that India had achieved independence without bloodshed. They had to be worthy of that independence by their right conduct. Moreover, the military and the police must be incorruptible under independence. No free government could function unless every citizen did his duty by the State. He was not

here asking them to take to non-violence. He merely pleaded for correct conduct irrespective of non-violence. He warned them that unless they paid attention to his words, they would have to repent afterwards.

Birla House, New Delhi, 8-10-'47

Harijan, 19-10-1947

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THE MINORITIES IN PAKISTAN

The Hindus and the Sikhs in Pakistan were in a terrible plight. Evacuation was a difficult process. Many must die on the way. After coming across to the Union their condition in the refugee camps was none too enviable. There was the camp at Kurukshetra where thousands lay under the sky. Medical facilities were inadequate, nutrition poor. It would be wrong to blame the Government. What advice was he to give to the people? Some friends from Western Pakistan had seen him during the day. They had narrated to him their tale of woe and pleaded for speedy evacuation of those left behind. He was not the Government. But with all the will in the world no Government would be able to do all that it wanted to do in such extraordinary circumstances News came from Eastern Bengal that people had started fleeing from there too He did not know the reason His co-workers including Satish Babu and others of the Khadi Pratisthan, Pyarelalji, Kanu Gandhi, Amtul Salaambehn and Sardar Jiwan Singhji were still there He himself had toured through Noakhali and tried to impress upon the people to shed all fear. It made him think of the duty of the people and that of the Government. Those fleeing from one Dominion might imagine that the conditions on the other side would be much better. But they were mistaken. With all the will in the world the authorities will not be able to cope with so many refugees. They could not reproduce the original condition. The only advice that he could give to the people was to stick to their places and

look to none but God for their protection. They would die courageously if they must in their own homes. Naturally, it would be the duty of the other Government to ask for the safety of the minorities. It was the duty of both the Governments to act correctly and in co-operation. If that desirable thing did not happen, the logical result would be war. He was the last person to advocate it. But he knew that Governments which possessed arms and armies could not act in any other way. Any such procedure would mean annihilation. Death in the process of exchange of population did no good to anyone. Exchange raised tremendous problems of relief and rehabilitation.

BADGES FOR HARIJANS

He had noticed the previous day a statement that Mandal Saheb and some other members of Pakistan had decided that the Harijans would be expected to wear a badge showing that they were " untouchables ". The badge had to have a sign of the cresent and the st This was intended to distinguish the Harijans from the other Hindus. The logical consequence of this in his opinion would be that those Harijans who did stay there, would ultimately have to embrace Islam. He had nothing to say against change of faith out of heart-felt conviction and spiritual urge. Having become a Harijan by choice, he knew the mind of the Harijans. There was not a single Harijan today who could fall in that category. What did they understand of Islam? Nor did they understand why they were Hindus. This was true of the followers of all faiths. They were what they were because they were born in a particular faith. If they changed religion, it would be merely from compulsion or some temptations held out to them in return. In the present atmosphere no voluntary change of faith should have any validity. Religion should be dearer than life itself. Those who acted up to the truth were better Hindus than one well versed in Hindu scriptures, but whose faith did not hold out at the time of a crisis.

Birla House, New Delhi, 11-10-'47

Harijan, 19-10-1947

A WORD TO THE REFUGEES

Gandhiji said during his prayer-discourse that he had received more blankets and promises of quilts during the day. Some mills were also getting quilts ready for the refugees. Unlike blankets quilts would get wet with dew. But an easy way out of it was to cover them with old newspapers at night. The advantage of quilts was that they could be stripped, the cloth washed and the cotton refilled after hand-loosening it.

Those who invoked God's assistance could turn even misfortune to good account. There were some among the refugees who were embittered by their sufferings. They were angry. But anger did not help. They were well-to-do people. They had lost their all. So long as they did not return to their homes with honour and dignity and assurance of safety, they had to do the best they could in the camp life. Contemplated return was, therefore, a long-range programme. What were they to do in the meantime? He was told that 75% of those who had come from Pakistan were traders. They could not all expect to start business in the Indian Union. That would upset the whole economy of the Union. They had to learn to work with their hands. As for people with professions, as for instance doctors, nurses etc., there should be no difficulty in finding work for them. Those who had felt driven from Pakistan should know that they were the citizens of the whole of India, not merely of the Punjab or N. W. F. P. or Sind. The condition was that wherever they went, they should so mix with the inhabitants there, as sugar with milk. They should be industrious and honest in their dealings. They must realize that they were born to serve India and add to her glory, never to degrade her. They should refuse to waste their time in gambling or drinking or quarrelling among themselves. It was human to err, but it was also given to human beings to learn from their mistakes and not to repeat them. If the refugees followed his advice, they

would be an asset wherever they went and the people in every province would welcome them with open arms.

Birla House, New Delhi, 12-10-'47

Harijan, 19-10-1947

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TO THE REFUGEES

Yesterday I made some remarks about the refugee camps which were missed in the English condensation. Let me extend them this evening as I attach great importance to them. Though we have our fairs, religious and other, and have our Congress sessions and conferences, as a people we are not accustomed to camp life strictly so-called. I have attended many Congress sessions, conferences, and other camps. I attended the Kumbha Mela of 1915 at Haradwar and had the privilege of serving in the Servants of India Camp together with my co-workers who had returned from South Africa. Though I have nothing to record except kind personal attention to me and mine, my observation of the camp life our people lived is none too happy. We lack the sense of social hygiene, the result being dangerous insanitation and dirt with the attendant risk of outbreak of infectious and contagious diseases. Our latrines are generally beyond description. Absence of this class of provision is perhaps an apt description. People think that they can perform these functions anywhere not excluding even the much-frequented banks of the sacred rivers. Spitting anywhere without the slightest consideration for the neighbours is almost accepted as a right. Nor are our cooking arrangements any better. Flies are everywhere welcome companions. We forget that they might have sat a moment ago on any kind of dirt and thus might have become easy carriers of infection. Accommodation is not always planned. This is not an exaggerated picture. I must not omit the babble of noise one has to tolerate in these camps.

For method, planning and almost perfect sanitation, give me a military camp. I have never recognized the

necessity of the military. But that is not to say that nothing good can come out of it. It gives valuable lessons in discipline, corporate existence, sanitation, and an exact time-table containing provision for every useful activity There is almost pin-drop silence in such camps. It is a city under canvass brought into being inside of a few hours. I would like our refugee camps to approach that ideal. Then there is no inconvenience, rain or no rain.

These camps become quite inexpensive provided that all the work including the building up of this canvass city is done by the refugees who are their own sweepers, cleaners, road-makers, trench-diggers, cooks, washermen. No work is too low for them. Every variety of work connected with the camp is equally dignified. Careful and enlightened supervision can bring about the desirable and necessary revolution in social life. Then indeed the present calamity would be turned into a blessing in disguise. Then no refugee will become a burden wherever he goes. He will never think of himself alone, but always think of the whole of his fellow sufferers and never want for himself what his fellows cannot have. This is not to be done by brooding but by prompt action under wise supervision and guidance.

Blankets and quilts continue to come. Soon it will, I hope, be possible to say that there will be no dearth of this protection against the coming winter.

Birla House, New Delhi, 13-10-'47

Harijan, 26-10-1947

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ADVICE TO REFUGEES

Gandhiji in his post-prayer speech dealt with the problem that the refugees were said to have become in Delhi. He was told that the refugees, being the aggrieved party, felt that they had certain special rights accruing to them; that when they went to do some shopping, they expected the shopkeepers sometimes to give free of charge what they wanted and sometimes to make considerable reductions. Individual shopping at times amounted to a few hundred rupees each. Some refugees expected the *tongawallas* to charge nothing or to charge a lower hire than usual. Gandhiji said that if the report given to him was true, he was bound to remark that the refugees had failed to learn the lesson that misfortune ordinarily taught the sufferers. They were thereby harming themselves and the country and further complicating a cause that was already sufficiently complicated. If such conduct continued, they were bound to estrange the Delhi shopkeepers from them.

At the same time he could not understand how the refugees, who were said to have been deprived of all their belongings, could make large purchases. He would also wish that no refugee would use anything but his God-given legs for locomotion except on rare and justifiable occasions. He was told further that after the influx of refugees, the revenue derived from spirituous liquors had increased to an enormous extent. As a matter of fact they should realize that if the Governments, Central and Provincial, were true to the Congress requirements, there would be no spirituous liquors or intoxicating drugs such as opium, *ganja* and the like to be had in either Dominion, for Muslim friends did not need a Congress resolution to induce them to declare for complete prohibition. Could not the refugees, who had suffered extraordinary hardships, learn to restrain themselves from using drinks and drugs or indulging in luxuries? He hoped that the refugees would

follow the advice he had given them during his previous after-prayer discourses; that they would so behave as to be like sugar to milk and resolutely refuse to become a burden on those in whose midst they lived, and that the rich and the poor refugees would live together in the same compound or camp and work in perfect co-operation so as to become model citizens and self-supporting.

Birla House, New Delhi, 7-11-'47

Harijan 16-11 1947

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NO DIVALI CELEBRATION

Divali will be on us in a few days. A sister who is herself a refugee writes

> "The question whether we should or should not celebrate *Divali* as a festival agitates most of us. I wish to put before you our thoughts on the question, no matter how lisping my Hindi words may be I am a refugee from Gujaranwala I have lost my all in that place Nevertheless, our hearts are full of joy that after all we have our independence This will be the first *Divali* in Independent India Therefore, it behoves us to forget all our sorrows and wish to have illuminations throughout India I know that your heart is sore over our sufferings and you would have all India to abstain from the rejoicings We are thankful for your sympathy Notwithstanding the fact that your heart is full of sorrow, I would like you to tell all the refugees and the rest of India that they should rejoice during the festival and ask the monied men to help those who are without means May God Almighty give us the wisdom to rejoice over all the festivities that might come to us after Independence"

Whilst I admire the sister and others like her I cannot help saying that she and those who think like her are wrong. It is well known that a family which is overtaken by sorrow abstains from participation in festivities according to capacity. It is an illustration of the doctrine of oneness

on a very limited scale Break through the crust of limitation and India becomes one family If all limitations vanish, the whole world becomes one family, which it really is. Not to cross these bars is to become callous to all fine feelings which make a man. We must not be self-centred or being falsely sentimental, ignore facts My advice to abstain from the rejoicings is broadbased on many solid considerations. The refugee problem is there affecting lakhs of Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs There is as well want (albeit man-made) of food and clothing The deeper cause is dishonesty of the many who can mould public opinion, obstinate refusal of sufferers to learn from their sufferings and extensive inhumanity of man to man I can see in this misery no cause for joy A resolute and wise refusal to take part in festivities will be an incentive to introspection and self-purification Let us not do anything which will throw away a blessing which has been won after hard toil and tribulation

Birla House, New Delhi, 9-11-'47

Harijan, 16-11-1947

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BROADCAST TO THE KURUKSHETRA CAMP

I do not know if it is only you or whether others too are listening in to me today. Though I am speaking from the Broadcasting House, I am not interested in such talks. To suffer with the afflicted and try to relieve their suffering has been my life's work I hope, therefore, that you will accept this talk in that light.

SUFFERINGS OF THE REFUGEES

I was distressed when I heard that over two lakhs of refugees had arrived at Kurukshetra and more were pouring in The moment the news came to me, I longed to be with you but I could not get away at once from Delhi because the Congress Working Committee meetings were being held and my presence was required Seth Ghanshyamdas Birla

suggested that I should broadcast a message to you and hence this talk

Quite by accident, General Nathusingh who has organized the Kurukshetra Camp came to see me two days ago and told me about your sufferings The Central Government asked the military to take over the organization of your Camp, not because they wanted to coerce you in any way, but simply because the military are used to doing such organization and know how to do it efficiently.

Those who suffer know their sufferings best of all. Yours is not an ordinary camp where it is possible for everyone to know each other Yours is really a city and your only bond with your co-refugees is your suffering

CO-OPERATION WITH AUTHORITY

I was sorry to learn that there is not that co-operation with authority or with your neighbours that there ought to be in order to make the camp a success I can serve you best by drawing attention to your shortcomings. That has been my life's motto, for therein lies true friendship and my service is not only for you or India, it extends to the world for I know no barriers of race or creed. If you can rid yourselves of your failings, you will benefit not only yourselves but the whole of India.

It hurts me to know that many of you are without shelter This is a real hardship particularly in the cold weather which is severe in the Punjab and increasing daily. Your Government is trying to do everything it can for you. The burden is heaviest, of course, on your Prime Minister. The Health Department which is served by Rajkumari and Dr Jivraj Mehta is also working very hard to lighten your sufferings No other government could have done better in this crisis The calamity is immense and the Government too has its limitations But it is up to you to face your sufferings with as much fortitude and patience as you can summon to your aid and as cheerfully as you can.

Today is *Divali*. But there can be no lighting of *chirags* for you or for anyone. Our *Divali* will be best celebrated by service of you, and you will celebrate it by living in

your camp as brothers and looking upon everyone as your own. If you will do that you will come through victorious.

General Saheb told me of all that still needed to be done in Kurukshetra. He told me that no more refugees should be sent there. It seems as if there is no proper screening of refugees, and it is hard to understand why they come and are dumped in various places without proper intimation to the local authority. In my post-prayer speech last evening I criticized the East Punjab Government for this state of affairs. I have just had a letter from one of their Ministers to say that the fault is not theirs but that the Central Government is responsible.

Now that all Governments, whether Central or Provincial, belong to the people, it does not befit us to throw the blame on the other All must work together for the general good. I tell you this in order that you may realize your own responsibility also.

MAINTAIN DISCIPLINE

You must help in the maintenance of discipline in the Camp. You must take the sanitation of the place in your hands. I have known the Punjab well since the Martial Law days. I know the qualities and failings of the Punjabis. One of them, and that is not confined to the Punjab alone, is the utter lack of knowledge of social hygiene and sanitation. Therefore it is that I have often said that we must all become Harijans If we do, we shall grow in stature. I ask you, therefore, to help your doctors and your camp officials—everyone of you, men, women and even children—to keep Kurukshetra clean

SHARE YOUR RATIONS

The next thing I want to ask you to do is to share your rations. Be content with what you get. Do not take or demand more than your share. Community kitchens are a thing which should be cultivated. In this way too you can serve each other.

GET OVER IDLENESS

I must also draw your attention to the danger of refugees getting accustomed to eat the bread of idleness.

They are apt to think that it is Government's duty to do everything for them Government's duty is certainly there but that does not mean that your own ceases You must live for others and not only for yourselves. Idleness is demoralizing for everyone and it will certainly not help us successfully to get over this crisis

BE SELF-SUPPORTING

A sister from Goa came to see me the other day and I was delighted to learn from her that many women in your Camp were anxious to spin It is good to have the desire to do creative work which helps You must all refuse to be a burden on the State You must be as sugar is to milk You will become one with your surroundings and thus help to share with your Government the burden that has fallen on them All camps should really be self-supporting but perhaps that may be too high an ideal to place before you today All the same I do ask you not to despise any work but rejoice at doing anything that comes your way in order to serve and thus make Kurukshetra an ideal place

The response to my appeal for warm clothing and quilts and blankets has been very good People have responded well to the Sardar's appeal too Your share of these is also there But if you quarrel among yourselves and some take more than their due, it will not go well with you. Your suffering is great even now but wrong action will make it even greater

REINSTATEMENT OF REFUGEES

Finally, I am not one of those who believe that you who have left your lands and homes in Pakistan have been uprooted from there for all time Nor do I believe that such will be the case with the thousands of Muslims who have been obliged to leave India. I for one shall not rest content and will do all that lies in my power to see that all are reinstated and are able to return with honour and safety from where they have today been driven out. I shall continue as long as I live to work for this end. The dead cannot be brought back to life, but we can work for those

who are alive. If we do not do so then it will be an eternal blot on both India and Pakistan and therein will lie ruin for both of us.

12-11-'47

Harijan, 23-11-1947

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VISIT TO PANIPAT

In his post-prayer speech Gandhiji reported about his visit to Panipat. He said he saw the Muslim patients in the hospital. Some of them had suffered ghastly wounds but they were receiving all the attention possible because the Rajkumari had sent four doctors, nurses and medical accessories. They then met the leader of the Muslims, the local Hindus and the representatives of the refugees who were reported to be over 20,000. They were told that more were coming in daily to the dismay of the Deputy Commissioner and the Superintendent of Police, both of whom, he was glad to report to the audience, were highly talked of by the Hindus as well as the Muslims, not to mention the refugees. They were also able to see the refugees, who were assembled near the Municipal House. He was glad to find that in spite of the terrible hardships the refugees had to go through in Pakistan and also in Panipat, where there was no settled life — some of them had to live on the station platform and many absolutely in the open without adequate covering — he did not see any irritation in them and they were glad that he had gone there. It seemed to him cruel that the refugees were dumped in Panipat without any previous notice to the Deputy Commissioner or anybody else. They came to know how many were coming only when the trains drew up at the station platform. This was most unfortunate. There were among the refugees women and children, also old men. He was told that there were women refugees who delivered on the station platforms.

All this was in East Punjab, whose Prime Minister was Dr. Gopichand. Dr. Gopichand was a valued associate

of his. He had known him for years as an able organizer with great influence over the Punjabis. He worked for the Harijan Sevak Sangh, the All India Spinners' Association as also the All India Village Industries Association. The speaker said that he should not have thought that the task of East Punjab would be beyond him, but if Panipat was a sample of his workmanship, it was a sad reflection upon his Government. Why were the refugees dumped down anywhere without notice? Why were there inadequate arrangements for their reception? Why should the officers not know beforehand who and how many were coming? Added to this was the information he had received the day before that there were three lakhs of Muslims in the Gurgaon District who were frightened into leaving their homes. They were living in the open, alongside the public road with the expectation that they, with their wives, children and cattle were to undertake a march of 300 miles in the severe winter weather of the Punjab. He did not believe the story. He thought that there was some mistake in the narrative given to him by his friends, and still hoped that it was altogether wrong or exaggerated. But after what he had seen in Panipat, he was shaken in his disbelief. Anyway, he hoped that Dr. Gopichand and his Cabinet would wake up betimes and not rest till all the refugees were well looked after. This could only be done by foresight and extreme vigilance.

Birla House, New Delhi, 10-11-'47

Harijan, 23-11-1947

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CO-OPERATION AMONG REFUGEES

Referring to refugees Gandhiji said that there were among them doctors, lawyers, students, teachers, nurses etc. If they tore themselves away from poor fellow refugees, they would not have learnt the lesson from their common misfortune. He felt that all of them, professionals and non-professionals, rich and poor, should hold together and establish model townships as monied men of Lahore had built the model town of Lahore, which the Hindus and the Sikhs had felt compelled to evacuate. These townships would remove the pressure from crowded cities like Delhi and they would promote the health and well-being of the inmates. If over two lakhs of refugees in the big camp of Kurukshetra became a model for purity within and without, if the people including the professionals and the rich men lived on equal terms with the poor refugees and led a life of contentment under canvas, with well laid-out streets and in perfect voluntary co-operation, doing all the services beginning with sanitation themselves and occupied themselves usefully throughout the day, they would cease to be a burden on the exchequer and their simplicity and co-operation would not only compel admiration from the city-dwellers but would also shame them into imitating them in all their good points. The prevailing bitterness and mutual jealousies would vanish in a moment. The refugees, no matter how many they were, would cease to be a matter of worry to the Central Government as also to the local Governments. Such an exemplary life lived by tens of lakhs of refugees would command the admiration of the distracted world.

Birla House, New Delhi, 22-11-'47

***Harijan*, 30-11-1947**

REFUGEE PROFESSIONALS

"You are as much in touch with the refugees as anyone else. Their tales of woe are heartrending. From being well-to-do a few weeks ago they are today reduced to penury. In the case of the medical profession its members have not been able to bring away any equipment; instruments and even medical books have been taken from them; personal belongings and money have had to be left behind. They are literally penniless, homeless and without occupation. They are at a loss to know what to do.

"You have often said in your post-prayer speeches that the calamity that has overtaken us is in the nature of a testing time for us. Whether we come through it victorious or defeated depends on ourselves. While one's whole heart goes out in sympathy to the refugees, it must be admitted that there is a certain amount of lack of resourcefulness in them which adds to their misery. Most doctors and *vaids* who have been deprived of lucrative practices in the various towns of Pakistan have only one demand, and that is to be allotted a shop or quarters in what they consider a good locality in Delhi, or in the case of men and women who have been displaced from service, they demand re-employment by some Government. In the very nature of things only a limited number out of the thousands that have been displaced can hope to get the desired accommodation. Even if all were to get it, they could not all possibly build up a practice for themselves in one town. The persons who are not fortunate enough to get quarters consider that they have not had a fair deal. I feel that something from your pen in the nature of advice to these people would show them the right path.

"Ours is a land which needs service in every sphere. All members of all branches of the medical profession, in particular, should not find it hard to lose themselves in service if they were prepared to settle down in a small

township or in some village from where they could render not only medical aid but teach people how to live cleanly and well in order to avoid disease Personally I see no reason why all members of the medical and teaching professions should not be absorbed straightaway in Government service if Governments really mean to carry out their rural uplift programmes in practice In the long run even private practice in the headquarters of a sub-division or in a village itself should offer more than a living wage to any man or woman willing to do without such amenities as town life has afforded them, perhaps not always for their own good If they were efficient, honest and sympathetic they would definitely become assets to the State instead of the burden which they are today The calamity that has befallen us would then be turned into a blessing"

This letter is from a correspondent who knows everything about this tragedy I have not the least doubt that this tragedy can be turned to good account by the correct behaviour of the sufferers, as also that of the people amongst whom their lot is cast for the time being In this consummation, I have no doubt that all specially qualified men and women such as doctors, lawyers, *vaids*, *hakims*, nurses, traders and bankers should make common cause with the others and lead a co-ordinated camp life in perfect co-operation, feeling not like helpless dependents on charity, but resourceful, independent men and women making light of their sufferings and looking forward to a life enriched by their sufferings, a life full of promise for the future and worthy of imitation by the people amongst whom the camp life is lived

Then when the professional people have been inured to corporate unselfish life and when they can be spared from these camps, they would branch out into villages or otherwise, shedding the fragrance of their presence wherever they may happen to be.

New Delhi, 30-11-'47

Harijan 7-12-1947

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GIVE AND TAKE

A Sindhi sufferer writes :

> " At this critical time when thousands of our countrymen are leaving their ancestral homes and are pouring in from Sind, the Punjab and the N. W. F. P., I find that there is, in some sections of the Hindus, a provincial spirit. Those who are coming here suffered terribly and deserve all the warmth that the Hindus of the Indian Union can reasonably give. You have rightly called them *Dukkhi*, though they are commonly called *sharanarthis*. The problem is so great that no government can cope with it unless the people back the efforts with all their might. I am sorry to confess that some of the landlords have increased the rents of houses enormously and some are demanding *pagri*. May I request you to raise your voice against the provincial spirit and the *pagri* system specially at this time of terrible suffering ? "

Though I sympathize with the writer, I cannot endorse his analysis. Nevertheless I am able to testify that there are rapacious landlords who are not ashamed to fatten themselves at the expense of the sufferers. But I know personally that there are others who, though they may not be able or willing to go as far as the writer or I may wish, do put themselves to inconvenience in order to lessen the suffering of the victims. The best way to lighten the burden is for the sufferers to learn how to profit by this unexpected blow. They should learn the art of humility which demands a rigorous self-searching rather than a search of others and consequent criticism, often harsh, oftener undeserved and sometimes only deserved. Searching of self ennobles, searching of others debases. The sufferers should learn the art and virtue of corporate life, in which the circumference of co-operation is ever widening till at last it encircles the whole human race. If they did this, no sufferer will live in isolation. All of them, no matter

to which province they belong, will hold together and would be considering not the welfare of self but that of all. This does not mean that all of them will live or insist on living at one place, an impossible feat at any time, more so today, when lakhs upon lakhs of people have been torn from their homes, not knowing where to lay their heads. But this humble spirit of co-operation does mean that wherever they are placed, they will feel one with all the sufferers, no matter from what strata of society they are drawn or to which province they belong. Insistence on being accommodated in a particular place of one's choice there will be none. The sufferers will never grumble They will disdain to occupy houses belonging to Muslim owners or tenants, whether these places are physically occupied or evacuated. It is for the Government to decide what they will do with property evacuated under abnormal conditions that are prevalent in India today The sufferers' one and only care would be to hold together and act as one man It would be seen that if the idea thus presented takes shape and spreads, the problem of accommodating sufferers, otherwise styled refugees, will become incredibly simple and they will cease to be a menace.

Moreover, every sufferer who is not a cripple will do his or her full share of work against bread, clothing and shelter in a becoming manner. Thus they will realize the dignity of labour and feel dependent upon no one. All will be equal to one another irrespective of sex. Some labour will be shared by all, e. g. sanitary work including latrine-cleaning and scavenging. No labour will be considered too low or too high. In this society there will be no room for drones, idlers or loafers. This camp life is any day superior to the city life of dirt and squalor side by side with palaces. It is difficult to decide which is the greater eyesore of the two.

New Delhi, 6-12-'47

Harijan, 14-12-1947

The day's statement says:

"After being in the grip of a cold wave for three days, when the minimum temperature fluctuated between 34° and 36°, Lahore had its first shower on Saturday morning. Rain fell on Sunday and again today, much to the misery and harassment of thousands of undernourished and scantily clothed refugees who have no bed and no roof except the overcast sky above them. Taking a walk on the Mall yesterday, I could hear in the stillness of the night the moans and groans of these unfortunate people.

"Until a few days ago cholera was prevalent and from September 6 to date nearly 2,500 cases have occurred in the city, about a quarter proving fatal. Now smallpox of a virulent type has broken out and on an average is causing 20 deaths every day. In the last three days 125 cases have been reported to the Health Department.

"Outbreaks of epidemics are perhaps not surprising, especially when it is borne in mind that the most insanitary conditions still prevail here.

"Sweepers have been brought from Murree and other places but, as the Health Officer ruefully admitted to me today, his staff has not yet succeeded in getting the maximum work out of them. The unsightly heaps of garbage all over the city and the stench which greets visitors to streets and lanes in thickly populated parts of the city are sufficient to convince one that if sanitation does not improve soon disease is likely to take a heavy toll."

Gandhiji was of the opinion that it was wrong for the refugees to have servants rendering the necessary service. The refugees should themselves attend to them and try to do some other work on behalf of the whole camp. They must turn their misfortune to the best account. It was the duty of both the Governments to see to their food, shelter

and clothing, but never to produce an army of servants for them Whether they were Hindus or Muslims or Sikhs, they should not shirk what was miscalled menial work including latrine cleaning, nor must they bacome lazy People must shed the evil habit of thinking that sanitary work was to be confined to a special class of people The audience must excuse him for showing so much care about the Muslim refugees in Pakistan He could not make any such unmanly distinction

Birla House, New Delhi, 23-12-'47

Harijan 4-1-1948

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DON'T WEAKEN THE GOVERNMENT

The Government had arrested some people and there was an agitation against the arrests Gandhiji said that the Government had a right to do so Our Government could never arrest innocent people deliberately. But human beings were apt to err and it was possible that some innocent people might suffer by mistake It was for the Government to rectify such error People in a democracy should be satisfied with drawing the Government's attention to mistakes, if any They could remove the Government if they wished to. But they should not obstruct them by agitating against them Ours was not a foreign Government having a mighty army and navy to support them They had to derive their strength from the people

How could real peace be established? They might feel pleased that peace appeared to have returned to Delhi He could not share the satisfaction The Hindus and the Muslims had become estranged from one another. They used to fight in the past too. But it lasted a day or two and then everybody forgot all about it. Today, they had become so embittered that they felt as if they had been old enemies. He called this feeling weakness. They must shed it. Then alone could they become a great power. They had two choices before them. They could become a

great military power or if they followed his way, they could become a great non-violent and invincible power. In either case the first condition was the shedding of all fear.

The only way to get near each other was that each must forget the mistakes of the other party and magnify its own. He recommended it to the Muslims as he did to the Hindus and the Sikhs with all the force at his command. Enemies of yesterday could become friends of today provided they made a clean breast of their guilt. The policy of tit for tat was not conducive to friendship. If they would act up to his advice wholeheartedly, he would be able to leave Delhi and follow his mission in Pakistan.

Birla House, New Delhi, 14-10-'47

Harijan, 26-10-1947

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MINORITIES IN EASTERN PAKISTAN

Some people had come to see Gandhiji from Eastern Pakistan. A large number of Hindus were leaving East Bengal. The friends sought his advice in the matter. He could but repeat what he had said often enough. It was unbecoming for brave men and women to be bullied out of their homes. They should stay there and face death rather than dishonour or loss of self-respect. They should fear none but God. They should defend their religion, their honour and their citizens' rights with their lives. If they did not have that courage it was far better for them to go away. If they decided to leave East Bengal, it was the duty of the upper class Hindus such as doctors, lawyers, merchants etc. to see that the poor scheduled castes and others went first. They should be the last and not the first to leave. He could not be in every place at the same time. But he could make his voice reach them all. He was also asked to appeal to Dr. Ambedkar to tell the scheduled castes to die for their religion and honour. He gladly did so through the meeting.

The friends also asked him to tell Suhrawardy Saheb to go to Bengal and help Khwaja Saheb in the difficult task before him Suhrawardy Saheb was not in Delhi. But he (the speaker) had no doubt that he (Suhrawardy Saheb) would go to Bengal on his return. The Muslim leaders in East Bengal had to produce conditions which would inspire the minority community with confidence It was in the interests of all concerned to work for peace If Pakistan would be a purely Muslim State and the Indian Union a purely Hindu and Sikh State, with no rights for the minorities on either side, it would mean ruin for both the States. He hoped and prayed that God would give them the wisdom to steer clear of the danger.

Birla House, New Delhi, 16-10-'47

Harijan, 26 10 1947

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THE ONLY WAY

How were they to quench the flames? Gandhiji had told them the only method They had to be correct in their behaviour irrespective of what others did He was not unaware of the sufferings of the Hindus and the Sikhs in Pakistan But knowing that he wanted to overlook them. Otherwise, he would go mad He would not be able to serve India. They were to look upon the Muslims in the Union as their blood-brothers Delhi was said to be at peace It brought him little solace. It was due to the presence of the military and the police There was no love lost between the Hindus and the Muslims. The hearts were still estranged He (Gandhiji) did not know whether there were any Muslims in the meeting. If there was any, he did not know whether he felt at home. Sheikh Abdullah Saheb and some Muslim friends were at the prayer meeting the day before. So was the widow of Kidwai Saheb's brother, who for no fault of his was murdered in cold blood in Mussoorie. He confessed that he was uneasy about their presence not because he was at all anxious

about their persons. He flattered himself with the belief that no harm could befall them in his presence. But he was not equally sure that they could not be insulted. He would have to hang his head in shame if they were insulted in any way. Why should there be any such fear about Muslim brethren? Surely, they should feel as safe among them as they themselves. This could not happen until they learnt the art of magnifying their own faults and minimizing those of their neighbours. All eyes rested on India, which had become the hope of Asia and Africa, nay of the whole world. If India was to realize the hope, it had to stop the fratricide and all Indians had to live like friends and brothers. Clean hearts were the first condition of that happy state.

Birla House, New Delhi, 19-10-'47

Harijan, 26-10-1947

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IS THE TIME RIPE FOR NEW UNIVERSITIES ?

There seem to be a mania for establishing new universities in the provinces. Gujarat wants one for Gujarati, Maharashtra for Marathi, Karnatak 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.

Take the Hindu-Muslim question. The poison has assumed dangerous proportions, such that it is difficult to forecast where it will land us. Assume that the unthinkable has happened and that not a single Muslim can remain in the Union safely and honourably and that neither Hindu nor Sikh can do likewise in Pakistan. Our education will then wear a poisonous form. If, on the other hand, Hindus, Muslims and all the others who may belong to different faiths can live in either Dominion with perfect

safety and honour, then in the nature of things our education will take a shape altogether pleasing Either people of different faiths having lived together in friendship have produced a beautiful blend of cultures, which we shall strive to perpetuate and increasingly strengthen the shape, or we shall cast about for the day when there was only one religion represented in Hindustan and retrace our steps to that exclusive culture It is just possible that we might not be able to find any such historical date and if we do and we retrace our steps, we shall throw our culture back to that ugly period and deservedly earn the execration of the universe. By way of example, if we make the vain attempt to obliterate the Muslim period, we shall have to forget that there was a mighty Jumma Masjid in Delhi second to none in the world, or that there was a Muslim University in Aligarh, or that there was the Taj in Agra, one of the seven wonders of the world, or that there were the great forts of Delhi and Agra built during the Moghal period We shall then have to rewrite our history with that end in view. Surely, today we have not the atmosphere which will enable us to come to a right conclusion about the conflicting choices. Our two months' old freedom is struggling to get itself shaped We do not know what shape it will ultimately take Until we know this definitely, it should be enough if we make such changes as are possible in the existing universities and breathe in our existing educational institutions the quickening spirit of freedom. The experience we will thus gain will be helpful when the time is ripe for founding new universities.

(*Adapted from the original in Gujarati*)

New Delhi, 25-10-'47

Harijan, 2-11 1947

LINGUISTIC REDISTRIBUTION

Acharya Sreeman Narayan Agarwal writes to me a letter published in the columns of the *Harijansevak*. Its purport is that new universities should not be established before the proposed linguistic redistribution of provinces. The following is the rendering of his argument:

> "I have read your remarks in the *Harijan* about 'New Universities'. I believe that such a project will present great difficulties, if it comes into being before linguistic redistribution. I cannot understand why the Congress should take any time in accomplishing this linguistic redistribution. The Congress has held since 1920 that this is necessary for the good government of India. And now that we are free to have this redistribution, efforts are being made in some quarters to defeat the purpose. In the Constituent Assembly too, the matter seems to have been shelved. Without redistribution, it would be very difficult to enforce all teaching through provincial languages in our schools and colleges, and it would not be easy to oust English from the position it unlawfully occupies today. Bombay, Madras and C. P. will bear out my contention. Any delay would but increase inter-provincial jealousy. We see the danger of tinkering in the terrible form that the Hindu-Muslim quarrel has assumed. If partition had to be accepted on any account whatsoever, how nice it would have been if we had accepted it sooner? Shall we not learn the lesson from these disturbances that if linguistic redistribution is good, delay in carrying it out is fraught with evil consequences?"

I entirely endorse the suggestion underlying the foregoing letter, viz. that what is proper to be done should not be delayed without just cause, and that what is improper should not be conceded under any circumstances whatsoever. There can be no compromise with evil and since linguistic redistribution is desirable from almost every

point of view, all delay in carrying out the project should be avoided.

But the reluctance to enforce linguistic redistribution is perhaps justifiable in the present depressing atmosphere. The exclusive spirit is ever uppermost. Everyone thinks of himself and his family. No one thinks of the whole of India. The centripetal force is undoubtedly there, but it is not vocal, never boisterous, whereas the centrifugal is on the surface, and in its very nature makes the loudest noise, demanding the attention of all. It manifests itself most in matters communal. This has given rise to fear in other fields. The history of the quarrel between Orissa and Andhra, Orissa and Bihar and Orissa and Bengal is fresh in our minds The whole of it has not died out even now. This is but an illustration of an almost accomplished fact The other provinces were never redistributed in law though they were in 1920 when the Congress had a brand new constitution enabling it to put up a life and death struggle with perhaps the greatest empire that has ever been. How will Madras, though divided by the Congress, divide itself into four provinces, and Bombay do likewise in law? Many other claimants have come to the fore. They are not recognized by the Congress, but they are not less vocal or less insistent. The Congress does not command the prestige and authority it found itself in possession of in 1920. Despair has given place to hope. Now, when we have freedom, we seem not to know what to do with it. It is almost mistaken for suicidal anarchy Even zealous reformers would postpone controversial issues to a more hopeful time when, in the interest of the country, the virtue of 'give and take' would be freely recognized and all sectional interests would be subordinate to the one interest of the good of India, which will include the good of all. Therefore, those who, like me, want constructive suggestions to come into play at this very moment, have to work to bring about a healthy atmosphere, promoting concord in the place of discord, peace in the place of strife, progress in the place of retrogression and life in the place of death. That happy

day will be most manifest when the communal strife has died out Meanwhile, will the Southern linguistic groups settle their disputes and boundaries, will Bombay produce an agreed scheme of redistribution according to language, and will the new candidates withdraw their claims at least for the time being? Then linguistic redistribution can come into being today without the slightest difficulty or fuss.

Let there be no undue strain upon the Congress, whose foundations have been shaken to their roots. It is ill-equipped today either for arbitrating between rival claimants or imposing its will upon recalcitrants.

New Delhi, 23-11-'47

Harijan, 30-11-1947

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DUSSEHRA AND BAKR ID

Gandhiji referred in his post-prayer speech to the approaching festivals of *Dussehra* (Hindu) and *Bakr Id* (Muslim). Everyone was anxious. In the Indian Union, trouble, if it arose, could only be started by the Hindus. He reminded them of the origin of the *Dussehra* festival. It was to commemorate the victory of Rama over Ravana *Durga Puja* meant worship of the all-pervading *Shakti*. The ten days were followed by *Bharat Milap*. All this connoted self-restraint not lenience The nine days were the days of fasting and prayer His mother used to fast during these nine days They, her children, were taught to practise as much abstinence as they could Were they to celebrate the sacred occasion by killing and harassing their brothers? The Muslims in the Union, including the Nationalist Muslims, did not know what was in store for them on the morrow. Were they to live in the Union on pain of being forcibly converted? The last state was worse than the first. He had protested against forcible conversions of the Hindus and the Sikhs to Islam He would expect them to prefer death to forcible conversions. The same thing applied to the Muslims He had no use for people who could change their

religion like their clothes. They would not be an asset to any religion. Hinduism could not be saved by following any of the three alternatives. The only honourable way was for those in the Union to live as brothers. Let them shed all enmity and bitterness on the occasion of these festivals. Then he would proceed to Pakistan with renewed self-confidence. He could not be satisfied until every Hindu and Sikh returned to his home in safety and honour, and the Muslims did likewise.

Birla House, New Delhi, 23-10-'47

Harijan, 2-11-1947

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FORCED TO LEAVE?

Complaints are being repeatedly made that Muslims are being forced to leave their ancestral home in the Union and migrate to Pakistan. Thus it is said that in a variety of ways they are being made to vacate their houses and live in camps to await dispatch by train or even on foot. I am quite sure that such is not the policy of the Cabinet. When I tell the complainants about this they laugh at it and tell me in reply that either my information is incorrect or the services do not carry out the policy. I know that my information is quite correct. Are the services then disloyal? I hope not. Yet the complaint is universal. Various reasons are given for the alleged disloyalty. The most plausible one is that the military and the police are largely divided on a communal basis and that their members are carried away by the prevalent prejudice. I have given my opinion that if these members, on whom depends the preservation of law and order, are affected by the communal taint, orderly government must give place to disorder and if the latter persists, to disruption of society. It is up to the upper ranks of these services to rise superior to communalism and then to infect the lower ranks with the same healthy spirit.

What is the duty of the affected citizens of the Union? It is clear that there is no law that can compel a citizen to leave his place of residence. The authority will have to arm itself with special powers to issue orders such as are alleged to have been given. So far as I am aware, there are no written orders issued to anyone. In the present case thousands are involved in the alleged verbal orders. There is no helping those who will be frightened into submission to any order given by a person in uniform. My emphatic advice to all such persons is that they should ask for written orders whose validity in case of doubt should be tested in a court of justice, if appeal to the final executive fails to give satisfaction.

The public in this case representing the majority community (that hateful expression) should rigidly refrain from taking the law into their own hands. If they do not, they will be cutting the very branch on which they are sitting. It will be a fall from which it will be difficult to rise. Let wisdom dawn on them while there is yet time. Let them not be swayed by ugly events even when the report thereof happens to be true. They must trust the representative Ministers to do the needful for the vindication of justice.

Birla House, New Delhi, 27-10-'47

Harijan, 9-11-1947

442
KASHMIR PANGS

In regard to the situation in Kashmir Gandhiji said that when the Maharaja Saheb in his distress wished to accede to the Union, the Governor-General could not reject the advance. He and his Cabinet sent troops by air to Kashmir telling the Maharaja that the accession was provisional upon an impartial plebiscite being taken of the Kashmiris irrespective of religion. The Maharaja had wisely appointed Sheikh Abdullah as his Minister with all the powers accruing to the office And it pleased him to read in the papers that the Sheikh Saheb had risen to the occasion and made a hearty response to the invitation What was the situation? It was stated that a rebel army composed of Afridis and the like, ably officered, was advancing towards Srinagar, burning and looting villages along the route destroying even the electric power house, thus leaving Srinagar in darkness It was difficult t believe that this entry could take place without some kind of encouragement from the Pakistan Government He had not enough data to come to a judgment as to the merits of the case Nor was it necessary for his purpose All he knew was that it was right for the Union Government to rush troops even a handful, to Srinagar That must save the situation to the extent of giving confidence to the Kashmiris, especially to the Sheikh Saheb who was affectionately called *Sher-e-Kashmir* i e, the Lion of Kashmir The result was in the hands of God Men could but do or die He would not shed a tear if the little Union force was wiped out, like the Spartans, bravely defending Kashmir, nor would he mind the Sheikh Saheb and his Muslim, Hindu and Sikh comrades, men and women, dying at their posts in defence of Kashmir. That would be a glorious example to the rest of India. Such heroic defence would infect the whole of India and we would forget that the Hindus, the Muslims and the Sikhs were ever enemies Then we would realize that not all Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs were fiends. There were

some good men and women in all religions and races. The universe existed on its good men and women. Indeed, he would not be surprised if even the rebel army was itself converted to sanity. Let them remember the refrain of the *bhajan*—'We were all of and from one and the same God, no matter by what name we worshipped Him.'

Birla House, New Delhi, 29-10-'47

Harijan, 9-11-1947

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KASHMIR AGAIN

Referring to the Kashmir trouble Gandhiji said that the Indian Union continued to send more troops and other necessary help. The Government did not own any aeroplanes but he was glad to hear that private companies had placed their planes at the disposal of the Government. Time ran in favour of ordered troops and ordered Government and against the freebooters

Gandhiji was, however, sorry to learn that the freebooters in Kashmir were being led by two ex-officers of the Azad Hind Fouj which valiantly fought under the able leadership of the late Shri Subhas Bose. It was composed of Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and others They retained their own religion but there was no distinction of caste or creed. They were knit together in bonds of friendship and brotherhood. They were proud of being Indians He had met them (if it was they) in the Delhi Fort and outside after their release He could not understand why they led freebooters and took part in burning and looting villages and murdering innocent men and women. They were harming the Afridis and the other tribesmen by encouraging them to do forbidden things. If he was in their place, he would wean the tribesmen from their error. They could meet Sheikh Abdullah Saheb if they thought he was harming Islam or India. He hoped his appeal would reach these officers and the tribesmen and that they would retrace their steps.

Gandhiji could not escape the conclusion that the Pakistan Government was directly or indirectly encouraging

the raid. The Prime Minister of the Frontier Province was reported to have openly encouraged the raid and had even appealed to the Islamic world for help Then he had seen in the Press that Pandit Nehru's Government was accused of fraud, in that assistance was being sent to Kashmir and that accession was being plotted for some time He was amazed that such reckless charges were made by a Pakistan Minister against the Government of a sister Dominion. He had brought in Kashmir in his remarks because he had good news from friends which he wanted to share with the audience The news did not square with the Qaid-e-Azam's declaration that there was an enemy of Pakistan meaning the Union, he supposed A Hindu friend from Karachi saw him and another from Lahore. Both informed him that things were better than a few days ago and that they were getting still better He was told, too, that at least one Muslim family was seen by the friend to have given shelter to a Sikh friend and set apart one room for keeping the Sikh friend's *Grantha Sahib* with due respect He was informed that such instances of the Hindus and the Sikhs having sheltered Muslims and vice versa could be multiplied. He had, too, some Muslim friends coming to him who deplored with him that vast and criminal exchange of populations was going on. These friends told him that the Muslim refugees in Pakistan suffered no less than the Sikhs and the Hindus in the Union. No government could cope with such a large mass of human beings uprooted from their homes and thrown on its shoulders. It was like an overwhelming onrush of waters. Could not this mad rush be stopped? the friends asked. He had no doubt that it could be if the suspicion and the flinging of charges (he thought baseless) was altogether and sincerely stopped. He invited the audience to pray with him that God would bring sanity to the unhappy land. He wished to congratulate the objectors on their wise restraint in allowing the prayer to proceed smoothly and without any interruption.

Birla House, New Delhi, 2-11-'47

Harijan 9-11-1947

444

SANITY AND INSANITY

Gandhiji had a visit from Sheikh Abdullah who was affectionately called *Sher-e-Kashmir*. Though there were just a handful of Hindus and Sikhs in Kashmir, the Sheikh Saheb took pains to carry them with him. He had been to Jammu also. What had happened there was most shameful for the Hindus and the Sikhs. But that did not make the Sheikh Saheb lose his balance. His visit to Jammu also bore good fruit. And if the harmony continued, as it promised to do, it would be a lesson in communal harmony for the whole of India.

Kashmir was a mountainous country. Life there was most difficult in winter. Many routes passed through Pakistan. There was, however, a narrow strip which joined Kashmir to East Punjab. But in East Punjab it was difficult for the Muslims to safely pass through, much less to live in, as it was difficult for the Hindus and the Sikhs in the West Punjab and the N. W. F. P. How could Kashmir have trade with the Indian Union under the circumstances? If the insanity continued in East Punjab, accession to the Union might prove nugatory. He hoped that wisdom would dawn upon East Punjab. It was the duty of the Central Government to see that there was a safe land route between Kashmir and the Union, so that the woollen cloth and other manufactures and fruits from Kashmir could come to the Union as freely as before.

Birla House, New Delhi, 27-11-1947

Harijan, 7-12-1947

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KASHMIR AND JAMMU

In his post-prayer speech this evening Gandhiji talked of Kashmir. He said that he had seen in the newspapers some reference to an arbitration over the issue of Kashmir. Were the Union and Pakistan always to depend on a third party to settle their disputes? How long would they go on quarrelling ?

There was some talk about the division of Kashmir. It was fantastic. It was more than enough that India had been divided into two. One would have thought it impossible for man to divide a country which God had made one. Yet it had happened, and the Congress and the League had both decided upon it though for different reasons. But that did not mean that the process of dividing should be further extended. If Kashmir was to be divided, why not other States ? Where would this process end ?

It was said at first that Kashmir was attacked by raiders. But as time went on, it became clear that Pakistan was at the back of the attack. He had a passage of an Urdu daily, the *Zamindar*, read out to him that day. In that the Muslims were openly invited for recruitment and to join the *jehad* (crusade). Abuses were showered all round. He knew Maulana Zafar Ali Khan during the Khilafat days. In those days too he could curb his tongue with difficulty. Now evidently he seemed to have no check on his tongue or pen. Did he mean that the Hindus, the Muslims and the Sikhs were to be perpetual enemies ? Whatever the provocation, Gandhiji advised the Hindus and the Sikhs not to retaliate.

The facts seemed to be that Pakistan was at the back of the attack on Kashmir. The Union troops had gone there at the call of the people of Kashmir as well as the Maharaja to help them in defending the beautiful valley. He considered Sheikh Abdullah to be the real head of Kashmir. Everyone who had been to Kashmir had told him

what an unrivalled hold the Sheikhsaheb had on the Muslim masses and the few non-Muslims in Kashmir. In these days an Indian Prince could remain one only as the titular head, even as the English king was.

He had heard of the murders of numberless Muslims and abduction of Muslim girls in Jammu. The Maharaja-saheb must own the responsibility. The Dogra troops were under his direct control. He had not yet become the mere constitutional head and, therefore, he must be held responsible for all the acts, good or bad, of people under his rule. Sheikh Abdullah had been to Jammu and had tried to allay passions He would advise the Maharaja to step aside along with his Minister in view of what had taken place in Jammu and give the fullest opportunity to Sheikh Abdullah and the people of Kashmir to deal with the situation Such a graceful act would become him as the head of a very great and important State in India.

Pakistan was proud of being the biggest Islamic power in the world. But they could not be proud of themselves unless they ensured justice to every single Hindu and Sikh in that State

If Pakistan was to become a worthy State, let them and the Union representatives sit down and thrash out the Kashmir affair as they had already done in the case of many other things. If they could not do so, why could they not choose from among themselves good, true persons who would direct their steps? The first step was an open and sincere confession of past lapses. Hearty repentance broke the edge of a guilt and led the way to proper understanding. The Congress Government could never stand for the Princes against their people. It could only deal with the Princes as trustees of their people.

Birla House, New Delhi, 25-12-'47

Harijan, 4-1-1948

KASHMIR, A BEACON LIGHT

I have been taken to task for daring to say what I have said about Kashmir and the Maharajasaheb. Those who have done so have evidently failed to read my statement carefully. I have simply tendered advice which, I suppose, the lowliest can do. To do so sometimes becomes a duty as was the case with me. What was it for ? It was, if accepted, designed to raise the Maharajasaheb in his own and the world's esteem. His and his State's is today a most unenviable position. He is a Hindu prince having under his sway a very large majority of Mu.' ms. The invaders have called their invasion a holy war for the defence of Muslims reported to be ground down under Hindu misrule! Sheikh Abdullahsaheb has been called by the ruler to his task at a most critical period. He is new to the task and deserves every encouragement if he is considered fit by His Highness. It must be evident to the outsider as it is to me that Kashmir must be lost to the invaders, 'otherwise called raiders, if the Sheikhsaheb's effort to hold together the Muslims and the minority fails. It would be a mistake to think that the Union army could do it. It was sent in answer to the combined importunity of the Maharajasaheb and the Sheikhsaheb in order to help ward off the attack. Is it any wonder that I have advised the ruling authority to rise to the occasion and become like the King of England and, therefore, use his rule and his Dogra *paltan* in strict accord with the advice of the Sheikhsaheb and his emergency Cabinet? The instrument of accession stands as it is. It confers or reserves certain rights on or for the ruler. I, as a private individual, have ventured to advise that he should waive or diminish the rights and perform the duty pertaining to the office of a Hindu prince. If I am wrong as to my facts, I should be corrected. If I err in my conception of Hinduism and of the duty of a Hindu prince, I am out of court. If Sheikh

Abdullahsaheb is erring in the discharge of his duty as the chief of the Cabinet or as a devout Muslim, he should certainly step aside and give place to a better man. It is on the Kashmir soil that Islam and Hinduism are being weighed. If both pull their weight correctly and in the same direction, the chief actors will cover themselves with glory and nothing can move them from their joint credit. My sole hope and prayer is that Kashmir should become a beacon light to this benighted sub-continent.

So much for the Maharajasaheb and Sheikhsaheb. Will not the Pakistan Government and the Union Government close ranks and come to an amicable settlement with the assistance of impartial India? Or, has impartiality fled from India? I am sure it has not.

Birla House, New Delhi, 29-12-'47

Harijan, 11-1-1948

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IMPLICATIONS OF WAR OVER KASHMIR

In his post-prayer address on Sunday evening Gandhiji said that he was amazed to see that the Government of Pakistan disputed the veracity of the Union's representation to the U. N. O., and the charge that Pakistan had a hand in the invasion of Kashmir by the raiders. Mere denials cut no ice. It was incumbent upon the Indian Union to go to the rescue of Kashmir when the latter sought its help in expelling the raiders, and it was the duty of Pakistan to co-operate with the Union. But while Pakistan professed its willingness to co-operate, it took no concrete steps in that direction. Gandhiji would like to impress on the leaders of Pakistan that partition having been conceded, there was no justification for animosity. Partition was demanded on religio-communal grounds and it was therefore the duty of Pakistan, as its name implied, to remain clean in all its dealings. Both Hindus and Muslims had resorted to cruel acts and made grievous blunders but that did not mean that this mad race should go on, culminating in war. A war would

bring both the Dominions under the sway of a third power and nothing could be worse. Gandhiji, therefore, pleaded for amity and goodwill which could enable the Union's representation to the U. N. O. to be withdrawn with dignity. This the U. N. O. itself would welcome. He invited all to join in this prayer. The understanding should however be genuine. To harbour internal hatred might be even worse than war.

Birla House, New Delhi, 4-1-'48

Harijan, 11-1-1948

448

FORCIBLE CONVERSIONS CONDEMNED

Gandhiji in his post-prayer speech mentioned a visit of some Muslim friends, who had complained about forcible conversions of hundreds of Muslims to Hinduism and Sikhism. Condemning such reported conversions, Gandhiji said that religion could not be forced upon an unwilling heart. Every so-called convert to Hinduism or Sikhism should feel sure that the conversion was not to be recognized and that every such 'convert' was free to follow his original faith. This applied equally to so-called converts to Islam. If it was to be otherwise, it would mean death to the three religions. It was the duty of the people to see that the minorities lived without any fear of the majority. If the Muslims from the Union wanted to go to Pakistan, they should be allowed to do so. But due protection should be afforded to such Muslims as wanted to stay in the Indian Union. He was against the use of force under any circumstances. Therefore, his ambition was that the evacuees on either side should return to their homes in honour and safety. He, for one, would not like to live to witness the perpetuation of the present unnatural condition.

Birla House, New Delhi, 31-10-'47

Harijan, 9-11-1947

449

PRAYER SHALL DISPEL DARKNESS

Gandhiji, before proceeding with the prayer spoke to the meeting. He said that he was glad that the people were open enough to register their objection. He did not like to think that they came not to share the worship of God but merely to see him or hear him because he was called a *mahatma* or because of his long service of the nation. The prayer was all inclusive. God was known by many names. In the last analysis the names were as many as human beings. It was rightly said that even animals, birds and stones adored God. They would find in the *Bhajanavali** a hymn by a Muslim saint which said that the chirp of birds in the morning and evening signified that they adored their Maker. There was no sense in objecting to any part of the prayer because it was selected from the *Quran* or from any other scripture. Whatever might be the shortcomings of certain Muslims (no matter what their number was), the objection could not apply to a whole community much less to the Prophet or any other or his message. He, the speaker, had gone through the whole of the *Quran*. He had gained by it, not lost by it. He felt that he was a better Hindu for the reading of the world's scriptural books. He knew that there were hostile critics of the *Quran*. A friend from Bombay who had many Muslim friends had put before him a conundrum. What was the teaching of the Prophet about the *kafirs?* Were not the Hindus *kafirs* according to the *Quran*? He had long come to the conclusion that they were not. But he spoke to his Muslim friends about the matter. They spoke from knowledge. They assured him that *kafir* in the *Quran* meant a non-believer. They said that the Hindus were not because they believed in one God. If they went by what the hostile critics said, they would condemn the *Quran* and the Prophet as they would condemn Krishna who was

* A collection made by Gandhiji of hymns from various religions. — Ed.

depicted as a dissolute being having sixteen hundred *gopis*. He silenced his critics by saying that his Krishna was immaculate. He would never bow his head before a rake. The God they worshipped with him every evening was in everyone and was all powerful. Therefore, they could have no enemy and they could fear none because God was in them and by them every moment. Such being the nature of the congregational worship, he would prefer to have no such worship if they could not with their whole heart and without reservation join the prayer. If they could, they would find that they daily gathered strength to enable them to dispel the darkness that surrounded them. On Gandhiji asking the audience frankly and fearlessly to express their opinion, they lustily said that they wanted the prayer and that if there was an interruption they would bear no anger or malice against the objectors. The prayer then went on in the usual manner, Gurudev's grand-daughter Nandita Krishna Kripalani singing the *bhajan* of the evening.

Birla House, New Delhi, 2-11-'47

Harijan, 9-11-1947

450

A CRITICISM ANSWERED

A Hindu critic said that Gandhiji and others like him were never tired of preaching to the Muslims that in spite of hardships entailed by their obstinacy, they should not leave their homes, even though they might be able to do so in safety. Whereas, if they stuck to their pockets, they would not be able to stir out to earn their livelihood or the manufactures of their honest labour might be boycotted by a vast majority of the Hindu public. It was too much to expect the remnant of the poor Muslims who had seen others slaughtered before their eyes and yet others going away to Pakistan to remain in their homes in spite of the disabilities before mentioned. Gandhiji admitted that there was much truth in the criticism, but he had no other advice to offer them. He thought that leaving their hearth

and home was likely to result in greater distress He, therefore, sincerely believed that if the remnant honestly and heroically remained in their homes in spite of the sufferings, they were bound to melt the hard hearts of their Hindu neighbours. Then there would be certain deliverance for others in both the parts of India. For, unexampled bravery born of non-violence coupled with strict honesty shown by a fair number of Muslims was sure to infect the whole of India.

Harijan, 16-11-1947

451

OUTSIDE HIS FIELD

Major General Cariappa is reported to have said as follows

> "Non-violence is of no use under the present circumstances in India and only a strong army can make India one of the greatest nations in the world."

I fear, like many experts, General Cariappa has gone beyond his depth and has been unwittingly betrayed into a serious misconception of *ahimsa*, of whose working in the nature of things, he can only have very superficial knowledge. By reason of lifelong practice of *ahimsa*, I claim to be an expert in it, though very imperfect. Speaking in absolute terms, the more I practise it the clearer I see how far I am from the full expression of *ahimsa* in my life. It is his ignorance of this, the greatest duty of man in the world, which makes him say that in this age non-violence has little scope in the face of violence, whereas I make bold to say that in this age of the Atom Bomb unadulterated non-violence is the only force that can confound all the tricks put together of violence. It would have become the General, unaided as he can only now be, by his British teachers of military science and practice, not to have gone out of his depth. Generals greater than General Cariappa have been wise and humble enough frankly to make the admission that they can have no right to speak of the

possibilities of the force of *ahimsa*. We are witnessing the tragic insolvency of military science and practice in its own home. Should a bankrupt, who has been by the gamble in the share market, sing the praise of that particular form of gambling?

New Delhi, 7-11-'47

Harijan, 16-11-1947

452

FIRM ON NON-VIOLENCE

A letter rebuked Gandhiji for having dared to advise Mr. Winston Churchill, Hitler, Mussolini and the Japanese, when they were likely to lose all, that they should adopt his technique of non-violence. The writer of the letter then went on to say that if he could give that advice when it was safe for him to do so, why did he abandon his non-violence when his own friends in the Congress Government had forsaken it and even sent armed assistance to Kashmir? The letter concluded by inviting Gandhiji to point out definitely how the raiders were to be opposed non-violently by the Kashmiris. Replying Gandhiji said that he was sorry for the ignorance betrayed by the writer. The audience would remember that he had repeatedly said that he had no influence in the matter over his friends in the Union Cabinet. He held on to his views on non-violence as firmly as ever, but he could not impose his views on his best friends, as they were, in the Cabinet. He could not expect them to act against their convictions and everybody should be satisfied with his confession that he had lost his original hold upon his friends. The question put by the writer was quite apposite. Gandhiji's answer was quite simple.

NO DENIAL OF CREDIT

His *ahimsa* forbade him from denying ctedit, where it was due, even though the creditor was a believer in violence. Thus, though he did not accept Subhas Bose's belief in

violence and his consequent action, he had not refrained from giving unstinted praise to his patriotism, resourcefulness and bravery. Similarly, though he did not approve of the use of arms by the Union Government for aiding the Kashmiris and though he could not approve of Sheikh Abdullah's resort to arms, he could not possibly withhold admiration for either for their resourceful and praiseworthy conduct, especially, if both the relieving troops and the Kashmiri defenders died heroically to a man. He knew that if they could do so, they would perhaps change the face of India. But if the defence was purely non-violent in intention, and action, he would not use the word 'perhaps', for he would be sure of change in the face of India even to the extent of converting to the defender's view the Union Cabinet, if not even the Pakistan Cabinet.

The non-violent technique, he would suggest, would be no armed assistance to the defenders. Non-violent assistance could be sent from the Union without stint. But the defenders, whether they got such assistance or not, would defy the might of the raiders or even a disciplined army in overwhelming numbers. And defenders dying at their post of duty without malice and without anger in their hearts against the assailants, and without the use of any arms including even their fists would mean an exhibition of heroism as yet unknown to history Kashmir would then become a holy land shedding its fragrance not only throughout India, but the world. Having described non-violent action he had to confess his own impotence, in that his word lacked the strength, which perfect mastery over self as described in the concluding lines of the second chapter of the *Gita*, gave. He lacked the *tapashcharya* requisite for the purpose. He could only pray and invite the audience to pray with him to God that if it pleased Him, He might arm him with the qualifications he had just described.

Birla House, New Delhi, 5-11-'47

Harijan, 16-11-1947

453

A PSYCHOLOGICAL EXPLANATION

The following is from Mr. Richard B. Gregg, whom many readers of the *Harijan* know as an American friend who used to live in Shantiniketan as also with me in Sabarmati years ago:

"Though because of my ignorance I am hesitant, yet I venture to send you an idea that seems to me not only to explain with perhaps less moral blame a part of the recent communal violence in India but also to offer hope for the future.

"It seems to me probable that much of this violence is an expression not so much of intercommunal suspicion and hatred, but rather, and more deeply and originally, of the long pent-up resentments of the masses because of their oppression. The oppression was not only by foreign political rule but by foreign modern social, economic and financial ways which are contrary to the ancient habits of *dharma* which were a very part of the nature of the masses. By foreign ways I mean such things as the English land-holding system, usurious money lending, heavy taxes payable not in kind but in money, and other interferences with long established village life common to all Indian communities.

"Psychological studies have shown clearly that severe frustrations suffered during the childhood of an individual generate resentments which are suppressed and remain suppressed long after the person who caused the original frustration has died, but later some occasion pulls a trigger, as it were, and releases the pent up energy of the old resentment which then pours forth in violence upon some perfectly innocent person. This explains many crimes of violence, and perhaps some of the cruelties against the Jews in Europe. In India the establishment of religious electorates created a channel into which it was easy for this energy to flow, but I believe the fearful energy of the explosion of wrath comes from the older cause I have

mentioned. Such an idea as this would help explain why in all countries all through history a major change of political power results in more or less violence and disorder. The masses always suffer some oppression and, therefore, have resentments which flare up upon a shift of control or may be exploited by selfish leaders.

"If this surmise is true, it suggests that the suspicion and hatred of one community towards another is not so deep as now appears. It also means that as soon as the masses can be guided back into their ancient ways of life with the chief emphasis on religion and small organizations — village *panchayats* and communal family systems — the energy of the people will be turned from violence into creative channels. I would expect that *khadi* work among the refugees might help start such a diversion of energy into sound channels. In such a development I see hope.

"Forgive me if this seems to be presumptuous. I write it only in the hope that an humble outsider, just because he is outside, may see a gleam of encouragement that is not so easy to see in the dust and distraction of the struggle. Anyhow, I love you and India."

Though many psychologists have recommended a study of psychology, I am sorry, I have not been able, for want of time, to study the subject. Mr. Gregg's letter does not mend matters for me. It does not fill me with any impelling enthusiasm for undertaking the study. Mr. Gregg gives an explanation which mystifies the mind instead of clearing it. "Hope for the future" I have never lost and never will, because it is embedded in my undying faith in non-violence. What has, however, clearly happened in my case is the discovery that in all probability there is a vital defect in my technique of the working of non-violence. There was no real appreciation of non-violence in the thirty years' struggle against British *Raj*. Therefore, the peace, the masses maintained during that struggle of a generation with exemplary patience, had not come from within. The pent up fury found an outlet when British *Raj* was gone. It naturally vented itself in communal violence which was never fully absent and which was kept under

suppression by the British bayonet. This explanation seems to me to be all-sufficing and convincing. In it there is no room for failure of any hope. Failure of my technique of non-violence causes no loss of faith in non-violence itself. On the contrary, that faith is, if possible, strengthened by the discovery of a possible flaw in the technique.

New Delhi, 11-11-'47

Harijan, 23 11-1947

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TWO AMERICAN FRIENDS' CONSOLATION

Of the many letters that come to me from American friends whom I do not know, the following extracts from two such friends are worth quoting:

> "Your great distress due to the unhappy situation in your country demands that I intrude upon your contemplation of the painful events now taking place in India, to remind you that your beautiful words have taken root in all the corners of the earth.
>
> "That you should feel a degree of disillusionment because of these sad happenings is natural. That that disillusionment should be measured and certainly not turn into discouragement is the purpose of my letter.
>
> "Never does the seed turn directly into a beautiful fragrant flower without first going through certain phases of growth and development. And, if at some stage of its development — or growth — it falters, the presence of the gardener is more than ever required. In the complete absorption of the selfless task of nursing the ailing plant, the gardener perhaps cannot fully observe the growth of other plants in his garden, to join with him in his compassion for their stricken brother.
>
> "I plead with you to give consideration to the countless numbers of people in all countries on earth, of all classes, races and creeds, who are now also praying for peace. These people, whose hopes you have so well expressed and who took fresh courage from these victories which you did achieve with the Science of Peace, must now join me

in prayer that the Master bless you and preserve you to continue your noble work, so much of which is still to be done."

What they say may prove true and that the senseless blood-bath through which India is still passing, though the original fury seems to have abated, may be nothing unusual as history goes. What India is passing through must be regarded as unusual. If we grant that such liberty as India has gained was a tribute to non-violence as I have repeatedly said, non-violence of India's struggle was only in name, in reality it was passive resistance of the weak. The truth of the statement we see demonstrated by the happenings in India.

New Delhi, 6-11-'47

Harijan, 16-11-1947

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"DO NOT LOSE HEART"

The following is from Madame Edmond Privat's letter, dated 27th August, 1947, to Gandhiji :

"Today I feel I must tell you how very deeply we have been moved by the late great events occurring to India, I mean her liberation and how we rejoiced over it.

"Yes, we know that you are not happy about it all — we read your article in the *Harijan*, but O Bapu! do not lose heart, think, O *do* think of the significance it means for us in the Occident: That India did her revolution without shedding the blood of her opponent and was liberated, is an immense progress on the past; it is a point reached in history without precedent on such a scale.

"O Bapu! For us in the Occident, just emerging from a terrific bath of blood, cannot you see how bright, luminous, divine appears to us the new dawn in India!

"Do be consoled, encouraged, braced up by our joy, our wonderful hope; you whom we regard not only as our spiritual leader, but also as an example of a man who has lived his faith fully in the daily life without losing his

sense of proportion or humour. After all, is it not you who have taught us this precious message of your religion, to work with all our heart without expecting any result, leaving the rest in God's care ? Well, you did what you did with all your faith and courage, and now God shows us what can be achieved by non-violence as a wonderful hope, the only means for us to save our civilization from destruction. That the non-violence used was not always perfect was perhaps the case, but certainly the sincere effort of your good people inspired by you, was there, I am convinced.

"Let us hope that we shall be worthy of this message and use it here to its full possibility.

"It is true, only a few people here understand its real meaning, but the soil is ready to receive it :

'Let us work heart within and God overhead!'

"*Your article in Harijan of 27th July, 1947, to which* I was alluding at the beginning of this letter, is going to appear, translated by Edmond in the next *Essor*. (In fact the whole number is on India.)

"I am glad for the readers of *Essor* that they should see once more this point emphasized by you and their attention drawn energetically to it, i. e. the fundamental difference between passive resistance and non-violence.

"The more I think about it the more I am convinced that people do not grasp, cannot grasp this difference. They use passive resistance and, not succeeding, they get discouraged, though yet they may be perfectly sincere in their endeavours.

"Often the fact is that people *unconsciously* lie to themselves.

"That is why lately I have been trying to get a little knowledge about psycho-analysis. Formerly one used to explain to people that one had to be aware of the great guile of Satan in his working in our heart.

"Nowadays people want more scientific methods to reach at truth and, apart from therapeutic means to cure neurosis, psycho-analysis can help normal people to get clear with the mechanisms of their feelings and attain

thus a fuller consciousness which enables them, if they are sincere, to use really non-violence."

To this letter Gandhiji replied:

I see that you have grasped the fundamental difference between passive resistance and non-violent resistance. Resistance both forms are, but you have to pay a very heavy price when your resistance is passive, in the sense of the weakness of the resister. Europe mistook the bold and brave resistance full of wisdom by Jesus of Nazareth for passive resistance, as if it was of the weak. As I read the New Testament for the first time, I detected no passivity, no weakness about Jesus as depicted in the four gospels and the meaning became clearer to me when I read Tolstoy's *Harmony of the Gospels* and his other kindred writings. Has not the West paid heavily in regarding Jesus as a Passive Resister? Christendom has been responsible for the wars which put to shame even those described in the Old Testament and other records, historical or semi-historical. I know that I speak under correction for I can but claim very superficial knowledge of history—modern or ancient.

Coming to my personal experience, whilst we undoubtedly got through passive resistance our political freedom, over which lovers of peace like you, and your good husband of the West are enthusiastic, we are daily paying the heavy price for the unconscious mistake we made, or better still, I made in mistaking passive resistance for non-violent resistance. Had I not made the mistake, we would have been spared the humiliating spectacle of weak brother killing his weak brother thoughtlessly and inhumanly.

I am only hoping and praying, and I want all the friends here and in other parts of the world to hope and pray with me, that this blood-bath will soon end and out of that, perhaps, inevitable butchery, will rise a new and robust India — not warlike, basely imitating the West in all its hideousness, but a new India learning the best that the West has to give and becoming the hope not only of Asia and Africa, but the whole of the aching world.

I must confess that this is hoping against hope, for we are today swearing by the military and all that naked

physical force implies. Our statesmen have for over two generations declaimed against the heavy expenditure on armaments under the British regime, but now that freedom from political serfdom has come, our military expenditure has increased and still threatens to increase and of this we are proud! There is not a voice raised against it in our legislative chambers. In spite, however, of the madness and the vain imitation of the tinsel of the West, the hope lingers in me and many others that India will survive this death dance and occupy the moral height that should belong to her after the training, however imperfect, in non-violence for an unbroken period of thirtytwo years since 1915.

New Delhi, 29-11-'47

Harijan, 7-12-1947

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NO LIMITATIONS

A correspondent says in substance:

> "Individual *ahimsa* I can understand. Corporate *ahimsa* between friends is also intelligible. But you talk of *ahimsa* towards avowed enemies. This is like a mirage. It will be a mercy if you give up this obstinacy of yours. If you do not, you will forfeit the esteem you enjoy. What is worse, you, being considered a *Mahatma*, mislead many credulous persons to their own and society's harm."

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*. '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 to reach God accrues only to the very brave, never to the faint-hearted. The atmosphere today is so much saturated with poison that one refuses to recollect the wisdom of the ancients and to perceive the varied little experiences of *ahimsa* in action. 'A bad turn is neutralized by a good', is a wise saying of daily experience in practice. Why can we not see that if the sum total of the world's activities was destructive, it would have come to an end long ago? Love, otherwise *ahimsa*, sustains this planet of ours.

This much must be admitted. The precious grace of life has to be strenuously cultivated, naturally so because it is uplifting. Descent is easy not so ascent. A large majority of us being undisciplined, our daily experience is that of fighting or swearing at one another on the slightest pretext.

This, the richest grace of *ahimsa*, will descend easily upon the owner of hard discipline.

New Delhi, 8-12-'47

Harijan, 14-12-1947

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JUNAGADH ACCESSION

Referring to the *bhajan* of the evening Gandhiji said that all their ills would be over if like Mirabai they became servants of God and God alone. They would understand the reference when they heard what was to follow. They had seen in the papers all about Junagadh. From two telegrams received by him from Rajkot he was satisfied that the newspaper report was fairly accurate. The Prime Minister, Bhutto Saheb was in Karachi; so was the Nawab Saheb. The Deputy Prime Minister, Major Harvey Jones, was in Junagadh. They all were party to Junagadh

acceding to the Union. The audience had a right to infer that Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah was party to this transaction. If he was, they were justified in inferring that the Kashmir and Hyderabad troubles would also be over. And if he could go further, he would say, things would take a happy turn and that the two Dominions would become friends and do everything in co-operation. He was thinking of the Qaid-e-Azam not as a Governor-General. As a Governor-General he had no legal right to interfere with the affairs of Pakistan. He thought of Jinnah Saheb as the maker of the present day Muslim League and without whose knowledge and permission nothing regarding Pakistan could be done. Therefore it was that Gandhiji thought that if Jinnah Saheb was behind the Junagadh accession, it was a happy augury.

Birla House, New Delhi, 10-11-'47

Harijan, 23-11-1947

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JUNAGADH, KASHMIR AND HYDERABAD

Addressing the prayer gathering this evening Gandhiji said that the previous day he had given them the news about the entry into the Junagadh State of the Provisional Government in answer to the request of the Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister of Junagadh. He did so partly in astonishment and partly in joy for he was not prepared for what appeared to be such a happy ending of the struggle of, and on behalf of, the Junagadh people. Gandhiji expressed also the fear that the joy would be premature if the request made by the Junagadh authorities had not the *imprimatur* of Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah. They could not, therefore, but feel painfully surprised to find that the Pakistan authorities resented this occupation of Junagadh by the Provisional Government on behalf of its ryots and demanded "the withdrawal of Indian troops from the State territory and relinquishment of the administration to the rightful Government and stoppage of violence and invasion of the State

by people from the Indian Union." They further contended that neither the Ruler nor the Dewan was legally entitled to negotiate any settlement, temporary or permanent, with the Dominion of India, and that the action of the Government of India was "a clear violation of the Pakistan territory and a breach of international law."

According to the statements in the Press the day before, he could see no breach of international law and no occupation by the Union Government. So far as he could see there was no unlawfulness about the whole of the movement of the Provisional Government on behalf of the people of Junagadh. The Union Government had certainly lent the use of its troops at the request of the Kathiawad princes for the safety of Kathiawad as a whole. Therefore, he detected no unlawfulness about the whole transaction, nor did he see any justification for what appeared to him to be a *volte face* on the part of the Prime Minister of Junagadh. The way he looked at the whole thing was this —the Nawab Saheb of Junagadh had no authority to accede to Pakistan without the consent of his people, of whom 85%, he was told, were Hindus. The sacred hill of Girnar with all its temples was part of Junagadh on which the Hindus had spent a lot of money and which was visited by thousands of pilgrims from all over India. In Azad Hind the whole of it belonged to the people. Nothing of it belonged to the princes as individuals. Their claim could only be sustained by their being trustees of the people and, therefore, producing the authority of the people for every transaction. That they had not realized their representative capacity and that the ryots in the States, with honourable exceptions, had not yet realized their capacity as true owners, in the aggregate, of the States they inhabited, derogated nothing from the doctrine he had enunciated. If, therefore, anybody had the legal right to accede to one or the other of the two Dominions, it was the ryots belonging to a particular State and if the Provisional Government did not at any stage represent the ryots of Junagadh, they became usurpers to be driven out by both the Dominions, and neither Dominion could stand before the world to justify

accession by a Prince in his individual capacity. In that sense he held that the accession by the Nawab Saheb of Junagadh was *ab initio* void, unless the ryots of Junagadh could be proved to have set the seal upon the accession by the Nawab Saheb To which Dominion Junagadh would finally accede could only be decided, in case of dispute, by a properly conducted referendum without the use of violence or show of it, accompanying the process The attitude taken by the Pakistan Government and now also by the Prime Minister of Junagadh created a curious situation Who was to decide upon the right or the wrong of the case for Pakistan and the Union Government? Appeal to the sword was not to be thought of The only honourable way out was the ancient method of arbitration in the usual manner. There were enough men and women in India who could shoulder the burden. If, however, the parties could not agree upon arbitration by Indians, he for one had no objection to any impartial person from any part of the world.

Finally, what Gandhiji said about Junagadh equally applied to Kashmir and Hyderabad Neither the Maharaja Saheb in Kashmir nor His Exalted Highness the Nizam had any authority to accede to either Dominion, without the known consent of their people This was, so far as he knew, made clear in the case of Kashmir If the Maharaja alone had wanted to accede, Gandhiji could not defend such accession The accession was provisionally agreed to by the Union Government because both the Maharaja and Sheikh Abdullah, speaking for the people of Kashmir and Jammu, wanted it Sheikh Abdullah came on the scene because he claimed to represent the people of Kashmir and Jammu, not merely the Muslims but the whole of the people.

He had heard whispers that Kashmir would be divided into two parts, Jammu going to the Hindus and Kashmir to the Muslims. He could not think of such divided loyalties and splitting up an Indian State into so many parts. He hoped, therefore, that wisdom would rule all India and an ugly situation would be avoided without delay if only for the

sake of the lakhs of Indians who felt compelled to become helpless refugees.

Birla House, New Delhi, 11-11-'47

Harijan, 23-11-1947

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RAMPUR STATE

Gandhiji in his after-prayer speech went on to talk of the Rampur State. Its ruler was a Muslim but that did not mean that it was necessarily a Muslim State. Many years ago Gandhiji had been taken there by the late Ali Brothers and had stayed there in their house. He had the pleasure of meeting the then Nawab Saheb also for he was a friend of the well-known nationalist Muslims of the day, the late Hakim Saheb Ajmal Khan and the late Dr. Ansari. The Hindus and the Muslims used to live in comparative peace and amity then. But the Hindu friends from there who came to see him on Sunday told him a different story. They said that though the State had acceded to the Indian Union, the insidious influence of the Muslim League was there. If that were the only obstacle they might have overcome it easily. But there was the Hindu Mahasabha assisted by the Rashtriya Sevak Sangh men whose ambition was to rid the Union of all Muslims.

Birla House, New Delhi, 16-11-'47

Harijan, 23-11-1947

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TERRIBLE IF TRUE

Gandhiji said that he sometimes glanced at the *Dawn* and the *Pakistan Times*. These were influential Pakistan dailies. One could not dismiss with indifference what they said These papers had reported that the Muslims in Kathiawad were being harassed. There was arson, loot, murders and abductions. He had received some telegrams too about the matter. Some Hindu friends had told him that arson and loot had certainly taken place in some places, but they were not aware of murders and abductions. He had asked Liaquat Saheb if the report of the Pakistan papers could be trusted. The Pakistan Premier assured him that it could be trusted about the facts, though he could not vouch for the magnitude. The report hurt Gandhiji deeply. He was born in Kathiawad. At the head of the Temporary Government in Junagadh was his nephew. The Sardar as well as Shri Shamaldas Gandhi had said in their speeches in Kathiawad that no Muslim could be hurt in Junagadh or Kathiawad, provided the Muslims were faithful to the Union. Gandhiji had been glad to hear that the Hindus and the Muslims of Junagadh seemed of their own free will to have decided to stay in the Union. If what was reported of the happenings in Kathiawad was true, then like their independence, what they had won in Junagadh was only to lose it. He fervently hoped that the reports were highly exaggerated if they were not entirely untrue. He would welcome an authoritative and frank statement on the subject. If the poison spread throughout India, life would not be worth living in it.

Birla House, New Delhi, 27-11-'47

Harijan, 7-12-1947

RENOVATION OF THE SOMNATH TEMPLE

Gandhiji referred to a letter of a Christian in a newspaper holding that the temple of Somnath could not undergo renovation from State funds. He sympathized with the objection. The Sardar happened to be with him. He was shown the cutting and he said that not a pie would be spent from the Junagadh State funds or for that matter from the Central fund for such purposes. The temple of Somnath would be renovated from funds donated by the Hindus and others who may be interested in the renovation. The Indian Union was a secular State and not a religious one. Shri Shamaldas Gandhi who was at the head of the provisional government for Junagadh had promised to give fifty thousand rupees from the public fund collected by him and His Highness the Jam Saheb had promised to pay one lakh.

KATHIAWAD QUIET

Lastly, he had told them last evening what he had read about the happenings in Kathiawad against Muslims. He asked the Sardar whether he knew anything about loot, arson, murders and abductions. The Sardar said that some looting and arson had taken place before he went there and assured loyal Muslims of safety. Looting and arson were quickly suppressed. Murder of Muslims as such and abduction of Muslim girls had not taken place to his knowledge. In fact Congressmen, he added, had risked their own lives in saving Muslim life and property. Gandhiji was glad of the repudiation. He would ask his informants to correct themselves publicly. It did not behove newspapers to publish unverified statements. If, however, the Sardar was in darkness, he would like authentic confirmation of the serious charges made.

Birla House, New Delhi, 28-11-'47

Harijan, 7-12-1947

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THE KATHIAWAD REPORTS

Gandhiji during his prayer-discourse referred to several telegrams that he had received about Kathiawad. He had spoken to them of the reported happenings in Kathiawad. He could not ignore what was written in the Pakistan newspapers. Thousands of people read and believed those newspapers. Therefore, he had spoken to them without waiting for verification of the reports. If the reports were incorrect, it was a matter of shame for the newspapers concerned. If they were true, it was shameful for the people of Kathiawad. He had told them what the Sardar had said. He had seen Gandhiji today also and repeated his assurance that things were all right in Kathiawad. Gandhiji had also received a telegram from Rajkot which said that some Hindus had lost their balance at one stage and had damaged or burnt a few Muslim houses, but Congressmen aided by the State had immediately controlled the situation at the risk of their own lives. Shri Dhebarbhai who was a well-known lawyer and leader in Rajkot had been mobbed. Some Congressmen had been injured. Thus, though the mob fury was turned against Congressmen, the Muslims were saved. They were sorry to learn of Gandhiji's distress and wanted to reassure him that life was normal in Rajkot. They were making enquiries about other places and would let him know the result. It was the Rashtriya Sevak Sangh and the Hindu Mahasabha who were supposed to have planned the attack, but they had failed. There was another telegram from the Muslims offering thanks for the services rendered to them by the Congressmen. A telegram from some Muslims in Bombay complimented the speaker for having brought out the matter and added that the Muslims in Kathiawad were looted and terrorized. Thank God, there was no mention of murders and abductions. It said that many Muslims had left Kathiawad. If the assurances given were to be relied

upon, the evacuees should return to their homes. Gandhiji warned men and newspapers against making unverified or exaggerated statements. It would serve no useful purpose to deceive their friends. He had received too a reassuring wire from the Maharaja of Bhavnagar. There was also a wire from five Muslims of Rajkot saying that thirteen shops were looted resulting in a damage of less than one lakh and saying that the State and the Congressmen had brought the situation under control. Against this was a telegram from Junagadh just received as he was coming to the prayer. It confirmed the alarming news that he had mentioned on Friday and asked for an inquiry. The inquiry was not in his power to give. As the meeting knew, he was awaiting further telegrams from Kathiawad. He could say, however, that he would not be satisfied except with full assurances which was perhaps better than an official inquiry.

APPEAL TO HINDU MAHASABHA AND THE R. S. S.

Gandhiji appealed to the Hindu Mahasabha and the Rashtriya Sevak Sangh, both of which were Hindu organizations and had many well-educated men on their rolls, to desist from what they were reported to be doing. Religion could not be saved by questionable methods. They should let the Government right wrongs and punish evil-doers.

IDOLS IN MOSQUES

Gandhiji then referred to a communique in the Press giving seven days' notice for the removal of idols from the mosques which had been converted into temples. If there was no compliance, the police were to remove the idols. The Sardar had said that the Government would repair the damage done to mosques. In Gandhiji's opinion, it was the duty of the public to do so. An idol had no value unless it was duly installed in a consecrated place by duly qualified devotees. Forcible possession of a mosque disgraced Hinduism and Sikhism. It was the duty of the Hindus to remove the idols from the mosques and repair the damage. He had not heard of any mosque being turned into a *gurudwara*. The Sikhs worshipped the

Guru Granth Saheb. It would be an insult to the *Granth Saheb* if it was placed in a mosque.

A Muslim had brought to him a half-burnt *Quran.* He had wrapped it up in a piece of cloth, showed it to him with tearful eyes and went away without speaking. The man who had thus tried to insult the *Quran* had insulted his own religion. He appealed to the Hindus and the Sikhs to desist from bringing ruin to their country and religion.

Birla House, New Delhi, 29-11-'47

Harijan, 7-12-1947

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SEEK THE TRUTH

Many friends upbraid me for often using 'if' in making many statements. I have made use of the little conjunction with much benefit to the cause I am espousing for the time. The controversy now rages round the Kathiawad imbroglio. My friends feel hurt by the publicity gained by the reported atrocities which they hold to be groundless and which, to the small extent they are true, the authorities and the Congressmen have battled against bravely and successfully. Surely, truth has gained by making conditional use of the information given by the parties concerned. The Kathiawad authorities and the Congress will gain to the exact extent that they have stood for the truth. But the friends hold that by the time untruth is overtaken, mischief is done by unscrupulous parties making unlawful use of my giving currency to a particular untruth by omitting the conjunction and quoting me in support of it. I am not unaware of the danger. Each time it has been tried it has failed miserably and the unscrupulous party has been discredited. My friends need not be perturbed by my speeches in which I make conditional use of compromising statements provided, of course always, the parties attacked are above reproach.

Let us examine the converse case. Suppose in the instance in point I had ignored the charges made in

influential Pakistan journals, especially when they were in the main backed by the Prime Minister of Pakistan. My indifference would have resulted in the Muslim world giving credence to the reports as if they were gospel truth. Now the best Muslim mind is already sceptical about the truth of the reports

The lesson I would have my friends of Kathiawad, and incidentally others, to draw from incidents such as this is that they should have their own house in perfect order, should always welcome criticism even when it is bitter and profit by it by becoming more exact (if possible) and correcting their errors whenever detected We should never make the mistake of thinking that we can never make any mistakes. The bitterest critic is bitter because he has some grudge, fancied or real, against us. We shall set him right, if we are patient, with him and whenever the occasion arises, show him his error or correct our own when we are to be found in error. So doing, we shall never go wrong. Undoubtedly, the balance is to be preserved. Discrimination is ever necessary. Deliberately mischievous statements have to be ignored. I believe that by constant practice I have somewhat learnt the art of discrimination.

In the present disturbed atmosphere, when charges are hurled against one another, it would be folly to be in a fool's paradise and feel that we can do no wrong. That blissful state it is no longer possible for us to claim. It will be creditable if by strenuous effort we succeed in isolating the mischief and then eradicating it. We shall do so only if we keep our eyes and ears open for seeing and hearing our own shortcomings. Nature has so made us that we do not see our backs, it is reserved for others to see them. Hence, it is wise to profit by what they see.

I have not done with the long telegram I received from Junagadh last evening as I was about to come to the prayer meeting. I was able only to glance at it. I have since read it carefully. The signatories repeat all the charges made in the reports alluded to by me. If the charges are true, they damage the Kathiawadi Hindus; if they go baselessly beyond the admissions made and published by me,

they have damaged the Pakistan cause. They invite me to go to Kathiawad and study things for myself. I presume that the senders know that I cannot do so. They ask for a commission. Surely before they can do so, they have to make out a *prima facie* case. I must assume that their purpose is not to discredit the Hindus of Kathiawad or Junagadh as the case may be, but to elucidate the truth and protect Muslim life, honour and property. They know as well as anybody else that newspaper propaganda, especially when it is unscrupulous, will protect neither honour nor life, nor property. All the three can be preserved and now by the strictest adherence to truth and going to the many Hindu friends that the signatories know they have. They should know too that though I am far away from Kathiawad, I am not idle. Deliberately I opened the chapter myself and I am gathering all the information I can. I have met the Sardar and he assures me that so far as in him lies, he will prevent all communal strife and see that all misconduct is severely dealt with. The workers in Kathiawad who have no communal prejudice are striving to reach the truth and seek redress of every wrong done to the Muslims who are as dear to them as themselves. Will they help in the process?

Birla House, New Delhi, 1-12-'47

Harijan, 14 12-1947

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WHY FOREIGN PROPAGANDA?

Gandhiji again referred to Kathiawad in his after-prayer speech this evening. He said that he had received a telegram from Shri Shamaldas Gandhi that day and had received one from Shri Dhebarbhai the night before, both contradicting the reports of Muslim harassment in Kathiawad. The former had felt hurt by Gandhiji's remarks about Kathiawad and had gone from Bombay to Kathiawad to investigate things for himself. He had wired to Gandhiji that the reports about abductions of Muslim women were entirely

false, and as far as he knew reports about murders were also untrue. There had been no disturbance of any kind after Sardar Patel's visit. Before that some looting and rioting had taken place. He was making further enquiries and would submit the report to Gandhiji. In the meantime, said Gandhiji, telegrams came from Iran, America and London saying that the Muslims in Kathiawad were being subjected to terrible atrocities. These foreign wires hurt him. He said this as a friend of the Muslims. It was well with them only so long as they adhered to truth. What would be the meaning of sending alarming news to foreign countries except to discredit the Union? It was wrong for them to exaggerate things out of all proportion, and to carry on propaganda in foreign countries based on exaggerations. He must warn his friends against such practice.

Birla House, New Delhi, 4-12-'47

Harijan, 14-12-1947

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MUSLIM RECANTATION

Gandhiji remarked in his post-prayer speech this evening that he had received a telegram from the Muslims who had wired to him earlier. They admitted that there had been much exaggeration in their earlier telegram, and what had appeared about Kathiawad in Pakistan papers was incorrect. He warned the Muslim friends against exaggeration which would damage their case. What was the good of carrying on false propaganda in foreign countries? They could not save the victims in question. The utmost that they could do was to punish the guilty Dominion after the fact. The proper thing was to trust truth to conquer untruth, which evil was.

Birla House, New Delhi, 5-12-'47

Harijan, 14-12-1947

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RECALLING GHAZNAVI ?

Gandhiji referred to an Urdu magazine published in the Union wherein was a verse to the effect that everyone was talking of the Somnath temple that day. But in order to avenge the happenings in Junagadh a new Ghaznavi would have to come from Ghazni. It had deeply hurt Gandhiji. How could any Muslim worth the name in the Union entertain such thoughts ? Why should he not be proud to associate himself with the act of renovation of Somnath ? He hoped that no true Muslim would be proud of the acts which are imputed to Mahmud Ghaznavi. Gandhiji had pledged his life to secure safety for the Muslims in the Union. He would not swerve from his pledge, because he believed in returning good for evil. He asked the Hindus and the Sikhs not to be carried away by passions. But he asked his Muslim friends not to make the task of reconciliation more difficult than it was. He would not have referred to the mischievous couplet but for the fact that it was to be found in an important publication.

Birla House, New Delhi, 25-12-'47

Harijan, 4-1-1948

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CONGRESS POLICY REGARDING COMMUNITIES

Gandhiji said that although the Working Committee had passed no definite resolution to be put before the forthcoming A. I. C. C. the members and the special invitees were unanimously of the opinion that the Congress, which had stood from its inception for over sixty years for perfect communal harmony, was not to go back upon that unbroken record of perfect harmony persisted often in the face of heavy odds. They were quite clear that even though the Congress might for a time find itself in a minority, they should cheerfully face that ordeal rather than succumb to the prevalent insanity.

Freedom, without equality for all irrespective of race or religion, was not worth having for the Congress. In other words, the Congress and any government representative of the Congress must remain a purely democratic, popular body leaving every individual to follow that form of religion which best appealed to him without any interference from the State. There was so much in common between people living in the same State under the same flag owing undivided allegiance to it. There was so much in common between man and man that it was a marvel that there could be any quarrel on the ground of religion. Any creed or dogma which coerced others into following one uniform practice was a religion only in name, for a religion worth the name did not admit of any coercion. Anything that was done under coercion had only a short lease of life. It was bound to die. It must be a matter of pride to them whether they were four anna Congress members or not that they had in their midst an institution without a rival which disdained to become a theocratic State, and which always believed and lived up to the belief that the State of their conception must be a secular, democratic State having perfect harmony between the different units composing the State. When he, the speaker, thought of the plight of the Muslims in the Union, how in many places ordinary life had become difficult for them and how there was a continuing exodus of the Muslims from the Union, he wondered whether the people who were responsible for creating such a state of things could ever become a credit to the Congress. He, therefore, hoped that during the year that had just commenced, the Hindus and the Sikhs would so behave as to enable every Muslim, whether a boy or a girl, to feel that he or she was as safe and free as the tallest Sikh or Hindu.

The A. I. C. C. meeting would be held next Saturday. He hoped that the members would pass resolutions that would be up to the best traditions of the Congress and that they would tend to promote the welfare of the whole of the people, the poor as well as the rich, the prince and the peasant. Then and then only would the Congress be

able to keep up the prestige of India for which it had become responsible, a prestige that would make India a custodian of the rights and dignity of all the exploited nations of the earth.

Birla House, New Delhi, 13-11-'47

Harijan, 23-11-1947

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SATYAGRAHA—MIGHTIEST WEAPON

The question was how Congressmen, who were true to their Congress objective, were to make their position good. Could they offer Satyagraha with hope of success? It gladdened their heart that the A. I. C. C. was staunch to the Congress objective and refused to envisage an India in which only the Hindus could live as masters. The Congress creed was broad-based enough to include all communities. There was no room in it for narrow communalism. It was the oldest of all political organizations. Its motto was service of the people. All that was happening in the A. I. C. C. nerved them for the struggle. Nevertheless, they wanted a word from him. Gandhiji said that he could not lay down the law for them as he had no knowledge of local circumstances. Nor had he the time for any such study. But he could say with confidence that Satyagraha was the mightiest force in the world before which the hostile combination which his visitors had mentioned could not stand for any length of time.

He said that while they were all engaged in trying to quench the fire of communal strife in their own country, they must not forget their countrymen abroad. He referred to the Indian case which was being fought with such unity and gallantry by the Indian delegation before U.N.O. What had pleased him immensely, Gandhiji said, was Ispahani Saheb's and Zaffarulla Saheb's speeches reported in the Press that day. They told their audiences in plain language how Indians were being discriminated against in South Africa and treated as outcastes. The Hindus and

the Muslims in India had no different opinions on the question of the Indians overseas which went to prove that the two-nation theory was incorrect. The lesson Gandhiji had learnt from this, and what he wanted the audience also to learn from what he had said, was that love was the highest thing. If the Hindus and the Muslims could speak with one voice abroad, they could certainly do so here if they had love in their hearts. To err was human. It was also human to mend one's ways. To forgive and forget was always possible. If they could do that today and speak with one voice here as they did abroad, they would surely win through.

Birla House, New Delhi, 16-11-'47

Harijan, 23-11-1947

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NO COMMUNALISM IN COMMERCE

Gandhiji then referred to a letter from the Muslim Chamber of Commerce at Calcutta. The secretary complained that the Central Government had decided to withdraw recognition from the Muslim Chamber. The complaint would be proper if the Muslim Chamber was the exception. But he would justify the step if recognition was withdrawn, say, from the European, and the Marwadi Chambers of Commerce and such others. Surely, in a secular State there was no room for separate communal organizations except for internal reform. The European Chamber had undue recognition from the late foreign Government. Its annual function was a great event. The Viceroys used to make serious pronouncements. He hoped that no such importance would be given to the body. He would expect the great European Houses to make common cause with the indigenous population and seek their advancement in common with that of the whole of India. He advised them to take the lead in disbanding their separate Chamber. The Hindus, the Muslims, the Sikhs, the Christians, the Parsis, the Jews should be Indians first and Indians last. Religion was the

personal affair of each individual. It must not be mixed up with politics or national affairs.

Birla House, New Delhi, 28-11-'47

Harijan, 7-12-1947

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NO COMMUNAL CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE

With reference to communal Chambers of Commerce, Gandhiji had a letter from the Marwadi Chamber of Commerce, saying that though it had a communal name, its membership was open to all. He had asked them how many non-Marwadis they had on the rolls. The European and Muslim Chambers also might make the same claim. The claim could not be sustained by having a few other members for the sake of form. Why should there be separate Chambers if there was no communal spirit behind. There was much to learn from the Europeans if they would stay as Indians and work for the good of India. Some of them were expert businessmen. They could give their talents to India in the spirit of service. There was no use for exploiters.

The letter and the report from the Marwadi Chamber of Commerce were in English. English was all right in its own place. But it hurt him to see it usurp the place that did not belong to it. As an Indian he felt ashamed that anybody should think that he knew more English than his own language. It was utterly useless to send him a letter in English when the writer knew Hindustani. The English report could be justified only on the assumption that the Marwadi Chamber had an overwhelming number of members who were either English or English knowing. He hoped such was not the case if the Chamber was representative of Indian interests, be they even exclusively Marwadi. He hoped the Marwadi Chamber would take his remarks in the spirit in which he had made them. He used the incident to drive home a general truth.

Birla House, New Delhi, 4-12-'47

Harijan, 14-12-1947

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UNBELIEVABLE

"Those who advocate the policy of undivided Bengal shall be punishable with death is the gazetted Order of the East Bengal Government," writes a correspondent. I should like to see the text of the Order before I can believe it. I feel sure that even if there is any Order to some such effect, the exact wording would bear a different meaning. I can understand the criminality of such action. There are very few Hindus and certainly not many Muslims who believe in the advisability or justice of the step. But only a madman would advocate any forcible measure to upset the settled fact. The partition can be undone only by the willing consent of both the parties. But even that consent will be impossible, if no one is allowed to convert public opinion to the side of unity.

New Delhi, 23-11-'47

Harijan, 30-11-1947

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DEATH—COURAGEOUS OR COWARDLY

A Bengali friend writes a long letter in Bengali on the exodus from East Pakistan. Its purport is that though workers like him understand and appreciate my argument and distinction between death—courageous and cowardly—the common man detects in my statement a not too hidden advice in favour of migration. "If death is to be the lot in any case, courage becomes of no count; for man lives but to escape death," he says.

This argument seems to beg the question. Man does not live but to escape death. If he does so, he is advised not to do so. He is advised to learn to love death as well as life, if not more so. A hard saying, harder to act up to, one may say. Every worthy act is difficult. Ascent is always

difficult. Descent is easy and often slippery. Life becomes livable only to the extent that death is treated as a friend, never as an enemy. To conquer life's temptations, summon death to your aid. In order to postpone death a coward surrenders honour, wife, daughter and all. A courageous man prefers death to the surrender of self-respect. When the time comes, as it conceivably can, I would not leave my advice to be inferred, but it will be given in precise language. That today my advice might be followed only by one or none does not detract from its value. A beginning is always made by a few, even one.

New Delhi, 23-11-'47

Harijan, 30-11-1947

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"HINDU AND HINDUISM"

Gandhiji in his after-prayer speech referred to a question that was sent by a member of the audience : What is a Hindu? What is the origin of the word? Is there any Hinduism?

These were pertinent questions for the time. He was no historian, he laid claim to no learning. But he had read in some authentic book on Hinduism that the word 'Hindu' did not occur in the *Vedas* but when Alexander the Great invaded India, the inhabitants of the country to the east of the Sindhu, which is known by the English-speaking Indians as the Indus, were described as Hindus. The letter 'S' had become 'H' in Greek. The religion of these inhabitants became Hinduism and as they knew it, it was a most tolerant religion. It gave shelter to the early Christians who had fled from persecution, also to the Jews known as Beni-Israel as also to the Parsis. He was proud to belong to that Hinduism which was all-inclusive, and which stood for tolerance. Aryan scholars swore by what they called the Vedic religion, and Hindustan was otherwise known as Aryavarta. He had no such aspiration. Hindustan of his conception was all-sufficing for him. It certainly

included the *Vedas*, but it included also much more. He could detect no inconsistency in declaring that he could without in any way whatsoever impairing the dignity of Hinduism pay equal homage to the best of Islam, Christianity, Zoroastrianism and Judaism. Such Hinduism will live as long as the sun shines. Tulsidas had summed it up in one *doha* : "The root of religion is embedded in mercy, whereas egotism is rooted in love of the body. Tulsi says that 'Mercy' should never be abandoned, even though the body perishes."

Birla House, New Delhi, 21-11-'47

Harijan, 30-11-1947

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NATIONAL GUARDS

"The Pakistan Government are sure to raise a volunteer army called National Guards or by some other name. What are the Hindus to do, if they are asked to join? What are they to do, if the army is confined only to the Muslims," asks a correspondent from East Bengal.

This is a difficult question to answer in the present state of things. Almost every Muslim is a suspect in the Union and every Hindu or Sikh likewise in Pakistan, West or East. If there is a hearty invitation, I would advise joining the body, assuming of course that the terms are equal and there is no interference with one's religion. If there is no such invitation, I should, for the time being, submit to the exclusion without harbouring any resentment.

New Delhi, 23-11-'47

Harijan, 30-11-1947

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ADDRESS TO SIKHS

MOTHER'S BITTER PILL

Today Bawa Bachittar Singh came to me in the morning and insisted that I should attend the Guru Nanak's birthday celebration. He told me that probably over a lakh of men and women had assembled there, and that most of them would be sufferers from West Pakistan. I hesitated because I felt that many Sikhs had been displeased with me. Bawa Saheb nevertheless insisted and said that I would say my say before the meeting. I yielded and felt that even as a mother often gives bitter pills to her children, I would take the liberty of saying things, which might appear to be bitter. In reality and in effect they are meant for your good. My mother often used to administer bitter drugs, but I could not feel elsewhere the comfort that her lap provided for me. Whatever I had said to you up to now, I do not regret. I have said those things as your sincere friend and servant. I have with me Sardar Datar Singh's daughter. You perhaps know him. He has lost his all in East Punjab. He was the owner of large tracts of land and several hundred fine cattle. He has lost many relatives and dear friends in Montgomery, but I am glad to be able to tell you that he has not shed a single tear over the misfortune nor has he felt any bitterness towards the Muslims. I would like you to follow his example. Sikh friends have told me that one Sikh is considered equal to 1,25,000 men. Where is that bravery today? Have things come to such a pass that a minority of Muslims cannot live in your midst with perfect safety?

I am free to admit that the mischief commenced in Pakistan, but the Hindus and the Muslims of East Punjab and the neighbouring districts have not been behindhand in copying the mischief. The difference is that the Hindus have not the courage of the Sikhs, who know how to use the sword.

THE SHER-E-KASHMIR

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

BEGIN A NEW CHAPTER

Let this auspicious day mark the beginning of a new chapter in your life. Let the disgrace of driving out the Muslims from Delhi cease from today. I found to my shame that as our motor-car was passing through Chandni Chowk, which used to be filled with Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims, there was not a single Muslim passer-by. Surely we have not come to such a pass as to be afraid of the minority of the Muslims scattered throughout the Indian Union. If there are any traitors in their midst, our Government is strong enough to deal with them. We must be ashamed of hurting children, women or old men. Every man must be considered innocent before he is found guilty by a properly constituted court of law.

I fervently hope that such misdeeds will become now a thing of the past. The *kirpan* is a symbol of sanctity to be exhibited and spent in defence of the helpless and the innocent. The tenth and the last *guru* undoubtedly wielded the sword, but never, so far as I know, at the expense of the weak. He had imposed many restraints upon himself. He had many reputed Muslim disciples. So had the other *gurus* beginning with Nanak Saheb. Your bravery

will be testified when all those who belong to different faiths including Muslims become your sincere friends.

Intoxicating drinks, drugs, dancing, debauchery and the vices to which many of us become addicted are not for the followers of the *gurus* and the *Granth Saheb*. With the *Granth Saheb* as my witness, I ask you to make the resolution that you will keep your hearts clean and you will find that all other communities will follow you.

Harijan, 7-12-1947

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KIRPAN AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

Gandhiji in his post-prayer speech said : It is well to consider a long letter from Sardar Sant Singh of Lyallpur, former M. L. A. (Central). He has put up a forcible defence for the Sikhs. He has read into my prayer speech of last Wednesday a meaning which the words do not bear and certainly was never meant by me. Perhaps the good Sardar does know my intimate connection with the Sikhs ever since my return from South Africa in 1915. There was a time when my word was law to them as to the Hindus and the Muslims. Manners have changed with the times. But I know that I have not. The Sardar, perhaps, does not view the present tendency among the Sikhs as I, their avowed, dispassionate friend without any axe of my own to grind, can and do. I speak freely and frankly because I am their true friend. I make bold to say that many a time the Sikh situation was saved because the Sikhs in general chose to follow my advice. I need, therefore, no reminder that I should be cautious about what I say about the Sikhs or any other community. Let the Sardar and every Sikh, who wishes well by them and is not carried away by the prevailing current, help in ridding the great and brave community from madness, drunkenness and all the vices that flow from it. Let them sheathe the sword which they have flourished loudly and used badly. Let them not be befooled by the Privy Council judgment if it means

that the *kirpan* is a sword of any length. A *kirpan* ceases to be sacred when it goes into the hands of an unprincipled drunkard or when it is used anyhow. A sacred thing has to be used on sacred and lawful occasions. A *kirpan* is undoubtedly a symbol of strength, which adorns a possessor only if he exercises amazing restraint over himself and uses it against enormous odds against himself.

The Sardar will pardon me when I say that I have fairly studied the history of the Sikhs and drunk deep of the essence of the *Granth Saheb*. Tested by the tenets of that scripture, what is said to have been done by the Sikhs is indefensible and suicidal. The Sikh bravery and integrity must not be frittered away on any account. It can be an asset to the whole of India. In my opinion, it is a menace which it should not be.

Of course, it is nonsense to suggest that the Sikhs are enemy No. 1 of Islam. Have I not been described as such? Is the honour to be divided between them and me? I have never desired the honour. My whole life is a standing testimony against the charge. Can the same be said of the Sikhs? Let them learn the lesson from the Sikhs who stand behind the *Sher-e-Kashmir*. Let them repent of the follies committed in their name.

I know the vicious suggestion that the Hindus would be all right if they will sacrifice the Sikhs who would never be tolerated in Pakistan. I can never be a party to any such fratricidal bargain. There can be no rest for this unhappy land unless every Hindu and Sikh returns with honour and in safety to the West Punjab and every Muslim refugee to the Union, barring of course those who do not choose to do so for reasons of their own. The sin of mass exchange of population must be washed out if we are to live as peaceful and helpful neighbours.

I must not be asked to recount the evil deeds of Pakistan. The recounting won't help either the Hindu or the Sikh sufferers. Pakistan has to bear the burden of its sins, which I know are terrible enough. It should be enough for everybody to know my opinion (in so far as it has any value) that the beginning was made by the Muslim League long

before the 15th of August. Nor am I able to say that they turned over a new leaf on the 15th of August last. This statement of my opinion can't help you. What is of moment is that we of the Union copied their sins and thus became fellow sinners. Odds became even. Shall we now awake from the trance, repent and change or must we fall?

Birla House, New Delhi, 24-11-'47

Harijan, 7-12-1947

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NO COMPARISON POSSIBLE

A friend asked me the other day whether I shared the opinion often expressed that as between nationalism and religion, the former was superior to the latter. I said that the two were dissimilars and that there could be no comparison between dissimilars. Each was equal to the other in its own place. No man who values his religion as also his nationalism can barter away the one for the other. Both are equally dear to him. He renders unto Caesar that which is Caesar's and unto God that which is God's. And if Caesar, forgetting his limits, oversteps them, a man of God does not transfer his loyalty to another Caesar, but knows how to deal with the usurpation. A rehearsal of this difficulty gave rise to *satyagraha*.

Take a homely illustration. Suppose I have mother, wife and daughter. All the three must be equally dear to me in their own places. It is a vulgar error to think that a man is entitled to forsake his mother and his daughter for the sake of his wife. He dare not do the converse. And if any of the three oversteps her limits, the law of *satyagraha* comes to his assistance for the restoration of the equilibrium of the three forces.

New Delhi, 28-11-'47

Harijan, 7-12-1947

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ABDUCTED WOMEN

Gandhiji in his after-prayer speech referred to some letters that had hurt him deeply. Several women had been abducted in Pakistan and some of them had been cruelly molested and dishonoured. Their upbringing was such that those rescued women felt ashamed, and society also looked down upon them. To do so was cruel. While it was true that no one could touch a woman who had the purity and the *tejas* of Sita, it was hard to find a Sita in this age. At any rate, every woman could not rise to those heights. A woman who was forcibly molested had nothing to be ashamed of. She was in no way unchaste or immoral. It was strange that while immoral men or women went unpunished and the lapses of some society men and women never came to light, people went out of their way to outcast innocent victims of brutality! Such an outlook pained him. He could never turn out or look down upon his daughter or wife if she had been subjected to such evil treatment and had escaped or been liberated. He had met such women, both Hindus and Muslims, and had told them that they had nothing to feel ashamed of.

Birla House, New Delhi, 26-11-'47

Harijan, 7-12-1947

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ABDUCTED GIRLS

God alone knew what awful things the abducted girls were being subjected to. The Hindus and the Sikhs in the Union had not behaved better. He had learnt that the Muslim girls who were abducted were subjected to unnamable ill-treatment by their lustful captors. He would like the East Punjab Government and its officers to deliver every one of such girls from indecent captivity. Every abduction or

capture should be regarded by both the Governments as illegal and *ab initio* void. It was the peremptory duty of the two Governments not to rest till every such girl was freed from captivity and returned to the respective Governments. There could be no question of voluntary conversion or association on the part of the girl concerned.

Birla House, New Delhi, 29-11-'47

Harijan, 7-12-1947

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ABDUCTED WOMEN

Speaking after prayers, Gandhiji referred to the subject of abducted women. Some Hindu women workers from the Union had gone to Lahore to attend a conference with Muslim women. Raja Gaznafarali and some others were present. It was said that 25,000 Hindu and Sikh women had been abducted in Pakistan and 12,000 Muslim women were abducted in the Eastern Punjab. Some said that the figures were not quite so high. For him, Gandhiji said, even a single abduction was bad enough. How could man stoop so low? The lowest figure, i. e. 12,000 for either province was high enough. The conference agreed that all these women must be rescued and restored to their families. Raja Gaznafarali had said that both the Dominions had been disgraced by this episode. Who did more evil and who started it, were irrelevant questions when both the parties were agreed that these women should be returned. The important thing was how the evil was to be undone.

Shrimati Rameshwari Nehru and Shrimati Mridula Sarabhai had given him a brief account of the work of the conference. They suggested that some women were to go to Pakistan and some to the East Punjab and do rescue work with the help of the police and the military. In his (Gandhiji's) opinion this method would not succeed. It was said that in some places some of the

abducted women did not wish to return. They had changed their religion and were married. He did not believe it. Such marriages and such conversions must be considered null and void. It was the duty of the two Governments to see that each one of these women was restored to her family. The families should receive them with open arms. To ostracize them for having fallen into evil hands was inexcusable cruelty.

25,000 women must have been abducted by at least an equal number of men. Were they all *goondas* ? Gandhiji discredited the hypothesis. They were men passing as good who had disgraced themselves. They had lost their balance and all sense of propriety. Public opinion had to be created in favour of restoration. The two Governments should stake their all on the rescue of these women. They could ask for the help of other individuals or organizations. But the task was so big that none but the Governments could tackle it.

Birla House, New Delhi, 7-12-'47

Harijan, 14-12-1947

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ABDUCTED WOMEN

Several thousand Hindu and Sikh girls had been taken away by Muslims. The whereabouts of a few were known, but there were large numbers about whom he knew nothing, said Gandhiji in his post-prayer speech. When contacted some were reported to have said that they did not wish to return. They were afraid that they would not be accepted back by their society. Their husbands, parents and friends would look down upon them. Gandhiji wanted to say, with all the emphasis at his command, that society should welcome those girls back. Some of them were pregnant. It was no fault of theirs. Their children, when born, should be treated with the same regard and respect as any other children. The religion of these children would be that of

the mother. On growing up they were to change it if they wished. If any such girl came to him she would be treated by him as any other girl in his party. To castigate these girls, for having fallen a victim to the lust of some monster, was less than human. No shame attached to them.

Gandhiji had been told that many Muslim girls had been abducted in Patiala and Kashmir and other places by Hindus and Sikhs. Some of them were girls from well known families. If his voice could reach the places where these girls were, he would strongly advise the guilty parties to restore them without delay. There was no doubt that they would be accepted back by their families.

He had heard that some Hindu and Sikh girls were with a Muslim Pir, who said that they would not be ill treated in any way, but that they would not be returned till the Muslim girls were returned. Could there be a bargain in such matters? Both sides should rescue and return the abducted girls at the earliest opportunity, irrespective of what the other side was doing. Then alone could they hope to live as respectable and respected citizens. Otherwise, they would become a nation of forty crores of *goondas*. A society that tolerated such crimes would be judged according to the pattern of its *goondas*.

Birla House, New Delhi, 26-12-'47

Harijan, 4-1-1948

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THE HARIJANS IN SIND

A medical friend from Sind had written to Gandhiji of the sad plight of the Harijans there. He said that if the Caste Hindus went away and the Harijans alone were left in Sind, nothing but annihilation awaited them. The only condition for life there would be complete slavery and ultimate acceptance of Islam. The Pakistan Government said many things, but the Pakistan officials did not implement them. Gandhiji said that this was a sad state of affairs. In the Union also Pandit Jawaharlalji and the Sardar had said that they would give protection to the Muslims and they did not want a single Muslim to leave the Union out of fear. What he had told them about Panipat yesterday showed that they could not have that assurance implemented to the full. If that was the state of affairs in the Union, what could he say to Pakistan? The Harijans of Sind, he was told, wanted to come away, but were not allowed to do so. They were forced to do *bhangi's* work, even when they were not used to such work. If true, it was wholly wrong. The Pakistan Government should not act in a way that might leave a permanent sore spot on the Sikh and the Hindu mind. Those Harijans, who wanted to leave Sind, should be given facilities to do so. No one could be forced to do *bhangi's* work. Today a Harijan could choose any profession for himself. Shri Jagjivanramji had said that the Harijans should come away from Pakistan. But while they remained there, they should be allowed to live honourably. All conversions, even when they were said to be voluntary, should be considered null and void in both the Dominions.

Birla House, New Delhi, 3-12-'47

Harijan, 14-12-1947

CAN INDIA TEACH BURMA?

The Prime Minister of Burma had been to see Gandhiji. He was full of humility. Gandhiji told him that though India was a great country geographically and its culture was ancient, today there was nothing for Burma to learn from India although India had given birth to Guru Nanak who taught love and tolerance for all. The Sikhs were to be friends with the Hindus, the Muslims and everybody. It was wrong to make a difference between the Sikhs and the Hindus. Master Tarasingh had compared the Hindus and the Sikhs to the nail and the nailbed. No one, he said, could separate the two. Gandhiji was glad to hear it. Who was Guru Nanak, if not a Hindu? The *Guru Granth* was full of the teachings of the *Vedas*. Hinduism was like a mighty ocean which received and absorbed all religious truths. It was a tragedy that India and the Hindus seemed to have forgotten their heritage. They seemed to be engaged in fratricidal strife today. He did not want Burma to learn strife from India. They should forget the ugly present, which he hoped was temporary, and remember that India had won her freedom without bloodshed. He had admitted that it was not non-violence of the brave that India had practised. But, whatever it was, it had enabled a mighty nation of forty crores to shake off the foreign yoke without bloodshed. It was the freedom of India that had brought freedom to Burma and Ceylon. A nation that had won freedom without the force of arms should be able to keep it too without the force of arms. This he said in spite of the fact that India had an army, a navy in the making and an air force and these were being developed still further. He was convinced that unless India developed her non-violent strength, she had gained nothing either for herself or for the world. Militarization of India would mean her own destruction as well as of the whole world. He reminded the Burmese friends that they had got their Buddhism too

from India. He had come in touch with their monks. Let Burma take the best of Buddhism from India. In his opinion the quality of the original had suffered from migration. He wanted Burma and Ceylon to rise to their highest heights This they could do only by copying its best from India and omitting its obvious shortcomings.

Birla House, New Delhi, 4-12-'47

Harijan 14-12-1947

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RETURN OF THE REFUGEES

The Working Committee gave full three hours to a discussion of the resolutions to be put before the A.I.C.C. It turned upon the question as to how best to bring about an atmosphere whereby all the refugees, the Hindus and the Sikhs could be returned with honour and in safety to their homes in the West Pakistan. They contended that the wrong commenced in Pakistan, but they realized also that the question of commencement dwindled into insignificance when the wrong was copied on a large enough scale by the Hindus and the Sikhs, who took terrible reprisals in the East Punjab and the adjacent parts of the Union. If the A. I. C. C. could with confidence say that so far as the Union was concerned the days of madness were over and that sanity reigned from one end of the Union to the other, the Committee could say with perfect assurance that the Pakistan Dominion would feel obliged to invite the refugees to return to their homes with honour and in perfect safety. This condition would be brought about if only the audience and the other Hindus and Sikhs could install *Ramanama*, i. e. God, in their hearts instead of Ravana or Satan. For, when they had displaced Satan and shed the present madness, every Muslim child would roam about as freely as a Hindu or a Sikh child. Then he had no doubt that the Muslim refugees who had left their homes under pressure would gladly return to their homes,

and the way would then be cleared for safe and honourable return of every Hindu and Sikh refugee

Would that his word could find an echo in the hearts of his audience and the A I C C would be able to come to a wise and just decision !

Birla House, New Delhi, 14-11-'47

Harijan, 23-11 1947

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CONDITION OF NEIGHBOURLINESS

Gandhiji during his post-prayer discourse referred to a letter received by him the day before in which the writer had warned him against the treachery of Pakistan It was Pakistan that had started the mischief. The Hindus and the Sikhs had merely retaliated Even if they stopped retaliating, Pakistan was not going to mend its ways The property left behind by the Hindus and the Sikhs was lost by them for good Gandhiji did not agree with this view He had said that he would not rest until every Hindu and Sikh had returned to his home with safety and honour Similarly, he wanted to see every Muslim return to his home in the Union The dead could not be brought back to life nor could the palatial buildings that had been burnt be restored by any Government. He would be content if what was left was returned with the land to the rightful owners The Hindu and the Sikh houses and lands occupied by the Muslims in Lahore, Lyallpur and other places in Pakistan had to be vacated And that was bound to happen soon if the Hindus and the Sikhs in the Union behaved correctly. Man was made in the image of God, but he was capable of making mistakes. If, however, he corrected his mistakes, the divine in him could restore him. That was what he hoped and longed for. The majority community in both the Dominions had to repent for their evil deeds and ask the forgiveness of the minority community. They would then become good neighbours instead of being

enemies they had become. They had won their independence through means that were above board. The world had complemented them for so doing Let them maintain their independence in the same way. If they said goodbye to goodness, they would not be able to keep their independence. People told him that the A. I C. C resolution about the return of the Hindus, the Sikhs and the Muslims to their respective homes was idle talk. He did not believe that this was so If the people of India had lost their sanity for a while, it did not mean that they would remain insane for ever. He had made Delhi the test case. If he failed here, he could not hope for success elsewhere.

Birla House, New Delhi, 6-12-'47

Harijan, 14-12-1947

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ASSURANCE OF MUSLIM PEACE MISSION

Four Muslim friends of the U. P. had been to the West Punjab on a peace mission. They had come to see Gandhiji in the morning and told him that the Hindus could go and live in Lahore in safety They would accompany them and would lay down their lives before a hair of their heads was touched. Gandhiji asked them to write down what they had said so that he could read it to the meeting They wrote and gave him the following letter:

"The U. P Peace Mission has twice toured in the West Punjab They spent one month there on the first occasion and one week on the second Conditions are much better now and the Government and the people are both trying to establish peace.

1. The West Punjab Government wishes that the non-Muslims living there should continue to do so and those that have left should return.

2. The Government has issued instructions that the property of those non-Muslims who come back should be returned to them.

3. Those non-Muslims who return to the West Punjab should be given full protection and facilities for carrying on their business.

4. If in spite of all their efforts any non-Muslim does not wish to return to the West Punjab, he has full right to sell or exchange his property.

5. The Government is giving exemplary punishments to riot mongers and is taking all precautions against a repetition of the trouble. The Peace Mission has prepared the people and the Government to shoulder the responsibility of ensuring the safety of life, honour and property of the non-Muslims. The members of U. P. Peace Mission assure their non-Muslim brethren that they would accompany those who wish to return to their homes and help to rehabilitate them. They would protect them with their lives and will not leave them till they feel safe."

A Hindu had also given him a letter saying that he had stayed in Lahore throughout the riot. He was running a restaurant. He had an attendance of nearly one thousand a day. The Government was trying to suppress lawlessness. He requested the non-Muslims, who had left Lahore, to go back.

Gandhiji said that if this was true, he would feel more than satisfied. But the statement of these friends had to be proved in action. He would set about seeing what was possible to do in the matter.

Birla House, New Delhi, 11-12-'47

Harijan, 21-12-1947

A CUNNING MOVE

A correspondent writes

"I have just heard over the radio, your post-prayer speech delivered on the 11th December, 1947 In this you say that certain U P Muslims who had been to Lahore, had come to you and assured on behalf of the Pakistan officials that non-Muslims especially the Hindus could go to Lahore and start their businesses there Firstly, this invitation, to the Hindus alone and not to the Sikhs, is a cunning move on the part of Pakistan officials to create a split amongst the Hindus and Sikhs

"All such assurances are farce and mockery and people like you alone perhaps can be misled by such Muslims Here with I am sending you a cutting dated 11-12-47 from the *Hindustan Times* which speaks for itself and fairly exposes the sincerity of the Pakistan Government After going through this, do you please still believe that such Muslims who come to you are honest? They only mean to show to the world that the Pakistan Government is quite fair to the minorities and everything is well in Pakistan whereas the facts are quite the contrary If these Muslims come to you again, kindly show them this cutting

"Further, I am sure you remember well what fate the Hindus and the Sikhs met on the 20th November, 1947 when they went to Lahore to take their valuables from their banks Even the Indian Military, under whose protection the Hindus and the Sikhs went, was attacked by Muslim mobs in the presence of the Pakistan officials who took no steps to check the rioters

The cutting referred to by the correspondent reads as follows

"Non-Muslim businessmen and shopkeepers who had fled eastwards during the recent communal disturbances are gradually returning to Lahore with a view to opening their trading concerns now closed for months, but on seeing the

impossible conditions they are required to sign before getting possession of their shops, many of them have gone back to India in disappointment, according to a recent report published in the *Civil and Military Gazette*, Lahore.

"The report adds: Shops are being opened by owners on behalf of the Rehabilitation Commissioner. The following terms are required to be signed by these shopkeepers:

1. A promise to maintain proper accounts of all sales.

2. That the owner will not transfer any interest in his shop without previous written permission of the Assistant Rehabilitation Commissioner.

3. That he will continue to manage his shop as a running concern.

4. That all sale proceeds shall be deposited daily in a Scheduled Bank and shall not be withdrawn without the previous permission of the Assistant Rehabilitation Commissioner.

5. That the shopowner will continue to reside permanently in Lahore.

"Many businessmen who had returned to Lahore with a view to opening their concerns have gone back to India. They feel that the conditions which they are being required to sign before possession is actually given them are such that it will not be possible for them to conduct their business etc. with respect in the face of so much interference and supervision by the Government.

"Besides, they say, since the Pakistan Government have promised the minorities 'generous treatment' it does not behove them to treat non-Muslim businessmen in a different manner. A leading businessman said: 'No such restrictions are being imposed on Muslim traders and businessmen.'"

TRUST BEGETS TRUST

I dealt with the disappointment only the other day. Whilst the information may be quite accurate, it does not necessarily vitiate what the Muslim friends told me. They have not only their own reputation to keep but also of those in the Union whom they represent and of the Pakistan authorities who gave them the assurances. Let me add, too, that the friends are in touch with me. They came in today.

As I was silent and busy writing my prayer speech, I could not afford to see them They have, however, sent me their assurance that they are not idle, they are prosecuting their peace mission I warn my correspondent against being hyper-suspicious and hyper-sensitive He will lose nothing by believing Disbelief is a treacherous mate. Let him beware. For my part, I am unrepentant I have trusted all my life with my eyes open I propose to trust these Muslim friends too till they prove themselves untrue Trust begets trust. It gives you strength to combat treachery. If there is to be return on either side by the evacuees to their homes, it will be only by the means I have adopted and am pursuing.

AN UNWORTHY FEAR

The correspondent's fear that the offer is intended to create a rift between the Sikhs and the Hindus is unworthy. I told the friends that their proposal might bear that sinister meaning They said an emphatic 'no' to it I see nothing wrong in making the passage smooth for recross over. It is not to be denied that there is stronger prejudice in Pakistan against the Sikhs But there is no doubt that the two (Hindus and Sikhs) must sink or swim together. Only they must not have evil designs There is no such thing as an honourable partnership between conspirators.

Birla House, New Delhi, 15-12-'47

Harijan 28-12 1947

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CONDITIONS FOR RETURN

Gandhiji was being warned that in spite of sweet talk by Muslim leaders in Pakistan, no Hindu or Sikh could live in Pakistan with any self-respect or safety. Congressmen had always held that their State was a secular State, where there could be no distinctions of caste and creed. But many Hindus and Sikhs were acting otherwise. If both the States were to lose their moorings, it must spell the ruin of both.

A friend had written to him as follows. "Forced by circumstances and to save valuable human lives, we had to leave Lahore on the 17th August with family and take shelter in Delhi with a relation Our house was looted and our shop given to some Muslim by the Pakistan Government We approached the Ministry for Refugees, Delhi, to help us in bringing our goods here on 9-9-'47, when all the things were intact, and receiving no acknowledgment even and after receiving news of loot and passing of the shop to a Muslim, our dear father went to Lahore on the 1st December and approached the Pakistan Government, in accordance with the decision between the Pakistan Government and the Indian Government that people who liked to go back to their original places would be given all facilities to restart their business and afforded all protection, and applied to allow us to open our factories and work the same We learn from our representative that the Director of Industries, Lahore, has refused to give us the permission, saying that the factories are allotted to ten refugees jointly (although the possession of the same has not been handed over to them) and the decision cannot be altered " Gandhiji's reply was that he had not asked anyone to return without assurances and arrangement by the Pakistan Government It pleased him that some Muslims were working for the return of Hindu and Sikh evacuees. But the time was not ripe yet for their return. He would let them know when he thought that they could safely return. The Muslim friends about whom he had made mention and even he himself might accompany the first batch.

Birla House, New Delhi, 17-12-'47

Harijan 28-12-1947

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DON'T RETURN AS YET

Gandhiji began his post-prayer address this evening by answering a few questions. In reply to the question as to how he could advise the refugees from the West Punjab to return when even in Sind the Hindus and Sikhs could not live in peace and honour, Gandhiji observed that the question did not arise since he had already made it clear at a recent meeting that he was unable at present to advise the refugees to return to the West Punjab, though some Muslim friends had brought this suggestion. He had been informed that there were 251 persons awaiting evacuation from Chitral and the surrounding parts as in Sind thousands were awaiting it. The Union Government could not rest content until those who wished to do so were enabled to migrate. He agreed with the questioner that there could be no return without change of hearts. Unless the Dominions turned a new leaf, both were doomed. The trouble had no doubt started in West Pakistan, but some parts of the Indian Union had resorted to retaliation. The question, therefore, of time and extent was now beside the point. If either Dominion behaved correctly, the other would follow suit and both would be saved.

Gandhiji could never bring himself to accept the proposition of a permanent exchange of population. Even if the refugees were well settled, they would hark back to their old homes. Therefore, he could not envisage real peace without the parties returning to their homes.

Birla House, New Delhi, 31-12-'47

Harijan, 11-1-1948

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TO PAKISTAN REFUGEES

Gandhiji in his post-prayer speech referred to the visit of several representatives of the refugees from Pakistan. They asked him why he did not take more interest in the removal of their grievances. Little did they realize that he was in Delhi for that very purpose. But he was not so effective today as he used to be before the advent of independence. In the past he was the leader of India's non-violent rebels. Although everyone did not follow his advice, large numbers did so. Today his was a voice in the wilderness. The great teachers had said that one should go on proclaiming the truth as one saw it, even though no one listened to it. He was not running the Government. Those at the helm of affairs, it was true, were his friends. But he did not want anyone to accept his advice out of friendship or regard for him. They should do so only if it went home. If the Ministers and their secretaries and the lower staff including the police would listen to him, things would be very different. But that could not be. The Ministers had inherited the old machinery from the British rulers and they were making the best of it.

The refugees were, however, entitled to food, clothing and shelter. They were their own kith and kin. It was utterly unjust that they should not get what, for instance, he could. What were they to do? He had told them that the only way was for all to gratefully accept whatever accommodation was offered. A grass mattress could very well serve the purpose of a cotton mattress. For the food, clothing and shelter supplied to them, they should do such work as was entrusted to them. A labourer could not sit at the table and write, but a man who had worked at the table all his life could certainly take to physical labour. If they developed the right mentality, India could easily absorb the few lakhs that had come and more.

They all knew of the happenings in Karachi. Although many people had said that Sind was quiet and people could

continue to stay there, he had his doubts. His fears had come true Not only the Hindus and Sikhs, but other non-Muslims also were not safe in Sind today The Pakistan Government had said that they had been powerless to prevent the disturbances, but they were trying to suppress them as fast as they could His advice to the Pakistan Government and to the Union Government was that if they were powerless to prevent the outbreak of violence, they should resign That might make things worse for a while, but ultimately they would improve The only condition on which they should continue to hold the reins was that things should begin to improve, however slowly. There should be no set back

To the refugees and the Hindus and Sikhs in general, he would say that they must curb their desire for revenge. They should be neither frightened, nor become upset and panicky by the happenings in Karachi. The only correct reply to such a thing was cent per cent correct behaviour in the Union

Birla House, New Delhi, 7-1-'48

Harijan, 18-1-1948

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ADDRESS TO THE MEOS

Addressing a gathering mainly of Meos (who are Muslims by religion) in the village of Jesarah in the Gurgaon Tehsil on 9-12-'47 *Gandhiji remarked that what* had taken place—the orgy of murder, arson, loot, abductions, forcible conversions and worse that they had witnessed —was, in his opinion, unmitigated barbarism. True, such things were not unknown before, but there was not that wholesale communal discrimination. Tales of such happenings had filled him with grief and shame. Even more shameful was the demolition and desecration of mosques, temples and *gurudwaras*. Such madness, if it was not arrested, must spell ruin to both the communities. They were far from freedom while this madness reigned

What was the remedy, Gandhiji continued. He had no faith in the force of bayonets He could only present to them the weapon of non-violence, which provided an answer to every emergency and which was invulnerable. It was common to all great religions—to Christianity no less than to Hinduism etc., but it had today been reduced to a mere copy-book maxim by the votaries of religions and in practice they all followed the law of the jungle. His might be today a voice in the wilderness, said Gandhiji, but he had no other message to give them except this message of non-violence—of meeting the challenge of brute force with the power of the spirit

Gandhiji then referred to the representation which was read to him by a representative of the Meos in which had been catalogued their complaints for which they wanted redress. He had placed that letter, Gandhiji told the audience, in the hands of Dr Gopichand, their Prime Minister and the speaker would leave it to him (Dr Gopichand) to tell them what he proposed to do in regard to the various points set forth in it. All he could say was that if any Government officer had been guilty of misconduct, he was sure, the Government would not hesitate to take suitable action against him. No individual could be allowed to usurp the function of the Government and expect a reshuffle of Government officers at his bidding. He was clear too that no conversion or marriage of a woman to a member of the opposite community could be recognized as valid on the plea of consent or free will. It was abuse of words to talk of free consent when terror reigned

He would feel happy, continued Gandhiji, if his words could bring some consolation to them in their distress. Referring to the Meo refugees who had been driven out of the Alwar and Bharatpur States, Gandhiji remarked that he looked forward to the day when all enmities would be forgotten and all hatred buried underground, and all those who had been driven away from their hearths and homes would return to them and resume their avocations in perfect security and peace as before. His heart would

then dance with joy. He would never give up that hope so long as he lived. But he was free to confess that today conditions were not ripe for it. He was sure that their Union Government would not be remiss in discharging its duty in that respect, and the States would have to listen to the advice of the Union Government.

Gandhiji concluded by giving a word of advice to the Meos. He had been told, he remarked, that the Meos were almost like criminal tribes. If the statement was correct, it called for an all out effort on their part to reform themselves It should not be left to others to do the work of reclamation. He hoped that the Meos would not resent his advice, but take it in the spirit in which it was offered To the Government he would say that even if the allegation regarding the Meos was correct, that was no argument for sending them out into Pakistan. The Meos were subjects of the Indian Union and it was its duty to help them to reclaim themselves by providing them with facilities of education and establishing settlements for them to settle in.

Dr. Gopichand, being next asked to address them a few words, said that it was not the policy of the East Punjab Government that a single Muslim should leave his hearth and home and go out of the Indian Union. As a representative and servant of the people, he was bound to carry out their collective will It was his duty to ensure equal protection to all sections and communities in the State He wanted them to return to their homes and resume their avocations. They should till the land which was lying uncultivated and help grow more food. If anybody tried to molest them, the fact should be brought to the notice of the authorities who would give them due protection. As regards Government officers against whom they had complaints, he would ask them to communicate the same to the authorities through the proper channels and to appeal to the higher authorities if they failed to get proper redress. He was sorry that he could not accept their suggestion that all officers who had been serving in their areas before should summarily be transferred and

other officers from the Ambala Division be brought in to replace them. All officers of the Government were equally bound by their oath of loyalty to carry out faithfully the policy of the State and he could not discriminate against officers of any particular Division as such. All he could promise was that any officer who acted contrary to the policy of the Government would be suitably dealt with As regards providing them with food and clothing, he had already issued orders to the Deputy Commissioner to make adequate arrangements. He had further instructed the District authorities not to be guided merely by their officers, but to act in close co-operation with the representatives of the affected people.

As regards those who wanted to return to the Bharatpur and Alwar States, from where they had been driven out, continued Shri Bhargava, the matter could only be dealt with through the agency of the Central Government

Finally, about the abducted women, he made a fervent appeal to those who held them, to return them to their respective guardians and relations. A committee had been formed to help recover such women and he would ask them to get into touch with it. He reiterated that no conversion would be recognized as valid by his Government on the plea of willing consent, considering the circumstances prevailing at the time when the conversions were made. He regarded such conversions worse than useless—they were a negation of religion.

Harijan, 28-12-1947

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NO DESECRATION

Not perhaps eight miles from here is the mausoleum of Kutubuddin Bakhtiyarkaki Chishtisaheb which is reputed to be second in sanctity to the one in Ajmer. Both are visited not only by Muslims but by thousands of Hindus and other non-Muslims in equal veneration. Hindu wrath visited the sacred place in early September last. The Muslims in the surroundings felt compelled to vacate their favourite home which had been such for close on four centuries. It would be unnecessary to mention this tragic occurrence but for the fact that the place is still deserted by the Muslims, however much they may be devoted to the mausoleum. It behoves the Hindus, the Sikhs, the officials immediately in charge and the Ministers to wipe out the disgrace and reinstate the place in all its original glory. What I have said here is equally applicable to all the Muslim places of worship in and around Delhi and elsewhere in the Union. It is high time that both the Governments by their firm action made it clear to their respective majorities that they could no longer tolerate desecration of the places of worship, big or insignificant. All damage done to them should be repaired without delay.

Birla House, New Delhi, 22-12-'47

Harijan, 4-1-1948

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UNION MUSLIMS' DUTY

Gandhiji in his post-prayer discourse said: In view of the decision recently arrived at by the Muslim League meeting held in Karachi and in view of the meeting to be held in Lucknow at the instance of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Muslim friends have been asking me whether if they were members of the Muslim League, they should attend the Lucknow meeting, whether they should also attend the meeting of the League members to be held in Madras, and in any event what the attitude of the members of the Muslim League in the Union should be. I have no doubt that if they are invited specially or publicly, they should attend the Lucknow meeting as also the later meeting at Madras. At each meeting they should express their views fearlessly and frankly. That the Muslims in India find themselves in a minority without protection from the majority in Pakistan is no disadvantage if they at all followed the technique of non-violence during the past thirty years. It was not necessary for them to have faith in non-violence to be able to appreciate the fact that a minority, however small it might be, never has any cause for fear as to the preservation of their honour and all that must be near and dear to man. He is so made that if he understood his Maker and himself as made in His image, no power on earth could rob him of self-respect except he himself. A dear English friend in Johannesburg, while I was fighting the mighty government of the Transvaal, told me that he always made common cause with minorities. For, he said, they were hardly ever in the wrong and if they were, they could be weaned from it without difficulty, whereas majorities could not be, owing to the intoxication that power gave them. The friend had uttered a great truth, if by majority we would also understand the power that exclusive possession of weapons of destruction gave an aggregate of men. We know to our

cost that a handful of Englishmen were able to be the majority, keeping under their heels millions of Indians by possession of arms which India did not have and could not know how to wield even if she had. It is a thousand pities that neither the Hindus nor the Muslims learnt the lesson whilst the English power was in operation in our country. The Union Muslims are now free from the oppressiveness they were under, whilst they were falsely proud of the Muslim majority in the West and the East. If they would realize the virtue of being in a minority, they would know that they could now express in their own lives the best that is in Islam. Will they remember that Islam gave its best during the Prophet's ministry in Mecca? Christianity waned when Constantine came to it. But I must not here carry this argument further. My advice is based upon implicit belief in it. Therefore, if my Muslim friends do not share the belief, they will perhaps do well to reject the advice.

BE OF THE CONGRESS

In my opinion, while they should hold themselves in readiness to join the Congress, they should refrain from applying for admission until they are welcomed with open arms and on terms of absolute equality. In theory at least the Congress has no major and minor communities. It has no religion but the religion of humanity. For the Congress every man or woman is equal to any other. It is a purely secular, political, national organization in which Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Parsis, Jews are equal. Because the Congress has not always been able to live up to its professions, it has appeared to many Muslims as a predominantly caste Hindu organization. Any way, Muslims should have dignified aloofness so long as the tension lasts. They would be in the Congress when their services are wanted by it. In the meantime they should be of the Congress even as I am. That I have an influence without being a four anna member is because I have served it faithfully ever since my return from South Africa in 1915. Every Muslim can do so from now and he will find that

his services are as much valued as mine. Today, every Muslim is assumed to be a Leaguer and, therefore, to be an enemy of the Congress. Such unfortunately has been the teaching of the League. There is now not the slightest cause for enmity. Four months are too short a period to be free from the communal poison. Unfortunately for this unhappy land, the Hindus and the Sikhs mistook the poison for nectar and have, therefore, become enemies of the Muslims of India and have to their disgrace retaliated and become so even with the Muslims of Pakistan. I would, therefore, urge the Muslim minority to rise superior to the poisonous atmosphere and live down the thoughtless prejudice by proving by their exemplary conduct that the only honourable way of living in the Union is that they should be full citizens without any mental reservations. It follows then that the League cannot remain a political organization, even as the Hindu Mahasabha or the Sikh Sabha or the Parsi Sabha cannot. They may function as religious organizations for internal religious reform for the purpose of exploring the best and living the best that is in their religions. Then they will purify the atmosphere of all poison and vie with one another in well-doing. They will be friendly to one another and thus help the State. Their political ambition can only be satisfied through the Congress, whether they are in it or not. The Congress will be a caucus when it thinks of those only who are in it. It has very few such even now. It has as yet an unrivalled position because it strives to represent the whole of India without exception. It aims to serve "even unto this last."

Birla House, New Delhi, 29-12-'47

Harijan, 11-1-1948

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ADVICE TO UNION MUSLIMS

Many Muslims, principally from the Postal and Railway Departments say that they had opted for the sake of propaganda. Therefore, they would now like to reconsider their view. There are Muslims who have been discharged from their posts, I presume, on the ground of suspected anti-Hindu bias. My sympathy goes out to all such men. But I feel that the right course is not to resent pardonable suspicion, although it may be unjustified in individual cases. I can only prescribe my old, well-tried remedy. Only very few can be accommodated in the various government departments. To get a government job should never be the aim of life. Honest living is the only worthy aim. This is always assured when and if one is ready to do any labour that comes to hand. Until the dominating and corroding communal poison is eliminated, I think it is necessary and dignified for Muslims not to aim at the loaves and fishes in government employ. Power comes from sincere service. Actual attainment often debases the holder. To fight for it is unseemly. At the same time it is surely the duty of a government to ensure bread labour for all unemployed men and women, no matter how many they are. To do so intelligently pays the State instead of costing it, assuming of course that the unemployed are physically fit and are not shirkers but willing workers.

Birla House, New Delhi, 29-12-'47

Harijan, 11-1-1948

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NON-MUSLIMS IN BAHAWALPUR

Some people from Bahawalpur had brought placards to the prayer ground the day before on which was written. "Save the 70,000 Hindus and Sikhs of Bahawalpur" Gandhiji was silent then, so he referred to the subject today. Two friends saw him during the day in the same connection. They said that they were contemplating fasting before the Governor-General's house till arrangements were made for the evacuation of the Hindus and Sikhs from Bahawalpur. Gandhiji said that such a step would help none. The Governor-General had no power today except such as he derived from his Cabinet. He had no longer the might of the British Empire at his back. Nor could he utilize his power as a fine warrior that he was. For the time being he had put it in cold storage. He nevertheless agreed that arrangements should be made to bring the Hindus and Sikhs from Bahawalpur. It was the duty of the Nawabsaheb to make arrangements to send them wherever they wanted to go outside Pakistan. Bahawalpur was,, he understood, made principally by the Sikhs. Yet they and the Hindus had to suffer terribly. The Nawabsaheb could not disown responsibility in the matter. But let bygones be bygones. He appealed to the Nawabsaheb to make a declaration that not a hair of the head of any Hindu and Sikh would be touched in the State till arrangements were made for their evacuation. During the interval they should be well looked after.

Birla House, New Delhi, 23-12-'47

Harijan, 4-1-1948

REGARDING BAHAWALPUR AND SIND

Gandhiji during his post-prayer discourse referred to a letter which he had received and in which he had been requested to reiterate and re-emphasize what he had already said, namely that such Hindus and Sikhs or any other non-Muslims as wanted to go out of the Bahawalpur State should be freely permitted to do so. The Nawabsaheb of Bahawalpur had declared that he made no distinction between his Muslim and non-Muslim subjects, but held them all in equal regard. He welcomed that declaration. He hoped that the Nawabsaheb would insure safe passage to them to leave his territory. They should be free to carry their belongings with them and in fact the State ought to provide them railway facilities for the purpose. What was done was done and could not be undone, remarked Gandhiji, but if the Nawabsaheb did that much, he would deserve the congratulations of all.

NON-MUSLIMS IN SIND

And what he had said about Bahawalpur, proceeded Gandhiji, applied equally to Sind too. From the reports which he had received, it seemed clear that no Hindu or for that matter any non-Muslim could today remain in Sind, and feel safe. Even educational institutions were being requisitioned and respectable, well-to-do people were being asked to vacate their premises to make room for in-coming "refugees" from the Union. Members of the so-called depressed classes were not permitted to leave Sind. He would appeal to Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah and the Prime Minister of Sind and his Cabinet to remedy this state of affairs. All those who wanted to go out of Sind should be free to do so. That was the only way of retaining or regaining the confidence of the minorities. With the return of normal conditions in Sind, even those who had gone away might feel like returning to their homes. Compulsion, on the other hand, would have just the opposite effect and defeat its purpose.

It would not redound to the credit of Pakistan if it was made impossible for non-Muslims to remain in it as free citizens and they could remain there only as serfs and helots.

Birla House, New Delhi, 30-12-'47

Harijan, 11-1-1948

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NEWS FROM NOAKHALI

Gandhiji in his post-prayer speech told the audience that his secretary Pyarelalji had come to see him from Noakhali. Pyarelalji and his colleagues had, in his opinion, done very good work there. They had stayed there at Gandhiji's instance even at the risk of their lives, if necessary. It had given great comfort and courage to the Hindus and it had also enabled the Muslims to realize that these volunteers were the friends of all, and wanted to restore peace and goodwill. Pyarelalji had told him of one incident which he wanted to share with them in his own words:

> "What may be termed the first act in restitution in Shahpur, which was the starting point and storm centre during the riots and where I have been working for the last thirteen months in pursuance of Gandhiji's "Do or Die" mission in Noakhali, was performed the other day when the local Muslims with their own hands removed a mosque which they had erected on a site belonging to the Hindus out of dismantled material of the house of a local Hindu businessman. Both the dismantled material and the site have been restored to the rightful owners. In a signed declaration which the leading local Muslims have issued, they have described the act as "a gesture of goodwill towards our Hindu brethren and a step towards their rehabilitation." The step was not taken without some vigorous heart-searching and even at the eleventh hour there was some talk of having a joint meeting of the Hindus and the Muslims of the locality to "explore means" of "amicable" settlement by "compromise". But they at once saw the point when it was pointed out to them that

compromise could have no place in a matter which called for restitution on the part of the majority community, specially when it was the offender. Even if there were no demand on the part of the minority, still the majority community would be bound to do full redress. Before the dismantling commenced I told the leading Muslims that unless they did the restitution from their hearts, I would far rather that they left it alone for the time being. Physical restoration was nothing unless it symbolized a heart change and carried with it the guarantee of the goodwill of the majority community. On my part I assured them that I would not let the authorities use coercion on them, so long as I was there. They, however, assured me that they really meant to do the reparation from their hearts and proceeded with the dismantling with *Bismillah* on their lips. The credit for the performance was due to the commendable good sense shown by the local Muslims and the exertions of the district officers, particulary the District Magistrate, who is untiring in his efforts to promote peace and goodwill between the two communities. This is not to say as yet that "God's in His heaven" and "all's right with the world" in Noakhali. The "petty done" only lends hope and encouragement in regard to the "undone vast", which has yet to be tackled."

If all in India and Pakistan followed this example, the shape of things would be changed in no time. The key to the solution of the tangle lay in everyone following the best in his own religion and entertaining equal regard for the other religions and their followers.

Birla House, New Delhi, 23-12-'47

Harijan, 4-1-1948

498

TIBIA COLLEGE

Gandhiji during his post-prayer discourse talked to the audience about the Tibia College at Delhi. It was an institution conceived and founded by the late Hakim Ajmal Khan. Hindu and Muslim princes as well as the people had subscribed to the funds. Unfortunately, the Hindus and the Sikhs had, after the 15th of August last, come to look upon the Muslims as enemies. But it was not so in the past. Muslim and non-Muslim students received training there There were Muslims and non-Muslims among the trustees, the late Dr. Ansari being one of them. The college trained students in the *Ayurvedic*, the *Unani* and the Western systems (of medicine) Today the college had no students. It was situated in Karol Bagh and the Muslims could not enter the locality except at the risk of their lives. It was a problem to find out which locality was safe for the Muslims today. Some Hindu friends had been to see him that day. They wanted to know what was to become of this college. Gandhiji considered it a matter of sorrow and shame that the college should be in that condition. He was trying to do what he could in the matter He pleaded with the Hindus and the Sikhs not to work for their own destruction. He who worked for the ruin of another was bound to ruin himself. That was the law of life. He begged of them not to ruin themselves and their religion.

Birla House, New Delhi, 26-12-'47

Harijan, 4-1-1948

499

DUTY OF THE PANCHAYAT

Saturday evening prayer meeting was held at village Sammalka where a *Panchayatghar* had been built. He was presented with garlands at the entrance. An address was also presented. Addressing the gathering after prayers, Gandhiji said that the meeting was held for prayers. At such a meeting garlands, addresses and shouts were out of place. He would have been pleased if they had omitted them. They had mentioned truth and non-violence in their address, but if they did not practise those virtues, there was no point in talking about them. On the contrary, mere mention of them was harmful. Ever since his return from South Africa he had visited thousands of villages. He knew how these addresses were prepared. Someone wrote it out and someone else read it parrotwise, and that was the end of it. There must be consistency between one's thoughts, words and actions. Driving away the minority community or ill treating them did not fit in with the profession of *ahimsa*. Independence did not mean that people could act in any way they liked. Could anyone pray for and work for the freedom to commit murders and tell lies? That would be surrender to Satan instead of God.

Gandhiji hoped that they would have no cinema house. People said that the cinema could be a potent means of education. That might come true some day, but at the moment he saw how much harm the cinema was doing. They had their indigenous games. They should banish intoxicating drinks and drugs from their midst. He hoped that they would eradicate untouchability if there was any trace of it still left in their village. The Hindus, the Muslims, the Sikhs, the Parsees and the Christians should all live as brothers and sisters. If they achieved all he had mentioned they would demonstrate real independence, and people from all over India would come to see their model village and

take inspiration from it. May God crown their endeavours with success

Birla House, New Delhi, 27-12-'47

Harijan, 4-1-1948

500

IS IT DESERVED?

In the course of a long letter which Reverend Dr. John Haynes Holmes had written to me before leaving the hospitable shores of India, he writes

> 'Of course you have been sad, well nigh overborne, by the tragedies of recent months, but you must never feel that this involves any breakdown of your life's work Human nature cannot bear too much — it cracks under too great a strain — and the strain in this case was as terrific as it was sudden But your teaching remained as true and your leadership as sound as ever Single handed you saved the situation, and brought victory out of what seemed for the moment to be defeat I count these last few months to be the crown and climax of your unparalleled career You were never so great as in these dark hours

I wonder if the claim can be proved That much more than Dr. Holmes observed can be proved of *ahimsa*, I have not the slightest doubt My difficulty is fundamental Have I attained the requisite qualifications for exhibiting the virtues of *ahimsa*, even as Dr. Holmes has said? Knowing as I do the working of *ahimsa*, however imperfectly, I see every reason for the utmost caution in advancing claims that cannot be proved beyond doubt

New Delhi, 3-1-'48

Harijan, 11-1-1948

501

AHIMSA NEVER FAILS

The following correspondence between a European friend and Gandhiji is published for general information :

The European friend writes :

"After carefully studying Roy Walker's thrilling story of your admirable work (*Sword of Gold*) I was satisfied that, lifelong as your struggle for non-violence had been, your unlimited devotion had met with success, at least as far as India's leaders and masses were concerned, and the fact that Britain retired from India in apparent goodwill and friendship, seemed to bear out the hope that appreciation of non-violence was no longer restricted to your own country. The first breach into the thick walls of violence seemed made, and the prospects for humanity seemed to have grown more lucid than ever.

"All the more depressing were your recent confessions, as reported in the last edition of *Peace News* by George Ll. Davies. It grieves me to the heart to read that you had never experienced the dark despair that was today within you. And though it is certainly true that God does not demand success but truth and love from a man, it is a sad sight to behold mankind as deeply entangled by violence as not to yield to the vast extent of soul-force and self-sacrifice given by you and your few friends during a long life.

"However, willingly admitting as I do that you are in a far better position to look into the heart of things than I am, I cannot believe that your heroic efforts should be lost upon mankind, that the good seed you have so untiringly sown in all your surroundings, by your words as well as by your example, should be wasted.

"Be that as it may, I for one (and I am sure I speak the heart of untold millions) feel it my bounden duty to express my deepest gratitude to you for giving the whole of your life to what you felt to be the one way to salvation for mankind."

Gandhiji's reply runs thus

"I have not seen the report you refer to. In any case, whatever I have said does not refer in any way to the failure of *ahimsa*, but it refers to my failure to recognize, until it was too late, that what I had mistaken for *ahimsa* was not *ahimsa*, but passive resistance of the weak, which can never be called *ahimsa* even in the remotest sense. The internecine feud that is going on today in India is the direct outcome of the energy that was set free during the thirty years' action of the weak. Hence, the proper way to view the present outburst of violence throughout the world is to recognize that the technique of unconquerable non-violence of the strong has not been at all fully discovered as yet Not an ounce of non-violent strength is ever wasted I must not, therefore, flatter myself with the belief — - allow friends like you to entertain the belief — that I have exhibited any heroic and demonstrable non-violence in myself All I can claim is that I am sailing in that direction without a moment's stop. This confession should strengthen your belief in non-violence and spur you and friends like you to action along the path'

New Delhi, 1-1-'48

Harijan, 11-1-1948

502

AN ALL-IN FAST

Two prominent Muslim Leaguers were relating to Gandhiji how the Indian Union Mussalmans were eager to join the Congress Gandhiji felt hurt "I do not like this stampede to join the Congress," he told them. "They should — it is their right to join the Congress. But the time for it in my opinion is not yet. I would rather that they waited till the Congress was ready to welcome them with open arms. Today, that warmth is lacking. Under the circumstances, it would be best for them to serve the Congress from outside — even as I am doing" To another

Muslim friend he remarked that he would stand up for Hindustani as the national language in spite of the decision of the Constituent Assembly to the contrary, even if he stood alone. Nor can I forget the moral indignation with which, talking about the accession of an Indian State, he told another Muslim leader that if it involved the sacrifice of any moral principle he would not care if, — leave alone that State — the whole of the Princely order acceded to Pakistan in preference to the Indian Union.

An India reduced in size but purged in spirit might still be the nursery of the non-violence of the brave and take up the moral leadership of the world, bringing a message of hope and deliverance to the oppressed and exploited races. But an unwieldy, soulless India would merely be an imitation, and a third rate imitation at that, of the Western military States, utterly powerless to stand up against their onslaught. He had no desire to outlive the India of his dreams. "We are steadily losing hold on Delhi," he remarked to still another friend, expressing his concern about the communal situation in Delhi. "If Delhi goes, India goes and with that the last hope of world peace." It was intolerable to him that a person like Dr. Zakir Hussain, for instance, or for that matter Shaheed Suhrawardy should not be able to move about in Delhi as freely and with as much safety as himself. When a deputation of the Muslims of Delhi waited upon him setting forth to him their grievances, he immediately arranged a meeting between them and important Cabinet members in his presence, and later the police chief saw them and promised them the fullest redress. But his agony continued.

That did not mean that he was indifferent to the sufferings of the minority community in the other Dominion. On the contrary, their sufferings only accentuated his impatience. He would have liked to be able to go to their succour — in Sind, in the Western Punjab, in the N. W. F. P. But with what face, with what confidence could he go there when he could not guarantee full redress to the Delhi Muslims? He felt helpless, and helplessness he has never put up with in all his life.

And so from the depths of his anguish came his decision to fast. Unlike some of his previous fasts, it is an all-in fast As he has already stated it came to him in a flash It left no room for argument, so much so that he gave no inkling of what was passing in his mind to Sardar Patel and Pandit Nehru who saw him only a couple of hours before the announcement of the fast yesterday

"I have a lot to say against your undertaking the present fast," wrote a correspondent in a note addressed to him on getting the news of his decision to fast, "but I have had no previous warning. . . . My main concern and my argument against your fast is that you have at last surrendered to impatience, whereas the mission which you have undertaken is essentially one of infinite patience. You do not seem to have realized what a tremendous success you have achieved by your inexhaustible and patient labour. It has already saved lakhs upon lakhs of lives and could save many more still. But your patience seems to have suddenly snapped. By dying you will not be able to realize what you would have realized by conserving your life. I would, therefore, beseech you to pay heed to my entreaty and give up your fast."

To this Gandhiji replied "I am not prepared to concede that my decision to undertake the fast was hasty It was quick no doubt. . . . The statement was of the nature of heartsearching and prayer. Therefore, it cannot be dubbed as "hasty" in any sense of the term. . . . .

"I did not need to hear any arguments as to the propriety of the fast. The fact that I did listen to arguments only bespeaks my patience and humility. . . .

"Your worry as well as your argument are of no use. You are, of course, my friend and a highminded friend at that. Your concern is natural and I esteem it, but your argument only betrays impatience and superficial thinking. I regard this step of mine as the last word on patience. Would you regard patience that kills its very object, as patience or folly?

"I cannot take credit for the results that have been achieved since my coming to Delhi. It would be self-delusion

on my part to do so. Mere man cannot judge as to how many lives were really saved by my labours. Only the Omniscient and All-Seeing God can do that. Does it not betray sheer ignorance to attribute sudden loss of patience to one who has been as patience personified right from the beginning of September last?

"It was only when in terms of human effort, I had exhausted all resources and realized my utter helplessness that I put my head on God's lap That is the inner meaning and significance of my fast If you read and ponder in your mind the epic of *Gajendra Moksha*, you might be able properly to appraise my step

"The last sentence of your note is a charming token of your affection But your affection is rooted in ignorance or infatuation Ignorance does not cease to be ignorance because of its repetition among persons, no matter how numerous they are

"So long as we hug life and death it is idle to claim that it must be preserved for a certain cause. 'Strive while you live' is a beautiful saying, but there is a hiatus in it. Striving has to be in a spirit of detachment.

"Now you will understand why I cannot accept your counsel. God sent me the fast He alone will end it if and when He wills In the meantime it behoves us all to believe that whether He preserves my life or ends it, it is equally to the good and we should act accordingly. Let our sole prayer be that God may vouchsafe me strength of spirit during the fast so that the temptation to live may not lead me into a hasty or premature termination of the fast."

On a previous occasion when the late Ali brothers had complained and asked him if it was not a breach of loyalty to his colleagues not to have consulted them before deciding to go on a twentyone days' fast, his reply was that it was not, for had not he and his colleagues pledged their loyalty to God? How could he be guilty of disloyalty to them while keeping his covenant with God? But both the Sardar and Pandit Nehru in the present case were far more understanding and full of sympathetic insight. Neither they, nor the Maulanasaheb and other friends and colleagues who saw

him later, tried to strive with him but set about to tackle the problem constructively.

"Brave deeds and not vain laments—should be our motto," remarked Gandhiji to a sister who came to seek guidance. Equally characteristic was his reply to a Sikh friend, who saw him soon after the commencement of the fast yesterday. "My fast is against no one party, group or individual exclusively and yet it excludes nobody. It is addressed to the conscience of all, even the majority community in the other Dominion. If all or any one of the groups respond fully, I know the miracle will be achieved For instance, if the Sikhs respond to my appeal as one man, I shall be wholly satisfied I shall go and live in their midst in the Punjab for they are a brave people and I know they can set an example in non-violence of the brave which will serve as an object lesson to all the rest."

New Delhi, 14-1-'48

Harijan, 18-1-1948

503

TO THE PEOPLE OF GUJARAT

To

The Men and Women of Gujarat,

I am dictating this from my bed early on Wednesday morning It is the second day of the fast though twenty-four hours have not been completed since the fast commenced. It is the last day of posting for this week's *Harijan* Hence, I have decided to address a few words in Gujarati to the people of Gujarat.

I do not regard this fast as an ordinary fast. I have undertaken it after deep thought and yet it has sprung not from reasoning but God's will that rules men's reason. It is addressed to no particular section or individual and yet it is addressed equally to all. There is no trace of anger of any kind behind it nor the slightest tinge of impatience. But behind it is the realization that there is a time for everything and an opportunity, once missed, never returns

Therefore, the only thing that now remains is for every Indian to think as to what his or her duty in the present hour is Gujaratis are Indians So, whatever I write in Gujarati is addressed equally to all the people of India.

Delhi is the Metropolis of India If, therefore, we really in our hearts do not subscribe to the two-nation theory, in other words, if we do not regard the Hindus and the Muslims as constituting two distinct nations, we shall have to admit that the picture that Delhi presents today is not what we have envisaged always of the capital of India Delhi is the Eternal City, as the ruins of its forerunners—Indraprastha and Hastinapur testify. It is the heart of India Only a nit-wit can regard it as belonging to the Hindus or the Sikhs only It may sound harsh but it is the literal truth From Kanya Kumari to Kashmir and from Karachi to Dibrugarh in Assam, all Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Parsis, Christians and Jews who people this vast sub-continent and have adopted it as their dear motherland, have an equal right to it No one has a right to say that it belongs to the majority community only and that the minority community can only remain there as the underdog Whoever serves it with the purest devotion must have the first claim Therefore, anyone who wants to drive out of Delhi all Mussalmans as such must be set down as its enemy No 1 and, therefore, enemy No 1 of India We are rushing towards that catastrophe It is the bounden duty of every son and daughter of India to take his or her full share in averting it.

What should we do then? If we would see our dream of *Panchayat Raj*, i e true democracy realized, we would regard the humblest and lowest Indian as being equally the ruler of India with the tallest in the land This presupposes that all are pure or will become pure if they are not. And purity must go hand-in-hand with wisdom. No one would then harbour any distinction between community and community, caste and out-caste. Everybody would regard all as equal with oneself and hold them together in the silken net of love No one would regard another as untouchable We would hold as equal the toiling labourer and

the rich capitalist. Everybody would know how to earn an honest living by the sweat of one's brow and make no distinction between intellectual and physical labour. To hasten this consummation, we would voluntarily turn ourselves into scavengers. No one who has wisdom will ever touch opium, liquor or any intoxicants. Everybody would observe *swadeshi* as the rule of life and regard every woman, not being his wife, as his mother, sister or daughter according to her age, never lust after her in his heart. He would be ready to lay down his life when occasion demands it, never want to take another's life. If he is a Sikh in terms of the commandment of the Gurus he would have the heroic courage to stand single-handed and alone —without yielding an inch of ground—against the "one lakh and a quarter" enjoined by them. Needless to say, such a son of India will not want to be told what his duty in the present hour is.

New Delhi,
Makar Sankranti, 14-1-'48
(*From the Gujarati*)

Yours etc.,
M. K. Gandhi

Harijan, 18-1-1948

504

MY FAST

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 9th 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 fulfilment 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.

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 salt 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 therethrough

the world. I flatter myself with the 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 counsellor, 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 housetops and retracing my faulty step. There is little chance of my making such a discovery. If there is clear indication, as I claim there is, of the Inner Voice, it will not be gainsaid. 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.

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 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 searchlight 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.

Birla House, New Delhi, 12-1-'48

Harijan, 18-1-1948

505

WHO IS TO BLAME?

Gandhiji attended the prayers as usual this evening. He warned the audience against being surprised that he had walked to the prayer ground as usual. A fast weakened nobody during the first twentyfour hours after a meal. It did good generally to everybody who fasted occasionally for twentyfour hours.

The day following it might be difficult for him to walk to the prayer ground. But if they were eager to attend the prayers all the same, they could come and the girls would recite the prayers with them even though he was not present.

A question was asked as to whom Gandhiji considered blameworthy for the fast. He blamed no individual or community. He did believe, however, that if the Hindus and Sikhs insisted on turning out the Muslims from Delhi,

they would be betraying India and their own faiths. And that hurt him.

Some people had taunted him that he had sympathy for the Muslims only and that he had undertaken the fast for their sake. They were right. But all his life he had stood, as everyone should stand, for minorities or those in need. Pakistan had resulted in depriving the Muslims of the Union of pride and self-confidence. It hurt him to think that this was so. It weakened a State which kept or allowed any class of people who had lost self-confidence His fast was against the Muslims too in the sense that it should enable them to stand up to their Hindu and Sikh brethren. In terms of the fast Muslim friends had to work no less than the Hindus and the Sikhs. Thus they were in the habit of singling out Pandit Nehru and him for praise and by contrast blaming Sardar Patel S me twitted the Sardar for his remark that Muslim Leaguers could not become friends overnight. They should not blame him, as he did not, for the remark. Most Hindus held this view What he wanted his Muslim League friends to do was to live down the Sardar's remark and by their conduct, not declarations, disprove it. Let it be remembered that Panditji though he had not the same method and manner as the Sardar claimed him as his valued colleague If the Sardar was an enemy of the Muslims, Panditji could ask him to retire The Sardar had not ceased to be his (Gandhiji's) esteemed friend though he was no longer his "yes man' as he was once popularly and affectionately nick-named His friends should also know the character of the Cabinet It was responsible for every official act of every member of the Cabinet. He expected a thorough cleansing of hearts That being assured, there would be mutual respect and trust. They were all of the Union and by right it belonged to them. He could not break the fast for less. They must dethrone Satan from their hearts and enthrone God.

DUTY OF THE HINDUS AND SIKHS

What was the duty of the Hindus and the Sikhs? They had just heard Gurudev's favourite song, "If no one respond

to your call, walk alone, walk alone." Gandhiji liked it very much and it was sung almost every day during his walking pilgrimage in Noakhali. He would repeat with his last breath that the Hindus and the Sikhs should be brave enough to say that whatever happened in Pakistan, they would not raise their little finger against a single Muslim in the Union. They would never again indulge in cowardly acts, however great the provocation.

DELHI ON TRIAL

If Delhi became peaceful in the real sense of the term, he would then break the fast. Delhi was the capital of India. The ruin or downfall of Delhi he would regard as the ruin of India and Pakistan. He wanted Delhi to be safe for all Muslims, even for one like Shaheed Suhrawardy, who was looked upon as the chief of *goondas*. Let all proved *goondas* be rounded up. But he (Gandhiji) was witness to the fact that Shaheedsaheb had worked for peace in Calcutta in all sincerity. He had pulled out the Muslims from Hindu houses which they had forcibly occupied. He was living with him. He would willingly join the prayer but Gandhiji would not expose him to the risk of being insulted. He wanted him, as he did every Muslim, to feel as safe in Delhi as the tallest of them.

He did not mind how long it took for real peace to be established. Whether it took one day or one month, it was immaterial. No one should say or do anything to lure him into giving up his fast prematurely. The object should not be to save his life. It should be to save India and her honour. He would feel happy and proud when he saw that India's place was not lowered as it had become by the recent happenings which he had no wish to recall.

Birla House, New Delhi, 13-1-'48

Harijan, 18-1-1948

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MY DREAM

Gandhiji had dictated a message to be read out to the prayer audience this afternoon, but later on he decided to go to the meeting and address the gathering. He said that he had come in spite of the doctor's objections But from the next day he would probably not be able to walk to the prayer ground He had the strength that day and he used it though the doctors had advised him to conserve it He was in God's hands If He wanted him to live he would not die He did not want his faith in God to weaken

SPATE OF MESSAGES

Continuing his speech without any reference to the dictated notes, Gandhiji said, "Cablegrams and telegrams are pouring in from far and near Some, in their opinion, weighty and congratulating me on my resolve, an trusting me to God Some others in friendliest terms appealing to me to abandon the fast and assuring me that they would befriend their neighbours irrespective of caste and creed and try to carry out the spirit of my message that accompanied the fast I am asking Shri Pyarelalji to give to the Press a few selections from the abundance which is hourly increasing They are from Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and others If those who have given me assurances—some of the senders represent associations and groups—carry them out faithfully, they will certainly have contributed largely to the hastening of the stoppage of the fast Shrimati Mridulabehn asks the following question from Lahore, where she is in touch with the Pakistan authorities as also the common Muslims . "There are friends here who are very anxious about Gandhiji's health and are eager to know what he would like them to do on this side and what he expects from his Muslim friends in Pakistan, including those who are in political parties and in Government service" It is pleasing to think that there are Muslim friends who are

anxious about my health and more so to know that they are eager for the information that Shrimati Mridulabehn seeks. To all senders of the messages and to the seekers in Lahore, I wish to say that the fast is a process of self-purification and is intended to invite all who are in sympathy with the mission of the fast themselves to take part in the process of self-purification, whether they are in the service of the Pakistan Government or whether they are members of political parties or others.

A WORD TO PAKISTAN

"You have heard of the cowardly attack on the Sikhs in Karachi. Innocent men, women and children were butchered and looted and others have had to flee. Now comes the news of an attack on a refugee train at Gujarat. The train was carrying non-Muslim refugees from the Frontier Province. Large numbers are reported to have been killed and women abducted. It distresses me. How long can the Union put up with such things? How long can I bank upon the patience of the Hindus and the Sikhs in spite of my fast? Pakistan has to put a stop to this state of affairs. They must purify their hearts and pledge themselves that they will not rest till the Hindus and the Sikhs can return and live in safety in Pakistan.

"Supposing that there is a wave of self-purification throughout India, Pakistan will become *pak* (pure). It will be a State in which past wrongs will have been forgotten, past distinctions will have been buried, the least and the smallest in Pakistan will command the same respect and the same protection of life and property that the Qaid-e-Azam enjoys. Such Pakistan can never die. Then and not till then shall I repent that I ever called it a sin, as I am afraid I must hold today, it is. I want to live to see that Pakistan, not on paper, not in the orations of Pakistani orators, but in the daily life of every Pakistani Muslim. Then the inhabitants of the Union will forget that there ever was any enmity between them, and if I am not mistaken the Union will proudly copy Pakistan, and if I am alive I shall ask her to excel Pakistan in well-doing.

The fast is a bid for nothing less. Be it said to the shame of those of us who are in the Union that we have readily copied Pakistan's bad manners

MY DREAM

"Before I ever knew anything of politics in my early youth, I dreamt the dream of communal unity of the heart I shall jump in the evening of my life, like a child, to feel that the dream has been realized in this life The wish for living the full span of life portrayed by the seers of old and which they permit us to set down at 125 years will then revive Who would not risk sacrificing his life for the realization of such a dream? Then we shall have real Swaraj Then though legally and geographically we may still be two States, in daily life no one will think that we were separate States The vista before me seems to me to be, as it must be to you, too glorious to be true Yet like a child in a famous picture, drawn by a famous painter, I shall not be happy till I have got it I live and want to live for no lesser goal Let the seekers from Pakistan help me to come as near the goal as it is humanly possible A goal ceases to be one, when it is reached The nearest approach is always possible. What I have said holds good irrespective of whether others do it or not It is open to every individual to purify himself or herself so as to render him or her fit for that land of promise I remember to have read, I forget whether in the Delhi Fort or the Agra Fort, when I visited them in 1896, a verse on one of the gates, which when translated reads '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-starved employees, nor intoxicating drinks nor drugs There will be the same respect for women as vouchsafed to men, and the chastity and 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, 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 everyone who listens to me or reads these lines will forgive me if stretched on my bed and basking in the sun, inhaling life-giving sunshine, I allow myself to indulge in this ecstasy Let this assure the doubters and sceptics that I have not the slightest desire that the fast should be ended as quickly as possible. It matters little if the ecstatic wishes of a fool like me are never realized and the fast is never broken. I am content to wait as long as it may be necessary, but it will hurt me to think that people have acted merely in order to save me. I claim that God has inspired this fast and it will be broken only when and if He wishes it. No human agency has ever been known to thwart, nor will it ever thwart Divine Will.'

Birla House, New Delhi, 14-1-'48

Harijan, 18-1 1948

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IMPORTANT QUESTIONS

Gandhiji was too weak to walk to the prayer ground this evening. He however wanted to say a few words to the audience from his bed. The radio microphone was arranged near his bed, but as there was no loud-speaker, his voice could not reach the prayer audience. A Hindi translation of his dictated message was read after the prayers.

In his spoken message at the radio microphone Gandhiji expressed regret that his vioce could not reach the prayer audience. However he would like to say a few words to the invisible audience sitting in their homes, as he knew that it would comfort them to hear his voice, although if he had known that his voice would not reach the prayer audience, he would not have spoken. He had dictated a

message for the prayer gathering that day. He did not know whether he would be fit enough to do so the next day.

Gandhiji appealed to the people not to bother as to what the others were doing. Each one of them should turn the searchlight inwards and purify his or her heart as far as possible He was convinced that if the people sufficiently purified themselves they would help India and help themselves and also shorten the period of his fast. None should be anxious for him. They should think out how best they could improve themselves and work for the good of the country. All must die some day. No one could escape death. Then why be afraid of it? In fact death was a friend which brought deliverance from sufferings

KILLING BY INCHES

In his dictated message Gandhiji said

"Newspaper men sent me a message two hours after my prayer speech of last evening, asking to see me, as they had some doubts to be cleared. After a heavy day's work I felt disinclined out of some exhaustion to see them for discussion. I, therefore, told Shri Pyarelalji to inform them to excuse me and further tell them that they should put down the questions in writing and send them to me next morning They did so. This is the first question :

'Why have you undertaken the fast when there was no disturbance of any kind in any part of the Indian Dominion?'

"What was it if it was not a disturbance for a crowd to make an organized and a determined effort to take forcible possession of Muslim houses? The disturbance was such that the Police had reluctantly to resort to tear gas and even to a little shooting if only overhead, before the crowd dispersed It would have been foolish for me to wait till the last Muslim had been turned out of Delhi by subtle undemonstrative methods, which I would describe as killing by inches."

THE SARDAR

"The second question is :

'You have stated that you could not give any reply to the Muslims who came to you with their tale of fear and

insecurity and who have complained that Sardar Patel, who is in charge of Home Affairs, is anti-Muslim. You have also stated that Sardar Patel is no longer a yes-man as he used to be. These factors create the impression that the fast is more intended to bring about a change of heart in the Sardar and thereby amounts to a condemnation of the policy of the Home Ministry. It would be helpful if you can clear the position.'

"As to this I feel that my reply was precise, not admitting of more interpretations than one. The suggested interpretation never crossed my mind. If I had known that my statement could bear any such interpretation, I should have dispelled the doubt in anticipation. Many Muslim friends had complained of the Sardar's so-called anti-Muslim attitude. I had, with a degree of suppressed pain, listened to them without giving any explanation. The fast freed me from this self-imposed restraint and I was able to assure the critics that they were wrong in isolating him from Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and me whom they gratuitously raise to the sky. This isolation did them no good. The Sardar had a bluntness of speech which sometimes unintentionally hurt, though his heart was expansive enough to accommodate all. Thus my statement was meant deliberately to free a life-long and faithful comrade from any unworthy reproach. Lest my hearers should go away with the idea that my compliment carried the meaning that I could treat the Sardar as my yes-man as he was affectionately described, I balanced the compliment by adding the proviso that he was too masterful to be anybody's yes-man. When he was my yes-man, he permitted himself to be so named because whatever I said instinctively appealed to him. Great as he was in his own field and a very able administrator, he was humble enough to begin his political education under me because as he explained to me he could not take to the politics in vogue at the time I began my public career in India. When power descended on him, he saw that he could no longer successfully apply the method of non-violence which he used to wield with signal success. I have made the discovery that

what I and the people with me had termed non-violence was not the genuine article but a weak copy known as passive resistance Naturally, passive resistance can avail nothing to a ruler Imagine a weak ruler being able to represent any people He would only degrade his masters who, for the time being, had placed themselves under his trust I know that the Sardar could never betray or degrade his trust

OBJECT OF THE FAST

I wonder if with a knowledge of this background to my statement, anybody would dare call my fast a condemnation of the policy of the Home Ministry If there is any such person, I can only tell him that he would degrade and hurt himself, never the Sardar or me Have I not before now said emphatically that no outside power can really degrade a man? He only can degrade himself. Though I know that this sentence is irrelevant here, it is such a truth that it bears repetition on all occasions My fast, as I have stated in plain language, is undoubtedly on behalf of the Muslim minority in the Union, and therefore it is necessarily against the Hindus and the Sikhs of the Union and the Muslims of Pakistan. It is also on behalf of the minorities in Pakistan as in the case of the Muslim minority in the Union This is a clumsy compression of the idea I have already explained I cannot expect the fast taken by a very imperfect and weak mortal, as I truly confess I am, to have the potency to make its proteges proof against all danger The fast is a process of self-purification for all It would be wrong to make any insinuation against the purity of the step "

NO ROOM FOR DISTORTION

'The third question is

'Your fast has been undertaken on the eve of the meeting of the United Nations Security Council and soon after the Karachi riots and the Gujarat massacre. What publicity the latter incidents received in the foreign Press is not known. But undoubtedly, your fast has overshadowed all other incidents And Pakistan representatives would not be worth their reputation if they do not seize the opportu-

nity to declare that the Mahatma has undertaken the fast to bring sanity among his Hindu followers, who have been making the life of the Muslims in India impossible. Truth takes a long time to reach the four corners of the globe. But in the meantime your fast may have the unfortunate effect of prejudicing our case in the eyes of the United Nations.'

"This question does not demand or need any elaborate answer. From all I have known of the powers and peoples outside India, I make bold to say that the fast has created only a healthy impression. Outsiders who are able to take an impartial and unbiassed view of what is happening in India cannot distort the purpose of the fast, which is meant to bring sanity to all those who inhabit both the Union and Pakistan. It is impossible to save the Muslims in the Union if the Muslim majority in Pakistan do not behave as decent men and women. Happily for the cause, the Muslims of Pakistan, as Shrimati Mridulabehn's enquiry of yesterday made clear, have become wide awake to a sense of their duty. The United Nations know that my fast aids them to come to a right decision and to give the right guidance to the newly made two Dominions."

Birla House, New Delhi, 15-1-'48

Harijan, 25-1-1948

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FITTEST ANSWER TO FAST

Before Gandhiji's dictated message was read out to the prayer audience, he addressed them on the microphone from his bed. He said that he had not expected that he would be able to speak to them that day but they would be pleased to learn that if anything, his voice was less feeble that day than the day before. He could not explain it except for the grace of God. He had never felt so well on the fourth day of the fast in the past. If all of them continued to participate in the process of self-purification, he would probably have the strength to speak to them till the end. He was in no hurry to break the fast. Hurry would spoil

matters. He did not want anyone to come and tell him that things had been set right while the process was incomplete. If Delhi became peaceful in the real sense of the term, it would have its repercussions all over the country. He had no wish to live unless peace reigned in the two Dominions.

UNMIXED GOODWILL

In his message to the prayer gathering Gandhiji said

"It is never a light matter for any responsible Cabinet to alter a deliberate settled policy. Yet our Cabinet, responsible in every sense of the term, has with equal deliberation yet promptness unsettled their settled fact.§ They deserve the warmest thanks from the whole country, from Kashmir to Cape Camorin and from Karachi to the Assam frontier. And I know that all the nations of the earth will proclaim this gesture as one which only a large-hearted Cabinet like ours could rise to. This is no policy of appeasement of the Muslims. This is a policy, if you like of self-appeasement. No Cabinet worthy of being representative of a large mass of mankind can afford to take any step merely because it is likely to win the hasty applause of an unthinking public. In the midst of insanity, should not our best representatives retain sanity and bravely prevent a wreck of the ship of State under their management? What then was the actuating motive? It was my fast. It changed the whole outlook. Without the fast they could not go beyond what the law permitted and required them to do. But the present gesture on the part of the Government of India is one of unmixed goodwill. It has put the Pakistan Government on its honour. It ought to lead to an honourable settlement not only of the Kashmir question, but of all the differences between the two Dominions.

§ The Indian Cabinet had decided that the financial Agreement between India and Pakistan would be implemented only after the Kashmir issue had been settled. This irritated Pakistan greatly. But in view of Gandhiji's fast to bring about friendship between Hindus and Muslims and as a gesture of goodwill to Pakistan, the Indian Cabinet altered its decision and stated that they would implement the Agreement immediately, as desired by Pakistan. —ED.

Friendship should replace the present enmity Demands of equity supersede the letter of the law. There is a homely maxim of law which has been in practice for centuries in England that when common law seems to fail, equity comes to the rescue Not long ago there were even separate courts for the administration of law and of equity. Considered in this setting there is no room for questioning the utter justice of this act of the Union Government If we want a precedent, there is a striking one at our disposal in the form of what is popularly known as the MacDonald Award That Award was really the unanimous judgment of not only the members of the British Cabinet, but also of the majority of the members of the Second Round Table Conference. It was undone overnight as a result of the fast undertaken in Yeravda prison.

FITTEST ANSWER TO FAST

"I have been asked to end the fast because of this great act of the Union Government. I wish I could persuade myself to do so I know that the medical friends who, of their own volition and at considerable sacrifice, meticulously examine me from day to day are getting more and more anxious as the fast is prolonged Because of defective kidney function they dread not so much my instantaneous collapse as permanent after-effects of any further prolongation. I did not embark upon the fast after consultation with medical men, be they however able. My sole guide, even dictator, was God, the Infallible and Omnipotent. If He has any further use for this frail body of mine, He will keep it in spite of the prognostications of medical men and women. I am in His hands. Therefore, I hope you will believe me when I say that I dread neither death nor permanent injury, even if I survive. I do feel that this warning of medical friends should, if the country has any use for me, hurry the people up to close their ranks. And like brave men and women, that we ought to be under hard-earned freedom, we should trust even those whom we may suspect as our enemies. Brave people disdain distrust. The letter of my vow will be satisfied if the Hindus.

Muslims and Sikhs of Delhi bring about a union, which not even a conflagration around them in all the other parts of India or Pakistan will be strong enough to break. Happily, the people in both the Dominions seem to have instinctively realized that the fittest answer to the fast should be a complete friendship between the two Dominions, such that members of all communities should be able to go to either Dominion without the slightest fear of molestation. Self-purification demands nothing less It will be wrong for the rest of the two Dominions to put a heavy strain upon Delhi After all, the inhabitants of the Union are not superhuman. In the name of the people, our Government have taken a liberal step without counting the cost. What will be Pakistan's counter gesture? The ways are many if there is the will. Is it there?

Birla House, New Delhi, 16-1-'48

Harijan, 25-1-1948

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TURN FROM SATAN TOWARDS GOD

"I repeat what I have said before — nothing is to be done under pressure of the fast. I have observed before that things done under pressure of a fast have been undone after the fast is over. If any such thing happens, it would be a tragedy of the highest degree. There is no occasion for it at any time. What a spiritual fast does expect is cleansing of the heart The cleansing, if it is honest, does not cease to be when the cause which induced it ceases. The cleansing of a wall seen in the form of a whitewash does not cease when the dear one has come and gone This material cleansing is bound to require renovation after some time. Cleansing of the heart once achieved only dies with one's death. Apart from this legitimate and laudable pressure, the fast has no other function which can be described as proper.

A WORD TO PAKISTAN

"The number of telegrams coming from Rajas, Maharajas and the laity continues to increase There are

telegrams from Pakistan too. They are good so far as they go. But as a friend and well-wisher I must say to all those who reside in Pakistan and mould its fortune that they will fail to make Pakistan permanent if their conscience is not quickened and if they do not admit the wrongs for which Pakistan is responsible.

"This does not mean that I do not wish a voluntary re-union, but I wish to remove and resist the idea that Pakistan should be re-united by force of arms. I hope that this will not be misunderstood as a note of discord, whilst I am lying on what is truly a deathbed. I hope all Pakistanis will realize that I would be untrue to them and to myself if, out of weakness and for fear of hurting their feelings, I failed to convey to them what I truthfully feel. If I am wrong in my estimate, I should be so told and if I am convinced, I promise that I shall retract what I have said here. So far as I know, the point is not open to question.

HAPPY IN FASTING

"My fast should not be considered a political move in any sense of the term. It is in obedience to the peremptory call of conscience and duty. It comes out of felt agony. I call to witness all my numerous Muslim friends in Delhi. Their representatives meet me almost everyday to report the day's events. Neither the Rajas and Maharajas nor the Hindus and Sikhs or any others would serve themselves or India as a whole, if at this, what is to me a sacred juncture, they mislead me with a view to terminating my fast. Let them know that I feel never so happy as when I am fasting for the spirit. This fast has brought me higher happiness than hitherto. No one need disturb this happy state, unless he can honestly claim that in his journey he has turned deliberately from Satan towards God."

Birla House, New Delhi, 17-1-'48

Harijan, 25-1-1948

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THE TASK AHEAD

Speaking on the microphone from his bed at 5-20 p. m. on Sunday, Gandhiji said that he had earlier dictated a message for the prayer audience which would be read out to them.

It was a happy day for him and for all of them. He was glad that due to their kindness he could break his fast on the auspicious day of Guru Govind Singh's birthday anniversary. He could never forget the kindness which was daily being showered on him by the inhabitants of Delhi, the Pakistan sufferers and the Government and administrative authorities, since the fast began. He had experienced the same love at Calcutta He could not forget the help that he had received from Shaheedsaheb in restoring peace in Calcutta But for him, he (Gandhiji) would not have stopped in Calcutta People had many suspicions about Shaheedsaheb's *bona fides* still. They should forget the past and learn the duty of having friendly feelings towards all and being inimical to none The crores of Muslims were not all angels nor were all the Hindus and the Sikhs. There were good and bad specimens among all communities. Would they be less than friendly towards the so-called criminal tribes amongst them?

Muslims were a numerous community scattered all over the world. There was no reason why they, who stood for friendship with the whole world, should not be friends with the Muslims. He was not a fortune-teller, but God had given him intellect and understanding enough to know that if for some reason or other they could not be friends with the Muslims of the Union, the Muslims of the whole world would be antagonized and they would lose India. Then India including both the Dominions, would once again pass under foreign domination.

He had received the good wishes and blessings of numberless men and women. He had been assured that the

Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Parsis, Jews, Christians and others who lived in Delhi would all live together as brothers. They would never quarrel among themselves again and in this assurance sufferers from Pakistan had also joined. This was no small matter. If the auspicious beginning was continued, it was bound to ensure peace in India and thence in Pakistan. This was not one man's work, but all, young and old, men and women, had to co-operate sincerely in the effort. If this was not the meaning of the breaking of his fast, he had not done well in breaking it. Then they would have fulfilled the letter and killed the spirit. What was possible in Delhi was possible in the rest of the Union and if communal peace reigned in the whole of the Union, Pakistan was bound to follow suit. They should shed all fear. Every Muslim child should feel safe among the Hindus and Sikhs. Up till now our face was turned towards Satan, now he hoped it would be turned Godward. If they did so, the Union would lead the way to world peace. He did not wish to live for any other purpose. Mere lip service was no good. They must install God in their hearts. God was one, whatever the name given to Him. The realization of this truth should end all enmity and intolerance.

Let the Hindus decide once for all that they would not quarrel. He would advise the Hindus and the Sikhs to read the *Quran* as they read the *Gita* and the *Granth Saheb*. To the Muslims he would say that they should read the *Gita* and the *Granth Saheb* with the same reverence with which they read the *Quran*. They should understand the meaning of what they read and have equal regard for all religions. This was his life-long practice and ideal. He claimed to be a *sanatani* Hindu, though he was not an idolator in the accepted sense. But he could not despise those who worshipped idols. The idol worshipper saw God in the stone image. God was omnipresent. If it was wrong to seek God in a stone how was it right to seek Him in a book called the *Gita*, the *Granth Saheb* or the *Quran*? Was not that also idol worship? By cultivating tolerance and respect they would be able to learn from all. Then they

would forget communal differences and live together in peace and amity. The disgraceful incidents where men and women were thrown out of moving trains, would then cease to occur. People would freely and fearlessly move about in the Union. He would never be at peace with himself till Pakistan was just as safe for the Hindus and the Sikhs, and the Pakistan sufferers could return to their homes with honour and dignity, and the Muslims to theirs in the Union.

BREAKING OF THE FAST

In his written message Ganhiji said :

" I embarked on the fast in the name of Truth whose familiar name is God. Without living Truth God is nowhere. In the name of God we have indulged in lies, massacres of people without caring whether they were innocent or guilty, men or women, children or infants. We have indulged in abductions, forcible conversions and we have done all this shamelessly. I am not aware if anybody has done these things in the name of Truth. With that same name on my lips I have broken the fast. The agony of our people was unbearable. Rashtrapati Dr. Rajendrababu brought over a hundred people representing the Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs. representatives of the Hindu Mahasabha, the Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh and representatives of refugees from the Punjab, the Frontier Province and Sind. In this very representative company were present Zahid Hussainsaheb, the High Commissioner for Pakistan, the Chief Commissioner of Delhi and the Deputy Commissioner, General Shah Nawazkhan, representing the Azad Hind Fauj (I. N. A.). Pandit Nehru, sitting like a statue, was of course there, as also Maulanasaheb. Dr. Rajendrababu read a document in Hindustani signed by these representatives, asking me not to put any further strain on them and end the agony by breaking the fast. Telegrams after telegrams have come from Pakistan and the Indian Union urging me to do the same. I could not resist the counsel of all these friends. I could not disbelieve their pledge that come what may, there would be complete friendship between the Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs,

Christians, Parsis and Jews, a friendship not to be broken. To break that friendship would be to break the nation.

SPIRIT OF THE VOW

"As I write, comforting telegrams are deluging me. How I wish that God will keep me fit enough and sane enough to render the service of humanity that lies in front of me! If the solemn pledge made today is fulfilled, I assure you that it will revive with redoubled force my intense wish and prayer before God that I should be enabled to live the full span of life doing service of humanity till the last moment That span according to learned opinion is at least one hundred twentyfive years, some say one hundred thirtythree. The letter of my vow has been fulfilled early beyond expectation, through the great goodwill of all the citizens of Delhi, including the Hindu Mahasabha leaders and the Rashtriya Sevak Sangh. The result could not be otherwise when I find that thousands of refugees and others have been fasting since yesterday. Signed assurances of heart friendship have been pouring in upon me from thousands Telegraphic blessings have come from all over the world Can there be a better sign of God's hand in this act of mine? But beyond the letter of fulfilment of my solemn vow lies its spirit without which the letter killeth. *The spirit of the vow is sincere friendship* between the Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs of the Union and a similar friendship in Pakistan If the first is assured, the second must follow, as sure as day follows night. If there is darkness in the Union, it would be folly to expect light in Pakistan But if the night in the Union is dispelled beyond the shadow of a doubt, it cannot be otherwise in Pakistan, noi are signs wanting in that direction. Numerous messages have come from Pakistan, not one of dissent. May God, who is Truth, guide us as He has visibly guided us during all these six days."

Birla House, New Delhi, 18-1-'48

Harijan, 25-1-1948

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CONGRATULATIONS AND CONCERN

"My thanks go out to the senders of numerous wires from all over the world from Indians and non-Indians expressing their goodwill and anxiety. These show the correctness of the step I had taken. Not that I had the slightest doubt about it. I had none about this as I never have had about the reality that God Is and that His most graphic name is Truth. Now has begun a stream of wires of congratulations heaving relief. These friends will forgive me for not sending personal acknowledgments. It is physically impossible to do so. I hope too that no such acknowledgment is expected by the senders. I feel constrained to single out two—one from the Premier of the West Punjab and the other from the Nawabsaheb of Bhopal. They are today labouring under grave distrust. Let the extracted passages speak for themselves. If the senders were not sincere, they would have spared themselves and me on the solemn occasion that the fast was.

Here is from the Nawabsaheb of Bhopal:

> "Your appeal for a reunion of hearts of all communities cannot fail to find support from all people of goodwill in both Dominions as will also any appeal for an understanding and friendly relations between India and Pakistan. We in Bhopal have been able happily to face our troubles during the past year in a spirit of concord, amity and goodwill between all communities with the result that not a single untoward incident has occurred to mar the peace of the State. We assure you that we shall strive to further this friendly spirit with all our strength at our command."

I give the full text of the wire from the Premier of the West Punjab:

> "The West Punjab Ministry expresses deep admiration and sincere appreciation for your great gesture for the furtherance of a noble cause. This Ministry has always stood for the principle of doing everything possible to

protect the lives, honour and property of the minorities, and giving them equal rights of citizenship. We assure you that this Ministry will follow this policy with redoubled vigour. We are anxious to see an immediate improvement in the situation throughout the Indian sub-continent which may enable you to break your fast. No efforts will be spared in this province to help in saving a life as precious as yours."

Birla House, New Delhi, 19-1-'48

Harijan, 25-1-1948

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MY WARNING

"In this age of senseless imitation my warning is that it would be foolish for anybody to embark on such a fast expecting identical results in an identically short space of time. If anyone does, he will face severe disappointment and will discredit what is a hoary and infallible institution. Two severe qualifications are necessary—a living faith in God and a felt peremptory call from Him. I am tempted to add a third, but it is superfluous. A peremptory call from God within presupposes the rightness, timeliness and propriety of the cause for which the fast is taken. It follows that a long previous preparation is required. Let no one, therefore, lightly embark on such a fast.

"The citizens of Delhi and the refugees have a heavy task in front of them. Let them seek occasions for meeting together as often as possible in perfect mutual trust. It was a soul stirring sight for me to meet Muslim sisters in large numbers yesterday. Girls in my party told me that the sisters were sitting in Birla House uncertain whether they could come to me. They were in purdah, most of them. I asked them to be brought in and they came. I suggested that they would not have the purdah before their fathers or brothers. Why should they think me less? And off went the purdah without exception. This is not the first time that the purdah has disappeared before me. I mention the

incident to illustrate what genuine love, as I claim mine to be, is able to do. Hindu and Sikh women should go to the Muslim sisters and establish friendship with them. They should invite them on ceremonial occasions and be invited. Muslim girls and boys should be attracted to common schools, not communal. They should mix in sports. Not only should there be no boycott of Muslims but they should be induced to resume their previous occupations. Delhi is poorer for the disappearance of the exquisite workmanship of the Muslims. It is a miserable and miserly thing for the Hindus and the Sikhs to wish to take away from them their means of livelihood. On the one hand there should be no monopoly and on the other there should be no attempt at deprivation. In this great country of ours there is room for all. The Peace Committees that have been formed must not go to sleep as many committees unfortunately do in all countries. The condition of keeping me in your midst is that all the communities in India live at peace with one another, not by force of arms but that of love than which there is no better cement to be found in the world."

Birla House, New Delhi, 19-1-'48

Harijan, 25-1-1948

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THE BREAKING OF THE FAST

The feverish anxiety into which the whole city of Delhi and the country at large had been plunged was terminated when Gandhiji broke his fast at Birla House, New Delhi, today at 12-45 p. m. with due solemnity. Earlier in the day, representatives of all the important groups and organizations in the city, including representatives of the refugees and from the three worst affected parts of the city, namely, Karol Bagh, Sabzimandi and Paharganj, had assembled under the chairmanship of Dr. Rajendraprasad at the latter's residence and put their signatures to a seven-point declaration covering the conditions laid down by Gandhiji for breaking his fast. The document was

recorded in both the Persian and Devanagari scripts at Gandhiji's special insistence. At the meeting were also present Maulana Azadsaheb and Major General Shah Nawazkhan. Delhi Muslims were represented by Maulanas Hifzur Rahman and Ahmed Saeed of the Jamiat-ul-Ulema and Maulana Habib-ur-Rahman. Goswami Shri Ganesh Datt, Shri Basantlal and Shri Narain Das represented the Rashtriya Sevak Sangh and the Hindu Mahasabha. There were too the representatives of the various Sikh organizations. They then all repaired (numbering over 100) to Birla House, where they assembled in Gandhiji's room, to request him to break the fast. Maulanasaheb and Pandit Jawaharlalji had arrived there already and Janab Zahid Hussainsaheb, the Pakistan's High Commissioner came in a little later.

Dr. Rajendraprasad opened the proceedings by narrating to Gandhiji how they had all assembled on the previous night at the former's residence and after full discussion decided to sign the declaration then and there. But as representatives of some organizations were not present in that meeting, they felt that they should not go to Gandhiji immediately with the signed document but wait till the remaining signatures were obtained. They had accordingly met again in the morning when all those who were absent during the previous night's meeting came and gave their signatures. It was found in the course of the morning meeting, Dr. Rajendraprasad reported, that even those who had some lingering doubts on the previous night were now confident that they could ask Gandhiji with a full sense of their responsibility to break the fast. As the President of the Congress, Dr. Rajendraprasad said that he had signed the document in view of the guarantee which they had all jointly and severally given. Janab Khurshid, the Chief Commissioner, and Shri Randhawa, Deputy Commissioner of Delhi, who were present, had signed the document on behalf of the administration. It had been decided to set up a number of committees to implement the pledge. Dr. Rajendraprasad hoped that Gandhiji would now terminate his fast.

Shri Deshabandhu Gupta, speaking next, described some touching scenes of fraternization between the Hindus and Muslims which he had witnessed when a procession of about 150 Muslims was taken out that morning in Sabzimandi and was received with ovation and offered fruit and refreshments by the Hindu inhabitants of that locality.

Gandhiji replying said that what they had told him had touched him deeply. They had given him all that he had asked for. But if their words meant that they held themselves responsible for communal peace in Delhi only and what happened in other places was no concern of theirs. then their guarantee was nothing worth and he would feel and they too would one day realize that it was a great blunder on his part to have given up his fast. As an illustration he referred to the report of the happenings in Allahabad that had appeared in the Press. Representatives of both the R. S. S. and the Hindu Mahasabha were among the signatories to the seven-point declaration. If they were sincere in their professions, surely, they could not be indifferent to outbreaks of madness in places other than Delhi. It would be a fraud upon God if they did so. Delhi was the heart of the Indian Dominion and they (the representatives gathered there) were the cream of Delhi. If they could not make the whole of India realize that the Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims were all brothers, it would bode ill for the future of both the Dominions. What would happen to Hindustan if they quarrelled with one another ?

Here Gandhiji broke down owing to overwhelming feeling as he explained on resumption. What he had said was repeated aloud by me and partly by Dr. Sushila Nayyar.

Resuming his remarks after the interval, Gandhiji again appealed to them to search well their hearts so that they might not take any step which they would have to regret afterwards. The occasion demanded of them bravery of the highest order. They should clearly realize the implications of their pledge. It was nothing less than that what they had achieved in Delhi had to be realized in the whole

of India. That did not mean that the ideal could be realized in a day. But it did mean that whilst in the past they had turned their face towards Satan, they had now resolved to turn it Godward. If, in their hearts, they did not accept what he had placed before them or if they had made up their minds that it was beyond them, they should plainly tell him so.

There could be nothing more wrong on their part, continued Gandhiji, than to hold that Hindustan belonged only to the Hindus and the Muslims could have no place in it or on the reverse that Pakistan belonged to the Muslims only and the Hindus and Sikhs could have no place in it. He wanted the refugees to understand that if they set things right in Delhi, as he had suggested, that was the only way to set things right in Pakistan too. He reminded them that he was not a man to shirk another fast, should he afterwards discover that he had been deceived or had deceived himself into breaking it prematurely. They should, therefore, act with circumspection and cent per cent sincerity. He invited the representatives of Mussalmans who had been meeting him frequently to tell him whether they were satisfied that the conditions in Delhi were now such as to warrant breaking the fast on his part.

Addressing next a few words to the Muslims especially, he asked if there was any ground for the suspicion that the Muslims did not regard India as their country. They lived in it in the midst of the Hindus because they could not help it, but one day they had to part company. He hoped that that suspicion was baseless. Similarly, if there was a Hindu who regarded the Muslims as *yavanas* or *asuras* incapable of realizing God, he was guilty of the worst blasphemy, which could possibly have no room in the covenant which they had signed.

He then referred to a book which a Muslim friend had lovingly presented him at Patna. In that book the writer had propounded that according to the *Quran*, *kafirs* (i. e. Hindus) were worse than poisonous reptiles and fit only to be exterminated. Not only was there no sin in

using every conceivable variety of force or fraud to compass that end, it was meritorious in the eyes of God. He was sure that no God-fearing Muslims could subscribe to or even secretly sympathize with that creed. Some dubbed Hindus as image worshippers, proceeded Gandhiji. But it was not the stone image which they worshipped but the God within, without Whom not a particle of matter existed. If a devotee saw God in an image, it was not a thing for anyone to cavil at. Granting that his belief was a delusion, it deluded nobody but himself. It required magnanimity and breadth of outlook to understand and appreciate the religious convictions and practices of others. It was the same thing if they considered the *Quran* or the *Granth Saheb* as God.

Concluding, Gandhiji remarked that if they fully accepted the implications of their pledge, they should release him from Delhi so that he might be free to go to Pakistan. In his absence they should welcome such refugees from Pakistan as might want to return to their homes. The latter were none too happy over there just as the Hindus in the Indian Dominion were none too happy to lose large numbers of Muslim artisans and craftsmen. It was not easy to reproduce in a day traditional skill that had been acquired through generations. It was a loss on both sides which no sane people would like willingly to perpetuate.

Gandhiji ended by once more asking them to turn the searchlight inward and not to deceive themselves or others by asking him to give up his fast, if what he had said did not find a responsive echo in their hearts.

Maulanasaheb Abul Kalam Azad, being next asked to say something, remarked that so far as the guarantee of communal peace was concerned it could be given only by the representatives of the citizens of Delhi. He, however, did not want to leave unchallenged the Muslim friends' observation to which Gandhiji had referred, as it referred to the teachings of Islam. He had no hesitation in characterizing it as a libel on Islam. He quoted a verse from the *Quran* which was to the effect that all mankind are brethren, irrespective of their race or religion. The remarks to which Gandhiji had referred were abhorrent to the

teachings of Islam. They were only indicative of the insanity that had of late, seized some sections of the people.

He was followed by Maulana Hifzur-Rahmansaheb, who categorically repudiated the allegation that his co-religionists did not regard India as their country which claimed their full and undivided allegiance, but only as a place where they were forced to live by expediency and by the compulsion of circumstances. Their thirty years' unbroken record of service of the nationalist cause gave the lie to that charge. They regarded it as an insult to their nationalism to be asked to reiterate their loyalty to India. He recalled how during the recent disturbances at one stage their Congress friends and colleagues had offered to provide a safe asylum to them outside Delhi as they were not sure that they would be able to give them adequate protection in Delhi. But they had declined that offer and had preferred to stay in and go about the city without any police escort, trusting to God alone Speaking of the Jamiat, he could say that its members were staunch followers of Maulana Azadsaheb and the Congress. Those who had left for Pakistan had done so out of fear for their lives and worse. They all wanted to remain in India as citizens of India with self-respect and honour, in their own right, not on the mercy or sufferance of anybody. He asserted that if India were to be attacked they would all defend it to the last man as their country. They had plainly said on more than one occasion that those who were not prepared to do so should leave India and go to Pakistan.

Describing next the change that had come over the city as a result of Gandhiji's fast, he said that they regarded it as a happy augury and a presage of things to come. They were satisfied that the tide had definitely turned and was now fast flowing in the direction of communal harmony and peace when previously bitterness and hatred ran riot. Now that the administration had underwritten the assurances given by the representatives of the people they were satisfied that they would be implemented, though it might take some time. He, therefore, joined Dr. Rajendra-prasad in his appeal that Gandhiji should break the fast.

After Shri Ganesh Datt had on behalf of the Hindu Mahasabha and the R. S. S. reiterated that appeal, Janab Zahid Hussainsaheb addressed a few words to Gandhiji. He was there, he said, to convey to Gandhiji how deeply concerned the people in Pakistan were about him and how they were daily inundating him with anxious inquiries about his (Gandhiji's) health. It was their heart's desire that circumstances might soon prevail which would enable him to break the fast. If there was anything that he could fittingly do towards that end he was ready and so were the people of Pakistan.

Janab Zahid Hussainsaheb was followed by Janab Khurshid and Shri Randhawa who on behalf of the administration reiterated the assurance that all the conditions mentioned in the citizens' pledge would be duly implemented, and no effort would be spared to restore to the Indian capital its glorious old tradition of communal harmony and peace

Sardar Harbans Singh endorsed on behalf of Sikhs what his predecessors had said. Gandhiji then expressed his readiness to break the fast, which was done with the usual ceremony of prayer at which texts from the Japanese, Muslim and Parsi scriptures were recited followed by the *mantra*

"Lead me from untruth to truth,
From darkness to light,
From death to immortality."

A Hindustani hymn and the Christian hymn.

"When I survey the wondrous cross", were then sung by the girl inmates of the Ashram followed by *Ramadhun*. The glass of fruit juice was handed by Maulanasaheb and Gandhiji broke the fast after fruit was distributed to and partaken by all present.

New Delhi, 18-1-'48

Harijan, 25-1-1948

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THE SEVEN-POINT PLEDGE

[Below is the text of the declaration made by the Peace Committee of Delhi before it could persuade Gandhiji to break his fast. — Ed.]

We wish to announce that it is our heart-felt desire that the Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs and members of other communities should once again live in Delhi like brothers and in perfect amity and we take the pledge that we shall protect the life, property and faith of Muslims and that the incidents which have taken place in Delhi will not happen again.

We want to assure Gandhiji that the annual fair at Khwaja Qutab-ud-Din Mazar will be held this year as in previous years.

Muslims will be able to move about in Subzimandi, Karol Bagh, Paharganj and other localities just as they could in the past.

The mosques which have been left by Muslims and which now are in the possession of Hindus and Sikhs will be returned. The areas which have been set apart for Muslims will not be forcibly occupied.

We shall not object to the return to Delhi of the Muslims who have migrated from here if they choose to come back and Muslims shall be able to carry on their business as before.

We assure that all these things will be done by our personal efforts and not with the help of the police or military.

We request Mahatmaji to believe us and to give up his fast and continue to lead us as he has done hitherto.

Harijan, 1-2-1948

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WORTHY OF REFLECTION

A young man writes:

"Today at noon I learnt that you had commenced fasting. I resisted the temptation of writing to you during the fast. But I can do so no longer.

"1. It is idle to think that a fast of five or seven days on your part can establish heart unity between the Hindus and Mussalmans. All it can achieve will be a sort of unity on the surface that manifests itself in mammoth public meetings, processions and such demonstrations. And that is good so far as it goes. But it won't be a sign of a real heart unity. You should not, therefore, delude yourself into the belief at the end of your fast that heart unity has been established. I do not regard the peace in Calcutta either as betokening heart unity. What your fast will do will be to make the Hindus suppress their anger so as not to kill innocent Mussalmans. And I think it should be enough to induce you to end your fast.

"2. By your penance you have gained a unique place in the hearts and affection of the people. On the other hand, our people have not yet attained a living faith in the immortality of the soul, which can enable them to regard physical death with philosophical indifference. They are not prepared to allow your life to ebb away by inches before their very eyes. They will, therefore, suppress their anger and hatred in order to save your life. But this pent-up anger is sure to burst out at the first opportunity. It seems to me that some such consideration alone must have led you to suggest that even civil war was to be preferred to partition.

"3. If anger and hatred are to be purged out of the hearts of the people, the Government ought to teach them to base their lives on constructive work. But today we see in the Papers that shortly 600 imported tractors and 6000 or more tons of fertilizers, i. e. ammonium sulphate are

going to be unloaded on our shores. One can understand people wanting industrialization of key industries to build up the country's war potential, but I fail to understand why they should want to centralize the production of the prime necessaries of life, viz. food and clothing. In America, they are tending more and more to revert to natural manures. We seem to be going in for the production of chemical fertilizers.

"4. I can say from my experience that the Indian Muslims are not so innocent as they might appear. Let not the tales of woe which the Delhi Muslims pour into your ears mislead you into thinking that all the Muslims in India or a greater part are innocent sufferers. On the contrary, a large majority of them are simply biding their time and waiting for an opportunity to play the fifth columnists when Pakistan would invade India. I do not impute these motives to the multitude of ignorant Muslim masses in the villages, but I do believe that they can serve as fuel to the fire. It seems to me that at the back of the Pakistan arrogance and truculence is the feeling that Indian Muslims are with them, and that they can and will exploit you to the full. They also reckon upon getting the support of some other selfishly inclined powers.

"5. In view of the foregoing, I feel that your fast was not meant to achieve anything more than making the Hindus restrain their passions.

"6. I hold that the Hindu-Muslim trouble can be resolved only in two ways. First, by the Hindus completely cleansing their hearts. That expectation may be said to have been belied long ago. As you have observed, the Congress struggle has so far been based on the passive resistance of the weak. Therefore, now that power has come to it, it will rush towards *himsa* with redoubled speed. A glance at the record of the various provincial Governments will amply bear out this. The other way is for the Indian Government to handle the situation with firmness. This, it seems to me, it has failed to do so far and to that extent—thanks to your influence—the interest of the country has suffered."

The foregoing letter deserves careful attention. Contrary to what the correspondent holds, instances can be adduced of instantaneous change of heart. It would have been more apt to say that such heart change is transitory. Now that my fast is over, it remains to be seen what result it produces. I say this not to deprecate or detract from what the writer of the foregoing letter has said. The Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs — all may learn something from it. The ideal of communal unity is not a new one. It has always been before the country as one of the pillars of national independence. Without it independence cannot last. This has been regarded as more or less axiomatic. The transition period, which I hope, is now over, reflected our distemper. We may, therefore, expect that the unity that has been established in Delhi will prove enduring.

That the edifice of unity can rest on constructive work alone is a maxim which everybody should remember. The question is how to realize it. It is up to every worker who believes in it to live it in his life and to bring it home to his neighbours. By going into explaining the scientific basis of the constructive programme, it can be made interesting. Our daily experience shows that this programme cannot be advanced by mechanical or unintelligent work.

That tractors and chemical fertilizers will spell our ruin, I have not a shadow of a doubt.

I do not regard all the Mussalmans of India to be innocent. What is obvious is that after the birth of Pakistan the Muslims in the Indian Union have been placed in a very difficult situation and it is up to the majority community to mete out exact justice to them. It would spell the ruin of both Hindu religion and the majority community, if the latter, in the intoxication of power entertains the belief that it can crush the minority community and establish a purely Hindu Raj. I consider the present occasion to be particularly auspicious for purging out the dross from the hearts of both the communities by a strenuous effort at self-purification.

The meaning of the fifth paragraph is not quite clear. In any case, my fast being for the purification of all I

expected and still expect all — be they Hindu, Muslim or others — to turn the searchlight inward and to cast out all hidden impurity.

In the sixth paragraph I find only dry logic. It ignores the heart. No one has a right to say that what could not be achieved during the struggle for independence is unachievable at all times. On the contrary, today there is a real opportunity to demonstrate the supremacy of *ahimsa*. True, our people have been sucked into the whirlpool of universal militarization. If even a few can keep out of it, it will be their privilege to set an example of *ahimsa* of the brave and be reckoned as the first servants of India. This cannot be demonstrated by intellect. Therefore, till it can be realized through experience, it must be accepted in faith.

The Swaraj Government is bound to proceed with firmness and courage. A Government which is weak or which allows itself to be led into courses which its reason does not approve of, is not fit to rule. It ought to step aside and make way for a better one. To say or to believe that Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Patel have weakened under my influence is to betray gross ignorance of their character. And if my influence has really the enervating effect imputed to it by my correspondent, it is a thing for me to be ashamed of and for the country to deplore as detrimental to its very existence.

New Delhi, 23-1-'48

Harijan, 1-2-1948

(From the original in Gujarati)

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A PLEA FOR SANITY

Gandhiji said that Delhi had done a great thing and he hoped that the signatories to the Peace Pledge had given their signature with God in the form of Truth as their witness. He had heard that there was a repudiation of the pledge on behalf of an official of the Hindu Mahasabha. He was sorry. If the inhabitants of Delhi and the refugees in the capital would remain steadfast and not be swayed by happenings elsewhere, they would save India and also Pakistan. Delhi was an ancient city. If Delhi acted truthfully and non-violently, the effects of its action would be felt all the world over If they would carefully read the Sardar's speech at Bombay, they would realize that there was no difference of outlook between the Sardar, Panditji and himself They were all working for the same end although they might express it differently. None of them was the enemy of the Mussalmans. Enmity towards the Muslims amounted to enmity towards India. The least he expected them to do was not to take the law into their own hands and commit inhuman acts. That would mean the end of society They were bound as respectable citizens to leave justice in the hands of their chosen Government. They and their newspapers were never tired of condemning in unmeasured terms the acts of those Americans as barbarous who lynched Negroes. Did similar acts on their part become less barbarous?

Gandhiji next referred to his statement that he might now proceed to Pakistan But that, he said, could only happen if the Pakistan Government were convinced that he (Gandhiji) was a man of peace and a friend of the Muslims and would, therefore, like him to go to Pakistan. He would, however, in any case, have to wait till the doctors declared him fit to undertake the journey. They had said that the convalescence would take at least a fortnight and it would be some time before he could take

solid food. The liquids that he was now taking included fruit juice, vegetable soup and goat's milk and this was enough in all conscience.

PRIME MINISTER'S NOBLE GESTURE

Referring to the sufferings of the Hindu and Sikh refugees Gandhiji said that Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was doing all that was possible in order to bring them speedy relief. His heart bled for them. He was a man who would offer his own bedding to one in distress and pace up and down the whole night in order to keep himself warm. His house was full. Being the Prime Minister of India he had to accommodate guests, both Indians and foreigners. Still he had expressed a wish to offer one or two rooms in his house to lodge refugees. He expected other Ministers, officials and men of means to do likewise. He (Gandhiji) was convinced that this act of self-sacrifice on the part of India's foremost leader would be appreciated all the world over and put a speedy end to the sufferings of the homeless refugees. It should gladden their hearts to note that this beautiful land of theirs had produced such great men, endowed with such a wonderful spirit of service and self-sacrifice. Jawahar was a real *jawahar* (gem) and there were others, only not so lustrous perhaps. If their leaders were doing all this for the people, it behoved them not to hurt their Muslim brethren. To hurt them was to hurt their leaders.

Gandhiji then went on to say that there were opportunists too in India. Some such men had endeavoured, he was told, to make money out of his fast. They produced notes which they could sell to the credulous poor. He severely criticized the practice and asked the authors of such mean action to find some honourable means of earning money. At the same time he warned the public against the tactics of such unprincipled men.

THE KASHMIR ISSUE

Gandhiji referred then to a telegram that he had received from Lahore. The sender had signed himself as President, Kashmir Freedom League, and had written as follows:

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

It hurt him. If the Kashmir issue was not settled, would the Muslims continue to look upon the Hindus and Sikhs as their enemies and *vice versa* ? The army of the Indian Union had not entered Kashmir on their own. So far as he was aware, they had gone there at the call of the ruler of the State and the leader of the Kashmiri Muslims, Sheikh Abdullah. If the invaders, tribesmen and others would withdraw, and the issue was left to the rebels in Poonch and the rest of Kashmir, and did not secure any aid from outside, it would be time to ask the Indian Union to withdraw its troops. The suggestion that Kashmir should go to whomsoever it rightfully belonged was perfectly true. And who were the rightful owners of Kashmir? The Maharaja was there and the Indian Government could not ignore him. Ultimately it was for the people of Kashmir to decide their own fate. Hence the idea of referendum.

GWALIOR

Next Gandhiji read out a telegram that some Gwalior Muslim had sent to him from Ratlam. It said:

"We Muslims inhabitants Jahangirpur, District Ujjain, Gwalior request your honour that on 15th and 16th instant our village was surrounded by Hindu party who beat us seriously. Several injured, one died. Our crops and houses destroyed. Officer of State not taking any action. We are in danger. Kindly arrange urgently."

If the report was correct, it was a matter of sorrow for them. All breach of communal peace in any corner of India should make them and their Government hang their heads in shame.

Birla House, New Delhi, 20-1-'48

Harijan, 1-2-1948

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ILL SERVING HINDUISM

Speaking after prayers on Wednesday evening, Gandhiji referred to the previous day's bomb explosion in the Birla House compound. He had been receiving anxious enquiries and praise for being unruffled at the accident. He thought that it was military practice and, therefore, nothing to worry about. He had not realized till after the prayers that it was a bomb explosion and that the bomb was meant against him. God only knew how he would have behaved in front of a bomb aimed at him and exploding. Therefore, he deserved no praise. He would deserve a certificate only if he fell as a result of such an explosion and yet retained a smile on his face and no malice against the doer. What he wanted to say was that no one should look down upon the misguided youth who had thrown the bomb. He probably looked upon Gandhiji as an enemy of Hinduism. After all, had not the *Gita* said that whenever there was an evil-minded person damaging religion, God sent some one to put an end to his life? That celebrated verse had a special meaning. The youth should realize that those who differed from him were not necessarily evil. The evil had no life apart from the toleration of good people. No one should believe that he or she was so perfect that he or she was sent by God to punish evil-doers, as the accused seemed to flatter himself he was.

He (Gandhiji) had heard that the youth had without permission occupied a *masjid* for lack of other accommodation and now that the police were getting all mosques evacuated, he resented the act. It was a wrong thing on his part to have occupied the *masjid* in the first place and it was doubly wrong to defy the authorities, who asked him to vacate it.

To those who were at the back of the youth, he would appeal to desist from such activity. That was not the way to save Hinduism. Hinduism could be saved only by Gandhiji's method. Gandhiji had practised Hinduism from

early childhood His nurse had taught him to invoke Rama when he feared evil spirits Later on he had come in contact with Christians, Muslims and others and, after making a fair study of other religions, had stuck to Hinduism He was as firm in his faith today as in his early childhood He believed God would make him an instrument of saving the religion that he loved, cherished and practised In any case one had to have constant practice and acquaintance with the fundamentals of religion before being qualified for becoming God's instrument

PITY THE BOMB THROWER

Continuing Gandhiji said that some Sikh friends came and said that he (Gandhiji) should not think that the Sikhs had anything to do with the deed He knew that the youth was not a Sikh But what did it matter whether he was a Sikh or a Hindu or a Muslim? He wished well to all perpetrators He had told the Inspector General of Police also, not to harass him in any way They should try to win him over and convert him to right thinking and doing He hoped that the youth and his guides would realize their error For, it was a wrong done to Hinduism and the country At the same time Gandhiji warned his hearers against being angry with the accused He did not know that he was doing anything wrong They should pity him If they harboured resentment against Gandhiji's fast and had still pledged themselves to maintain peace in order to save an old servant of the nation, the guilt was theirs, not that of the young man who had thrown the bomb If, on the other hand, they had signed the Peace Pledge wholeheartedly, persons like the young man were ultimately bound to come to their way of thinking.

Gandhiji said that he expected the audience to go on with the prayers in spite of bomb explosions or a shower of bullets. He was glad to learn that a poor unlettered woman was the cause of the arrest of the miscreant If the heart was sound, if there was right thought, lack of letters was not of any consequence. He congratulated the unlettered sister on her simple bravery

BAHAWALPUR AND SIND

Next he referred to a note from the Bahawalpur sufferers. He had not forgotten them. Even that very day he had received a telegram from the Nawabsaheb of Bahawalpur saying that he was doing everything possible for the welfare of the non-Muslims in his State He (Gandhiji) was pursuing the matter in his own way

Gandhiji narrated a telegram that he had received from the Sindhi Sikh refugees at Bombay They said that 15,000 Sikhs scattered about in Sind were in danger of extermination Their life, religion and culture were in danger. Arrangements should be made for their speedy evacuation Gandhiji could never tolerate the extermination of the Sikhs and would do for them all that was possible for one man to do Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's Government was also fully alive to their responsibility He called upon the Sind Government and the Pakistan Government to reassure the Sikh residents there that they would protect them with their own lives If they could not guarantee their protection, they should gather them in one place and make arrangements for their speedy and safe evacuation The Sikhs were a brave community They should know that everyone's honour and religion were safe only in one's own hands No one else could rob one of these Parsi friends of his had gone to Sind that day

A MISLEADING ANALOGY

Gandhiji then referred to a letter written to him during his fast The writer had said that while Gandhiji was in jail in 1942, the country had somewhat taken to violence. If Gandhiji died of the fast, there would be such a violent upsurge in the country that it would stagger humanity Therefore, the writer had argued that for the sake of humanity he should give up his fast. Gandhiji said that while it was true that the people had resorted to violence when he was locked up in jail, he did not think that his death under a fast should have the feared result. But he had rehearsed before embarking on the fast the possibility of a wide fratricide. The Yadavas had destroyed each other

before Lord Krishna's death. But he (Gandhiji) was too insignificant a mortal, to produce such an effect. However, if the people had become indolent and vicious like the Yadavas and God saw that there was no way out but extermination, He might make even an ordinary person like him, the instrument of such a catastrophe. Having left himself in God's hands, he worried no more about the consequences. What, however, he saw during the fast nerved him to hope that India had no such self-destruction in store for her.

Lastly, he expressed satisfaction at the way the Muslims were freely moving about in Delhi. He wanted them to continue the process of self-purification and convert their hearts into temples of the living God of Truth

Birla House, New Delhi, 21-1-'48

Harijan, 1-2-1948

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GWALIOR AGAIN

For the first time after the fast Gandhiji was able to walk to the prayer ground this evening. He said in his post-prayer speech that he was slowly gaining strength and God willing hoped to return to his normal health before long

Gandhiji referred to Gwalior. He had already mentioned a telegram enumerating the sufferings of the Muslims in a village in that State However, a Praja Mandal representative came to see him the evening before after the prayer meeting and asked for his blessings on the act of the Maharaja giving full Responsible Government to the people Gandhiji said that he was not interested in political reforms in the State if there was to be any distinction of caste. creed or community. Both the Maharaja and the people would deserve his congratulations and blessings only if they did away with all such distinctions, and if there was not the least dislike towards the Muslims, and the *bhangi* and the Brahmin, and the rich and the poor had equality of treatment in law and in fact If the Maharajasaheb would

be the first servant of the people, he would welcome him and his successors to continue to occupy the *gadi* and keep on serving the people. The rulers and the ruled had all to undergo self-purification. That was the only way for India to stand erect before the world and be the custodian of its moral height.

Birla House, New Delhi, 22-1-'48

Harijan, 1-2-1948

519

FOR THE MAINTENANCE OF PEACE

Today being the anniversary of Subhasbabu's birthday Gandhiji referred to it in his post-prayer speech. He said that he generally did not remember such dates, nor did he attach much value to dates of birth and death. He did not know whether it was right or wrong for him to be so indifferent. But he was just reminded of the day and he was glad that there was special reason to take note of Subhasbabu's birthday in spite of the fact that the deceased patriot had believed in violence, while he (Gandhiji) believed in non-violence. But he would not forget at this time that it was Subhasbabu who knew no provincialism nor communal differences. He had in his brave army men and women drawn from all over India without distinction, and evoked affection and loyalty which very few have been able to evoke. A lawyer friend asked him for a good definition of Hinduism. Though he was a *sanatani* Hindu, he was unable to define Hinduism. Gandhiji replied that he had forgotten his law for years. Nor was he learned in the science of religion. But as a lay man he could say that Hinduism regarded all religions as worthy of all respect. Subhasbabu was, in his opinion, such a Hindu. In memory of that great patriot, they should cleanse their hearts of all communal bitterness.

A PLEA FOR CAUTION

Proceeding Gandhiji referred to what he had said about communal trouble in a Gwalior village. He had been

investigating the matter and had just received a telegram from one who had personally visited the village in question, saying that the information conveyed to him regarding looting, arson and killing of the Muslims in the village of Jahangirpur was quite wrong. It was true that there was a personal private quarrel which could not be stretched into a communal question. And in no case was there arson or loss of life. Gandhiji said that the telegram gladdened him. He advised his Muslim friends to be most careful about sending complaints. They should meticulously avoid all exaggeration. The golden rule in life was to exaggerate one's own faults and belittle those of others. That was the only way to self-purification. Those who indulged in exaggeration would discredit their community.

MYSORE, JUNAGADH AND MEERUT

Gandhiji then mentioned a telegram from Mysore saying that there had been communal trouble there and that his fast had not produced any effect in Mysore. He (Gandhiji) was sorry to hear this. He advised the Mysore Government to issue a clear statement on the actual happenings.

Gandhiji next referred to a telegram by several influential Muslims of Junagadh. They said that since the Sardar had appointed a Regional Commissioner there, they felt fully reassured. No one would now be able to create a split amongst the people of Junagadh and at the referendum they would be able to prove that the Muslims of Junagadh were with the rest of the people.

Gandhiji had also received a telegram from Meerut. It said that the efforts to keep perfect peace in the country were highly appreciated. They had no ill feelings against the Nationalist Muslims, but they did not believe that those League Muslims who, until yesterday, had been collecting arms and even now intended to help Pakistan, could ever be loyal to the Union. He (Gandhiji) would have to repent if he put his trust in them. They also said that religion and politics were quite separate and non-violence could never work in politics. They added that

they were satisfied with the present Government and did not want any change in it. He (Gandhiji) did not understand how the question of change in the Government arose. He did not believe that anyone could displace or replace the present Government.

HOW TO DEAL WITH TRAITORS

It was rather late in the day to tell him that non-violence could not work in politics. In politics they could not begin with distrust. Those in charge of the Government were men of great courage and self-sacrifice. They would deal with traitors when the occasion came. Traitors might be found in any community and not only among the Muslims. They had decided to live with the Muslims as brothers and he wanted them to stick to their resolve. All Leaguers were not bad. They should report against those who indulged in questionable activities and let the Government deal with them as severely as it liked. They must on no account take the law into their own hands. That would be barbarous.

Lastly, Gandhiji again thanked those who had sent telegrams of good wishes which were still pouring in. He prayed to God that their wishes for the maintenance of peace might be fulfilled. The senders would excuse him for his inability to send personal acknowledgments.

Birla House, New Delhi, 23-1-'48

Harijan, 1-2-1948

520

EXCHANGE OF PRISONERS — ABDUCTEES

Gandhiji after prayers read from a letter received by him complaining that the inter-Dominion agreement for the restoration of abducted women prisoners, while it was duly honoured in the earlier stages, was not being implemented now. He was informed that the West Punjab Government had demanded as a condition precedent that the States should also fall in line. Gandhiji had no objection to such a wish, but if it was a fresh condition, it was not proper. Friendship demanded that all prisoners and women should be returned to either Dominion without regard to their number. The number of abducted women kept in the West Punjab might be larger but so long as there was one such sister in the East Punjab it would be sinful to withhold her from her kith and kin. Why should there be a competition in wrong behaviour? Gandhiji suggested that there should be complete forgetting of the past if there was a thorough inward cleansing. He had noticed with much pain that each Dominion accused the other of bad faith. If they were to give a good account of themselves, this thing had to stop.

Birla House, New Delhi, 24-1-'48

Harijan, 1-2-1948

521

"SET ME FREE"

The gathering at Gandhiji's public prayer which has been growing bigger and bigger for the last two days reached unusual dimensions today owing to its being Sunday.

ALL QUIET IN DELHI

Gandhiji proceeded to say that assurances were daily pouring in that all was well with Delhi and that there was nothing to worry so far as the communal situation

in the city was concerned. It gladdened his heart to be told by his Hindu and Muslim friends that a reunion of hearts was in the course of being established and that the people were waking up to the truth that it would not be possible for them to pursue their normal avocation if they continued quarrelling among themselves. Having regard to the improved situation he suggested that they might go a step further and that each Hindu and Sikh should make it a point to bring with him at least one Muslim to the prayer gathering.

URS AT MEHRAULI

Gandhiji next referred to the annual celebration of the *urs* at Bakhtiar Chishti's *dargah* at Mehrauli which was to commence from the next day. During the riots the *dargah* had been damaged by miscreants and some of the stone lattice work was removed. Efforts had been made during the last few days to effect the repairs so far as it was possible. Previously, both Mussalmans and Hindus used to visit it and take part in the *urs*. If the Hindus could still go there in the same spirit of peace and devotion, it would be a great thing. He hoped that such Muslims as might want to take part in it would be assured the completest security and safety from insult or molestation and that too with the minimum assistance of the police. He would rather that they should all constitute themselves into police for the purpose. The eyes of the whole world were on them, continued Gandhiji. Telegrams were pouring in from all quarters of the globe—from China, from Africa, from Europe and from America expressing deep appreciation and admiration of what they had done in Delhi. He hoped that they would all so act as to come up to the expectations that had been aroused. The transfer of power on the 15th of August as a result of their passive resistance struggle was a unique event in the history of the world. But then they fell from grace and the Hindus and Muslims and Sikhs behaved towards one another like barbarians. It was, however, he hoped, only a temporary distemper. Their hearts were sound. The fast seemed to have served to

throw out the distemper. He hoped that the cure would be permanent, without the possibility of a relapse.

"SET ME FREE"

Gandhiji then proceeded to say that he hoped that they would now set him free to go to Wardha. He would be going there to do their work. Dr. Rajendraprasad too would be going there. But he could go only with their blessings coupled with the solemn guarantee that things would be well during his absence. He wanted to go to Pakistan too. But since legally Pakistan was now foreign territory, he could go there only with the permission and consent, if not the invitation, of the Pakistan Government.

Birla House, New Delhi, 25-1-'48

Harijan, 1-2-1948

522

INDEPENDENCE DAY

This day, 26th January, is Independence Day. This observance was quite appropriate when we were fighting for Independence we had not seen nor handled. Now! We have handled it and we seem to be disillusioned. At least I am, even if you are not.

What are we celebrating today? Surely not our disillusionment. We are entitled to celebrate the hope that the worst is over and that we are on the road to showing the lowliest of the villager that it means his freedom from serfdom and that he is no longer a serf born to serve the cities and towns of India but that he is destined to exploit the city dwellers for the advertisement of the finished fruits of well thought out labours, that he is the salt of the Indian earth, that it means also equality of all classes and creeds, never the domination and superiority of the major community over a minor, however insignificant it may be in number or influence. Let us not defer the hope and make the heart sick. Yet what are the strikes and a variety

of lawlessness but a deferring of the hope? These are symptoms of our sickness and weakness. Let labour realize its dignity and strength. Capital has neither dignity nor strength compared to labour. These the man in the street also has. 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. Strikes in Cawnpore, coal mines or elsewhere mean material loss to the whole society not excluding the strikers themselves. I need not be reminded that this declamation does not lie well in the mouth of one like me who has been responsible for so many successful strikes. If there be such critics they ought not to forget that then there was neither independence nor the kind of legislation we have now. I wonder if we can remain free from the fever of power politics or the bid for power which afflicts the political world, the East and the West. Before leaving this topic of the day, let us permit ourselves to hope that though geographically and politically India is divided into two, at heart we shall ever be friends and brothers helping and respecting one another and be one for the outside world.

Birla House, New Delhi, 26-1-'48

Harijan, 1-2-1948

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NO RETALIATION

Gandhiji began his post-prayer address on Tuesday evening with asking how many Muslims were present and expressed his disappointment as only one hand went up. The other day he had advised that each Hindu or Sikh should bring at least one Muslim friend and he expected that they would do that much.

URS AT MEHRAULI

Gandhiji next described his morning visit to the *Dargah Sharif* at Mehrauli. The *urs* had attracted a large concourse

of Muslims and what gladdened Gandhiji was to find an equal number of Hindus and Sikhs Due to some wild and misleading rumours, however, the attendance of Muslims was thinner than in the previous years. It was a matter of shame that man should have to be afraid of man Gandhiji was also distressed to see the costly marble trellis damaged. It was no answer to say that similar or worse things had happened in Pakistan Had we fallen so low as to stoop to such acts of vandalism? Granting that such incidents had occurred on a larger scale in Pakistan, it would be improper to institute comparisons in evil doing Even if the whole world did wrong, should we do likewise? If today Gandhiji took to evil courses, would it not distress them? For him it would be worse than death Similarly, they had reason to feel ashamed at the damage done to the *Dargah* The friend in charge had related to the audience the history of the shrine and Gandhiji felt that it behoved them all to show to such a holy place the veneration due to it

MORE MURDERS IN N W F P

Gandhiji then referred to the news of one hundred and thirty innocent Hindus and Sikhs having been killed at the Parachinar refugee camp in Peshawar by raiders from tribal areas Anger at such events would be understandable but nevertheless wrong. Gandhiji had warned the congregation at the fair that if there was any secret wish for retaliation, it would be a breach of the solemn pact entered into in their name It was up to the Dominion Governments to take appropriate action in such matters, but so far as the public was concerned, they should remain unmoved

MIRPUR VICTIMS

Finally, Gandhiji spoke of the plight of the men and women carried away by the raiders in Mirpur — a district of Kashmir. The captives included young girls who were molested by the raiders and many of whom were reported to have been removed to Pakistan. There should be some code of decency even for raiders and abductions

could have no place therein. He appealed to the Pakistan authorities to right the obvious wrong assuming that a correct version was given to him. Pandit Jawaharlalji himself felt sore at heart and the Union Government was doing what was possible. He knew from his study of Islam that it did not countenance such acts. Government machinery moved slow. Dictates of humanity brooked no delay.

Birla House, New Delhi, 27-1-'48

Harijan, 8-2-1948

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MUSLIMS IN MYSORE

The other day Gandhiji had received a telegram from Muslims that his fast had produced no effect in Mysore. He had had a telegram from the Home Minister of the State that he had been misinformed. The fast had produced a deep impression and helped to ease the tension. There had been some trouble but it was confined to certain localities of Bangalore city and was immediately controlled without police firing or *lathi* charge. The rest of the State had been and was free from communal trouble.

Gandhiji had also a telegram from a Muslim on behalf of the Muslims thanking him for his reference to their woes in the prayer meeting and saying that the Government had now been stirred and issued a clear statement on the happenings, which went to prove the innocence of the Muslims. The telegram also said that the Muslims had always been loyal to the State and the country and their reckless evacuation should be stopped. Gandhiji advised Muslim friends and others not to indulge in exaggerations, but if anything, to understate their grievances. From his long experience he could say that that was the way for all communities to live in mutual harmony.

Birla House, New Delhi, 28-1-'48

Harijan, 8-2-1948

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THEIR SERVANT

Gandhiji during his post-prayer discourse spoke of a deputation of about forty refugees from Bannu, who had called on him in the afternoon. Poor men, they were in an afflicted state and he prized their *darshan.* As he had other engagements, they were good enough at his request to have their statements recorded by Shri Brijkrishna. One of them, however, exclaimed that they owed their miseries to him and angrily asked him to leave them alone and retire to the Himalayas. Gandhiji asked him at whose bidding he should go. Some were annoyed and a few went to the length of abusing him, while many eulogized his efforts. The only course therefore, open to him was to follow the dictates of God who spoke to men in the inmost chamber of the heart. There were women too in the company. He regarded them as his brothers or sisters. God was our one true friend. We were entirely in His hands. He would not care to go and enjoy the peace of the mountains but would be content with what peace he could extract from the surrounding turmoil. He, therefore, preferred to stay in their midst, adding that if they all went to the Himalayas, he might follow them as their servant.

Birla House, New Delhi, 29-1-'48

Harijan, 8-2-1948

ADDENDA

1

THE VOW OF HINDU-MUSLIM UNITY

The following is a free translation, approved by Gandhiji, of his leaflet on Hindu-Muslim Unity:-

In the huge mass meeting of Hindus and Mahomedans held in the Sonapur Masjid compound on Sunday the 6th April, the day of humiliation and prayer, a vow of Hindu-Muslim Unity was proposed to be taken as in the case of Swadeshi proposed at the Chowpaty meeting, and I had to utter a note of warning on both the occasions. At times in a fit of joyous passion we are spurred on to certain courses of action for which we have afterwards to repent. A vow is a purely religious act which cannot be taken in a fit of passion. It can be taken only with a mind purified and composed, and with God as witness. Most of what I have said whilst writing about the Swadeshi vow applies here. Acts which are not possible by ordinary self-denial, become possible with the aid of vows which require extraordinary self-denial. Hence vows can uplift us. If the Hindu and Muslim communities could be united in one bond of mutual friendship, and if each could act towards the other even as children of the same mother it would be a consummation devoutly to be wished. But before this unity becomes a reality, both the communities will have to give up a good deal and will have to make radical changes in ideas held heretofore. Members of one community when talking about those of the other at times indulge in terms so vulgar that they but accentuate the strained relations between the two. In Hindu society we do not hesitate to indulge in unbecoming language when talking of Mahomedans and *vice versa*. Many believe that an ingrained and ineradicable animosity exists between Hindus and Mahomedans. In many places we see that each community

harbours distrust against the other Each fears the other It is an undoubted fact that this anomalous and wretched state of things is improving day by day The Time-Spirit is ceaselessly working on unchecked, and willy-nilly we have to live together But the object of taking the vow is speedily to bring about by the power of self-denial, a state of things which can only be expected to come in the fulness of time How is this possible? Meetings should be called of Hindus—I mean the orthodox Hindus—where this question should be seriously considered The standing complaint of Hindus against Mussalmans is that the latter are beef-eaters and that they purposely sacrifice cows on the *Bakr-Id* day Now it is impossible to unite Hindus and Mahomedans so long as Hindus do not hesitate to kill their Mahomedan brethren in order to protect the cow For I think it is futile to expect that our violence will ever compel Mahomedans to refrain from cow-slaughter I do not believe the efforts of our cow protection societies have availed in the least to lessen the number of cows killed every day I have had no reason to believe so I believe myself to be an orthodox Hindu and it is my conviction that no one who scrupulously practises the Hindu religion may kill a cow-killer to protect the cow There is one and only one means open to a Hindu to protect the cow, and that is that he should offer himself as a sacrifice if he cannot stand its slaughter Even if a very few enlightened Hindus thus sacrificed themselves I have no doubt that our Mussalman brethren would abandon cow-slaughter: But this is Satyagraha, this is equity, even as, if I want my brother to redress a grievance I must do so by taking upon my head a certain amount of sacrifice and not by inflicting injury on him. I may not demand it as of right. My only right against my brother is that I can offer myself as a sacrifice. It is only when Hindus are inspired with a feeling of pure love of this type that Hindu-Muslim Unity can be expected

As with Hindus, so with Mussalmans. The leaders among the latter should meet together and consider their duty towards Hindus When both are inspired by a spirit

of sacrifice, when both try to do their duty towards one another instead of pressing their rights, then and then only would the long standing differences between the two communities cease. Each must respect the other's religion, must refrain from even secretly thinking ill of the other. We must politely dissuade members of both the communities from indulging in bad language against one another. Only a serious endeavour in this direction can remove the estrangement between us Our vow would have value only when masses of Hindus and Mussalmans join in the endeavour I think I have now made sufficiently clear the seriousness and magnitude of this vow I hope that on this auspicious occasion, and surely the occasion must be auspicious when a wave of Satyagraha is sweeping over the whole country, we could all take this vow of unity. For this it is further necessary that leading Hindus and Mahomedans should meet together and seriously consider the question and then pass a unanimous resolution at a public meeting. This consummation will certainly be reached if our present efforts are vigorously continued. I think the vow may be taken individually even now and I expect that numerous people will do so every day. My warnings have reference to the taking of the vow publicly by masses of men. If it is taken by the masses it should, in my humble opinion, be as follows .—

"With God as witness, we Hindus and Mahomedans declare that we shall behave towards one another as children of the same parents, that we shall have no differences, that the sorrows of each shall be the sorrows of the other and that each shall help the other in removing them. We shall respect each other's religion and religious feelings and shall not stand in the way of our respective religious practices. We shall always refrain from violence to each other in the name of religion."

Young India, 7-5-1919

2

THE KHILAFAT

GANDHIJI'S ADDRESS BEFORE THE ANJUMAN

A special meeting of the Anjuman Ziaul Islam was held on Friday last under the presidentship of Mr. M. T. Kadarbhai, Barrister-at-Law, to consider the question of the Khilafat. A large number of Mussalmans was present. Messrs Gandhi, Jamnadas Dwarkadas and Shankerlal Banker were among those specially invited. Mr. Kadarbhai introducing Gandhiji to the meeting said that the latter had throughout his life tried to see that the differences between Hindus and Mahomedans were obliterated, that his passive resistance struggle in South Africa was principally for Mahomedans, because three-fourths of the Indian commerce in South Africa was in the hands of Mahomedans, and that he had done in one day what years of British rule could not achieve in the way of union of Hindus and Mahomedans. He recalled the words of the late Nawab Mohisin-Mulk who, when at the time of the Balkan War asked as to what would be the position of the Mahomedans if the British Government were to declare war against Turkey, said our bodies would belong to the Government but our lives would belong to the Sultan of Turkey Mr. Kadarbhai said that for the last four years the same state of feeling had been existing in the Mahomedan mind, and added that the meeting had been called to appeal to the Government to settle the question of the Khilafat and the holy places to the satisfaction of the Moslem sentiment He requested Gandhiji to express his thoughts on the subject.

The following is a substance of Gandhiji's Gujarati speech. What the chairman has said about me is true, for I have ever since the days of my youth had a longing to see the differences between Hindus and Mahomedans obliterated. When I was in South Africa I came in close touch with Moslem brethren. I went there in connection with a Mahomedan case and there I was able to learn

their habits, thoughts and aspirations. In 1914 I sailed from South Africa reaching London on the 6th of August, i. e., two days after the declaration of war between England and Germany. Soon after, I read a series of articles in the *Times*, speculating on Turkey's choice. I found the Mahomedans residing in London equally agitated. One morning we read the news that Turkey had joined Germany. I had no leisure then to study the Turkish question, and pronounce judgment on the Turkish action. I simply prayed that India might be saved from the turmoil. Having had to explain to the Mahomedan friends in South Africa the events of the Tripolitan War and having understood their sentiments I had no difficulty in gauging Mahomedan sentiment over the Turkish choice. Theirs became a very difficult position. I landed next year in India with ideas of Hindu-Mahomedan unity and the Turkish question, and I felt when I landed that I would like to assist in securing a proper solution of these questions. There are two things to which I am devoting my life—permanent unity between Hindus and Mahomedans, and Satyagraha; to Satyagraha probably more, for it covers a much wider field. It is an all-embracing movement and if we accepted the law of Satyagraha unity will come of itself. The question that I have to answer this evening is, 'how can I help in having the Mahomedan question emerging out of the late war properly solved?' After my arrival in India I began to find out good Mahomedan leaders. My desire was satisfied when I reached Delhi, and found the Ali brothers whom I had the privilege of knowing before. It was a question of love at first sight between us. When I met Dr. Ansari, the circle of Mahomedan friends widened and at last it even included Maulana Abdul Bari of Lucknow. I have discussed the Mahomedan question with all these friends and many other Mahomedans throughout India and I feel that this question is the greatest of all, greater even than that of the repeal of the Rowlatt legislation; for it affects the religious susceptibilities of millions of Mahomedans. It is a remarkable fact, but it is true that

Mahomedan women and children too are interested in this question. There is at the present moment suspicion, deep-rooted in the minds of Mahomedans, regarding the intentions of the Imperial Governm nt on this question Though the Viceroy is not unmindful of the gravity of the situation, I do feel that a declaration of British policy is necessary in order to conciliate Mahomedan sentiment

. So far as I am aware, there are three points involved first, the one regarding the Khilafat and the possession of Turkey, second, regarding Holy Mecca and Madina, third regarding Palestine Briefly put, your contention is that the pre-war status should be restored With Mahomedan countrymen the temporal and spiritual power go hand in hand. I can, therefore, understand the Mahomedan sentiment against any dismemberment of Turkey But it has been stated by the *Times of India* a nongst others that there is as yet no authoritative and representative statement of the Mahomedan claim You and you alone can mend this omission There should be a calm, dispassionate, and reasoned statement of the Mahomedan claim In my humble opinion you should set forth your minimum demands in such a way as to appeal to any impartial student of such matters Time is running fast and unless you make a move at once in the desired direction it may be too late to do anything, for the League of Nations is making rapid progress, as rapid as it is possible to make it in view of world-interests that are to be affected by its deliberations. And when you have drawn up the statement of your claim, you have to see how to enforce it

It may be asked why I, a Hindu, bother my head about the Mahomedan question The answer is that as you are my neighbours and my countrymen, it is my duty to share your sorrows. I cannot talk about Hindu-Mahomedan unity and fail in giving effect to the idea when the test has come And you know that I touched the Mahomedan question in my published letter addressed to H. E. the Viceroy immediately after the war conference that was held in Delhi Since then I have never failed, whenever the occasion has arisen, to submit my views to the proper

quarters It now remains for me to consider how your claim may be enforced. Naturally the chosen method is to make representations to the Government. Sometimes the Government do not see eye to eye with us What are we to do under such circumstances ? If we had the franchise and responsible Government we could by our vote turn that Government out of power But in the absence of any such effective methods of making our will felt, what are we to do? When people have become enraged against Governments for a deliberate failure to carry out their wishes they have resorted to violence and I know that many consider that violence is the only remedy open to them when ordinary agitation has failed This is an age-long remedy I consider it to be barbarous and I have endeavoured to place before the people and the Government another remedy which does away with violence in any shape or form and is infinitely more successful than the latter. I feel we are not justified in resorting to violence for asserting our rights It is noble by far to die than to kill. Had it not been for my talk with Barisahib I would have hesitated to talk to you on a subject which is deeply religious. But he assured me that there was warrant enough for Satyagraha in the *Holy Quran* He agreed with the interpretation of the *Quran* to the effect that whilst violence under certain well-defined circumstances is permissible, self-restraint is dearer to God than violence, and that is the law of love That is Satyagraha Violence is concession to human weakness, Satyagraha is an obligation Even from the practical standpoint it is easy enough to see that violence can do no good and only do infinite harm, as we have seen in Ahmedabad and Viramgaon You will have a further illustration on Sunday I have advised a Satyagraha hartal accompanied by fasting and prayer. I hope that you will all join the great demonstration of honour, sorrow and protest — honour to an Englishman who has served India so well and so faithfully, sorrow that he has been deported, and protest against the ill-advised act of the Government. These are common causes among us and I hope that you

* The reference is to Mr Horniman

will take your full share in this demonstration. Its success lies in its being absolutely peaceful and voluntary and if we are that, we need neither the police nor the military. When Satyagraha becomes the accepted creed of India. aeroplanes will cease to frighten us, and when we provide no occasion for the use of machine guns at Colaba and elsewhere they would be overlaid with earth, grass will grow upon them and our children will play upon them.

Molvi Abdul Raoof then moved the following resolution: "Resolved that the Viceroy and the Governor General of India be requested to announce the British Policy in concert with the Right Hon'ble the Secretary of State for India and the Prime Minister which may be laid before the Peace Conference through the British representatives whose object would be (1) to settle the question of the Khilafat in accordance with the wishes of the Moslems in India; (2) to entrust the guardianship of the Holy places, such as Mecca, Madina, Jerusalem, Najaf, Kerbala, Kazemania. Baghdad etc. to the Khilafat Mussalmin: (3) to d.·ist from the proposed dismemberment of the Turkish Empire: (4) that Constantinople, which has been the seat of the Khilafat for four centuries and which is predominantly Moslem by faith and Turkish by race, must remain the capital of the Turkish Empire. That the fulfilment of the above questions in their entirety will bring about the restoration of normal feelings among the Moslems in India, and remove the tremendous discontent and unrest that exist, and that therefore this meeting earnestly prays that His Majesty's Britannic Government will cause a declaration to be issued at an early date in India bearing on the question, as such declaration will bring forth an era of peace, calmness and tranquility so very essential to the good and orderly governance of India." The resolution was carried.

Young India, 14-5-1919

3

IN CELEBRATION OF HINDU-MAHOMEDAN UNITY

Gandhiji wrote the following letter to the Editor of the *Times of India*

Sir, — I had the privilege of being a guest of Maulana Abdul Bari Saheb of Firangi Mahal some time ago We on this side of India, barring the Mahomedans, know little of this great and good man He is one of the foremost religious preceptors in Islam and has thousands of followers all over India His unassuming and truthful nature turns his opponents into friends when they begin to understand him He and I discussed many problems of mutual interest in the course of which I told him that so far as I could interpret Hindu opinion, I had no doubt that it would be solidly for the Mahomedans in the very difficult task of securing justice on the Turkish claim — difficult because the question was burdened with so many European complications that the Allied Powers might in a weak moment fail to decide it on grounds of justice alone He said to me with calm deliberation, but without any hesitation, " If we do not help you and do justice to you, Hindus, I for one cannot claim nor even take for my fellow-religionists your active help " I said, " Surely you do not for one moment consider that I have spoken in any spirit of bargaining The question that is behind the thought you have just now expressed, viz , that of cow-killing can be decided on its own merits and can await solution for the ripening of true friendship between us and for an impartial discussion " He immediately intervened as soon as I had finished the sentence and said, " Please excuse me. I know you want to help, because our cause is just and because we are children of the same soil, and not because you want any *quid pro quo* But do we not owe a duty to ourselves ? Islam will fall to pieces if it ever takes and never gives It must be faithful above all The nobility

of our creed (he used the expression '*khandani*') requires us to be strictly just to our neighbours. Here it is a question of taking service. The Hindus will judge our faith, and rightly, by our conduct towards them. That is why I say, 'If we take from you, we must give to you.'"

I have only given the tiniest bit of the wonderful conversation I had with a priest who combines in him learning, true wisdom and humility The Maulana has been true to his word. I know ever since this observation, he has been preaching amongst his followers and friends the necessity of abstention from cow-killing, and today of all the days, one of the most sacred of Islam, he has thought of the Hindus and sent me the following telegram —

"In celebration of Hindu-Moslem unity no cow sacrifices in Firangi Mahal this *Bakr-Id.* Abdul Bari," to which I have sent the following reply "Delighted with your great act of renunciation. Pray accept *Id Mubarak.*"

Would to God that all of us, Hindus, Mahomedans, Christians, Parsis, Jews belonging to all races have the same virtue of charity, justness and breadth of vision. The world will surely be the better for it.

Young India, 10-9-1919

4

KHILAFAT PUBLIC MEETING IN BOMBAY

A public meeting of the Mussalmans of Bombay was held on Thursday the 18th of September 1919 at the Mastan Shah Tank, (Nagpada) at 8-30 p. m., (Bombay Time) to further consider the questions of the Khilafat and of the preservation of the Holy Places of Islam, and to consider the present Islamic situation.

In response to a call from the audience and the chair, Gandhiji speaking in Gujarati on the resolution on the threatened dismemberment of Turkey said .-

> "I am glad to be able to be present at this gathering and I thank you for inviting me. The question we have met to discuss this evening is not new to me.

Ever since my arrival I have been mixing among Mahomedans of all shades of opinion and I know that it is a question among questions. On a right solution of it depends the future peace of this land. It therefore affects not only the Mahomedans of India but it affects the Hindus and others as well It is a great Empire question. I was therefore pained to see that H. E. the Viceroy had only one minute out of fifty-five of his speech to the Legislative Council to devote to this question He might usefully and legitimately have reversed the order I have publicly and respectfully warned His Excellency of the gravity of this question. With it is bound up all that is most sacred in Islam. I can enter into your feelings for I know what Hindus would feel if their religious honour was at stake. I know that with you the Khilafat is all in all today. I am sure therefore that you have the whole of the Hindus with you in this your just struggle. I have pleaded with His Excellency in a recent writing of mine that it is not enough that he has represented your case, that he secured representation before the Peace Conference. This is good but not enough. He has to feel with you He has to make your cause his own. I respectfully suggest that both His Excellency and Mr. Montagu, if they know your feelings properly, should tell His Majesty that they should be relieved of the charge entrusted to them if this great question is not solved to your satisfaction. His Majesty's ministers are bound, representing as they do a great Mahomedan interest, to secure a proper adjustment of the case. We are on the eve of obtaining a measure of responsibility. It will be wholly inconsistent with a disregard of Mahomedan sentiment. But I confess I do not fear the ministerial neglect of duty so much as I fear yours—the leaders' on the platform and this vast audience's. If you and I do not do our duty today we shall rightly deserve the curses of the millions of Mahomedans who are hoping that somehow things will come out right. Deep will be the disappointment if

and when they find that things have not come right. The British rulers are shrewd and sagacious. And they take no time to find out whether we are serious or at play. I want therefore to ask you to ask you selves whether you are serious about this very serious matter. Believe me that if you are, nothing is yet lost." Our best thanks are due to those noblemen like Lord Ampthill and others who are championing your cause. You have only seen one letter from that good Englishman, Mr. Andrews. Let me assure you that it is the least of his ceaseless efforts on your behalf. But his services and those of the Englishmen whom I have just mentioned will be of no avail, if you do not feel about it. You have opened with a prayer and you will close with a prayer We can not deceive Him, the ever wakeful and omnipresent Witness. He will surely answer the prayers of the just. Your cause, all the be opinion of the world has borne witness, is just. Are y just? Are you sincere? The test is simple. A sincere and true man is ready to sacrifice himself for a cause. Are you ready to sacrifice yourself for a cause? Are you ready to sacrifice your ease, comfort, commerce and even your life? Then you are Satyagrahis and you will win. Hindus and Mahomedans sometimes come and ask whether secret violence may not sometimes be Satyagraha. I have answered violence, whether secret or open, is the very reverse of Satyagraha. Absolute calmness and a firm resolve allied to a just cause always ensure victory. To die for a cause is the law of man, to kill is that of the beast."

Young India, 20-9-1919

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